Chapter 3: The cultural relationship between India and Southeast Asia from the beginning of Christian era.

From the beginning of the first millennium A.D up to 20th century A.D, particularly the chieftain groups of Southeast Asia had adopted “Indianized” traditions of religion, political administration, philosophy, languages and arts. There are some ambiguous external historical records, Indian and Chinese, which mentions about some states being influenced by Indian cultural tradition like Funan located at the lower Mekong river delta where present days situated at the bordering of Cambodia and Vietnam. There are numbers of articles and researches related to “the Indianization” of Southeast Asia (Coedes 1968; Kangle 1963; Kulke 1990; Mebbet 1977; Pelliot 1903; Wheatley 1983; Wolters 1999).

The concepts of Indianization have been developed exclusively through the time from 20th century onward. According to each of scholar, period and their experiences, since the beginning of 20th century, the influence of European colonial rule had inspired the concept of Indianization as the major migration of Indian to Southeast Asian. This theory led to the “Greater India” movement, clearly seen in the works of R.C. Majumdar (1952) who had asserted that “…the Hindu colonists brought the whole frame work of their culture and civilization and it was transplanted into entirely of people who had not yet emerged from their Barbarianism…”

In contrast to this colonist influenced theory, O.W. Wolters (1999) has put forward the idea of selective “localization” of Indian cultural elements and emphasized the innovative and dynamic characters of Southeast Asian societies. In addition to Wolters, Kulke (1990: 8-32 ) also has given the concept of “Convergence” in between the courts on the both sides of the Bay of Bengal, linked by intensive maritime trade relations and being united in a mutual process of civilization. Currently, all the regional specialists agree that the theories or concepts of Indian cultural impact on Southeast Asian countries whether inspired by “Indianization”, “localization” or “convergence” are the result of expansion of trade, especially maritime trade relationship. For better understanding, it is necessary to trace back the formation and evaluation of this trade networks across the regions, from the coastal areas of Indian subcontinent to the localized chieftain groups in Southeast Asia.

Furthermore, there are some important research works related to the early exchange networks in South and Southeast Asia were done by Bronson (1977), Wheatly (1983), Wolters (1967), Miksic (1984) and Wisseman Christie (1990). They all have proposed evolutionary or structural models for Southeast Asian exchange systems.
The formation of early Southeast Asian states located in mainland regions and maritime states like Indonesia (Java), Malay Peninsula (Sumatra) including Bali had gradually started from the middle of first millennium A.D. This was an important facet of economic life of this region (Ray 1994: 87). During this time, it was considered to be a contemporary of the late Gupta period (4th-6th centuries A.D.) followed by Medieval period of regional states in Eastern and Southern India (6th-12th centuries A.D.). To understand the process of cultural impact between two regions, it is necessary to study through the political history, economic system and expansion of Brahmanism in Indian subcontinent during this period which would have influenced the administrative function as well as religious culture in Southeast Asian states.

3.1. The growth of Gupta Kingdom and early medieval states in Eastern and Southern India: Political history and economic system.

The Guptas (early 4th-6th centuries A.D.)

The Gupta Empire had governed the most of North Indian region from the early 4th century A.D. The founder of the Gupta dynasty was Chandra Gupta I, a local chieftain from North India who married a Licchavi Royal princess for strengthening his political power. Like the Mauryas, he selected Pataliputra city as the capital of Gupta Kingdom. There are some important Kings like Samudra Gupta and Chandra Gupta II who had patronized glorious arts and literatures and also expanded the territory of their Kingdom by both military and matrimonial alliance. Especially in the reign of Chandra Gupta II, he married to a Kubera Naga who was from Naga Royal family from Deccan region which later came to be known as “the Vakatakas”. Then he had given away his daughter, Prabhavati Gupta, to the King of Vakataka named Rudrasena II in a marriage. These marriages not only strengthened the political power of the Guptas, but also brought the delicate Gupta art and aesthetic along with intensive Vaisanavite tradition to the Deccan region.

After Chandra Gupta II, Kumara Gupta then came to the throne followed by Skanda Gupta. It was during Skanda Gupta’s reign that the Huns (Hunas) from Central Asia invaded India from the northwest region. Though Skanda Gupta managed to prevent his Kingdom from the invasion, it was not able to resist the long term attacks. After the reign of Skanda Gupta, the Gupta Kingdom was getting weakened by political and economic problems that finally led to the downfall of the great Kingdom under military troop of Hun at around the middle of 6th century A.D.
The Vakatakas (middle of 3rd – late 6th centuries A.D.)

The Vakatakas had gradually emerged from the Central part of India very close to Deccan region, presently Vidrabha district, or even Southward up to Andhra Pradesh. After the downfall of Satavahana at around the middle of 3rd century A.D., several smaller and less powerful chieftain states arose in this region but the most important of these was the Vakatakas. Initially they ruled over Berar region in Central India. The Puranas mention Vindhayasakti as their founder.

Vindhayasakti’s successor, Paravasena I (280-340 A.D.), made military conquests in all directions. He was the only King who had been given the title Samrat (emperor). During the reign of Chandra Gupta II, the political power of the Vakatakas was influenced by Gupta as seen through Royal matrimonial alliance.

The Vakatakas arts and religious cultures had been flourishing along with Gupta of North India till the last Vakatakas King, Harishena, who was able to control the whole of Deccan. The Vakatakas had patronized the construction of Ajanta and several cave temples. But soon after the death of Harishena at around 6th century A.D., the entire Kingdom seemed to have fallen apart.

Administrative structures of the Gupta and Vakatakas

After the long period, The Gupta brought unity to a large part of India. The administration was efficient, and thus the country was peaceful and prosperous as well as the stable economic condition made it possible for the art to flourish.

From 3rd century A.D. onward, political hierarchies can be identified by the title of rulers reflecting the relations of the paramount and subordination. Gupta Kings had several titles as “Maharajadhiraaja”, “Parama-bhtataraka” and “Parameshvara”. They also connected themselves with the Gods through epithets such as “parama-daivata” (the foremost worshippers of Gods) and “parama-bhagavata” (the foremost worshipers of Krishna-Vasudeva). Some historians have suggested that Gupta Kings claimed divine status (Singh 2008: 485). For instance, the Allahabad prashasti describes Samudragupta as God dwelling on earth, as Purusha (the Supreme Being) and as equal of gods Kubera, Varuna, Indra and Yama. This assertion can be seen as reflections of an attempt to exalt the King’s status by comparing him with Gods, rather than as an assertion of the King’s divinity.

The administration under the Gupta kings was not merely centralized as it had been under the Mauryas. The Guptas did not control government officials so strictly like the Mauryas, on contrary, the district officials during Gupta period had a considerable amount of freedom. According to several Gupta inscriptions, they mention on the status and hierarchies of officers with the basis of duty
towards particular official works such as *Kumaramatya* (Royal member or crown prince), *Baladhikrita* (chief of Military), *Dandanayakas* (high ranking juridical officers), *Uparika* (head of province), *Vishayapati* (head of district) and the *nagara-sreshthin* (chief of merchant).

Similar to Gupta administrative system, Vakataka Empire was also divided into provinces called *rashtra* or *rajya* governed by district officers. The ministers of Vakataka, apart from official works, they also devoted themselves to religious activities as seen from the inscription found at Ajanta cave 16 which mentions about the minister *Varahadeva* who donated the gifts of cave to Buddhist *sangha* during the time of King *Harishena*. The feudatories had settled widely in the Kingdom as it was described in the Vakataka inscriptions which referred to some additional administrative terms related to land governors.

**Land grants:**

The earliest inscription recording the Royal land grant system as “*Dakshina*” for religious activity is the Naneghat inscription dated around 1st century A.D. (Singh 2008: 384). Thus, it assumes that the land donation system had started from *Satavahana* and *Kshatrapa* periods and continuously followed by the later Kingdoms. Generally, according to *Nashik* cave inscription of *Ushavadata* (2nd century A.D.), not only the landed property had been donated to Gods and the *Brahmanas*, they also included the surrounded villages for religious works.

From the economic perspective, one important reason for the decline of the centralized economy in this period was the system of land grants. Later on these land grants were distributed for administrative purposes rather than religious gifts. However this system became very common during Gupta and Medieval period. Under this system, the salaries of officials were not always paid in money. Instead, officials were given land and allowed to cultivate it after paying tax to the King. Lands were also granted to *Brahmanas* known as “*agrahara*” grant.

Politically, the system gives landowners a great deal of power and weakened the position of the King. It marked a shift from central to local power known as *Samanta*, the subordinate or feudalitary rulers. Thus, the history of northern India from the early medieval period onwards is known as the period of “feudalism” when the central economic function was not mainly controlled by the Royal order.
Trade and economy of Gupta-Vakataka period:

During the Gupta time, one of the important sources of income was the tax which was collected from traders and guilds. The guild is a partnership of artisans, craftsmen and workers organized in a group for commercial benefits. This kind of guilds had started from 2nd century A.D. onwards due to the socio-economic development and distant trade route. In some cases, guilds also worked as banks and training centres that sustained the knowledge and skills of various craft-making from time to time. The most important guilds were those of the potters, metal workers and carpenters. Their leaders were wealthy men who commanded much influence in the city. There are several inscriptions which the date lasted up to medieval period mention the distinction between merchants operating locally as “Svadesi” and internationally as “Nanadesi” (Kulke and Rothermund 1986: 125).

According to the Gupta–Vakataka inscriptions, there are abundant records mentioning artisans, craftsmen and specialists which suggest that they thrived on urban crafts and trades as well as the flourishing situation of the guilds. Besides commercial activities, the wealthy guilds were supposed to do charitable works for the society such as providing shelter for travellers or building temples, assembly houses and gardens (Singh 2008 : 501). There are some important inscriptions which mention about the merchant guilds and their religious activities like the Indore inscription of Skandagupta (465 A.D.). This inscription records that the Surya temple at Indrapura (Indore) was contributed by two merchants who originated in this place named Achalavarman and Bhrikunthusimha. It also mentions about an endowment made by Bharmana Devavishnu for maintaining perpetual lamp in this temple and that money was invested by a guild of oil manufacturers headed by Jivanta. Interestingly, the guild was to ensure regular supply of oil for temple lamps, even if it migrated elsewhere. Thus, it suggests on the role of merchants in the expansion of religious activities as contributors or patrons.

In case of long distance trade, since it had obviously started from 2nd-3rd centuries A.D., the prosperity of the overseas trade and Silk Road across Central Asia were seen through both archaeological and literary evidences. There are references of port sites in India during early of 4th to late 6th century A.D. in the account of Cosmas and Fa Hien’s travelling records. It suggests the growth of port sites located in the western and eastern coasts of India. These ports and towns were connected with those of Persia, Arabia, and Byzantium on the one hand and Sri Lanka, China and Southeast Asia on the other. Fa Hien mentioned on the perils of the sea routes between India and China. Monks traveling from India to China along the land route via Central Asia must have followed the routes of Caravan traders.
Although the trade with the Roman Empire had decreased after the fall of Roman Empire in the 3rd century A.D., the trade with the East and Southeast Asia was more preferred (Kulke and Rothermund 1987: 105). There was a high demand of the luxurious Indian trade commodities like sandalwood, jewel, muslin, spices, aromatics and pepper (Xinru Liu 1996: 50-56). Meanwhile Chinese silk was also regarded as an expensive item in India known as “Chinamshuka” (Singh 2008: 503).

During this period from 300–600 A.D., along with the trade contact, the Indian cultural impact had influenced the early Southeast Asian states especially in sophisticated religious rituals and philosophy. In the course of the 1st millennium, Buddhist and Hindu sculptures were found together within the complex sacred monuments in this region. Although it is hard to identify the originate place of Indian culture found in Southeast Asian countries, both of Gupta and other northern dynasties as well as the South had done successfully in the role of cultural inspirations which had given intensive influence through the religious arts in both Buddhism and Brahmanism.

The early medieval period of Northern India: The Vardhanas of Kanauj and the Palas Dynasty:

The golden age of the Indian history ended with the fall of the Guptas and its feudatories, after 6th century A.D. Then the subsequent period which is commonly known as Early Medieval period started with numerous independent states from North to South India. The most important ruling dynasty soon after the Guptas in the North India was “Pushyabhutis” of Thaneswar. The King Harshavardhana began his reign in 606 A.D. and established Kanauj as the capital. Although the specific extent of Harshavardhana’s empire is unknown, it seemed to be over the most part of north India from Himalayan region, Bengal, Assam and up to Narmada Valley (Jha 2008 : 183). But the King could not defeat Punjab and Deccan region. When he tried to cross the Narmada River for extending his territory to the South, he was defeated by the King of Western Chalukya, Pullakesin II and this made Harshavardhana retreat to his own land.

After the death of Harshavardhana in 647 A.D., it was followed by a confusion that lasted till 8th -10th centuries A.D. in North India. There were some powerful Dynasties ruling over the north India during the Early Medieval period namely the Palas, the Pratiharas of Rajastan and Gujarat, Shailodbhava-Bhaumakara dynasty of Kalinga, Chandela of Madhaya Pradesh and the Rashtrakutas of western India. The Palas gained ascendancy in Bihar and Bengal. In the time of Devapala (810-850 A.D.), the Palas had close diplomatic relationship with the Kings of Sumatra who patronized the monastery construction at Nalanda. The Palas were ruling in the North for some time then succeeded
by the Senas of Bengal before leading to the end of the Hindu Kingdom. In 13th century A.D. due to the Muslim invasion, started the period of Muslim rulers known as the “Medieval period”.

**The economic conditions of early medieval period:**

By the time of *Harshavardhana* of Kanauj, economic conditions had become unstable. This was because of the continuous wars in northern India and lack of a powerful Kingdom for long term domination.

A trace of the decline of the long distance trade can be found from the Gupta period onwards. One of the obvious sign was the decrease in the issue of of coins. During the Gupta period, the gold coins were issued for heavy economic transactions like the purchase of landed property or with the Roman Empire.

But after the fall of the Guptas and the decline of the Indo-Roman trade, the gold coin became rare along with the silver and copper coins. According to *Fa-Hien*, in North India during the late Gupta period, the *cowries* became the common medium of exchange (Jha 2008: 165). Thus, it can be assumed that the economic status of Medieval Period after 600 A.D. would have sustained mainly by the agriculture known as “Feudal system” or several taxes incomes paid to central government.

The slump in trade and the general decline in craft and commodity production led to the decay of many towns located in central and eastern India which once had flourished due to the commercial business like Pataliputra, Kausambhi, Hastinapur, Ujjain and Taxila etc. Even so, Harshavardhana had developed another part of northern India at Kanuaj which became the prosperous capital with full of all accommodations and Buddhist monasteries as well as Brahmanical temples.

**The emergence of South Indian Kingdoms: (500-1300 A.D.)**

**Political history:**

The South Indian history mostly starts with the Satavahana dynasty that ruled over the present day Andhara Pradesh and the Deccen region. The Satavahanas had been the officials under the Mauryas and after Asoka’s death they carved out a Kingdom for themselves. This dynasty had been ruling over there approximately from 225 B.C. to the early of 3rd century A.D. Without accurate chronology, they had left some important information regarding the administration, economic system and religious tradition through several inscriptions, coinage and art which suggest the growth of the Hindu dynasty as they performed Vedic sacrifice and rituals, but they also patronized Buddhism. The early economic condition might have been sustained by both inter-regional and overseas trade. In the
1st and 2nd centuries, the Sakas had migrated to western India and invaded some parts of the Satavahana territory. The war had lasted for a century, Satavahana Kingdom collapsed in the early 3rd century A.D. and the territory was replaced by the Vakatakas while the Sakas could retain their political power in western India up to 4th century A.D. before they got defeated by Chandragupta II of the Gupta empire.

The urbanization in Indian peninsular had possibly started from 1st -3rd centuries A.D. onwards, in the period known as “Sangam” after the name of the Sangam academies in Madurai. Sangam literatures are believed to have been written during this period. The scene of social life, Kingship and religious beliefs are narrated directly in these refined poems which show the sophisticated literary skill. According to Champakalakshmi (1996:92-93), the urbanization of the Sangam age did not take place in context of a state polity, and that this was an age of tribal chiefdoms or at the most “potential monarchies”. She asserts that vender kings exercised limited control over agriculture or trade and depended on tributes and plunder of their sustenance. However, the evidence of writing, the sophisticated literature, urban centers, issue of dynastic coins, long distance trade and specialized crafts suggest otherwise.

During Sangam period, there were three powerful kingdoms known as Cholas (Coromandel Coast), Cheras (Malabar) and Pandyas (southern peninsular). The rulers of these Kingdoms were mainly occupied each other. Moreover, they also fought many chieftains in their own lands. These battles became the main subject of the Sangam poems which reflected the lives, beliefs and social traditions of people of this time.

After the decline of the Guptas in about 500 A.D., the major developments in the South Indian history had started. Politically, this period saw the establishment of two Kingdoms: the Chalukyas of Badami (western Deccan) and the Pallavas of Kanchipuram. Both the Kingdoms were almost equal in their political power and economic strength. They had broken into several wars for governing the fertile region known as Vengi that was located between the Godavari and the Krishna rivers. The Pallavas had been powerful enough to defeat Cholas and Cheras as their vassal states. The Pandyas predominantly governed the Southern Peninsular with their flourishing capital at Madurai, being distinct from Pallava political power.

**The Chalukyas of Badami:** (early of 6th –the middle of 8th centuries A.D.)

The Chalukyas of Badami had governed the land which once belonged to the Vakatakas from the middle of the 6th century. There was the most powerful King named Pullakesin II who had conquered not only South Indian Kings, but also Harshavardhana of Kanauj, when he invaded the Narmada valley. After that great victory, Pullakesin II established himself as “Dakshinapatha” or the
grand lord of the Southern region. During the reign of King Pullakesin II and his son Vikramaditya II, Chalukya Kingdom prospered greatly both economically and architecturally, which got portrayed especially in the architectural style of Pattadakal and rock cut caves of Aihole and Badami.

The downfall of the Chalukyas of Badami had come due to the never-ending warfare with the Pallavas and the rebellion of he local chieftain at around the middle of the 8th century. Although the Chalukyas of Badami ended, but he other branch of the Chalukyas at Vengi (Eastern Chalukya) had sustained till the 11th century A.D.

**The Pallavas:** (middle of 4th – 9th centuries A.D.)

Initially, the Pallavas had emerged from the early 4th century A.D. and had been recognized as the vassal state of the Satavahanas. After 350 A.D., they declared themselves independent and soon established thei capital at Kanchipuram. Their territory was mainly in the eastern coast of South India.

It was around 7th century that the Pallavas had reached their peak politically. In the latter two centuries, the Pallavas ruled over the entire Tamilnadu region. Similar to the Guptas of the North India, the Pallavas too were great patrons of various kinds of art, literature and religious activities. Thus, it had made Kanchipuram, the most flourished centre of art and education in the Southern India.

There were some important Kings who were great rulers as well as religious or arts patrons like Mahendravarma I (600-630 A.D.), Narasimhavarman I (Mamalla: 630-670 A.D.) and Narasimhavarman II (700-728 A.D.).

During their times, the Pallavas were the most powerful Kingdom of South India after fighting many wars against the Chalukyas, Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas. Those were also the most imperative time for art and architecture as seen through the temples of Kanchipuram and the group of monuments of Mamallapuram in Tamilnadu.

The Pallavas declined in the middle of the 8th century A.D. as many civil warsbroke out in the time of Nandivarman II. The riot, though did not ruin the country suddenly, but gradually weakened both the political power and the military which paved the way for the invasion of the Chalukayas and the Rashtrakutas. By 9th century, the Pallavas could no more maintain their strong political power and thus the last ruler was overthrown by Aditya I who was known as the founder of Chola Kingdom and the glorious culture of Pallava was replaced and succeeded by the later powerful Kingdom.
The Chola (late of 9th century A.D.-13th century A.D.):

The Chola dynasty was raised in the late 9th century A.D. They had conquered the Pallava and established their center for political power at Uraiyur or Thanjavur located in the Kavari basin in Tamilnadu.

Similar to other southern Kingdoms, Cholas too had become the most powerful Kingdom in South India by 10th century A.D. after fighting several wars not only with the neighbouring states like Pandyas and Cheras, but also with Sri Lanka, Andaman region and Sri Vijaya state in the Southeast Asia.

The strength of the political power, military and seafaring trades had brought the Kingdom plenty of wealth which was mostly spent on the patronization of religious art. During the times of the great Chola Kings like Rajaraja I, Rajendra I and Kulottunga I, the economic condition was much better as seen through the gold coins which were issued and the magnificent Chola architectures in their capitals, Thanjavour and Gangaikondacholapuram. According to the historical sources, the maritime trade was an important income of the Chola Kingdom. Especially in the time of Kulottunga I, the commercial relationship with Sri Vijaya had flourished and dispatched Chola merchants and ambassadors to the Chinese court.

The imperial power of the Cholas declined in the 13th century due to frequent warfare between Chola and neighboring states like Chalukyas of Vengi, Hoysalas and Rastrakutas. Finally, the Cholas got completely diminished in the 13th century and left behind the vast territory occupied by successive Kingdoms like Pandyas of Madurai, Hoyasalas (Helebid), Yadavas and Kakatiyas of Warangal. These medieval South Indian states had lasted for a century and later got demolished by the Muslim invasion from Delhi.

The Administration and Kingships of South Indian states:

The Kings of South Indian states, especially Chola Kings, had gained much of sovereignty which is evidenced in the inscriptions that referred the great Kings as “Raja-Rajadhiraja” who is the great King of Kings. These inscriptions, normally mentioned about the Kings who got the highest respect, possessed attractive physical appearance, were great warriors, protectors of rightness, great patrons of the art and the generous giver of gifts (specially for Brahmanas). In some cases, the poets also compared the mighty of the Kings with Gods and the mythological heroes. For example, Rajaraja is referred to as Ulakalanda Perumal (the great one who measured the earth). This could mean that the King had ordered a great land survey for revenue purposes. It could equally imply Vishnu, when he as a god had encompassed the Universe with three strikes.
The early medieval dynasties of South India, even those which might have been connected in some way with their namesake of the early historic period, declared the original myths for themselves (Veluthat 1993: 30-50). These originated from the Epic-Puranic tradition of *Surya Vamsa* (Solar lineage) and *Chandra Vamsa* (Lunar lineage). The dynastic ancestor also claimed an indigenous (relationship) family from *Brahmana* or *Kshatriya* clans, namely Rajaraja’s title known as *Kshatriya Sikhamani* (The crest jewel of *Kshatriyas*). Many Kings who had their names ending with “Varman” were related to Kshatriya according to *Manu Smriti*. The Pallavas claimed to be *Brahmanas of Bharadvaj gotra* and traced their line back to God Brahma and some of the Vedic sages or Epic heroes such as *Angniras, Brihaspati* and *Dorna* etc.

The Pandyas considered themselves descending from the lunar lineage while the Cholas declared themselves as the successors of the solar lineage. Moreover, apart from connecting themselves with the puranic tradition from northern Brahmanical elements, the Kings also legitimated the political power by performing Vedic Sacrifices like *Rajsuya* and *Ashvamedha* that were often mentioned in Tamil inscriptions. The Royal land grant to Brahmanas or giving precious gifts to temples were continuously practiced in the courts linked to the legitimation of the Royal power.

The vast territories of South Indian states mostly were under the local chieftains. Possibly, these local chiefs (*samantha*) were governors appointed by the King to rule over the divisions of their Kingdom. The chiefs had to provide military support and when required. It is also likely that they paid tribute to their overlord and loyally attended his court. The matrimonial alliance was used to strengthen their political relationship with Kings. The land governing system by the chieftain and the political situation are important markers to describe the administrative pattern in South Indian Medieval states as centralized state under the sacral Kingship (Sastri 1955). But this was not purely unitary state, the segmentary functions such as local chiefs, peasants and administrative structure like ministries and officials also had given their shares for the development of Kingdom as taxes and military troop.

**Trade and economic condition of South Indian Kingdoms:**

The economic condition of South India in ancient time depended on agriculture and trade. The majority of people lived in village and agriculture was their main occupation. There are some crops which were cultivated and are still being done till this date, such as cotton, sugarcane, spices, pulses and grains which demand less water. Rice or paddy field has commonly grown in the major river basins like Kaveri or Godavari valleys. With the developments in the irrigation facilities, the agricultural products had been sufficiently harvested. However, several wars between Kingdoms
broke out over the control of the fertile basin, especially Vengi located at the mouth of the River Kaveri.

Maritime trade brought great prosperity to the Kingdom of South India. The important ports such as Mammalapuram and Poompuhar had been splendid from Pallava period then Nagapattanam became the richest port of this region during Chola time. The scenes of the flourishing markets and buildings are vividly described in the Tamil literatures.

In case of trade, during this time the trade with the Roman Empire had declined, but it is thought that the seafaring trade still had flourished in Southern peninsular with other countries such as Arab, China and Southeast Asia. From 8th century A.D. onwards, the coming of the Arab merchants had stabilised in the Malabar region as well as their Islamic teaching. For China and Southeast Asia, Indian guilds and traders had settled in these regions mainly for commercial purpose, indirectly the merchants or priests who stayed there had brought their cultural tradition that had been adapted and practiced in Southeast Asian countries. Thus, it is possible to assume that the cultural impact was related to an intensive trade relationship and, besides the Brahmanas, merchants and guilds too had worked together with the priests as the religious patrons in these areas.

