

SUVARNABHUMI

The Golden Land



C V M. quod partem maris
Vassilius fuit Ped. lib. 7. cap. 2. c. 6.



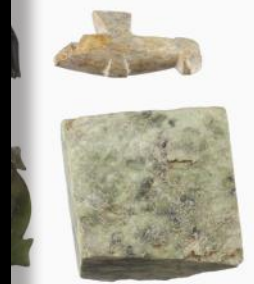
Color code for the illustrations on back cover and both wings.

- Evidences found in Suvarnabhumi:
- From Greco-Roman world
 - From South Asia - India
 - From East Asia - China
 - From Southeast Asia

The front cover illustration

- Blue Glass Bowl found from archaeological excavation at Huanglingtao Han tomb, Hepu, Guangxi, China
- Hand-coloured copper engraved printed map of INDIA extra Gangam by Gerhard Mercator (1512-1594) after Claudius Ptolemy from Mercator Classical Atlas with Aurea chersonesus shown in the middle

Asia



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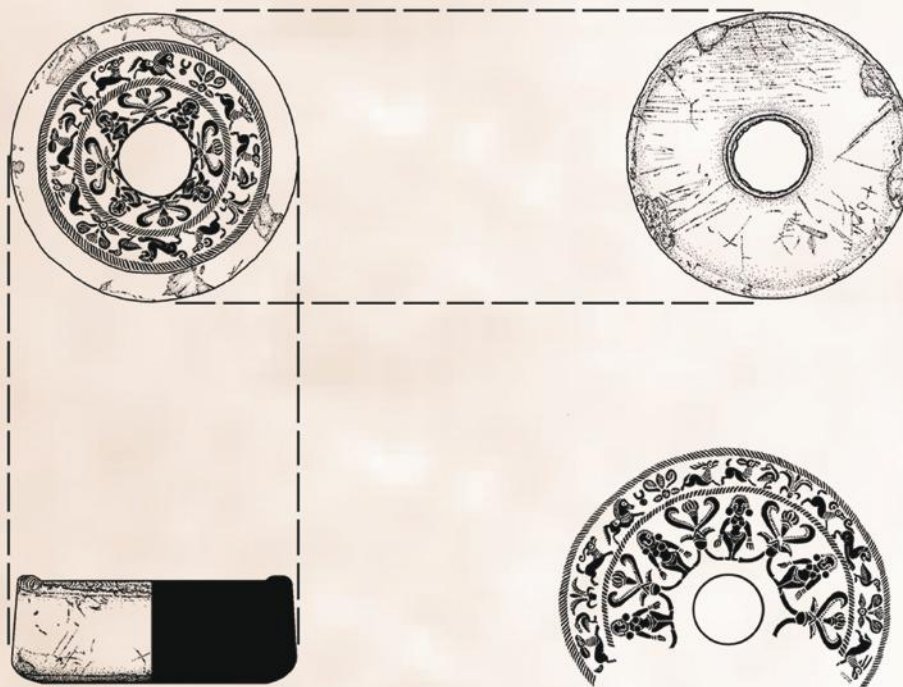


ahmi scripts and punch mark

SUARNABHUMI

The Golden Land





0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 cm

Fig. 1. KSK Maurya-Sunga Ring Stone and Khamao Yee Disc Stone

Ring Stone and Disc Stone with several figures. Especially human and animal figures similar to the so-called Indian Maurya-Sunga Stone.

5.9 x 2.2 cm and 3.7 x 1.1 cm, mud stone, Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand and Khamao Yee, Kawthaung District, Southern Myanmar.

SUARNABHUMI The Golden Land

Bunchar Pongpanich

SUVARNABHUMI: The Golden Land

First Thai Edition: June 2019 (500 copies) by GISTDA and BIA

First English Edition: August, 2023 (2,000 copies)

Published by Thailand Academy of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (TASSHA). Under the office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation

Distributed by Thailand Academy of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (TASSHA). Under the office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation

Email: tassha0221@gmail.com

<https://tassha.mhesi.go.th/>

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Translated by Asst. Prof. Ubon Sanpatchayapong (D. Ed.)

Edited by Bunchar Pongpanich and Institute of World Studies.

Layout by Pairot Singbun

Satellite Maps by Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (Public Organization): GISTDA

Printed and Bound in Thailand by Pimdee Co., Ltd.

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National Library of Thailand Cataloging in Publication Data.

Bunchar Pongpanich.

Suvarnabhumi: The Golden Land.-- Bangkok : Thailand Academy of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (TASSHA). Under the office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, 2023.

144 p.

1. Suvarnabhumi (Kingdom). I. Ubon Sanpatchayapong, tr. II. Title.

959.301

ISBN 978-616-584-134-4

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Fig. 2. Aurea chersonesus in INDIAM extra Gangem, hand-coloured copper engraving by Gerhard Mercator (1512-1594) after Claudius Ptolemy from Mercator Classical Atlas.

Foreword

Professor Dr. Anek Laothamatas
Minister of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation of Thailand

I take great pride in recommending this immensely significant book, meticulously compiled by Dr. Bunchar Pongpanich. The book serves as irrefutable evidence of the existence of ancient territories and their remaining artifacts in Thailand and neighboring countries, backed by extensive research. Moreover, it firmly establishes that Thailand has been endowed with a profound historical and archaeological heritage, spanning a period of 2,000 to 3,000 years. Suvarnabhumi, in its true essence, encompassed not only Thailand but also several nations across Southeast Asia and southern China, both on land and at sea.

This remarkable book represents a remarkable achievement in research, providing a comprehensive understanding of Suvarnabhumi. It illuminates how our nation has been deeply ingrained in a rich tapestry of civilization for countless generations. In fact, it flourished contemporaneously with esteemed civilizations such as China, Persia, Greece, and Rome. These historical connections fill us with a sense of pride and confidence, both in our country and in ourselves. Consequently, it serves to enhance tourism, spur economic growth, and significantly bolster our soft power, both among the Thai people and on the international stage.

The studies mentioned earlier were conducted by esteemed scholars from both the Western and Eastern hemispheres, and the number of Thai researchers exploring this field continues to grow. Presently, Dr. Bunchar Pongpanich, as the Director of the Suvarnabhumi Studies Center under TASSHA (Thailand Academy of Social Science, Humanities, and Arts) of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation, is leading a dedicated team of researchers in conducting more intricate studies and extensive explorations of Suvarnabhumi. Subsequently, a wealth of new books and articles will be published, complemented by the utilization of advanced scientific equipment to unveil further archaeological insights.

This beautifully illustrated book, replete with captivating photographs, offers a captivating and enlightening reading experience. It effortlessly combines entertainment with knowledge, leaving readers thoroughly enthralled. I am confident that delving deeper into the captivating story of our Golden Land will prove to be a truly rewarding and enriching endeavor.

Foreword

Sompong Sanguanbun
Director of the Institute of World Studies,
Thailand Academy of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts,
Dean of the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies, Rangsit University

The native ancestors and present-day generations of mainland Southeast Asia, particularly in Thailand, have passed down stories and legends of the fabled “Golden Land” through the ages. The generation born after World War II, often referred to as the ‘Baby Boomers,’ received comprehensive education across various fields and acquired knowledge from diverse disciplines, albeit without a specific focus on Suvarnabhumi. Nevertheless, their belief in the existence of ‘Suvarnabhumi’ has endured to this day, including my own belief.

Significant progress has been achieved in the investigation of the histories of Rattanakosin, Ayutthaya, Sukhothai, and Dvaravati, including Suvarnabhumi, through numerous studies and historical research conducted. There is a passionate and dedicated individual who has played a pivotal role in conducting extensive studies in collaboration with groups of researchers, academicians, adventurers, archaeologists, and individuals from both Thailand and abroad. Through these collective efforts, historical documents and material evidence in various forms have been discovered, providing substantial indications of the existence of Suvarnabhumi. The person is Dr. Bunchar Pongpanich, M.D.

In February 2020, I had the privilege of accompanying Prof. Dr. Anek Laothamatas on a visit to locations in Surat Thani Province where archaeological evidence of Suvarnabhumi exists. Dr. Bunchar served as our esteemed guide, providing us with briefings on the evidence and characteristics of Suvarnabhumi.

During Prof. Dr. Anek’s tenure as the Minister of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation, he established the Thailand Academy of Social Science, Humanities, and Arts in February 2022. The academy’s primary mission is to foster the growth of knowledge among Thai citizens, encompassing not only science but also social sciences. As part of this mission, five institutes were established, including the Suvarnabhumi Studies Center and the Institute of World Studies. These two institutions were founded simultaneously, and they are intricately linked. When Dr. Bunchar proposed the translation of the original book on ‘Suvarnabhumi’ from Thai into other languages such as English, Lao, Vietnamese, and Khmer, I wholeheartedly supported his initiative.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to our revered Great King Bhumipol, or the late King Rama IX, for his blessed recognition of Suvarnabhumi. It is under his recognition that we have used this specific term to refer to the Land of Gold in this region. The Great King undoubtedly revitalized the significance of this land and inspired the Thai people to embrace and appreciate the values of our civilization and the glory of our beloved homeland, which has now achieved global recognition. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Anek for his visionary approach to establishing the Suvarnabhumi Studies Center. This center highlights our crucial role in academic development, studies, and research on the distinguished aspects of the Suvarnabhumi civilization as a regional hub.

My sincere admiration goes to Dr. Bunchar, who has been an exemplary leader in collecting, exploring, and investigating the documents and necessary data for this project. Despite the hardships and immense work, Dr. Bunchar's unwavering dedication was focused on revealing detailed information about this legendary land. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude and immense thanks to all who contributed to data collection, research, revisiting locations, and other aspects of this endeavor. Though remaining anonymous, they are all remembered and cherished in my heart.

On behalf of the Institute of World Studies, I take great pride in witnessing the resurgence of Suvarnabhumi and disseminating its legendary civilization, which serves as a significant hub in Southeast Asia, to global citizens through translations in seven different languages: Chinese, English, French, Khmer, Malay, Myanmar, and Vietnamese. It brings me immense joy to fulfill this mission, which enables the world to recognize the significance of Thailand, the history of Suvarnabhumi, its future role in Asia and Southeast Asia, and its position as a crossroads for trade, cultural exchange, regional collaboration, and peaceful coexistence. I am confident that these books in various languages will serve as sails propelling Suvarnabhumi's glorious global journey forward.

Foreword

Dr. Bunchar Pongpanich, (M.D.)

Director of Suvarnabhumi Studies Center (2021-2022)

During the past century, extensive studies and research have been conducted to investigate the existence and location of Suvarnabhumi, a place referred to in numerous historical records worldwide for thousands of years. These investigations have covered both global and Southeast Asian regions, exploring various dimensions to ascertain whether Suvarnabhumi truly existed, where it was located, and its significance.

In this regard, the Geo-informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (GISDA), a public organization, joined hands with the Buddhadasa Indapanno Archives to conduct a comprehensive study from the year B.E. 2559 (2016) to B.E. 2562 (2019). The outcomes of this research were then published in two volumes: “SUVARNABHUMI: The Golden Land, The New Finding on 2018 Collected Paper for Suvarnabhumi Terra Incognita” and “Suvarnabhumi: Terra Incognito.”

The findings from these works have resulted in a consensus among regional and global scholars that Suvarnabhumi was indeed situated in the Southeast Asian region well before the emergence of various states and nations. Suvarnabhumi possesses five essential attributes and values:

1. It served as a bridge connecting different parts of the world, rich with invaluable natural resources and products.
2. It was a transitional hub for trade, settlements, and the foundation of diverse cities, metropolitans, states, and kingdoms.
3. It played a crucial role as a center for the accumulation and exchange of knowledge, technology, and essential productions for the global community.
4. It functioned as a significant global trading center.
5. It served as a profound source of arts and civilization.

The Suvarnabhumi Studies Center was established on February 4th, 2021. It is one of the five institutes operating under the Thailand Academy of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts (TAS-SHA). The primary objective of the Center is to engage in the study, investigation, and research of Suvarnabhumi. Additionally, it focuses on collecting and formulating a comprehensive database, fostering the development of human resources, and disseminating the outcomes of its research worldwide.

As part of its ongoing efforts in conducting investigations, studies, and research, and to fulfill its mission of dissemination of the Center’s efforts and outcomes related to Suvarnabhumi, the Center collaborates closely with the Institute of World Studies in undertaking the translation and publication of preliminary conclusions from the work titled ‘Suvarnabhumi : Terra Incognita.’

This endeavor seeks to delve deeper into the subject matter and expand the results for the advancement of social, economic, and cultural development in Thailand, the Southeast Asian nations, as well as the international community. The significant and potential findings of Suvarnabhumi's existence in the region of today's ASEAN carry great meaning and implications for not only the ongoing research efforts but also several dimensions, in particular economic development.

On behalf of the Suvarnabhumi Studies Center, I extend our sincere gratitude to the Geo-informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (GISDA) and the Buddhadasa Indapanno Archives for their invaluable initiative and being a driving force in expanding the circle of researchers. We are also deeply appreciative of the collaboration and coordination with the Institute of World Studies, TASSHA, the National Research Center of Thailand, and Prince of Songkla University during the initial stages of the Center's work.

Foreword

I am very proud and honored to be a translator of this history documentary entitled “Suvarnabhumi: The Golden Land,” recollected by Dr Bunchar Pongpanich. As a translator from my mother -tongue or the Thai language, into English, I tried my best to convey the beauty and wisdom of our past civilization to be shared with global readers and capture the essence of the original narrative, ensuring that its depth and meaning resonate with audiences worldwide.

In this particular endeavor, I hope that the transfer of information from Thai into English has breathed the stories of the past into the present, transcending language barriers and connecting cultures. The significance of this translation also reminds me of Dr. Bunchar and his team’s profound contribution. Their passion for language, history, and cross-cultural understanding has shaped this documentary into a work of art. It is through their tireless efforts that the voices of the past have found a new resonance, inviting audiences of all backgrounds to embrace the wealth of knowledge encapsulated within these pages.

May I again express my sincere thanks to Dr. Bunchar Pongpanich and his great team for giving me an opportunity to translate this collective wisdom of humankind. I am certain that the spirit of our shared history, “Suvarnabhumi: The Golden Land,” will forever be preserved and cherished.

Asst Prof Ubon Sanpatchayapong (D. Ed)
Deputy Director for Administration, Rangsit English Language Institute(RELI)
Rangsit University, Pathum Thani, Thailand

SUARNABHUMI:
The Golden Land

Bunchar Pongpanich

Abstract

His Late Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, in retelling the story of Mahajanaka from the Buddhist Jataka, included a map giving the purported locations of some fabled cities. Chief among these was a prosperous and bountiful land of trade and learning frequented by traders and wayfarers: Suvarnabhumi, the “Golden Land.” The name was given by the King to Bangkok’s ultramodern second international airport – an aviation hub at the heart of mainland Southeast Asia and its gateway to the world -- linking the Suvarnabhumi of lore to the present and future of the region.

Literature from the past century by Thai and foreign historians and archaeologists suggests that Suvarnabhumi was a real place at the crossroads between India and China, known today as Southeast Asia. However, it remains unclear whether the boundaries of Suvarnabhumi were well-defined as a city, state, or kingdom, much less exactly where it was located. Of particular note was that it formed the basis for the rise of Funan as the region’s first state, segueing into its recorded history, to wit the Dvaravati period beginning in the 4th century CE.

There have been efforts to broadly establish the location of Suvarnabhumi in the area between India and China. The most widely presumed hypothesis places it in southern Myanmar, western Thailand, and the upper Thai-Malay peninsula around the Kra Isthmus, the western coast of the Gulf of Thailand, and north-western Malaysia. It has also been suggested, based on discovered artifacts, that from the 3rd century CE, Suvarnabhumi was somewhere on the Mekong River estuary in Vietnam and Cambodia. Later, there were some findings that corresponded to contemporaneous records between the 5th century BCE – 1st century CE, suggesting the existence of Suvarnabhumi, especially at Sungai Batu in Bujang Valley, Kedah, Malaysia, and the Isthmus of Kra on the Thai-Malay peninsula straddling Ranong and Chumphon provinces, to the southern tip of Myanmar in Koh Thaung. Meanwhile, evidence has also been found in the river basin of the Chao Phraya-Pasak and Chi-Mun valleys across mainland Southeast Asia stretching from the Bay of Bengal to Tonkin Bay. Newer studies have found more traces of Suvarnabhumi in Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Cambodia.

The heritage of Suvarnabhumi leaves a legacy that lingers to this day in the form of the ASEAN Community. This legacy consists of:

1. **Physical Geography, Natural and Resources:** The wealthy land at the crossroads of the world: north and south, east and west, mainland and maritime.
2. **Settlement and Polity Development:** A place where travelers visited and passed through, where many settled and traded, forming towns, cities, states, and kingdoms.
3. **Science and Technology:** A space for the exchange and accumulation of knowledge, technology, and production.
4. **Commodity Trade and Services:** An important trading hub for the world.
5. **Art, Culture, and Civilization:** A cradle of arts, culture, and civilization.

SUARNABHUMI – The Golden Land

Due to the benevolence and virtue of the Late King Bhumibol Adulyadej (King Rama 9) the Great, the story of Mahajanaka was researched, translated, and adapted from Mahajanaka Jataka in the Tripitaka (Suttanta Pitaka) the Jataka Sect, Volume 2, Part II) in the year 1988. His Majesty had it published to commemorate the auspicious occasion of the Golden Jubilee of His Succession to the throne in 1996, aiming to benefit people who live a righteous life. His Majesty also developed a map showing the geographical locations of some ancient cities, including Suvarnabhumi, which was detailed in the book as an affluent commercial center. Those who came to trade here would be successful and rich. In addition, it was a well-positioned city with well-known landmarks, and people could reach the place by calculating the distance, duration, and forecast of natural disasters that may occur during the season. The city was also a center of prosperity and had its own language with a learning center for arts and sciences as well as higher education institutions. Later in the year 2000, His Majesty named Bangkok International Airport, the second of Thailand, in Bang Phli District, Samut Prakan Province, “Suvarnabhumi Airport,” which means “Golden Land.” This marks the location of Suvarnabhumi on Earth for the first time, bringing wide recognition with its location in the middle of Southeast Asia, the center of transportation as a gateway to connect with the world representing a crucial context of “Suvarnabhumi” ever since then.

Literature Review on Suvarnabhumi

Literature concerning Suvarnabhumi has been extensively studied, researched, and reported over the past centuries, both in Thailand and overseas. It has revealed several issues regarding Suvarnabhumi, including its existence and how it differs from Suvarnadvipa. Additionally, there is a matter of its location that is difficult to resolve due to various factors that need to be considered, particularly supporting evidence and nationalism, which have contributed to the creation of a myth. This has led to ongoing discussions and declarations circulating in Southeast Asia and South India.

The side advocating for Southeast Asia proposes that Suvarnabhumi refers to the Thai-Malay Peninsula, including Southern Myanmar, while Suvarnadvipa pertains to the Indonesian archipelago, specifically Sumatra, which may also cover parts of current Malaysian territory. Nevertheless, proponents of Southeast Asia claim that Suvarnabhumi could be the southernmost part of India. Furthermore, there are other assumptions, such as Central Bengal in Bangladesh, the Tenasserim Coast in the Thaton region of Myanmar, the old cities of U Thong and Dvaravati in Thailand, and the area of Funan at Oc Eo in Vietnam.

Based on the review of the Suvarnabhumi story as it appears in legends and various Jataka tales, Suvarnabhumi or Suvarnadvipa, from the storytellers’ and listeners’ perspectives, likely refers to the same land. It was a fertile region, rich in gold and wealth, making it a sought-after destination for many adventurers and merchants. Suvarnadvipa or Suvarnabhumi was a land by the sea between Jambudvipa and Continental China. To reach it from Jambudvipa, one had to undertake a long journey, primarily by boat. Suvarnadvipa, or Suvarnabhumi is sometimes associated with the name Manipur (on the Indian border with Myanmar), and it took several days to travel there from Hanthawaddy.

Thai academic circles:

In the academic circles of Thai history and archaeology over the last 100 years, the study of Suvarnabhumi began in 1912 when King Mongkut (King Rama IV) revised the Royal Autograph Edition of the Ayudhya Chronicles. The chronicles had previously been revised by Prince Wongsajirak Snid, and additional explanations were later added by Prince Damrong Rajanubhab.

This study involved the review of various works, including:

- “Siam and Suvarnabhumi” by Luang Wichit Wathakan (1933)
- “Golden City or Suvarnabhumi” by Khun Siriwattana Anathorn (Phol Siriwattanakul, 1936)
- “Ancient Indochina Peninsula” by Phraya Anuman Rajadhon (1938)
- “Where are Suvarnabhumi and Dvaravati?” by Khachon Sukkhaphanit (1957)
- “Suvarnabhumi” by Dhanit Yupho (1967)
- “Suvarnabhumi” by Pariwat Tassanasarit (1972)
- “Where is Suvarnabhumi” by Manit Vallibhodom (1974-1978)
- “Thai Legend and History: Than Chan’s 80th Anniversary” by Prince Chan Jirayuwat Rachanee (1993)
- “Suvarnabhumi is Here, At Chorakhe Sam Phan River Basin and Mae Klong-Tha Chin Area” by Srisak Vallibhodom (2000)
- “Suvarnabhumi is Here, At the Land of Siam” by Sujit Wongted (2002)
- “Suvarnabhumi, the Golden Land of Southeast Asia” by Prathum Chumphengphan (2003)
- “Suvarnabhumi in Tales” by Kusuma Rakksamani (2004)
- “Suvarnabhumi from Archaeological Evidences” by Phasuk Inthrawut (2005)
- “Suvarnabhumi, the Beginning of Thai Historical Trend” and “Suvarnabhumi, the Trade Center Across the Two Oceans Where King Ashoka First Buddhism at the Beginning of Thai History 2,500 Years Ago” by Sujit Wongted (2006)
- “Ancient Paintings of Suvarnabhumi 3,000

- Years Ago” by Apisit Theerajaruwan (2009)
- “Srivijaya in Suvarnadvipa” by Ammara Sisuchat (2015)
- “Early Buddhist Traces from India to Thailand” by Bunchar Pongpanich et al. (2016)
- “Suvarnabhumi and Maritime Silk Road and Ancient States in Southeast Asia before B.E.1100” by Saritpong Khunsong (2017)
- “Documents and Knowledge about Suvarnabhumi Studies” by Rungroj Thamrungsreang et al. (2017).

These works have contributed to the exploration and understanding of the historical and archaeological significance of Suvarnabhumi in the region.

Based on the research conducted by Thai academic circles in the past 100 years, there is a consensus that Suvarnabhumi existed and had been developed for thousands of years before recorded history. It is believed to have been a city, state, or kingdom around 2,000 years ago. The geographical location of Suvarnabhumi is considered to encompass the entire Southeast Asian region known as Indochina, extending from the Brahmaputra River Basin through Burmese, Mon, and Thai territories all the way to the Malay Peninsula. This region includes areas up to the Mekong River, including the territory of Yunnan, particularly in the area of Thaton town, Ban Don Ta Phet, U Thong, Nakhon Pathom, Lavo, Chao Phraya River Basin, the mouth of the Gulf of Thailand, as well as Vaishali, Beikthano and Oc Eo.

There have been different speculations about the possible location of Suvarnabhumi, with some suggesting that it could be submerged at the bottom of the Gulf of Thailand, while others propose a region called the “World of Suvarnabhumi,” with land at the center surrounded by the Bay of Bengal, the Gulf of Martaban, the Malay Peninsula, the Indonesian Archipelago, and the South China Sea. According to archaeological evidence, the land is divided into two centers: one being the trade center comprising U Thong, Chaiya, the Malay Peninsula, and the bottom of the Gulf of Thailand, and the other being the center

of prosperous Buddhism at Thaton and Nakhon Pathom, which continued into the historical eras of Dvaravati, Funan, Sri Ksetra, and Srivijaya.

However, there is an opposing view that questions the age and origin of much of the evidence, leading to difficulties in determining the true age of Suvarnabhumi. Despite this, new archaeological findings, such as stone beads, glass beads, ornaments, bronze vessels, and iron tools dating back to the 4th century BCE, have provided some evidence related to the period of Suvarnabhumi. Nevertheless, the lack of strong evidence necessitates the need for new discoveries or innovative methods to prove the authenticity and age of existing evidence in the future. The study of Suvarnabhumi remains a fascinating and complex topic in Thai history and archaeology.



Figs. 3. Some Thai works on Suvarnabhumi.

Overseas studies:

Below is a list of the mentioned overseas works related to Suvarnabhumi, Thai history, and Southeast Asian archaeology:

- “The Periplus of The Erythraean Sea: Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean by Merchant of the First Century” by Wilfred H. Schoff (1912)
- “SUARNADVIPA: Hindu Colonies Of The Far East” by R.C. Majumdar (1936)
- “A History of Southeast Asia” by D.G.E. Hall (1955)
- “The Golden Khersonese” by Paul Wheatley (1961)
- “Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia” by Kenneth R. Hall (1985)
- “THAI IMAGERIES OF SUWANBHUMI” by M. C. Chanjirayuwat Rachanee (1987)
- “The Winds of Change: Buddhism and the Maritime Links of Early South Asia” by Himanshu P. Ray (1994)
- “Southeast Asia From prehistory to history” by Ian Glover and Peter Bellwood (Editor) (2004)
- “The Indian Ocean in World History” by Milo Kearney (2004)
- “Early Kingdoms of the Indonesian Archipelago and the Malay Peninsula” by Paul Michel Munoz (2006)
- “Early Landscape of Myanmar” by Elizabeth H. Moore (2007)
- “The Pyu Landscape: Collected Articles” by Elizabeth H. Moores (2012)
- “BEFORE SIAM: Essays in Art and Archaeology” by Nicolas Revire & Stephen A. Murphy (Editor) (2014)
- “RESEARCH ON SUARNABHUMI” (Burmese language) by U SAN WIN (2015)
- “Bujang Valley: The Wonder that was Ancient Kedah” by V. Nadarajan (2012)
- “Antiquities of Bujang Valley” by Nik Hassan Shuhaimi Nik Abd. Rahman & Othman Mohd. Yatim (1990)
- “Kedah Tua Kingdom: New Evidence from Sungai Batu Complex” by Mokhtar Saidin (2016)

- “LOST KINGDOMS: Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Early Southeast Asia” by John Guy (Editor) (2014)
- “THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND THE INDIAN OCEAN: The Ancient World Economy & The Kingdom of Africa, Arabia & India” by Raoul McLaughlin (2014)
- “CITIES AND KINGS: Ancient Treasures from Myanmar” by Stephen A. Murphy (editor) et al. (2016)
- “SINGAPORE & THE SILK ROAD OF THE SEA 1300-1800” by John N. Miksic (2017)
- “ANCIENT SOUTHEAST ASIA” by John N. Miksic and Geok Yian Goh (2017)
- “Revisiting the Bujang Valley: A Southeast Asian Entrepot Complex In The Maritime Trade Route” by Stephen A. Murphy (2017)
- “Khao Sam Kaeo: An Early Port-City between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea” by Berenice Bellina (2017)
- “Ancient Stone Beads of Southeast Asia and Indian Connection in Stone Beads of South and Southeast Asia: Archaeology, Ethnography, and Global Connections” by Bunchar Pongpanich (2017)
- “Beads of Thailand at the Crossroad of Ancient Maritime Trade in Journal Borneo International Beads Conference” by Bunchar Pongpanich & Pairot Singbun (2017)
- “The Ashes of the Buddha” by Harry Falk (2013)

These works, written in English and by international authors, contribute to the understanding and exploration of Suvarnabhumi, Thai history, and Southeast Asian archaeology from various perspectives.

In conclusion, the international academic works spanning the past 100 years have provided evidence, records, and stories from various ancient civilizations such as the Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Indians, and Chinese, all of which indicate the existence of Suvarnabhumi approximately 2,000 years ago. The name “Suvarnabhumi” is associated with the concept of gold and prosperity, with variations in different languages like Suvarna (Indian), Chryse (Greek), Aureaus (Roman), and Jin (Chinese).

Suvarnabhumi is believed to have been a region rich in valuable goods from both the land and the seas, as well as those obtained from other distant places, including gold, forest products, sea goods, and textiles. The location of Suvarnabhumi is thought to have been beyond the Ganges River Basin, preceding China, and might have been divided into two parts: a terrestrial region and a peninsula and archipelago region. The territories associated with Suvarnabhumi encompass areas



Figs. 4. Works on Suvarnabhumi and related.

that now correspond to Myanmar, the Thai-Malay Peninsula, and Sumatra. Suvarnadvipa, on the other hand, refers to the Thai-Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, and other nearby islands. These territories consisted of port cities, cities, provinces, and small states before the rise of larger states in the early historical period. Notably, Funan located at the mouth of the Mekong River in the 2nd - 4th cent. CE, preceded the prominence of Suvarnadvipa, which was later referred to Srivijaya.

Trade played a central role during this period, followed by governance and religion, with Buddhism holding significant importance. As archaeological excavations progressed in Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, India, and China, more evidence supporting and refining hypotheses about Suvarnabhumi's history emerged. Excavations were conducted in various locations, such as the Irrawaddy River Basin, the

mouth of the Sittang River, the central plains and western region of Myanmar, the peninsula around the Kra Isthmus of Thailand, the upper and west coast of Malaysia, Sumatra, various Indonesian islands, and the coast of Vietnam up to the mouth of the Mekong River.

In more recent times, significant excavations have taken place at Khao Sam Kaeo in Chumphon Province, the Kra Isthmus area of the Thai-Malay Peninsula connecting to Southern Myanmar, and Sungai Batu in Kedah. These excavations have yielded substantial evidence dating back to the 4th cent. BCE, which potentially sheds light on the historical significance of Suvarnabhumi. The ongoing efforts of archaeologists and researchers in these regions have contributed to a deeper understanding of Suvarnabhumi's past and its significance in the ancient world.

