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A Reflection of Trans-oceanic Contacts on Innovations of Buddhist Art and Commodities in Thailand's Past*

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Abstract

The main aim of this paper was to synthesize current discovery and propose a concept of cultural transformation and innovation of people in Thailand as a result of the trans-oceanic contacts since the beginning of the maritime silk road. Three main items of discussion: elephants and tusks, ceramics and bronze objects are representatives of the archaeological findings and historical evidence of the explanation of the concept. The Following were among the findings of this study: (1) Elephant has played a pivotal role in the livelihood and customs of Thai people from the remote past until the present. Its higher status, particularly a royal elephant and a symbol of king's prestige, reflects an adoption of Hindu and Buddhist influences. Thai scholars invented the concept of royal white elephant clans and technical manual for catching wild elephant and tame it for serving man's activities. The elephant's roles had been changed when a diplomatic trade established and tamed elephant was a tribute and a white elephant, a

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precious gift, presented to a Chinese emperor by a Thai's king. A live elephant and elephant tusk (ivory) trade that had been continuously increased when overseas commerce with India, Japan, and the European countries actively took place since the early 17th century. The Thai absolute monarchy had a monopoly on elephant and tusks trade. For two centuries of elephant and tusks trade, a population of elephant had decreased markedly. (2) Ceramics have been either imported or exported items. The discovery of earthenware potsherds of 'Indo-Roman roulettes ware' in Southeast Asian sites including Thailand indicates that the first to second- century Roman-Indian trade network distributed throughout the region before the advent of Hinduism and Buddhism. Evidence of the eighth-century torpedo stoneware jars bearing the Pahlavi inscription of the Persian Gulf as well as some Chinese glazed stoneware bearing the Arab inscription found at a shipwreck and port sites in Thailand suggests that the local emporium and middlemen trading with Chinese, Indian, Arab and Persian were established. Local craftsmen that were already skilled at pyro-technology were easily to acquire Chinese glazed stoneware technique to produce the first glazed 'Buriram ceramic', popularly known as 'Khmer ceramic' and it was only exported in the mainland Southeast Asia, whereas a fine grain 'Pa-O' earthenware from southern Thailand was overseas exported. By tracing Thai glazed stoneware 'Sangkhalok' exported to Ryukyu island and Japan, there appears a glimpse of trade interaction with Korea. Between 14th and 17th century the Thai ceramic as a commodity itself or a container for local product had been exported to the world market as well as the Chinese and Japanese ceramics were imported to the country. A reciprocal imitation of ceramic styles and designs for trade occurred between 17th and 18th century in the time of the first Thai polychrome enameling porcelain occurred. (3) Bronze objects, especially high-tin bronze weapon, vessel and ornament had been developed since 2000 BCE, but the discovery of the Chinese bronze kettle drum of the 5th to 1st century BCE points towards the

theory that the maritime contact with the Far East (China) was established and its spiritual tradition was absorbed prior to that with India. The metallurgical knowledge handed down to religious artisans, sculptors of the historical states in which bronze images of Buddha and other Buddhist icons and objects were sophistically developed. It is hypothesized that an image of Buddha in particular posture/gesture had been created on the basis of identification of Buddha's teachings (philosophy) related to the significant episodes of the Buddha's life to be ideally suited to the indigenous people's life style and other factors of their community of the time rather than direct imitation of art styles imported from India or Sri Lanka.

Key Words: elephants, tusks, ceramics, bronze objects, trans-oceanic contacts

Ⅰ. Introduction

Before the trans-oceanic contact between people of Thailand and those of west-east regions, indigenous inhabitants have been seafarers for thousands of years. Surveys and

xcavations conducted in other countries reported similar findings. In the light of the empirical findings, it's clear that since the discovery of the monsoon winds has been more convenient for trans-oceanic sailings. Its legendary wealth of gold and/or wealth of natural resources had drawn foreign merchants to the land and it has been known as a meeting place of Indic and Chinese cultural influences. Archaeological excavations and findings have provided confirmation of the maritime-silk-road contact with China from the east and with India from the west started approximately 400 - 300

BCE and the port communities of the land were established, followed by formation of the earliest states between 100 to 500 CE. [Srisuchat 2017, 3 - 6]. Cultural and trade tradition of the west-east regions have been influential in the development to the city-states or countries. Over a period of eight centuries (from the 6th - 13th century CE) there had been many changes in patterns of trade and cultural interaction between historic states in the present-day Thailand as a result of their contact with some countries from the West and the East. Local communities and small states were under the cultural influence of three locally sovereign states, namely, Dvārāvatī, Śrīvijaya, Lavapura or Lopburi. Dvārāvatī, likely in association with the Pyū and Mon in the present-day Myanmar, dominated most parts of all regions; the northern region later developed into the Haribhuñjaya state between the 11th and 13th centuries CE. The growth of Lavapura or Lopburi in the central and the northeastern paralleled that of the Khmer state in the present-day Cambodia, and at some point between the 10th and 13th centuries CE they shared similar features. The southern peninsular Thailand became a part of the Federation States of Śrīvijaya, encompassing states on the archipelagoes of the present-day Indonesia and on the Thai-Malay Peninsula during the 8th to early 13th century CE; and dominated the maritime trade within Southeast Asia(Srisuchat 2014, 11-16). Archaeological and historical evidence revealed that over time the development of the states followed a spiritual and a social pattern based on Buddhism and/or Hinduism and adopted way of writing and religious languages and literature, i.e. Pāli and Sanskrit, from India. Indigenous people

adopted the new techniques and art of buildings religious architecture and making gold and ornaments from India; glass-making from the Middle-east and glazed ceramic technique from China. Not so long they possessed the knowledge of the matter and new techniques have served to add to the quality of the finished products which were in demand in the overseas trade-markets. Some items had been commodities themselves, but some had been containers for particular materials, such as, spice, herbal product, bee wax, camphor, coconut oil, and sugar. This resulted in the proliferation of special trading routes forming the so-called 'spice route' to and from west and east. Indigenous people from the ports of the kingdoms played important role as middlemen trading with Chinese, Indian, Arabs and Persians(Srisuchat 1990, 24-34; 2015, 8-42).

From the early 13th century CE onwards, The Thai states, Sukhothai (early 13th century to 1438 CE), Lan Na (13th - 19th century CE) and Ayutthaya (1350 - 1767 CE) yielded the glory time of independent states and free-trades. Through the maritime silk road, many foreign nations entered Siam (the former name of Thailand) whose capital city was Ayutthaya; and a large number of them established a permanent settlement and religious community of different faiths (Hindu, Islam, Catholicism and Christianity). Evidence of foreign aspects and influence comes not only from documents but from arts, traditions and technologies. For instance, main raw materials in an old Thai book on the art of warfare called *Tamra Phichai Songkhram*, we find Dutch soldiers explaining military strategy to the Thai and telling them the best way of making

gunpowder(Garnier 2004, 93).

Despite the Siamese Kingdom having established diplomatic relations with European countries (Portugal, the Netherlands, France and England) and having adopted many aspects of Western technology and since the early 16th century CE, she had maintained the strong trades and cultural contacts with neighboring countries in Southeast Asia and Asian countries like China, Japan, Korea, Iran (Persia), India and Sri Lanka.

The maritime trades had been going on for hundreds of common or rare raw materials, which received high demand overseas, however these materials were mainly produced from rich land in Siam. Apart from aforementioned liquid products of the previous trade-commodities, the main commodities were as follows: tin and lead ingots, ironwood, eaglewood, sappanwood, teakwood, sandal wood, rattan, live elephants, ivory, rhinoceros horns, buffalo horns, cow and buffalo hides, deer hides, ray skin, tortoise's shell, peacocks'plumes, sealing wax, rice, pepper, clove, black lac, black polish oil, dyes, indigo, saltpeter and Thai ceramics. For centuries Thailand has been a junction point for ships from east and west. The variety, value and availability of products from Thailand itself and from other countries (e.g., India, China, Japan, Persia, Arab, and European countries) let them deliver their goods to Ayutthaya, Bangkok or other city-ports for merchandise. Commodities from these countries imported to Thailand and these were able to get in the international market or the emporium in Ayutthaya: silk, brocades, porcelain, carved ivory, quick-silver, bronze and copper vessels and the rarest teas (from

China), lacquered chests and cabinets, screens, keys, fans, umbrellas, swords, silver and copper bullion and porcelain (from Japan), opium, minerals, dyestuffs and Indian cloth (from Muslim and Hindu in India), musket, gun, cannon (from Portugal), shipbuilding equipment (from the Netherlands)(Garnier 2004, 17 -21; Srisuchat 2011a, 75-79).

In the paper three categories of materials selected to be described here reflecting the influence of maritime silk road's contact are as follows: (1) Elephant and Elephant tusks (Ivory); (2) Ceramics; (3) Bronze objects.

Ⅱ. Elephant and Elephant Tusks (Ivory)

Elephant has played a pivotal role in the livelihood and customs of the Thai people from the remote past until the present. It is regarded as the national animal. After adoption of Buddhism, elephant is highly respected as an auspicious symbol of peace and virtue. It is believed that elephant has been related to Buddha directly and indirectly. There, we have seen a set of elephant sculpture being fixed encircled the base of stūpa. However, there is controversy over why Thailand's elephant had been recognized in the international market through the maritime-trade as one of significant exports both elephant itself and only ivory; historical accounts indicate that one of the biggest threats to elephant populations had been the ivory trade, as the animals were poached for their tusks.