**The merchant Guilds of South India:**

Trade led to the growth of prosperous southern towns. There were organized guilds known as “Nagaram” in each port city. Some powerful guilds such as “Ayyavole of five hundred swamins” or Brahmana of Mahajanasa clan (traders) and “Manigramam” were directly related to the maritime trade with seafaring countries where they had interacted with local trading groups (Abraham 1988: 42-43).

The “Ayyavole”, whose name is considered to have been derived from Aihole, the capital of the Chalukyas, dominated the trade with the western region and the Deccan whereas “the Manigramam” was the base in Tamilnadu. The different directions of the commercial targets of these two guilds can be observed, because the Ayyavole had mostly concentrated in Western Asia while the other extended to Southeast Asia. But there was no strict division of trading spheres between the guilds. There are some important Tamil inscriptions discovered in Southeast Asian states mentioning the presence of South Indian guilds, especially Manigrammam at Ta Kua Pa (Southern Thailand), Sumatra and Pagan in Burma where the traders from Malabar Coast (Malaimandalam) established the Vishnu temple in 13th century A.D. (Kulke and Rothermund 1987: 124-125).
The great guilds operating in the seafaring country (nanadeśi) had emerged as an important power factor in the South Indian polity in the days of the Pallavas. They not only financed local development projects and the constructions of the temples but also lent money to the Royal court. Hence, the King had tried his level best to accommodate the merchants draw profits from their works. Because of their international connections, the troops and immunities had been duly supplied. Such guilds were almost on the verge of building up their own communities within the state. This kind of merchant communities commonly settled in the Southeast Asia for trading purpose, though they were not temporary towns, the groups of merchants and their troops had contributed some public facilities like wells or rest houses and temples dedicated to their revered Gods. Due to these Indian settlements, the development of Brahmanical culture in the region got a huge support thought it was not an aimed impact like the arrival of priest or the Brahmanas.

So far we have seen the general description of the political history of the ancient Indian urbanization from Gupta–Vakataka periods in north and central India down to the medieval period of Southern peninsular states. The growth of trade activities and commercial function had been developed along with the state political structures. As a model of a great empire, Gupta Kingdom had an important influence on the whole administrative setup of the medieval regional state rulers and far beyond the boundaries to Indianized states of Southeast Asian. This was because the Guptas had been the most powerful Kings who had successfully ruled over the most magnificent Kingdom of that period. The concept of territory expansion by warfare or matrimonial alliance between Kingdoms to strengthen the political power and the myths of Puranic-sages and Brahmans or Khashatriya ancestors were also commonly rooted in the Southeast Asian royal courts.

The economy and the land revenue systems were efficiently practiced as officially the state incomes and religious grant that conveyed the King’s role to the temples as great divine patron. These common aspects were possible to ascertain in Southeast Asian state organization as they were directly narrated in the inscriptions, but adapted less complicated structure than original place. Moreover, the rise of the Brahmanical temples as centres of economic function had started in Southeast Asian states, especially in ancient Cambodian empire, after 8th century A.D. and indirectly too it had been the Royal character demarcating the expansion of political power at the dominated regions.

Thus, it can be assumed that some of the main administrative features of the Indian Kingdoms had greatly influenced the early state formation in Southeast Asian countries which would be discussed in detail later on.
3.1.1 Trade as the exchange networks in South and Southeast Asia: Literary and archaeological aspects:

“Trade” is one of the important aspects which lead to the foundation of the Southeast Asian states. This is because the expansion of trade system rested upon the more complicated level of society. Thus, the development of urbanization is identified with the growth of commercial system. Moreover, the invention of coinage system was introduced in order to support and facilitate the trade over a larger expanse of area for the far distant connections.

The scene of ancient trade journeys to far distant regions have been clearly narrated in several early literatures. The *Jatakas* had given an account of traders who used to travel on various vehicles; their activities such as of establishing basic civic amenities like wells and tanks along the roads as well as rest houses for staying over nights. Generally, the *Jatakas* also mentions about the location of ports and commercial city centers that connect. Along with this, the *Jatakas* often referred that the group of traders hailed from different social classifications but entered into partnership while going on for long distant trade journeys (Chandra 1977: 56-57; Sigh 2009). In addition to the detail of traders, there are some references from literary sources that mentions about the various items involved in trade exchange between different regions of the subcontinent. These trade items included cotton textile, sandal wood, silk, fine muslin, horses, camels, elephants and steel weapons from several parts of country. The *Arthasastra* also has given a special detail of south cotton textile from Kanchi and Madurai as well as other trade commodities like shells, diamonds and other precious stones, pearls and Golden items (Kulke and Rothermund 1987: 98).

Apart from the north Indian literary sources, the *Sangam* texts from the south, believed to be written within 1st century - 3rd centuries A.D. (Kulke and Rothermund 1987: 103) gives living sketches of the markets and traders of Tamilnadu. They describe the scene of markets in Puhar and Madurai where their merchants used to sell flowers, aromatic powder, betel leaves, shell bangles, jewelry, garments and bronze. The *Sangam* poems mention the caravan (Chettu) of traveling traders who journeyed to interior regions carrying pepper, salt and other items (Singh 2008). Similarly the early Tamil- Brahmi inscriptions refer to the group of merchants dealing with cloth, salt, oil and gold. Therefore, it is justified to assume that during the beginning of the Christian era, all over subcontinent especially in South India, social economic system had widely developed due to the more complicated marketing and demands of commodities matching up with the expansion of primary states toward their political history.
With the advantage of geographical and natural resources, the trading history of peninsular India has been described from a seaward orientation on account of its extensive coastline and the inhospitable nature of the terrain of much of the interiors. Communication has either been coastal or overland through well defined passes in the hill ranges. As the majority of peninsular river flows through narrow channels carved into the uplands, it makes them largely unfit for navigation or irrigation, except in the deltaic regions (Ray 1994: 10). Thus the central area of agrarian expansion of South India has been located in the basins of river Kaveri, Tamraparni and Vaigai.

According to archaeological evidence, the coastal adaptations and exploration of marine resources date back to the prehistoric period. The currently available archaeological data indicates that in the early and middle Holocene periods, the hunting-gathering communities had expanded and settled in a variety of ecological niches. Additionally, the Mesolithic groups settled on the tops of the hills and rocky outcrops near the sea coast, while in Tamilnadu there are evidences of occupations on coastal sand dunes.

Later on by the third millennium B.C. major changes had come up in the north-western part of the Indian region resulting in the emergence of urban centers and extensive overland as well as maritime network. That is Harrapan culture have been found along the western coast of Makran and Gujarat; moreover, they were involved in maritime trade with centres in Mesopotamia through the sea-lanes of the Persian Gulf (Possehl 1986; Chakrabarti 1990). The Akkadian texts too refer to the number of imported commodities from ‘Meluhha’ like timber, copper, carnelian and gold dust (Ratanagar 1981: 70-71). With the decline of the mature Harappan centers around 1750 B.C., maritime trade seems to have lost some of its vigor, through the emerging archaeological picture from sites in the Arabian Peninsula would suggest some contacts between the Harappan centers along the west coast of India and those in the Gulf (Ray 1994: 13).

Tracing back to the Vedic literatures, there is a mention about the sea, thereby indicating the discovered knowledge of ocean. There are very rare evidences of maritime travel implicit in these. Thus, the evidence is inadequate to support a conclusion on the inter-maritime trade or sea travelling during this period.

Contemporary settlements in the peninsular India included iron- using communities that emerged around the early part of the first millennium B.C. The available evidences indicate that it formed the nucleus in the upland region. Megalithic sites expanded into the river basins and coastal areas, thereby involving a shift in the subsistence pattern. Generally, a majority of the Megalithic sites in South India have been postulated with the time bracket ranging from 1000 BC to 300 A.D. (Ray 1994: 13; McIntosh : 1983).
The traces of inter-regional trade can be substantiated with archaeological evidences like grave goods or raw-materials used for making the ornaments. Especially in the peninsular region, there had been a network extended along the Andhra and Tamil coast into northern Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia in accordance with the deposits of copper, iron and high quality garnets. Apart from these items, the fisheries materials like chanks and pearls had been most productive in the peninsular region where facing the north of Sri Lanka founding along with the Megalitic sites in both countries. Another indicator of the prosperity which is not included in these exchange networks is the uneven distribution of gold ornaments in Megalithic burials. The fact that some of the richest sites of such type are located in Soutteoukey near Arikamedu and Adichanallur (Casal: 1956; Rea: 1915). The Kaveri River provided a link between the coastal Megalithic sites and those further inland as indicated by the similarities in gold jewellery from the burials of the Nilgiri Hills (Knox 1985: 523-533).

Thus three major routes in south India were perhaps the routes along the Kaveri and Vaigai Rivers and the third was overland, connecting the Magalithic sites of Puddukottai via Trichy and Salem to Karnataka. In addition to these, were the coastal network between sites, i.e. between Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka on one hand and the later route linking Malabar with Gujarat (Ray 1994: 17). Commercial centers were widely connected along the main trade routes, which proved highly beneficial to the economic and cultural interaction. This led to the growth of craft and Royal centers in the medieval period when the trade had been essentially patronized by Royal members.

The growth of early historical routes and the beginning of coastal sailing:

The development of the urbanization that occurred around the last stage of the Megalithic Age, people gradually got settled, started exploring areas in search of minerals and ores; began industrial as well as agricultural activities and established trade. Indian subcontinent was part of larger Indian Ocean world from proto-historic times onward. The long distance trade that flourished between second century B.C. and third century A.D has been mentioned and reflected in various kinds of sources like Archaeological, epigraphical and literary.

Initially, these are some references of the coastal sailing or river navigation in early corpus of Buddhist literature. The Jatakas mention long distance journeys over land, river and sea. Indian traders are described as venturing into Suvarndvipa (Southeast Asia) Ratnadvipa (Srilanka) and Bavera (Babylon?). There are numerous stories of voyages, difficult journeys and shipwrecks. In the Jatakas, there are also some references of sailors and organized guilds conducted overseas trade with other countries. From Buddhist texts (Vinaya Pitaka, vol.1; Parajika, II.4.7.), we get to know about a monk who travelled from Bharukaccha. This story was repeated in the Theragatha (vs 73,190-1,338-
42) too and in Therigatha (vs 204-12) there is a mention of the Gahapati Vaddha from Bharukaccha who travelled along to Sarasvati with his mother.

In the Mauryan period, Kautilya in his work - Arthasastra (II.11.2; VII.12) has mentioned about sea voyages and river routes as kulapatha and nadipatha. Although the text does not shed any light on the features of trade routes but there are references of territories surrounded by sea and their resources like pearl and fisheries which had demands in trading. Furthermore, the South Indian sources like Sangam poems, has mentioned facts about the Yavanas bringing goods by ships into the port of South India located at Coromendal Coast where especially they set sailing for Southeast Asia. There are also mentions about the merchants who speak different languages at Kaveripattanam, which was probably served as another port in Perimula, situated on the bank of Vaigai River and was considered to be an important trade centre nearby Rameswaram.

It is now generally considered to be an early urban center that had emerged around the middle of the first millennium B.C. in Ganga valley and that urbanization then expanded into other parts of Indian subcontinent, especially, southward into the Deccan Peninsular. There is an important reason of the expansion of urbanization i.e. it was the demand of resources in the peninsular region like gold, diamond, pearls and precious stones (Ray 1994: 17). The Pali literature referred more frequently to pearls and gems than the later Vedic texts, and is evident that the use of gems for inlay work was in vogue from the Mauryan period onwards (Lad 1983: 33). This is reflected in the Mahabharata and Pali literature which gives elaborate descriptions of large variety of ornaments in use and the popularity of inlay work and craft of the goldsmith (Lad 1983: ch.IV).

From the Mauryan period onward, the numbers of references about the coastal centers and sea voyages increase. The Jataka stories, puts forward some interesting narratives about the sea boarding from important ports to Suvarnabhumi, Southeast Asia (Susondijataka, no.360; Samkha jataka, no.442.). The development of trade and coastal centers are referred more frequently in the later Buddhist literature like Mahavamsa (XI.38) and the Dipavamsa. (III.33)., they refer to the port of Tamaliti where the Bodhi tree was sent to Sri Lanka. Another intriguing omission of places in eastern India appeared in Mahaniddesa (Levi 1925: vol. II, 37), mentioned about the sailing from eastern ports along the Bengal Bay to Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the records from foreign travelers like Fa-Hsein also said about the journey of eastward shift in the boundary of Madhayadesa. Megasthenes described the journey from Taxila to Pataliputra along the Ganga River, but he didn’t mention about the further east. The most detailed discussion is to be found in the first century A.D. work, Milindapanha (VI, 21, 359) which enumerates the various mariners like Bengal, Malayan peninsular, and Alexandria, Kolapattana on Coromandel Coast and Suvarnbhumi or Southeast Asia (Ray 1994: 23)
From the third century B.C. onward, the emergence of state system under Mauryan dynasty and the growing influence of Buddhism and Jainism were the cause of demands of various resources for the infrastructural maintenance of the state. Thus, the Muryan had to expand their political power which resulted into closer interaction with the local proto-historic exchange networks with the peninsular region (Ray 1989, 1994: 19). According to the archaeological resources, for example, the discovery of Megalithic urn burial beneath a subsidiary stupa at Amravati is an indicator of the contribution of Buddhism in this change. Furthermore, in case of Kolar district of Karnataka which is renowned for the gold deposits is also rich in term of Megalithic monuments (Sundara 1975: 156).

Thus, these social changes along the trade routes were leading to the growth of the Satavahana Dynasty of Deccan region around the fist century B.C. As the result of this expansion of urbanization, the social and economic system also widely developed with the support of better navigational facilities and marine technologies.

By the second century B.C., a series of urban coastal trading enclaves had emerged along the east coast of Indian subcontinent. These urban and the tribal chiefdom, within their hinterlands, began to mint their own coin. The earliest version of these included use of high-tin bronze. India has few tin deposits, and there is no evidence that they were exploited at this early date (Ray 1989). Hence the nearest sources of tin were the massive deposits on the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal. High-tin bronze items were already being produced in U-Thong site, located at central region of Thailand. They were exported not only southward to the peninsular but also westward across northern India as far as Taxila in Pakistan. (Glover 1989: 42).

In the Mauryan period, during the time of King Ashoka’s reign, there are definite references to the development of maritime routes. In the Second Rock Edict, the King mentioned about the people staying in the sea-bordering areas such as the Cholas, Pandyas and Keralaputras. Again, according to his Rock Edicts, there were number of Dhamma missionaries who had been sent to distant foreign lands. Thus the rapid development of maritime trade was quite evident as it got frequent mentions in the literary texts along with the evidences recovered from various archaeological sites, especially from many of the ancient port sites of 300 B.C. to third century A.D. These ports sites almost located along the Gujarat coast, Eastern coast and Southern peninsular has been subjected to be more beneficial due to its geography over other regions pertaining to maritime trade. The main important port sites such as Bharukaccha, Prabhas Patan, Amreli and Sopara are situated along the Makran and Gujarat coasts; and port sites like Amravati, Nargarjunkonda, Muziris and Navasa were in the Southern peninsular. These southern ports were scattered along the coastal regions of Tamilnadu, Malabar and Deccan. Similarity, in the Eastern coasts, Bengal and Orrisa, like Chandrakettugarh, Tamralipati and Sisupalgarh were regarded as major sites with long term deposition.
According to the excavation reports of these ancient port sites, many traces of inland trade connection could be established due to the presence of various materials like Northern black polish ware, North Indian red ware and Black slipped ware shreds at Tumluk and Bharukaccha. Moreover, the various artifacts clearly indicate the extensive international contacts between mainland India and overseas countries. These artefacts include Red polish wares, Roulette wares, Sprinkler and the Amphora shreds which are related to Indo-Roman trade from the beginning of Christian era. During the early settlement, in the later half of millennium B.C, the town complex, particularly the port sites had been developed as can be seen on the mud rampart and fortification at Sisupalgarh, Chandraketugarh, Tumluk in West Bangal and Western coastal region of Gujarat at Bharukaccha and Prabhas Patan.

Therefore, it is considered that the complicated system of economy and expansion of trade routes were leading to the growth of political power emerging from the urban centres. This supported or stimulated the commercial activities in particular regions. Instances of such emergence can obviously be found in the second century A.D., with the rise of large empires like Kushana and Satavahana who required a proper economy facilitated by coinages in order to support the commercial expansion between Indo-Roman trades which patronized their political stability. Finally the urbanization manifested itself in the middle Ganga valley and gradually took different shape and got spread over Deccan and far South. along with these the growth of socialized state and better administration, helped the commercial activities to grow up rapidly considered to be the important patronization of many regional centers and well flourished up to the end of forth century A.D.

Generally criticized from the development of historical and social contexts, there are three important reasons which are considered to be the causes of stimulus of trans-regional and continental trade activities, Firstly; it was the demand of Chinese silk in Mediterranean region. Apart from silk, other commodities like spices were also involved in vibrant trade. Secondly, the existence of Kushana Empire was a huge stimulus to the trade as it provided safety for traders from the government along the silk route. Thirdly, the most important, the advancement of the sea faring techniques was importantly increased after the traders had discovered the advantage of Southwest monsoon winds to sail across the Indian Ocean (Singh 2008).

Apart from the economical benefits due to the expansion of maritime trade activities, indirectly there were many social changes occurring in different regions too which took place only because they were connected with the trade route. The reflection of cultural exchange are found in the regional port sites especially in Southeast Asia and in the islands in which Indian communities used to settle down to make them their trade stations. All kinds of Brahmanic rituals, inscriptions and the images of Hindu deities that are found in this Southeast Asian region are considered to be the most
reliable evidence for the intensive cultural impact over the indigenous place. Thus, it is to be summarised that the growth of seafaring trade led to the expansion of Indian culture beyond its geographic boundaries into the overseas countries where the Hinduism was practiced continuously and got established as the second home of Brahmanical tradition.

**The Early contact between India and Southeast Asia:**

The impact of maritime trade between the South and Southeast Asia had probably developed in the second half of the first millennium A.D. It was the time when the early Sanskrit inscriptions had appeared in the mainland and Peninsular Southeast Asia. In addition to the epigraphical sources, the number of sculptures and religious monuments associated with Buddhism and Brahmanism belonging to this period also represents the intensive cultural impact in this region. These manifestations are seen along with the references from the Pali and Sanskrit literatures, leads to the outsider’s attitudes toward historical change in Southeast Asia. Possibly the use of specific terms like “Suvarnabhumi” and “Suvarandvipa” for Southeast Asia are implies the association of this region with the booming of gold reserves, leading to wealth and prosperity.

As regard to the cause of maritime trade expansion in Southeast Asia, Coedes(1964 :44-49) opined that since the Roman Emperor Vespasian had prohibited the export of Gold to India, the trade route from Central Asia to India was disturbed and gradually had to be closed down. This led to the search for the precious metal from an alternative area. Throught the way that Siberian gold had been exported to South Asia. As a result, Indian merchants turned their way to the fable land of prosperous known as Southeast Asian for the quest of Gold (Wheatley 1983: 217). The second explanation has also given an emphasis on the role of prestige goods, though in this case it was the increase in demand from Mediterranean markets that led to the expansion of Indian maritime trade into Southeast Asia (Lamb 1975: 445).

According to the Jatakas, there are several mentions about the early contact with Southeast Asia by the group of merchants like in Mahajanaka, Sankha (no.442) and Sussondi jatakas (No. 360). These narrate the sea-faring trade journeys from important ports in India like Varanasi, Bharukaccha, Champa and Tamralipti to Suvarnbhumi, the land of prosperous. Mahakarma Vibhanga (Indrawoother 2005: 15) refers to the advanced skills of navigation of the merchants who always traveled to Suvarnbhumi from Mahakosali and Tamralipati ports. The early Pali text, Mahaniddesa, gives the information of the ancient ports where the navigators set sailing for trading activity located at the gulf of Bengal, Suvarnbhumi, Java and Sri lanka. Milinda panha and Divyavadana mention Suvarnbhum as the most important port amongst other coastal port centres because many rich merchants were interested in making their journeys here. Especially, Divyavadana lays more
emphasis on the image of *Suvarnbhumi* and describes it as the hilly area of “golden land”. *Jatakamala* written in the second century A.D. also voices the story of the merchants moving from Bharukaccha to *Suvarnbhumi* in *Suparaka Jataka*. Besides the religious texts, the Tamil *Silpadikaram*, also speaks about the trade items like aloe, silk, sandal, spices and camphor coming from *Tondai* that seems to have lain in Southeast Asia, perhaps in parts of Malaysia.

During the beginning of the Christian era, Chinese court was more interested in trading with the Western countries than any of the other regions as a result of the increase in the demand of the Chinese silk in the Mediterranean, especially among upper class Romans (Sing 2009: 600-605; Hall: 1979). Due to the development of silk trade, not only the inland trade routes but also the overseas trade has been mentioned in the Chinese records with regard to the sea faring countries.

The earliest reference related to overseas trade contacts can be found in the royal accounts of the late Han dynasty known as *Hou Han Shu* of the third century A.D. A list of the names of countries are found to have been mentioned in the accounts who appears to have established official trade with the Chinese royal court and they were *Dian Zhu* and *Dajin* considered from the North Indian empire and the Byzantine Empire (Wu 1958 : 27-28). Towards the end of the Han dynasty, around 249-50 A.D., Wu Empire had occupied the southern region of China. *Liang Shu*, Royal record of 6th century A.D., mentions the journey of two Chinese ambassadors, *Kang-Tai* and *Shu Ying* who were ordered to be sent to Southeast Asia officially by the Wu Emperor. Their mission was to report the status of the contemporary trade which was being carried out in that region. Kang Tai literally described the town scene of *Dunsun* state in Malay Peninsula located between *Funan*, present day Cambodia, and India (Pelliot 1903: 271-303; Wolter 1967: 42-32). He said, in town of *Dunsun*, there were crowded markets selling various kinds of trade items. The *Kushanas* (*yueh-shih*) merchants played an important role in the transportation of horses to this country. Regarding the diplomatic issue, Kang Tai had given the reference of *Funan* ambassador, *Suwu*, who had met the King *Murunda* in the Ganga plain with reverence. On his return, *Suwu* was accompanied by King *Murunda’s* ambassador and gifts of four *Indo-Scythian* horses back to *Funan* (Pelliot 1903: 271).

Moreover, another Chinese Royal record known as *Tai Ping You Lan* of the 11th century, also gives information about an Indian settlement in *Dunsun* state. The text narrates that “… (There) are 500 families of *Hu* (Indian merchants) and two of *Fodu* (Buddhist) families including thousands of Brahmins in this city. The people of Dunsun practice their doctrine and give their daughter to them for marriage. Many of them (*Brahmanas*) do not leave; they do nothing but read the holy book of the celestial spirits…” (Pelliot 1903: 279, Wheatley 1961: 16-17, Sarkar 1985: 250).
The story of “Golden land” known as “Jin Lin”, according to Liang shu, it says “The King of Funan, Fan Chan, sent the navigated military to invade many countries in this region. Thus the Funan had widely expanded their territory, but the King suddenly died before he could defeat Jin Lin…” In addition to this, Tai Ping You Lan, also speaks about Jin Lin likely “…Jin Lin Empire is quite far away from Funan. There are plenty of Silver mine and very crowded. The Jin Lin people liked hunting of elephants. When they kill it, the ivories are taken and used…”

Besides the Royal accounts, there are records written by some Chinese Buddhist monks who had traveled from China to India like I-Tsing and Fahien (414 A.D.). They mentioned about the sea faring journeys passing through Java (Indonesia and islands). They also wrote about the location and religious culture of the places they visited (Sarkar 1985: 4-5). According to their accounts, the Southeast Asian ports, especially the region along the Java and her Islands, had developed due to the flourishing maritime trade routes. In these states, Brahmanism and Buddhism mainly emerged in accordance with the crowd of the settlement of Indian merchants or priests. Their administration and royal ceremonies were influenced from Hindunized tradition which highly elaborated the status of Kingship by employing Indian priests as religious consultants in the Royal courts.

The earliest mention of the story about the “The land of Gold” can be found in the Western literatures in De Chorographia written by Pomponius Mela which dates possibly around 43 A.D. The region of Southeast Asia was known as “Chyse” and “Argyre”, associated with the land of Gold and Silver. There are numerous other western literary texts that provide information about the Southeast Asian trade contacts. Among them the most remarkable one is “The periplus of Erythrean sea” that gives a detailed report of the maritime trade map from western coast to South Asian and details of ports in South India where the merchants set sailing to Southeast Asian countries (Schoff 1912: 28- 29). There also mentions on the exported trade items of Southeast Asian that had been sold in South Indian market such as precious stones like diamond, sapphire and tortoise shells.