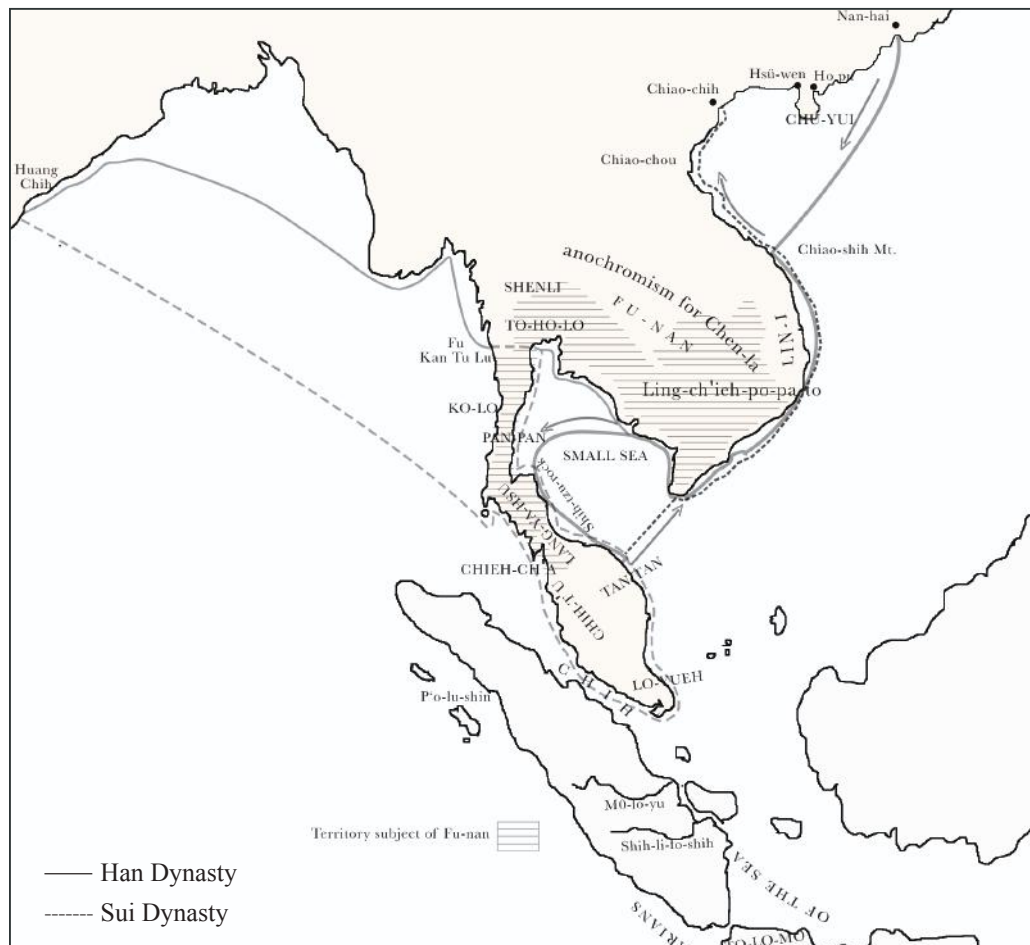


Fig. 5. The routes from India to China (back and forth) via Southeast Asia during the Han Dynasty (1st cent. BCE - 1st cent. CE) and the Sui Dynasty (5th cent. CE) Source: The golden Khersonese, Paul Wheatley



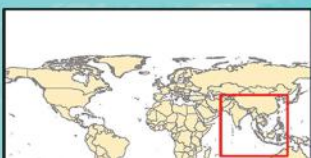
Map. 1. Illustrated the Ancient Places mentioned related to Suvarnabhumi.

: by Thai academic circles

- 1 Suvarnabhumi : Area between India and China.
- 2 Suvarnadvipa : Thai-Malay Peninsular and Archaeopalego.
- 3 Tanessarim and Thaton in Mataban Bay.
- 4 U Thong and Dvaravati Sites in Thailand Central Plain.
- 5 Funan at Oc Eo Around the mouth of Mekong River.
- 6 Kra Isthmus of Thailand and Myanmar.

: in Overseas studies

- 1 Suvarnabhumi on Thai-Malay peninsular and Southern part of Myanmar.
- 2 Suvarnadvipa in Indonesia archaeopalego, especially Sumatra
- 3 Tanessarim and Thaton in Mataban Bay.
- 4 U Thong and Dvaravati Sites in Thailand Central Plain.
- 5 Funan at Oc Eo Around the mouth of Mekong River.
- 6 Kra Isthmus of Thailand and Myanmar.
- 7 Kedah and Sungai Batu in Malay Peninsular.
- 8 Sumatra.



1 km² spatial resolution SRTM digital elevation data.
 Source: Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (Public Organization)



South China Sea

Gulf of Thailand

Andaman Sea

1 SUARNABHUMI

7 SUARNADVIPA

2 SUARNADVIPA

8

3

4

5

1

6

2

Halin
Ava (Inwa)
Pagan
Binnaka

Nanyue (Guangzhou)

Hepu

Beikthano

Dong Son

Haripunchai

Phra That Luang

Ban Chiang

Phu Phra Bat

Maw Lam Leng

Maeung Fa Daet Song Yang

My Son

Dong Duong

Chamapasak

Chan Sen

Phimai

U Thong

Lop Buri

Ban Don Ta Phet

Kamphaeng Saen

Thagara

Ban Kao

Nakhon Pathom

Khu Bua

Phanat Nikhom

Sombor Prei Kuk

1

Vyadhapura

Angkor Borei

Oc Eo

Khao Sam Kaeo

Phom Da

Ao Yai - Khmao Yee

Tha Cha na

Chaiya

Phu Khao Thong

Khura Buri

Takua Pa

Krabi

Nakhon Si Thammarat

Klong Thom

Yarang

Bujang Valley

Sungai Batu

Pahang

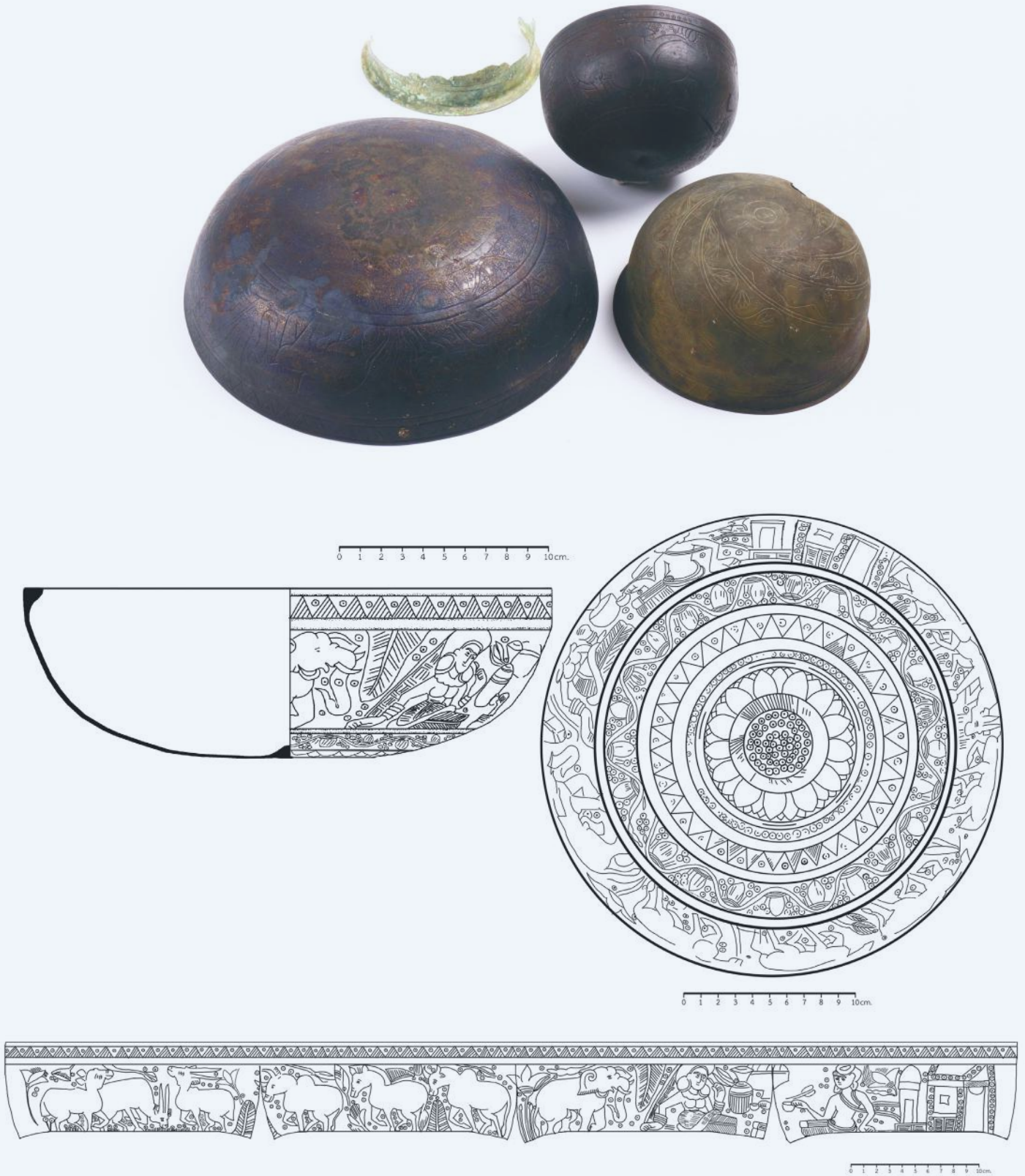
Singapore

Jambi

Palembang

Borobudur

Yogvakata



Figs. 6. a & b Four high tin bronze bowls with decoration found from Tha Tapao River, Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.

RECENT STUDIES
(2018)

Recent studies

The latest studies, comprising insightful thoughts and newly discovered evidence, have been conducted by prominent historians and archaeologists from Thailand and around the world. The following publications have emerged from their research efforts:

- “Suvarnabhumi: Myth or Reality?” by Ian C. Glover.
- “Sailing into Suvarnabhumi: View from Jatakas and Inscriptions” by Suchandra Ghosh.
- “Sailing to Suvarnabhumi: Maritime Routes and Cultural Landscapes” by Himanshu Prabha Ray.
- “Research Project on Peleo – Shoreline, Port Polity, Trade Routes, and Its Connectivity to Early Settlement in Thailand in the Context of Suvarnabhumi” by Chawalit Khaokhiew et al., Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University.
- “A Roman Gold Coin Found in Peninsula Thailand” by Brigitte Borrel.
- “Suvarnabhumi in the 1st cent. CE: The Glass Evidence” by James W. Lankton and Bernard Gratuze.
- “Suvarnabhumi: Land of Gold” by Anna T. Bennett.
- “Chinese Knowledge on Suvarnabhumi before the 10th Century” by Lin Yin and Xiong Zhaoming.
- “Khao Sam Kaeo: An Early Port-City between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea” by Berenice Bellina.
- “Progress of Suvarnabhumi Study” by Srisak Vallibhodom.
- “Suvarnabhumi: Transpeninsular between the Gulf of Martaban and the Gulf of Tonkin” by Phuthorn Bhumadhon.
- “Many Lands of Gold” by Peter Skilling.

These works represent significant advancements resulting from analytical studies in archaeological science and the uncovering of new discoveries. To summarize the findings:



Suvarnabhumi: Myth or Reality? by Dr. Ian C. Glover

Although the true nature of Suvarnabhumi, as mentioned in numerous ancient texts, remains unresolved, Dr. Ian C. Glover highlights significant archaeological findings related to trade and the interactions between India and Southeast Asia during the early Buddhist era. These discoveries include an array of artifacts, such as colored semi-precious gemstones, glass beads, bronze vessels, ornamental items, and iron tools. They were unearthed at various sites, including Khao Sam Kaeo, Khuan Lukpat, Kuala Selinsing, and the Sa Huynh Cultural Site.

Among the findings are bronze bowls adorned with animal motifs depicting ancient Indian individuals and architectural structures. These were discovered at Ban Don Ta Phet and Khao Chamuk. Notably, recent excavations at Khao Sam Kaeo have yielded four additional blows dating back to the 4th – 2nd cent. BCE. Intriguingly, depictions of griffins, typically associated with the Sunga and Kushan art of northwestern India, have been found, suggesting a potential connection to the Sunga culture in northwestern South Asia. This culture held significance as a Buddhist center during the first cent. BCE to first CE equently, these findings represent some of the oldest evidence indicating a link between South Asian Buddhism and Thailand.



Fig. 7. Burial C56 at Ban Don Ta Phet, Kanchanaburi Province, Western Thailand, 1981. Iron tools and weapons are concentrated in the middle of the grave. The socketed iron spears were deliberately bent double. On the right a high-tin bronze bowl is shown deliberately crushed above a leaded situla, the latter probably an import from the Dong Son Culture of northern Vietnam. (Photograph by I. C. Glover)



Fig. 8. Semiprecious hardstone, glass beads and animal pendants excavated at Ban Don Ta Phet, Kanchanaburi Province, Western Thailand. (Photograph by Mariko Yamagata)

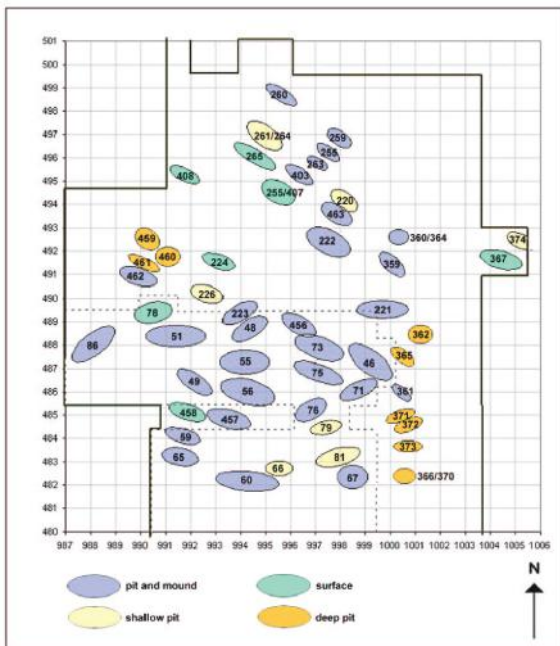
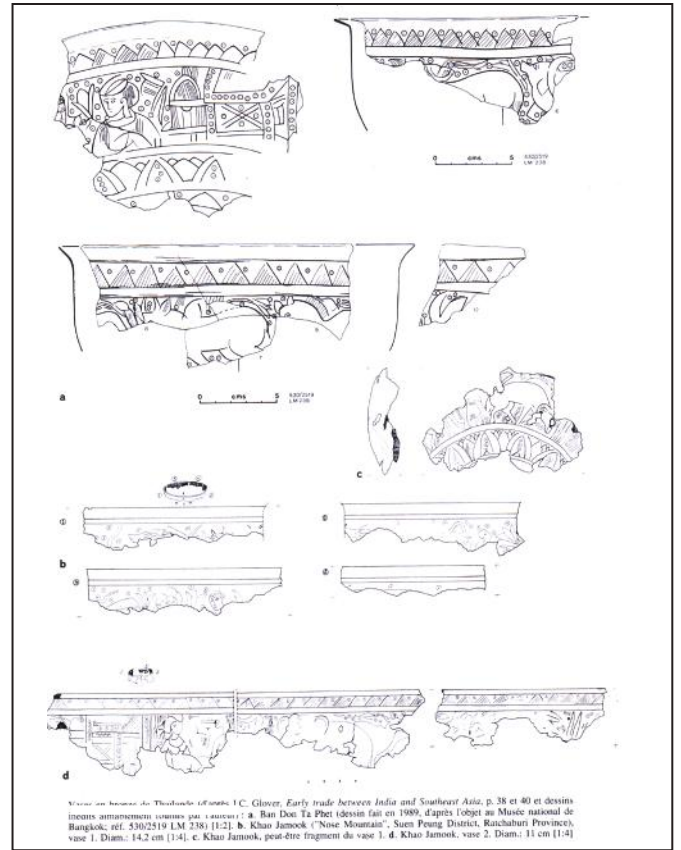
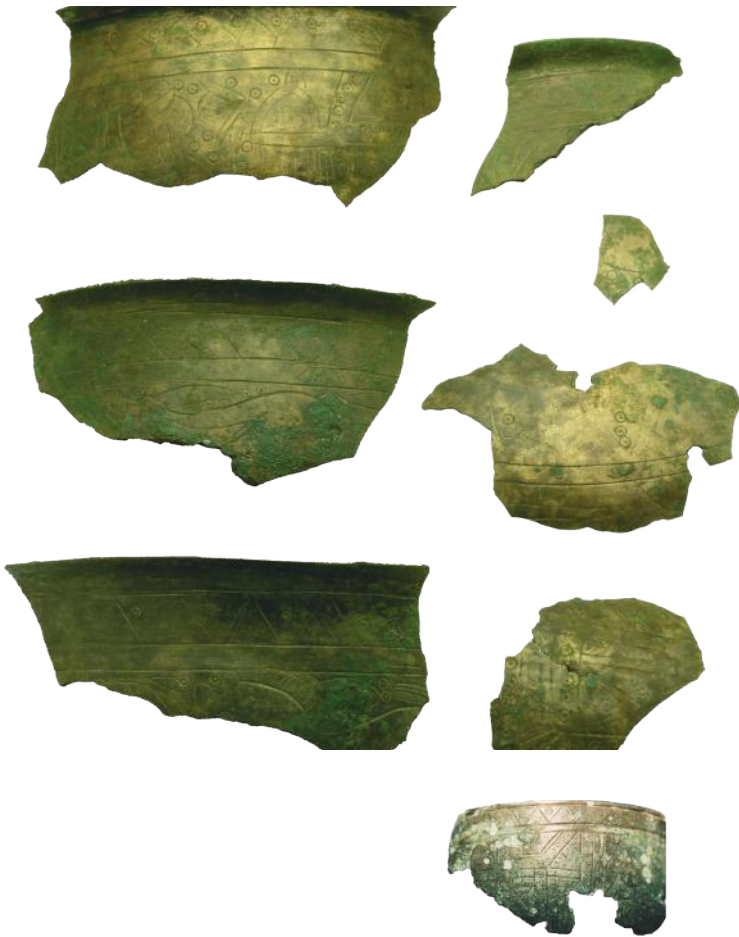


Fig. 9. Plan of burial contexts excavated between 1980 and 1982 at Ban Don Ta Phet. Variations in the depths of the burials are indicated by colour – the pits marked in blue in the middle tend to have more and rather richer burial finds. (From Masters Research by Moira Woods)



Fig. 10. Bronze bowls, carnelian beads and iron tools in situ during excavation of Burial 46 at Ban Don Ta Phet in 1981. The bronze figure of the fighting cock in the National Museum, Bangkok was found under the large bowl in the bottom of the picture and the base of the cage is just visible to the left of the third bowl in the middle of the picture. (Photo by I. C. Glover)



Figs. 11. a & b Portions of high-tin bronze Bowl with sketch of Ancient Indian Design found at Ban Don Ta Phet, Kanchanaburi Province and Khao Jamook, Ratchaburi Province, Western Thailand.



Figs. 12. a-c Designs on the base of decorated bronze Bowl 1 recovered from the Tha Ta Pao River at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Southern Thailand. The design includes images of griffins which are unknown in Southeast Asian art and rare in eastern India. They are however, rather common in Sunga and Kushan art in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent. (Drawing by Shahnaj Husne Jahan and Kwanpoom Wilaival)



Sailing to Suvarnabhumi: View from Jatakas and Inscriptions by Dr. Suchandra Ghosh

and Sailing to Suvarnabhumi: Maritime Routes and Cultural Landscapes by Himanshu Prabha Ray

While scholars have yet to reach a consensus, Dr. Suchandra Ghosh suggests that Suvarnabhumi may not have been a state or kingdom but rather a vast territory beyond India, specifically referring to the Southeast Asian peninsula or Indochina. This region was renowned for its wealth. Travel to Suvarnabhumi required a captain known as a mahanavika. The earliest inscription related to this concept, dating back to the 1st cent. CE, was discovered in Ghantasala, west of Masulipatnam in Andhra State. Coincidentally, coins depicting a boat with two sails and a humped cow, similar to Andhra coins, were found at Khuan Lukpad. Furthermore, a gold seal inscribed with “Brahaspati Sharma Mahanavika,” meaning “of Captain Brahhaspati Sharma,” is estimated to be from the 2nd - 4th cent. CE was found at Bang Kluay Nok near Phu Khao Thong, opposite the peninsula’s coast and Khao Sam Kaeo. Another inscription in Seberang Perai mentions Mahanavika, a figure associated with Buddhism. The inscription identifies him as Buddhagupta from Raktamrittika Mahavihara in West Bengal, dating back to the 5th cent. CE

An inscription from the Tamil trade group in Takua Pa further clarifies that all Mahanavika departing from India were connected to the Thai-Malay Peninsula. Dr. Himanshu Prabha Ray focuses on the exchange of crops between India and Southeast Asia approximately 3,000 years ago. Numerous antiquities have been discovered, such as rouletted ware found in regions surrounding the Bay of Bengal, including the Krishna, Godavari, and Kaveri River Basins, as well as the coasts of Thailand, Java, Bali, and Vietnam. Other antiquities, such as inscription seals, ring stone, and high-tin bronze bowls dating from the 3rd cent. BCE to first CE has also been unearthed. Gold antiquities,



c



b



a

Figs. 13. a-c Bronze and Iron from Ban Don Ta Phet, Display in Bangkok National Museum.



Fig. 14. Bang Kluay Nok Gold Seal, Ranong Province, Southern Thailand.



Fig. 15. Bronze Coinage, Khuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Southern Thailand.

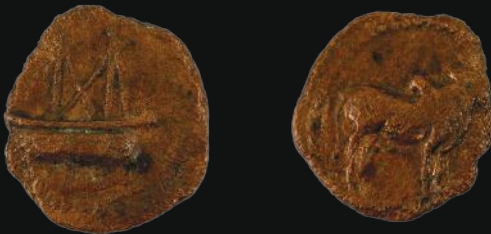


Fig. 16. Bronze Coinage, Khuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Southern Thailand.



Fig. 17. Terracotta Sealing, Nakhon Pathom Province, Central Thailand.

particularly ring stone, which serve as unique symbols of the early history of the Ganges Basin, provide contemporary references to journeys to Suvarnabhumi by Buddhist groups. The Andhra region in India holds significant evidence related to the spread of Buddhism, and the settlement of devotees and pilgrims forms a complex and diverse network of societies, religions, and cultures surrounding the Bay of Bengal. The Sangha network in Buddhism plays a vital role in supporting these journeys and overall well-being.



Fig. 18. Rouletted Ware sherds from the Tamil coast.



Fig. 19. Potsherd from Alagankulam on the Tamil coast with ship symbol.

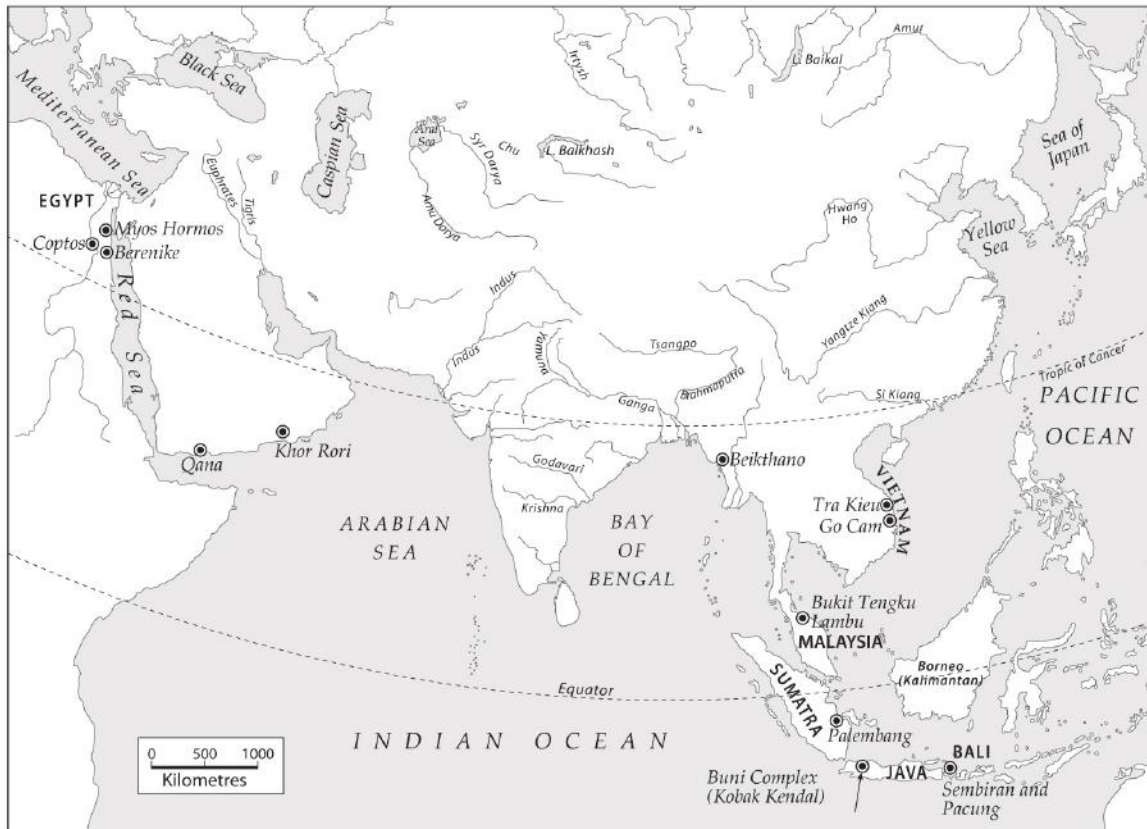
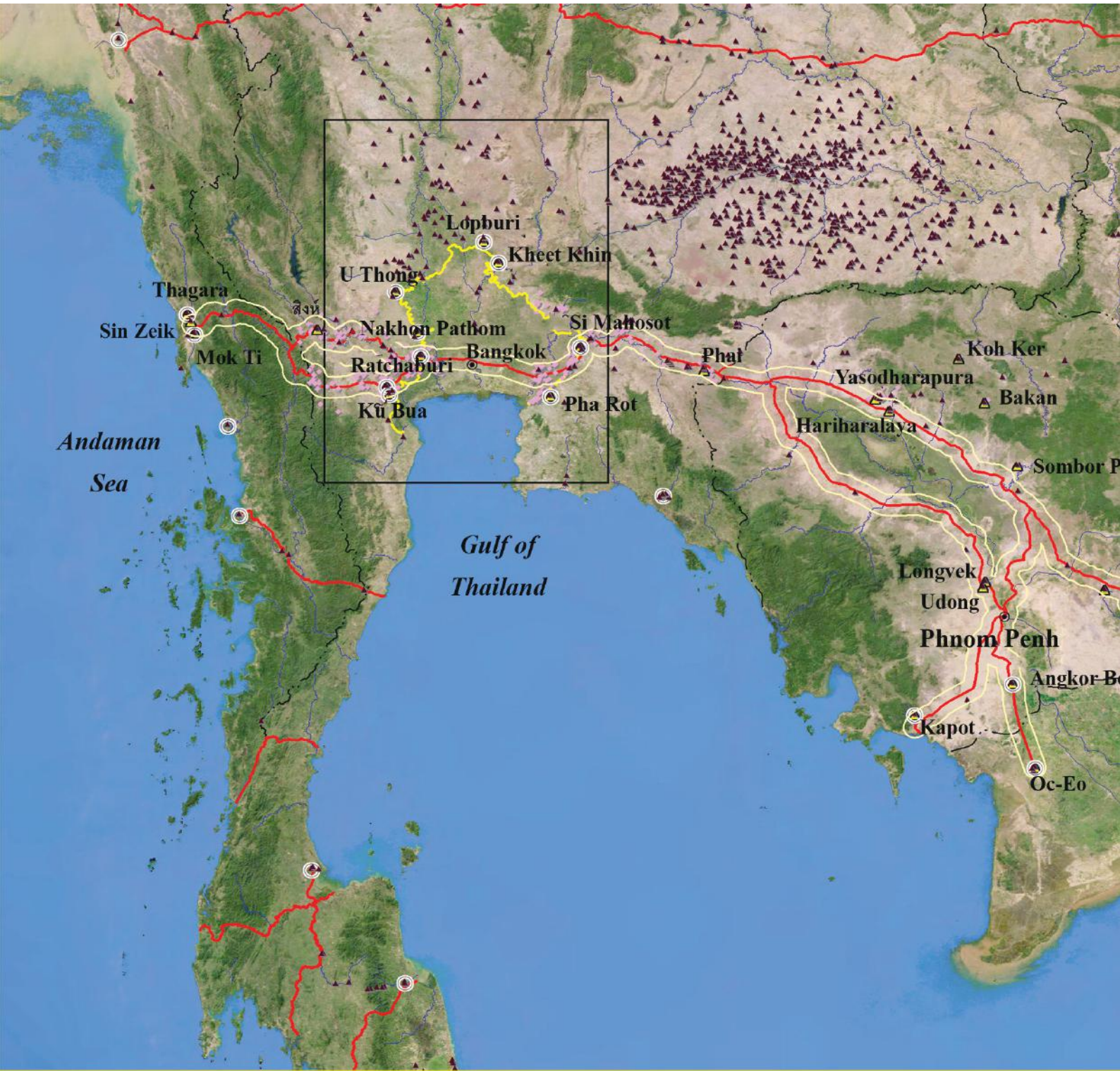


Fig. 20. Finds of Rouletted Ware in the Indian Ocean region.



Fig. 21. Stucco from Nakhon Pathom stupa, Nakhon Pathom Province, Central Thailand. Showing Supparaka jataka.

Map. 2. Paleo-shoreline, Port Polity, Trade Routes and Its Connectivity to Early Settlement in Thailand in the context of Suvarnabhumi.





Research Project on Paleo–Shoreline, Port Polity, Trade Routes and Its Connectivity to Early Settlement in Thailand in the Context of Suvarnabhumi by Asst. Prof. Chawalit Khaokhiew et al., Faculty of Archeology, Silpakorn University

Asst. Prof. Chawalit Khaokhiew et al. from the Faculty of Archaeology, Silpakorn University conducted a research project titled “Paleo–Shoreline, Port Polity, Trade Routes and Its Connectivity to Early Settlement in Thailand in the Context of Suvarnabhumi.” The study utilized satellite data, geospatial data, remote sensing technologies, and information from documents, inscriptions, archaeological evidence, settlements, trade, transportation, primitive geography, as well as natural resources and environment spanning the past 2,000 to 3,000 years.

The findings revealed that five cities—Nakhon Pathom, U Thong (Suphanburi Province), Lop Buri, Kheet Khin (Lop Buri Province), and Si Mahosot (Prachinburi Province)—were once flooded areas that were part of the estuary. These cities were situated at the edge of flat areas adjacent to low plains, with canals dug from the city sites that extended to the edges of the lowland areas. Furthermore, all the cities were contiguous to the lowlands of the present-day main river. This geographical context corresponds to the late Prehistoric or Iron Age to the early Historic Age, aligning with the earliest era of the Suvarnabhumi civilization based on archaeological evidence found in the surrounding region.