By the trans-oceanic contact, not only the religious practice but

also the Buddhist treatise and literature had been spread and adopted by the indigenous people in the land. So the indigenous people have accumulated the knowledge about the story of Buddha and the Buddhist religion in various aspects. For example, the presence of elephant related to the birth of the Buddha. It is said that Queen *Māyā* saw an elephant in her dream before being pregnant. After that she gave birth to Prince *Sidhāratha* (Pāli: *Siddhattha*), the Buddha-to-be. Sculptures and mural paintings depict such a scene from the life of the Buddha have been produced by Thai artisans over time to serve the perception. At a Torana (gate) of the Sāñcī stūpa in Madhaya Pradesh, India, there are depictions of a lady flanked by elephants which is sometime regarded as the representation scene of the birth of Buddha. However, some scholars said that it is the *Gaja-Lakṣmī*, literally meaning *Goddess Lakṣmī and Elephants* or the scene of *abhiṣeka-śrī*. A passage in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* states that she should be depicted with a pair of elephants behind her head, upturning on her the contents of two jars. This form of *Lakṣmī* or *Śrī* was adopted by the Buddhists and is depicted seated on a lotus between two elephants who pour water over her from their uplifted trunks, as in the Hindu *Gaja-Lakṣmī* image(Stutley 1977, 286).

The rectangular stone tablet or the cupped tray that has been found in Nakhon Pathom Province, Central Thailand, considered to be an important town of Dvāravatī culture (6^{th} -11^{th} century CE), depicts the scene of *abhiṣeka-śrī*, for in the coronation (*abhiṣeka*) of the goddess there are two elephants pouring sacred water from the *pūrṇaghaṭa* (the pot) with garlands on her. Adorned with the image of Śrī and

other auspicious symbols denoting power, prosperity, victory over suffering, peacefulness and happiness, the cupped tray also served its important role as a ritual object for consecration anointment. The auspicious symbols are considered to be the royal insignia. There is also a figure of Gaja-Lakṣmī appearing on the lower segment of the Dvāravatī dharmacakra (the Wheel of the Law) found in the same province. [Figure. 1]. The depiction such as this has been found in the form of the engraving on plate or seal and on a *sīmā* stone at other sites of Dvāravatī culture. The presence of images such as these reinforces the idea that the Dvāravatī people developed a concept of Hindu gods which was incorporated into Buddhist tradition(Srisuchat 2012, 114 – 115).

<Fig. 1> Dharmacakra depicting Gajalakṣmi

Elephants that appeared in the scene of the Buddha's life are: *Grīmekhala, Pālilaiyaka, Nāḷāgiri*. The elephant *Grīmekhala* was the vehicle of Māra (the Evil One) who rode the elephant to attack Lord Buddha. The Aśvaghoṣa's Buddhacarita, the Mahāyāna literature, dated to 2nd century CE, said that the troops of Māra manifested themselves to be fierce, ugly animals in various kinds including elephant. The elephant *Pālilaiyaka* served Lord Buddha when he was alone in *Rakkhitavana* jungle. The elephant *Nāḷāgiri* was a fierce elephant that *Devadatta*, a jealous monk who released it on the road

of *Rājagriha* town to harm Lord Buddha; but it was tamed by the Lord with his loving kindness. The elephant *Grīmekhala* has appeared in the scene of the Buddha subduing Māra. The twelfth-century stone lintel at Prasat Phimai, the Vajrayāna temple in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, depicts a scene of Buddha subduing Māra and his vehicle *Grīmekhala* appears in the scene. The story related to the elephant *Pālilaiyaka* has been found in the form of sculpture and painting showing the Buddha sitting with pendent legs. The religious work of art has been made since the 15th century CE. Although a Pāla styled bas-relief depicting a scene of Buddha and elephant *Nāḷāgiri* was found at Chiang Man temple in Chiang Mai Province. [Figure 2], probably made from Nālandā or the Bengal area of India in the 11th century CE, there was no tradition of making an image of Buddha and elephant Nāḷāgiri in Thailand during that time and later time until the 17th century CE some illustrated manuscripts and mural paintings of the Ayutthaya Kingdom depict the life-episodes of the Buddha including that of the Buddha and elephant *Nāḷāgiri*, therefore, it can be said that the story has been recognized to Thai people since then(Srisuchat 2007, 56-84).

<Fig. 2> Buddha and elephant Nāḷāgiri at the base, Dvāravatī style

According to *Jātaka* or the story of the past lives of the Buddha,

the Buddha was born as elephant in several births, e.g. in *Dumedha-jātaka*, *Laṭukka-jātaka, Mātuposaka-jātaka,* and *Chaddanta-jātaka.*

Some outstanding examples of stucco reliefs found around the base of the brick stūpas at *Chula Prathon Chedi* in Nakhon Pathom Province, at Khu Bua in Ratchaburi Province, at Muang Bon in Uthai Thani Province, and at Khok Mai Den in Nakhon Sawan Province, reveal the perception of the Dvāravatī people about the following Jātakas: *Chaddanta* (six-tusked elephant), *Hatthi* or *Hasti* (the elephant). Note that some representations were made in accordance with Buddhist Sanskrit literature, such as, the *Avadānaśataka*, the *Divyāvadāna*, and the *Jātakamālā*. The representation of the stories of the past lives of the Buddha related to elephant by the Dvāravati people of the northeast region is in the form of engraving on the *sīmā* (Thai: *sema*, literally, boundary stone) for an ordination hall, e.g. the sīmā stones found at the ancient town of Fa Daet Song Yang in Kalasin Province depicting the scenes from the *Chaddanta-jātaka*. Note that among the jātaka story of the bodhisatta (Sanskrit: bodhisattva; the epithet of the Buddha-to-be in the story of the past lives of the Buddha) performing *dāna-pāramī* (the virtue of generosity), must have played an important role, given its prominent depiction. Moreover, the *dāna-paramatha-pāramī*, the highest stage of giving (*dāna*), represented by the story of the elephant who gives his life to be food of starved voyagers in the *Hasti-jātaka* [Figure 3], is based on the Sanskrit *Jātakamālā*, written by Āraya Sūra (2nd to 4th century CE). This is also a testimony to the adoption of the Mahāyāna concept by the Dvāravatī people(Srisuchat 2007, 85 –114).

<Fig. 3> Stucco on the base of Chula Prathon stūpa depicting Hasti jātaka, Dvāravatī style

Apart from the idea of several previous lives of the Buddha being born as an elephant, several times in his discourse the Buddha compared himself to an elephant or told his disciples a story related to an elephant; or an elephant and its behavior is the Buddha's use of metaphor in his teaching.

In Dhammapāda or the teaching of the Buddha has a chapter called *Nāgavagga*, literally, *The Elephant*. In the chapter Lord Buddha explained his *Dhamma (*Sanskrit: *Dharma)* by means of using metaphors related to elephant and its behavior(The Royal Institute, (tr.), 1995, 567-677).

According to the Buddhist tradition, the *cakkavatti* or a universal monarch is a righteous king who would rule the four quarters endowed with the seven jewels (*satta ratanāni*), including the wheel (*cakra*) and the elephant (*hatthi*). A golden sculpture of bejeweled elephant with howdah was a significant related object to be deposited together with a set of royal regalia, insignia, attire and utensils, along with the gold Buddha images, in the treasure room of the crypt above the lowest level within the main stūpa consecrated by King Borommarachathirat (reigned 1424-1448 CE) of Ayutthaya Kingdom in 1424 CE at Ratchaburana temple. The set of offering as part of an

effort to show the king's making merit and his right to claim the title of the Righteous Universal Monarch by showing himself to be like the past *Cakkavatti King Sudassana* (a bodhisatta in the past life of the Buddha) who made the wheel (*cakra*) roll by sprinkling water over it. Therefore, the elephant is not only the representation of one of the seven jewels of a *cakkavatti*, but also the representative of the Buddha(Srisuchat 2012, 124).

In the Buddhist sense, the Pāli word '*nāga*' has two meanings differently '*elephant*' or '*snake/cobra*'. Nāga as a snake also played an important role as a protector of Lord Buddha and Buddhism. The image of Buddha in meditation protected by nāga have been created in several Buddhist cultures and several periods, based on the well-known story of Lord Buddha; after the Enlightenment, Buddha was meditating and the King of nāgas, *Mucalinda*, spread his hood as a shelter protecting Buddha during a storm.

It is indisputably that the '*nāga* cult' of the indigenous people had been intermingled with Buddhist tradition either Theravāda or Mahāyāna (including Vajrayāna). The Buddha image protected by nāga had been flavored among people of Thailand since the time of the early states before the Thai kingdoms. The belief in the serpent-progenitor of Thai people, considered to be very similar to that of the mythic serpent (nāga) of Indian tradition, has largely influenced the development of the work of art over time. Nāga (snake) was gradually replaced *makara* (a mythical aquatic animal) that represents water in Indian cult. The indigenous people in Thailand have believed that the duty of nāga is to bring water from

the sky and ocean to the earth; that is to say, the rain, which is the need of the agricultural country like Thailand. Thus, figures of nāga have been used as a part of religious and palace buildings from the uppermost part pointed to the sky to the lowest part touched the ground. In the means time 'nāga' for 'elephant' has been placed in the form of stucco-brick figure around a stūpa or chedi (Thai term for stūpa), influenced by the Sri Lankan tradition of consecration of a stūpa since the late 13th century CE.