The Natural History of Pliny written during the first century A.D, mentions The Golden land of East which was located in the South of the Chinese peninsular while golden and silver islands are supposed to be far away out site Sindhu river basin. According to the Ptolemy’s Geography, the countries which were located east of India are “Chryse Chora”, Golden land, and “Chryse Chersonesus”, Golden peninsular. Ptolemy has given the names of ports while on the maritime journey from India to Southeast Asia and in detail regarding to people and geography of this region (Coedes 1910: 12-14).

The Arabian texts also mentioned about Southeast Asian countries from 7th century A.D. onwards. Although infrequently Arab merchants had traveled much far across India into Southeast
Asia, but quite a few references do partly mention about Southeast Asia like “The wonders of India” written by Buzurg B. Shahriya in 644 A.D., Tale of India and China (851 A.D.) and The Thousand and One night. The later sources primarily are the navigated journey records, the important one is written by Abu Zaid in 916 A.D. He has given the information about the Southeast Asian peninsular including the Turkish tales which referred to this region as the “Suffra Kingdom” (Wheatley 1961: 210-215, 244-251). Moreover, the Arabian sailors also mentioned Southeast Asian region as “Zabag” meant on the Land of Gold (Sarkar 1985:4-5).

Thus, according to the literary sources, Southeast Asia in the early Christian era had been considered as the land of prosperous countries where merchants from several parts of the worlds had come and gradually established their community. With the benefit of maritime trade exchanges that stimulated state welfare, the assimilation of Indian or Hindunized culture had also been utilized for the development of primary state and Kingships. Because of this particular culture, the state or Kingdoms started forming their territories during the early Christian era and are known as The Indianize states of Southeast Asia.

3.1.2 The development of Southeast Asian states from the prehistory up to proto Historical period.

Fig. 2. Map of Southeast Asia
Southeast Asia, both mainland and maritime regions, has a very long series of developments starting from almost 40,000 years ago since the early human (*Homo erectus*) known as “Java Man” was discovered in central Java island in 1891 (Bellwood et al 2004:12; 1992-1999:78). There are also findings such as a human skull and fragments from Niah cave in Sarawak in Malaysia and Tabon cave in Philippines attested to the same period at the late Pleistocene. Precisely, the discovery of early Homo erectus in the island regions may lead to an assumption of the early sea crossing migration or the changes of sea level in the late Pleistocene period. In this section, the series of cultural changes in Southeast Asia is seen through four major phases. The first involved hunters and gatherers who lived relatively mobile lives in the forest or occupied the rich coast. Then the second phase started during third millennium B.C. when the agriculture and domestic animal farming had been introduced. The people gradually settled down in the river basin. Later between 1500 and 1000 B.C., the agricultural communities became familiar with metal usage like bronze and copper with the skill of mining, casting and smelting artifacts. Finally the fourth phase occurred when the iron had been adopted and widely casted in the society from 500 B.C. to 500 A.D.

The prehistoric period steadily gave way to the age of early urbanization in the early centuries A.D. by the emergence of historical states and civilization, especially trade contacts with India and China. These phases of social development are evidenced by archaeological records which will be described as follows.

**The early prehistoric period from late Pleistocene to Holocene:**

The *Hoabinhian* culture is considered to be the important phase of Mesolithic period in the mainland Southeast Asia that had been developed and widely spread in this region from 10,000 BCE. Generally, the people of this period had temporarily stayed in hilly rock shelters and made bifacial stone tools from gravel rocks. These artifacts are widely discovered from the Southern parts of China, Vietnam, Laos, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. In Thailand, the *Hoabinhian* stone tools are found in the mountain areas of Western and Northern parts or the river basin valley in central region. According to the excavation reports from *Hoabinhian* culture sites in Southeast Asia, the primitive people had a hunter-gatherer society. They prepared food by grilling and burning processes. After calculating the quantity of artifacts found from the sites, it can be assumed that probably they lived in small groups and migrated in search of food and natural resources.

In case of Island or maritime region, the basic flake industry occurred chiefly on fine-grained rocks such as cherts, jasper and obsidian and generally on coarser-grained rocks of river pebble origin on the mainland (Bellwood 1992-1999:81). In contrast to Mainland region, the stone tools
found in the island are blades and microliths as seen from Tabon, Niah and Mandai caves in Philippine, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Gradually, when the population increased, they inhabited and settled down the area along the river basin. Although, the primitive agriculture was newly introduced, still they were partially hunter-gatherers. This phase is known as Neolithic cultural phase which had started from 4,000 - 3,000 BCE. The stone artifacts were created more skillfully along with the stone tools, beads and potteries.

**Southeast Asia in Neolithic period:** around 4,000-1500 B.C

The Neolithic people in Southeast Asia, during earlier stage, lived as hunter-gatherers in the interior uplands and took shelters in the rock shelters or caves. At around third millennium B.C., the arrival of early rice farmers appears to have come down in Southern China, Vietnam and Thailand (Higham 2004: 46).

Since the people started living on agricultural activities, rice and domestic animals, they had settled down their communities along the river basin due to agricultural progress. The mortuary pattern had been practiced in the burial by setting the direction of the head, offering grave goods such as potteries in various styles of decorations, weapon and ornaments of the decreased one. The stone artifacts made during this time were more delicate and skillful such as stone adzes, blades, flakes and other microlith including bone tools or weapons etc. (Higham 2004: 48). There are some important Neolithic sites located in Vietnam and Thailand like *Non Nok Tha* (Bayard 1971; 1972a: 109 - 143; 1972b: 1411 - 1412), *Ban Chiang* (Gorman and Chareowongsa 1976: 14-26) and *Khok Panom Di* (Higham and Thosarat 1994) etc.

In the Island regions of Southeast Asia, the early Neolithic archaeological records mainly consist of pottery, flake and stone tools, very rarely adzes etc. The firmest evidence of the spread of agricultural communities into the islands of Southeast Asia comes from the comparative study of Austronesian languages, rather than from the primary archaeological record due to the damage of artifact caused by climate and environmental conditions (Bellwood 1992-1999: 104). The pottery usage in this region may suggest that the people, circumstantially with varied agricultural economies, settled on largely in the southeast Asia Island during the third millennium B.C. Although the archaeological records alone cannot prove the existence of agriculture, the Palynological evidence has been considered to support the hypothesis of an expanding agriculture based population. Also the trace of forest clearance and burning comes mainly from cores drilled in highland swamps in Java and Sumatra (Maloney 1985; Bellwood 1992 - 199: 105 - 106; Flenley 1988). According to the trace
of forest clearance for agriculture in the sample site - Pea Sim Sim, northern Sumatra, had been started in Java and Sumatra much prior 2,500 B.C. (Flenley 1988: 186).

This kind of Neolithic societies had been found extensively in India, China and Southeast Asia. There had been researches on the spread of stone axes divided into two groups based on the difference of stone tools and languages.

According to the studies, the group of Mongoloid who spoke Austro Asiatic languages like Munda, and the Mon-Khmer family and made shoulder stone axes mostly stayed in Mainland Southeast Asia while the other family who used Austronesian languages and made Simple Square stone axes got scattered in Indonesia and the Islands. For further comparative study, both these kinds of Stone axes are found in India especially in Assam and Bengal (where shoulder stone axes are more common) as well as in China, Burma, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand and down to Malaysia (Intrawooth 2005: 31). In Addition to this case, the simple square stone axes were also found in Thailand randomly in the sites along the river basin similar to the places where they were found in Burma, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia especially in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Thus, summing up from research results, some archaeologist and linguistic scholars like Gorge Ceodes (1948: 24) had suggested that during Neolithic period there was supposedly a migration of people who belonged to Austro Asian group. They moved from inner land, downward to mainland Southeast Asia. Hence, the Austronesian groups might have had to resettle in the lower regions or across the sea to Indonesian Island.

The late prehistory to Proto-historical period in Southeast Asia: From The beginning of Metal age (the middle of first millennium B.C.) upto proto historical period of the Early of Christian era:

Southeast Asian regions are clearly divided into two regions as mainland and maritime regions which have different ways to interpret the archaeological records due to the pattern of social formation which in turn depended on their particular environments.

The social development in both mainland and maritime Southeast Asian regions probably had started during this time known as late prehistoric or megalithic period. It is acceptable that from the middle of the third millennium B.C. (Glover 1990: 2) or at least second half of 2nd millennium B.C. (Higham 2004: 53) substantial improvements had been made in various kinds of technology like the expansion of pottery using, bronze casting, agriculture and probably the settlement of Austronesian speaking people throughout Islands of Southeast Asia (Bellwood 1985; Natapintu 2007: 199). In case of inter-regional contact with South Asia, it is possible to accept that the distribution of Munda
language (a language related to Mon–Khmer in Austroasiatic family), cord-impressed pottery and shoulder adzes in eastern India from Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa is more likely to be the product of continuous connections by land route via Burma.

According to Bellwood (1992), he has recently drawn attention to the marked differences between the extant archaeological records of maritime and mainland regions that can be dated back to the late prehistoric period. This can be done by assuming that the archaeological records in the mainland region i.e. Thailand and Vietnam, consists almost entirely of large settlement and burial sites which encourage the study of social complexity, the growth of settlement hierarchies and the evolution of metallurgy. The mainland tradition of settlement nucleation in a relatively dry environment has clearly been useful for these research questions.

In case of maritime region, the archaeological record has rarely yielded coherent settlement and social evidence. Large, stable and nucleated settlement seems to be rare in these latitudes in both prehistoric and historical times. Probably, due to this, the interpretation of maritime region in Southeast Asia in late prehistory tends to focus more on supra-settlement phenomena such as population expansion, style diffusion and trade. The history of social complexity before the Indic civilization is basically unknown (Bellwood 1992: 126).

Although the proposition of early Southeast Asian settlement still have been in controversy, there are cultural assimilation which possibly indicate the contacts between the people of the mainland and the people of the Island regions of entire Southeast Asia.

They are similar in several ways such as in the better techniques of maritime navigation due to the development of ship-making like double or single hulled canoes for distant journeys (Glover 1990: 2), agricultures and irrigation system. There are some evidences of Southeast Asian inter-regional contacts in the form of “Boundary Reciprocal” or “Down to line” exchanges as formalized by Renfrew (1975: 41-42) which meant on the undirected long distant route sailing along the coastal lines. In particular, the presence of arm rings (and raw material) made of marine shell species have been reported from the mainland sites in Central Thailand such as Kok Chareon, Ban Kao, Ban Na Di and Tha Khae (Natapintu 1984); the exotic stone arm rings from Ban Na Di and other sites of Northeastern Thailand (Higham and Kijtngam 1984 : 63-70) and traces of imported lead, tin and copper ores and metal from the sites such as Ban Chiang and Non Nok Tha located in the Northeast region (Piggott and Natapintu 1984). Similar evidence also has been found in Vietnam especially in late Neolithic culture and early Bronze Age (Ha Van Tan 1980). Possibly, the trade connection between these Southeast Asian regions would have been evidently at least from the first millenium B.C. (around 3,500 years ago) and became more prominent as long distant maritime trade with the

The significant feature of megalithic culture in Southeast Asia, beside cultural material aspect, the religion and folk beliefs in the form of urn burials are noticed before the coming of Hinduism and Buddhism in Southeast region (Solhiem 1960). The local people had practiced and worshiped animism or totem traditions as well as primitive natural Gods. These beliefs can be observed from the funeral ceremony or megalithic jar burials that are widely spread over Southeast Asia. The sites represented this culture are Don Ta Phet and Ban Chiang in Thailand, Dong Son and Sa Huynh in Vietnam.

During the Megalithic cultural period, with the high demands of metal usage urn burials had also increased and this type of burial practices continued up to the early historic period. At around 500 B.C., there are more apparent evidences of an economic interaction between mainland and island region because there had been a dispersal of the key metals for the making of the early tools like copper, tin and iron. The high grade copper ores have been discovered widely in the mainland region but only Sumatra and Timor of the southern maritime region is mentioned as the early sources of the ore (Bronson 1992). Iron ores are confined to the belt of mountains running from South of China to mainland region, with major fields of alluvial tin lying near the coast of the peninsular. Iron is more widely distributed, but often in small, lateritic deposits. Although the peninsular region appears to have had sufficient iron deposits to support the trace of small metal tool making industries, Java and Bali has very few iron deposits and also there are no reports of the early mining or ore processing industry. Thus, in the regions where metal have had been produced and imported, the metal objects are found to be used as weapons, vessels, armor, ornaments and also for ritual purposes. This may be a reason why the polished stone adzes were continuously used in far Island region (Wisseman 1995: 246).

Furthermore, there is the trace of metal-object trade into the maritime region in the first millennium B.C. However, this trade seems to have limited itself fairly to a small scale and was intermittent for some time. Then, shortly after 500 B.C., the expansion occurred and quantity of imported metal objects increased. Most prominent metallic imports amongst the people of the island region, were large in size and the expensive style of Dong Son Bronze drums known as Higer I type that originated in the North Vietnam between fifth and second century B.C. Large bronze “flake” and “bells” of related decorative tradition also circulated in maritime region at the same time. Besides the imported bronze objects, some megalithic burials in the Island region have also reported the grave goods like glass and stone beads boarding from east and south India.
Beside mainland Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Bali and Sarawak islands funeral tradition were also discovered from the Deccan Plateau region. There are many megalithic burial sites, found in maritime region, which were formed in various patterns like dolmen, standing stone, stone circles and pavements including jar and boat burials. These became fashionable in peninsular region following the contacts with north and central coast of Vietnam, possibly mediated by Chams (Wisseman 1995: 246).

In mainland region, the megalithic burials are widely reported from excavation sites. There are plenty of Urn burial found in Laos (Chiang Khong) and Vietnam (tran ninh and Dai Lanh) dated up to fifth to first century B.C. in Sa Hyun culture (Diem and Kim 1966: 114 - 128). In Thailand, the Megalithic Urn burials are found mainly in Northeastern plateau belonging to the early Christian era onward. Though there was an influence of the Buddhist tradition in Dvaravati culture, the locals had continued to practice this type of burial up to the middle of 9th century A.D. (Indrawooth 2005: 33).

**Southeast Asia in proto historic period and maritime contacts: (300-50 B.C)**

From the first millennium onwards, in the period of proto state, the people of this region gradually developed themselves into more complicated communities. Specially there are evidences which shows the intensive contact with China and India due to the benefit of the development of navigation leading to the direct long distant journey across the sea faring countries.

Due to the diplomatic and commercial relations a contact was established between China and Southeast Asia. As far as the expansion of political power was concerned, the Chinese military had annexed the Annam region located in the North of Vietnam, governed by Chinese officers, by conquest and finally spread the Chinese Civilization (Ceodes 1968: 34 - 35; Indrawooth 2005: 34). Regarding the commercial purpose, it was concentrated on the official process. This reflected the attitude of suzerainty towards the Southern countries by demanding annual tributes from those who asked for commercial relationship with the Chinese court. Thus the form of relationship between China and Southeast Asian countries was more diplomatic rather than due to trade with basis of equality like Indian cultural impact which had come toward people in peaceful attitude.
In case of ancient India, the early contact between Southeast Asian states and India had started since the late Iron Age or Maurya-Sunga dynasties. During this period, there are evidences of an expansion of trade networks towards west and east directions. There were important trade centers settled along the trade routes like Taxila, Ujjain, Pataliputa and Tumluk. For eastward sailing, along the coastal regions to Southeast Asia, the journey from inland started from Pataliputra to Champa then passed to Tamluk or set sailing from western direction at Bharukachcha in Gujarat. At an early stage, the trade commodities which had a high demand in Southeast Asian markets were such as Glass and semi-precious stone beads. When the maritime trade became more extensive, the requirement of more luxurious items as well as for religious purposes developed.

After the downfall of the Mauryan Empire in the third century A.D., commonly known as the time of interaction and innovation in Indian culture, and while the North India states were governed by Kushana and Gupta dynasties and the South was under the control of the Satavahanas, the trade and economic system had been extensively developed widely within subcontinent and countries overseas. Besides Coinage system, the Indo-Roman trade brought wealth and higher technology of crafts making such as Roulette ware and Arretine wares. These were influenced by Roman style of making potteries and commonly spread to the coastal trade centers of India and Southeast Asia. Because of the high demands, the Roman items were duplicated and were in circulation mostly in the Southeast Asian countries. Some artifacts has survived till present days such as ivory combs, Roman brass lamps, intaglios, Arretine and Roulette ware along with the Indian or Roman coins found in archaeological and port sites in Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma, Vietnam and Thailand. The numbers of these evidences has shown the stage of intensive contact between India and Southeast Asia and also the trace of Indo Roman trade.

Several excavation sites situated in various parts of Southeast Asia, has yielded a range of objects of Indian origin or duplicated items (Indrawooth 1999: 74, 2005: 38; Higham 2004: 41 - 67). The sites involved in this maritime network include both coastal and inland centres which dated from 500 - 400 B.C. onwards. These sites are contemporary to the beginning of the late metal age in Southeast Asia. The early settlements in the river valley of mainland had started increasing around the beginning of Christian era. The growth of local evolution and the increased complexity in the development of state system is the result of a continued maritime trade link with India which is also considered to be a major channel for the transition of ideas.
Thus, due to the development of maritime contact and variations in the trade items, the period known as proto historic period or “Indian Impact time” is divided into two phases which dates from 3rd century B.C. to 1st century B.C. (late pre historical period) and 1st century A.D. to 4th century A.D. (proto historical period)

The earliest evidence of contacts with South Asia is possibly provided by the late metal age burial in mainland. There are excavations sites belonging to this period where numbers of Indian artifacts especially stone and glass beads have been discovered. The sites are located extensively throughout Southeast Asia in mainland from Burma to Vietnam and Southern peninsular Islands. Although there are plenty of excavated sites discovered Indian antiquities, the remarkable sites are mentioned in this table. (Courtesy: Indrawooth 2005: 39; Stargardt 1990: 14-15; Fox 1970; Bellwood 1985: 312; Chin 1980; Glover 1986)
Table 1: The important excavation sites in Southeast Asian (3rd century B.C to 1st century B.C. Late prehistoric period): Phase I and antiquities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Excavated Sites</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td><em>Borangman</em> cave: Central part of Burma</td>
<td>Color etched beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western</td>
<td><em>Ban Kon</em> cave: Kanchanaburi</td>
<td>Glass beads, eyed glass beads, Camelian, Agate beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Aung Bha</em> cave: Kanchanaburi</td>
<td>Camelian, Agate and Onyx beads, Glass beads, eyed glass beads, Etched stone beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Don Tha Phet</em> cave: Kanchanaburi</td>
<td>Lion camelion, stone bead, High fin bronzed vessel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central</td>
<td><em>Kok Phub</em> cave: Rachapuri</td>
<td>Decorated bronzed spoon with peacock figure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lopburi (archaeological site at military camp: Lopburi town)</td>
<td>Camelian, Agate, beads, High tin bronzed, vessel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Eastern</td>
<td><em>Ban Tar Prasad</em> cave: Nakhoen Rasasima</td>
<td>Camelian, Agate beads, Eyed glass beads, Rag fragment, Camelian, Agate beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Ban Chaing</em> cave: Udonthani</td>
<td>Camelian, Agate beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td><em>Samrongsen</em>; Eastern region of Cambodia</td>
<td>Camelian, glass beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td><em>Dai Ia</em> cave: Danang district</td>
<td>Camelian beads, Etched stone beads, Glass beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td><em>Niah</em> cave: Sarawak district</td>
<td>Camelian, Agate beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>*Sumatra Java, Borneo and Bali</td>
<td>Camelian, Agate beads, Eyed glass beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td><em>Tabon</em> cave: Palawan Island</td>
<td>Camelian, Agate beads, Etched beads</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are some sites apart the above mentioned ones especially in Thailand such as lower Khwae Noi basin in Kanchanaburi which had served as a habitational area continuously from the pre historic period and also Pimai in Nakonratchasima provinces where Indian antiquities mainly glass and stone beads are discovered. However the other trade items like spices such as cloves or textile fabric might have got mixed within the layers of soil but could not survive up to present days due to their biological substance. The trade material of the early Historic period (1st century B.C. to 4th century A.D.) had been in a more intense relationship according to the growing of broad maritime trade connected from the western to eastern directions. Thus, various kinds of trade commodities have been discovered which were brought from Western coast and Indian subcontinent. As a result of the extensive maritime trade, many port sites along the sea coast also had been developed especially in the Southern peninsular and Indonesian Islands where their primary state had gradually contributed from the basis of trade cities.
Table 2: The important excavation sites in Southeast Asian (The 1st century B.C to 4th Century A.D. Proto-Early Historic period). Phase II and antiquities:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Excavated Sites</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td><strong>Buthiah</strong>: The central part of Burma, Western side of Irrawaddy Valley</td>
<td>Cambodian, Agate beads, both plain and etched beads, Arratine and Rudolfebrero sherds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thailand (Western and Central)</td>
<td>Phong Tuk Kanchanaburi</td>
<td>Eyed glass beads, Roman brass lamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thailand (Western and Central)</td>
<td>U-Thong: Suphanburi</td>
<td>The coin of Roman King <em>Victorinus</em> (Carson 1980), Eyed glass beads, Etched glass beads, Cambodian and Agate beads, both plain and etched beads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thailand (Western and Central)</td>
<td>Old Nakhon pathom city: Nakon Pathom</td>
<td>Eyed and color glass beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thailand (Western and Central)</td>
<td>The Kae Lopburi</td>
<td>Eastern Roman lamp, <em>Sarvatula</em> lead coin (elephant type) (Gupta 1999: 223-277).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thailand (Western and Central)</td>
<td>Nong Mamot (Kok Samrong): Lopburi</td>
<td>Cambodian and Agate beads, Ivory or bone dices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thailand (Western and Central)</td>
<td>Wat Chantharam temple: Lopburi</td>
<td>Ivory comb, Cambodian and Agate beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thailand (Western and Central)</td>
<td>Chomphu: Nakon Sawan</td>
<td>Ivory comb, Ivory and bone dices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Sri Mahathat: Prachinburi</td>
<td>Eyed and color glass beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Khao Sam Roi Yot: Chumphon</td>
<td>Cambodian and Agate beads, both plain and etched beads, Decorated bronze spoon with peacock figure, Knobbed ware (bronze), Hinn pottery sherds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Lumpho Chaiya Swatthana</td>
<td>Cambodian and Agate beads, Ivory or bone dices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Phu Tuk Phanom</td>
<td>Ivory comb, Cambodian and Agate beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Phu Tao Thong: Rung</td>
<td>Ivory comb, Rudolfia ware (sherd), Roman Italo, Inscribed sherds, Glass and stone beads, Granulated gold beads, Rock Crystal, Lion amulet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Kwan Lao Pad (Khlong Torn): Koabs</td>
<td>Cambodian, Agate beads, both plain and etched beads, Eyed glass beads, Roman camelid, Inscribed camelid <em>Intaglio</em> (Prakrit, Brahmi languages), <em>Sathala</em> bronze coin (slip type).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Oc-Eo: An Giang district, Southern region</td>
<td>Roman gold coin of King Antoniuspius and Marcus Aurelius, (Carson 1980), Cambodian and Agate beads, both plain and etched beads, Striped glass beads, Roman precious stone beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Pekuangan Bujang and Lembah Bujang: Kedah</td>
<td>Cambodian and Agate beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Kampung Sungai Lang and Kilau Selating: Perak</td>
<td>Rolette wares, Cambodian and Agate beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Buli Tengah: Lembah Perak</td>
<td>Rolette wares, Cambodian and Agate beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Taruma in the Bumi complex: Northeastern of Java Island</td>
<td>Duplicated Roman Rolette beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Julah and Zembiren: Bali</td>
<td>Duplicated Roman Rolette beads</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the tables, we can see that the demands of luxurious trade commodities had increased after the first century A.D. which probably had developed along with the development in the social life. At the same time, Indian subcontinent regions had started intensive maritime trade with the western world which can be substantiated with the various trade commodities found in the port sites located along eastern and western coasts of India. Thus, the trade items exported from Indian ports to Southeast Asian region during this time was both made in India and western countries such as eyed and stripped glass beads that were extensively found in Burma to Vietnam, especially in Southern and Central parts of Thailand.

There are some important trade commodities and artifacts discovered in Southeast Asian regions which reflect the intense maritime relationship with India since the beginning of the Christian era. The majority are beads of glass and stone materials, potteries, coins and luxurious ivory items which are believed to have been brought from India by the merchants along the sea route.

Fig. 4. Map of proto-historical sites in Southeast Asia and the trade routes during early Christian era
Beads: Stone and Glass beads

The beads are the best artifacts which show that the trend had changed from simple products to more sophisticated ones. Thus, the typology of beads found in this region has been the obvious markers to prove the change in demands.