Regarding port cities, ancient cities, trade routes, and settlements along the Pak Mungkorn to Pak Kong Route (They are Thai terms meaning ‘the dragon mouth and the mouth of the Mekong River’), studies indicate that the route has been utilized in the west, from Dwai (Myanmar) and Muang Singha (Kanchanaburi Province) to Nakhon Pathom and Ratchaburi, since prehistoric times. However, there is insufficient prehistoric information available for the east side of the route, spanning from Chonburi to Oc Eo, where eight city clusters are located. Nevertheless, this route has been continuously used from late prehistoric times up until the present day.





A Roman gold coin found in Peninsular Thailand by Dr. Brigitte Borrel

A review of the Greco-Roman works as well as the Han chronicles from China provides evidence of Western travelers venturing beyond India and reaching the South China Sea. This is further supported by the discovery of Mediterranean artifacts along both the west and east coasts of the Kra Isthmus. Dr. Brigitte Borrel highlighted the significant finding of a recently discovered Roman gold coin at Bang Kluay in Ranong Province. The coin belonged to the Domitian Emperor of the Roman Empire (81-96 CE) and was minted in Rome in 86 CE. It is speculated that the coin was transported across the Mediterranean to Alexandria, then sailed along the Nile and crossed the desert to reach the Red Sea ports of Myos Hormos, or Berenike in Egypt. Although it was not intended for use as a trading currency, as it was specifically produced for trade in India, it would have been worn and had two holes drilled in it in the popular Indian style before being taken across the Bay of Bengal to the Kra Isthmus area. Local gold wire rings were added to imitate the local style before the coin was eventually dropped and recently discovered. This finding holds great significance as it indicates the connections along the Maritime Silk Road between the Mediterranean Sea and Southeast Asia during the 1st - 2nd cent. CE.



Fig. 22. Roman Coin Imitation Pendant of Faustina Empress, Khuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Southern Thailand.



Fig. 23. Gold Coin, Khuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Southern Thailand.



Fig. 24. Aureus of Domitian of 86 CE found near Bang Kluay. D. 2.0 cm Weight 7.07 g. Obverse. Photo: Brigitte Borell.



Fig. 25. As figure 1, reverse. Photo: Brigitte Borell.



Fig. 26. Detail of obverse. Photo: Brigitte Borell.



Fig. 27. Detail of reverse. Photo: Brigitte Borell.

Fig. 28. Fragments of Early Roman glass vessels made of mosaic glass dating from the late first century BCE to first century CE, found at Phu Khao Thong (center and right), Ranong Province and Tha Chana (left), Surat Thani Province, Southern Thailand. H of center fragment 2.2 cm. Photos: Brigitte Borell.



Fig. 29. Fragment of an Early Roman glass bowl made of so-called reticella glass dating from the first half of first century CE, found at Phu Khao Thong, Ranong Province, Southern Thailand. 2.8 x 2.1 cm. Photo: Brigitte Borell.



Figs. 30. Early Roman intaglios dating from the late first century BCE to the first century CE, found at Tha Chana, Surat Thani Province, Phu Khao Thong and Bang Kluay Nok, Ranong Province. - a Amethyst. Bacchus, standing, with panther. H 1.15 cm. From Tha Chana. - b Agate. Young satyr playing the double flute. H 1.3 cm. From Phu Khao Thong. - c Carnelian. Bust of young satyr. H 1.4 cm, from Bang Kluay Nok. - (Photos: a Bunchar Pongpanich, b-c Brigitte Borell).



Suvarnabhumi in the 1st cent. CE: The glass evidence by James W. Lankton and Bernard Gratuze

Similarly, Dr. James W. Lankton and Dr. Bernard Gratuze cited Greco-Roman documents that suggest contact between the Mediterranean, South India, and Southeast Asia. Furthermore, the area beyond the South China Sea would have been under the supervision of local inhabitants. In addition, studies on Roman glass in various parts of Southeast Asia reveal that Roman glass has been found from the southernmost point of Myanmar to the west coast of the Kra Isthmus, specifically at Phu Khao Thong and Bang Kluay (Ranong Province). These locations may have served as the center of Suvarnabhumi during the 1st cent. CE before shifting to Bang Ro-Nang Yon between the 4th - 6th cent. CE. However, it is unlikely that the influence extended as far as Khuan Lukpat in Khlong Thom (Krabi Province), as no Roman glass has been discovered there.



Fig. 31. Fragments of Roman vessels, beads and unworked or waste glass recovered at Phu Khao Thong (PKT), Ranong Province, Thailand, and Ao Yai (AYI), Kawthaung District, Southern Myanmar. Approximately to scale. Photographs JWL.

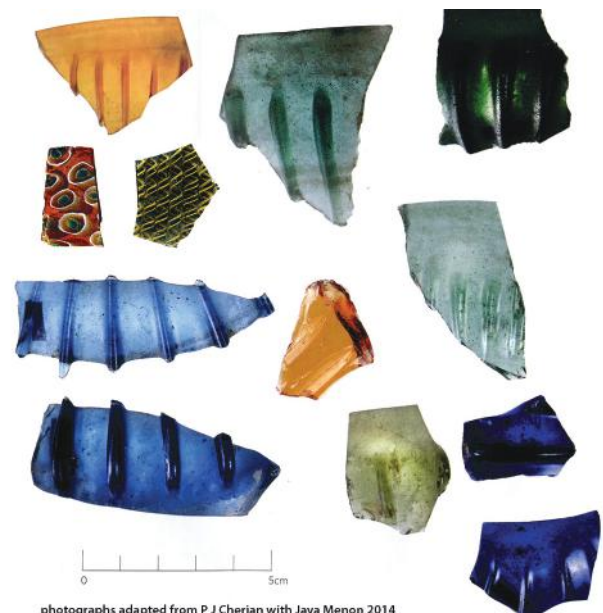


Fig. 32. Fragments of mostly 1st c. CE Roman ribbed bowls, millefiori mosaic and lace mosaic glass vessels from the site of Pattanam in the Ernakulam district of Kerala state, India, the possible site of Muziris, an important trading port mentioned in the 1st c. CE merchants' guide, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei*. Photographs adapted with permission from Cherian and Menon 2014. Approximately to scale.

Region	Site	Date	Number of samples	Data source	Egypt 1-3c	Egypt 4-6c	Levant 1-3c	Levant 4-6c	Egypt 7-8c	total Roman
Myanmar north	Sri Ksetra	1c-8c CE	47	own data	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Myanmar north	Mu Pon	1c BCE-4c CE	139	own data	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
Myanmar north	Winka	1c-6c CE	34	own data	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Myanmar south	Ao Yai	1c-4c CE	75	own data	21.3%	0.0%	10.7%	0.0%	0.0%	32.0%
Myanmar south	purchased Ranong	2c-7c CE	60	own data	20.0%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	23.3%
Thailand Kra Isthmus W	Ban Kluay Nok	1c BCE-4c CE	96	own data	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%
Thailand Kra Isthmus W	Phu Khao Thong	1c BCE-4c CE	236	Dussubieux et al 2012; own data	11.9%	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	14.4%
Thailand Nang Yong estuary	Ban Triam	2c-7c CE	52	own data	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%
Thailand Nang Yong estuary	Bang Ro	2c-7c CE	105	own data	1.0%	16.2%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	18.1%
Thailand south	Khuan Lukpat	1c-7c CE	291	own data	0.3%	2.1%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%
Thailand south	Ko Kho Khao	8c-11c CE	117	own data	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.9%
Thailand north-east	Ban Chiang	2c BCE-4c CE	51	own data	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%
Thailand north-east	Ban Non Wat	2c BCE-4c CE	27	Carter and Lankton 2012	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Thailand north-east	Don Klang	2c BCE-4c CE	41	own data	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Thailand north-east	Noen U-Loke	1c-5c CE	83	Carter and Lankton 2012; Saitowitz and Reid 2001	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Laos	Plain of Jars	1c-6c CE	29	own data	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Thailand Kra Isthmus E	Khao Sam Kaeo	4c-1c BCE	232	Lankton et al 2008; Dussubieux and Bellina 2017	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%
Thailand Kra Isthmus E	Tha Chana	1c BCE-4c CE	327	own data	8.3%	0.0%	5.5%	0.0%	0.0%	13.8%
Cambodia	Angkor Borei	2c BCE-3c CE	175	Dussubieux 2001; own data	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
Cambodia	Phum Snay	1c-6c CE	271	own data	0.0%	4.1%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	4.4%
Cambodia	Prei Khmeng	2c BCE-4c CE	53	Carter 2010	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Vietnam north	Dong Son	1c BCE-3c CE	31	own data	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Vietnam north	Thung-thon	1c BCE-3c CE	45	own data	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Vietnam south	Oc-Eo	1c-7c CE	69	Dussubieux 2001; own data	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
Indonesia-Bali	Gilimanuk	1c BCE-3c CE	56	Calo et al 2015	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Indonesia-Bali	Pacung	1c BCE-3c CE	36	Calo et al 2015	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Indonesia-Bali	Sembiran	1c BCE-3c CE	128	Calo et al 2015	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%
Indonesia-Bali	Pankung Perak	1c BCE-3c CE	9	Calo et al 2015	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%
totals			2915		3.2%	1.4%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	6.0%

Table 1. Roman glass samples found at sites in Southeast Asia as percent of the total number of samples from each site. The Roman samples are divided by production zone between Egypt and the Levant, and chronologically into early (1-3c CE) and late (4-6c CE). Data source indicates the origin of the analyses, either published in the listed reference, or unpublished from IRAMAT in Orleans, indicated as 'own data.'



Fig. 33. The distribution of Roman glass samples from this study at sites in Southeast Asia. White (1st - 3rd cent. CE) and purple (4th - 6th cent. CE) circles proportional in size to the percentage of Roman samples at each site, with the largest circles representing approximately 20%. Black circles are either the locations (or possible locations) of ports in eastern India, or some of the Southeast Asian sites with no Roman glass samples. Map adapted from Google Maps. For details see text and Table 1.



Suvarnabhumi: Land of Gold

by Dr. Anna T. Bennet

Dr. Anna T. Bennet's research emphasizes the significance of gold in ancient trade and highlights Southeast Asia as an important source of gold that attracted Chinese and Indian merchants. Evidence found at Klong Thom (Krabi Province) reveals the presence of gold coin production, including the discovery of scrap gold, stone molds and Tamil inscribed touchstone, indicating the existence of Tamil-Indian goldsmiths dating back to the 3rd cent. CE. Imitation metal pendants, dating from the 3rd - 6th cent. CE has also been found and is associated with Phu Khao Thong (Ranong Province) and Khao Sam Kaeo (Chumphon Province), where the Triratna symbol of Buddhism was discovered. Notably, Sunga gold earrings were found on the west coast of the southern Peninsula of Myanmar, and Maurya-Sunga ring stone were found at Khao Sam Kaeo, indicating the presence of Indian cultural influences in Southeast Asia as early as the 3rd –

1st cent. BCE. These discoveries are consistent with research on Suvarnabhumi and the spread of Buddhism to Southeast Asia.

Dr. Anna T. Bennet concluded that a long-distance trading network existed 2,000 years ago, with Indian merchants seeking gold coming to the rivers of Suvarnabhumi. Abundant gold artifacts have been reported in Thailand during the 4th cent. BCE, contemporary with the iron age period, semi-precious stone bead making and glassmaking. It is believed that these technologies were likely brought to Southeast Asia through India, as they were also sought after by Chinese merchants. This trading network facilitated the exchange of culture, religion, and various new items. Monasteries played a crucial role in utilizing these valuable items through pilgrims and religious missions.



Fig. 34. Goldsmith's touchstone.

The two line inscription in Dāṃili script and ancient Tamil language has been translated by K.V. Ramesh, the eminent South Indian epigraphist, as *Perumpataṅ kal* identifying it as being the stone belonging to the great "Goldsmith". Phra Kru Athorn Sangvarakit Museum, Krabi Province (Srisuchat 1996: 250).



Fig. 35. a Gold triratna from Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, SuthiRatana Foundation, Bangkok, clockwise KSK38



Figs. 36. b, c and d Gold triratnas from Khao Sam Kaeo, SuthiRatana Foundation, Bangkok, KSK232, 355 and 185.



Figs. 37. a-e First or second century CE mahanavika gold seal bearing the Brahmi inscription brahaspatiśarmasa nāvika, 'of the mariner Brahaspati', found at Bang Kluay Nok in Ranong Province, Thailand on the western coast of the central peninsula. SuthiRatana Foundation, Bangkok, BKN068. The close up photographs have been reversed to allow ease of reading starting at 10 o'clock.



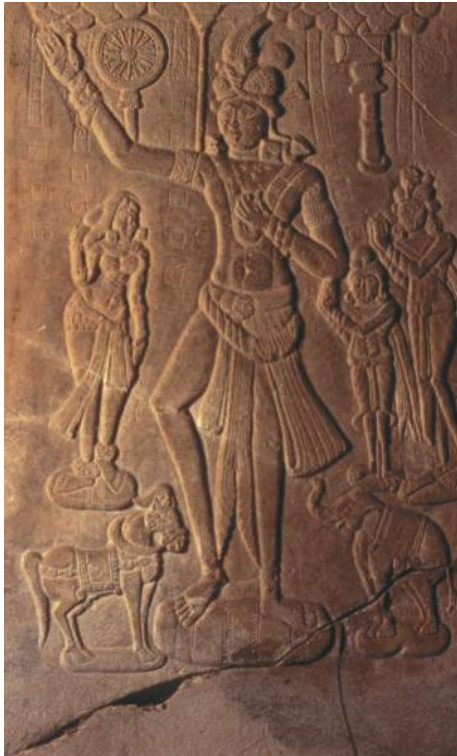


Fig 38. a & b Chakravarti, a term used in Maitrayaniya Upanishad to refer to the kings who have relinquished the rulership to become ascetics. The universal ruler is surrounded by a dharmachakka, a lion and an elephant. Jaggayyapeta stupa. Andhra Pradesh, India, 1st cent. BCE Marble, H. 4'3". Government Museum, Madras.



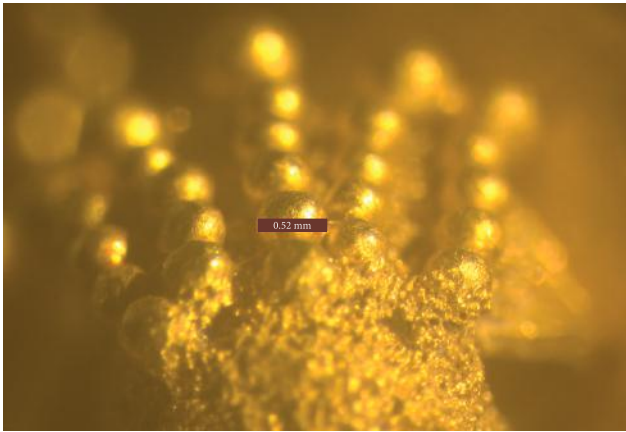
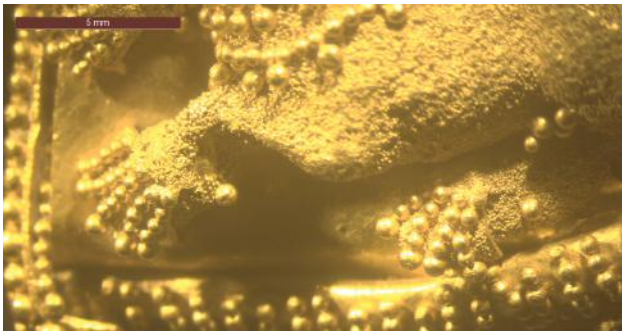
Fig 39. Granulated gold earring, hammered gold sheet decorated with granulation and twisted gold wire. 1st cent. BCE. Dimensions: 4.8 cm x 2.9 cm (squashed) Dimension of square terminals 1.9 cm Weight: 44 g Foundat Khamao Yee, Kawthaung District, Southern Myanmar. SuthiRatana Foundation, Bangkok.



Figs. 40. a & b The devotee figures on the reliefs at the Bharhut stupa. Government museum Kolkata.



Figs. 41. a, b, c, d Granulated gold earring, hammered gold sheet decorated with granulation and twisted gold wire. 1st cent. BCE. Dimensions: 4.8 cm x 2.9 cm (squashed). Dimension of square terminals 1.9 cm. Weight: 44 g. Found at Khamao Yee, Kawthaung District, Southern Myanmar. SuthiRatana Foundation, Bangkok.



Figs. 42. a & b Feet of the lion depicted using medium sized granules granule size 0.4 mm.

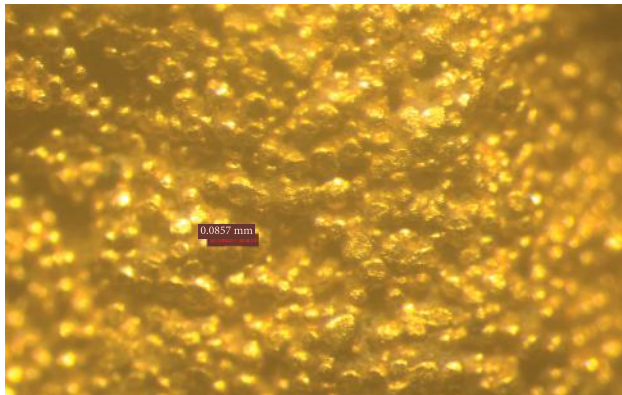


Fig. 43. Tiny granules covering the lions body - granule size 0.08 mm.

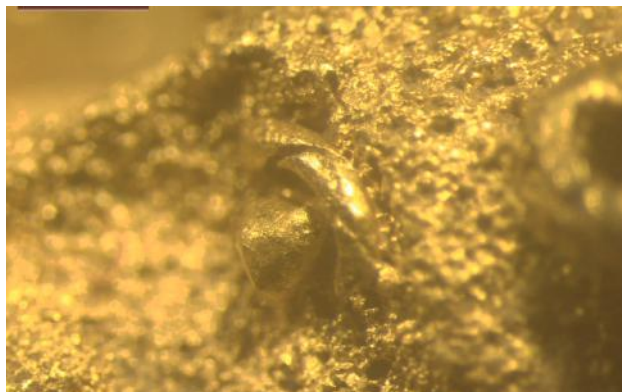
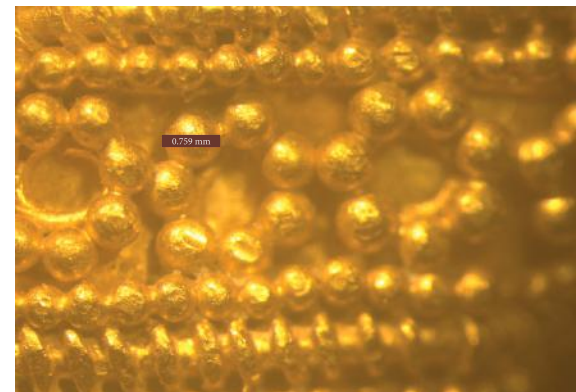
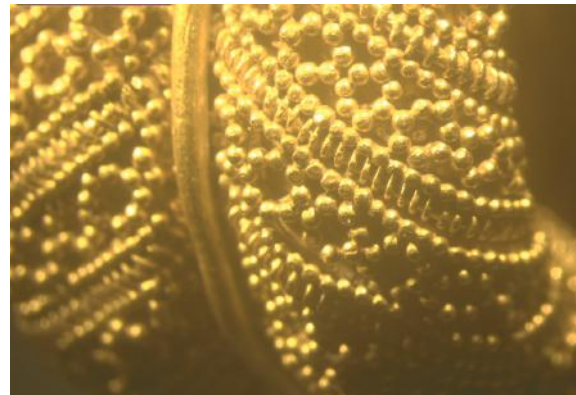


Fig. 44. Lions eye made using twisted wire. The striations are clearly visible.



Fig. 46. The central portion of the earring is decorated with a geometric patterns of rosettes, clusters and rows of granules. The repeating pattern is made up of diagonal rows of small circles of twisted wires onto which seven granules, each granule measuring 0.8mm have been attached. Between each assemblage of circles there are three rows of decoration. The outer rows are made of individual granules joined together in the same manner as the circles whereas the inner row is made from twisted wire which is itself wrapped in wire.



Figs. 45. a & b The central portion of the earring is decorated with a geometric pattern of rosettes and rows of granules.



Fig. 47. a Ringstone carved in a hard fine grained metamorphous mud stone which is soft enough to carve and hard enough to preserve the exquisitely fine detail. The decoration includes several auspicious symbols including a Triratna, four fertility goddesses and Nagapushpa or Indian 'honeysuckle' or Tree of Life and Fortune motifs, the rhizome of the flowers emerging directly from her legs.
Diameter: 5.8 cm
SuthiRatana Foundation, Bangkok, KSK522.



Fig. 48. A triratna



Fig. 49. Nude mother goddess with characteristic posture, large circular eardiscs, large breasts, very narrow waist, flaring hips, fully exposed genitalia, feet pointing outwards, arms hanging straight down, bangles, girdles and a wig coiffure.

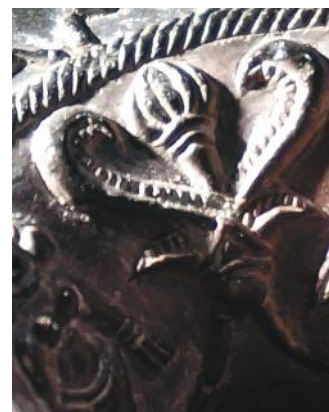


Fig. 50. Nagapushpa connecting through the goddesses' feet.

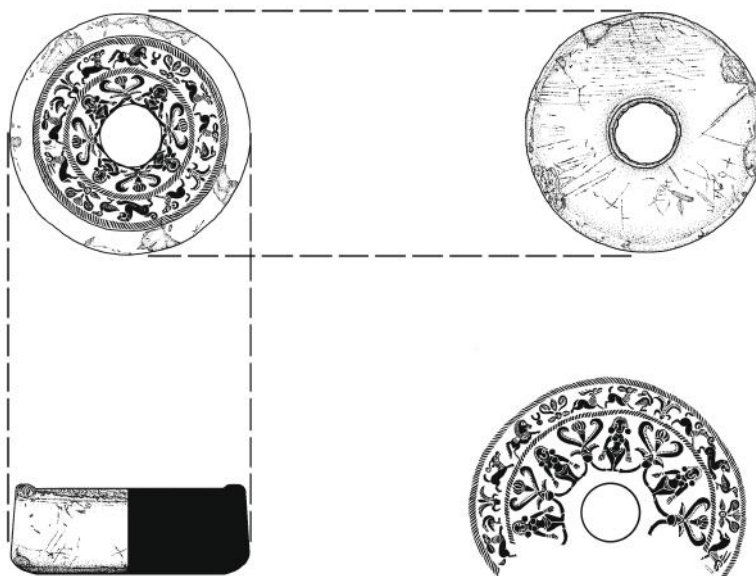


Fig. 51. Drawing of the intricately carved on upper face with two bands of cable-moulding between which a ring of animals and birds: lion, crane, ibex, antelope?, goose, markhor goat, horse, deer, antelope, goose, and ram run towards the right separated by four floral designs. Within a central hole are four standing nude female figures often interpreted as a "fertility goddess", alternating with a foliated design, representing the Indian 'Honey suckle' or 'Tree of Life and Fortune' (Kalpavriksha or Kalpadruma). The reverse face is blank but bears what appears to be a scratched inscription. (Drawing by Khun Watinnee).

Some ringstones in western museums



Figs. 52. a-b Fragment showing female goddess figures alternating with Nagapushpa. Two bands of cross and reel motif with rope like border. Detail showing that as on the other examples shown here the rhizome of the flowers emerge directly from the goddess's legs. Diam. 8.9 cm
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
inv.Nr. M.83.255.1
Steatite



Fig. 53. Four female goddess figures alternating with Nagapushpa. Two bands of cross and reel motif with rope like border.
V&A from Taxila inv.Nr. IS.82-1948
Sandstone



Fig. 54. Three female goddess figures alternating with Nagapushpa. Cross and reel motif with rope like border. Diam. 4.9 cm
Museum of Asian Art in Berlin
inv.Nr. 10164
Sandstone



Fig. 55. Fragment showing female goddess figure alternating with Nagapushpa. Two bands of cross and reel motif with rope like border. Diam. 8.9 cm
British Museum, inv.Nr. 1995,0124.1
Given by Angela Kidner and Stephen Dobell, in memory of C H M Dobell.



Fig. 56. Fragment showing female goddess figures alternating with Nagapushpa. Cross and reel motif with rope like border. Diam. 8.1 cm
Metropolitan Museum of Art
inv.Nr. 1987.142.374



Fig. 57. Fragment showing female goddess figure flanked by two birds. Floral motif between rope like border. Diam. 5.6 cm
Metropolitan Museum of Art
inv.Nr. 1987.142.391



Fig. 58. Four female goddess figures alternating with Nagapushpa. Diam. 5.9 cm
Metropolitan Museum of Art
inv.Nr. 2000.284.10

Weight: 0.57 g

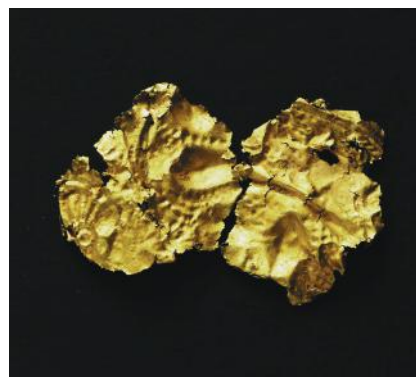
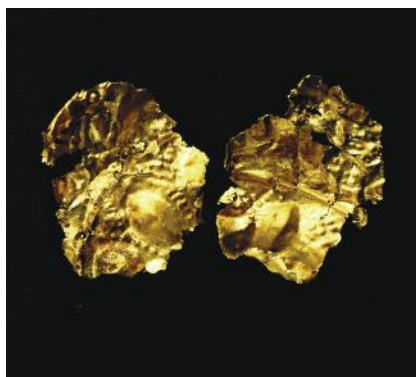
MT: 0.38 mm

Composition: 84.49% gold, 12.06% silver, 2.6% copper (traces of iron, titanium and silica which were picked up from the soil still attached to areas of the gold).

Find location: Khao Sam Kaeo hill KSK 512.



Fig. 59. Drawing by Khun Watinnee.



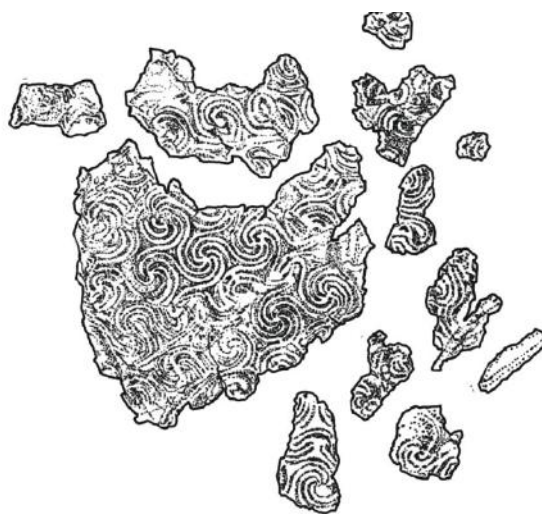
Figs. 60. a-b-c-d Obverse and reverse of a fragmentary gold disc with repoussé ornamentation of an animal frieze surrounding a central lotus with 15 petals. Only nine animals are visible; stag, deer, unidentified, unidentified, winged mythical animal, unidentified, elephant and another two unidentified animals. Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand. SuthiRatana Foundation, Bangkok, KSK512.



Fig. 61. Discstone from Murtaziganj showing birds in a frieze PM/Arch 10749

Weight: 0.57 g
MT: 0.38 mm
Composition: 82.75% gold, 13.54% silver, 3.6% copper (traces of iron, titanium and silica which were picked up from the soil still attached to areas of the gold).
Find location: Khao Sam Kaeo hill KSK 511.

Fig. 62. Drawing by Khun Watinnee.



Figs. 63. a-b-c-d Obverse and reverse of the fragments of a gold circular foil. The repoussé design of interlinked 'S' motifs is very similar to a gold sheet found in a burial context in India illustrated in Gupta 1980. Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand. SuthiRatana Foundation, Bangkok, KSK511

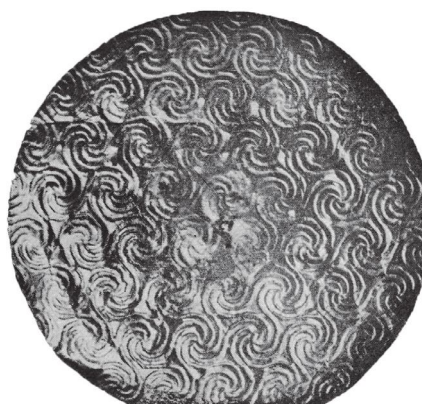


Fig. 64. Complete gold disc found in a burial context in India (Gupta 1980:77)



Fig 65



Fig 66



Fig 67



Fig 68

Fig 65. Discstone found in 2017 at Khamao Yee, Kawthaung District, Southern Myanmar.

Fig 66. Ringstone found in 2013 during the sand dredging of Tha Tapao River near Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand on the other side of the isthmus from Khamao Yee.

Fig 67. View from Ranong towards Khamao Yee

Fig 68. Sand dredging the Tha Tapao River which flows east from the Tenasserim Mountains to the Gulf of Siam.



Chinese Knowledge on Suvarnabhumi Before the 10th Century

by Professor Lin Yin and Dr. Xiong Zhaoming

Professor Lin Yin and Dr. Xiong Zhaoming have compiled information from the Han chronicles (200 BCE - 8 CE) regarding Suvarnabhumi on the Chinese side. These chronicles describe the journey by ship from the Chinese border to Southeast Asia and India. However, during this voyage, they had to travel overland for more than ten days from Yilumo to Fugandulu in search of colorful beads (biliulu) and various valuables. Archaeological excavations at the Han Dynasty tomb in the coastal city of Hepu revealed a plethora of valuable items such as ornaments, precious colored stones, glass beads, and gold. These findings are consistent with what has been discovered along the trade routes of the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean.

In the era of Sun Guan, the Lord of Wu, in 226 CE, envoys were sent to Funan, and three important regions were mentioned. It is believed that these regions correspond to Suvarnabhumi, which was distinct from Funan and served as a trading port connecting the eastern and western regions. This port later developed into Suvarnadvipa and Srivijaya in Sumatra.

This compilation of historical sources supports the understanding of Suvarnabhumi as a significant trading hub that facilitated connections between the eastern and western regions during ancient times.