The word '*nāg*' in Thai language, shortened from the original Pāli '*nāga*', has been commonly used to call a man to be ordained into the Buddhist monkhood. There is a legend known to Thai people that once a male 'nāga' (super-natural snake), to fulfill its wish to be a monk, it manifested itself a human being asking Lord Buddha to perform an ordination for it. The Buddha knew that it's not a human being so that he refused to do so. However, the nāga asked the Lord that a man who is undergoing training as a Buddhist monk should be addressed him 'nāg' in order to not forget the solemn wish of the 'nāga'. The request of nāga has been responded practically by Thai Buddhists. The concept of Sukhothai people to blend the two significations of 'nāga'; i.e., *elephant* and *snake*, was exemplified by a Sukhothai work of art: a stucco sculpture depicting seven headed snake with elephant face and trunk, found in the ancient town of Sukhothai, dated to the 13th - 14th century CE. [Figure 4]. Even nowadays the ordination ceremony of local people in Si Satchanalai District in Sukhothai Province a boy who is undergoing training as a Buddhist monk or the so-called 'nāg', would be riding on an elephant

to the temple at the beginning of his ordination ceremony. This is a living tradition that survives and suggests the handing down of the Sukhothai concept of the integrated significance of elephant and snake.

<Fig. 4> stucco Seven headed elephant Nāga, found at the ancient town of Sukhothai

The Indian influence in Thailand came from the Buddhist and Brahmins traditions, including science in various fields – these traditions were assimilated with local practices and wisdoms to form the foundation of national culture. Buddhism became the official religion, while Brahmanism (Hinduism) played a major role in rituals and royal court traditions, as well as sciences. The science related to elephants that came from the Indian tradition, was preserved in the form of ritual practice, folk tales, and manuscripts.

The oldest manuscript recording about the story and the science of training elephant in Thailand dates to the 1782 CE or in the reign of King Rama I (reigned 1782 -1809 CE) of the Chakri Dynasty. Of 100 manuscripts related to elephant collected in the National Library, the knowledge of elephant can be divided into three categories; namely, *Gajaśātra, Gajalakṣṇa, and Gajakarma.* Gajaśātra, literally, the science of elephants, reveals the natural history and behaviors of elephants. Gajalakṣṇa, literally, the physical traits of elephants, reveals the types of elephants from different origins or different

families. Gajakarma, literally, the activity with elephants, reveals the way how to catch a wild elephant; how to tame it, how to train it, along with *mantra* and ritual ceremony relating to each activity. The earliest testimony of catching a wild elephant and tame it for serving man's activities has been seen from decoration around the neck of a stoneware water-pot produced from Ban Bang Pun kiln in Suphan Buri Province, dated to the 14^{th} -15^{th} century CE. The water-pot such as this has been also discovered in Indonesia and Japan as an imported item.

The story of the origin of elephant in the Thai *Gajalakṣṇa* manuscript has been adapted from the Hindu myth and has created contained herein differently. It is said that elephant was born from a lotus rising up from the navel of Lord Viṣṇu. Śiva asked Agni to perform his divine power. From the power, the elephant-headed god, *Ganeśa*, came out from his right ear; A deity with three-faced elephant from his left ear; *Airāvata*, the thirty-three-headed elephant, from his arm; *Girīmeghagala*, the three-headed elephant from another arm, these two elephants Śiva gave to Indra to be his vehicle; and from his rest arms came out six white elephants that Śiva gave to the great kings on earth. Thus, the *white elephant* (Pāli: *seta hatthi*/ Sanskrit: *śveta hasti*) is regarded as an auspicious animal for the king. Traditionally, the great king who can rule all earth will possess '*sapta ratna*' or seven auspicious things which symbolize his greatness. The white elephant is one of the '*sapta ratna*' of the Great king. Beliefs about white elephants in particular transformed elephants from being plain and normal to animals of felicity and prosperity. White

elephants play a significant role in state affairs as they are now a symbol of king's prestige. By tradition, after a wide elephant being captured and pointed out the seven characteristics of white elephants as located in their skin, eyes, palate, ears, toenails, genitals and tail by the royal expert in elephant traits, the ceremonies would be held to celebrate and confer royal status on the white elephant belonging to the king. The king would preside over the royal ceremony of raising a white elephant to royal rank. After anointing the elephant, the elephant's name would be inscribed on the golden plate called "*suvarnapatra*" suggesting his royal status being equal to that of a prince or princess(Srisuchat 2007, 8 –12).

The discovery of an ivory tusk from excavation along with other trade goods such as Chinese and Persian Gulf ceramics, betel nuts and black resin, etc. in the Arab dhow traditional shipwreck, known as Phanom Surin shipwreck in Samut Sakhon Province, dated to 8th century CE, is regarded as the earliest evidence of export of ivory tusks found in Thailand.

The local trading on elephants was recorded in the first Sukhothai inscription, dated to 1292 CE. Elephants were considered to be common goods for buying and selling in the Sukhothai Kingdom. During the Ayutthaya period (1350 - 1767 CE) elephants and tusks had been known overseas as items of commercial export among the wild products of the kingdom.

In the early Ayutthaya period (14th - 15th century CE) elephant tusks were mentioned as an exported item as well as other commodities. This was a starting point of overseas trade of elephants

and elephant tusks of the Siamese (Thai) Kingdom. The trade relation with China is to be found in the official records of the Ming dynasty as follows:

> *"In the fourth year (of the Ming dynasty, 1371) their king (i.e. the Siamese king of Ayutthaya) sent envoys to present a letter of homage … they came to submit tributes to tame elephants, (a) six-legged tortoise and other home products. [The Emperor] decreed to present their king with brocade and fine silk and to give the envoy silk varying (as to their rank)*." (Garnier 2004, 15)

The white elephant, regarded as a precious gift, was loaded on board with envoys from King Maha Chakraphat of Ayutthaya to present the Chinese Emperor of the Ming dynasty in 1553 CE. Unfortunately, the white elephant died on the way, but its tusks adorned with pearls and its tail for proof of its whiteness, were presented anyway(Garnier 2004, 16).

After the Burmese conquest the Ayutthaya Kingdom in 1569 CE, a large number of elephants from the Siamese land were moved to Hamsavati in Burma (the present Myanmar). It was recorded that in the reign of King Naresuan the Great (reigned 1590 - 1605 CE) 800 elephants from the Burmese troops were captured by the Siamese troops during the elephant dual battle between the king and the Burmese Crown Prince. It is conjectured that elephant and tusks trade was revived in the reign of King Ekathotsarot (reigned 1605 - 1610 CE), or in the reign of King Songtham (reigned 1611 - 1628 CE) when the Ayutthaya Kingdom was in peacefulness without battle and

the western ports namely Tavoy, Marit and Tanaosri (the present Lower Myanmar), which were the trade port to Bengal, were returned to be under the Siamese Kingdom.

In 1621 CE the Japanese account mentions that a junk from Ayutthaya brought diplomats carrying the royal letter from King Songtham to the court of Tokugawa Hidetada in Edo (the future Tokyo). The text was inscribed on a thin sheet of gold, which was rolled up like a scroll and inserted in a hollow *elephant tusk*. This ivory container, which much has been elegantly carved, was placed in a decoration box covered with damask cloth. The text was entirely in Chinese and ended with a date that includes the era name. Chinese and Japanese dates included their respective era(Nagazumi Yoko 1999, 90-91). However, an elephant would be recognized by the Japanese before the aforementioned diplomatic trade connection, for a stoneware water-pot from Ban Bang Pun kiln in Suphan Buri Province, central Thailand, dated to c. 14th -15th century CE, has been discovered at the Osawa beach site in Wajima, Ishigawa Prefecture, Honshu Island of Japan.[Figure 5]. The stamped pattern around the neck of the water-pot depicts a scene of a row of elephants and of a man trying to catch an elephant. The water-pot probably came from the Ryukyu Island (Okinawa) that engaged in the maritime-trade with Ayutthaya in the early 15th century CE(Srisuchat

<Fig. 5> Thai jar with elephants pattern around the neck, found in Japan

2011a, 73-75).

The overseas trade of the Ayutthaya Kingdom (The Siamese Kingdom) then flourished in the reign of King Prasat Thong (reigned1630 - 1656 CE) and King Narai the Great (reigned 1656-1688 CE). According to the record of Jeremias Van Vliet, the Dutch merchant (1633 - 1642 CE), the 3 to 3.6 kilos of elephant tusks were exported overseas together with other commodities from the Ayutthaya Kingdom. Sometime the king allowed the laymen to capture elephants for their benefit. However, the Ayutthayan absolute monarchy had a monopoly on elephant and tusk trade.