India has been the original place of stone bead manufactures since the ancient times. The rich natural resource facilitates the bead-making especially, Carnelian and Agate in the western region including Deccan plateau. The oldest Carnelian bead is discovered from Taxila dated up to 500 - 700 B.C. (Beck 1941). Later on during the late Iron age (350 - 50 B.C.), the manufacture of the stone beads had gradually started in many places mostly located in Western India like Nasik (Sankhalia and Deo 1955), Bhokadan (Deo et al 1973), Cambay, Brahmapuri, Kaudinyapura (Dikshit 1968), Kondapur, Nevasa, Paithan, Ter, Sopara; and from Northern India such as Ujjain (Benerjee 1959), Hastinapur (Lal 1954-5), Kosambi (Sharma 1960; 1969), Tripuri, Rangmahal and Maski. In case of etched beads, discoveries had been made of both the finished products as well as in the form of raw materials from many excavation sites in India mostly belonging to the period of late Iron Age to Mauryan period (300 - 200 B.C.). These sites include Ujjain, Sravasti, Ahicchatra, Navdatoli, Amreli and Chandravalli (Dikshit 1949). The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea mentions the importance of Ujjain as the manufacturing center of stone beads where the beads had been made and exported to many ports before oversea boarding.

Thus, the discovery of plain and etched stone beads in the excavation sites dated from 300 B.C. to 200 A.D. in Southeast Asia has thrown some light on the beginning of intensive maritime trade contact which started from the late Iron age (Mauryan period) to Kushana-Gupta period. In Thailand, the stone beads are reported from proto historic sites such as Ban Don Ta Phet and U Thong.

At Ban Don Ta Phet (Glover 1986: 167) and Wat Ampawas temple at Suratthani province (Srisuchart 1986: 3212 - 3243), the finest Carnelian lion amulet or pendants were reported from excavation. The lion figure in jumping pose found at Don Ta Phet was fully carved from Carnelian stone as well as found at Wat Ampawas but in different pose. These Carnelian lion figures are related to other amulets made in the same style from various materials like Carnelian, Quart, Lapis lazuli and Garnet found in India at Taxila in the north western India (Kushana period), Sambhar and Ter (Satavahana period) in Western India (Margabhandu 1985: 222; Dikshit 1953: 94). Moreover, at Ban Don Ta Phet, a few bangles and distinctive ear ornaments, and one typical Sa Huyn style of two-headed animal ear pendent of nephrite from Vietnam (Glover 1990) were also found.
According to Bérénice (2007: 30 - 35), in her work with regard to the cultural exchange between Indian and Southeast Asian beads from 4th century B.C. to 6th century A.D., she has given the analysis of the typological and technological study of the hard stone beads found in Southeast Asia. The beads are characterized into two groups namely- Indian and Southeast Asian beads on the basis of typological and technical characteristics. Furthermore, the group of Southeast Asian beads, can be subdivided into sub-groups as early (before the end of first millennium B.C.) and later (the first millennium A.D.) sect of Southeast Asian beads. According to the study, the beads found in the Southeast Asia were both of Indian origin made in the Indian subcontinent and of local origins. The trend of early Southeast Asian beads is similar to Indian beads in sizes and technique while the latter group is different in style and technique, slightly greater size but lower in quality of raw material and standard of workmanship. Thus, it is assumed that the cultural exchange in stone bead distribution in Southeast Asia was initially started by India. Later on when the demands got increased, local manufacturers located in mainland and coastal regions had produced the beads to suffice the order of Southeast Asian market by local or Indian trained craftsmen.

In case of colored glass beads, in India, the earliest obvious evidence of glass manufactures was in the Mauryan period. According to the Arthasastra, glass was an important state export which was mainly produced in Taxila, Ahicchatra and Varansi. Later on during 200B.C to 200 A.D., the technology of glass manufacturing in India became more advanced due to the influence of the Roman glass making techniques. From this time on, many glass workshops had started in the north and south India which can be substantiated with the number of glass beads, ornaments and other items reported from excavation of Paithan, Ter, Nevasa and Kondapur dated to Satavahana period. Thus, it can be assumed that most of the port sites flourished during the time of Indo-Roman trade was important glass materials and beads, especially in South India namely Karaikadu and Arikamedu (Tamilnadu).

Regarding the evidence of glass beads found in Southeast Asia, there is no glass found belonging to the time period before 600 - 400 B.C. The earliest glasses are found in Vietnam dated to the 4th -3rd century B.C. (Nguyen Truong Ki 1983: 7-54). In Thailand, the earliest evidence of glass manufacturing comes from Klong Thom which is not earlier than 400 B.C. (Basa 1998) and Malay Peninsula at Kampong Sugai Lang which dates within 5th century B.C. to 2nd century A.D. (Peacock 1979: 212 - 213). Galimanuk and Pasir Agin in Indonesia (Bali) also yield early glass beads dating back to the 3rd - 1st century B.C. (Bronson and Glover 1984: 41). Thus, glass in Southeast Asia cannot, so far, be dated much earlier than 400 B.C. and certainly not more than 500 B.C. In general, the glass beads appear with the first use of iron (Basa et al 1990: 367).
In case of typological and technological studies of glass beads in Southeast Asia, Fransic (1990: 1 - 23) and Rouffaer (1899) had given identical terms to their common found monochrome glass beads of different colors and shapes like Cubic, Bi-pyramidal, square or hexagonal prismatic and barrel etc. as “Indo-pacific Monochrome drawn glass beads” and among them the major group is opaque orange red and brawny red known as “Mutisalah” beads. The Indo Pacific glass beads are the most common type found in Late Prehistoric Southeast Asia and the Mutisalah beads constitute important component (Basa 1990: 372). This glass bead category has been extensively reported as making up a major amount in the collections from many excavated sites in Southeast Asia such as Ban Don Ta Phet, Ban Chiang, Ban Nadi, Tha Kea and Kok Ra Ka in Thailand as well as in Kuala Selinsing and Penkalang Bujang in Malaysia. In Indonesia and Bali also, they are found in plenty at Sembiran (Ardika and Bellwood 1991).

In South Asia, the earliest evidence of red glass beads comes from Rajgat dated to 600 - 500 B.C. (Bhrajwal 1979: 44) and Bhir mound at Taxila in the same period (Dikshit 1969: 5). From that time onwards they are found to be plentiful in various parts of India. However, Arikamedu (Wheeler et al 1946; Begley 1983) flourished between late century B.C. and early Christian era was one of the important centres of monochrome beads, including Mutisalah varieties.

Beside Mutisalah beads which were referred to have been initially brought from South India, there are few rare beads found in Thailand at Prasat Muang Sing (Kanchanaburi province) and Ban Chi Nam Lai (Inburi district: Singhburi Province). These are a type of deep translucent (apparently black) round beads with spiral grooves originally filled with white strips. This kind of bead is a typical north Indian bead and has been found from surface collection at Kosambhi, Narhan, Chandraketugarh and Kodumanal. These sites are dated from 100 B.C. to Gupta period (Basa 1990: 373).

Most of the Glass beads found in excavated sites of Southeast Asia have been discovered along with carnelian and agate beads which were brought from India. Thus, according to the reports, it suggests that early glass beads discovered in the sites dated before Christian era and initially might be made in India. Later on, when the demand of glass beads was increased, some local glass beads workshops in Southeast Asia had started producing them on a mass scale. In the light of Chemical composition, the early Southeast Asian glass beads may be grouped into two broad compositional types: Mixed-Akali glass and potash glass. The Mixed Akali glass beads are all opaque red Mutisallah beads with a high copper content, probably of Indian origin. The potash glasses include all colours and degree of opacity and it is now generally thought that some were made locally in Southeast Asia, even at this early date, since they include forms which were never found in India (Bérénice and Glover 2004: 75).
Additionally Basa (1990: 373), in regard to the early glass beads makers of Southeast Asia, states that it is possible that some Indian merchants took skilled artisans along with them to make glass ornaments in Southeast Asia to meet local demands in certain areas. However, it seems that the local glass could not have satisfied the demands of the whole of Southeast Asia during the period of 500-400 B.C. Thus, few manufacturing centers are known and a large number of glass beads have been distributed in most parts of Southeast Asia. There are some important local bead manufacturing centres located along the Malay Peninsula which has already been excavated and studied by archaeologists such as *Klong Thom* (Thailand: *Kuan Luk Pad*), U Thong (Supanburi province: Thailand), *Oc Eo* in Vietnam, *Kampong Sugai Lang* and *Kuala Selinsing* (Malaysia) and *Sunlibar* at Bali (Indonesia).

In addition to glass beads, recently in Southern Thailand at Phu Khao Thong (Ranong province), some Granulated gold beads from the site has been reported. In fact, this kind of bead is also found in Iran (Dublin 1995: 21; Chaysuwarn 2009).

**Coins, seals, Amulets and other rare found objects:**

In Indian subcontinent, especially in the south, Roman coins of gold, silver and copper have been found extensively in large numbers but few seems to have been brought to the east and the contexts of these finds are always unclear. They include the well-known 2nd century A.D. Roman King, *Marcus Aurelius* and *Antoninus Pius* found at Oc EO (Vietnam), a copper coin of Victorinus (3rd century A.D.) from U Thong and other unidentified Roman coins from Klong Thom (Khuan Lukpad) in peninsular Thailand.

In addition, seals are also recently reported from Khao Sam Kaeo, southern Thailand. The stone seals and golden one bear Sanskrit inscriptions written in Brahmi scripts predated ranking from first to sixth centuries A.D. (Bérénice 2002; Bérénice and Silapanth 2006: 384 - 385). The inscribed words are in single Sanskrit words such as *Kapana* or *Isidata* (*sa*).

Apart from Roman coins, in Thailand, there is a bronze Roman lamp found at *Pong Tuk* (Kanchanaburi province). Picard (1955) and other scholars (Ceodes 1928; Brown and Macdonnel 1989) had done comparative study of the lamp with similar one from Greece. Probably, the bronze lamp found in Thailand might be brought from Hellenistic Alexandria during the 3rd century B.C. whereas Brown and Macdonnel have argued that it is of late Roman-Byzantine manufactured in Greece.
There is another clear Indian origin ivory comb found at Chansen Phase II (Nakonsawant province: Thailand) dated to the 3rd century A.D. (Bronson 1976: 26). This delicate craft is decorated with traditional symbols like a pair of horses, Sri Vatsa, Coach, a vase of abundance (*Purnaghata*) and Swan (Humsa). In India, this kind of ivory combs was reported from excavations of Taxila (100 century B.C. - 1st century A.D.) and Ujjain (400 - 300 century B.C.) (Mashall 1975: 655-656; Marghabandhu 1985: 157). According to Mashall (1975), the ivory combs found in India were made in Roman style and the centers of ivory crafts were possibly located at Vidhisa and Mathura.

In addition to this, there are rectangular ivory or bone dices with the sides numbered 1-4 were discovered from *Khok Samrong, Nern Makok* (Lopburi province) and Uthong (Supanburi province) located in the central region of Thailand. This kind of dices was most probably brought from India where, besides gambling or games, it was mentioned in *Rajsuya* ritual for conducting how food should be divided by the King (Bhattacharya 1975).

In case of amulets, possibly, the Indian merchants who had come and settled at the ports in Southeast Asia might have brought amulets with themselves for the fortune of long journey. The amulets, in both Hindu and Buddhist beliefs, have been reported from several port sites mostly located in coastal area. The Hindu God who was considered to remove all struggles and and usher prosperity was Ganesh and this idea can be substantiated with the numerous Ganapati sculptures of portable size discovered from Burma, Thailand and Vietnam. Beside Ganapati, there was Vishnu, regarded to be the protector of seafaring journey, and Kubera being well known as the God of prosperity. Furthermore, the numbers of small amulets and seals depicted a Goddess, *Gaja-lakshmi* which was found commonly in early historic site settlements and ports located in Southeast Asia such as *Uthong* and *Sap Champa* in Thailand.

**High Tin Bronze vessels with a central cone:**

The bronze vessels are supposed to be the most ancient type of container indicating the link between India and Southeast Asia, occurring at a few sites in western and central Thailand such as Ban Don Ta Phet and a cave at Khao Kwark in Ratchaburi province. From Ban Don Ta Phet about 30 high tin bronze containers were excavated, many were incomplete and fragmented. They are made relatively on flatter bases and some have a number of concentric circles surrounding a central cone. The vessels walls are very thin – sometime less than 1 millimeter and usually have rather low sides, slightly curved to the exterior (Janse 1962: 280-92). A great variety of silver, copper and bronze knobbed base wares are also reported from Taxila at Bhir and Sirkap mounds. In Southern India, bronze bowls of this type occurred in Megalithic graves at Nilgiri Hills of Tamilnadu.
In summary, these kinds of bowls, thought far from common in Southeast Asia, can be said to be widespread in the subcontinent. Mashall (1971) described the knobbed ware based vessels from Taxila, he suggested that they might have been a stylized version of Greek ceramic types known as the *phiales* bowl, common in the Mediterranean world in the 3rd-2nd century B.C. The knobbed ware has been considered to be derived from the Helenistic ceramics decorated with an omphalos, appearing in South Asia during the 3rd-2nd centuries B.C. Therefore, Southeast Asian examples of Knobbed wares in copper alloys or other materials can be suggested as evidence of cultural transmission of typology of western ceramics to the east during protohistoric period.

In Southern Thailand at Khao Sam Keao, recently the knobbled ware has been reported as copper alloy artifacts (MA. 72) containing high-tin bronze chemical feature. The high tin bronze knobb bowl has its morphology and decoration comparable to the examples in metal and ceramic known from further north in Mainland Southeast Asia (eg. Ban Don Ta Phet and Dong Son) and from Indian subcontinent (eg. Coimbatore, Adhichananallur and Taxila) (Pryce et al 2006: 303; Bérénice Bellina and Glover 2004).

**The potteries: Rouletted and Arritine wares, Sprinkler (Kundika) and Stamped or molded ware:**

The wheel-made pottery constitutes a very important craft to facilitate as the evidence for exchange between South and Southeast Asia. The most common form is a flat-based dish, about 6 centimeters deep and up to 32 centimeters in diameters. The sloping rim curved slightly inwards. The surface is highly polished, brown to red-grey color and interior body mostly in grey. Decoration comprises one to three interior bands of impressed rouletted design (Begley 1986: 47-54). Generally rouletted ware is found in many sites in the subcontinent, from the south to northeast. Among these are namely Anuradhapura, Kantarodai and Mantai in Sri Lanka; Arikamedu, Karaikadu and Kodumanul in Tamilnadu; Amaravati and Brahmagiri in Andra Pradesh; Sisupalgarh in Orissa; Tumluk and Chandraketugarh in Bengal; Bunai complex of Northern Java, Bali and Sembiran.

In Thailand, the trace of rouletted wares has been reported from Phu Khao Tong, southern region. This type of pottery turned up in great amounts and was the first to have been discovered in the Andaman coast. These wares might have been produced in Tamilnadu in South India as the collected samples from different sites in Southeast and South Asia had shown a similarity in the results after the scientific analysis by X-Ray diffraction XRD. (Chaysuwarn 2009; Bérénice and Glover 2004: 78). Thus, it can be assumed that rouletted ware had one or few source of production and possibly exported to various regions. Perhaps, the distribution of rouletted wares indicates the
trading and cultural exchanges that took place between east coast of India and the Shore of Andaman Sea during the beginning of the Chirtian era. However, the accurate date of rouletted ware is still controversial; commonly it is considered to be dated from 1st century - 2nd century A.D.

In Southeast Asia, the traces of rouletted ware has been excavated and found, sometime in date context, at Buni complex and Sembiran in Indonesia (Walker and Santoso 1980: 228-235) and Tra Kieu in Central Vietnam (Prior 1998: 94-110) which belonged to the period starting from 1st century B.C. to the first half of the first century A.D. Mineralogical analysis by Prior (1998) confirmed that the texture was similar to the sherds found at Arikamedu.

Therefore, the appearance of rouletted ware in Southeast Asia has thrown some light on the contacts that was established across the Bay of Bengal. Although the chronology of the artifact is still in the need of greater precision, it seems that the appearance of rouletted ware in Southeast Asia was just little later than the knobbed ware vessels (Berénice and Glover 2004: 79).

Moreover, there are more examples of vessels which were influenced by the Indian tradition found in Southeast Asia like Sprinkler and stamped ceramics. The Sprinkler is a form of pitcher with a long neck and a spout, swelling at the base and which is also known as “Kundika” or “Kundi”. This kind of vessel is typically an Indian ceramic that got extensively adopted in Southeast Asia from the last century B.C., but only for a brief period. In India, the Sprinkler was associated with primary Hindu rituals and became rare in the original place after 7th century A.D. However, the sprinklers were reported from the Buddhist sites dating from the beginning of the historic period and were frequently made in the distinctive Red polished ware. The sprinklers are found in Pyu sites in Burma such as Beikthano and in Dvaravati sites in the Central part of Thailand such as from Chansen and Ban Khu Muang, at Oc Eo and Tra Kieu in Vietnam as well as in Central Indonesia. In Southern Thailand, at Thung Tuk site, many Kundi fragments as well as the spouts were recovered. Interestingly, the Kundi wares have been commonly found in the Southern or coastal port sites which date from the proto historic period till the historic time (Chaysuwarn 2009).

In case of Stamped and moulded ceramics, in Southeast Asia, such forms occurred for the first time during the last centuries B.C. and it lasted till the 6th -7th century A.D. They are found in major early historic sites such as Mathura, Ujjain and Paithan. Commonly, this ceramic is red and the stamped or molded decoration depicted on its shoulder, consists of symbolic motifs like svastika, Srivatsa, wheel and goose etc.
The Burmese stamped ceramics show strong influence of Indian and are generally found in early Buddhist sites like Beikthano, Halin and Sri Ksetra. Other local adapted style of stamped or molded ceramics is found in Thailand in Dvaravati sites such as Chansen, Phra praton chedi and Khu Bua. The decorations are in various patterns like a series of rectangular frames, each separated by dotted line, enclosing an animal such as elephant, cow or floral motif and horse. The stamped sherds found at Phra praton chedi very strongly resemble the excavated sample from Kondapur, Andra Pradesh. Though this kind of ceramic might have been imported from India, somehow, the sherds found in Southeast was probably local products that reflect the adoption and adaption of Indian technique and style (Bérénice 1999: 161-184)

A study of different traded materials has shown us the existence of two distinct phases. The first probably caters to the period around 4th century B.C. - 2nd century A.D. According to Van Leur (1955), the scattered evidence of beginning period was referred to regular but less intense and archaeologically less visible contacts that preceded Indianization. In Southeast Asia, during this period, very few items have been found from the western world that had reached this region through South Asia. Most of the artifacts in this period are found in non-indianized context (Bérénice and Glover 2004: 73). Firstly, they consist of glass and stone beads ornaments, and ceramic and bronze vessels. It seems to us that vessels of this period are very similar to Indian types, whether imported or locally made. They attested already frequent exchange. Three types of vessels seems to characterize this period such as bronze container with knob, pottery rouletted wares and stamped wares.
Later on in the second period, 2nd to 4th century A.D., intra and inter regional exchange got more intense and is marked by a lesser diversity but greater quantity of artifact to study. Most of the items that were traded had Indian influence but were locally made potteries like sprinklers, stamped and molded ceramics which clearly reflect the adoption of Indian form and decoration techniques. From this time, objects in contexts referred to as “Indianized” may be found. Similar to stone and glass beads, though the Indian products still came along the maritime route, the local manufacturers had produced beads in mass quantity due to higher demands of the market.
According to Ian Glover (1990: 2-3), the maritime exchange across the Bay of Bengal was quite infrequently and impermanently connected between India and early chieftain states of Southeast Asia. Thus, it is still controversial that whether this kind of relationship should be recognized as “Maritime trade” or not as the coinage system was also nonexistent. In this case, Glover has given an idea of early contacts which was either established on the model of commercial exchange that entered in this region for financial profit or supporting the “Big Man” theory specifically meant on the exchanges of prestige, good reciprocal type of economy that is well documented for recent Melanesia (Brookfield and Hart 1971: 314-331).

This point of view is also discussed by some scholars like Raschke (1978: 676) and Wheeler (1955: 206-207) especially the infrequency of Indian voyage traveled to Southeast Asia in early Christian era.

However, the expansion of inter-maritime trade or exchange system had been the cause of the emergence of producer-trading states in Peninsular Malaysia during late century B.C. Though in most of the Southeast Asian states, during late century B.C., the highest level of political organization was known as chieftain society where barter system and gift giving were likely to have been the principal modes of exchange (Wisseman Christie 1995: 235-288).

All in all, the maritime trade relationship between India and Southeast Asia had not only brought luxury and wealth to the states but also been the cause of cultural convergence which supported the growth of primary states. According to Kulke (1990 : 18), the concept of “Indianization” in Southeast Asia is the result of the acceptance of Brahanical rituals as it was directly explained from the early Sanskritized inscriptions dated around 5th century A.D. in early Southeast Asian states. The expansion of cultural influence had not only led to the appearance of Brahanical conception but also to the development of religious arts on the both regions of Bengal. Thus, in the perspective of religious influence, it can be assumed that the concept of “Indianization” laid emphasis on the role of “Brahmanas” as the court advisers and ritual specialists in addition to the growth of maritime activity between two regions. And also, “the localization” means the way by which Brahanical concepts had been adapted and restated by the native population (Mabbett 1977: 1-14; 143-161).
3.1.3 States formation in Southeast Asia: political history and social – economic structures

The beginning of “Indianization” process

The diffusion of Indian culture to distant parts of Central Asia, China, Japan and especially Southeast Asia is certainly the greatest development of Indianized culture. In Southeast Asian countries, there are numerous splendid monuments reflecting the intensive complications of Indian arts as well as the sophisticated philosophy such as Pagan (Burma: 1044-1287 A.D.), Angkor and the group of monuments (Cambodian: 889-1300 A.D.) and Borobudur (Indonesia: early of 9th century A.D.). Though they were influenced by Indian culture, nevertheless they have shown their native aesthetic concepts and had portrayed an important character in history of representative countries.

First of all, there are some fundamental problems concerning the transmission (diffusion) of Indian culture to the vast regions of Southeast Asia. The Historians have formulated several theories regarding the spread of Indian culture to the Southeast Asia: 1) The Kshatriya theory; 2) the Vaishya theory; 3) The Brahmins theory.

The first theory states that Indian warrior clan like princes or Kings had colonized Southeast Asia. Presently, this proposition has been rejected by most scholars though it was very much accepted some time back. The Vaishya theory contributes the expansion of Indian culture to guilds and traders. It is certainly much more plausible than the Kshatriya theory, but it seems not well enough to explain an intensive cultural impact that demanded higher capability to initiate like Sanskritized literatures and complicated religious ritual. The last theory is concerned on the role of Brahmanas as the major introducers of Indian culture to the Southeast Asia due to their finest knowledge on religious rituals as well as literatures, but it may need to be substantiated more firmly by other references of the Buddhists as well as the traders.

The origin of Kshatriya theory can be traced back to the time of the Indian freedom movement. Indian historians, smarting under the stigma of their own colonial subjection, tried to compensate this by showing that at least in ancient times Indians had been strong enough to established colonies of their own. In 1926 the Greater Indian Society was established in Kolkata and, in the later year, the well-known Indian historian R.C. Majumdar had published his series of studies “Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East”. This school held that Indian Kings and their military had occupied the colonies in Southeast Asian region and, thus, the Sanskrit names of the local rulers seem to support this theory. As research progressed further, it was found that there was very little proof of any direct Indian political influence on those states of Southeast Asia. Moreover, it was demonstrated that Southeast Asian rulers had adopted Sanskrit names themselves. Therefore, such name could not be used as evidences for the presence of the Indian Kings.
The second theory, in contrast, concerned much important element of Indian connection with Southeast Asia. Trade had actually been the stimulated cause behind all these early contracts. Inscriptions also show that the merchant guilds had settled outposts in many parts of Southeast Asia. Some of the inscriptions were written in their local languages such as Tamil language.

However, if the merchant groups played the crucial role in the Indianization process, all their local languages could have made an impact on those of Southeast Asia. But it did not appear this way and on the contrary Sanskrit and Pali had more prominent domination as loan words in Southeast Asian languages. Therefore, the traders might have had certainly provided an important transmission belt for all kinds of cultural influences, but they certainly they did not play the main role which some scholars have attributed to them. Additionally, one of the main arguments against the Vaishya theory is that some of the earliest traces of Indianized states in Southeast Asia were found not in the coastal region, but in the mountainous or interior regions.

The Brahmin theory is quite similar and almost contemporary to the spread of Brahmanical culture in Central and Southern India. The Brahmans, Buddhist and Jain monks played a major role in transmitting cultural values and symbols, and in disseminating the style of Hindu kingship. Besides being the religious specialists, the priests had a good knowledge in Sanskrit languages and literature like the law (Dharmashastra), the art of government (Arthasastra) and the art of Architecture (Silpashastra). They could thus serve as a ‘cultural development consultants’ in various fields and accordingly were welcomed to Southeast Asian Kingdoms which might have just emerged from early state formation.

Although the rise of Indianized culture had progressively spread over Southeast Asia and intensively influenced the local culture, it seemed that the local rulers and people of this region had developed their own urban system before the time of Indian impact. Perhaps, an emergence of Indianized culture might have started from Royal ceremonies when the local rulers had been inspired by the finest impression of being the ideal King for their Kingdoms like Indian Royals. Then the Brahmanas were invited to conduct the grand rituals and approve their rightful power over the lands and later on Indianize culture could have probably extended from the centre of the society to sequenced stage surrounding.