Fig. 71. Map of Maritime Silk Road of the Han Dynasty. Xiong Zhaoming 2015, figure 1.

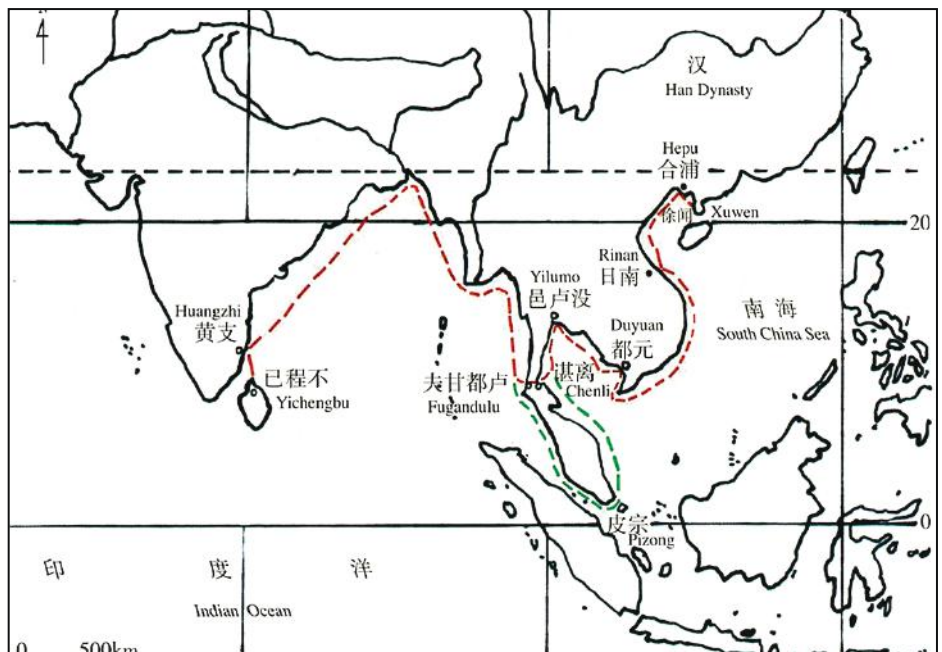


Fig. 69. String of gold beads excavated in 1993 at the Beichajiang Yandui, tomb no. 4. Xiong 2015, fig. 91.



Fig. 70. String of gold beads excavated in 1978 at the Beichajiang Yandui, tomb no. 1. Xiong 2015, fig. 92.

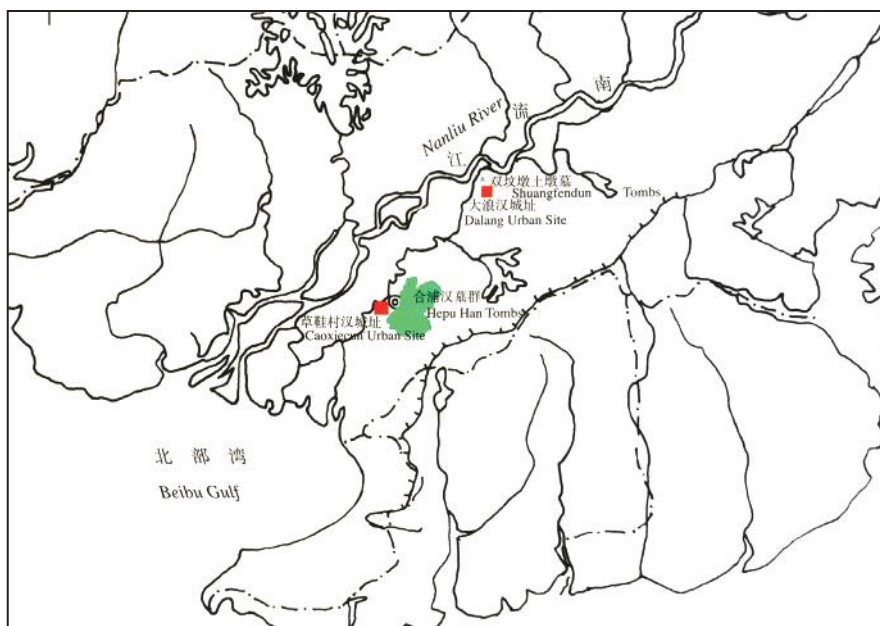


Fig. 72. Map of the relationship between tombs and urban sites in Hepu, Guangxi, China, after Xiong 2015, fig. 4.



Figs. 73. a,b. Agate beads excavated in 1971 at the Wangniuling, tomb no.1; agate ring excavated at the Tuguling Car Parts Factory, tomb no. 1. after Xiong 2015, fig. 44-45.



Fig. 74. String of amethyst beads excavated in 1978 at the Beichajiang Yandui, tomb no. 1. Xiong 2015, fig. 64.

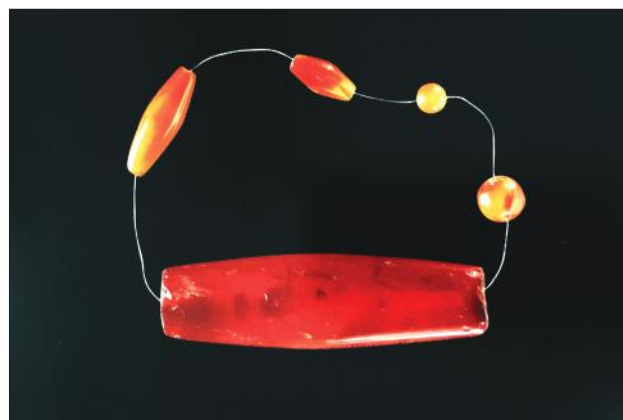


Fig. 75. Carnelian beads excavated in 1995 at the Tuguling Podder Factory, tomb no. 1., Xiong 2015, fig. 38.



Fig. 76. Semiprecious stone and Glass beads found at Myanmar Kra Isthmus area.



Fig. 77. Fragments of Glass bowl found from several sites around Kra Isthmus, Tha Chana (Surat Thani Province), Bang Kluay (Ranong Province) in Southern Thailand and Southern Myanmar.



Fig.78. Animal figurine beads made from semiprecious stone and glass found at Tha Chana, Surat Thani Province, Thailand.



Fig. 79. Semiprecious stone beads found from archaeological excavation at Hepu Huangnigang Nol tomb 1990.



Fig. 80. Blue glass bowl excavated in 1988, at the Huanglingtao, tomb no. 34. (Hepu, Guangxi Province, China.) Xiong 2015, fig. 14.



Fig. 81. Animal figurine beads made from carnelian found from archaeological excavation at Hepu tomb in 1990 and 2003, in Hepu, Guangxi Province, China.



Khao Sam Kaeo: An Early Port-City between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea by Dr. Berenice Bellina

Dr. Berenice Bellina proposed her conclusion based on nearly ten years of excavations and archaeological studies, asserting that Khao Sam Kaeo (Chumphon Province) was one of the port cities and early city-states situated between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, dating back to the 4th - 3rd cent. BCE. It predates other cities that emerged between the 2nd - 4th cent. CE. Evidence found in the four hill areas along the river reveals the presence of foreign and local populations, foreign craftsmen, as well as people from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia. Starting from the southern region, the findings indicate a long-standing relationship in the South China Sea, suggesting that Khao Sam Kaeo likely evolved into an independent state engaged in trading commodities like tin and valuable items such as bronze drums. This exchange of goods may have facilitated the sharing of cultural objects and values, with the absorption of the Indian symbolic value system evident in stone ornaments.

Furthermore, several pieces of foreign evidence associated with the Han Dynasty were discovered in the northern area. Through site exploration, analysis of excavation techniques, and the study of archaeological geology and archaeobotany, it was concluded that Khao Sam Kaeo was a densely populated settlement during the late prehistoric period. It comprised large structures such as walls, moats, and waterways that were built and maintained over centuries under the social and political systems of the people. These structures served multiple purposes, including symbolism, flood prevention, and agriculture. This represents a unique case in Asia where social and political systems held the authority to mobilize manpower for construction and maintenance, while internal politics and various job roles related to production existed within the social system, all within the context of the South China Sea trading system.

Khao Sam Kaeo transformed into a production hub that catered to market demands through specialized expertise both locally and imported from abroad. It had an economic system with specialized workers, production networks, material imports, and product distribution. The settlement demonstrated the ability to handle food supplies to support the production system for both locals and passers-by, either by sourcing them from distant regions or cultivating them in the surrounding area. These findings indicate that Khao Sam Kaeo, with its dense population, social complexity, urban management center, economic system, and trading networks, possessed the characteristics of a thriving trading community on the South China Sea coast.

The evidence strongly suggests that Khao Sam Kaeo may have been the first city in Southeast Asia, or at least a precursor to a city-state, during the late prehistoric period from the 4th - 1st cent. BCE. It likely comprised a group of trading ports on the western part of the South China Sea, aligning with ancient Chinese records from the period when the maritime silk road was established. Khao Sam Kaeo served as a center for industrial production within market networks, utilizing both locally made and imported raw materials and technologies. The diverse market responses, both economic and political, further characterize its industry and trade. It possessed a complex social system, intricate economy, and politics before entering the earliest historical period, as documented in the chronicles of the Liang Dynasty during the 3rd cent. CE.



Map. 5. Satellite image of Khao Sam Kaeo archaeological site, Chumphon Province, Southern Thailand.

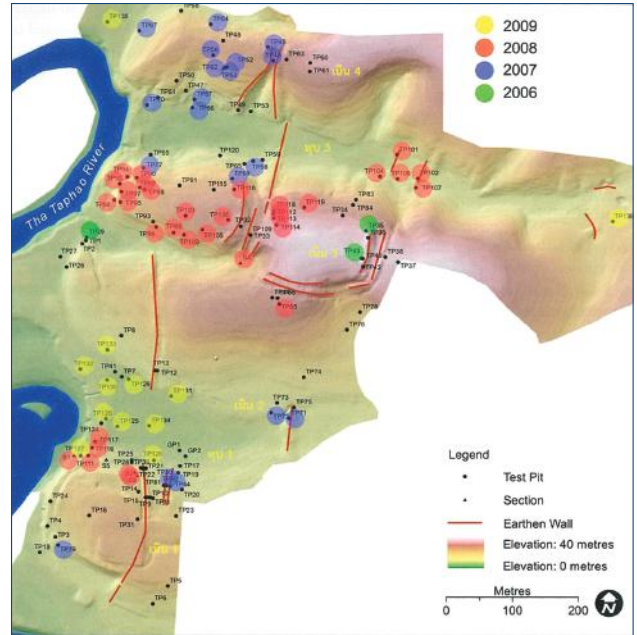
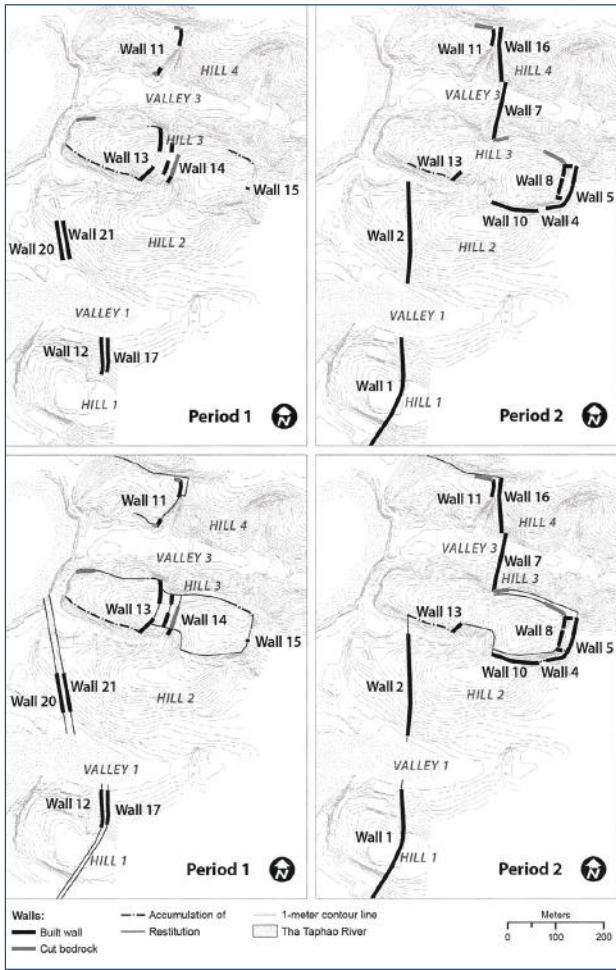


Fig. 82. Detailed of Khao Sam Kaeo archaeological site, Chumphon Province, Thailand. From *Khao Sam Kaeo : An Early Port-City between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea*. Berenice BELLINA, Editor. 2017.



Fig. 83. Inscribed sphere, cat. 18. Photos: B. Bellina.



Fig. 84. Details of inscription, cat. 18. Photos: B. Borell.



Fig. 85. Roman intaglio with Mars, cat. 17. Photos: B. Bellina.

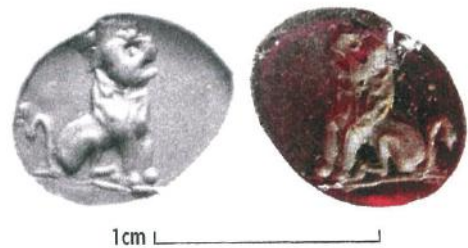


Fig. 86. Garnet intaglio with seated lion, cat. 16. Photos: B. Borell.



Fig. 87. Finger-ring with inscription, cat. 15. Photos: B. Borell; drawing: V. Bernard.



Fig. 88. Rectangular seal, cat. 9. Photos: B. Bellina and B. Borell.



Fig. 89. Rectangular seal, cat. 10. Photos: B. Borell.

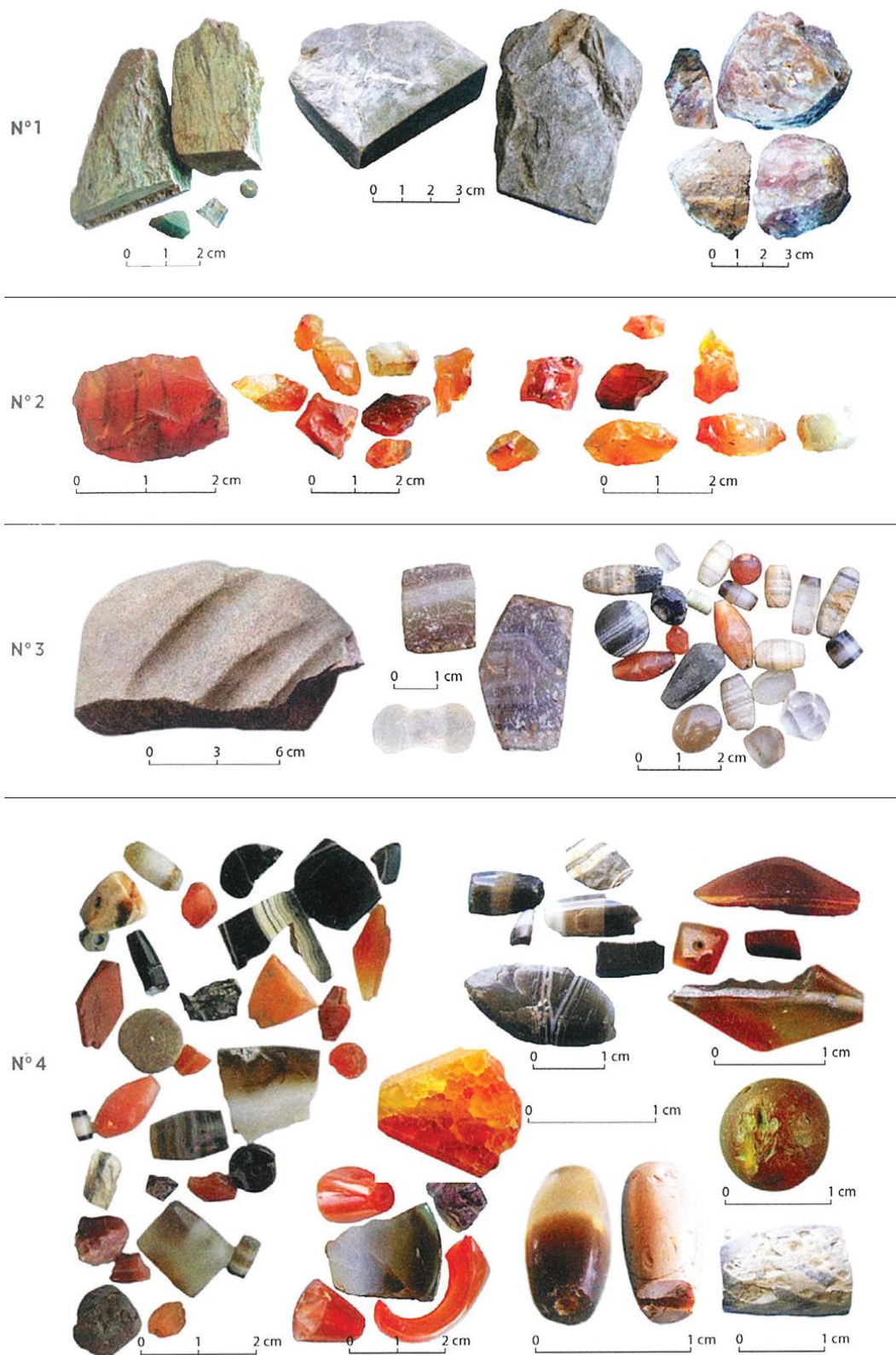


Fig. 90. Production evidence from raw material, bead polisher, to production wastes. Cultural Materials found from Khao Sam Kaeo, illustrate the production process from the raw materials, tools, roughout and waste from Khao Sam Kaeo : An Early Port-City between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Berenice BELLINA, Editor. 2017.



Fig. 91. The four technological groups identified at Khao Sam Kaeo. Cultural Materials found from Khao Sam Kaeo, illustrate the production process from the raw materials, tools, roughout and waste from Khao Sam Kaeo : An Early Port-City between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Berenice BELLINA, Editor. 2017.



Fig. 92. Drilled-out cores (1 & 5), pendant (4) and worked blocks and fragments (2 & 3, 6 to 12) of Taiwan nephrite from Khao Sam Kaeo.

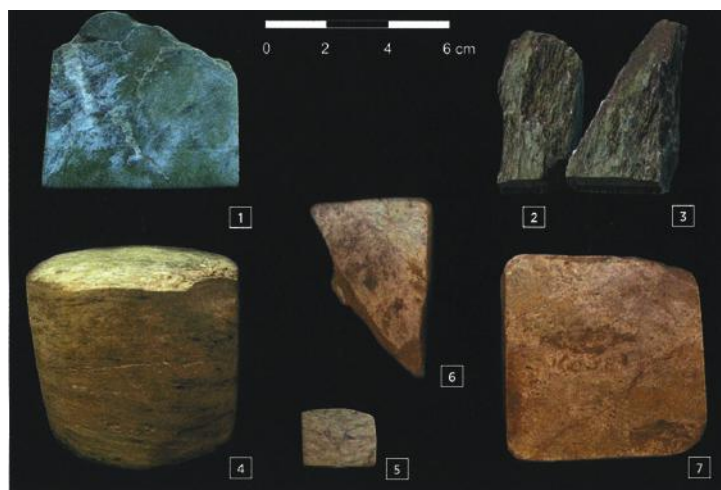


Fig. 93. Cut square blanks (1 & 7), worked blocks (2 & 4) worked fragment and large core (4) of Taiwan nephrite from Khao Sam Kaeo. courtesy Bunchat Pongpanich

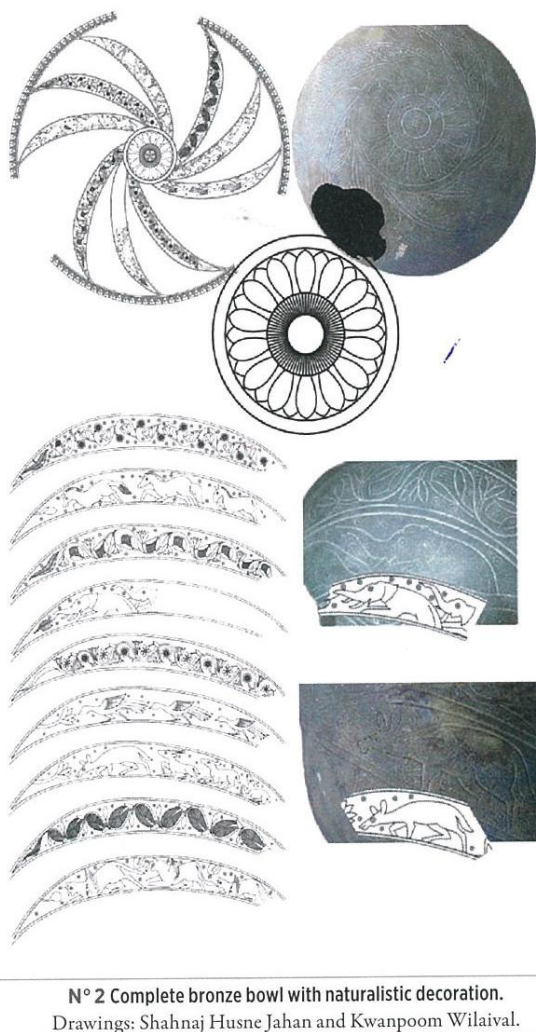
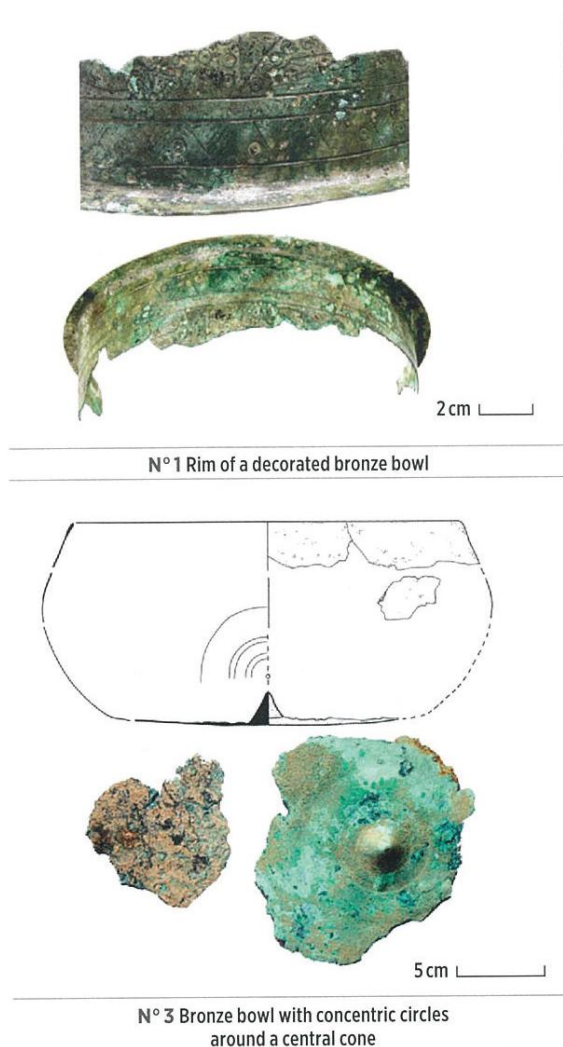


Fig. 94. Assemblage of South Indian influence copper-base artefacts, Photos: B. Bellina; drawings: V. Bernard. From Khao Sam Kaeo: An Early Port-City between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Berenice BELLINA, Editor. 2017.



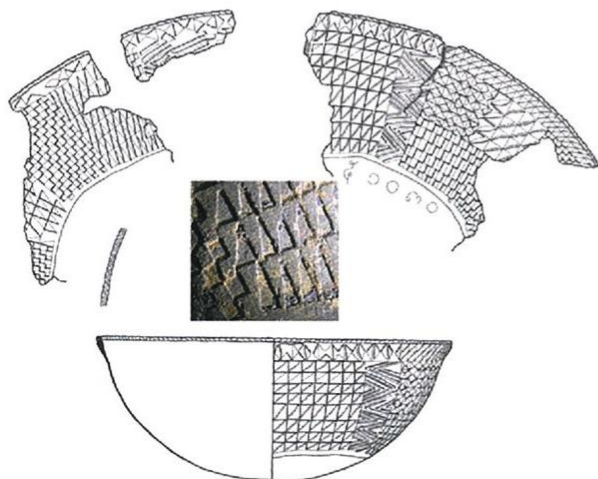
1 cm

N° 1A Rim fragment of a Western Han mirror

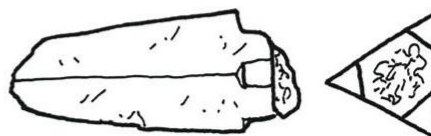


2 cm

N° 1B Complete Han Mirror

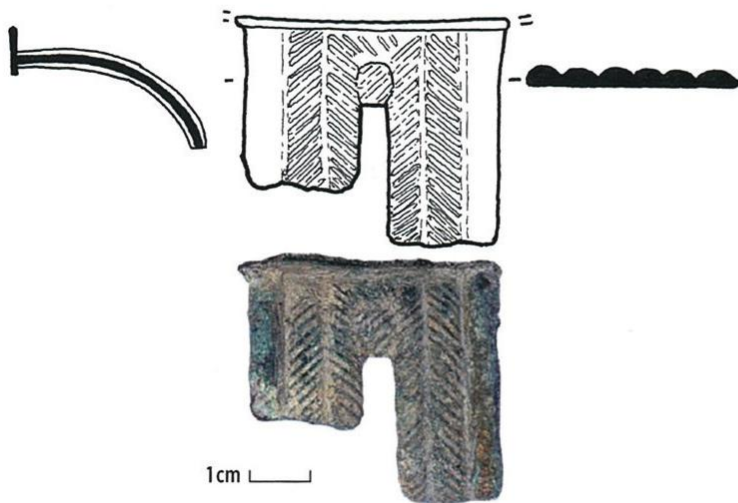


N° 2 Decorated vessel with "Dong Son" geometrical motif



2 cm

N° 3 Fragment of a prismatic projectile point



1 cm

N° 4 Handle of a Dong song drum



1 cm

N° 5 Two "Western Han" seals

Fig.95. Assemblage of Vietnamese South Chinese influence copper-base artefacts, Photos: B. Bellina; drawings: V. Bernard. From Khao Sam Kaeo : An Early Port-City between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Berenice BELLINA, Editor. 2017.



Fig. 96. Gold ornaments from Khao Sam Kaeo. Photos: B. Borell
 From Khao Sam Kaeo : An Early Port-City between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Berenice BELLINA, Editor. 2017.



Progress of Suvarnabhumi by Adjunct Prof. Srisak Vallibhodom

Adjunct Prof. Srisak Vallibhodom has built upon the previous work of Mani Vallibhodom and presented the progression of Suvarnabhumi, indicating its territorial extent from the Chorakhe| Sam Phan River Basin in Muang U Thong (Suphanburi Province), extending to India, the Andaman coast, the Gulf of Thailand, and the South China Sea. This encompasses the entire peninsula from the Chao Phraya River Basin in the central region down to the southern end of the Malay Peninsula, existing during the Suvarnabhumi period through the Funan period. The region was referred to as the Golden Khersonese in Greco-Roman records and was recognized as the transoceanic land of the Indians during the time of the Buddha, known as Suvarnabhumi.



Figs. 97. Terracotta fragments insitu at Khlong Hnoo - Ao Yai, Kawthaung District, Southern Myanmar.

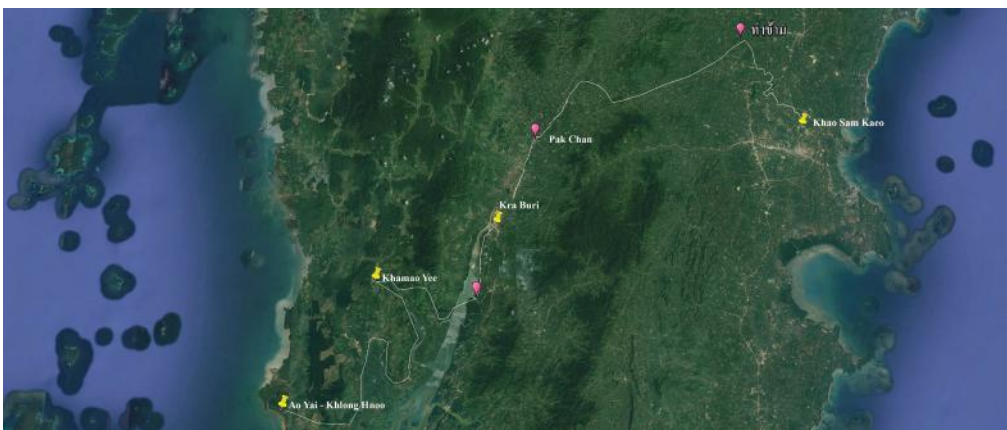


Fig. 98. Satellite image of Kra Isthmus illustrate the crossing space from Khlong Hnoo-Ao Yai through Khamao Yee Kawthaung District, Southern Myanmar to Ta Tapao-Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand from Srisak Vallibhodom: Progress of Suvarnabhumi Study.

Additionally, new archaeological evidence has been discovered along the west coast of Thailand at Phu Khao Thong, Bang Kluay, Khao Sam Kaeo (Ranong Province), Lang Suan (Chumphon Province), and Tha Cha Na (Surat Thani Province), all of which have connections to Buddhism. Notably, the port city of Suvarnabhumi has been identified on the Andaman Sea, along with the identification of a clear and accurate transpeninsula route in Myanmar, referred to as Khamao Yee, which shares similarities with Khao Sam Kaeo.

In conclusion, Suvarnabhumi, with its combination of islands, bays, peninsulas, and mainland, was a land abundant in metal resources and biodiversity, encompassing human populations, wildlife, and natural plants. Indian and Middle Eastern traders sailed to this region in search of goods and wealth. Archaeological evidence indicates that by the 5th cent. BCE, the society in Suvarnabhumi had developed into a small state, influenced by trade relations and the movement of people from India and nearby regions who settled down, resulting in the formation of social and cultural ties. This is reflected in the evidence of art, culture, languages, religions, and rituals, tracing back to the ancient history of the land and its people. This period is referred to as the Suvarnabhumi period, also known as the Iron Age or late prehistoric period, as recognized by both Thai and international archaeologists. The early prehistoric period spans from the 5th - 3rd cent. BCE, while the late period ranges from the 2nd cent. BCE - 2nd cent. CE.



Fig. 99. Khamao Yee site, Kawthaung District, Southern Myanmar.



Figs. 100. Stone and Terracotta Cultural Materials found insitu at Khamao Yee, Kawthaung District, Southern Myanmar.