Ibn Muhammad Ibrahim, who was the scribe for a Persian embassy which came to Ayutthaya in 1686 CE, wrote in *the Ship of Sulaiman*:

> *"Live elephants are a valuable export to India…. and one of the important sources of income of the Indian Rajah (king) is elephants and there are indeed many elephants in the jungles of Siam. For a long time now the Siamese have been exporting elephants to the Dekkan and Bengal since these countries are not far away….Every year merchants have been coming to Siam bringing commodities which the Siamese desire and in exchange the foreign merchants take away elephants. The king's administration itself makes money exporting elephants to India. Every year the king catches about three or four hundred elephants in the jungle and has his men tame them. Once the elephants are tame and can be ridden they are sold*." (Garnier 2004, 14 ; 57 –58)

In 1690 CE two junks of King Phetracha of Ayutthaya were reported carrying goods from Ayutthaya to Japan. These goods were of wrinkly woolen and silk cloth, buffalo horns, deer skins, ray skin,

cotton, sugar, sappan-wood, black polish oil, fishing cord, *ivory*, pepper, bee wax, tin, rattan, clove, aloes wood, camphor and medical herbs(Niphatsukkhakit 2007, 25-26).

The elephants and tusks were transported to the western ports for sale to India, China and Japan. For the elephant tusks, they were sold by weight. The royal court of Siam obviously earned a profit from the elephant and tusk trade and the profits were great.

A huge size of ivory or a perfect one had been used to be a decoration and it was beautified with a carving depicting a scene of the life of the Buddha or an image of Buddha. Some elegant ivory works of art are exhibited in the National Museum Bangkok. [Figure 6].

<Fig. 6> Carving Ivory depicting Buddha, imported from Myanmar

The Thai art of making ivory Buddha image in all shapes and sizes or a carving ivory depicting a scene of the Buddha's life influenced the Portuguese art in the 17th century CE. This is exemplified by a number of small ivory sculptures (5-35 centimeter high) depicting Saint John lying, covered with a sheep skin, Saint John lying and protecting a sheep, and Jesus in an oriental oratory. It is a rare typology of *luso-oriental* sculpture in ivory from the collection of *Tavora Sequeira Pinto* in Portugal. It is conjectured that the Saint John's lying pose and gesture sculptures

such as these were made by perceiving and imitating images of reclining Buddha, particularly the ivory work of art, recognized by the Portuguese who settled in Ayutthaya as merchant or as mercenary from the 16th to early 18th century CE. The ivory masterpiece was sent to be exhibited in the special exhibition on the occasion of celebration 500 years of Thai-Portuguese relations at the National Museum Bangkok in 2011. [Figure 7].

<Fig. 7> Ivory carving depicting Saint John lying and protecting a sheep

At present, wild elephants are wildlife protection under the Wildlife Reservation and Protection Act B.E. 2535 (1992 CE). The Act provided for the establishment of lists of reserved and protected wild animals limited hunting, controlled trade in wild animal products.

Ⅲ. Ceramics

Earthenware or terracotta ware has been produced for use by local communities since prehistoric times. Wares of the earliest period were not glazed and in later period they were transported on merchant ships not with any intention to sell them but because they were containers for consumer goods such as food stuffs, spice or liquid substances.

Reports from excavations mention a form of earthenware known as

'*Indo-Roman rouletted ware'* of the 1st century CE, discovered at the site of Bukit Tengku Lembu in Perlis State of Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Buni grave complex on the North coast of Java and at the site of Gilimanuk in Bali of Indonesia, likely had been made in antiquity west of the Bay of Bangal(Glover 1996, 66-67). Also this special type of earthenware has been found at early port-sites in southern Thailand, such as Phu Khao Thong site in Ranong Province. At the site *a potshard of Indian fine ware* bearing a Tamil Brāhmī inscription (which seems to read 'tū ra o', possibly part of the Tamil word 'tuṛavor' meaning 'ascetic' or 'recluse' or 'tūṛavam' meaning 'common black plum' or 'plum recipient'.) has been found; the earliest Tamil inscription may be dated to the 2nd century CE. (Bellina 2014, 22-24; 274). Note that archaeologists have, however, observed that from their surveys and excavations pieces similar to the Indo-Roman rouletted wares have appeared at sites in Central Thailand, where they are accompanied by elements of Dvāravatī culture.

In 2013-2014 CE the discovery and excavation conducted by archaeologists from the Fine Arts Department of Thailand at a shipwreck site, later named the Phanom Surin shipwreck, located on a coastal mangrove plain in Phanthai Norasing Sub-district, Samut Sakhon Province, eight kilometres from the present day shoreline of the Gulf of Thailand, reveals a stitched construction in the Arab dhow tradition, estimated at 35 metres long, containing local earthenware (food storage pot and/or cooking pot, likely typically Dvāravatī pottery), Chinese Guangdong glazed storage jar of the 8th century CE,

Persian Gulf wares: turquoise glazed earthenware and '*torpedo stoneware jars'* (the wide-mouthed cylindrical storage jars with pointed bases) along with other organic matter, including rattan basketry, bitumen, an ivory tusk and deer antlers as the ship cargo. It is interesting to note that two inscriptions on ceramics have been found. The first one is two character ink inscription on the base of Guangdong Yue-type green glazed storage jar, provisionally read as "branch office", dated to the 8th century CE. The second inscription, chiseled into the fired body of a section of a torpedo jar. The inscription, reading '*Yazd-bōzēd'*, literally means 'god delivers' or 'god saves' which is a proper name, presumably identifying ownership. It has been read and identified by Professor Prods Oktor Skjærvø of Harvard University as being in Pahlavi, the middle Persian language and script used by Persian, Zoroastrian, and Christian communities in Sasanian Iran(Guy 2017, 179-196).

Between the 8th -10th century CE three main ports of Śrīvijaya emerged. They were: Kota Kapur on the Island of Banga (in Indonesia), as the southern emporium of the Federation States, however, being the centre emporium of the Śrīvijayan Archipelagoes, Muaeng Thong Ko Kho Khao at the mouth of the Takua Pa River in Phangnga Province, (southern Thailand), as the western coast emporium of the peninsular states of Śrīvijaya, and Laem Pho Payang at the mouth of Phum Riang River in Chaiya District, Suratthani Province, as the eastern coast emporium of the peninsular states of Śrīvijaya. The glory of the western coast emporium was mentioned in the Arab and Persian sources, respectively(Srisuchat 2014, 16).

The foreign glazed wares in beautiful textures dating to the 9th century CE entered Thailand as trade goods. The excavations of the sites at Muaeng Thong Ko Kho Khao and Laem Pho Payang as well as at Kota Kapur have yielded traces of more than ten varieties types of Chinese ceramics from domestic kilns of Tang dynasty and the quality of these ranging from moderate to good. It was during this time that ports were flourishing and the aforementioned Chinese glazed wares and glazed '*Kashi*' ware of Middle Eastern ceramic featuring turquoise color glazed on a white body were available for sale in the markets. Note that one object from Laem Pho Payang attests to the arrival of Chinese ware brought by a Muslim individual and this particular item clearly points to the fact that Arabs had placed special orders for Chinese ceramics which the Chinese then brought to Laem Pho Payang at the eastern coast. No doubt the ruler of the port would have arranged for such an object to be sent on to the Arabs. The greenish-glazed ware found here was a product from the Changsha kilns (in Toungguan town or Shizhu region, north of Hunan Province of China) but instead of being decorated with the usual flower motifs on the inner bottom, Arabic characters were inscribed with the name of the Islamic god, '*Allah*'. [Figure 8]. There are some shards with the Arabic characters of the Changsha ceramic type have been found at the site later on as well.The goods must have been ordered and went through the hands of middlemen who had control over trading transactions in the ports of Thailand. These were sold afterwards as exported goods. Therefore, indigenous people from the ports played an important role as middlemen trading with Chinese,

<Fig. 8> Chinese Changsha ware with floral design and Arabic inscription

Indians, Arab and Persians who desires the local products and together with other natural items(Srisuchat 1996, 256-257 ; 2014, 16]

In the same century, the first glazed ceramic industry emerged which was based in northeastern Thailand (which number in their hundreds in Buriram Province), the *Buriram ceramic* and which belongs to the category that scholars term '*Khmer ceramic'*. From recent excavations and analysis, the data suggests a date for these kilns; the time span given for the production of these wares is estimated to be from the 8th to 14th centuries. A large area of the ceramic kilns and the iron industrial sites found in the northeastern Thailand near Thai-Cambodian border suggested that two products, *ceramic and iron*, were main commodities for export which strengthened economic power of the *Khmer* Kingdom(Srisuchat 2002, 186-187). The Buriram ceramic adopted the Chinese ceramic technology, for the Chinese wares were widely distributed in markets at the time. It is understood that during the earlier stages of production the quality of this ware did not attain as high levels as the imported Chinese ceramics but they were nevertheless exported to the towns of northeastern and eastern Thailand. From about the 9th to 11th centuries, cargo ships carried Buriram ceramic to far flung markets. Their subsequent purchase led to their recent discovery in the central

region, the West, the South and Malaysia, while they were also commonly found in Cambodia. Small brown glazed pots with animal head motifs which resembled decorations on the brown glazed wares of the Chinese Tang Dynasty whereas a pale green glazed rounded cover box which likely followed a Chinese model of the so-called *Qingbai* porcelain ware of 12th -13th century CE, were in great demand. There is little doubt that these imitations met with great success in the market place(Srisuchat 1990, 26).