The development of Indianization in an early stage can be observed in the inscription of King Mulavarman dated around 400 A.D. found at Eastern Boneo, Indonesia. Van Leur (1995) mentioned that the early Royal consecrated ceremony was conducted following a Vedic ritual which was done by the invited Brahmanas from India in the ancient Indonesian court. In this case, Van Leur stated that the dynasty had been founded by local Kings for two generations chiefly independent from the
Brahmanas or Vedic culture from India until the time of Mulavarman, who was the first person to adopt a Sanskritized name. Moreover, according to the inscription, King Mulavarman, after his royal consecrated ceremonies had subjected the neighboring rulers, had made them mere “tribute givers” of his Kingdom.

Besides the Southeast Asian rulers who had played an important role in the state formation process, there were the Indian adventurers who travelled eastwards and had also been the other major contributors of early state. The legend of Kaundinya Brahmin who was inspired by a divine dream to go to Funan was recorded in Chinese sources. There he won over the Naga Queen (local chieftain Queen) by his holy bow and married her, thus founded the first dynasty of Funan (pre Angkorean period of Cambodia) in the late first century AD. Interestingly, it is quite similar to the legend associated with the rise of the Pallava dynasty and this may indicate that Kaundinya possibly came from South India where the Kaundinyas were renowned famous Brahmin lineage (Kulke and Rothermund 1987: 155; Coedes 1968: 30; Sastri 1961: 403). Furthermore, the Chinese sources of the fourth century A.D. describe an Indian usurper of the throne of Funan, known as “Chu Chan-t’an” or “Chandan”. The “Chu” always indicates a person of Indian origin and “Chan-t’an” could have been transliteration of the title “Chandana” which can probably be traced to the Indo-Sythians of Northern India. Later on, in the beginning of 5th century A.D., another “Kaundinya” arrived at the port of Funan and his arrival to Funan was also mentioned in Chinese annals as the Brahmin from India who was chosen to be King of Funan by the locals and governed his Kingdom according to the Indian system (Pelliot 1903: 269).

The story of the second Kaundinya is the most explicit reference about an Indian ruler who contributed to Indianize the culture in Southeast Asia at 4th-5th century A.D. Comparably with the time of intensive Indian cultural impact, there have been seen through the earliest Sanskrit inscription in Indonesia and mainland Southeast Asia.

The emergence of early state formation in Southeast Asia

From the end of first millennium B.C, in Southeast Asian regions, evidences of more complicated social structural development can be found in the early chieftain states. Gradually, the local rulers had started contributing themselves in the process of social hierarchy and tried to upgrade their positions as chieftains for being more intensively “centralized” society by the expansion of dominance over dependent settlement. Actually, according to archaeological evidences from some megalithic sites in Southeast Asia, the trace of primary aristocratic society had been revived in the simplest forms which are apparent from the various grave goods and burial pattern.
Thus, it can be assumed that the concepts of social ranks had been practiced continuously and had improved to be more distinct for the benefit of certain state administration.

Generally, the development of the early states has involved several aspects of cultures such as technology, crafts specialization, literature, long distance trade, public sustainable functions and administrative system. The most striking variable was the social organization in which successive leaders from elite families in different regions sought the superior position of eminence. To approach the goal, there were several common ways like attracting a large number of loyal followers, establishing the royal power to be more centralized conducted by sophisticated sacred ritual and military forces. There were some reputed lords who had proved to be perfect in this grand royal concept and had magnified their political power, not only in the region of their dominance but also far beyond their territories into larger and more complex form of social organization. This kind of state formation that mainly governed and occasionally expanded its area of domination without exact boundary depending on the strength of central power was particularly formed in early Southeast Asian urbanization.

A wealthy centralized state could only be sustained by some relevant factors like settlement location, agriculture and irrigational system, income from long distance trade, warfare benefits and the permanent Royal linage. Moreover, the rulers should have individual magnetism and attainment of divine qualities for being a superior governor. Thus, it can be suggested that certain states in Southeast Asia from the first millennium A.D., in spite of fluid boundary and unstable tenure, their social organization was well established and quite sophisticated in material and cultural perspectives. It is remarkable for the latter aspect, religious and art culture which reflect an intensive connection with the Indians who were being important in the role of social organization.

The geographic regions of the early state formation

This kind of flexible territorial state in Southeast Asian region were scattered nearby river line and low land. There were mainly six areas in the Mainland Southeast Asian region (Higham 1989: 245) and the rest are in the Maritime region. First, at the lower Mekong Valley and delta is supposed to be formed at a very early period. Second, is at the area in the middle Mekong Valley including the entire area of Cambodia. Third will be the Chao Praya Valley in Thailand and the fourth one is located in the Khorat plateau where the agriculture is sustained by the Mun and Chi rivers. The fifth and sixth are the areas settled in Central and North Vietnam that noticed the rise of Champa Kingdom paralleling the north which had been dominated under the Chinese political control. Finally in the maritime regions, the early urbanizations had developed in Java Island and southern part of Thailand or Malay Peninsula.
The early historical sources regarding the Southeast Asian states from the first millennium A.D. is mainly based on the Chinese dynastic annual records by the ambassadors or travellers and Indian epic literature. In addition to the literary sources, archaeological evidences and inscriptions are obviously required for a better understanding in the early historical aspect as well as cultural development in this region. But, unfortunately, the evidence from both artifacts usually prove to be either partial or absent.

**The Funans of lower Mekong river delta: 100-500 A.D.**

The lower reaches and the delta of the Mekong River had been an important point of visit to participate in an exchange network which linked Rome and India with China. It also gave many benefits as a gateway for goods journeying up and down the Mekong Valley. From the first century A.D., the delta had been the centre of Funan state which had intensified centralization, incorporation of surrounding groups by force and the adoption of some Indian cultural traits. The settlement pattern in the central area revived the large centre connected by the irrigation system. The indigenous ideas of statehood mainly followed Indian tradition. These included the establishment of the legislative function, writing and state religion. It is possible to distinguish the central political control under each successive member of the same dynasty following a chronology of the lineage. Moreover, there are also some evidences related to the concentration of resources, specialized manufacture, a central court and state’s internal affair (ambassadors dispatch to Chinese court), all of these structures suggest a high level of intensification rather greater than primary chiefdoms of earlier period. A notification of this kind of social grouping is their ephemeral nature. While this area was flourishing with the Funans state and the sub dominant chieftain regions, they were not principally durable and, by the end of 6th century A.D, the politically magnetic centre had shifted to middle Mekong and Tonle Sap plain in the upper basin of Cambodia that led to the abandonment of the lower delta region.

The Funans are considered to have the earliest state formation in ancient Cambodian (Khmer) history. The state had been getting an advantage of its prosperous location at the lower Mekong delta that conveniently supported the economic growth of the Kingdom as it was placed in maritime trade route. Although the knowledge of chronology or political history of Funan state has been in an uncertain stage, there are some Chinese official records and inscriptions during this period throwing some light on this aspect.
The knowledge of Funan is obtained almost exclusively from the Chinese source. The name is obviously derived from the Chinese translation of the original Khmer. Aymonier (1903: 109) thought that Funan was purely Chinese name means “The protected South”. Coedes (1943: 43-44) had identified the name of mountain as “Mount Motan” mentioned in Nagasena’s work (p.28) with the present Ba Phnom and it places the ancient capital the Vyadhapura of the inscription at its base. It seems to be possible that Funan has derived its name from mountain Ba Phnom with Vyadhapura established as the capital. Possibly, the Ba Phnom was the Holy Mountain as referred in the 10th century Khmer inscription (Coedes 1911-40: 124-140).

The most important literary source which refers to the presence of Funan state during third century A.D. was in the official reports of the Chinese emissaries Kang Dai and Zhu Ying, who visited the country by the order of Wu emperor for gathering the information of Southern trade route to India. In their accounts mentions of the mythical legend of the Funan Royal ancestors known as “Kaundinya”, the high caste Indian, who had married the local queen and governed the country by following Indian tradition, has been found. The King Kaundinya had male successors to sustain royal lineage. Remarkably, the mythical legend of Royal ancestors was quite similar to the traces of the Pallavas of Kanchi dynasty. These which the Funan Kings, as well as later period royal members, also claimed their blood line through the lunar dynasty (Chandra vamsa) (Briggs 1951: 18; Coedes 1969: 57, 1968: 30).

According to Pillot (1903), this incident might have taken place towards the end of the first century A.D. The Liangshu (history of Liang Dynasty), composed in the 7th century A.D., also noted that the founder King of this country had given his son the territory over seven dominant areas. These settlements suggest the developing centralized state organization. Down to the line of the Funan royal heredity, there were some successful Kings who had been denoted in Chinese official reports such as Hun Panhuang who had attacked and conquered the local chiefs on the periphery of his domain, then he distributed the vassal chiefdoms to his sons and their next generation.

The King Fan Shiman who also had expanded his territory by strong military troop, defeated many local chiefdoms and occupied the vast region along the gulf of Siam. His suzerainty may have extended eastward as far as the region of Nha-trang, where the stele of Vo Canh was erected by his descendents, upon which he is mentioned under the Sanskrit form of his name “Sri Mara” (Coedes 1969: 58; Coedes 1940: 484; Gaspardone 1953: 477; Sarkar 1956: 77; Bhattacharya 1961(a): 219). He was succeeded by King Fan Xan (Chan), another powerful King who had sent his first group of embassy to the Chinese as well as Indian courts (Coedes 1969: 59). During this time, the rise of another state located at Funan’s northeast frontier known as “Linyi” had contemporarily grown up with the capital that was established in the southern Vietnam.
Besides the state incidents and chronology of Funan Kings, the works of Kang Dai and Zhu Ying also narrates the life of people such as house and palace plans, agricultural activities, special crafts and the wide use of Indian scripts as well as the religions. Later on in the middle of 4th century, according to Chinese records, Funan state had a King of foreign origin named as “Chandan”. This title “Chandan” suggests the western Indian (Kushana) or Scythian origin (Pelliot 1903: 248-303; Briggs 195: 23; Coedes 1969: 59). Probably, his reign might have not lasted long.

At around the 5th century A.D., according to Liangshu, there was another Indian King who too was named “Kaudinya” and who was selected to be the King of Funan by the locals. He was considered to have belonged to the “Brahmin” caste and changed the rule according to the Indian custom. Some of these customs can be perceived on the basis of inscriptions and archaeological evidences, and they contributed it as their tradition which had been maintained up to the Angkor period from the early of 9th to 15th centuries A.D. For instance, the adoption of Sanskrit was used for royal title “Varman”.

The literal meaning of this word is armor, and it is possible to translate as “being protected by”. The proceeding part of the names commonly refers to Hindu Gods or any particular achievement such as “Mahendravarman” or “Jayavarman” etc. The Kings were not only given the honorific name related to their devoted Gods, but also it officially established the local cult incorporated within Indian deities like Siva, Vishnu or Buddha. Siva is the Hindu gods of fertility and he was appropriated to be represented in the form of Linga. The cult of Linga, whereby the representation of the Linga was considered to be the essence of the Kingdom, engendered beyond belief, even on occasions when the rulers professed Buddhism. The cult of Linga, despite of being less tangible self-innovation, it followed Indian legal system which had been highly respected as the symbol of royal political centralization. There are evidences by allusions on inscriptions and references to the raising of a statue of bull Nandi along with the establishment of the Linga. Interestingly, from the 5th century A.D. onwards, the overlords increasingly appreciated the fact of being served by advisers who were well-versed about Indian administrative philosophy. The series of Funan Kings after second Kaundinya like Jayavarman, Gunavarman or Rudravarman were the powerful Kings who had sent royal ambassadors to Chinese courts and being grand patrons of the Brahmanical activities as observed through few survived inscriptions. Similar to the Indian writing tradition, the inscriptions found in this area have provided invaluable information regarding the religions, beliefs and incidents of the Kingdom such as the consecration of Vishnu path (foot prints) by the royal order of prince Gunavarman and his achievement regarding the excavation of drainage canals (Coedes 1931:1-23). The Funan inscriptions mostly can be dated from early 6th century A.D. based on the script characters and written in combined languages of Sanskrit and archaic Khmer. The
valuable information translated from epigraphical sources and systematic excavation at Oc Eo (Malleret 1959), capital of Funan, has given us an important knowledge of early Indianized settlement which reflected an intense appreciation in Indian culture from the Royal family to locals and their complex social organization.

The Chenlas of Middle Mekong and Tonle Sap plains: 550-802 A.D.

The Chenlas was the early state belonged to this region lasted from early Christian era up to almost 9th century A.D. The Chenlas had been a vassal state of the Funan before they declared their independence and annexed Funan of lower delta region by military troop. According to the historical trace from epigraphic sources, inscriptions and Chinese historical records of Sui and T'ang dynasties, mentions that the ancestor of Chenla dynasty were hermit Kambhu svayambhuva and celestial nymph Mera was given to him by Siva, and started the Solar dynasty (Surya vamsa) at Sreshtapura located in the region Bassac (Coedes 1968 : 66; Goloubew 1924 : 508). Later on the capital had shifted to Bhavapura located in the northern shore of the Great Lake (Tonele Sap).

The legend, entirely different from that of Soma nagi of Funan (Lunar dynasty: Chandra vamsa), shows a certain Kinship with the genealogical myth of the Pallavas of Kanchi. At around the beginning of 6th century A.D., the Chenla King who had a conquest with the Funan was Bhavavarman and his cousin Chitrasena, judging by their inscriptions, the Chenlas had pushed the previous dynasty southward to a locality far south at Naravara nagara or known in present day as Angkor Borei (Coedes 1968: 68). After the reign of Bhavavarman, Chitrasena became the King and got retitled in an honorific name as Mahendravarman. The inscriptions of Chitrasena or known as Mahendravarman are found spreading along Mekong basin from Southern Loas, Cambodia and Northeastern region of Thailand. Interestingly, the detail from epigraphical source clearly suggests that Chitrasena was a grand devotee of the Saivite cult because of the establishment of Linga of mountain (Girisa) and Nandi bull statue for his greatest victory over the whole country. And he also sent an ambassador to Linyi (Champa) state to start the friendship between two countries. The peaceful alliance with neighboring state had continued for centuries. Moreover, the first group of ambassador to Chinese court in the name of Chenla state was sent in the reign of King Isanavarman who established new capital at Isanapura at north of Kampong Thom and started constructing the group of Hindu monument at Sombor Prei Kuk.
During 6th-7th century, it was the most flourishing period of the Chenla when their political power had expanded from middle reach of the Mekong valley to the plains between Dong Raek range and the vanity of Phnom Penh. The archaeological evidence reveals very clearly that the principal settlement were extensive, defended and dominated by central religious buildings erected and decorated according to Indian traditions of temple architecture (Parmentier 1927: 44-92).

The inscriptions indicate that the Kings were supported by the Brahmanas who were versed with Indian political and legal doctrines, and also who had played the central role in the consecration of overlords according to Hindu ritual. Sanskrit was considered to be the official and religious language employed in Vedic rituals, but archaic Khmer was the vernacular language. Considering to Chinese records of visited embassies and surviving inscription, because of the very large territory, it is found that in this particular region there were many chiefdoms competing the domains with the centralized states of Chenla.

During such long periods, any weakening of the political centralized capital like the death of powerful and magnetic rulers, the forested minor lords always declared their independence leading to political fragmentation. The inscription of Queen Jayadevi (731 A.D.) who was daughter of King Javarman I, had complained of “bad time” due to state political crisis that she would not able to manage on the problem (Dupont 1943-6: 85). The first sovereigns of Khmer Kingdom did not connect themselves with the unity of Chenla, as a result of this crisis, the large territory had been divided mainly into two regions known as “upper Chenla” located in the northern plain in the mountain area while the “lower or water Chenla” surrounded by lake and sea at the lower Mekong delta (Pelliot 1902: 124; 1903: 272).

The evidence available from archaeology and inscriptions is still unanimous in supporting the conclusion that between the beginning of the state formation (1st century A.D.) up to the end of 8th century A.D., the middle and lower Mekong regions sustained numerous states organized on the principle of centralizing attainment of economic and political power by overlord. It was because the character of the state is flexible which can be simply attached by any course. Thus, in one hand, it was also not difficult to scatter when the centralized power got weakened and could no more sustain the demands from dominant chiefdoms. The political diversity of Chenla in the late 8th century A.D. due to the long term chaos broken out by rival chiefs and Javanese invasion was leading to the state devastation.
Finally, at around the beginning of 9th century A.D., the large territory of Khmer empire had been permanently reunited in the reign of King Jayavarman (II) who successfully defeated the local chiefdoms and established the “Royal Linga”, symbolic of supreme Kingship, at the holy mountain in his new capital located in the upper plain of delta.

The early state formation in Thailand:

The early states in Chao Praya basin (Dvaravati state) and the Khorat plateau at the Mun and Chi river basin: late 5th -9th century A.D.

The Central part of Thailand has Chao Phraya as the principle river which debouches into the gulf of Siam. There are other three rivers, on the west namely Mae Khlong and Ta Chin and on the east, the Bang Pakong River. As the central basin is rich with natural and water sources, the rice cultivation has been efficiently carried out in this region. Thus, this area was the most preferred settlement area in Thailand since the prehistoric period.

According to the result of the geographical study on the basin formation, during late prehistoric and early prehistoric periods (c. 500 B.C. - 900 A.D.), the sea level was probably rather higher than that it is at present and the extensive formation of the Chao Phraya delta was at an earlier stage. Archaeological sites now set back from the coast and possibly had direct access to the sea (Supajanya and Vanasarin 1979). This basin though it was most suitable for agricultural activity, there was lack of mineral source such as tin, copper and Iron. However this deficiency was solved by the inner–routes connection with the northeastern plateau known as Korat region and far eastward distance up to Cambodia plain. Like lower Mekong delta, the central basin of Thailand had intensive contacts with the Indians by both means as the inland trade route and maritime trade since its location was much close to thesea shore.

The documentary sources for proto historic and early historic society of this area are poorer than other contemporary states. The earliest possible reference to Chao Phraya plains is referred in “The History of the early Hans”. It recorded the journey which started from Southern Chinese coast and ended at a place named “Huangzhi”. Wheatley (1961: 9) suggested that the ultimate destination was the eastern shores of India, and the overland sector involved might have been the three pagodas pass on the west of Thailand. The existence of early states located in Chao Phraya plain and Gulf of Siam were briefly mentioned along with some historical narration of neighboring states in Chinese sources like the account of Pan Gu , the Chinese historian and “The History of Liang dynasty” (Liangshu: 7th century A.D.). Because of very few inscriptions are known from Chao Phraya Valley, there is doubt that the erection of stelae was not commonly practiced in the same extent as it was done in the middle Mekong area. A known Chinese monk named Xuan Dang described the state
called “Duoluobodi” as existing on the west of Isanapura (Chenla capital). The emergence of early state in Chao Phraya plain has been confirmed from the Sanskrit Inscription on a copper plate found at U Thong. It stated that “…Sri Harshavarman, grandson of Isanavarman, having expanded the sphere of his glory, obtained the lion throne through regular succession…” and the next two stanzas records the numbers of gifts like jewel litters, a parasol and musical instruments to the Linga Amratakesvara. This situation suggests the overlordship followed the cult of Saivism. Although the inscription left no accurate date, the style of writing scripts reflects its approximate date around the middle of 7th century A.D. (Coedes 1958: 125 -142).

The origin of the name of this state is found not only in the Chinese account but also in the two silver medallions which provide information about the king and the name of his Kingdom. The coins were discovered beneath the sanctuary at Nakon Prathom which stated that it was “The meritorious work of the King of Sri Dvaravati”. The scripts are identified as South Indian characters of the 7th century A.D. Thus, it is accepted that the state located at the Chao Phraya plain was one of the Indianized states which can be proved by the cultural exchange that developed with India, and definitely, the Kingship had existed there. In addition to the discovery of the silver coins at Nakon Prathom, an investiture cerimonial tray (Lyon 1979) decorated with Indian royal symbols like Sri Vatsa, conch shells, white elephants and Sri Devi was also found. This ritual artifact has approved the Royal and social hierarchy of Dvaravti.

By the epigraphical studies, the result has shown that Mon was the indigenous language while Sanskrit was known as the official and religious language. Religion incorporated Vaisnavism and Buddhism. It is important to mention that the state formation of Dvaravati had a background of the cultural development from the late prehistoric communities which were mostly located in the Central, western and eastern part of the country which used to have intensive contacts with India (Higham 1989: 272). These sites probably had formed as Chiefdom society before annexed or accepted the Dvaravati state which was extended from Chao Phraya basin, possibly the capital might locate at Nakon Prathom or U thong.

Dvaravati is an obvious example with the characteristics of the early state. This large area contained numerous major trade or religious centres, and all had a similar cultural practice. According to the archaeological structure of town planning, the feature that was always found common among the major centres is the moat and bank, the outline of which differs markedly from the rectangular geometry of the Chenla centres. Usually they are oval or sub rectangular in plan, and were situated in a fashion that a stream always had filled the moats. Places where the excavation had taken place, the foundation and remains of the super structures of religious buildings have been
recovered; laterite and brick were the dominant material used. The buildings include *Stupas* and *Caityas* hall.

Quaritch Wales (1969) had divided the major Dvaravati centres of the Chao Phraya valley into three regional groups which he had labeled as Western, Central and Eastern. However, so far, there are not any reasons to think that these were political units. There are some important sites which are related to the religious centers, both Hinduism and Buddhism like *U Thong* (central plain) which had been occupied for many centuries prior to the advent of Dvaravati and the impressive artifactual remains had many parallels with *Oc Eo* of Mekong Delta.

Besides copper plate inscription of *Harshavarman*, many Siva *linga* has been reported along with the stone statues of Vishnu as well as Buddhist structural remains and sculptures (Boisselier 1969). On the upper plain of central region, there is the large moat and site monument known as *Si Thep*. It was near here that a stela was raised to commemorate the accession of the overlord *Bhavavarman* of Chenla. *Si Thep* itself comprises a circular moat area linked with a larger moated enceinte of sub-rectangular shape. The major Brahmanical Gods like Siva had been worshipped in the form of Linga and *Adhranarisvara*, Vishnu as *Krishna* and Surya statues there. The presence of so many evidences indicating the existence of Hinduism at Si Thep is due to the location of the site which controlled the communications between Chao Phraya basin and Korat in the Northeastern plateau. As will be seen, the northeastern part of Thailand was under the strong influence of the Khmer culture, and thus there was more impact on *Si Tep* than on the western part of Chao Phraya valley due to contact with Khmer. The same geographic proximity to Chenla characterizes the Bang Pakong valley in the eastern part of Thailand. The three large moated settlements controlled the passage from the gulf of Siam up to the river valley and so towards Tonle Sap.

One of the most important sites is known as *Dong Si Maha Pot*. It measures 1500 by 800m., and has a rectangular reservoir which covers 200ha on the northeast corner. Hinduism is evidently found from several *Linga* and Vishnu Images. Casual finds include the statues of Buddha, usually carved out of stone. There are also many laterite foundations of religious buildings inside and outside the moats. An inscription of A.D. 1187 refers to a town as *Watsapura*, a name which may have originated when Chao Phraya valley was incorporated into the Khmer Empire (Angkor period) in the early 11th century A.D.
In most researches on Dvaravati sties it is assumed that they comprise constituent parts of a Kingdom, with a capital first at U Thong and later at Nakon Prathom. Quaritch Wales suggested that the territory of Dvaravati culture had expanded into Mun and Chi valleys in northeast Thailand. But the existence of the state encompassing the entire region of the Central regional valleys has not yet been based on any firm evidence. Exactly, the present knowledge about Dvaravati is still found to be in a primary stage, and the only important point which has come to light is that, the state had been getting an advantage of the long–distance trade connection with India. Thus, there were plenty of long-established prehistoric communities sustaining their socio-economic structure mainly by trade benefits.

These communities are mostly located along the coastal or trade route such as Chansen, Ban the Kae including Dong Sri Mahapat and Maung Pra Rot in the eastern region where similarities in cultural materials with the items found has been discovered from Oc Eo (lower Mekong Delta). Although from the 7th century A.D. many Buddhist stupa and remains had contributed to support the glorious rise of Buddhism in this plan. Traces of the significant Brahmanical communities that had been in a closed relationship with Chenla state in Cambodia have been extensively found. Hitherto, there have not yet been any literary or epigraphical sources to confirm the exact chronology of the Kings and the History of Dvaravati state, at least it can be assumed that the Kingship and social hierarchy was being practiced there. At present, there is no evidence in favor of the most distinctive community as against a series of small ones each vying for ascendancy. All in all, this kind of large state connected with each other by cultural sharing has also been found in case of the northeastern plateau, Mun and Chi river valley of Thailand.