**Suvarnabhumi: the Peninsular Land
across Martaban and Tongkin Bays**
by Phuthorn Bhumadhon

Phuthorn Bhumadhon has raised concerns about the original assumptions regarding Suvarnabhumi, stating that they were based on fragile findings and often relied on simple logic. To establish reliable proof, Phuthorn Bhumadhon suggests looking at the evidence of Buddhism dating back to the reign of King Ashoka the Great. However, such evidence has not been found, except for small fragments that were likely brought from India, including Triratna symbols, beads, bronze bowls, and ornaments. These artifacts are predominantly discovered in seaside communities along the Southeast Asian peninsula, which were important trading hubs in the early days of the Buddhist era. The archaeological sites in the Chao Phraya-Mae Klong River Basins and U Thong region, which date several centuries after King Ashoka's reign, also provide evidence. The archaeological evidence of the early Buddhist era, imported from India and later found in the region, includes unique beads in the shape of Singh (lions), Triratna, dice, seals, coins, dharma chakra (Wheel of Dharma), artistic patterns, Singh and Goja Lakshmi, and various auspicious motifs. These antiquities suggest the possibility that Suvarnabhumi was a land situated along the Gulf of Martaban's coast, extending from the area of Thaton town through the Chao Phraya-Pa Sak River Basins to the Chi-Mun River Basins in northeastern Thailand and reaching the sea at Tonkin Bay. Suvarnabhumi encompassed urban communities along the transpeninsular route connecting the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. It played a role in trade and the dissemination of Buddhism, which arrived in the land during the 3rd cent. BCE before firmly establishing itself during the 5th - 6th cent. CE. Over time, the name Suvarnabhumi became a popular auspicious name.

Phuthorn Bhumadhon's perspective highlights the need for careful examination of the available evidence and suggests a possible location and significance of Suvarnabhumi within the historical context of the region.

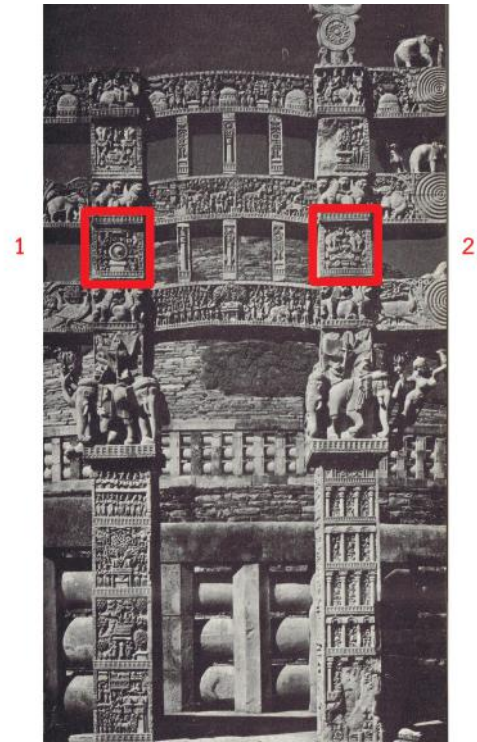


Fig. 101. The carving image of entrance gate to the Sanchi stupa number 1, aged 3rd cent. BCE - 1st CE. This pattern the dhammachakra (1) and gajalakshmi (2). Picture by Hugo Münsterberg, *Le Domaine indien*, Italy, 1971.



Fig. 102. An image representing Gajalakshmi which features Lakshmi sitting on a lotus, with lotus flowers in her hands as she received water from pitchers, held by two elephants. This item, which is believed to bring luck and prosperity, was found at Kosa Alley (Lop Buri Province), Somdet Phra Narai Museum.



Fig. 103. An image representing Gajalakshmi features Lakshmi sitting on a lotus, with lotus flowers in her hands as she received water from pitchers, held by two elephants. This item which believed to bring prosperity and luck was found in Dong Marum city (Lop Buri Province), Somdet Phra Narai Museum.



Fig. 104. A bas-relief, featuring (from left) dharmachakra on a pillar, a Buddha image in meditation posture; a stupa, aged 5th - 6th cent. CE, found in Ku Bua, (Ratchaburi Province, Thailand) Ratchaburi National Museum.



Fig. 105. An image of a sitting lion on clay sculpture, aged 5th- 6th cent. CE. Sculptors must have pressed the pattern on a piece of clay before baking it. At left and right of the lion's head are images of stars, the moon, the sun and a whip, probably symbolizing the ruler's power. The piece was found at Ban Sapnoi, (Lop Buri Province, Thailand), Somdet Phra Narai National Museum.



Fig. 106. Lions on the Asoka pillars built during the reign of King Asoka, aged around 3rd century BCE. Sarnath Museum, India. Picture by Gilles Béguin, L' Art Indien, France, 1984.



Fig. 109. Bas Relief of Dharmachakra, Buddha Image and Stupa from 5th - 6th cent. CE, on the wall of Thamorat Cave, Sri Thep, Petchabun Province, Thailand.



Fig. 107. A sculpture featuring a standing lion made of clay, aged 5th - 6th cent. CE. Found at Kosa Alley, in Lop Buri Province, Thailand the sculpture is believed to be either a piece used in rituals or a lid of a container, Somdet Phra Narai National Museum.



Fig. 108. A coin featuring an image of elephant holding a tree's branch with its trunk which was discovered in Ban Tha Kae, Lop Buri Province. Some scholars believe the coin may be of the India's Satavahana dynasty, 2nd cent. BCE - 2nd cent. CE.



Fig. 110. A bas relief, featuring from left, dhammachakra on a pillar, a Buddha image in meditation posture; a stupa, aged 5th - 6th cent. CE, found in Dong Khon city (Chainat Province, Thailand) Chainat-muni National Museum.



Fig. 111. A triratna pendants, the Lord Buddha, Dharma, and Sangkha. This item which was found widely in India, was unearthed at Ban Wangchan, Lop Buri Province, Thailand.



Fig. 112. A stone sheet featuring Gajalakshmi and puranakata pots, found in Nakhon Pathom Province, Thailand aged around 5th - 6th cent. CE, Phra Nakhon National Museum.



Figs 113. A stone mould for pendant which bears the image of a seat person believed to be Tiberius Emperor (Early CE) was discovered at U-Thong, Suphan Buri Province, Thailand. There were Brahmi scripts around the edge.



Figs. 114. Terracotta sealing with the image of the westerner, found at U Thong (a) and Sab Champa (b) in Suphan Buri and Lop Buri Province, Thailand respectively.



Fig. 115. Bas-relief on a stone pillar features a winged lion that could be a griffin, an imaginary creature that mixed between eagle and lion. This pattern came from Greek-Roman empire, through Persia at the early Buddha era, before spreading to Thailand in the 5th - 6th cent. CE. The item was found in Lop Buri Province, Thailand (Somdet Phra Narai Museum).



Suvarnabhumi
by Bhadra Rujirathat
(Dr. Peter Skilling)

Bhadra Rujirathat, also known as Dr. Peter Skilling, began raising the issue of a reference to a land rich in gold in the early Buddhist century of Southeast Asia. This reference mentioned a difficult and perilous voyage on a ship without clearly specifying where Suvarnabhumi was. Consequently, this has led to many difficult-to-resolve theories and assumptions. Simply copying an old proposal and questioning whether there is something new is not an easy solution.

Despite relying on inscriptions and literature, we still cannot definitively answer the questions: What is Suvarnabhumi, and where is it located? However, the discovery of empirical objects in archaeology and technology related to trade and production, such as the distribution of beads, bronze drums, and glass at Khao Sam Kaeo in Chumphon province, Phu Khao Thong in Ranong province, and other sites in Thailand, as well as Sungai Batu in Malaysia, has given a new image of Southeast Asia as an early center of civilization, technology, development, and trade.

In particular, the finding of bronze bowls with the figure of humans and animals engraved, gold earrings dating back 2,000 years in the Sunga Period, ring stones from the Maurya Period, as well as medals and inscriptions, all indicate that an incredible transglobal trade journey has already taken place.

Scholars, therefore, had to review various documents and literature in multiple languages such as Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Tamil, or even Chinese, Arabic, Persian, and Tibetan. However, very few of these documents are available in their original form. Mostly, the term “destination coast” or “Suvarnabhumi” refers to the region of Southeast Asia with numerous “dvipas” (islands) and states or kingdoms, but there is no specific location identified as Suvarnabhumi. This situation is unlike the concept of Eldorado in the Western world, which was believed to be located in the Mountains of the Moon or the Valley of the Shadows.

It is essential to consider whether “legend” and “reality” should be treated as separate entities. Suvarnabhumi has been a part of human imagination for over 2,000 years, but what are we truly searching for? And what will ultimately satisfy our quest for knowledge?

The name Suvarnabhumi is derived from Sanskrit, where “Suvarna” means “gold” and “bhumi” means “land.” It can be translated as “the land of gold” or “the land of wealth.” According to historical accounts, Suvarnabhumi was the sought-after destination for navigators from India who embarked on their journeys from ports such as Bharukaccha on the west coast of India or Tamralipti in the Bay of Bengal. They described Suvarnabhumi as a place filled with romance and adventure, often likening it to a jungle.

In ancient India, the term “Dvipa,” used in Suvarnadvipa and other contexts, referred to an island, land, or territory, both in geography and cosmology. Examples of other “dvipas” include Jambudvipa, Candradvipa, Karpuradvipa, Yavadvipa, Narikeladvipa, Simhaladvipa or Lankadvipa, and Katahadvipa. Katahadvipa, which is now located in Kedah, Malaysia, was a significant port city and has been a center for iron production since the 5th cent. BCE. Interestingly, Katahadvipa is neither an island nor a peninsula, suggesting that the term “dvipa” likely referred to an onshore port that could be reached by water.

Overall, Suvarnabhumi was considered a land of prosperity and riches, attracting explorers and traders from India and other regions in ancient times. The term “dvipa” in the context of Suvarnabhumi and other places denoted important locations, often serving as ports of trade and commerce.

Suvarnabhumi’s close association with Buddhism is evident in various ancient texts, including the Tripitaka Atthakatha Pali, particularly in the Niddesa and Milindapanha. This connection is also recorded in Langkan chronicles Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa. While there is no concrete evidence of the arrival of Sona Thera and Uttara Thera during the reign of King Ashoka the Great, the absence of evidence does not necessarily negate the possibility of their arrival.

The discovery of real evidence concerning the technological and cultural development in Southeast Asia, especially on the Thai-Malay Peninsula, does not provide direct support for the existence of Suvarnabhumi. However, it does indicate a high likelihood that a Buddhist center had already formed, given the historical presence of many Buddhist monks and practitioners who traveled extensively and facilitated technological and commercial exchanges.

Suvarnabhumi was described as a vast coastal territory with diverse geographical features, including mountains, valleys, winding rivers, estuaries, and numerous sparsely populated small and large islands. Unfortunately, ancient evidence has not clearly identified it as an area where many states had already formed and thrived. It was only in later eras that exploration and mapping efforts led to the naming of cities in the 14th cent. CE. Additionally, inscriptions like the King Ramkhamhaeng Inscription (1292 CE) in Sukhothai, Wat

Song Kob Inscription (1408 CE) in Chainat, and Kalyani Inscription (1476 CE) found in Bago City in Lower Myanmar have specified Suvarnabhumi.

Jacques de Coultre's memoir (1595 CE) mentioned Sapampur, which might have been related to Subhanbhumi, and King Rama V's record (1908 CE), where someone told him that Khlong Makham Thao and Suphanburi River were rivers of Suvarnabhumi.

There is evidence of Acharya Dharmakirti, who composed *Athakatha of Abhisamayalamkara*, approximately before 1005 CE and translated it into Tibetan by Atisa Dipamkarasrijnana between 982 and 1054 CE, a period of widespread communication. Additionally, the Nalanda copper plate of Devapaladeva (860 CE) makes mention of making merit for Sangha from five villages at the request of Maharaja Sri Balaputradeva, who was referred to as the "King of Suvarnadvipa."

Bhadra Rujirathat or Peter Skilling has concluded that there were multiple Suvarnabhumi territories in Southeast Asia, both recently discovered (such as the Pre-Angkorian inscription in Sanskrit found at Kampong Speu in Cambodia, dating back to 633 CE and mentioning King Isanavarman, Ruler of Suvarnabhumi) and those known for a long time. Suvarnabhumi served as a cultural code that some states chose to associate with, making it challenging to pinpoint its exact location. Even today, the case of Lanka in the *Ramayana* remains a topic of divided opinion.

Despite various inscriptions linking Suvarnabhumi to a state in Southeast Asia, it cannot be identified as a specific state, kingdom, or metropolis. Scholars have suggested possible locations, such as Southern Myanmar, Thailand, the Malay Peninsula, or even Sumatra, but no conclusive evidence supports any of these claims, be it in the form of memoirs, archives, or maps.

Misinterpretations have led to the belief that Suvarnabhumi is located in Sumatra, especially at Palembang, based on a modern interpretation of Atisa's journey to study with a teacher from Suvarnadvipa in the 11th cent. CE, which lacks concrete evidence.

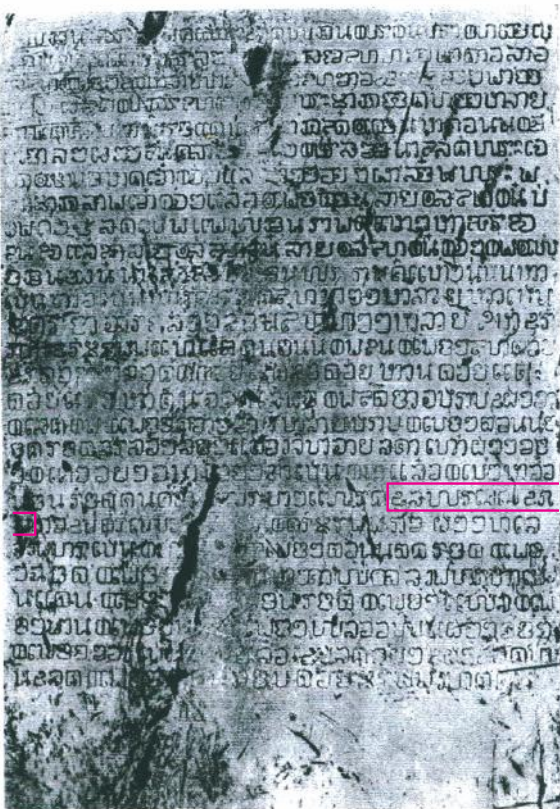


Fig 116. Inscription no 1, face 4, estampage, with Suvaṇṇabhūmi highlighted (line 20–21). After Terwiel, *The Ram Khamhaeng Inscription*, p. 68.



Fig. 122. Inscription from Baset district, Kampong Speu province, Cambodia. After *Phnom Penh Post*, 5 January, 2018.

Fig. 123. Inscription from Baset district, Kampong Speu: detail reading 'suvāṇabhūm-xx'

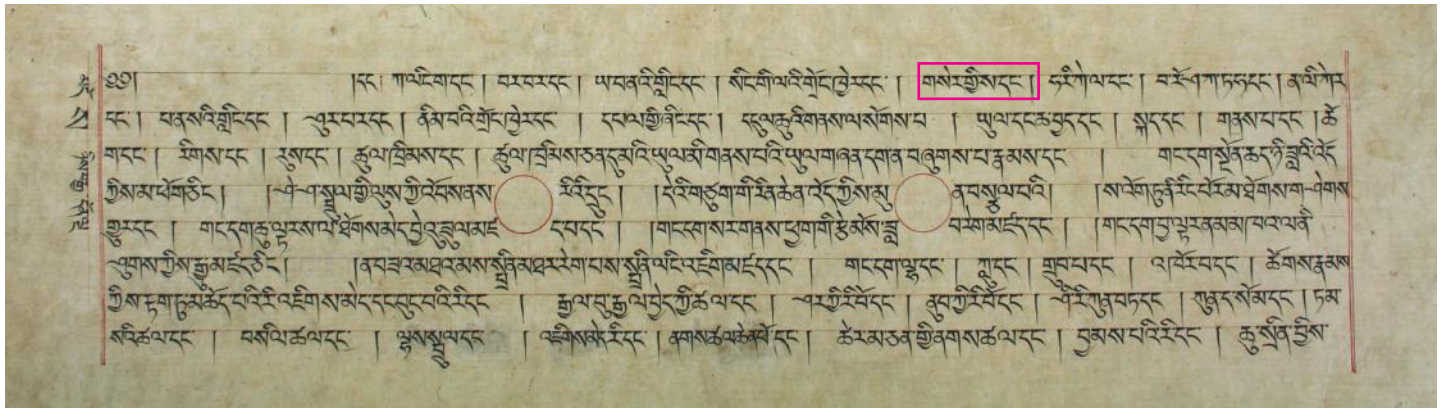


Fig. 124. 'Invitation of Senious Monks', Tibetan text, U-med script, Them Spangs ma Kanjur, Mdo, sa, 275a, National Library of Mongolia, Ulan Bator.



Fig a

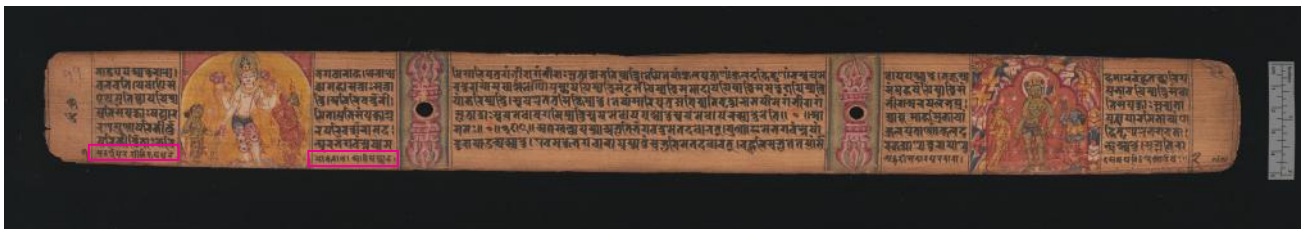


Fig b

Figs. 125. a, b 'Lokanātha of Suvarṇapura in the glorious city of Vijaya' (*suvarṇapure śrī vijayapure lokanātha*). Palm-leaf manuscript of the *Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 Lines*, Cambridge University.

सुवर्णभूमि श्रीविजयपुरे

suvarṇabhūme śrīvijayapure

लोकनाथः श्रीविजयपुरे

*lokanātha | śrīvijayapure*¹

¹ The meaning of *śrīvijayapure*, which occurs with variants in the 'captions' of many of the miniatures, has not been satisfactorily explained.

There are still many unanswered questions regarding Suvarnabhumi's historical figures, such as where Tapussa, and Bhallika, come from and where they are going, where Sona Thera and Uttara Thera arrived, where Acharya Dharmakirti lived and taught. These unanswered questions remain targets for historians to find evidence and put an end to their quest for answers.

The text emphasizes the importance of being honest with inscriptions and evidence, carefully interpreting those that do not refer to Suvarnabhumi. Suvarnabhumi continues to hold significance in our memories and imaginations, helping us understand the past and the roots of our culture without imposing compromises on others.

In the past, Suvarnabhumi was a land where Sanskrit culture flourished and left behind numerous inscriptions. It was a place of open trade and goodwill, accommodating various value systems from Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Chinese culture, and modern value systems, including science and ideas. These diverse value systems and local traditions have intermingled with Sanskrit values, contributing to the rich heritage of the ASEAN Community.

While the exact nature of the famous Suvarnabhumi and Suvarnadvipa of the past remains unknown, the text suggests that the spirit of this golden land lives on. Today, it symbolizes a civilized landscape that offers opportunities for all human beings. As a place of encounters, connections, trade, and commerce, the main airport in the heart of Southeast Asia rightfully carries the name Suvarnabhumi, reflecting its historical significance and continued relevance in the modern world.



Fig 126. Amoghapāśa, Museum Nasional Indonesia., inv. No. 6469. After John N. Miksic, *Icons of Art: The Collections of the National Museum of Indonesia*, BAB Publishing Indonesia, 2007, p. 100.



Fig 127

Fig 127. Devapāladeva copper-plate inscription, Nalanda, India. Recto. Nalanda Museum, Nalanda. Photo courtesy ‘On the Nalanda Trail’ exhibition, ACM, Singapore.

Fig 128. Devapāladeva copper-plate inscription, Nalanda: detail, recto.

Fig 129. Estampage of Devapāladeva inscription, Nalanda. After Sastri, ‘The Nalanda Copper-plate of Devapāladeva’, *Epigraphia Indica* XVII, plate facing p. 320.

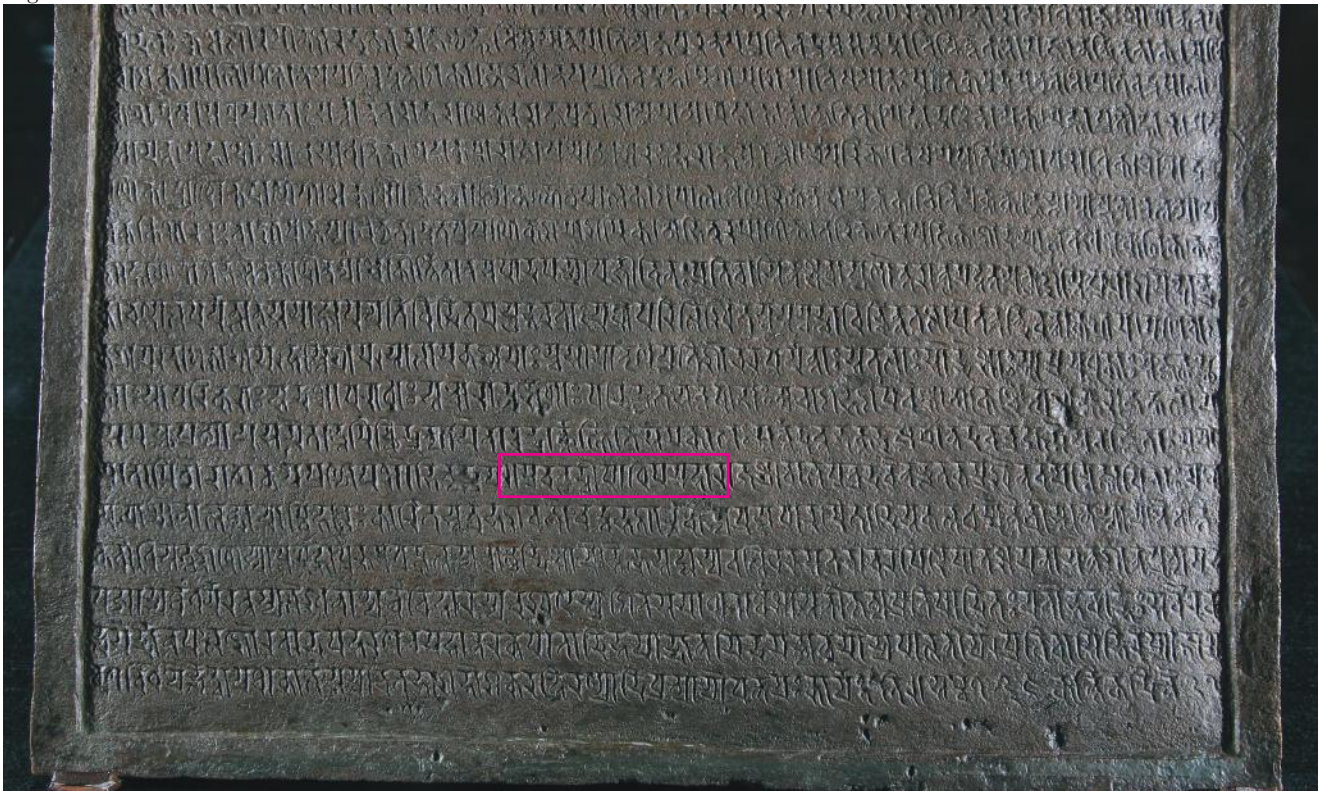


Fig 128

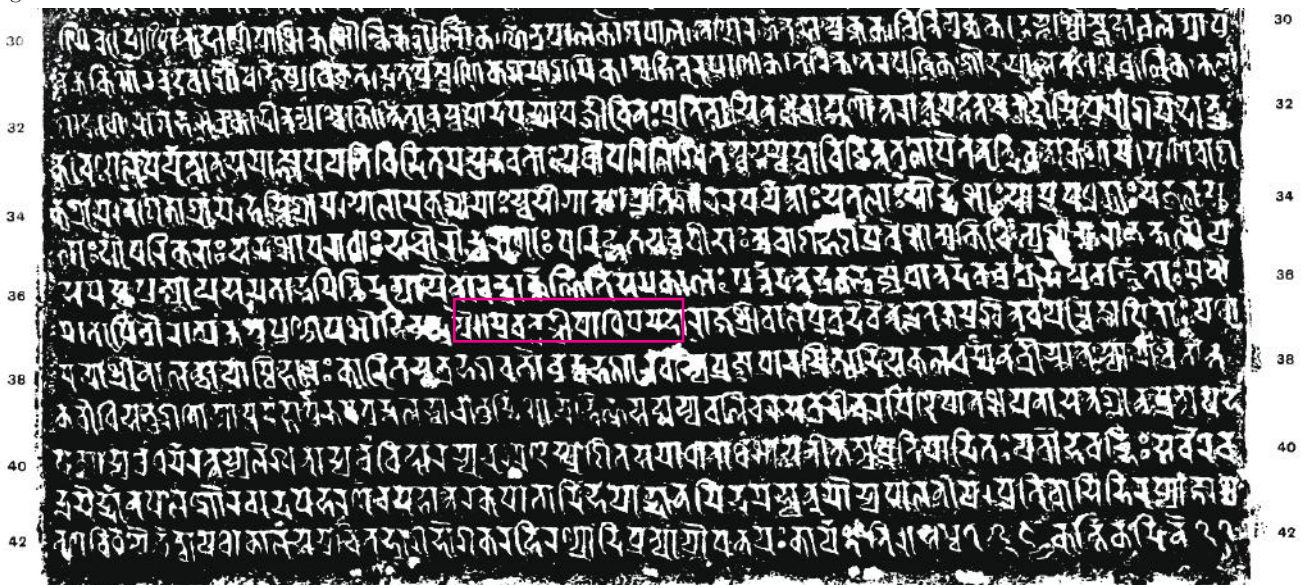


Fig 129



Fig 130. Beads with some amuletic symbols in stone, glass and golden, found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.



Suvarnabhumi:
The Preliminary Conclusion



Figs. 131. Gold Adornments and fragments of gold found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province (above) and Phu Khao Thong, Ranong Province, Thailand (lower).

Suvarnabhumi: The Preliminary Conclusion

Over the past century, extensive research and study have been conducted both locally and internationally on the subject of Suvarnabhumi. The investigation began with the examination of Indian Jataka tales, as well as the chronicles and memoirs of various ancient civilizations, including Indians, Lankans, Greeks, Romans, Chinese, Persians, and Arabians, with a smaller representation of their perspectives. Subsequently, historical studies were combined with research in various sciences, such as geography, linguistics, humanities, sociology, economics, political science, and politics. Additionally, archeological evidence and scientific methods have been employed to shed light on the topic.

Contemporary academic works by Thai and international scholars have collectively concluded that Suvarnabhumi is not merely a fleeting imaginary land but very likely a real place. The general consensus places it within the territory between India and China, in what is now recognized as Southeast Asia, eventually forming the ASEAN Community. Despite this, the exact nature of Suvarnabhumi remains uncertain, including whether it was a territory, state, or kingdom, and its precise coordinates are yet to be definitively identified.

Notably, Suvarnabhumi played a pivotal role in the formation of the first state, Funan, which further developed into the historical period of the region, particularly during the Dvaravati era, starting from the 10th Buddhist century onwards. The search for answers continues as scholars strive to piece together the historical puzzle of Suvarnabhumi and its significance in the early development of Southeast Asia.

The questions surrounding the existence of Suvarnabhumi have persisted throughout history, with debates about whether it is a reality or merely a product of fantasy, dreams, fictional stories, fairy tales, legends, allegories, or memoirs handed down from the past. The stories of Suvarnabhumi have

been recorded for almost 2,000 years and have spread widely across various civilizations, including the Greeks, Egyptians, Romans, Indians, Chinese, and Arabs, all of which are known for their meticulous record-keeping methods.

Interestingly, the coordinates of Suvarnabhumi's location have been consistently mentioned in specific territories, related to other territories, and corresponding during the same period, approximately 1,500 to 2,500 years ago. Additionally, various other features have been consistently described, such as its accessibility only by sea and its capacity to produce what was needed during that era. Furthermore, the results of analytical studies align with the available archaeological evidence.

Many archaeologists and historians are in agreement that ancient Suvarnabhumi was either a real place or very likely to have been real. This belief is reinforced by the presence of names with similar meanings in different cultures, all related to the concept of "gold." Examples include Chryse in Greek, Aureus in Roman, Suvarna in Indian, Thong in Thai, and Jin in Chinese, all of which translates to "gold."

While the mystery of Suvarnabhumi continues to captivate scholars and researchers, the consistency in historical accounts and the connection to the theme of gold across cultures support the notion that it was more than just a mythical land. Instead, it likely represents a real place with a significant role in the history and interconnectedness of ancient civilizations in Southeast Asia.

The determination of Suvarnabhumi's location has been approached in various ways, resulting in different interpretations. Suvarnabhumi has been defined as a wide area, certain specific areas, or even a single clear spot. The wide area definition encompasses the territories between India and China, including several key regions:

- At Thaton and Kyaikkatha in Myanmar, located at the mouth of the Irrawaddy and Sittang Rivers of Myanmar.
- In the western region of Thailand, covering locations such as Don Ta Phet, U Thong, Kubua,

and Nakhon Pathom, extending from the area of the Mae Khlong-Tha Chin River Basins in Western Thailand to Southern Myanmar, specifically at Dawei and Myeik.

- At the Kra Isthmus, spanning from the end of Myanmar at Ao Yai, Khlong Nu, and Kha Mao Yee to Thailand at Kraburi, Bangkluai, Phu Khao Thong, Bang Ro, Nong Yon in Ranong and Phang Nga Provinces, and at Khao Sam Kaeo, Khao Sek in Chumphon, and Tha Chana in Surat Thani of Thailand.
- In the Northwest of Malaysia at the Bujang Basin in Kedah, extending to the state of Perak.
- From the area at the mouth of the Mekong River at Oc Eo in Vietnam to Angkor, Borei, and other locations in Cambodia.