In the 12th century CE a new source of ceramics appeared and this was *Sangkhalok ceramic of Sukhothai* in the lower northern region which can be said to have been influenced to some degree by the Buriram ceramic tradition from the northeastern region and the Chinese Sung and *Yuan glazed ceramic traditions* from China. Between the 11th and 13th century CE, glazed wares known as celadon of the *Longquan* type, green glazed wares of the Fujian variety and white glazed, thin-walled wares, the early blue-and-white porcelain known as the *Qingbai* from *Jingdezhen* kilns, were actively imported into Thailand. An important phenomenon in commerce which emerged during the course of the centuries was the rise of small ports scattered throughout both coasts which dealt in the Chinese ceramic trade. Towards the 12th century CE there is proof of the existence of a port town on the *Sathing Phra* peninsula at the eastern coast of the South, which was heavily involved in the buying and selling of Chinese ceramics and glassware-activities associated with the world market. It was also a manufacturing site for local ware called *Pa-O ware*. The Pa-O ware was unglazed fine grain earthenware having a

spouted vessel form (*kendi*) and trays decorated with incised motifs and painted with an orange-red colour developed. The products were exported and were popular in Malaysia, Indonesia, and also taken to be sold to the Philippines and Sri Lanka(Srisuchat 1990, 26 ; 1996, 256-260).

The 'Sangkalok' ceramic of Sukhothai Kingdom were first exported during the 13th - 14th century CE at a time when the Buriram ceramic had gradually disappeared from the markets. The kilns that produced glazed Sangkalok ware enjoyed world-wide renown for several centuries. The finest quality celadon plate or bowl and the covered box with mangosteen fruit handle or the cover box with spired stūpa shaped-like handle and the iron black underglaze ware were produced were produced at one of the more than 200 cross-draft kilns at Si Satchanalai District, Sukhothai Province [Figure 9] whereas the underglaze painted plate decorated with typical fish in profile was produced at one of more than 50 cross-draft kiln at Sukhothai. Because of its location, Sukhothai had no own seaport. To engage in the sea trade, Sukhothai had to use the port towns of the Mon State in the West and of the cordial states near the Gulf of Thailand or near the eastern coast of the South. A factor of the decline of Sukhothai was the economic problem caused by losing the sea-port towns to Ayutthaya and her transoceanic trade ceased. From

<Fig. 9> Sangkhalok cover box with mangosteen fruit handle

the late 14th century CE, Ayutthaya, the river port city, grew up after dominating over sea-port towns of Sukhothai and Nakhon Si Thammarat, she engaged in sea-trade as a middleman, for Ayutthaya had no product in demand of the world market to offer in trade. The spices and jungle products as well as Sangkhalok ceramic came to Ayutthaya from dependent towns of the kingdom, such as Sukhothai, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Chiang Mai(Srisuchat 2002, 187-189). However, Ayutthaya had long since found herself other trading partners in the East. Ayutthaya was in touch with Korea and Japan at the end of 14th century CE when at least two trading missions were sent out by the Siamese in 1391 CE and 1393 CE. One led by a certain '*Nai Gong'* with eight companions, claimed to have stayed a year in Japan, before going on to the Korean Court. Two years later the official Siamese trade mission to Korea was forced to put in at Japan to seek refuge from Japanese pirates. In 1419 CE, and probably much earlier, the island kingdom of Ryukyu was sending ships to Ayutthaya(Garnier 2004,16). The trade contact with the island of Ryukyu is confirmed by archaeological findings of Thai Sangkhalok wares found at Nakijin Castle site in the western area of northern Kyushu (Okinawa). These evidence coincide the Ryukyu Island's document named *Rekidai Hoan* which mentioned about trading junk from King of Ryukyu carried royal letter and tribute to King of Siam or Ayutthaya since 1368 CE, the later year of King Ramathibodi I or King U-thong, the first king of Ayutthaya (reigned 1350-1369 CE). (Srisuchat 2011a, 73).

Evidence of the popularity of the *Sangkhalok ceramic* in the

international market is provided by the complete and/or the fragment of the wares found at various foreign sites outside Thailand, such as Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, the United Arab Emirates, State of Bahrain and Iran. In Thailand Sangkhalok covered box of squat form is regarded as the reliquary urn type but when it was exported it used as a container herbal medicine; when imported to Japan it was known as '*Sunkoroku*' and used as incense box and later used as additional material in Japanese tea ceremony(Srisuchat 2002, 187-188; 2011, 150-151). In the northern Thailand, kilns which were producing glazed ceramics have been excavated but there is no proof that their products were shipped out. The northern wares or the Lan Na ceramics came from the kilns at Wiang Kalong, Wang Nua and Huai Sai (in the provinces of Chiang Rai, Lamphang and Phayao), San Kamphaeng (in Chiang Mai Province) and Ban Bo Suak (in Nan Province). They were used extensively in the northern region (the Lan Na State) and were also exported overland to Myanmar.

A progress or a decline of the trade depended upon the business administration on port, and tax system in accordance with a treaty or a contract, including a diplomatic relation. Ayutthaya, tried to make an international treaty in order to facilitate the maritime trade. Towards the 15th century CE, Ayutthaya followed new coherent strategy to strengthen its political and economic power: (1) Ayutthaya had monopolized Sangkhalok production and trade export management; (2) New ceramic kilns such as Bang Pun kiln in Suphan Buri Province, Mae Nam Noi kiln in Singburi Province and

Sa Bua kiln in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, were established near the port city to produce ceramics in all shapes and sizes as containers for trade commodities; (3) Junks flying the Ayutthaya's flag sail to make direct trade with East and West; (4) Overseas trade stations were opened in foreign territories, especially in India, organized by Muslim consul on behalf of the Ayutthaya's monarch, thus Ayutthaya gained market share in silk and cotton commodities of India; (5) Contract-exchanges between Ayutthaya and the European countries were made. Like the Japanese, the Europeans got a license to settle their communities with Christian churches and trade stations (such as the Dutch Trade Station conducted by V.O.C.) in Thailand. In return new weapon materials, i.e. guns and cannons, were brought in to sell to Ayutthaya and foreigners could be mercenary in Ayutthaya's troops. Therefore, Ayutthaya was regarded as a junction of the maritime route. The granting permission for foreign traders to acquire commodities whatever they wanted from this land without well-control system caused a rapid decrease of resources. A large number of wildlife were chased and killed for different requirement, such as, dears and antelopes for hide or antler to make armors, medicine ingredients, elephants for ivory to be carved and used as an ornament or decoration article, rhinoceros for horn as an ingredient of medicine, swallow's nest for preparing tonic nourishment. Some parts of forest were burnt up to prepare a ground for planting peppers, clove, camphor, sugar and areca palms(Srisuchat 2002, 188-190).

During the 16^{th} -17^{th} century CE the sea-trade countries like China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and Thailand, each had her own junk and her

<Fig. 10> Thai Stoneware jar handle found at Sakai site, Japan, as container of saltpetre

own ceramic for trade. These countries merely bought foreign ceramic in a great number for everyday use or selling them; the foreign ceramics were bought only for particular purpose. For example, high quality of Chinese blue and white porcelain and polychrome enamel porcelain are thought to have been made in Jingdezhen in Jiangxi Province. Thai royal artists had designed the forms and colours of the wares and then sent the designs to be produced in China and imported them for the royal court's desire. The enamel ware such as this has been known as '*Bencharong ware'* in Thailand. Japanese '*Arita ware'* (or Hizen ware) was imported to Thailand as a prestige item while the Japanese bought Sangkhalok wares for tea ceremony and/or as a container of scent. Japanese also bought big jars produced from the Ma Nam Noi kiln in Singburi Province, which were filled with potassium nitrate (saltpeter), a component of gunpowder. [Figure 10]. The point to emphasize here is the ceramic trade played the role related to activities of peace and war. Either using it for peace or doing so for war, merchants always got a profit from the ceramic trade.

Along the period of trade interactions, some techniques and styles of ceramic production were no doubt transferred from one to another and had a result to have a product in common; the competition between the countries to dominate ceramic markets inevitably took

place. Between the 17th and 18th centuries Japanese ceramics were in the first range in the external markets instead of Chinese ceramics which were banned to export by Chinese government. However, ports and market towns in Thailand were used to export the Japanese wares. A Japanese record says that 1790 pieces of Hizen wares were exported yearly to Siam(Isamu 1997, D). In 1671 they were exported twice with the quantity of 153 pieces and 317 pieces. Then in 1677 were increased to 2216 pieces(Chandavij 1997, 149).

From the late18th century CE Thailand preferred to produce ceramics in the form of container for export local commodity. Sangkhalok ware was no longer produced. Thus, markets in the Arab countries and in the European countries were shared between the Japanese wares, Vietnamese wares and Burmese wares. Thailand like other countries in Southeast Asia imported Dutch ceramic from European junks for trade. The natural resources, such as, minerals, jungle products, were increasingly exported. Even the commission of Bencharong porcelain from China continued into the Bangkok Period from 1782 CE onwards [Figure 11], the royal court still imported the Japanese Hizen polychrome porcelain. During the reign of King Chulalongkorn the Great (reigned 1868-1910) production of the polychrome painted porcelain was started by Prince of the Palace of the Front(Srisuchat 2011b, 45).