The Mun and Chi valleys of the Northeast of Thailand:

The geography of the Northeastern region of Thailand consists of a high plateau with the Phetchabun range lying in between this northeastern plains and Chao Phraya river basin. And Dong Raek range lies between them and the low land bordering Tonle Sap and Middle Mekong. There is a trace of a connection through the Mekong Valley as well as the Chao Phraya region which passes through the Pa Sak valley in further south via Nakhon Ratchasima province. Indeed, the evidence of the social development in this plateau had appeared even before the time of Indian impacts, probably two or three millennia before the exchange of any trade items. By this time, 500 B.C.-500 A.D., it is accepted that local social organization had started as centralized chiefdoms concentrated along the broader back swamp rice-lands of the Mun and Chi river systems (Higham 1989: 280).
There are some related sources of information which elucidate the development of early chiefdoms to statehood. There are a few Chinese records and corpus of inscriptions which may be useful. Generally, there has been some archaeological research in this area and the artifacts have been classified in art history aspect. At last, the local folklore has given the glimpse of local chiefdoms and their beliefs.

The evidence of early political impact from Mekong valley, Chenla dynasty, had occurred in between 550-610 A.D. as seen through the various inscriptions erected by the order of King Mahendravarman or the formerly known prince Chitrasena. The corpus of inscriptions record military troop which was successfully done over this region and as a consequence of the grand victory, the King who was a great devotee of Siva had ordered to establish Linga and Nandi bull as a memento of his grace. This group of inscriptions is found scattered along the Mun river basin. The earliest was erected at Tham Phet Thong (cave), during the reign of Bhavavaran, and commemorates a victory. According to Coedes (1958), it is hard to imagine this overlord being active in military sense so far from his base in Cambodia. In addition, the information from epigraphical sources have revived the emergence of Saivism in this region, the Tham Prasat cave has also preserved the Sanskrit inscription and the base of the stone statue was supposed to be Nandi bull as it had been referred to in the inscription. The duration of Khmer political influence over the Mun basin communities might not have been for long time. It could have been occupied only during the expedition of King Mahendravarman’s reign.

Besides being dominated by the Chenla from Cambodia, brief information about the local chiefdoms present in this Northeastern plateau at around the early of 8th century A.D. have also been found. There is a group of Sanskrit and Khmer inscriptions discovered from Muang Sema, a protohistoric site in the Khorat plateau, which mentions about the Sri Canasasa Kingdom. Although the epigraphical source has provided an important information of Kings and their royal activities such as the donation of buffalos, cattle and labors (slaves) of both sexes to Buddhist monastic communities for the great merit of the overlord of Sri Canasa. Another inscription found at Hin Khon, south of Nakon Ratchasima, overlords Nripendradhipativarman founded the Buddhist temple during 8th century A.D. He donated rice-fields, 10 pairs of cattles, gold and silver utensils, an elephant and plantation of 20 areca trees.

Finally the last inscription, relocated from an unknown place, is found at Ayutthaya and erected in 937 A.D by Mangalavarman who succeeded the royal lineage of Sri Canasa. This inscription is also in Sanskrit and Khmer, rather than Mon language that was commonly used in most inscriptions of the central plateau, therefore supports the generations of royal lineage of the local state located in the upper Mun valley as well as the trace of Khmer immigration before the Angkorean period in the late 8th century A.D. (Veerapraserth 2010: 105-123; Ceodes 1944:73-76; 1954: 83-85; 1958: 227).
Although the centre and the territory of Sri Canasa has been in controversy which was either Sri Tep or Muang Sima (Nakon Ratchasima province: Northern Mun valley), however on the basis of archaeological evidence and religious iconography, it can be assumed that the religious tradition narrated in the inscriptions of Sri Canasa was influenced by Mahayana Buddhism till 8th century A.D. but gradually changed to Saivism. Possibly, Muang Sema was the capital of Sri Canasa because a sequence of religious practices can be observed from the number of sculptures and architectural remains.

The references of early state in the Northeastern plateau can also be found in the Chinese literature dated around the late 8th century A.D. Jia Dan had given information of land route from the coast of Vietnam over the Truong Son mountains to the Gulf of Siam. This land road could hardly avoid Khorat plateau in the northeastern part of Thailand. The itinerary describes how it took 16 days to reach the inner capital state called “Wendan” (Pelliot 1904; Smith 1979). This state is recorded as having sent tribute mission to Chinese court in 753-4, 771, and 779. Although the information translated from Chinese account is not enough to connect Wendan state with Sri Canasa, there is an attempt to mention on the emergence of the early state in the Korat plateau which had enough well-built political power to send official contact to China.

The presence of large settlements behind moats and ramparts in the Khorat plateau has been known at least since early years of this century (Lunet de Lajonquièr: 1902). The Character of town planning with oval or round moat reminds us the Dvaravati influence from Chao Phraya valley. There are several sites which revived strong impact from Dvaravati culture like Muang Phet, Thamen Chai and Muang Fa Daet as seen through the numbers of Buddhist sculptures, potteries, and sema (scared boundary markers). Especially at Muang Fa Daet sites, the large area (17 ha.) has shown an evidence of brick stupa remains and an extensive quantity of sema depicting the life story of Buddha as well as Jatakas. It is able to suggest about the importance of Muang Sema as religious centre like Dong Srimaha Pot at the eastern part of Central basin and Isanapura of Chenlā state.

Some glimpse of Kingship appeared in this plateau as observed in the local folklore (Saidenfaden 1954; Keyes 1974). The stories narrate on the legends of rulers and their Chiefdom where the place was always located or connected with ancient towns like Muang Fa Daet. Sometimes the local myths also implied the social organization, royal hierarchy and folk beliefs that are related to either ancestor cult or religious practice.

Finally, as well as Chao Phraya Dvaravati settlements, these early states gradually accepted the strength of Khmer and attained to be a part of Angkorean Kingdom during its glorious period which began in the 9th -10th century A.D.
The Champa Kingdom of Central and Southern Vietnam: from 2\textsuperscript{nd} century -13\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.

While the Northern Vietnam region with Bac Bo as its centre had been intensively influenced and politically occupied by Chinese overlord from very early of Christian era. At the central and southern there was the place of early statehood that their culture was different from the neighboring area in almost every ways. The emergence of Champa or Lin-yi (Chinese official name) Kingdom is restricted in time to the period corresponding to the growth of early states of Funan and Chenla dynasties in Cambodia up to the foundation of Angkor. Epigraphical and documentary sources reveal that the coastal plains in the south of the Red and Ma rivers were the developed centralized state like the one in Cambodia. Although Champa Kingdom had been involving military and sustaining tributary with Chinese court, the country accepted the religious and political forms of India that expressed Hindu religion, especially Saivism, and the Sanskrit language. From the beginning of the Christian era, there are brief allusions in the surviving inscriptions to the construction of temple dedicated to Siva, but according to archaeological evidences, sanctuary construction and the materials could be dated quite later, approximately to the late 6\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. During the formative phase, the political condition of Champa had entered into a diplomatic relation with Chenla and China (Hun and Northern Viet state) in both military revelry and royal marriage alliance. Interestingly, examining from Chinese records, the Champa was one of the mighty states which had not only efficient military power and well trained armies, but also they amassed much of their wealth into the religious activity as seen through the form of embellished Saivism cult sacred symbol, the royal linga.

Lin-yi was the first Centre of Cham country which emerged in history at the end of the second century (Coedes 1968: 42). There are some Chinese texts which mentions the location of Lin-yi as “…touches Funan in the South. Their tribes are numerous; their friendly bands render mutual aid; taking advantage of the ruggedness of their region, they do not submit to China…” (Pelliot 1903: 255). The emergence of Lin-yi state first found its mention in the Chinese record at around 192 A.D. when a local official named Chu Lien had taken profits from the political weakness of the Han to carve a domain for his state at the expense of the Chinese boundary of Jihnan and established himself as the King. At first it was thought that the Lin-yi, “the capital Lin”, an abbreviation of Hsiang –lin-yi as “the capital of Hsiang-lin” (Maspero 1928: 27) but another meaning was found which related it to an ethnic tribal name (Coedes 1968: 43).
Although the trace of the dynastic legend of the royal ancestors of Chams is not well mentioned in the ephigraphical source, but only in an inscription of the 9th century, there appeared the name of Maharishi Bhrigu (personage of Mahabharata) eponymous ancestor of the dynasty of the Bhagavas, from which, the King of Champa claimed their descent. As for the name of Champa itself, whence is derived the name of the Chams, since it does not appear in epigraphy till the beginning of the seventh century, it may be much older.

After the reign of King Chu Lien, the royal descendants of Champa started sending the official ambassadors to the Chinese courts after the fall of Hun dynasty for the benefit of trade connection along with political supports.

The Champa or Lin-yi state had been governed by Kings who are identified by Chinese or local names such as Fan Yi or Fan Wen till the early of 4th century A.D. Then the first King with honorific title in Sanskrit name as “Bhadravarman” had appeared in the inscription which was found at Quang-nam and Phu-yen. (Finot 1902:181-195; Majumdar 1927; Chhabra 1935: 50). According to Finot (1902: 186), the date of this inscription should be 400 A.D. though there are some suggestions which state that they are supposed to be written several decades earlier (Vogel 1918: 232).

The King Bhadravarman was the grand devotee of Saivism and being the founder of the first sanctuary monument, dedicated it to Siva in the name of Bhadresvara at Mi-Son, Champa religious centre. Furthermore, the inscriptions of Bhadravarman are the first documents related to the religion of Champa court. They reveal the dominance of Saiva cult, Siva and Pravati represented in the royal Linga establishment which is considered to be the oldest known outside India (Coedes 1968: 49).

The Chinese account written by Ma Tuan Lin (Marquis d’ Harvey 1983: 422-425) regarding the Champa Kingdom, cities and people, has given an information of the country culture and their common practices which intensively followed Indian tradition. Thus, it can be assumed that, the Champa state, though it was located very closed to the Chinese boundary, the Indian religion and tradition had been influencing the local people more which was remarkable in the northern state dominated by Chinese rulers.

There were also several attempts by the Champa King to become politically independent from the Chinese court by stopping temporarily the annual tribute. During the reign of Sambhuvarman (595-629 A.D.), the Chinese military had invaded Champa Kingdom as they neglected the payment tribute. This invasion caused serious damages to the capital and the royal treasury. After Chinese army withdrew, the King had to reunite his country and be loyally obliged to the Emperor. According to this incident, the Champa king officially sent at least three times the groups of ambassadors along with royal tribute in 623, 625 and 628.
Interestingly, from the time of Sambhuvarman’s reign to his royal successors for more than centuries, the Kingdom of Champa had officially tried to maintain a good relationship with Chenla by both marriage alliance between royal courts and receiving an official minister from Cambodia for administrative work. Besides Royal matrimonial alliances, there was an evidence of marriage between princess and Brahmanas practiced in Cham royal court. For instance, the King of Champa, Bhadresvaravarman, who was the son of the Brahman Satyakausikasvamin and Cham princess. Unfortunately, his reign was very short but it could be dated to be in between 645-652 AD. (Coedes 1968: 71).

After the reign of Sambhuvarman, the Champa Kings were making peaceful relationship with China as well as Cambodia. Therefore, this period is the golden age of Cham art as seen through the magnificent temple, their sanctuaries at Mi-Son and Tra Kieu and including various places in Quangnam district. Many of these monuments have shown the existence of Visanavism in Champa along with the glorious light of Saivism (Pelliot 1904: 296).

The middle of the 8th century, which was notable because of the advent of the Sailendras (ancient Indonesian Kingdom) in the southern seas, was also a critical era for Champa. During the reign of King Indravarman, the Java raid appeared along the coastal region and caused high damages to the capital. Soon after the Javanese army had left, the King was able to reconstruct the city and Saivite sanctuary at Bhadradhipatisvara which got destroyed by the Javanese invasion. In case of religious aspects, especially Saivism, the tradition of using posthumous names was introduced. These indicated the divine presence of the King after his death and the God with whom the deceased King’s soul was united. Interestingly, this ritual also had been commonly practiced in ancient Cambodian court.

In the beginning of the 9th century A.D., the Champa capital had been well established at Po Nagar in the Southern region. There was warfare between Champa and ancient Cambodian Kingdom in the Angkorean period due to the demand of fertile areas for expanding agriculture and maritime trade benefits. In the north, the independent state of Dai Co Viet, had emerged and frequently attacked the territory of Champa in the northern part in order to expand their political power over the coastal area. Thus in the early 10th century A.D., the King of Champa had to established the new capital city in the North, Indrapura, for protecting the northern area from Viet invasion and avoid political interference with Cambodian Kingdom. Although the warfare and political chaos had caused serious devastation between the states located along the Mekong region especially ancient Cambodian and Champa, there are remarkable traces of cultural influence as seen through their art and architecture which were created during this period and few centuries later which reflected each distinct school of characters adapted into their own style. Finally, towards the end of the 13th century,
the long history of the Champa Kingdom had reached an end due to the frequent warfare with the Viets for centuries, the heavy invasion at Cham last capital at Vijayapura caused much serious devastation and left very few of the survival Chams that presently settled in the Southern peninsular of Vietnam.

**The early states of Malaysian Peninsular and Indonesia:** (around 1st century –the end of 7th century A.D.)

The Malaysian peninsular had been an important habitation area from the time of pre historic period due to its rich natural resources that provided the essential subsistence for the early settlement. This region started from the Isthmus of Kra went downward along the Strait of Malacca passing throught the Malay Peninsula into Sumatra region. The Malay Peninsula was well known as a trade centre connecting the demands of the Eastern and the Western countries. With the benefit from the maritime trade route, small states were found to have grown up along the peninsula and Sumatra region during the early Christian era. The Chinese texts, *Tai Ping Yu Lan* or History of the Liang dynasty, mentioned about important states located in the southern sea such as “Lang-ya-hsiu (Langkasuka)”, “Pan Pan” and “Tun Sun”. Remarkably, the Chinese sources of 3rd-6th century A.D. with special reference to the states in Malaysian peninsular, normally indicate a populous settlement of Indians in each state and a close relationship with India which more familiar with India than other cases in mainland Southeast Asia or Indonesian (Java) country (Wales 1976 : 22). In case of Tun Sun, the History of Liang dynasty mentions that “…In this country there are five hundred family of “hu” (Indian merchant) and thousands of Brahmanas whom the local people practice their doctrine and give their daughters in marriage. Thus, the Brahmanas will not go away. And this priest they do nothing but study scared texts, taking bath with scent and flowers and practice magic by days and nights…” (Wales 1976: 22). The same text has also given information about some important local ritual like death funeral which was practiced in several ways. According to the literary sources, next to Tun Sun was Pan Pan located at the Bay of Ban Don, southeastern coast of Thailand, Liang Shu recorded some important events of this state when they had sent several tributes to Chinese court in 5th-6th century A.D. and the glimpse of local history as Kaundinya (Indian Brahmins) had visited this state before getting crowned as the King of Funan in Cambodia (Wheatley 1961: 48). Ma Tuan Lin, Chinese ambassador of 5th century, had quoted about the Buddhist monks and the high positions held by the Indian Brahmanas in this state as “…In the country where Indian Brahmanas come for wealth. They are in high favor with the King…”
Pan Pan Neighbour on the south was Langasuka (Lang-ya-hsiu), probably located in Pattani province, southern part of Thailand (Wales 1976: 24). Chinese record of Liang Dynasty has described the common practices of the state like the nature of people, their cloths and decorations and had identified the social status and the King’s palace and local houses etc. Furthermore, with regard to the work of Ma Tuan Lin, there is an important historical event about the exile of a prince who got more admiration than the King. Because of this problem, the King sent him to an exile from his country. The prince had taken refuge in Indian court and it was quite acceptable for the Indian King to get married with his daughter. Soon after the King of Langasuka had died, the prince came back to his place and became the next King. It is interesting to suggest that during 5th century A.D., the Southern sea state had been in a close relationship with India much enough to take refuge and marry with royal family member.

The existence of the first Sanskrit inscriptions in Sanskrit language, found in Champa Kingdom, dates to the second half of the fourth century. It was almost the same time, or slightly later, in case of Malay Peninsula and Indonesia. There is a group of early inscriptions found scattered in this region. Most of them had been created for religious purposes, Buddhist or Hindu verses. The most important one is the inscription erected by the King Mulavarman found at Kutei in Borneo Island, Indonesia. Significant feature of this inscription is the mention about the King Mulavarman, grandson of a certain Kundunga whose name is perhaps Tamil or Indonesian, but surely not Sanskrit (Chhabra 1935:50). The King is the son of the Aßvavarman who is considered to be the founder of the dynasty. These inscriptions are associated with a sanctuary bearing the name Vaprakeßvara which must be recognized as a Siva or Agastaya or local divinity. The sanctuary is not a funerary monument at all (Poerbatjaraka 1926; Sastri 1936: 515; Krom 1931: 72). Furthermore, there are some Buddha statues and Brahmanical sculptures such as Vishnu, lingas and Ganesh dated around 5th - 6th century scattered along the rivers in this area.

In the Java Island, Indonesia, the evidence of early Kingship also obviously appeared as it was written in the inscription of King Purnavarman at Taruma. The four stone inscriptions discovered in the westernmost part of the island known as Sunda strait. Suggested by the location of these inscriptions, this area might have been the early Indian settlement due to the benefits from maritime trade route. The inscriptions dated around 450 A.D. have narrated about the King Puravarman who had observed Brahmanic rites and was engrossed in irrigation works in his Kingdom. Two of his inscriptions reproduced his foot prints in the form of “Vishnu path”. This tradition implies a symbol of taking procession in a neighbouring region where the inscription was discovered. The Kingdom of Taruma had still existed until 7th century and appears to have sent the official tribute to China in 666-69, during T’ang dynasty (Coedes 1968: 54).
Furthermore, there are also some important chiefdoms mentioned in several Chinese records such as “Yeh-Po-Ti” where Fa Haien, the Chinese monk, had visited after he came back from India, the “She-Po” was the place that Buddhist Kashmiri monk, Gunavarman, had come and preached to the local people at around the end of 5th century. The “Ho Lo Tan” which was governed by the King named Shi-li-pi-cho-yeh, possibly derived from “Sri Vijaya” in Sanskrit. According to the History of the early Sung dynasty (470-478 A.D.), this state had sent ambassadors to China several times between 430 to 452 A.D. The most recent research tends to place these three states on the Malay Peninsula (Coedes 1968: 54). In addition to this aspect, the King whose Sanskrit name as “Sri Vijaya” of “Ho Lo Tan” might have been the King of Sri Vijaya with regard to the customary usage in this region for King to lend their names or titles to their Kingdoms.

Later on at 7th century A.D., some sophisticated Kingdoms were found, mainly three of them, located at Malaysian peninsular, Sumatra and Indonesia. According to the Chinese sources, one of that is the Ma Tuan Lin’s account, he has given information of “Chih-Tu” (red earth country) state at Malaysian peninsular. In this country, the King and people have been following Indian tradition such as wedding, death funeral, administrative function and the architecture style of palace and common houses (Wheatley 1961: 26; Coedes 1968: 78). In addition, he also stated that it was a custom to worship Buddha but the greater respect was paid to the Brahmanas.

Furthermore, in Indonesia and Sumatra region by this time, there were two important states like “Ho Ling” and “Mo-Lo-Yu” located in central Java and Sumatra region (Jambi). The History of T'ang dynasty mentions about their rich natural resources and particularly being the centre of Mahayana Buddhism in this region. Possibly, the “Mo-Lo-Yu” would have been annexed to Sri Vijaya Kingdom in sometime later (Pelliot 1904: 342).

The period of regional Kingdoms (early of 8th century to the late of 14th century A.D.): Sri Vijaya and the Śailendras dynasties of maritime region and Angkorean Kingdom of Cambodia

The development of navigation and intensive maritime trade connection with India and China were the main causes which enriched the primary states of this region to move forward from small independent chiefdoms sustained themselves on merely trade benefits to be involved with the concept of proper “Kingdom” with expanded large territory under the powerful Kingship and administrative function. The influence of Indian culture that had emerged from the beginning of the Christian era got assimilated with the local pattern and gradually reformed their distinct tradition. This kind of social development can been seen in the second urbanization of the Southeast Asian region, especially maritime states, where the domain kingdoms had founded their states as being the most centralized centre surrounded by the chiefdoms who had surrendered themselves to be weaker
in terms of political power. This administrative pattern effectively worked as a network connecting the capital state and the vassal chiefdoms by the link of royal matrimonies, religion and political or trade benefits which the greater one supposed to have provided in exchange of diplomatic loyalty. The foundation of these Kingdoms from the 8th century A.D., (1) **ancient Cambodian Kingdom** (Angkorean period: early of 9th century A.D.), (2) **the Sri Vijaya Kingdom** of Sumatra and Malaya peninsular (early of 8th century A.D.) and (3) **ancient Javanese Kingdom** at greater Indonesian Island and Bali (ṣailendra dynasty of Java and the successive dynasties: the end of 8th century A.D.) are considered as the regional Kingdoms governed by local Kingships with chronological lineage and the flourishing Indianized culture was well refined, especially in religious aspects that has impressively influenced their art. Furthermore, the cultural motivation from these three kingdoms had been the mainstream of aesthetic inspiration for the making of Brahmancial sculptures found in Thailand from 8th-13th century A.D.

The rise of Sri Vijaya at Malay Peninsula and Sumatra and the beginning of Silendra dynasts and the successors of greater Java Island: (the early of 8th –late 14th centuries A.D.)

The foundation of the Śri Vijaya Kingdom was the result of the high benefits gained from the major maritime trade route passing through the Sunda strait and Sumatra region, this in turn increased wealth as well as the political status of the state. Thus, with an advantage of a profitable location, at an early stage Śri Vijaya Kingdom might have established a political centre in this region (Sumatra and Malay Peninsula) in order to dominate this important trade route purposefully before they expanded their territory across the sea to Javanese Island.

There are some important literary and epigraphical sources which mention about the emergence of Śri Vijaya Kingdom and its glorious time in this region. The Chinese account written by I-ching, the Buddhist monk who had travelled from China to India and stopped at Fo-shi or San-li-fo-shi state for studying Sanskrit language, states that if any Chinese monk prefers going to abroad for further study in India, initially they should visit this state to study Sanskrit grammar for few years. This state has more than a thousand monks who do good work with proper diligence, moreover, their rules and ceremonies are identical with those in India (Takakusu 1896; Coedes 1968: 81). The monk also mentioned about the political expansion of “San-li-fo-shih” which had already annexed “Mo-lo-yu” state as a part of the Kingdom in the year 695 A.D. possibly, the “San-li-fo-shih” Kingdom in Chinese translation would have been derived from Sanskrit name of “Śri Vijaya”.

The epigraphical evidences also confirm the expansion of the political power of the Śri Vijaya. Most of the inscriptions were found in the Palembang area and the rest were scattered over Sumatra region. Though the name, Śri Vijaya, had appeared in three inscriptions, the others carry
similar paleographical characteristics which date to the 7th century A.D. (Suleiman 1980: 3). One of the oldest inscriptions written in old Malay language and South Indian scripts engraved on the stone at Kudan Bukit: Palembang has mentioned that the King began an expedition (siddhayatra) by boat in the year 682. A month later the King came back and brought the victory, power and wealth to his Kingdom, Śri Vijaya (Ferrand 1932: 271-326; Coedes 1930: 29-80; Suleiman 1980: 3).

This anonymous King is almost certainly the Jayanaśa who found a public park two years later, on March 684 at the west of Palembang. The King had expressed his wish to the merits gained by this deed and all his other charities should redound on all creators and bring them closer to enlightenment. The inscription found at Bangka, near Java Island, mentions about the King’s expenditure against the subdued land of Java in 686. Possibly the place might have referred to Taruma which would be the centre of Sumatran influence on the Java island. This suggestion is evidenced from the inscription of the following century found at Kedu region, Java Island.

The Śailendras and successive dynasties in Java: (end of 8th A.D. late of 14th centuries A.D.)

After the discovery of the Purnavarman inscription at Kutei, no more inscriptions are there which follows the continuity or mentions the chronology of the ancient Javanese dynasty before 732 AD (Chhabra 1935: 43). The first glance of Javanese Sailendra King has been found in the Sanskrit inscription at Changal Saivite sanctuary, located in the southeast of Borobudur. According to Coedes (1968:88), the King who was clearly mentioned in this source had a Sanskritized name - known as “Sanjaya” and he had erected linga in Kunjarakunja possibly located in the Malay Peninsula. Furthermore, it might be suggested that his origin might be traced back to the Sri Vijaya royal family from Palembang and became the King of Java region, vassal state of Sri vijaya Kingdom. In addition to this aspect, interestingly, the place name “Kunjarakunja” found in this inscription has given a glimpse of cultural relationship with the Pandyas in South India. Kunjarakunja is indeed located near the frontier between Travancore and Tinnevelly. On this exact spot the temple of Agastaya sage has been found (Stutterheim 1939: 73-84). His successor was the King Panankaran, the founder of Śailendra dynasty of Java.

The name “Śailendra” has its meaning as the King of mountain. Perhaps, it is an equivalent of Siva (Giriśa) and reflected Indian adaptation of Indonesian beliefs which place the residence of God in the mountains. Furthermore, this concept might have been introduced by Indian migrations, possibly related to the Sailodbhava King of Kalinga (Majumdar 1927: 225-227). But a serious objection has been discussed on this theory (Sastri 1935: 610). There is another suggestion regarding the origin of “Sailendra” as it might have been related to the Funans from Mekong delta that were zealous adherents of the linga “Girisa” and set themselves up as universal sovereigns (Coedes 1934:
66-70). This theory is supported by the epigraphical study of de Casparis (1950: 184-185) who noticed that the last capital of the Funans in the Southern Peninsular was “Naravarnagar” with the variant Varanara in an inscription of the 9th century. This inscription mentions that the Varanara country was ruled by the Sailendra King of Java. All in all, it can be said that the appearance of the Sailendra dynasty in Southern island with their imperial title as “Maharaja” was an international event of major importance (Majumdar 1927: 159; Briggs 1950: 76-89).