Each of these areas has been associated with the concept of Suvarnabhumi based on historical records, inscriptions, and archaeological evidence. However, there is still no definitive agreement on a single precise location for Suvarnabhumi, and the topic continues to be subject to ongoing research and exploration. The diverse range of proposed locations reflects the complexity and significance of Suvarnabhumi as a historical and cultural entity in Southeast Asia.

According to past archaeological studies, most of the evidence related to Suvarnabhumi was from the 3rd cent. CE onwards. However, new evidence has been discovered that corresponds to ancient memoirs dating back to the 5th cent. BCE - 1st cent. CE. These findings are particularly associated with Buddhism, which played a significant role in Suvarnabhumi's history. Notably, Sungai Batu in the Bujang River Basin in northwestern Malaysia and the Kra Isthmus on the Thai-Malay Peninsula, specifically in Ranong and Chumphon Provinces, all the way to the southernmost tip of Myanmar in Kawthaung, have been key areas of interest with ongoing excavations and research in Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Cambodia.

Evidence from the 6th – 5th cent. BCE, imported from India, has been found in the Chao

Phraya-Pa Sak River Basins and the Chi-Mun headwaters, along with traces of an ancient city featuring moats and walls along the transpeninsular route from the Bay of Bengal through the Mon territory, central and northeast Thailand, southern Laos, and southern Vietnam to the South China Sea. This evidence suggests that Suvarnabhumi might have been located along this route.

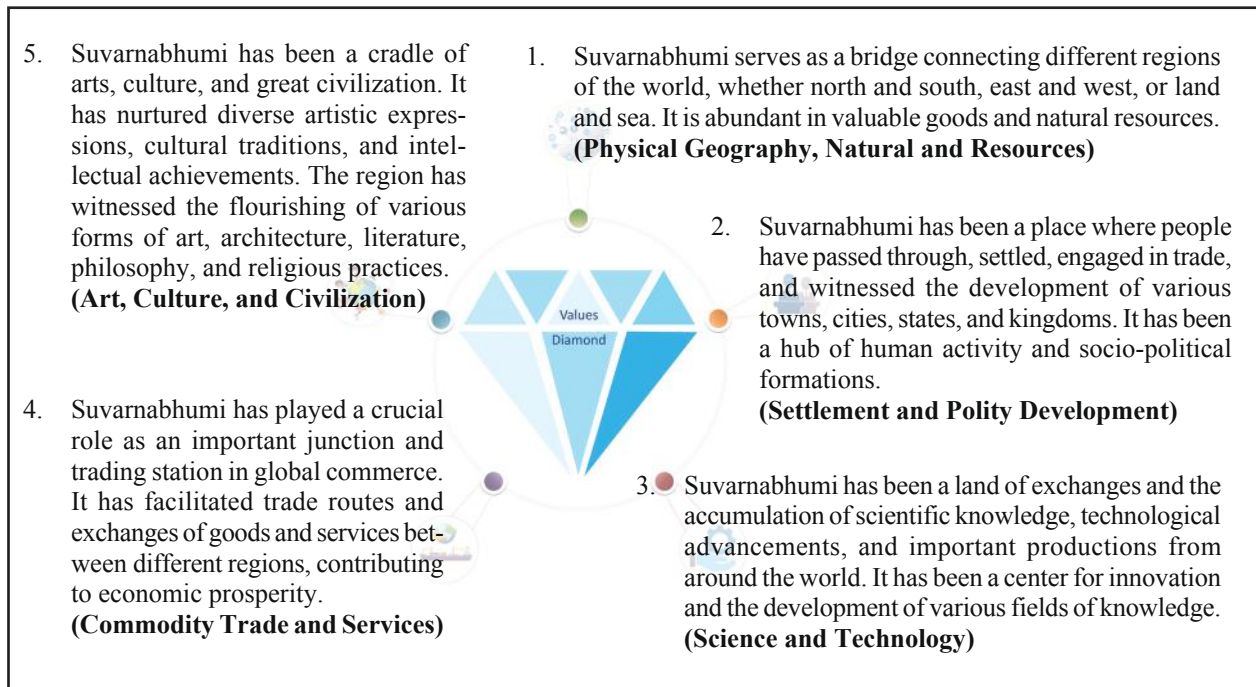
Regarding the shared names of Suvarnabhumi and Suvarnadvipa, the explanations provided by archaeological historians lead to a consistent conclusion that Suvarnabhumi tends to refer to the terrestrial region, while Suvarnadvipa pertains to the peninsula and archipelago. However, over time, the usage of Suvarnabhumi has also been extended to include the peninsula and archipelago.

Some scholars have put forth the idea that Suvarnabhumi and Suvarnadvipa may have had dual contexts as centers: one being a trade center and the other being a center for Buddhist prosperity. This highlights the complexity of these historical regions and their multifaceted significance in terms of trade and religious development.

As the research and excavations continue in different Southeast Asian countries, the understanding of Suvarnabhumi and Suvarnadvipa is likely to evolve, potentially providing further insights into their roles in the ancient civilizations of the region.

Five Diamond Values of Suvarnabhumi

It is now proper to compile empirical values, which are the heritage of Suvarnabhumi based on ‘physical geography and natural resources’; ‘settlement and polity development’; ‘science and technology’; ‘commercial activities, trade, and services’; and, ‘art, culture, and civilization.’ All dimensions are considered as the 5 Diamond Values of Suvarnabhumi as described below:



1 Physical Geography, Natural And Resources: **The wealthy land at the crossroads of the world: north and south, east and west, mainland and maritime.**

Suvarnabhumi's unique landform, as a narrow peninsula between two major oceans, positions it as a land bridge connecting the West and the East. It serves as a crucial transit point from the vast continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa to the southern hemisphere, encompassing various archipelagos and the continent of Australia. Located near the Equator, Suvarnabhumi experiences monsoon winds and undergoes continuous continental changes over time. This dynamic geological history has resulted in abundant natural resources on both land and in the surrounding waters.

The region boasts diverse natural resources, including fertile soils, rocks, minerals, and metals such as copper, tin, iron, lead, and gold. These minerals have played a vital role in the development of human production technology. Additionally, Suvarnabhumi is renowned for its precious gems, forest products, medicinal plants, spices, herbs, and incense, which have been highly sought after in the

global market since ancient times, attracting interest from civilizations such as the Greeks, Egyptians, Romans, Arabians, Indians, and Chinese.

Suvarnabhumi is flanked by two major oceans, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, along with various important minor seas and bodies of water, including the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, Bay of Bengal, Andaman Sea, Gulf of Thailand, South China Sea, Java Sea, Philippine Sea, and Tonkin Bay. These bodies of water are influenced by winds and currents, particularly the seasonal monsoon winds, which have facilitated different types of water transportation. The coastal regions comprise islands, bays, and estuaries that provide suitable locations for periodic rest and protection from strong winds.

The connection between the seas, oceans, and the plains of fertile river basins has facilitated human settlement and the formation of early civilizations. Examples of such civilizations include the ancient Egyptian civilization along the Nile River Basin, the Mesopotamian civilization along the Tigris-Euphrates River Basins, the Mohenjo Daro civilization along the Indus River Basin, the Indian civilization along the Ganges River Basin, and the Chinese civilization along the Huang He and Yangtze River Basins.

“Suvarnabhumi’s strategic location as a bridge connecting different parts of the world, combined with its abundant natural resources, positions it as a region of great importance throughout history. The region has consistently attracted interest and served as a valuable source of goods and resources sought after by people from around the globe. Its significance extends beyond its geographical location, making it a region of immense value and importance.”

2 Settlement and Polity Development: A place where travelers visited and passed through, where many settled and traded, forming towns, cities, states, and kingdoms.

Due to its geographical and physical features, as well as its abundant resources, Suvarnabhumi attracted primitive humans to Southeast Asia millions of years ago. These early humans initially settled along cliffs and caves on hillsides and later migrated to river basins, leading to the development of various communities spanning the Old Stone Age, the New Stone Age, and the Bronze and Iron Ages. Over the millennia, these settlements expanded, accommodating a large population and interacting with other minor civilizations dispersed among and between communities.

The development of these communities occurred in a sequential manner. They evolved from hunting and gathering communities to agricultural settlements, eventually forming complex societies with leaders. This progress

continued, culminating in the establishment of urban societies, city-states, states, and kingdoms, alongside the presence of nomadic peoples.

Before the emergence of urban societies or states in Southeast Asia, evidence of Austroasiatic settlements has been found. These settlers were primarily involved in rice cultivation and later became known as the Mon-Khmer people. Another group, the Austronesians, were known for their affinity towards seas and islands and eventually became the Malays approximately 4,000 years ago. Concurrently, the Thais, who also cultivated rice, gradually settled in the lower areas of Tonkin Bay, subsequently entering the Bronze and Iron Ages around 3,000 to 2,500 years ago. These areas encompass the lower regions of Tonkin Bay, the Red River Basin, the Mekong River, the Vietnamese coastline, the Mekong Delta, the Mekong plateaus in Laos and northern Thailand, the Sakon Nakhon Basin, the Korat Basin, the Pasak-Lop Buri River Basins, the areas surrounding the Great Khmer Lake, the Prachin-Bangpakong River Basins, the Chao Phraya River Basins, the Ping-Wang-Yom-Nan, the Mae Klong-Thachin River Basins, the Thai-Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan Islands, numerous South Seas Islands, Austro-Polynesians, and the Satong-Salween River Basins and the Irrawaddy-Samon River Basins.

Significant archaeological sites and minor civilizations include the Dong Son culture (Bronze Age) in modern-day northern Vietnam, the Sahuyn culture (Iron Age) in central and southern Vietnam, the Ban Chiang culture (Bronze and Iron Ages) in northeastern Thailand, the Ban Kao culture (Stone Age) in the western region of Thailand, the Lop Buri-Pasak culture (New Stone and Iron Ages) in the upper central region of Thailand, the Mae



Map. 5. Satellite Image of Khao Sam Kaeo archaeological site, Chumphon Province, Thailand.

Klong-Thachin culture (Iron Age - turning point in history) in western Thailand, the Funan Culture (turning point in history) in southern Cambodia and southern Vietnam, the Samon River Basin Culture (Stone-Bronze ages), the Pyu culture (turning point in history) in present-day Myanmar, as well as the Dvaravati culture in mainland Thailand and the Srivijaya culture on the Thai-Malay Peninsula and archipelagos that followed.

Suvarnabhumi, located in a strategically important region, was abundant in valuable commodities. It served as a bustling hub where people from diverse backgrounds came to acquire local and imported goods. Over time, it developed into a port-of-call and trading station, eventually expanding into a flourishing community and state. Chinese chronicles from the Han Dynasty (2nd cent. BCE - 2nd cent. CE) documented its existence, referring to it as either

a state or county called Shen-Li and Fu-kan-tu-lu, likely situated Isthmus on the Thai-Malay Peninsula. Similarly, records from the Liang Dynasty mentioned over 100 states and counties, with Funan being recognized as the earliest kingdom in Southeast Asia. Funan's navy fleet launched attacks on more than ten states, including Chu-tu-kun, Chiu-chih, Tien-sun, Chin-lin, Pien-tou, Tu-kun and Chuli.

Indian texts from the 3rd cent. BCE, such as "The Debate of King Milinda" and "The Greater Expositions," also referred to places believed to be located in Suvarnabhumi. Takola, Java, Tamali, and Suvarnabhumi were mentioned, corroborating the Greek and Roman records. For example, the "Periplus of the Outer Sea" by Martianus of Heraclea described a large gulf between India and Sinai known as the Golden Khersonese. It noted the capital city of Thinaï (China), situated between known and



Map. 6. Satellite Image of Bujang Valley archaeological site, Kedah, Malaysia.

unknown lands, as well as 50 tribes, 67 towns, villages or marketplaces, 18 mountain ranges, five important caves, three ports, one large gulf, and 30 major islands within the border. Similar details can be found in Ptolemy's "Guide to Geography," written in 165 CE, which provides extensive information on locations in the Golden Khersonese. It mentions a trade station called Takola Emporium at the mouth of the Khrysoanas River and another trade station or Sabara Emporium at the estuary of the Palanda River. Estuary of the Atabas River, Kole Perimula, Maleoykolon Cape, Perimulikos Bay, along with three inland cities named Kalonka, Konkonagara, and Palanda.

Paul Whitley, in "Golden Kersonese," suggested that these places gradually formed a state encompassing the Lower Mekong plains, the narrow seashores of Central Vietnam, and the Thai-Malay Peninsula where the Kra Isthmus is located. Trade in this state was managed co-

operatively by elites in high society, gradually uniting as many as ten states on the Peninsula to create the Funan Empire. The history of communities in the Mekong River Plains began during its prime in the 2nd cent. CE, with the Chinese Empire Chronicles recording the prosperous Panpan and Langkasuka Kingdoms. In the 4th cent. CE, these regions merged completely, solidifying Funan's status as a kingdom. This kingdom was surrounded by forts and consisted of a palace and houses inhabited by locals. The natives had a distinct appearance with dark complexions and curly hair. They wore no clothes or shoes, lived a simple life without theft, and engaged in agriculture. With a three-year harvest cycle, they excelled in craftsmanship and ornament carving, ate from silver wares, used gold as currency, and cherished pearls and scents. They also had their own chronicles, using characters similar to those used by the Hu people of Central Asia, who adopted Indian scripts.

This information aligns with Kenneth R. Hall's observations in "Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia," which outlines two types of state formation in Southeast Asia. One type is characterized by settlements along riverbanks and on islands, while the other type consists of hinterland inhabitants. These areas were influenced by trade and interactions between people from both regions. The relationship building and collaboration among these communities were vital, particularly in areas with clusters of settlements, rivers, and river plains where estuaries played a crucial role. People formed networks and established hubs for the exchange of goods. Mutual assistance and care for one another were customary practices, predating the emergence of land-based communities that eventually took control of the river plains for agriculture.

So far, more studies have revealed the existence of two important regions: Khao Sam Kaeo at Kra Isthmus and Sungai Batu in the Bujang River Plain. Khao Sam Kaeo served as a central port connecting several places and evolved into a significant sea port on the Maritime Silk Road. It is considered the beginning of globalization and is presumed to be the first seaport of the South China Sea. From the 4th - 1st cent. BCE. Khao Sam Kaeo thrived as a prominent cosmopolitan city. It was an international community and a trading township situated along the river banks. It had its own cultural and artistic developments. Their knowledge of technology and know-how was remarkable. These qualities had been supportive of trading networks and harmony among people from different classes and nationalities well before the emergence of the Maritime Silk Road.

The major contributors to such qualities were a perfect geographical location and the

region's fertility. Natural resources and man-made constructions were used congruently with the landscape covering four hills in an area as big as 35 hectares inside the parallel earthen dykes. Irrigation for agriculture and the elevation of water level for transportation were also available. Houses were built on the poles or plains on the mountain slopes as well as on the river banks. Tremendous evidence of iron, bronze, stones, glass, gold, inscriptions, and different kinds of vessels was found on the open ground, floors, wells, beds, ditches, and pole pits as well as graveyards. This civilization existed during the 5th - 2nd cent. BCE. Nevertheless, as one of the major international ports, it maintained its glory until the 1st cent. CE.

Meanwhile, the Bujung River Plain became the most significant international trade center on the west bank of the Thai-Malay Peninsula from 1st – 14th cent. CE. It was adorned with buildings, structures, religious places, piers, and very large iron smelting area. Trading occurred along the river, from Sungai Batu to Sungai Mas and Penggalun Bujung, respectively. This evidence aligned with several pieces of evidence from India, Greece, and Rome, especially archeological findings at Hepu in the Gulf of Tonkin's bottom area in China, where the cemetery of the Han Dynasty also supports this view. As a result, people began to believe that Chenli in the Han Dynasty's Chronicle is likely Kao Sam Kaeo, and Fukan-tu-lu is Pukao Thong-Bangkluy in Ranong Province or Khamao Yee-Ao Yai, Kawthaung District, Myanmar.

Dr. Bellina Berenice et al. suggested that Khao Sam Kaeo established relationships among communities in the China Sea area and gradually evolved into a free trade state. Over time, they developed a cooperative symbolic value and material culture, assimilating more

Indian symbolic value systems evident in various stone ornaments. Before the end of the prehistoric period, Khao Sam Kaeo was a bustling settlement, classified as an international hub with numerous large buildings, walls, ditches, and well-maintained water systems dating back centuries. It operated under its own political system administered by the townspeople. Based on this administration, they devised several schemes for flood prevention and agricultural plans, marking a pioneering approach to politics in Asia. The political and manpower supervision in this area stemmed from diverse communities and professions. They lived and developed trading systems in the South China Sea region, creating a technologically and economically advanced society. As they expanded their networks, they exported goods to various overseas locations to cater to the diverse needs of different markets. These trades showcased the city's expertise in consumer product management and supported their experts both in distant places and neighboring areas. In summary, Khao Sam Kaeo was a densely populated city with social complexity. It had its own system of city management, a coordination center, an economic system with experts from various fields, and a networked production of imported materials and exported products.

The city's agricultural outputs were abundant, catering to both the locals and passers-by. Khao Sam Kaeo's prosperity perfectly matched the dictionary definition of a trading hub on the South China Sea, displaying various attributes of a great city. Consequently, Khao Sam Kaeo indisputably stood out as the very first Southeast Asian city, second to none in South Asia or Southeast Asia, although there might not be sufficient evidence to make a definitive claim. It is highly likely that Khao Sam Kaeo established its status as a state

during the prehistoric period, approximately from the 4th – 1st cent. BCE. It is assumed that the city might have been part of a cluster of sea ports conducting business in the western parts of the South China Sea. There are contemporary pieces of evidence of similar trading activities in ancient China during the time of the Silk Road.

Khao Sam Kaeo presumably played a role in the formation and development of a state system in the western part of Southeast Asia. However, whether it existed as a stand-alone state or in conjunction with other small states remains a subject of debate. What remains certain is that Khao Sam Kaeo served as the center of industrial production, providing goods to networked markets both locally and internationally, encompassing raw materials and advanced technologies during the late prehistoric period. These products met the economic and political needs of various markets. The city's marketing techniques likely resulted from its adeptness in controlling skilled workers, which significantly influenced its competitive development against other trading states in both South and Southeast Asia. These qualifications exemplified the international industries and trading activities facilitated by the social, economic, and intricate political systems of the region. Given that the upper part of the Thai-Malay Peninsula served as a central hub connecting various routes between the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea, it provided essential support to Khao Sam Kaeo in becoming an influential city of industry and culture. The city's cultural materials and products were distributed through these route systems to various trading communities around the South China Sea and potentially the Bay of Bengal. Khao Sam Kaeo's products, particularly those of the hard stone jewelry industry, not only utilized foreign materials and

technology but also bore distinctive characteristics that set them apart from products of other industries. These products showcased Khao Sam Kaeo's unique qualities and the value of its cultural networks within the regions surrounding the South China Sea.

Khao Sam Kaeo demonstrated remarkable ability in adopting foreign innovations and successfully implementing socio-economic strategies. Evidence supporting this can be found in Oc Eo of Funan. Historical records from the Liang Dynasty's Chinese chronicle indicated that Fan Si Man controlled trading ports on the Thai-Malay Peninsula around the 3rd cent. CE, possibly as an heir to the region. These trading states heavily relied on each other for both products and transportation to other destinations, utilizing both land and sea routes. However, further research is necessary to fully comprehend the entire system. The routes crossing the peninsula, as well as maritime routes, not only facilitated the export of products but also facilitated the movement of people, fostering numerous interactions that led to mutual changes and developments.

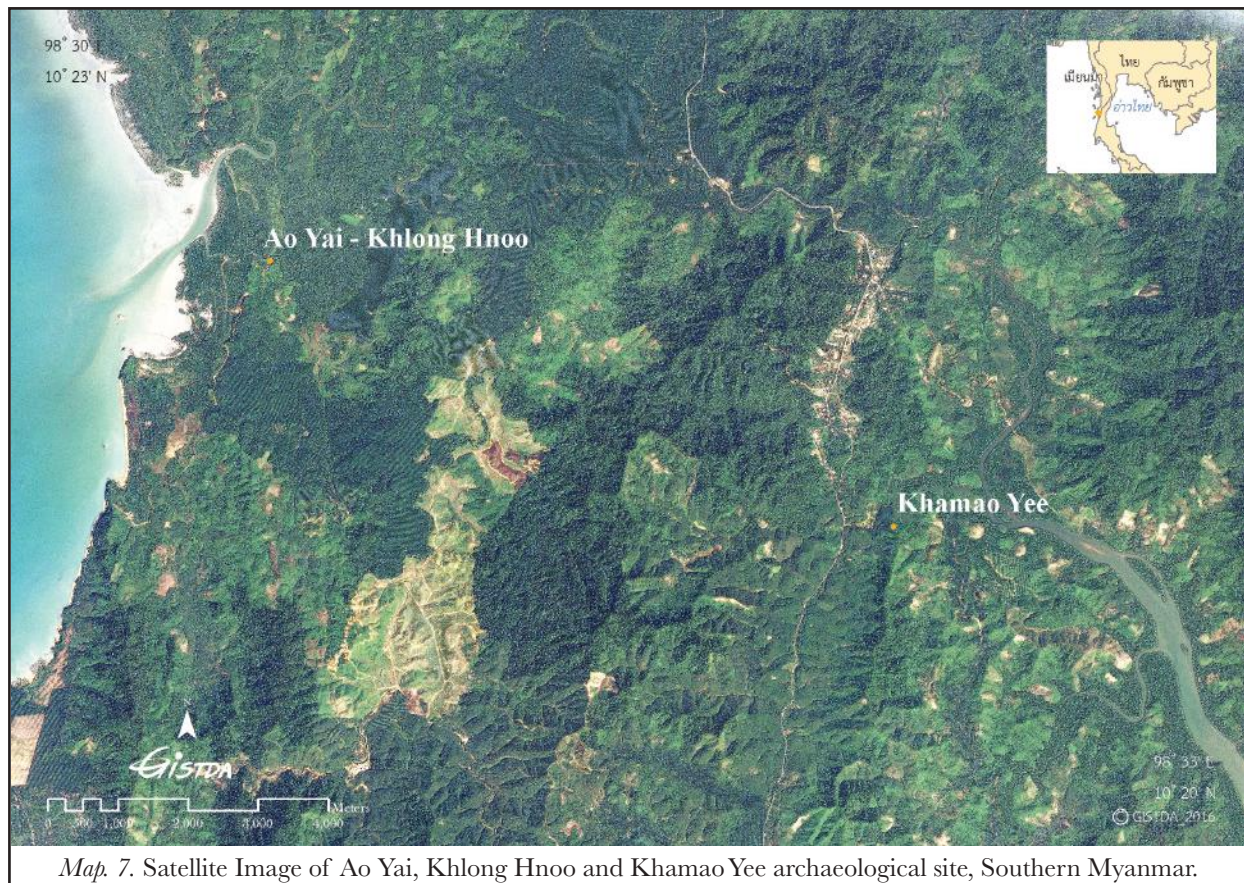
Another significant region situated on the Kra Isthmus, on the western shore of Khao Sam Kaeo, was near the Myanmar border and adjacent to the Thai border in Ranong Province. This area encompassed Khamao Yee and Khlong Hnoo, where a vast number of antiquities were discovered. These antiquities were divided into two areas: the harbor and inland Khamao Yee. Among the findings were colored stone beads, glass, and earthenware of varied shapes and sizes. Some of them bore imprints of Triratna or Nandiyavatta symbols and gold jewelry imprinted with artistic prints reminiscent of the Maurya and Sunga Dynasties during the reign of King Asoka the Great. These antiquities have been thoroughly investigated and confirmed through comparative studies

conducted by American, British, and Indian archaeological scholars. In the middle of this location, where these antiquities were found, there were creeks on one side running to the Andaman Sea and creeks running from the eastern side of the Kraburi River to the same destination. Additionally, pieces of cracked stones were discovered at the sloping low foothills towards the river. This evidence suggests the possibility of this region having been some industrial sites in the past. The presence of cracked stones might result from carving different designs on the art objects and architectures, reflecting the fact that this area might have been involved in various artistic and industrial activities. These findings add to the intrigue and significance of the region in the context of Suvarnabhumi and its historical role in ancient civilizations.

Certain stone slabs were also unearthed, some with engravings of Triratna symbols and parts of Buddha's biography, such as Buddha's birth stories or Kotcha Lakshmi. Votive stupas were also discovered, akin to clay stupas of Sri Vichai's but with more slender figures, and were associated with antiquities imprinted with Triratna symbols, suggesting they had not been moved from other places. Based on this evidence, it was assumed that the location called Khamao Yee served as a port with residential, agricultural, and religious sites, similar to Khao Sam Kaeo on the Tha Tapao River in Chumphon.

Kawthaung's region on the Andaman Seashore, around 9 kilometers from Khamao Yee, was situated lower southwest in the curving bend of Ao Yai, sloping down to the mangrove forest. This area featured low mountains and streams flowing from the mountain and high area within Khamao Yee. This specific site is called 'Khlong Hnoo.'

The mangrove forest connected to the



beach was distinct in that it was the site where shipwrecks and antiquities, such as colored stone beads, broken bowls, and other objects (both goods and utensils), were discovered. Beads, jewelry, seals, and broken pieces of Greek and Roman-style earthenware, similar to those found in the Indian Ocean areas, were also unearthed. These objects were produced around the 1st cent. BCE or the 1st cent. CE from the time of Suvarnabhumi to the period of the Maritime Silk Route. However, these antiquities, including the beads, jewelry, and seals, could be traced back to Suvarnabhumi during the reign of King Asoka the Great, originating from the Maurya and Sunga Dynasties and beyond. These findings were essential because they provided evidence that the merchants and residents in the area were Buddhists, corroborating the existence of Suvarnabhumi and King Asoka the Great's dissemination of Buddhism, which was also

recorded in the Mahavongga Chronicle of Sri Lanka. This evidence contradicted the claims of some archaeologists and historians who deemed King Asoka the Great's dissemination of Buddhism vague and existing only in legends less than a thousand years ago.

In conclusion, the evidence presented strongly supports the existence of Suvarnabhumi as a residence for settlers and a thriving trading hub for merchants. Suvarnabhumi's influence and impact have been significant over thousands of years, shaping towns, cities, states, and kingdoms in Southeast Asia since the prehistoric period. The inhabitants of Suvarnabhumi hailed from various backgrounds, contributing to the development of diverse cultures in different periods, including the Stone Age, Bronze Age, and Iron Age, which flourished and

prospered before transforming into towns, cities, and states.

The evidence points to the development of a thriving city with a diverse population of international settlers, managed through well-organized structures and networked management systems. This polity state gradually evolved into a city, state, and kingdom, and all the interconnected systems flourished cooperatively, akin to the cooperation among the 10 ASEAN countries in

Southeast Asia. These countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia, have progressed and developed within their respective subregions, across regions, and on the global stage. Nationalities from various backgrounds move and work across these countries, seemingly without borders in this modern world and beyond. Suvarnabhumi has undoubtedly proven its value as the golden land of Southeast Asia!



Fig 132. Stone fragments with some Buddhist symbol found at Khmoa Yee on Kra Isthmus, Southern Myanmar.



Figs. 133. Fragments of terracotta and stone with Sunga art style relief found at Khamao Yee on Kra Isthmus, Southern Myanmar.



0 1cm

3 Science and Technology: A space for the exchange and accumulation of knowledge, technology, and production.

Regarding science and technology, Suvarnabhumi served as a hub for exchanging and accumulating knowledge, technology, and important production from around the world. The nautical expertise of the Suvarnabhumi people and those who journeyed to this land played a significant role in establishing its identity as a key junction space and a settlement community. The region witnessed abundant agricultural produce and the development of various products, leading it to become a hub for ports, trading stations, and a bustling city.

Numerous pieces of evidence support these assumptions, including evidence of nautical expertise among the Austronesian natives of the South China Sea, along with discoveries from the Dong Son culture during the 3rd cent. BCE and the Sa Huynh culture from the 4th - 1st cent. BCE is found in numerous archaeological sites around the South China Sea. The chronicles of the Han Dynasty (1st cent. BCE - 2nd cent. CE) and the Liang Dynasty (2nd - 4th cent. CE) also mention sailing through this area and describe the deployment of the Funan Empire's formidable fleet to attack regions and states in the Thai-Malay Peninsula and Jin Lin, which is presumed to be part of Suvarnabhumi.

On the west coast, various regions, including the Andaman Sea, Bay of Bengal, and extending all the way to the Indian Ocean, the coast of Arabia, Africa, and the Greco-Roman archives and memoirs from the 1st - 6th cent. CE refers to monsoon sailing that has been in practice since the 1st cent. BCE. Nautical treatises from the 1st cent. CE onwards mentions a large ship known as Colandia or Kolandiphonta, traveling to Chryses and the Ganges River Basin. The use of coordinates to identify port cities, cities, and states began in the early 2nd cent. CE. These facts align with Chinese chronicles, Indian supporting evidence in ancient

scriptures or allegories (3rd - 2nd cent. BCE), and the discovery of coins depicting a sailboat with two masts from the Satavahana Dynasty of India (2nd Cent. CE) at Khlong Thom.

The discovery of ancient inscriptions at Bang Kluay mentioning "Mahanavika" or a sailor named Brahaspatisarama, along with finding wooden fragments from an ancient ship and other evidence from India, the Middle East, the Roman Empire, and ancient Greece, along with an inscription mentioning another Mahanavika



Fig. 134. Ling Ling O earring found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.



Fig. 135. Bronze coin found at Kuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Thailand.



Fig. 136. Gold seal found at Bang Kluay Nok, Ranong Province, Thailand.

named Buddhagupta at Kedah in the 5th cent. CE confirms the presence of advanced nautical technology during that time, although specific details remain unclear. It is presumed that voyagers from various civilizations, including Greece, Egypt, Rome, Arab, Parthian, India, and China, particularly Malays, Kunlun, Cham, and Yue, known as “barbarians” by the Chinese, traveled in succession from the Metal Age onwards, seeking valuable treasures from distant lands. Qin Shi Huang’s expansion continued to reach this region until the periods of the Han Dynasty, Liang Dynasty, and Sun Quan of the Three Kingdoms, contributing to the region’s prosperity during the Tang Dynasty, which persists to the present day. As a result, the major maritime routes have centered on the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea for over 2,000 years, with Suvarnabhumi in Southeast Asia serving as a boundary, fort, and bridge connecting development, technology, and maritime navigation.