<Fig. 11> Japanese Hizen porcelain covered bowl, found in Thailand

<Fig. 12> Bencharong, Thai polychrome Cover bowl Porcelain

The vintage porcelain wares were never used in everyday life; they have been regarded as works of art rather than utensils. The nineteenth-century Japanese artwork-like porcelains (Hizen/Arita wares) were source of inspiration for Thai ceramic artisans in the 19th to the early 20th century CE. [Figure 12].

Ⅳ. Bronze Objects

Archaeological evidence from some known sites in Thailand, such as Non Nok Tha in Khon Kaen Province, Ban Chiang in Udon Thani Province and Pho Lon in Loei Province (2,000-300 BCE) reveals a new way of life of indigenous people different from that of the hunter-gatherers. It had been an agricultural society for some times which then learned the finer points of metalworking: first bronze and then iron and developed a very sophisticated metallurgical tradition.(Chaoenwongsa 1989, 47-50). From 3,500 to 2,000 years ago craftsmen who produced specific items or other skilled people began to appear. During the transitional period --from the late metal age to the early historic period, it is evident that some bronze objects reflecting the land and sea route-contacts were imported to the area of the modern Thailand.

An indigenous belief in '*life after death'* and '*the world beyond the earth'* is confirmed by the discovery of a large number of bronze kettle drums and some of which were decorated with pictures of boats carrying either spirits of the dead and men with bird-like headdresses. Bronze drums such as these, dating to the 5th to the 1st century BCE, were popular in Lower China and Vietnam which are known as *Heger type I*. These drums have been found in Laos PDR, Malaysia and Indonesia. The discovery of these drums points towards the theory that contact with the Far East (China) had been established and the foreign traditions were being absorbed prior to India from the West.

The local people may have acquired these bronze drums and brought them into the region for ritual purposes to support religious beliefs which might have entered the area around the same time that the people began to produce their own drums. The discovery of making bronze drum from archaeological excavation at Non Nong Ho site, Ban Na Udom Sub-district, Nikhom Kham Soi District, Mukdahan Province, ought to point towards the hypothesis of local technology of making bronze drum and the belief and practice of the aforementioned tradition. This earliest type of bronze drum from the C-14 dating site (dated to 2,105±25 BP), adopted from southern China, was locally made, along with other bronze items(Baonoed 2016, 12-21). According to the analysis result these bronze items made of tin and lead ores/ingots from the mines of the western Thailand and copper ores/ingots from those of the central and upper northeastern Thailand and the southern region of Lao PDR, therefore,

a long-distance exchange of material overland had took place for thousands of years(Natapintu 2015, 4-15). During this time the archaeological findings also show relatively evidence of imported of the new species of cattle from overseas to the land which has been confirmed by cattle's bone found alongside burials in two sites and the data analysis of samples by means of DNA reveals that the bones' cattle belongs to species: Bos taurus (first domesticated in southeast Turkey around 10,500 years ago) in which the subspecies is Bos taurus indicus (indicine cattle or Zebu). A bronze figure of cattle with a fatty hump on its shoulders (humped cattle) found in Khon Kaen Province is identifiable as Bos taurus indicus or Zebu or Brahman; as the scientific name suggested, the species was probably imported from South Asia, i.e., India. [Figure 13].

<Fig. 13> Bronze figure depicting humped cattle

The current archaeological evidence suggests that many prehistoric and early historic communities already possessed advanced pyro-technology and metallurgy that local people had accumulated knowledge handed down by their forefather as reflected in the 4th century BC site at Ban Don Ta Phet, Phanom Thuan District, Kanchanaburi Province, where the high-tin bronze weapon, vessel, and ornament obviously produced by exceptionally skilled craftsmen(Glover 1996, 75-79).

Perhaps, some Indian references of *Suvarṇabhūmi*, literally, *the*

Land of Gold, to the Southeast Asian region including Thailand, arose from the knowledge that the land was rich in resources of all types including mineral resource which could be easily bought and sold in a large market. It is also possible that gold could be found in this region, that is was a good quality and that the technology employed in the manufacture of objects whose techniques could well have developed as a result of their long-standing familiarity with bronze technology which had been developing since prehistoric times(Srisuchat 1996, 239-240).

An important feature of the sixth to eleventh-century-states was the rise of manufacturing sites for metal works, such as religious images, coins and ornaments, particularly in Buddhist states of Dvāravatī and Śrīvijaya. Metal ornaments as well as metal ingots (lead, tin, copper, bronze, and silver) were manufactured for used within their own communities and were sent out far and wide by Arab ships via the ports in the western coast. The coin was model on those of India, and used as a commemorative item, and/or a form of currency used in the internal and external markets of the states. Nevertheless, there was also the import of Chinese coins and they were continuously used as the form of currency in the regional trade(Srisuchat 2002, 186).

It is understood that Buddhism from India and/or from Sri Lanka was introduced and cultivated in Thailand since the 5^{th} - early 6^{th} century CE; this is confirmed by three small Buddha images found in Thailand: The small sandstone image of standing Buddha granting boons found in the ancient town of Wiang Sa, Suratthani Province, southern Thailand, is in the style closely associated with the sculpture

workshops of the great monastic complex at Saranath in northern India; Two bronze images of standing Buddha preaching; one found in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, northeastern Thailand and another found in Narathiwat Province, southern Thailand; both may be considered imports from Sri Lanka.

The presence of these portable and imported icons affirm the participation in long-distance trade of India and Sri Lanka and represent a significant first phrase in the socio-cultural exchange and opened avenues for influence on local art production(Guy 2014, 7 ; 35-38).

The Buddhist cult icons from overseas were installed in peninsular Thailand and central Thailand. This is confirmed by: 1. Small sandstone image of standing Buddha found in peninsular Thailand, is most likely a local product based on imported models from Andhra Pradesh, southern India, dated to the early fifth century CE; 2. Incomplete bas-relief terracotta depicts the middle part of three standing monks going on alms round; 3. Incomplete bas-relief stucco depicts the lower part of meditating Buddha protected by nāga has been found in the ancient town of U-thong, Suphan Buri Province. The two incomplete objects that both have been found in the ancient town of U-thong, Suphan Buri Province, are most explicitly modeled on fourth to fifth-century Amarāvatī types from the Andhra region in southern India.

Images of Buddha in different styles, postures and gestures of different periods of Thailand have been recognized by scholars that they were made on the basis of the Indian Buddha iconography but

had been subjected to local people's insight into the Buddhist philosophy and their interpretation of it differently. Examples of Buddha images in particular posture and/or gesture contained herein were selected specifically in order to express the idea of how the adopted-style or innovative images represent what the indigenous perception of the Buddha's teaching, knowing of the Buddha's life and the Buddhist art imported from overseas.

Three Buddha's seated postures (āsana) of the Buddha images, originated in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka that had been adopted by indigenous people of the land and influenced them to create images of Buddha of their own, will be particularly noted and described here. Firstly, we have an image of Buddha in *paryaṅkāsana*, literally, posture with right foot on the left thigh (Reliefs depicting the episodes of the Buddha's life from the Amarāvatī Mahāchaitya stūpa of the late Sātavāhanas at Amarāvathī village, Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh, India, late 2nd to early 3rd century CE and from Nāgārajunakoṇḍa site (Ikṣvāku period), Āndhra Pradesh, India, late 3rd century CE.) and secondly an image of Buddha in *paryaṅkavajrāsana* or *vajrāsana*, literally, diamond posture with the left foot on the right thigh and the right foot on the left thigh and the feet showing (Mirpur Khas, Pakistan, mid- to late 5th century CE as well as at stūpa 1, Sāñcī, Madya Pradesh, India, Gupta period, mid-5th century CE) and thirdly an image of Buddha in *pralambapādāsana* or *bhadrāsana*, literally, posture with two legs pendant, feet on the ground (at Cave 26, detail of Stūpa, Ajaṇṭā, Maharastra, India, late 5th century CE).

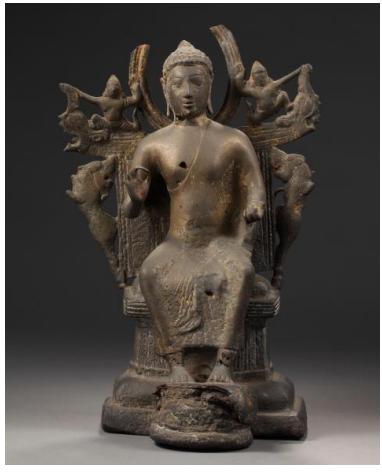
According to the Pāli text of Tipiṭaka (the Buddhist Canon), the paryaṅkāsana would be a suitable posture of Lord Buddha after he became the Enlightened One and eschewed torture-postures such as vajrāsana. There is a story of the Buddha's thoughts about the torture-posture and a dispute between him and Māra the Evil One about the issue, found in the Sagāthāvagga (the Book of Verse), Chapter 4: Mārasaṃyutta: Austere Practice, of the Suttapiṭika, Saṃyutanikāya of the Pāli Tipiṭaka(Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000, 195).