Very little is known about the political history of the Sri Vijaya but mostly they are considered to have dominated the large area of maritime region at Sumatra, Malay peninsula and western Java Island for another five hundred years under the name of Sailendra dynasty. During the 8th to 9th century, which is known as the golden age of Mahayana Buddhism in Java, the Kings of Sailendras dynasty in central Java had strongly devoted themselves to this sect as can be seen through the plenty of splendid stone monuments in this region dedicated Bodhisattvas and Tara such as Chandi Kalasan, Chandi Sari and the group of monuments at Chandi Sewu. The most important one is the great construction of Borobudur as the dynastic temple of Sailendras (Coedes 1968: 89-90; Miksic 2004: 242). The rapid development of Mahayana Buddhism in these centuries has also been found besides the number of monuments. There are some inscriptions erected in the reign of the King Sangramadhananjaya mentioning his intensive devotion to Mahayanism as instructed by his Indian moral teacher, Kumaraghosa, who came from Gaudi (West Bengal). The King had established the temples of Bodhisattva Manjusri, a symbol of Tri ratna (Buddhist three jewels), Brahmanical Tri murti and all Gods (Coedes 1968: 89). Thus, during this period, the north Indian script was used in the inscription found at Kalasan and Kerulak which apparently reflected the influence of the Western Bengal, possibly the Pala style (Bosch 1928:26).

During 778-832 A.D., the Šailendras of Java had successfully displaced the descendant of the King Sanjaya, the Sri Vijaya of Sumatra line. Possibly, when the new dynasty took interest in the esoteric Buddhism and had established the main capital at central Java region, the Hindu royal members particularly for those belonged to Sumatra lineage had gradually migrated to the eastern region of Java Island, Bantras valley, and settled their political power as local chieftain state in that area. The oldest inscription of eastern Java dating to 760 A.D. mention the construction of the sanctuary of Agastaya and royal linga named “Putikesvara” by royal members (Coedes 1968: 90). It seemed that the cult of loyal linga had been broadly practiced over Southeast Asian states as well as furnished in Cambodian and Champa.
The advent of the Śailendras which is marked by the development of Mahayana Buddhism in the field of international affairs, also attempted to expand their political power over mainland Southeast Asian states at Chenla (Cambodia) and Champa in the late of 8th century. Although the expansion of the political power of the Śailendras was not in long term succession, the Śailendras of central Java had occupied the majority of maritime region and made Sri vijaya Kingdom to be a vassal state (Coedes 1934: 65). The relation between the Śailendras of Java and Sri Vijaya was good as it was connected by royal matrimonial alliance, despite few military invasions from both sides.

Around the beginning of the 9th century, Śailendra dynasty of central Java faced a political problem within the state caused by the rebellion from a royal member who was the descendant of Sri Vijaya family. According to the inscription found in Nalanda (Bihar), prince Balaputra, rebel of Śailendras, was ruling independently in Sri Vijaya Kingdom (Miksic 2004: 244; Coedes 1968: 65-66). This incident had shown the weakness of the Śailendra power which gradually declined from the middle of the 9th century, and gave way to the political centre of a Hindu dynasty in the eastern plateau.

At the beginning of 10th century the center of political power was changed to eastern Java as the evidence from royal charter was discontinued in Central Java from 900 A.D. and appeared after wards in Brantas valley. There are some reasons regarding to the capital relocation, at first, it might happen because of avoiding military attacks from the Sri vijayan Kingdom. Second one is probably due to the economic purpose. The east Javanese harbors was closed to the natural sources that accessibly provided several forest items especially spices which had been highly on demand in oversea trade. And the last reason is believed to be the volcanic eruption that might have destroyed the capital (Suleiman 1980: 5).

While the Śailendras Kings were Mahayana Buddhists, the new dynasty apparently patronized Hinduism, particularly Saivism, as evident from the construction of the greatest Hindu temple complex at Prambanan, Candi Loro Jonggrang in 856 A.D. This complex sanctuary is dedicated to Siva and Tri murti. Although Saivism was of great interest among royal members, the Mahayana Buddhism also got attention from the Hindu Kings as well. Thus, the Buddhism and Hinduism had started forming in syncretic union from this period onward.

During this century, besides the glorious religious culture, the overseas trade activities too reached its peak as can be seen through the Chinese literary sources of (Tsang) Sung dynasty and South Indian inscriptions erected by the guilds regarding their trade activities. At around late 10th century, Sri Vijaya and Javanese Kingdoms had been fighting several wars to dominate over the maritime trade route as the most important one doing so. Indeed, the high benefits of spice-trade with
China attracted the interests of the Cholas and finally sent a military expedition and invaded the capital of Sri vijaya and Malayu trade centres (Suleiman 1980: 8). But the Chola military invasion did not last longer than few years. Therefore, this century was supposed to be the time of diplomatic relations among the rulers of Chola, Sri vijaya, Java and China.

The Sri Vijaya Kingdom in Sumatra had gradually declined in the 12th century when Chinese shipping was interested in western Asia which caused a huge fall in the importance of Malay Peninsula, and with the leverage of Malay rulers upon the flow of commerce. In Java, the country flourished during the reign of King Ailanga of eastern Javanese dynasty (1019-1049 A.D.), the political power and Javanese Brahmanical culture had expanded over the maritime regions, including Bali Island, by military troop and royal matrimonial alliance. After the reign of Ailanga, from 12th century onwards, the great Java region started to be governed by the later dynasties like Kediri for a century, Singhasari towards the end of the 13th century and finally the last Hindu Kingdom of Majapahit. During this time, Sri Vijaya had still occupied most of the part of the Malay Peninsula, though for sometime it had been a vassal state of Majapahit, and challenged new regional powers like the Thais Kingdoms in the 13th-14th century. The Indianized period ended with the advent of Islamic impact as it rapidly spread over maritime region and also caused the downfall of Majapahit dynasty in Java. Finally, in the late 14th century, Islam had successfully occupied the southern sea states, except the Bali Island where the house of the royal members from the Majapahit lineage was present.

The foundation of Angkorean Kingdom of ancient Cambodia

After the fall of Chenla state in the middle of 8th century that lead to a political instability over Mekong delta for almost a century, the Javanese invasion also caused serious damage to Khmer capital and had captured Chenla royal members, one of whom in the later centuries came to be known as King Jayavarman II, the founder of Angkorean period in Cambodian history.

The Angkorean period had risen in the beginning of 9th century (802 A.D.), when King Jayavarman II had returned from Java and later on established the royal linga at Mahendraparvata Mountain for his Kingdom after he had defeated the local chiefdoms that strengthened his political power. The ceremony was believed to be conducted by Hiranyadama Brahmana from India in order to perform Tantric rites for the independent of the Kambujadesa, the unity of Khmer Kingdom. The rite of “Royal linga” establishment is literary known as Devaraja cult which henceforth became the State religion. Hiranyadama had also introduced the royal priest Śivakaivalya and authorized him to conduct this royal cult and, thus, the King of Kambuja had to invite the Brahmanas from only this family (Majumdar 1963: 190).
Jayavarman II is believed to have died in 850 A.D. and been succeeded by Jayavarman III (851-877) and Indravarman (877-889). During this time, there were three capitals of Khmer Kingdoms at Indrapura, Hariharalaya and Amrendrapura before the time of permanent political centre at Yashodharapura. Remarkably, King Yasovarman I, the first king who established the magnificent capital at Angkor or Yashodharapura (Kambupuri) within his reign, is well known as a great builder. He had ordered to construct Hindu temple sanctuaries as well as one hundred monasteries throughout the realm, each apparently serving as a royal outpost in the locality where it was located. These monasteries were for monks who variously worshipped the three chief deities as Siva, Vishnu and Buddha. All three cults were in favor of the Royal power and patronized by the Kings.

There are few observations about the economic, social and political organization of the Angkorean polity. It seemed that the economy depended on the rice cultivation and the temples were prominent custodians of property and peasants. The royal authority expressed through a relatively well-developed hierarchy that included priests and religious sections. The high status of centralized control approached by the Kings over temples, agricultural fields, and available labors can only be conjectured, but it was sufficient to realize magnificent buildings and public projects and, periodically, to sustain long distance military expedition. According to the Khmer history during Angkorean period, it would be able to assume that whatever the mechanism of hierarchical control available to the Kings, orderly condition and glorious demands were the result of their personal abilities than of an institutionalize command system.

After Yashovarman’s reign, it was a brief period of his sons and, then at around 920 A.D. Jayavarman VI had established himself as a King at Koh Ker, northeast of Angkor area. In the years 940, Rajendravarman who claimed to be the nephew of both Yashovarman and Jayavarman IV, had gained ascention and resided at Yashodharapura where he is credited for building some splendid monuments. Moreover, the King had strong aspiration to become a great conqueror, consequently he lead a military invasion into the capital of Champa. Later on at around 968 A.D., King Jayavarman V had succeeded the throne of his father and governed the country peacefully up to 1001 A.D. During the reigns of Rajendravarman and Jayavarman V, according to the epigraphical sources, there were groups of noble families who upgraded themselves by marrying previous Kings to establish a close relationship with the central authority. After the reign of Jayavarman V, warfare followed for the succession among the royal members and finally the defeater of all chiefs was Suryavarman I.

In 1080, the royal lineage was claimed by a family who was thought to have been settled in northern Cambodia, also known as Mahidharapura. After the reign of Suryavarman I, the
descendants belonged to southern Cambodia for over thirty years. In 1113, Suryavarman II was known as a royal member from northern region family and defeated two Kings, one of whom was his uncle, and then claimed his right to the throne.

The Suryavarman II is considered to be a great conqueror. For decades the Khmer royal member had dominated northern Champa capital at Vijayapura. The King also attempted to expand Khmer political power to Dai Viet (northern Vietnam) territory, despite of the occupation of the northern Champa capital and its military which gained an advantage for the combined troops to Dai Viet country, the series of invasion from Cambodia was still unsuccessful. By this time, after Vijayapura was being governed by Khmer prince, the Chams forcefully migrated to far southern region and re-established their new capital at Pandhuranga. Lopburi and northeastern plateau of Thailand and south of Laos, during this time, seemed to be vassal states of Angkorean Kingdom as seen through the numbers of inscriptions and architectural remains. Moreover, Suryavarman II also undertook military troop over Mon polity in the northern region of Thailand, but it again failed.

Suryavarman II was a great patron of Vaisnavism as seen through the number of splendid monuments among which the best known one is Angkor Wat. This glorious sanctuary was used as the King’s personal funerary temple and the royal tradition states that when the King had left this world he got united with his God. Along with this, Suryavarman II had got his honorific title “Parama Vishnuloka” after his death. It can be suggested that there was an extensive movement of Vaisnavism in the Southeast Asian countries along the same time when Vishnu cult was being permanently practiced in India and Indonesia. This coincidence might have successfully flourished as a result of an interest in intellectual and religious trend in Sanskrit and also due to the continuance of the transformation of the cultural process. Furthermore, Suryavarman II had conducted a good diplomatic relationship with Sung Dynasty of China that led to more intensive trade connection. At last, Suryavarman II disappeared from the epigraphical sources after 1150 and left the county to suffer from internal chaos and Cham invasions for thirty years.

Suryavarman II’s immediate successors are undistinguished. The internal political affairs had weakened the Kambuja country and even the invasions from neighbouring country had caused serious damages to the capital. During this difficult time of Cambodian Kingdom, in the wake of this event, Jayavarman VII had stepped forward to lead resistance to the invaders. In 1180s, he completed the expulsion of the Chams and established his authority at the Khmer capital. In 1190s, he began to send expeditions to Champa with an eventual success. Champa had been the vassal state of Khmer Kingdom for almost twenty years in the early 13th century. At the same the King also sent his armies to the north and west where evidence of his authority could be found as far as the present day of northern Laos.
In addition to his conquests, *Jayavarman* VII is known for many impressive monuments constructed during his reign, including his ancestral temples and the *Bayon* temple which was a great Mahayana temple in the centre of Angkor Thom walled enclosure designed at that time. Possibly, instead of royal *linga* establishment like his ancestors, he had considered himself as *Bodhisattava* in Mahayana Buddhism and ordered to construct the Bayon temple catering to his personal concept. Moreover, Jayavarman VII was also responsible for the construction of roads, 121 rest houses and 102 hospitals throughout *Khmer* Kingdom.

Similar to *Suryavarman* II, the achievement of Khmer Empire was mostly happened as the result of King’s personal ability rather than his organizing achievements. Remarkably, the King Jayavarman was considered to be the last important King of Cambodian history. The manner in which his reign had come to an end is still unknown, possibly dated around 1220 when the Chams started invaded Cambodian territory again.

After the fall of *Angkorean* period in the end of 13th century A.D., it was so as Mahayana Buddhism in Cambodia. There was brief light of Saivism, but by the end of this century, Theravada Buddhism had spread widely among the Khmers, giving way to the post Angkorean period in Cambodian history. Precisely, from this time onward, it was supposed to be the end of classical period of *Angkorean* culture as its change is seen through the archaeological evidences. The construction of stone monuments rapidly ended and Sanskrit ceased to be used as official or religious language after it had been replaced by Pali scripters. In religious aspects, the Brahmanical ritual gradually lost the importance when Theravada Buddhism had widely influenced the people. Finally, at the end of the 13th century A.D., Thai military troop pressure posed serious problems and continuously the Angkor capital faced difficulties to be defended over the Ayuthaya Kingdom from Thailand. Consequently, after being a vassal state of the Thais Kingdom for century, the Khmers abandoned *Angkorean* area and moved southward to *Sri Santhor* and *Panom Penh*, present day capital city, with greater access to the maritime trade routes that were being invigorated at that time in response to newer commercial initiatives from China.

**The expansion of Khmer political power in the Northeastern region of Thailand from pre Angkorean period to the end of 13th century A.D.: Epigraphic reference**

The glory of Khmer culture could obviously be seen through their monument and inscriptions that were extensively found from the capital to their far reaching political domains, especially in northeastern plateau of Thailand. These cultural heritages, besides reflecting the development and experty of their fine art and religious cults, they indirectly implied the diplomatic relationships between chiefdoms or districts in particular and the capital of *Angkorean* Kingdom.
Initially, the early impact of Khmer polity is clearly mentioned in the group of inscriptions erected on the order of King Bhavavarman and Prince Citrasena or later known as “Mahendravarman” of Chenla. These inscriptions have been written, as prince Citrasena who became the king with honorific name “Mahendravarman” had ordered to establish the royal linga, the Nandi bull along with the inscription as the symbol of his grand victory over this region. The inscription of Sri Bhavavarman is discovered at Si Thep which mentions briefly on the royal lineage of King Bhavavarman. Besides the epigraphical evidence, at Ta Phrya district of the eastern region, King Mahendravarman had also given an order to excavate water resource named as “Sankara Tathaka” (Siva tank) and the inscription. There are some important inscriptions of other Chenla and early Angkorean Kings scattered in the northeastern and eastern regions mostly in the borders closed to Cambodia such as the inscription of Iśanvarman, Indravarman I (877-889 A.D.) and Yashovarman (889-910 A.D.) These inscriptions not only throw light on the polity of the kingdom, but also give information regarding the King’s individual religious practice. For instance, the inscription of Indravarman I has stated that the king strongly believed in Buddhism as he had done grand donation to monastery expecting the merit of nirvana.

There are some inscriptions found in Cambodia which mentions about the vast territory of Kambujadeśa such as inscription at Loloi temple (893 A.D.) has exaggeratedly remarked on the large boundary spreading up to Chinese territory. Inscription at Baksei Chamkrong sanctuary has also provided valuable detail such as the King Yashovarman I had given the land to his successor, the boundary was next to Ramanadesa (Mon of Southern Burmese), the ocean gulf, China and Champa Kingdom. According to this source, it might be suggested that Yashovarman I had expanded his political power over the majority of present day Thailand territory. Moreover, the inscription of Jayavarman IV found at southern Chao Phraya region has officially mentioned about the royal order of Parama Sivapada (Jayavarman IV) and his grand donation including the slaves.

During the reign of Rajendravarman, there are some inscriptions erected in the northeastern and eastern regions of the country, the first one was written in Khmer language and was an important part of the royal order for construction of religious monuments in this area. The second inscription found at Panom rung (3) sanctuary mentioned about the tenure of King Rajendravarman’s reign according to the Maha Saka era dating.

Towards the end of the 10th century, it was the reign of King Jayavarman V, there are some interesting inscriptions regarding his religious activities such as the inscription at Muang Sema site and Oub Mung district located at the Mun river valley exhibits that he had donated land grants along with the monastery (Aśrama), luxurious gifts and slaves to the God, possibly Siva.
For the century later, there are number of Khmer inscriptions erected during the reign of Suryavarman I, some of the important inscriptions like the inscription found at Lopburi has yielded some important political event such as the King’s great victory over this region. In religious aspect, the King also supported Brahmanical and Buddhist (Mahayana) activities and provided protection to their monasteries. At Vimaya pura (Pimai sanctuary), there is an inscription referred to Suryavarman I as Sri Sauryavarman and the faithful priest Muni Radashma. The later detail recorded the much revered grant for Buddha by the King. Thus, it suggests that the King’s personal religion was Buddhism, though he had paid high respect to Saivism which is evident from the grand construction of Sri Sikharesvara sanctuary at the top of mountain that lied between Thailand and Cambodian boundaries. In the time of Udaydithaya II, there is a worthy Khmer inscription known as inscription at Sdok Kok Thom temple dated to 1052 A.D. This inscription has recorded the chronology of the Khmer dynasty and Devaraja cults along with royal ceremonies that gives light on the political history and religious culture.

Other remarkable inscriptions related to royal religious patronage is the royal inscription erected at Phanom Wan temple dated to 1082 A.D. during the time of Jayavarman VI who had given an order to his ministers and priests for daily maintaining routine this Saivite temple. This kind of character can also be seen in an inscription on the door frame at Vimayapura (Pimai sanctuary) regarding the honorific name of Buddha statue which has been installed in the inner hall as “Kamarateng jagata Vimaya” and the royal grant including slaves that was given to the temple during the ceremonies.

In case of the Mun valley which might have been the original place of “Mahidrapura” family, there are some notable inscriptions regarding the chronological reference of King Suryavarman II and his royal relatives. At Phanom Rung sanctuary, the inscription narrated that the royal family members of Mahidrapura and Nareindrithaya the relative of Suryavarman II who had left his luxurious life in the capital (the Angkor) and became Pasupati priest at this temple. Moreover, The inscription at Panom Rung (I) mentions the royal order of Suryavarman II to establish Siva linga, the statues of Mahisasurmadhini, Vishnu, Sankara narayana, Sri guru and Bhagavati Sri from 1132 - 1139 A.D. including slaves for this temple.

According to the Chinese literary evidences, after the reign of Suryavarman II, the local chiefdoms located in present day Thailand territory were trying to be independent from Khmer political power by sending ambassadors to Chinese court under their name for political acceptance and trade connection with China. Finally in the reign of Jayavarman VII, after refreshed his Kingdom from Champa invasion, he had established “the Jayabhudha Mahanath”, the Buddha statue created according to the King’s individual depiction, in 23 viharas throughout his territory.
many names of the cities located in Thailand and, interestingly, the archaeological evidences found in these mentioned cities also coordinated to this suggestion. Furthermore, the royal route constructed upon his order also connected many of the ancient sites along the way that started from Khmer capital to Vimayapura. Along the road, there are the remains of rest houses and temples built during this period which directly approves the expansion of Khmer political power over this region.

The end of the reign of Jayavarman VII is also considered to be the fall of Angkorean political power as the local chiefdoms became independent and they gradually developed to pose a challenge to the Khmer Kingdom. From this time onwards, there were very few Khmer inscriptions found in this region which simply indicated the political decline of Khmer in this area. The Chinese sources of the late 13th century had noticed the rapid growth of Siam or Thai Kingdom and some chiefdom located in Central region of Thailand. Lastly, by the end of 14th century after 600 years of glorious period, the fine Angkorean culture got transferred to the more powerful Kingdom of Ayutthaya at the lower Chao Phraya region.

All in all, according to literary and epigraphical sources related to the cultural expansion of Khmer Kingdom, it can be assumed that the Khmer culture had continuously influenced the northeastern and central regions of Thailand due to these two factors considered as by the political and military troops or religious and trade connection. The attempt to develop state boundary had been commonly seen in Southeast Asian countries as it had always been in peaceful relationship with royal matrimonial alliance or forceful invasions. In case of the process of the Khmer political expansion, the construction of religious monuments along with official inscriptions clearly regard that the royal orders were the symbols of Khmer political acceptance in this particular region. Thus, along with the growth of fluid territory, the religious cultures could not been dispatched as well as it carrying the political identification and gradually got assimilated among the local people.

Similar to the process of “Indianization” in the early Christian era, Khmer culture had spread well broadly over mainland Southeast Asia as well as the prosperous Javanese of maritime region, but slightly with a different approach. Only the initial “Indianization” had developed mostly by trade connection and gradually had an influence in their administrative and religious patterns, while at a secondary stage, the “Khmer” cultural expanded after 8th century successfully as the result of political achievement.
The cultural link between Southeast Asia and India: with special reference to South India:

Administration system: The concept of Kingships and Royal land grants:

The much intensive level of Indianization process of the early Chiefdoms or Kingdoms of this region can be studied through the administrative system and the concepts of Sovereign. From the beginning of the Christian era, it is possible to suggest that the concept of royal lineage in ancient states before 8th century were mostly attached to Indian *epic-puranic* tradition like the dynastic legends of *Funan, Chenla* and *Champa* Kingdom while in the early maritime chiefdoms this mythological lineage can not be noticed clearly like others. Possibly, it was because the early southern sea states had paid much attention to trade benefits with India rather than attempted to expand their boundary. To approach the goal of this process, the leader should have been of great character such as warlords or performing magnetic manners for obtaining much loyalty from his followers, in this case the mythological tradition had been remarkably used as major instrument in order to proclaim their rightful sovereignty. The case of Javanese Śailendras dynasty is different from the neighboring state. Instead of attributing themselves with *puranic* heroes, they did value the royal ancestors as the King of Mountain that equaled to Siva (*Giriśa*) or, in the same way, it might have originated in the folk beliefs of mountain, fertility and ancestor worships which later on gradually got involved with the Indianized concepts of universal mountain (*Sineru* or *Kailash*) then finally been elevated as royal tradition.

Gradually, when the states had increased their boundaries and peoples, more appropriate political and administrative function was required for governing such complicated societies. Thus, the Indian lore at that time which was recognized as the finest ideology had been developed and applied accordingly to this matter. With an advantage of sacred ritual performance, the overlord status inspired by great Indian Kings had emerged and was accepted among their followers. Nevertheless, in return of loyalty, the grand lord was supposed to be a dutiful king who had spent all his ability in maintaining the state. This kind of ideal leader perception could be simply observed in many of the great Indian Kings such as *Ashoka*, *Chandragupta II* and *Harshavardhna* of *Kanauj* etc. Perhaps, the way they had developed their countries had impressed Southeast Asian Kings to do the same as can be seen in the campaign of *Mahendravarman* for *Chenla* in the early of 6th century or King *Purnavarman*’s royal mission at *Taruma* regarding the state’s agricultural welfare. Interestingly, along with their success deities, the religious aspect involving in this process could be noticed, the early trace of Brahmanism in administrative system that later got exagerated and led to the developement of the concept of “God King” or *Devaraja* cult.
The perception of being “God King”, “the King of universal” or even “the great ruler of the world” had been commonly inspired by the great Indian rulers for centuries. Exactly, the status of Kingship had developed from very basic position as “God among men” in Atharvaveda (20: 127;7; Gonda 1966: 24) or to be called as “Demi God” in Rig Veda (4:42;8f; Gonda 1966: 32). Then soon after the literature had been supplied with much concentrated on intensive philosophy which related more to the social life than purely religious perspective, it would have inspired the people regarding each particular aspect, especially in administrative thought. The epics, Mahabharata (3: 185: 26 ff.) has given some light on the political achievement, with regard to this text, the successful King should behave in “God like” (Deva) way such as he is strong like Indra with a sound knowledge and good manner as Sukra, Varuna and Brhaspati. In Manu smriti (7: 4ff.), the king is regarded as being created from eternal and essential particles of Indra along with the seven other great devas (Gonda 1966: 25). Centuries later, Kalidasa in his work Raghuvamsa (2: 75), has stated that the great ruler besides being formed by the essence of lokpalas, he has also got the lordship from Indra incorporated with Vishnu, anger from Hara (Siva) and wealth from Kubera. The divine kingship has been mentioned in several texts and finally the god like’s qualification got limited to Indra (warlord), Vishnu (protector) and Hara Siva (Destroyer and ascetics). Among three of them, Vishnu has been given the most intimated position with Kingship as can be observed through the mythological royals and puranic King such as Rama, Manu (son of Surya) and the Prthu royal legend that Vishnu is believed to manifest himself into the first King. In case of South Indian legend, Siva was noticed involving with Kingship as narrated in the story of Minakshi –sundresvara of Maurai that Pandya King, Sudresvara, was part of Siva who married to the queen Minakshi.