Regarding the science of settlements (Ekistics), land arrangement, agriculture, and farming, the formation of the Funan Empire after the Suvarnabhumi period during the 2nd - 4th cent. CE is described in the chronicles of the Liang Dynasty. The Funan Empire consisted of surrounding walls, a palace, and people’s houses, and its inhabitants were described as having dark skin, kinky hair, being unclothed, walking barefoot, and having an easy-going nature with no stealing. The people cultivated by sowing in one year and harvesting for three years created ornament engravings and carvings, used dinnerware made of silver, paid taxes with gold, pearls, and incense, and had the availability of books, archives, and others. The latest excavations and analytical studies of findings from both Khao Sam Kaeo and Sungai Batu indicate the existence of the science of settlements from the 4th cent. BCE onwards. Khao Sam Kaeo exhibited spatial arrangements along the hillsides near the river, including walls, moats, ditches, water systems, and dams, as well as residential, production, trade, and agricultural areas. The buildings of religious sites and ports were constructed with bricks, similar to those found at Khamao Yee and Khlong Hnoo.

Regarding agriculture and farming, Dr. Berenice Bellina’s research from archaeobotanical studies indicated that Khao Sam Kaeo had the capability to handle foodstuffs to support the production system of various



Figs. 137. Bronze bowl and Iron tools found in Ta Tapao river and Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.

experts, whether by importing them from afar or cultivating them in the surrounding areas, ensuring sufficient farming to sustain both the local population and passers-by.

Industrial science is evident in various fields of manufacture involving the production of vessels, equipment, and tools made from clay, iron, and bronze, particularly a large number of locally produced and imported pottery. Detailed studies at Khao Sam Kaeo have uncovered various objects from different sources, including four types of locally made pottery without potter's wheels and fine-grained pottery from India, more extensive than previously studied Indian pottery findings. Other discoveries include black and red polished pottery, and three types of pottery using potter's wheels, which are uncertain whether they are imported or locally produced using Indian techniques. Examples of Sa Huynh Kalanay pottery, both imported and locally made in a foreign style, prevalent around the China Sea, were also found. A significant number of Han Dynasty wares were discovered outside mainland China and nearby regions, made using clay coils and potter's wheels, with and without pattern stamping, displaying styles from South China, East China, and North Vietnam, and some unique ones not found in those areas.

Regarding iron artifacts, mostly in a worn state, bloomery iron, commonly used in South Asia as a tool for scraping, cutting, or stabbing, such as axes, chisels, and spears, were found. Copper and bronze artifacts reflect wide relations among China, Vietnam, Thailand, and South Asia, particularly high tin bronze, possibly made by artisans from South Asia who established a production base at Khao Sam Kaeo. On the west coast at Phu Khao Thong, it possibly existed contemporaneously with Khao Sam Kaeo from the 3rd - 1st cent. BCE through the 2nd - 3rd cent. CE South Asian vessels, particularly Indian earthen wares known as rouletted wares, with patterns and no patterns, with knob in the middle and flower pattern stamps, were also discovered. Stone and glass items, including Roman-like ring

settings or intaglios, pendants, and mosaic glass, were among the findings.

The manufacture of ornaments from stone, glass, and gold indicates a high level of skill transfer, technology, raw materials, products, and processes for adjustment and development. Various techniques such as cutting, carving, drilling, polishing, and embellishing were employed in creating these ornaments. Products were traded in local and distant markets, and the evidence suggests that trade networks were systematically developed by high-level individuals with knowledge-seeking tendencies, socially organized by groups like craftsmen and merchants, involving both Indians and Southeast Asians with high religious, economic, and political status.

Detailed studies on ornaments found at Khao Sam Kaeo revealed four categories of production technology: South China Sea style from siliceous rocks, South China Sea style from jade stones, South Indian style from siliceous rocks, and Southeast Asian style. These techniques were blended by artisans, incorporating styles from various parts of Asia, indicating technical improvements and developments to meet market demand, involving aristocracy, great merchants, or stable elites connected to internal and external ruling classes. This competitive process led to the dissemination of techniques and knowledge among elites from many areas in the South China Sea, extending to China and India. Raw materials such as stone and glass came from various places like India, Taiwan, and the Philippines through regional networks, along with involvement from both local and non-local artisans. Glass, found in large quantities, was produced at Khao Sam Kaeo and imported from Northeastern India and Southern China. Beads and bracelets were likely made by artisans from India in a trading network with the Bay of Bengal and South China Sea regions, with Khao Sam Kaeo as the main producer for the Southeast Asian Market and beyond.

The archaeological findings at Khao Sam Kaeo include seals, intaglios with patterns and characters influenced by South Asia, and emblems



Fig. 138. Figurine stone and glass beads, form of flowers and animals found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.



Fig. 239. Figurine stone beads in animal form found at Tha Chana, Surat Thani Province, Thailand.



Fig. 140. Stone seals with Brahmi scripts found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.

prevalent in India during the late Maurya Dynasty to the Sunga Dynasty, along with Brahmi script from the 3rd – 1st cent. BCE continued to the 1st – 3rd cent. CE. These artifacts, known as Indian products of the South China Sea, display more Indian-like features than genuine Indian ones, especially when combined with a bronze seal from the Han Dynasty. These ornaments likely served purposes such as personal identifications, communication letters, or trade packaging, indicating the prosperity of ornamentation during that period. Notably, the star-shaped flowers and birds found at Khao Sam Kaeo resemble those found in the

stone chest containing Buddha's relics enshrined in the casket of the Lords of the Shakya Dynasty at Piprahwa, probably made during the era of King Ashoka the Great, 248 BCE. These artifacts were rarely found in India except at Sanchi and Taxila, suggesting that these star flowers might have been first crafted in India before the techniques and production were later transferred to Southeast Asia at Khao Sam Kaeo.



Fig. 241. Stone and glass beads, some with Triratna and Swastika symbol found at Phu Khao Thong, Ranong Province, Thailand.

Regarding gold, the discovery of an Indian goldsmith's touchstone from Tamil with an inscription dating back to the 3rd cent. CE at Khlong Thom is the oldest evidence showing that goldsmiths from India arrived to find gold and engage in its production since then. Evidence also suggests the production of numerous gold coins, possibly making it the first coin-production site in the region.



Fig. 142. Touching stone with Tamil scripts found at Kuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Thailand.



Fig. 143. Small gold coinage with many symbols, gold earrings and gold fragments found at Kuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Thailand.



Figs. 144. Metallic Pendants made of tin and gold in many steps of production and usage, imitating many Roman coinages. Found at Kuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Thailand.

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These traces of evidence demonstrate the development of science, technology, and production in the land of Suvarnabhumi, Southeast Asia, dating back 2,000 years. Even today, the region remains a significant production base for various industries such as food, clothing, and more. It serves as a transportation hub for land, sea, and air transport, with major cities like Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Jakarta, and Ho Chi Minh playing crucial roles in commercial activities, trade, and services, establishing Suvarnabhumi as an important junction and trading station to the world.

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Figs. 145. Metallic, stone and glass coinages, seals and sealings found at Bang Kluay Nok, Ranong Province, Thailand.



0 1cm

Fig. 146. Stone Intaglios and Cameos of Roman and Southern Asia art styles found at Bang Kluay Nok, Ranong Province, Thailand.

4 Commodity Trade and Services: An important trading hub for the world.

“The land of Suvarnabhumi was abundant in a wide variety of produce and products, which were considered rare and of the highest quality, making them highly sought after at a global level.”

The evidence from memoirs and records of various civilizations, such as Chinese, Indians, Greeks, Romans, and Arabs, along with ongoing archaeological research, confirms the origin and trade of these goods in the territory known as Chryse, Aurea, Suvarnabhumi, or Jinlin.

- **Some of the products from the sea** included tortoise shells, turtle shells, stingray tails, fish bones, shells, cowries, pearls, coral, dried fish, leeches, and seaweed. The tortoise shell from Chryse or Suvarnabhumi was especially renowned as the best, as stated in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* in the 1st cent. CE.
- **Forest plants and products** comprised various crops, fruits, Nipa palms, Sago palms, coconuts, cotton, vines, rattan, agarwood, Gaharu-wood, ebony, frankincense, incense sticks, oil, perfume, scented water, amber, propolis, palm oil, sap, bezoar, herbal medicine, rare herbs, spices, pepper, cloves, nutmeg, camphor, ginger, galangal, turmeric, cinnamon, mace, honey, shellac, cinnabar, fabric dye, indigo, and liquor. Good bezoar was specifically mentioned to come from Suvarnabhumi in the *Arthashastra* by Kautilya, the highest priest of the Maurya Dynasty in the 3rd cent. BCE.
- **Wildlife products** included tigers, elephants, elephant tusks, rhinoceros, rhinoceros horns, hides, horns, animal bones, carrion, hedgehog spines, birds, parrots, peacocks, white ravens, pheasants, feathers, kingfisher feathers, hawk beaks, and bird nests.
- **The region was also rich in minerals and precious metals** like gold, silver, tin, lead, iron, copper, bronze, antimony, sulfur, glass ingot, salt, and extracted dyes. Suvarnabhumi was especially known as the world’s largest source of tin.



Fig. 147. Gold bead with symbols found at Kuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Thailand.



Fig. 148. Gold ring with Triratna symbols found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.



Fig. 149. Small gold coinage with Figure and brahmi script found at Kuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Thailand.



Fig. 150 Tin Ingots in several style found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.

- **Gemstones, ornaments, and objects for worship** included jade, precious stones, colored stones with patterns, jewels, ruby, glass, opaque glass, beads, amulets, relics, and bodhi leaves. Evidence from the Han chronicles indicated expeditions to find such objects.
- **The land of Suvarnabhumi also played a significant role in the trade** of fiber and cloth, offering raw silk, silk thread, silk skeins, satin, silk fabric, muslin cloth, fine woven fabric, cotton fabric, asbestos fabric, embroidered fabric, carpets, and woven mats.
- **Various other goods were traded in Suvarnabhumi**, including metal utensils, cutting machines, hoes, armor, items made of ivory, incense stick burners, eunuchs, elephant trainers, and slaves.

The goods from Suvarnabhumi were highly valued and desired by elites in major civilizations of the time, and most of these products either originated in the region or had to pass through it.

Suvarnabhumi has been an active participant in world trade since the Metal Age, serving as the world's largest source of tin and an important source of gold. The trade routes from the Red Sea to the South China Sea facilitated the exchange of goods from one merchant to another, creating tiers of trade that eventually reached the end merchants without a single direct journey from origin to destination. Goods from Suvarnabhumi were highly valued luxury items, as evidenced in Greek and Indian archives, as well as the Han chronicles. During the Buddhist era, an urban center emerged in India, and the spread of Buddhism linked it to wealthy trade expeditions, with Suvarnabhumi being one of the prime targets. In the 1st cent. BCE. Arab traders established a monopoly in the Arabian Sea by leveraging their knowledge of Monsoon sea navigation, which allowed them to participate in the trade of spices, bezoar, gemstones, pearls, and other valuable commodities. This led to significant profits in the region of the Mediterranean Sea and the Roman Empire. Numerous civilizations and peoples were involved in this extensive trade network, including

Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Parthians, Indians, and Chinese, as well as the Malay, Kunlun, Cham, and Yue peoples, are referred to as “barbarians” by the Chinese. These diverse groups carried goods from one trip to another in a continuous flow throughout the trade route. In the 1st cent. CE, major port cities and prominent trading centers emerged, documented in Greek maritime treatises. Three trading stations and two port cities, particularly the Takola emporium near the mouth of the Khrysoanas River and the Sabara emporium near the mouth of the Palanda River, are mentioned. Dr. Saritpong Khunsong proposed the existence of a growth triangle port city at U Thong, Takola, and Funan during the 1st - 5th cent. CE, further illustrating the significance of Suvarnabhumi in the regional trade landscape. The flourishing trade and the exchange of valuable commodities contributed to the prosperity and cultural exchange in the region during this period.

It is plausible that a community or guild of merchants had already formed in Suvarnabhumi and accumulated wealth, similar to the development seen in India. According to the proposal put forth by Himanshu Prabha Ray, Buddhism, and trade were significant drivers of various social changes, impacting communities and elites who became leaders, aristocrats, or powerful individuals and established monopoly trades.

In India, Buddhism gradually evolved from an ideal into a social value system and became linked to the economic system, leading to the formation of a collective system known as the Sunga during the 3rd cent. BCE - 3rd cent. CE. Various activities such as joining the Patimokkha, attending the Uposot, participating in the Buddhist Lent, establishing temples and monasteries, and



Fig. 151. Stone moulds found at Phu Khao Thong, Ranong Province, Thailand.

sending out missions were connected to the Buddhist community, states, merchants, and the alms-giving system. Over time, Buddhism transitioned from Theravada through the Maha Sanghika to Mahayana.

Buddhism played a prominent role in promoting trade and driving the economy, both within India and beyond its borders. This pursuit of wealth was used to support the group and perform rituals, leading to the emergence of professional groups and trade associations instead of the traditional caste system. Buddhism played a vital role in creating networks within communities and cities along trade routes that spanned various river basins across Jambudvipa (the Indian subcontinent) and overseas.

Inscriptions, characters, and symbols associated with Buddhism spread to Southeast Asia during the 4th - 3rd cent. BCE. Here, Buddhism became the dominant religion among the upper classes, rulers, and merchants. Buddhist trade networks were open and connected with local people at all levels, and Buddhists played a crucial role in the dissemination and popularization of Buddhism throughout the region.

The combination of Buddhism and trade had a profound impact on the social, economic, and religious aspects of Suvarnabhumi and the broader Southeast Asian region, fostering cultural exchange

and contributing to the growth and development of societies during this period.

Suvarnabhumi operated as a well-organized system for collecting, procuring, and delivering raw materials and products through a comprehensive market and trading network. Dr. Berenice Bellina and Dr. Brigitte Borell's research supports this notion. The primary routes for goods transportation likely originated from the Mediterranean, starting from Alexandria and proceeding down the Nile. From there, the goods would cross the desert to reach the Red Sea port, such as Myos Hormos or Berenike, in Egypt. Crossing the Persian Gulf, the trade route would continue to Barygaza and Muziris and then round the tip of the South Asian Peninsula or India, possibly reaching Arikamedu, Sopatma, or Tamralipti in the Ganges and Huangzhi. Crossing the Bay of Bengal, the trade route would reach Fugandulu and eventually traverse the Kra Isthmus to reach Yilumo. From Yilumo, traders would take boats to Duyuan, Rinan, Hepu, and Xuwen before proceeding to Luoyang, the capital city of the Eastern Han Kingdom.

Crucial elements for the success of these trading routes were the systems of currency and communication that were in place during that time, as evident from various findings. The currency used in these trade transactions included coins from several territories, especially the Roman



Figs. 152. Metallic Coinages found at Kuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Thailand.

Empire, India, and China. For instance, examples of gold coins from Roman Emperor Domitian (81-96 CE) were found at Bang Kluay, while copper coins from Emperor Victorinus (269-271 CE) were found at U Thong. Additionally, punch mark coins were first used during the Buddha's era in India's Mahajanapadas, as well as copper coins from the period of the Satavahana Dynasty in the 2nd cent. CE, was also discovered. Moreover, the Satavahana bronze coins of a sailboat with two masts and a cow with a hump were found at Khlong Thom, providing further evidence of the ancient trading activities that took place in the region.

These discoveries and evidence shed light on the intricate trade networks that connected different territories and regions, including Suvarnabhumi, during ancient times. The complex interplay of currency, goods, and communication systems facilitated extensive trade and cultural exchange across the regions, contributing to the prosperity and interconnectedness of the ancient civilizations.

The archaeological findings at Khlong Thom reveal significant evidence of trade and currency use in the ancient region of Suvarnabhumi. Among the important discoveries are tin pendants and replica stone molds of coins from Roman Emperors Tiberius, Antonius Pius, and Commodus, found at different locations like Khlong Thom and Oc Eo. Dr. Brigitte Borell also proposed evidence of local currency production, which is considered the earliest in the area.

Regarding taxes, it is not explicitly stated in the records, but it is believed that a tax system was likely in place in Funan, similar to the Roman Empire, where taxes could be as high as 25 percent. Trade with the Roman Empire involved highly sought-after items that fetched exorbitant prices in far-flung markets. For example, pepper was extremely expensive, with one pound worth four denarii, equivalent to four days of labor. Despite the risks involved, traders pursued these valuable products because of the great profits they could make. The Roman Empire had a strong control system to manage trade, but it eventually faced challenges that led to its collapse.

For the large number of seals found, characters and symbols, were also discovered. These seals likely served as communication devices, permissions for passage, or trademarks, and are considered vital findings for understanding the trade practices of that era.

The list of items in demand and traded in Suvarnabhumi 2,000 years ago includes high-end products that were not only valuable in ancient times but remain expensive and scarce even today. The evidence points to Suvarnabhumi being a significant center of production and trade, connecting not only nearby regions but also distant lands. The trade network of Suvarnabhumi was extensive and encompassed various trade groups, associations, and organizations. Its communication systems and currency had been utilized since the Metal, Bronze, and Iron Ages, respectively, until the turning point in history marked by the beginning of the Maritime Silk Road.

Throughout history, the legacy of Suvarnabhumi as a center of trade, commodities, and services has been passed down to the present day. It is a region that has played a crucial role in the economic and cultural exchanges of the entire Southeast Asian region, spanning countries like Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. The significance of Suvarnabhumi's historical trade heritage continues to be valued across various levels and contexts in these modern-day countries.

The evidence points to Suvarnabhumi in Southeast Asia being a center of production and trade for high-end products that were in demand not only in ancient times but continue to be scarce and valuable today. Its role as a trade network connecting different regions of the world is evident in its communication systems and currency usage since the Metal, Bronze, and Iron Ages. This trade network has persisted throughout history and has shaped the development of art, culture, and civilization in the region.

5 Art, Culture and Civilization: A cradle of arts, culture, and civilization.

As mentioned from the beginning, the value of Suvarnabhumi is grounded in empirical evidence across various aspects, encompassing physical geography, natural resources, settlement and polity development, science and technology, as well as commercial activities, trade, and services. These factors have played crucial roles in the development of art and culture, as explained earlier, through the establishment of groups, cities, metropolises, and states. This, in turn, fostered the advancement of inventions, innovations, knowledge exchange, and the development of tools and equipment within the systematic trading networks that have been continuously linked through long journeys and markets, connecting people and major civilizations from prehistoric times to the turning point and the beginning of recorded history.

Suvarnabhumi's location and availability of resources have contributed to the accumulation of a great cultural and artistic heritage comprising both tangible and intangible elements. It has served as a junction for

human settlements, facilitating the evolution and development of cultural life. Over thousands of years, people have traveled to and from Suvarnabhumi, establishing contacts, interacting, and exchanging knowledge. From the stone and metal ages to the turning point in history, languages, characters, inscriptions, communication methods, and possibly archives, as mentioned in the Liang Dynasty's chronicles, have emerged. This has led to the cultivation of a shared cultural way of living, promoting friendliness, caring, and mutual exchange. People in the region have demonstrated readiness to welcome others, learning



Fig. 153. Faience with figures and scripts found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.



Fig. 154. Stone and glass beads found at Tha Chana, Surat Thani Province, Thailand.

from each other's value systems, faith, and religions. They organized the rules of states and exhibited a willingness for appropriate adjustments, ultimately adopting Buddhism as an initial base.

Moreover, the combination of lifestyle, food, clothing, body decorations, and the invention of art and fine arts have all contributed to the representation of a rich cultural heritage that has been passed down over the last 2,000 years. Suvarnabhumi's artistic and cultural legacy continues to thrive, encapsulating the essence of the region's history, traditions, and interactions with various civilizations.

Cultural Material from Indian Sub-continent, the Western world of South Asia,

numerous artifacts have been discovered, particularly containing high-class items such as oblations, precious ornaments, inscriptions, currency coins, and vessels. These findings further emphasize the cultural and artistic significance of Suvarnabhumi in ancient times. The evidence suggests that Suvarnabhumi was not only a thriving center of trade but also a cradle of arts, culture, and great civilization, contributing to its importance in the region's history and development.

- **Ring stones and disc stones** dating Maurya-Sunga period: The discovery of ring stones and disc stones dating back to the Maurya-Sunga period, during the 3rd - 1st cent. BCE, at Khao Sam Kaeo and Kha Maoyee, offers important evidence related to the faith and beliefs of Indian culture in Southeast Asia. Both cultural materials depict images of ancient Indian auspicious symbols, including Triratna (the Three Jewels of Buddhism) and Nagapushpa (a flower associated with abundance), alongside influences from Near Eastern and Greek art. Among these findings, a significant item is a thin gold leaf with embossed marks resembling the patterns on disc stones, likely used as a mold for creating gold leaves.

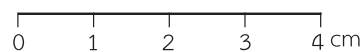


Fig. 155. Mauraya-Sunga stone disc found at Khamao Yee, Southern Myanmar.



Fig. 156. Gold repousse similar to the Mauraya-Sunga stone disc found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.



Fig. 157. Mauraya-Sunga stone ring found at Ta Tapao river, Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.

- The next category of important evidence consists of **stone caskets, sculptures, vessels** for auspicious occasions, **bronze bowls** depicting rows of animal figures, and various building structures. Notably, male and female figures found in these artifacts are considered the oldest portraits discovered in Southeast Asia. Additionally, griffin figures originating from northwestern South Asia provide evidence of the presence of Buddhism 2,000 years ago. These griffin figures possibly suggest the arrival of Buddhism from the western Sunga culture, which was a prominent center of Buddhism during the 1st cent. BCE - 1st cent. CE. This discovery is considered one of the earliest pieces of evidence supporting the existence of Buddhism in this region.

Furthermore, several fragments of stone vessels have been found, and they bear a resemblance to the stone caskets used to enshrine relics in Buddhist stupas found in South Asia. Many of these fragments are carved in the art style of the Sunga period, further supporting the presence and influence of Buddhism during that era.

Overall, these archaeological discoveries provide valuable insights into the religious and cultural connections between India and Southeast Asia during ancient times. The artifacts reveal the transmission of Indian beliefs, particularly Buddhism, to the region, shaping the artistic expressions and cultural practices of the people in Southeast Asia.



0 1 2 3 cm

Fig. 158. Fragments of stone casket found at Southernmost Southern Myanmar.



0 1 2 3 4 5 cm

Fig. 159. Fragments of stone casket, mould and seal found at Tha Chana, Surat Thani Province, Thailand.



Fig. 160. Fragments of stone casket and rouletted earthenware found at Khamao Yee, Southern Myanmar.



Fig. 161. High Tin Bronze bowls with ancient Indian art style engraved on the outer surface found at Ta Tapao river, Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.

- Another group of evidence comprises oblations and remembrance symbols related to religion and faith, taking the form of **beads, seals, and symbol pendants**, many of which exhibit characteristics that are “more Indian-like than real Indians.” These symbols were prevalent in India during the late Maurya to Sunga dynasties and are often found in the enshrining of Buddha’s relics and other sacred relics at ancient Indian Mahastupas.



Fig. 162. Fugurine stone and glass beads found at Phu Khao Thong, Ranong Province, Thailand (above) and Southern Myanmar (lower).

- In addition, **ornaments, decorations, and adornments, including the Golden Sunga earring** discovered at Kha Maoyee, feature intricate patterns with figures of humans and auspicious animals such as lions and elephants. These artifacts also bear traces of Indian, Persian, and Greek civilizations. Comparisons can be drawn between these items and the earrings depicted in the stone sculptures of Chakra Vatin at Jaggayyapeta Mahastupa in Andhra Pradesh and the donor figure of Bharhut Mahastupa from the 5th Buddhist century. These objects represent taste, wealth, social status, class, craftsmanship, and more within the region.



Fig. 163. Triratna pendants found in Southern Myanmar.



Figs. 164. Gold earrings found at Khamao Yee, Southern Myanmar.



Figs. 165. Gold Adornments and fragments of gold found at Southern Myanmar (above) and Phu Khao Thong, Ranong Province, Thailand. (lower).

- Furthermore, various characters, inscriptions, and currency coins have been found, including Karshapana coins dating back to the Mahajanapadas period, as well as coins from various regions in India and several states and dynasties of Sri Lanka during the first millennium. Numerous Brahmi script inscriptions appear on intaglios, seals and other objects, providing valuable insights into the ancient script used in the region.



Figs. 166. Seal with Brahmi scripts and punch mark coinages found at (1) Tha Chana, Surat Thani Province (2) Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province (3) Southern Myanmar (4,6) Kuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province (5) Bang Kluay Nok, Ranong Province.



Fig. 167. Rectangular bronze similar to coinage, some with elephant and lion figure, found at Khuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Thailand.



(obverse)



(reverse)

Figs. 168. Rectangular bronze with human and animal figure similar to coinage, found at Khuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Thailand. (obverse and reverse).

- The last category of evidence from South Asia includes vessels and pottery from India, particularly the fine-textured type and rouletted wares with and without pattern stamping. These knobbed vessels are stamped with flower patterns and other designs. Recent research has also uncovered large jugs that were likely used in various rituals, shedding light on the ancient practices and cultural traditions of the region. All of these findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural connections between South Asia and Southeast Asia, particularly regarding the spread of Buddhism and the exchange of artistic and religious influences.



Figs. 169. Rouletted and lotus ware found at Southern Myanmar and Phu Khao Thong, Ranong Province, Thailand.

The evidence from the far western region to the Greek and Roman territories includes various artifacts and objects that highlight the connections and influences of these civilizations on Suvarnabhumi in Southeast Asia.

- Coins and replica coin pendants of the Roman Empire's emperors have been found at various sites, indicating the presence of Roman influence and trade in the region. Gold coins of Emperor Domitian (81-96 CE.) were found at Bang Kluay, copper coins of Emperor Victorinus (269-271 CE.) were found at U Thong, tin pendants, and stone molds for replica coins of Emperor Tiberius (14-37 CE.) found at Khlong Thom, replica coin pendants of Emperor Antonius

Pius (138-161 CE) found at Oc Eo and Khlong Thom, and replica coins of Emperor Commodus (180-192 CE.) found at Oc Eo, all suggest direct or indirect connections with the Roman world.

- Seals, intaglios, and pendants with the figure of gods and goddesses from the Roman world have been found in large numbers, indicating the adoption and influence of Roman religious and cultural symbols.
- Glass vessels and ornaments decorated with delicate mosaic techniques, often depicting faces or people, also indicate the presence of Roman craftsmanship and artistic influence.



Fig. 170. Tin and gold pendant imitating the Roman coin found at Khuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom (2 upper rows), Krabi Province, Thailand and Oc Eo (lower row), southern Vietnam.



Fig. 171. Stone Intaglios and Cameos found at Southern Myanmar.



Fig. 172. Stone Intaglios and Cameos found in Southern Thailand.

- Overall, the evidence suggests a rich cultural exchange and interconnectedness between Suvarnabhumi in Southeast Asia and the far western regions, including the Greek and Roman territories. These findings highlight the significance of Suvarnabhumi as a center of trade, cultural exchange, and civilization, connecting diverse regions and civilizations from ancient times.



Fig. 173. Mosaic glass face beads found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province (right) and Khamao Yee, Southern Myanmar (left).



Fig. 174. Mosaic glass beads found at Tha Chana, Surat Thani Province, Thailand.



Fig. 175. Mosaic glass beads and fragments of bowl, with fragments of other style of stone and glass bowls found at Phu Khao Thong, Ranong Province, Thailand.

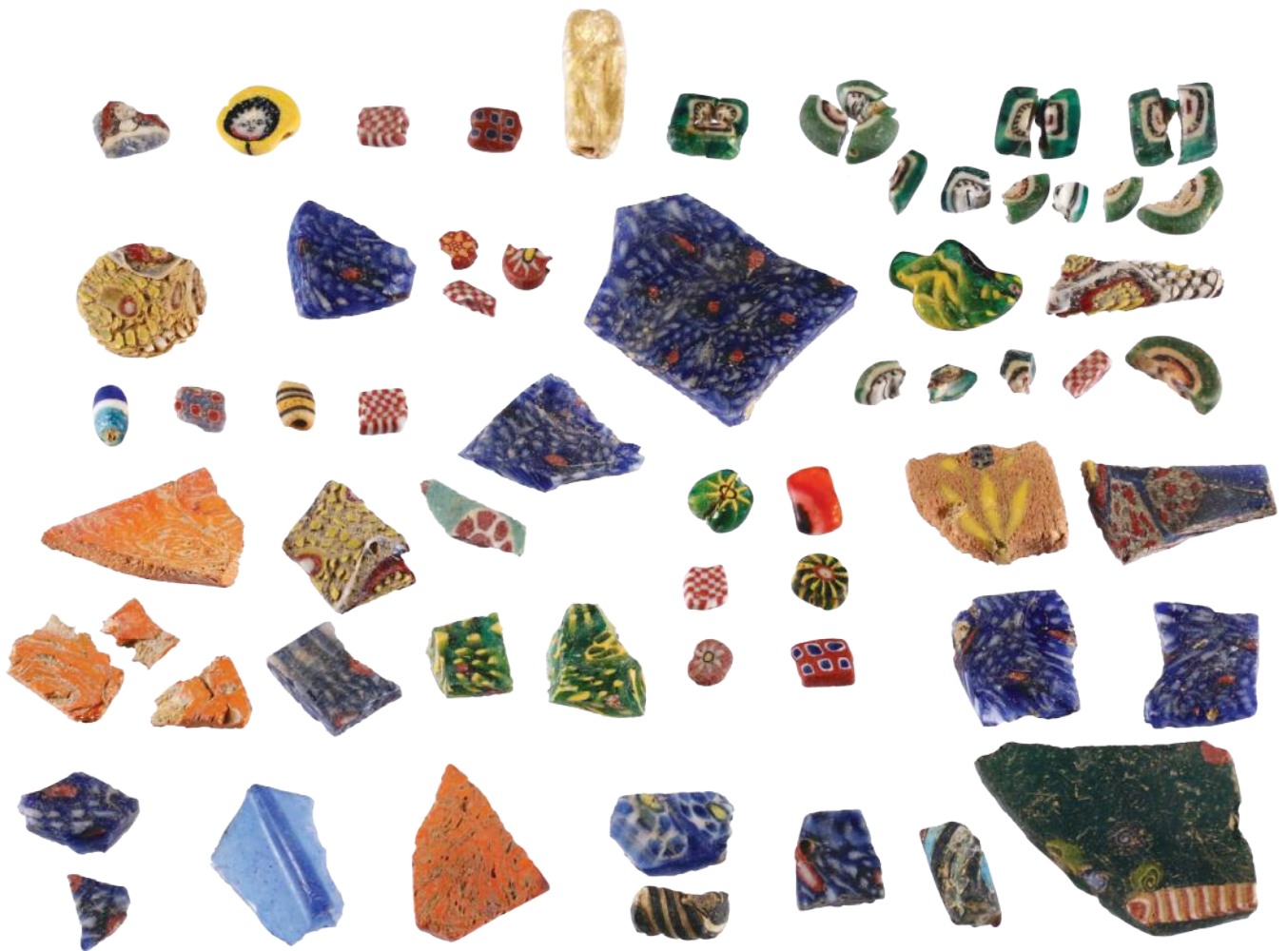


Fig. 176. Mosaic glass beads and fragments of bowl, with fragments of other style of glass bead and bowl found at Southern Myanmar.