However, the *Lalitavistara*, the Mahāyāna Sanskrit literature (dated to the 1st century CE), influenced Indian artisans to create the images of Buddha in paryaṅkāsana, vajrāsana, and also bhadrāsana.

The aforementioned three āsanas of Buddha are exemplified by a number of Buddha images found in Thailand; i.e., a bronze Buddha image in paryaṅkāsana in the Dvāravatī style found at Haribhuñjaya Temple, Lamphun Province, dated to 8th century CE [Figure. 14], a bronze Buddha image in vajrāsana of the Lan Na style found at Wat Pa Daeng Luang Don Chai Bunnak, Phayao Province, dated to 1476 CE [Figure 15], and a bronze enthroned Buddha images in pralambapādāsana of Dvāravatī style found at the ancient town of In Buri, Sing Buri Province, dated to 8th - 9th century CE. [Figure 16].

<Fig. 14> Bronze Buddha in Paryaṅkāsana

<Fig. 15> Bronze Buddha in Vajrāsana, Lan Na style



<Fig. 16> Bronze Enthrone Buddha in Pralambapādāsana

The Sanskrit literature, *Lalitavistara*, that influenced on the Pāli and Thai literature, for instance, the *Pathomsomphothikatha* (1845 CE), have made the Buddhists believe that after subduing Māra (the

Evil One) Lord Buddha's seat becomes a 'diamond throne' (vajraparyaṅka/ vajrāsana) in post-enlightenment or seat upon which the Buddha achieved enlightenment, Buddha used his 'enlightenment' (jñāna) like a 'diamond' (vajra) to destroy his defilements (as personified by 'Māra').To emphasize the role of 'vajra' when Lord Buddha becomes the Enlightened One, therefore, images of Buddha in vajrāsana (diamond pose related to a diamond seat) have been created, particularly in the Northern School of Buddhism, the Mahāyāna and later the Vajrayāna. The concept of the diamond throne related to the diamond pose has been regarded as a crucial feature of representation of the mortal Buddha (and the word 'vajrāsana' is also the epithet of the historic Buddha or mortal Buddha), as well as of the Five Dhyāni-Buddha (Tathāgaka-Buddha) and of a number of botthisattvas in the Mahāyāna (as well as Vajrayāna) Buddhist pantheon(Bhattacharyya 1968, 42-144). It is confirmed by a large number of Buddhist images in vajrāsana and in the gestures of dhyānamudrā (meditation) or of bhūmisaparśamudrā with right hand touching the ground in the mudrā of calling the earth to witness, or other gestures that had been created in Bihār and Bengal of the eighth through twelfth centuries (during the Pāla period), particularly at major centres such as Nālandā or Bodh Gayā. These major centres served as sources of stylistic and iconographic inspiration for smaller, less prominent establishments(Huntington 1985, 387-412). Images of Buddha in vajrāsana are broadly found in the northern India and it appears to be generally associated with the Northern School of Buddhism: Mahāyana/Vajrayāna. The posture has

been implied respectfully and widely for Buddha image-making according to the Mahāyāna/ Vajrayāna treatises such as Sādhanamālā and Niṣpannayogāvalī(Bhattacharyya 1968, 1-41).

During that time countries/states in Southeast Asia had engaged in trade and religious exchange with some areas of Bihār and Bengal, therefore, the Pāla school of art spread to Southeast Asia through the maritime silk road and had been adopted by the indigenous people in Thailand, especially people of the states of the Śrīvijaya on peninsular Thailand and of the Khmer influenced state, Lavapura or Lopburi.

However, prior to the advent of the Pāla School of art, indigenous people of the early states in Thailand had been accustomed to the Amarāvatī School of art that conveyed the message of the Theravāda Buddhism or the Southern School of Buddhism. It is acceptable that the image of Buddha in sitting pose in paryāṅkāsana with the right foot on the left thigh is originally created at Amarāvatī in Andhra Pradesh of southeastern India. A different type of art form evolved and flourished in Amarāvatī for nearly six centuries, commencing from about the 2nd century BC to the end of the 3rd century CE, during the rule of Sātavāhana dynasty. The Amarāvatī School of art had great influence on art in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia as products from here were carried to those countries.

A large number of Buddhist images in paryāṅkāsana have been found in Thailand over time. Most seated Buddha images depicted the position had been made to serve the Theravāda Buddhists and the Vajrayāna-influenced communities of the peninsular states of Śrīvijaya and the state of Lavapura (Lopburi) as well. These testified

to the fact that the perception of the Buddha's teaching on the middle-way and the crucial episode of the Buddha's life, the transition of change from the torture-yogic practice of the bodhisatta Siddhattha (the Buddha-to-be) to perform the paryāṅkāsana to access the Enlightenment, has been favorable and particularly impressive to most indigenous people in Thailand and consistent with their philosophy of living. Exceptionally, most of the Buddha images seated in the vajrāsana have been counted in the Haribhuñjaya State in the northern Thailand, flourished during the 12th to 13th century CE. The Theravāda Buddhist state was influenced by traditionally Mon's Theravāda Buddhists and the Mon's images of Buddha at Bagan (in the present-day Myanmar) and from the Pāla style of Indian art that passed on through Bagan.

The strong perception following the Buddha teaching such as this that expressed through the Buddha images in the paryāṅkāsana posture as the hallmark of the Theravāda's icon in Thailand that had influenced on the artisans of the Mahāyana or Vajrayāna Buddhist states, like *Tāmbraliṅga* in southern Thailand, *Lavupura* in central Thailand. This is confirmed by a number of 7th to 9th - century bronze and stone images of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, created to be Amitābha Buddha's acolytes found in several sites of the ancient states. The bodhisattvas bear the figure of Amitābha on the crown, thus clearly revealing their origin. Note that the effigy of Amitābha Buddha on the Avalokiteśvara's crown is always represented as seated on the full bloom lotus, and the meditative pose with legs crossed, i.e. vajrāsana (or padmāsana), but herein some Amitābha

Buddha seated in paryāṅkāsana instead of vajrāsana. [Figure 17]. Apart from the significant images found in the ancient state of *Tāmbraliṅga*, images of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara have been found abundantly in the southern Peninsula of Thailand as well as in Central and western Thailand, and some of them remarkably feature Amitābha Buddha seated in paryāṅkāsana(Srisuchat 2014, 14-16).

<Fig. 17> Bronze Avalokiteśvara bearing the Amitābha Buddha seated in Paryaṅkāsana on his crown

Regarding the gestures of seated Buddha image; the Nakhon Chum Inscription of the Sukhothai Kingdom, dated to 1357 CE, suggests that the gesture of Buddha subduing Māra under the Bodhi-tree represents His Enlightenment. This is the reason why most of images of Buddha in Sukhothai art were created in the form of Buddha subduing Māra (equivalent to *bhūmisparśamudrā*) and did not follow the Sri Lankan tradition of making the Buddha image in meditation (equivalent to *dhyānamudrā*) even the Sukhothai adopted the Theravāda from Sri Lanka. However, the concept of reverence the Bodhi-tree of the Sri Lankan tradition was adopted. Following the Buddha image-making tradition of Sukhothai, a large number of images of Buddha in subduing Māra had been created in the

Ayutthaya Kingdom (1350-1767 CE), not only sculpture but also being depiction in the mural paintings and illustrated manuscripts. However, at the same time a number of images of Buddha in meditation had been produced and recognized in the kingdom. A distinctive image of Buddha of the sixth-century Ayutthaya style recalled the turning back to follow the Sri Lanka concept of making Buddha in meditation and the reverence of the Bodhi-tree in association with the scene of Buddha subduing Māra. This is exemplified by an outstanding bronze image depicting Buddha seated on the lotus throne beneath the Bodhi-tree with both hands on his lap, signifying he is in meditation (dhyāna-mudrā). Below him, ugly figures depict the armies of Māra including demonic figures with buffalo heads and elephant. [Figure 18].

<Fig. 18> Bronze Buddha in meditation beneath the Bodhi-tree and below him a troop of Māra

Apart from depiction of Buddha seated under the Bodhi-tree with or without the presence of Māra and/or his army, images of seated Buddha in meditation protected by nāga have been created in several Buddhist cultures and several periods until the present. It originated in Nāgārjunakonda in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh and spread to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. In Thailand, the worship of

snake as the indigenous progenitor intermingled with Buddhist cult related to *nāga*, either Theravāda or Mahāyāna, was broadly practiced and further developed. The seated Buddha in meditation protected by nāga has been created based on the well-known story of Lord Buddha and Mucalinda, the king of nāga. [Figure 19].

<Fig. 19> Bronze Buddha in meditation protected by Nāga

Depiction of the Buddha protected by nāga and the Buddha performs the gesture of Māravijaya instead of meditation has been found in the late period of the Śrīvijaya, exemplified by a significant bronze image known as '*Grahi Buddha*' (12th century CE). [Figure 20]. Why did the indigenous people not follow the Indian model of such an icon? It is plausible that the image of Buddha performing the gesture of Māravijaya (victory over Māra/subduing Māra) and protected by nāga was created based on other story of the Buddha's life when Māra manifested himself in the form of a giant king serpent (nāga) and approached the Buddha when He was dwelling at Rājagaha and was sitting out in the open in the thick darkness of the night while it was drizzling. The Buddha addressed Māra in verses implying why He

<Fig. 20> Bronze ‘Grahi Buddha’ in Māravijaya protected by Nāga

subdued Māra the Event One in the form of ‘hooded serpent’. The verses appear in the Sagāthāvagga, Chapter 4: Mārasaṃyutta: Austere Practice, of the Suttapiṭika, Saṃyutanikāya of the Pāli Tipiṭaka(Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000, 199).

It is evident that some images of Buddha perform the gesture of Māravijaya and protected by nāga such as these were made at the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya states during the 14th -15th century CE. At present one of the Sukhothai-styled Buddha images performing the gesture of Māravijaya, brought from the ancient town of Sukhothai to be placed at Phra Chetuphon temple, was reconstructed and the new part of ‘protected nāga’ has been added.

It is necessary to sum up the conception of the Theravāda practitioners in Thailand that sometime the Buddha subduing Māra is considered to be the gesture of attaining the enlightenment of the Buddha. Therefore, images of Buddha may be created by periodically alternating two different gestures, dhyānamudrā (meditation) or bhūmisparśamudrā or Māravijaya (subduing Māra).

The third Buddha's seated posture (āsana), *pralambapādāsana* or *bhadrāsana* will be discussed in the last point of the topic to show a reflection of a significant Buddha Dhamma (Sanskrit: Dharma, literally, Buddha's teachings) adopted by indigenous people and has recognized and gained insight into it through the image of Buddha in the āsana.

The Sanskrit term 'pralambapādāsana' literally means 'the seated posture with pendant feet' is a typical posture of the Buddha Gautama (Pāli: Gotama) and of some images of Maitreya (the Buddha of the Future). The Buddha or Maitreya sits on a throne with both legs pendant and feet on the ground or a small stool, especially a lotus-like shaped stool. According to iconography, the term 'bhadarāsana' is often used as a synonym for pralambapādāsana. The term bhadrāsana was found in the Lalitavistara, the first-century Mahāyāna Buddhist literature. According to the literature, bhadarāsana was performed by Lord Buddha for relaxing after maintaining of the 'paryaṅgāsana' during long hours of meditation and becoming the Enlightened One.

The image of enthroned Buddha seated in the bhadrāsana normally is found very early in the Bactro-Gandhāra region of the Kuṣāṇa period (2nd century CE) and in India, for instance: Buddha of the Gupta period (4th to 6th centuries CE). In Tibet, China, Korea and Japan, bhadrāsana is a typical posture of Maitreya rather than that of the Buddha Gautama. As being the seated posture on a throne and two legs pendant, it is also called 'European seated posture' or 'Chinese seated posture'.

The Buddha's seated posture has parallels in both Indian and

Chinese Buddhist art of the seventh century and is associated with auspiciousness and material wealth. Its widespread appearance throughout mainland Southeast Asia and Java points to the circulation of portable Indian models, most likely transported by Buddhist missionary monks(Guy 2014, 199).

The significant sites of early states of Southeast Asia where the Buddha's seated posture have been found are as follow: the Sòn Tho site of the Champa State in Trà Vinh Province of Southern Vietnam (6^{th} - 7^{th} centuries CE), Chandi Mendut of the Śrīvijaya State in Java (8^{th} century CE). In Thailand, the images of Buddha or depiction of the Buddha's posture on other religious objects of place have been particularly found at the ancient towns or archaeological sites of the Dvāravatī culture in several provinces of all regions, such as Nakhon Pathom, Suphan Buri, Saraburi in Central Thailand, Ratchaburi in western Thailand, Kalasin and Mahasarakham in northeastern Thailand, Suratthani and Krabi in southern Thailand, etc., dated to 6^{th} to 9^{th} centuries CE. **[Figure 21].** The overall criterion of the Dvāravatī images of Buddha in the posture was their relatively similarity to the south Asian examples. Thanks to the maritime-trade interaction between Thailand and the west-east

<Fig. 21> Bronze Buddha in Bhadrāsana, found at Phra Pathom Chedi, Dvāravatī style

regions over time, the Dvāravatī Buddha image had Indic characteristic and shares many characteristic with Chinese sculpture, however, it features some distinguishing characteristics of the local sculptural innovation.

The Sanskrit term bhadrāsana is a compound made up of 'bhadra" (blessed or fortunate) and 'āsana' (posture) means 'the blessed posture' or 'the fortunate posture'. The word 'bhadra' is equivalent to the Pāli 'bhadda'. There are four consecutive suttas (verses) in the Majjhima Nikāya, the Pāli text of Tipiṭaka (the Buddhist canon of the Theravāda Buddhists) with the name 'Bhaddaekaratta' (bhadda + eka + ratta) meaning '*One who has a fortunate single attachment'*. The expression 'Bhaddaekaratta' was a popular phrase taken over by the Buddha and given a special sense by him. The following is an example:

> *'Let not a man revive the past or on the future build his hopes; The past is‥as the left-behind, the future‥as the yet-unreached. Rather with insight let him see. Each dhamma presently arisen: to how and to be sure of that invincibly, unshakably. Today the effort much be made. Tomorrow Death may come, who knows? No bargain with Mortality can keep him and his hordes away. But one who dwells thus ardently, relentlessly, by day, by night, it's he, the Hermit Stilled has said, that has one Fortunate Attachment.'*

When the term Bhadrāsana is used for an image of Buddha which is the likely representation of the Buddha's teaching, therefore, the presence of the Buddha's seated posture in all shapes and sizes in

many ancient sites of Dvāravatī culture suggests what would be the crucial Buddhist philosophy of individual and community life.

This is the spiritual heritage that handed down from generation to generation through the Buddhist icons of this type. Whenever one perceives the Buddha in bhadrāsana, one should think of the dhamma above.

Ⅴ. Conclusion

A concept of cultural transformation and innovation of people in Thailand as a result of the trans-oceanic contacts since the beginning of the overseas trade can be recognized through three main items of aforementioned discussion: (1) Elephant and elephant tusks (ivory) as a representative of fauna-natural resources or jungle's products that had functional role in the indigenous way of life and to be trade; (2) Ceramics as a representative of a functional commodity itself as well as a container of several commodities, developed from local technology and adoption of more progress technology imported through the maritime silk road contact; and (3) Bronze objects as a representative of integration of indigenous knowledge of pyro-technology and adaptation of foreign knowledge of religious sculpture-making, particularly, an image of Buddha.

The three categories were described in a specific topic in terms of its existence in the local way of life and beliefs, its role of change after adopting foreign technique or religious concept, particularly the

Buddhism, innovative items reflecting indigenous adaptation and socio-economic development as a result of the maritime-trade and cultural interrelation.

Various types of evidence including archaeological sites, religious architecture and sculptures, archaeological findings (especially foreign imports, local resources and exports), inscriptions, manuscripts and documentary evidence have been used to identify the three issues and to lay the groundwork for an understanding of the dynamically cultural interactions between overseas counties and indigenous people of Thailand's past either advantage or disadvantage. However, one lesson we learn from the past that a trade of natural resources was affected by the idea of consumerism and technology which caused material culture development to leapfrog with no due considerations of environmental impact and led to the destruction and irreparable loss of resources.

Whatever the political situation may have been like when power changed hand through the various ages and throughout the periods the inhabitants of Thailand including natives, immigrants and foreigners have taken part in maritime trade and cultural development from the remote past up to the present.

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요 약

해양 실크로드가 태국 불교미술과 용품에 미친 영향

아마라 스리수찻
전 방콕국립박물관장/ 문화부

본 논문에서는 해상 실크로드가 시작된 이래 태국에서 이루어진 해양 접촉을 통한 문화와 물질의 발견을 통해 문화 변혁과 혁신을 밝히고자 하였다. 이를 위해 태국의 대표적인 고고학 유물인 코끼리 문양과 상아, 도기와 청동유물을 중점적으로 다루고자 하였다.

코끼리는 예로부터 태국인들의 생계와 풍습에 중추적인 역할을 담당했으며, 태국을 포함한 동남아시아 전체에서 발견되는 '무늬가 있는 인도-로마 도기'는 기원후 1-2세기에 이미 로마-인도 무역 네트워크가 이 지역까지 퍼져 있었음을 보여준다.

청동 유물, 특히 주석 함유량이 높은 청동제 무기와 청동호우, 청동 장신구를 만드는 기술은 기원전 2000년 이후 등장한다. 그러나 기원전 5세기에서 1세기 사이의 중국제 청동북이 발견되어 중국과의 해양 교류가 인도보다 앞서 영향을 받았다는 가설을 제시할 수 있다.

또한 인도, 스리랑카에서 수입된 양식을 직접적으로 모방하기보다는 현지인들의 생활과 사회에서 이상적으로 여기는 붓다의 생애와 가르침을 토대로 그의 형상을 만들었다고 할 수 있다.

주제어: 해상실크로드, 태국, 코끼리, 도기, 청동 유물