The Eastern World, China

The evidence of Chinese presence in the region of Suvarnabhumi during the Han Dynasty includes the discovery of various utensils and artifacts. Bronze wares, seals, mirrors, and parts of different items from China have been found, indicating trade and cultural exchanges between China and Suvarnabhumi.



Figs. 177. Bronze fragments including Chinese Mirror and part of Sahuyh bicephalous glass ependant found in Southern Thailand.



0 1 cm

Fig. 178. Bronze mirror found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province.



0 1 cm

Fig. 179. Bronze fragments including Chinese mirror and belt hook found at Tha Chana, Surat Thani Province, Thailand.

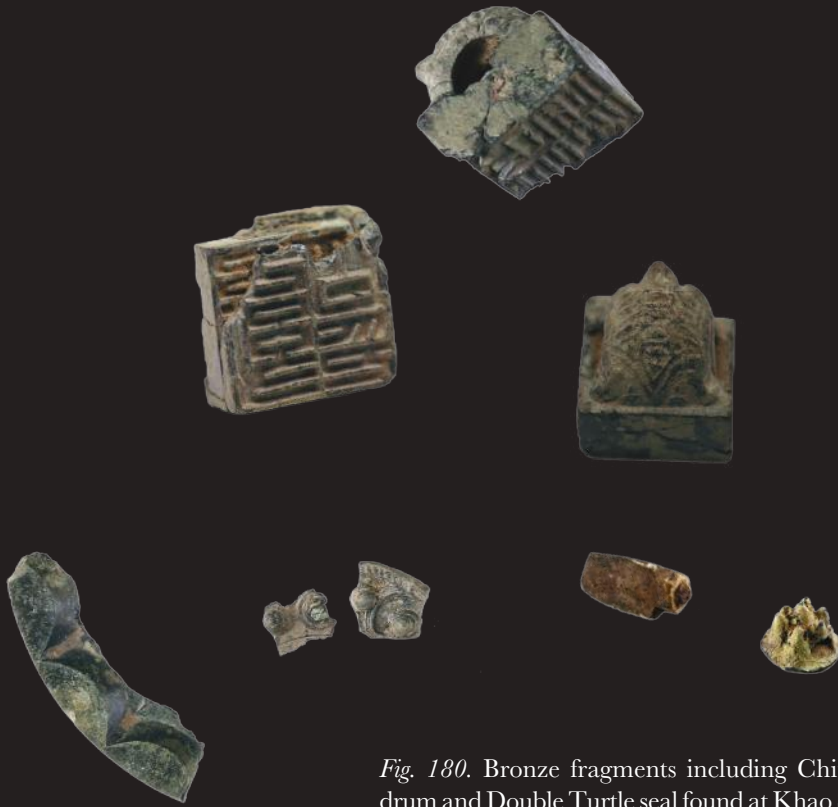


Fig. 180. Bronze fragments including Chinese mirror, Dongson drum and Double Turtle seal found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.



- Notably, the vessels and Chinese wares from the Han Dynasty period were primarily discovered outside mainland China. These artifacts represent different styles, with distinct influences from South Chinese, east Chinese, and North Vietnamese cultures. This suggests that trade networks and cultural interactions extended beyond China's borders and reached the Southeast Asian territories of Suvarnabhumi.
- The presence of Chinese artifacts in Suvarnabhumi during the Han Dynasty reflects the region's significance as a trading hub and a center of cultural exchange. It highlights the extensive maritime trade routes that connected China with Southeast Asia, facilitating the movement of goods, ideas, and technologies between the two regions. This historical evidence underscores the role of Suvarnabhumi in fostering cross-cultural connections and shaping the development of art, trade, and civilization in ancient times.



Fig. 181. Han period terracotta tile end found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.



Fig. 182. Han period terracotta stone ware found at Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province and Tha Chana, Surat Thani Province, Thailand.

Land of Suvarnabhumi, Southeast Asia

The evidence from the region of Suvarnabhumi in Southeast Asia has a rich cultural and artistic heritage that has been accumulated over almost 2,000 years. Various cultures, such as Dong Son, Sa Huynh, and Kalanay, have contributed to this heritage, leaving behind tangible artifacts and intangible aspects that define the identity of Suvarnabhumi.

- Bronze wares from the Dong Son culture, including bronze drums and other vessels, showcase the advanced metallurgical skills of ancient Southeast Asian civilizations. Ornamentation and decorations, such as earrings and ornaments from the Sa Huynh culture of the South China Sea, demonstrate the artistic and aesthetic tastes of the people in the region. Additionally, gold adornments and beads with unique features produced in the upper Thailand Peninsula at the Kra Isthmus exhibit the diverse artistic styles that existed in Suvarnabhumi.



Fig. 183. Stone and glass adornment of Sahuynh Culture found at Khao Sam Kaeo, raw material in block, roughout, unfinished, finished and waste.



Fig. 184. Fragments of Dongson bronze bowl found at Ta Tapao river, Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.

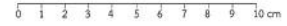
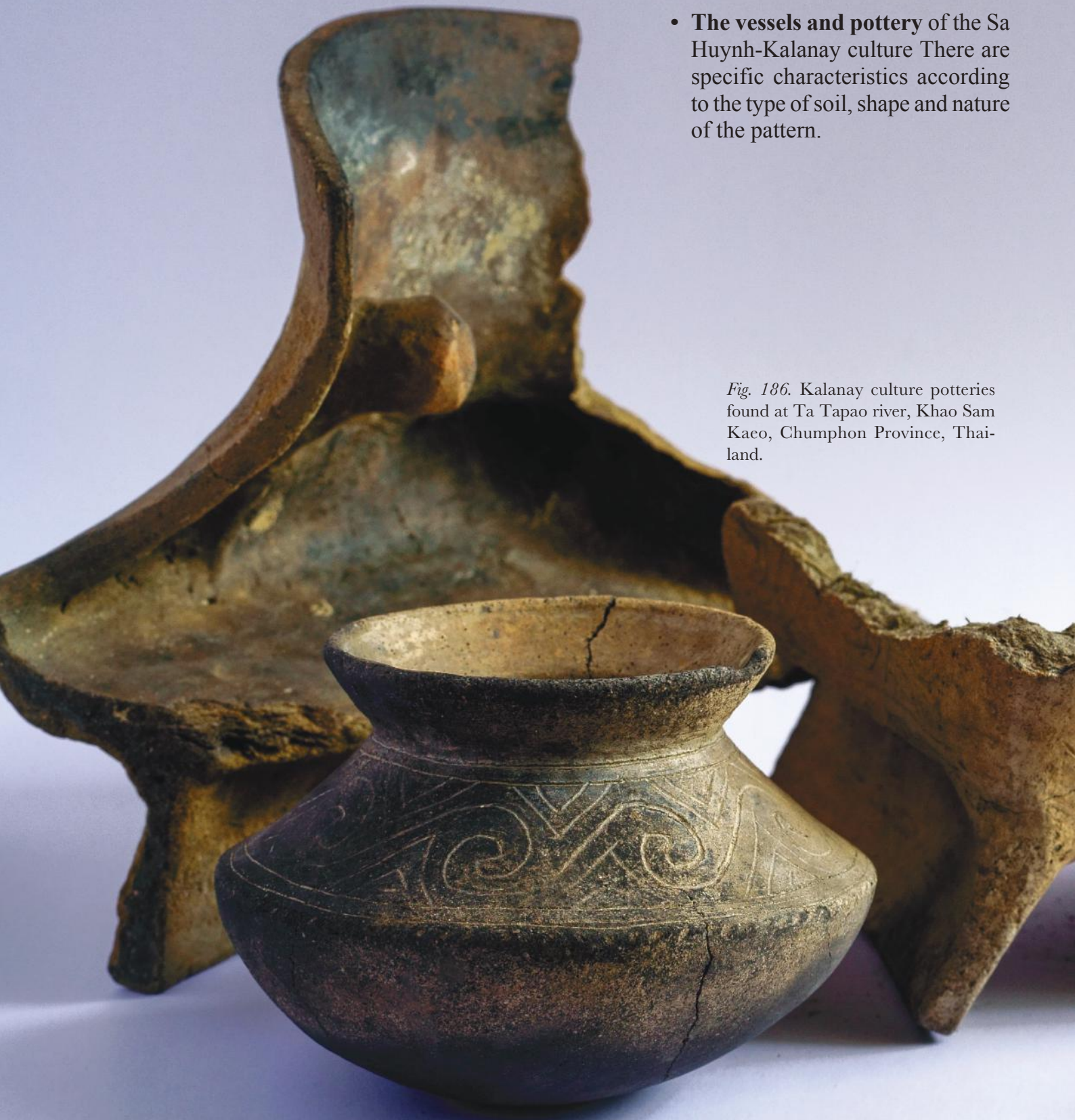


Fig. 185. Fragments of Dongson Bronze Drum found at Ta Tapao river, Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.



- **The vessels and pottery** of the Sa Huynh-Kalanay culture There are specific characteristics according to the type of soil, shape and nature of the pattern.

Fig. 186. Kalanay culture potteries found at Ta Tapao river, Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.



Figs. 187. Kalanay culture potteries found at Ta Tapao river, Khao Sam Kaeo, Chumphon Province, Thailand.

Suvarnabhumi Heritage

The heritage and value of Suvarnabhumi in Southeast Asia can be summarized into five aspects:

- **Physical Geography and Resources:** Suvarnabhumi is strategically located as a bridge connecting different regions, making it a hub for trade and the exchange of valuable goods and resources.
- **Settlement and Polity Development:** The region has been a place of settlement and trading, leading to the formation of various towns, cities, states, and kingdoms over time.
- **Science and Technology:** Suvarnabhumi has been a center for the exchange and accumulation of scientific knowledge, technology, and important production, contributing to advancements in various fields.
- **Trade, Commerce, and Services:** Suvarnabhumi has historically served as an important junction and trading station, facilitating commercial activities, trade networks, and services between different regions and civilizations.
- **Arts, Culture, and Great Civilization:** The region has been a cradle of art, culture, and great civilization, with a rich heritage of traditions, fine arts, and cultural exchange between different cultures and civilizations.

These five dimensions encompass the historical, cultural, and economic significance of Suvarnabhumi in Southeast Asia, highlighting its role as a vibrant and influential region throughout history and continuing into the present and future as an important part of the ASEAN Community.

Beyond the tangible artifacts, the intangible aspects of Suvarnabhumi's cultural heritage are equally significant. The region's history as a junction for trade and settlement has fostered a diverse and open-minded society characterized by friendly, caring, and welcoming people. This welcoming nature has contributed to the growth of tourism, with Suvarnabhumi attracting visitors from around the world. Despite the diverse cultures and influences, the people of Suvarnabhumi have maintained a strong local identity, rooted in their value systems, religions, and organizing rules of the state.

Buddhism remains a fundamental part of the region's identity and is deeply rooted in the continent. Moreover, the lower peninsula and islands have embraced the systems of Islamic and Christian values, reflecting the religious diversity of Suvarnabhumi.

The combination of lifestyle, food, clothing, body decorations, and artistic traditions has made Suvarnabhumi a fascinating and charming place. The region's fine arts and cultural expressions continue to captivate people today, preserving and celebrating its rich heritage.

In summary, the immense cultural and artistic heritage of Suvarnabhumi, both tangible and intangible, has been shaped by the influences of various cultures and civilizations over the centuries. It stands as a testament to the region's history as a center of trade, cultural exchange, and artistic innovation, and it remains a vibrant and culturally diverse place that will continue to shape its future.



Fig. 188. Bronze mirrors and Triratna - Trident symbol found at Khuan Luk Pad, Khlong Thom, Krabi Province, Thailand.

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**Sailing into Suvarṇabhūmi:
View from Jatakas and In-
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โครงการวิจัยภูมิสถานชายฝั่งทะเล
โบราณ เมืองท่า เส้นทางการค้า และ
ความเชื่อมโยงกับการตั้งถิ่นฐานแรก
เริ่มในประเทศไทยในบริบทของภูมิ

อารยธรรมสุวรรณภูมิ โดยผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์ชวลิต
ขาวเขียวและคณะ แห่งคณะโบราณคดี มหาวิทยาลัย
ศิลปากร

เอกสารอ้างอิง

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พระราชพิธีมหามงคลเฉลิมพระชนมพรรษา ๗ รอบ ๕ ธันวาคม
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A Roman gold coin found in Peninsular Thailand.

By Dr. Brigitte Borrell

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สุวรรณภูมิคือดินแดนตามเส้นทาง
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Many Lands of Gold by Peter Skilling (Bhadra Rujirathat ภักธรุจิรทรรศน์)

In-text citation

¹ To paraphrase William Hazlitt, ‘On the Ignorance of the Learned’, from W.E. Williams, *A Book of English Essays*, Penguin Books, London, [1951] 1987, p. 151.

² A classic inventory of literary and epigraphic sources is that given by R.C. Majumdar in his *Suvarṇadvīpa: Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East* (2 vols., first published at Calcutta, 1937–38; repr. Gian Publishing House, Delhi, 1986), especially Book I, Chap. IV. Kernial Singh Sandhu, in his *Early Malaysia: Some observations on the nature of Indian contacts with pre-British Malaya* (University Education Press, Singapore, 1973), pp. 76–86, gives a useful Appendix on ‘Indian Records relating to Malaya and the rest of Southeast Asia prior to AD 1500’. For a more recent study of this question, with analysis of earlier research, see Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, *The Ascendancy of Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia*, Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, 2010, especially Chap. 3. The bibliography of Suvarṇabhūmi is vast and it is not my intention to attempt regurgitate it here.

³ Sanskrit is an inflected language, and the case ending is not clear in the photo (blown up on the computer from the newspaper photograph).

⁴ My own earlier contributions are Peter Skilling, ‘Two Ports of Suvarṇabhūmi: A brief Note’, *Journal of the Siam Society* 80.1 (1992), p. 131, and ‘Dharmakīrti’s *Durbodhāloka* and the Literature of Śrīvijaya’, *Journal of the Siam Society* 85 (1997), pp. 187–194.

⁵ I will give more examples below.

⁶ Somadeva, *Océan des rivières de contes*, édition publiée sous la direction de Nalini Balbir avec la collaboration de Mildrède Besnard, Lucien Billoux, Sylvain Brocquet, Colette Caillat, Christine Chojnacki, Jean Fezas et Jean-Pierre Osier, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, Paris, 1997, p. 600 (*araṅga* 54, vv. 97 seq.).

⁷ P. Skilling, ‘The Geography of Pali and Ānanda Ācariya’, paper presented at the conference ‘From Vijayapura to Śrīkṣetra? The beginnings of Buddhist exchange across the Bay of Bengal’, Pondicheri, 31 July–4 August, 2017. It is included as Kalaśavarapura among the holy sites in the illuminated *Perfection of Wisdom* manuscripts discussed below.

⁸ Peter Skilling, ‘An Untraced Buddhist Verse Inscription from (Pen)insular Southeast Asia,’ in D. Christian Lammerts (ed.), *Buddhist Dynamics in Premodern and Early Modern Southeast Asia*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 2015, pp. 18–79.

⁹ Peter Skilling, ‘*Sāgaramati-pariprcchā* Inscriptions from Kedah, Malaysia’, in *Reading Slowly: A Festschrift for Jens E. Braarvig*,

edited by Lutz Edzard, Jens. W. Borgland, and Ute Hüsken, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2018, pp. 433–460.

¹⁰ Peter Khoroché (tr.), *Once the Buddha Was a Monkey: Ārya Śūra’s Jātakamālā*, The University of Chicago Press, 1989, p. 99 and p. 263, n. 6, *suvarṇabhūmipattanadvayaṃ laṅkāśobhaḥ kaṭāhadvīpaṃ ca*. Khoroché suggest that ‘the two ports in question are perhaps the port of departure, Bhārukaccha, and the port of destination in Suvarṇabhūmi’. Even if this is the poet’s intent, the *Ṭīkā* shows the commentator’s knowledge of two peninsular ports linking up to a trans-shipment route. For a note on the *Ṭīkā*, see Peter Khoroché, ‘Jātakamālāṭīkā’, *South Asian Studies* Vol. 1 (1985), pp. 63–66. See further Skilling ‘Two Ports of Suvarṇabhūmi: A brief note’.

¹¹ *Deśavarṇana (Nāgarakṛtāgama)* by Mpu Prapañca, translated by Stuart Robson, KITLV Press, Leiden, 1995, Canto 15.1, p. 34.

¹² *Deśavarṇana* Canto 14.2, p. 34.

¹³ N.A. Jayawickrama, tr., *The Sheaf of Garlands of the Epochs of the Conqueror, being a translation of Jīnakālamāliṅpakaraṇaṃ of Ratana-pañña Thera of Thailand*, The Pali Text Society, London, [1968] 1978, p. 121; *Jīnakālamāli*, transcribed from a Siamese text and edited by Aggamahāpaṇḍita A.P. Buddhadatta,

The Pali Text Society, London, 1962, p. 87.15, *jambudīpe pubba-dakkhiṇa-disantarāle syāmadese eko rocarājā nāma sukhodayapure rajjaṃ kāresi*. I follow the tradition that the title is *Jīnakālamālinī*.

¹⁴ The meaning and extent of Jambudvīpa can be ambiguous. It can be South and Southeast Asia writ large, as in the *Jīnakālamālinī*, or it can be the continent of India—for example in the Pali chronicles of Sri Lanka, in which the island of Lanka is presented as outside of Jambudvīpa (the Pali form), which is the Indian subcontinent properly speaking: people can come from Jambudvīpa to the island or go from the island to Jambudvīpa.

¹⁵ See the classic Prasert Na Nagara and A.B. Griswold, *Epigraphic and Historical Studies*, Bangkok, The Historical Society under the Royal Patronage of H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, 1992, ‘The Inscription of King Rāma Gaṃhèn of Sukhodaya (1292 A.D.) (Epigraphic and Historical Studies No. 9), pp. 241–290 and figures; text p. 264, line 20–21; translation pp. 280–281, and, more recently, Barend Jan Terwiel, *The Ram Khamhaeng Inscription: The fake that did not come true*, Ostasien Verlag, Gossenberg (Reihe Gelbe Erder 5), 2010, pp. 94 and 101.

¹⁶ Face 4, lines 20–21.

¹⁷ See Terwiel, pp. 50–53 on the geopolitics of the cities mentioned.

¹⁸ It is number ChaN 13 (จน 13), published as Inscription no. 48 in *Prachum Silachareuk Part 3* (ประชุมศิลาจารึก ภาค 3), no. 44/2499; *Chareuk nai prathet Thai*, Vol.5, National Libiary, The Fine Arts Department, Bankok, 2529 [1986], pp. 77–84, read by Cham Thongkhamwan (จารึกในประเทศไทย เล่ม 5); ‘Charuek lanthong Wat Song Khob 1’ (จารึกลานทองวัดสองคม 1); in Santi Pakdeekham, *Prawatisat Ayuthaya chak chareuk: Chareuk samai Ayuthaya*, Bangkok, Samakhom Prawatisat nai Phra Ratchupatham, 2561 [2018] (สถานศึกษาอักษรอยุธยาจารึก: จารึกสมัยอยุธยา, กรุงเทพฯ: สมาคมประวัติศาสตร์ในพระราชูปถัมภ์, 2561), pp. 111–120. For the publication history, see p. 113.

¹⁹ Side 1, line 6.

²⁰ Side 2, line 3.

²¹ *Jinakālamālī* (Pali, ed. Buddhadatta), p. 87 foll.; *Epochs of the Conqueror* (English tr.), pp. 123 foll. For references, see Hans Pentz, *Jinakālamālī Index*, The Pali Text Society, Oxford/Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, 1994, pp. 189–190.

²² *Epigraphic and Historical Studies*, p. 281, n. 130.

²³ See Jason A. Carbine, ‘Sāsanasuddhi:Sīmāsammuti: Comments on a Spatial Basis of the Buddha’s Religion’, in *How Theravāda Is Theravāda? Exploring Buddhist Identities*, Edited by Peter Skilling, Jason A. Carbine, Claudio Cicuzza, and Santi Pakdeekham, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 2012, pp. 241–273; *ibid.*, ‘How King Rāmādhipati Handled His Boundary Case: *Sīmā*, *Sāsana*, and Buddhist Law’, *Buddhism, Law & Society*, vol. 1 (2015–2016), pp. 105–164.

²⁴ Taw Sein Ko, tr., *The Kalyāṇī Inscriptions Erected by King Dhammaceti at Pegu in 1476 A.D.*, Bangkok, Bangkok Times Press Limited, 1925, especially pp. 1–6.

²⁵ This is the implication of Michael A. Aung-Twin, *The Mists of Rāmañña: The Legend That Was Lower Burma*, University of Hawai’i Press, Honolulu, 2005, pp. 67–78 et passim.

²⁶ For Suphanburi, see *The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen, Siam’s Great Folk Epic of Love and War*, translated and edited by Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, illustrated by Muangsing Janchai, Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai, 2010, pp. 915–920.

²⁷ *The Memoirs and Memorials of Jacques de Coutre: Security, Trade and Society in 16th- and 17th-century Southeast Asia*, edited with an Introduction by Peter Borschberg, translated by Roopanjali Roy, NUS Press Singapore, 2014, pp. 121–122 (see also p. 379).

²⁸ *Phra ratchahatthalekha ruang sadetpraphat lam-nam makhām tao mua pho. so. 2451*, third printing, The Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, 2561, p. 31. I thank Santi Pakdeekham for pointing the passages out to me.

²⁹ This section draws on my earlier ‘Geographies of Intertextuality: Buddhist Literature in Pre-modern Siam’, *Aséanie - Sciences humaines en Asie du Sud-est* 19 (June 2007), pp. 91–112.

Note that the name Dharmakīrti was not uncommon, and there were several figures with the name among South and Southeast Asian intellectuals. The author of the *Durbodhāloka* is centuries later than the ‘profound and rigorous philosopher of Indian Buddhism’ (circa sixth-century, for whom see Tom Tillemans, ‘Dharmakīrti’, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/dharmakīrti/>>. The two should not be conflated.

³⁰ The full Sanskrit title of the work is *Abhisamayālaṃkāra-nāma-prajñāpāramitopadeśasāstra-vṛtti-durbodhāloka-nāma-tīkā*.

³¹ The name of the city is made up of *śrī*, glorious + *vijaya*, victory. It can be interpreted, here and below, as a single unit, *śrīvijaya*, or with *śrī* as an adjective, qualifying the city of Vijaya. Vijaya as the name of a city (Vijayapura, for example) is well attested in Indian history. The question of the relationship between the

‘glorious city’ here and the famed ‘empire of Śrīvijaya’ cannot be easily solved. Taking account of the difficulties arising if the two names are taken to mean the same place, I interpret the city’s name as Vijaya,

³² For an earlier study of the colophon, see Skilling, ‘Dharmakīrti’s *Durbodhāloka* and the Literature of Śrīvijaya’.

³³ For convenience see Coedès *Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, pp. 141–144. I do not necessarily accept all of Coedès’ interpretations.

³⁴ See Giuseppe Tucci, *Rin-chen-bzari-po and the Renaissance of Buddhism in Tibet around the Millennium*, New Delhi, Aditya Prakashan, 1988 (*Śata-pīṭaka Series, Indo-Asian Literatures*, Vol. 348) (first published in Italian, Roma: Reale Accademia d’Italia, Nov. 1932; English translation by Nancy Kipp Smith under the direction of Thomas J. Pritzker, edited by Lokesh Chandra).

³⁵ *tshig don rtogs par dka’ ba yi || de nyid snang ba zhes bya ba || bdag gis sbyar ‘di byas gyur pas || ma ‘tshal dam pas bzod par mdzod || bsod nams ‘di yis ‘gro ba kum || shes rab pha rol phyin dngos shog || bdag kyang nam mkha’i dbyings ‘dra bar || sems can don ni byed gyur cig || dpal ldan rnam rgyal nyams dga’i gnas || rgyal po dpal ldan gtsug nor bu || go chas chos kyi grags dpal la || gsol ba tibab pas snang bar byas ||*.

³⁶ *gser gling gi dpal rnam par rgyal ba’i grong du lha dpal gtsug gi nor bu’i go cha rgyal po’i ring lo tshigs bcu pa las dpyid zla ra ba’i tshes bcu gcig la mdzad pa | rtogs par dka’ ba’i snang ba zhes bya ba rdzogs so ||*.

³⁷ *rgya gar gyi mkhan po dī paṃ ka ra shrī dznyā na dang | sgra bsgyur gyi lo tsā ba chen po dge slong rin chen bzang pos bgyur cing zhus te gdam la phab pa’o ||* Narthang and Peking editions only add *‘dis kyang bstan pa rin po che rgyas par byed nus par gyur cig | shubham |*.

³⁸ For a transcription see L.-C. Damais, ‘Études d’épigraphie indonésienne.- IV. Discussion de la date des inscriptions’, *Bulletin de l’Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient*, 47 (1) (1955), pp. 99–101. Also N.J. Krom, ‘Een Sumatraansche inscriptie van koning Kṛtanagara’ *Verslagen en Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, afd. Letterkunde*, 5de reeks, 2, 1917, pp. 306–339 (not seen). For the image see, *Sumatra: Crossroads of Cultures*, edited by Francine Brinkgreve and Retno Sulistianingsih, KITLV Press, Leiden, 2009, pp. 89–90 and figs. 6.3, 6.4; Natasha Reichle, *Violence and Serenity: Late Buddhist Sculpture from Indonesia*, University of Hawai’i Press, Honolulu, 2007, pp. 120–132.

³⁹ Hiranand Sastri, ‘The Nalanda Copper-plate of Devapaladeva’, *Epigraphia Indica* XVII (1923–24), pp. 310–327; Hiranand Sastri, *Nālandā and Its Epigraphic Material* (Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India no. 66), Delhi, 1942, pp. 92–102.

⁴⁰ See A. Foucher, *Étude sur l’iconographie bouddhique de l’Inde d’après des documents nouveaux*, Ernest Leroux, Paris, 1900, ‘Catalogue’, pp. 189–214, and Jinah Kim, ‘Painted palm-leaf manuscripts and the Art of the Book in medieval South Asia’, *Archives of Asian Art* 65.2 (2015), pp. 57–86. The Sanskrit names given in the following are taken from the manuscript.

⁴¹ The meaning of *āriṣasthāna*, which occurs with variants in the ‘captions’ of many of the miniatures, has not been satisfactorily

explained.

⁴² That the authors may be drawing on a common source (and this is a complex question that needs further research) does not lessen the significance of the lists insofar as they point to a consciously shared geographical vision.

⁴³ E. Obermiller, tr., *History of Buddhism (Chos-hbyung)* by Bu-ston, II. Part, *The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*, Heidelberg, 1932, p. 171. See also Lisa Stein and Ngawang Zangpo, tr., *Butön's History of Buddhism in India and Its Spread to Tibet: A Treasury of Priceless Scripture*, Boston & London, Snow Lion, 2013, p. 266. I follow the Tibetan text in Rdo rje rgyal po, ed., *Bu ston chos 'byung*, Krung go bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1988, p. 172.19 foll. *rug ma dang | ram ma dang | zangs gling dang | singa la'i gling dang | phri yang ku'i gling dang | ya mu na'i gling dang | gser gling dang | zla ba'i gling dang | ma kha dang | kha sha dang |*. The identification of all of the places is not clear: Priyaṅgudvīpa may be the same as Pa yi gu, that is, the Mon center of Pegu in lower Burma.

⁴⁴ Tibetan after Antonius Schiefner, ed., *Tāranāthae de doctrinae buddhicae in india propagatione narratio. Contextum tibeticum e codicibus petropolitanis*, p. 200.16. *singa la'i gling dang nas gling dang | zangs gling dang | gser gling dang | dhanaśrī gling dang | pa yi gu zhes bya ba'i gling phran de dag rnams*. Translations in Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, ed., *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*, translated from the Tibetan by Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, KP Bagchi and Company, Calcutta, 1980, p. 332; Anton Schiefner, *Tāranātha's Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien aus dem tibetischen uebersetzt*, St. Petersburg, 1869, pp. 263–264. See further commentary and identifications in Nihar-Ranjan Ray, *Sanskrit Buddhism in Burma*, H.J. Paris, Amsterdam, 1936, pp. 72–87.

⁴⁵ Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2006, p. 16.

⁴⁶ Romila Thapar, *The Past as Present: Forging Contemporary Identities Through History*, Aleph, New Delhi, 2014, pp. 234, 237.

⁴⁷ For Mt. Malaya, see Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, vol. II, pp. 448–449.

⁴⁸ Derge Tanjur, Cat. no. 4199, *Spring yig, nge*, translated circa 800 CE by Jinamitra and Ye shes sde. I follow the *Dpe bsdur ma* edition, vol. 96, p. 1014.2–9: *ka ling ga dang | barba dang | ya ba na'i gling (var. nas gling) dang | sing ga la'i gling dang | ka la sa'i grong khyer dang | gser gyi sa dang | ha ri ke la (var. ha ri ke ra) dang | ba ro sha ka ta ha dang | na ri ke la dang | pa na sa'i gling dang | su sa ra dang | nimba'i grong khyer dang | dpal gyi zhing dang | dngul chu'i gnas la sogs pa yul dang | cha byad dang | skad dang | gnas pa dang | cho ga dang | rigs dang | rus dang | tshul khrims dang | tshul khrims can du du ma'i yul | mi gnas pa'i yul gzhan dag na bzhus pa rnams dang |*... See the translation as given in F.W. Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents concerning Chinese Turkestan*, Part I: *Literary Texts*, The Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1935, p. 262.

⁴⁹ See for example Hubert Decler, 'Atisha's Journey to Sumatra', in Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Buddhism in Practice*, Princeton. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995, pp. 532–540. For

the Tibetan, I have consulted *rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas. 'jo bo gser gling du byon pa'i rnam thar/. 'jo bo rje dpal ldan a ti sha'i rnam thar bka' gdams pha chos*. TBRC W00KG09688. zi ling /: mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang /, 1994 : 37–51, retrieved from <http://tbrc.org/link?RID=O2DB96991> |.

⁵⁰ Wheatley, *Nāgara and Commandery*, p. 267 (cited in Skilling, 'Dharmakīrti's Durbodhāloka', p. 188).



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