From the legend of “God like” king in the earlier period had come to inspire the kings who attempted to reach the great sovereignty. This incidence can be observed through some of the archaeological evidences like inscriptions or numismatic sources from the beginning of the Christian era, obviously from Gupta period onward. During the early medieval time, the ideal of great King of the kings had started to be appreciated by many rulers and rapidly got incorporated into royal land dominance system. According to this theory, the large territory of the Kingdom meant more wealthy and superior political powers, so the Kings tried to expand their boundaries to far distant land leading to the development of Indian type of feudalism known as “samantas”. For obtaining loyalty from his people and vassal chiefs, the position of king had been evaluated to be “God King” or “representative of God on the earth” with the helps of religious ritual conducted by high class Brahmins. There are examples of great King who committed to this sacred sovereignty as Udayaditya and Rajaraja Chola, during their reigns they had established royal linga named Udayeshvara and Rajarajesvara linga at Tanjavour. Moreover, in the same period, there is also a
reference of creating bronze statues of Siva and Sakti as royal personified images at the great temple of capital (Nagaswami 2003: 174-175).

In northeastern region, the other King is Anangabhima III (1230 A.D.) who announced that Jagannath was the real King (samraj) of Orissa and he (the king) was his son and general governing the country on behalf of the God as well as his successors ruled the Kingdom in the name of Jagannath (Kulke and Rothermund 1988 : 136, 187). In this way, they could use the temple and the staff as instruments of government and punish the disobedient lower kings in the name of God.

Consequently, the theology of “God king” from India definitely made an impression on the Southeast Asian lords, especially Angkorean and Śailendras kings. The linga worship was officially elaborated to Devaraja cult in Khmer and Champa Kingdoms while in maritime region the worship of royal linga and Vishnu pada could be seen from the beginning of the Christian era and reached its zenith in the middle of 9th century under the Eastern Javanese realm. The King Ailanga was the most powerful king in both political and religious activities as he was considered to be a great patron of Vishanavism. At his funeral temple, there is the bronze image of Vishnu and his two Sakti which possibly referred to the King Ailanga and his two queens. The making of personified images related to the supreme Gods or Bodhisattava was obviously found in Majapahit period at Chandi Rambi and Sumberjati. The stone image of Hari-Hara and Parvati was discovered with inscription through which the royal personified image of King Kertarajasa and Tribhuwana Devi (Kinney et al 2000: 219) could be identified. Interestingly, their royal orders or inscriptions narrating important events in the country reflect the God King ideology as main factor in the process of political expansion. In case of great Khmer Kings, they were always obviously compared or equaled to God like Indra or Vishnu for being universal warlord.

The ancient Khmer Kings used to compare themselves to feel encouraged with Vishnu or Prthu in respect to their military qualities and Siva-like qualities in respect to their spiritual abilities in account of the royal heroism (Wolter 1979: 440). When their lives ended, it meant that the duty as God on earth also completed and finally the souls would get united with God as it could be identified from the honorific title of the kings after death. In addition to the literatary source, the building of the magnificent funeral edifices also supports this tradition. Similar to the massive construction of Chola period which was probably used as funeral edifice or for emphasizing ritual sovereignty (Nagaswami 2003: 173-186; Stern 1980: 337), the great sanctuary of Southeast Asia such as Angkor Wat, Bayon temple in Cambodia or Prambanan (Lolo jongrang) of eastern Javanese Kingdom might have been constructed following the impression of a place where the great rulers’s delicate souls would have united with the mighty Gods.
In the field of administrative function, in case of the early Southeast Asian states though there was not much evidence regarding this particular aspect which survived up to these days, the glimpse of governing pattern is noticeable in the epigraphical source and folk mythology. From the beginning of the Chiritian era or as soon as they had been in contact with Indians, the basic Chifdoms got influenced by Indian tradition and gradually developed in their ways. It can also be observed from the growth of kingdoms that when the boundaries had expanded and population increased, it needed systematic administrative pattern for maintaining the state political stability. The concept of royal land grant and vassal chiftdoms (Samantha) had been used for governing over rural districts along with good support from the capital.

The inscription on standing Buddha basement found at Lopburi dated to Dvaravati period (Indrawoooth 1999: 178) has mentioned that “The Nayaka Arushva, the pati of Tangur and son of the King of Samphuka has contributed to the making of this Buddha statue (Muni)”. In fact, the appearance of “Nayaka” and “Pati” in context of the political position can also be found in the Chinese account written by Ma-Thoun-Lin regarding the administrative function at Chi-tu, the southern sea state. Possibly, these political statuses would have been familiar among the Indianized states of early Chritian era. In Gupta administrative function, “pati” had been used as a suffix of the names for the people of great honour or being leader. During the Rashtrakuta period (the late 6th-8th century A.D.), there were political statuses known as “purpatis” and “Nagarapatis”which were meant for the officials in the rank of city level.

In case of Dvaravati political administration, the Sambhuka or Sambhukapathana was mentioned in the Khmer inscription of King Javavarman VI dated to late 11th century A.D. which furnished with its location at Uthong (Indrawoooth 1999: 178). Thus the Nayaka Arushava, pati of Tangur, might have been the royal member from Uthong who might have been sent to Lopburi as a subordinate ruler and patronized religious acitivity.

In addition, there are some obvious examples from Angkorean land grant inscriptions, though they were mainly erected for religious purpose, the royal records have mentioned that the ministries in different hierarchy and their labours (the surrounding villages of temple) who were given the duty of taking care of the sacred property showing the simple unit of administration. It seemed that these ministries had official authority over the land and villagers surrounding area and thus, the temples probably worked as regional economic centres maintained by the royal donation and labour products either from agricultural field or from the works of the slaves.
In this case, it is quite similar to common Indian tradition that was present after the Gupta period and early medieval period especially in South India when the property used to get distributed on behalf of salaries or supports from royal members to officials or Brahmains in the name of religious activities. As a result of this social development, the great royal patronaged temples had contributed in representing the sovereignty, religious devotion and economic centre. From 11^{th}-13^{th} centuries in India, there was a period of magnificent religious temples in various regional kingdoms such as Khajuraho, Rajarajesvara temple at Tanjavour, Udayadesvara temple at Udaipur and the sequence of temples at Orissa (Kulke and Ruthermund 1988: 136-137).

However, there is an interesting point which can be noticed in the system of the royal land grant and gifts including honorable posts distributed to Brahmanical activities. The Brahmanas in ancient Khmer region would have enjoyed benefits from their chift’s superintendent temples that yielded rich revenue, but they did not seem to have been honoured because of the ritual they performed on behalf of the entire society. The inscriptions of the Guptas and Mahabharata always emphasized the high importance of gifts given to the Brahmanas, but very few in Khmer inscriptions. During Gupta, Pallava and early medieval periods, Brahmanas became wealthier and gradually became landowners, but in Cambodia the merits were earned by personal achievement and not by honoring Brahmanas (Wolters 1979: 434-435).

In general, it can be assumed that Indianization had intensively involved into Southeast Asian administrative structures by both theology and political pattern. As for being secondary place of Indianize culture, the local kingdoms had not given much concentrated intention to follow an authentic desciples but they had selected some appropriated points for more complicated social management. The glance of flourishing Indianized culture in Southeast Asian region could also be commonly seen through their religious arts which is much more evident and interesting.

**Arts and cultural perspectives:**

The processes of Indianization in Southeast Asian states proceeded and were formed by different parts of Indian cultures, especially the Guptas and South Indian schools. Although each of them had their own distinct characters, it is quite complicated and difficult to identify any difference between them in Southeast Asian Indianized culture. Nevertheless, there are some salient features reflecting the distinct characters which help us to trace back to their places of origin.
The North Indian influence: The Guptas:

The influence of the North Indian Gupta style had been found in Southeast Asia from 5th century A.D. onwards. The Buddhist art from school of Sarnath had contributed an important part in early Buddhist art and sculptures in Burma, Thailand, Cambodia (Funan: pre Angkorean period) and ancient Indonesia (Śailendra dynasty of 8th – 9th century A.D.) as appeared in the magnificent complex of stupas at Borobudur. In Central Java Island at Plaosan temple (800 A.D.), there is an inscription referring to the “constant flow of people from Gurjaradesha” (Gujarat and neighboring regions) due to which temple has been built (Kulke and Rothermund 1987: 158). Indeed, the temple’s sculptures reflect a salient influence from the late Buddhist caves at Ajanta and Ellora.

The Northeast Indian influence: The Palas and central India:

In the late of 8th -9th century A.D., the Pala dynasty known as the last and great Royal patrons of Tantric Buddhism had mainly given an intensive cultural influence to Mahayana Buddhist arts in Southeast Asia. The splendid growth of Tantric and Mahayana Buddhist philosophy had impressed many of the scholars from Southeast Asian countries to study at Nalanda University (Bihar). Then an intensive cultural exchange had begun along with the wide spread Mahayana Buddhism in the mainland and especially in maritime region of Southeast Asia. During Śailendra dynasty of ancient Indonesia, the Buddhist monk named “Kumara Ghosh” from “Gaudi” (Bengal) became royal consultant of the King and had consecrated the statue of Majushri Bodhisattava in the Royal temple of the Śailendra in 782 A.D. Southeast Asian art, during the time of constant religious relationship with Bengal, eastern Bihar and Orissa have shown the glorious reflection of East Indian style that could obviously be seen through the arrangement of figures surrounding the central image or the concept of “Tri-ad”. The characteristic features of this art are commonly found in Burma (Pagan) and Indonesia which had been getting strong influence from East India Mahayana Buddhism.

The South Indian influence:

Interestingly, the development of “Sanskritized” society in South India had been in process as almost contemporary with Southeast Asia, especially when seen from literary evidence reflecting the Brahmanical trace from the northern to southern region (Pallock 2006). According to Pallock, there are two phases of Sanskritized culture in between these regions, the first started from the first millennium A.D. known as the early Sanskrit cosmopolitan period and the second had contributed to “vernacularisation” of cultures which means on the emergence and convergence of various regional languages (Khmer, Javanese, Mon and Dravidian languages) during the 2nd millennium A.D. Although his suggestion is supported by archaeological and ephigraphical evidences, it is still controversial as it is limited largely to the religious literature written in Javanese and Khmer.
languages (Manguin 2010: 178). However, it can be assumed that there is the trace of cultural convergence in between these two regions by the beginning of the Christian era.

According to archaeological remains it can be assumed that the influence of South Indian cultures, especially from Tamilnadu and Andhra region, was the earliest impact that had arrived to this region at least from the beginning of the Christian era. There are some important sculptures found mostly in maritime region and Malay Peninsula which were made or brought from eastern coast of South India like the bronze Buddha statue and some early Hindu God sculptures like stone Vishnu statues discovered at ancient port sites in Indonesia and southern part of Thailand. Besides these artistic skills, the group of early Sanskrit inscriptions found in Southeast Asia was written in Pallava style as well as the monuments of this period in Cambodia and Indonesia were influentially constructed in early Pallava style dated around late of 5th - 6th century A.D.

When Chola dynasty had reached their golden age of political power and art in the 9th-10th century A.D., maritime trade gained a major importance in the Kingdom thereby also expanding their cultural influence. Contrary to the occasional military intervention between the Cholas and Sri Vijaya, it did not detract the peaceful cultural relationship. During this period, there are plenty of stone sculptures which were mostly of Hindu Gods such as Ganesh and Vishnu primarily discovered from the maritime region. In case of architecture style, Cholas probably had given some inspiration to the temple composition in plan and structures which gets clearly reflected in ancient Cambodian monuments.

The downfall of “Indianized” culture in Southeast Asia after the 13th century A.D.: The historical perspectives

The expansion of Indian influence in Southeast Asia had possibly ended by late of 13th century A.D. because of the Islamic invasion. This tragic incident caused the cultural devastation in northern and eastern India which had been the religious centres like Nalanda University in Bihar. Thus, the cultural contact with Southeast Asia was disturbed due to the internal chaos and economic instabilities. Finally the connection with India for the religious purpose, especially Brahmanism and Buddhism, also decreased due to the loss of r important religious centres in their indigenous place as the majority of them had been shifted and developed outside India.

Regarding the political condition in Southeast Asia after 13th century, it was the time of regional Kingdoms that gradually emerged and become independent from earlier political centre such as the Kingdom of “Siam” established in present day territory of Thailand. The Champa state in Southern Vietnam was forcefully be integrated as part of Viet Kingdom and became a vassal state of Chinese Empire.
In the maritime region, the large territory of ancient Indonesian Kingdom had carved out to be smaller independent states according to the rise of regional power in Bali Island, Malay Peninsula and Sumatra. These suburbanized Kingdoms grew up almost contemporarily, challenging each other for a higher economic status and political power beyond the regions. Thus, the maritime trade with India slowly declined and lost its importance as a result the regional Kingdoms had steadily developed as major trade centres and started operating the economic process by themselves independently from Indian maritime trade benefits, though political and commercial supports from Chinese court were an official requirement of the potential stabilities of the Kingdoms.

3.2 The development of Brahmanism in India and Southeast Asia:

The Vedic period: 1500 – 600 B.C.

The coming of Aryan had made great changes into Indian culture from 1500 B.C. onward. They were semi nomadic who probably migrated from Central Asia or Iran because of drought at the upper plains and pressured of population. The knowledge of the Aryan is derived from only literature source which they had composed them in the name of Vedas (knowledge). There are four important Vedas as known as Rig Veda, the collection of hymns mostly used at sacrificed. Yajur Veda contains sacrificial formulae in prose and verse to be recited by priests. The Samaveda is a collective of verses from Rig Veda for liturgical purposes. And the last one is Atharvaveda consisted mainly of mythic spells and charms. Along with each of Vedas are the supplements manual texts called Brahmanas which the most important section is Aranyakas. Moreover, there are the Upanishads appended or incorporated into Aranyakas in the field of philosophy. The Vedic texts are considered to be composed from 1500- 600 B.C. with the Rig Veda as the oldest one. In the light of political history and religion studies, the Rig Veda had given valuable information regarding these points such as brief geography, basic government or social systems and the folk belief toward their Gods and Goddess (Jha 2008:44-62).

The religion of Vedic period is suitable to be described as nature Gods worship due to the basic benevolent factor of their surrounding atmosphere. The Gods had been created in personified images, worshiped and sacrificed with several offering and hymns. The Aryan conducted this ritual for good cultivation, long lives, successful warfare and whatever they desired. The main Vedic Gods are thirty three in numbers with specific characters related to their supreme duties.

According to Vedic cult, the Indra was the chief God who considered to be great warriors with golden armors and carried thunder bolt as his weapon. To praise on him, it was required grand sacrifice with fleshes and soma, scared drinks, along with special hymns. Then there was Agni, the fire God, “butter-backed and flame haired”, who had duty of purification in scared ceremonies and
sacrifice. The Varuna was the God of sky and morality that recorded the human behavior and would punished the sinners with his loops. Surya and Usha were the Sun and morning light coming to the earth by golden chariots with 7 horses.

So far, we have not found any trace of Aryan or Vedic sculpture survived up to this day. It suggests that either Aryan cult did not create their God images or, if it was, they might have been made from wood or any unsubstantial material. The early Vedic ritual that mainly dominated on sacrifice was gradually lost an important place as the result of social development and the pursuit of more intensive thought in philosophy. The practical concepts of transmigration (samsara), karma and the circle of life (Ashramas) were considered to be developed during later Vedic period as the people had sought for the answer of life which could not been provided by any rituals. There were the simple definition of “Brahman”, the supreme God who had neither beginning nor end and dominated the “Atman”, the souls that always cycling along samsara. Possibly, this theory might have been elaborated as the core of Brahmanical concept.

During this time, there was also known as “Epic period” when Ramayana and Mahabharata composed in Sanskrit languages. These two religious texts would have given great inspiration on the Brahmanical philosophy which later on divvied into various sects.

The Iron Age and the rise of Magadha Kingdom: 600-185 B.C.

From the time of 600-200 B.C., the rise of Iron Age to early Mauryan period, the expansion of trade and constant settlements in Ganga valley had been emerged rapidly in material prosperity. At the same time, the social structure that based on caste was becoming increasingly rigid while the sacrifice rituals had lost its place. It made the way for intensive philosophical sects. By this time, the wide discussion of theological thoughts had formed many sects mostly under the name of Brahmanism such as the Ajivikas who believed in the human was dominated by unchanged destiny and Charvaks, the materialists of world pleasures. During the time of theological development, the two important religions known as Buddhism and Jainism had been gradually raised and given much valuable inspiration on the people that lasted up to thousand years later. Possibly, the entire of subcontinent regions including extreme south had witnessed the early process of north Indian Brahmanism by the fourth century B.C. as seen through the Aryanized social lore such as caste and beliefs mentioned in the Tamil Sangam poem, Purananuru dated from 300 B.C. onward (Sastri 1963: 26-27).
The period of Interaction and Innovation of devotional cults: 200 B.C-300 A.D.

The period 200 B.C.-300 A.D. was historically significant from several aspects. In the north India, the invasions from northwest led to the westward shift in the focus of political power away from the Ganga basin, Magadha region. At the Southern plateau, Deccan and Dravidian lands had arrived to the state polity and society. This is the time of political, economic and arts developments in several parts of India, as well as social structures, the religion culture had found its flourishing time as seen through the beginning of images worships of supreme Gods installing in permanent construction shrines.

The increasing institutionalization of religious schools was clearly reflected in religious texts, monuments and inscriptions. These philosophical schools known were challenging among them the different points of views (darshana) and mainly divided into two groups as “Astika” and “Nasika” schools. The astasika schools accepted the scare of Vedas and comprised a number of schools that later came to be considered the six classical systems of Hindu philosophy.

In contrary with the nasika schools which related to such as Buddhist, Jaina and Charvak had rejected the authority of the Vedas and Brahmans. Among nasika schools, the Charvak was the most distinguished one. Thought their texts could not survived up to present day, it is able to assume from the other contemporary philosophy literatures that the Charvak rejected every kinds of ritual, scared texts or even the delicate thought of eternal soul. Charvak accepted only one basis of knowledge that is perceived by senses (Singh 2008: 426). The other six schools of Astika are later known and highly developed in medieval period as Mimamsa, Vedanta, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya and Yoga. Interestingly, each of them had been represented their distinctive way of thought and always been challenging among the groups regarding to the field of Philosophy.

The great advanced steps of Brahmanism during this period were seen through the transformation of natural Vedic deities into the cults of supreme Gods Siva and Vishnu. The other significant point also had started during this time, the new devotional worship accompanied by new liturgies and mythology and the scared images installed in permanent shires. Actually, the temple construction might have been done earlier, but during this period, the shrines or temples were enlarged and constructed by using stones or bricks. The temples were not only scared place anymore. They would have turned to be the primary economic and crafts centers as well as the people kept coming for worshiping the Gods. Patronage of shrine construction was an act of piety and validation of social or political status. In addition to this point, there is the evidence of religious interaction and contemporaneity during this period as noticed from archaeological evidences discovered from the scared cities or pilgrim centers.
For instance, Mathura has been known as center of Krishna and Bhakti sect, there had very variegated religious landscape between 200 B.C- 300 A.D. These archaeological remains are numbers of sculptures, structural remains and inscription of various religious sects (Singh 2004: 378-398). In case of South Indian location of religious complex as exhibited from the variety of structural remains and sculptures of Buddhist *stupas*, Hindu temples and medieval Jain shrines. It suggests on the sharing landscape for religious purpose that leading to cultural or arts exchanges among the different sects.

Apart from the making of supreme Gods images, the semi-God worship was also commonly found in north India. There were *yakshas*, *yakshis*, *nagas* and *nagis* and Goddess that gradually developed as source of primary devotional elements then became so pervasive in Indian religions, Hindu and Buddhism. According to A. Coomerswamy (1980:36), he has suggested that the worship of *yaksha* and *yakshi* had been related implied temple, *puja* (devotional worship with offering) and a cult. They are related to the fertility, wealth, water, forest and wilderness.

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In case of female spouse, she also connected to the Children protector, fertility and child birth. The literature evidence and sculptures haven shown them in various ways as benevolent, the powerful deities who devoted to God worship or terrifying, demonic creators. The *yaksha* and *yakshi* always appeared in Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jaina texts, but mostly found in demonic or terrify characters. Their worship was gradually absorbed into and marginalized by the domain religious tradition, but the frequent references to them reflected how widespread this cult once was. The trace of yaksha-yakshi worships is seen through numbers of their sculptures collected from Madhya Pradesh, Mathura and Besnagar.

Similar to the *nagas* and *nagis*, the worship of this semi-God creator had also obviously absorbed into dominant religions. The cult of *nagas* belonging to the early Christian era has been found in many places, from north to south India. Their worship was ranked from simple or village cult up to the individual sect. For instance, the seven hood *naga* sculpture found from Mathura had an inscription dated at 2\textsuperscript{nd} century A.D. mentioned on the *naga* king, *Dadhikarna*, and his shrine was dedicated by the stone mason of Mathura (Singh 2008 : 431). Additionally, the *naga* shrines are found at *Sonkh* and *Maniyar Math* (*Rajgriha*) including large numbers of *naga* images occur everywhere in the subcontinent. The cult of semi-God creators, *yaksha-yakshi* and *nagas-nagis*, though their importance as major cult had been decreased and gradually assimilated with dominant religious cults, especially Buddhism and *Vaisnavism*, the trace of once being famous cult has still be seen continuously up to present time.
The development of Brahmanism into the concept of Puranic tradition:

The definition of Brahmanism or later on known as “Hinduism” is the religion formed by great variety of sects, rituals and philosophies. Generally, these different practices are combined together under the worships of Gods or saints who followed Brahmanical theologies and caste systems. During this period, there is the evidence of the variety of devotional practices related to Brahmanism. This was the formative evaluation of supreme Gods pantheons. Some of Vedic deities had been promoted as main Gods respected as the principle of devotion. Consequently, the worship of particular God as the absolute one was leading to the making of scared images as principle of devotion and offering rituals.

There are some important texts mentioned on the devotional practices, especially of image installation. The texts namely, Baudhayana Grihasutra (2.3.13) and Gautama Dharmasutra (9, 12-13, 45) have given comments on the worship of sacred images in connection with the ceremony related to household life. Mahabhashya written by Patanjali had mentioned on the metal images of Gods like Siva and Siva bhagavatas, Skanda and Vishaka.

The Athashatra (2.4.167; II.4.19) describes the location of the temple dedicated to guardian deities and family deities of King that should be place in the center of the town. This text also mentioned on shrines for the tutelary Gods of various groups of people as well as in storehouses.

There also the reference of temple property, including image, crops, cattle, slave, money and houses. The earliest inscription of this period that referred to the temple construction and images worship is Besnagar pillar inscription and surrounding remains. There are some references indicate on temple of Vasudeva and Sankarshana. At Sonk, the structural remains are believed to be the temple of Matrika. The cult of Goddess Lakshmi is also found at the temple remains at Atranjikera. Similar to north India, at down south from Nagarjunakonda and Gundimallam, located at Andhara Pradesh, there is the finest sculpture of Ek Muklingam discovered in the temple complex as well as the Nagarjunakonda, where discovered the early Brahmanical shrines dedicated to Siva and Vishnu. These archaeological evidences have suggested on the emergence of devotional cult in Brahmanism that widespread over Indian subcontinent.

Although this period noticed the development of Brahmanical sects and devotional tradition of particular God or Goddess, there was also the beginning of an inventive ideology of Brahmanical God performing complementary function known as “Tri Murti”. This idea has presented in Mahabharata and more clearly developed in several Puranas. According to this concept, Brahma is generally related to creator, Vishnu is given the role of universal protector and Siva is the great
destroyer. In *Puranic* philosophy, the Gods appear in their individual aspects according to their division. But in the others texts, they have been described as the manifestation of the Supreme Being.

The devotion supreme God was leading to the sectarians worship in Brahmanism, *Saivism*, *Vaisnavism* and *Sakti*. These kinds of religious sects had been developed during this period and finally reached to the most important factor of present day Hinduism.

Sectarian theology had been successfully dominated Brahmanical worlds as well as caste system did in social organization. The influence of religious devotion is seen through various cultural parts such as literatures, intensive philosophy, arts and especially temple construction. In case of Southern region, there is witnessed the concepts of early devotional cult and temple construction from this time as noticed from Tamil inscriptions by using the word of “palli-padai-koyil” to identified the class of sacred structures. Actually, the image worship in this region could be traced back from the erecting memorial stones for local heroes decreased in the battles or the cult ancestors then gradually developed into the *linga* worship installing in small shrine (Sastri 1963: 27).

Moreover, the main variety of worshipped deities in South India are seen from the early classical works regarding to the conventional classification of the landscape of Tamil country (south Indian) in to five landscapes presided over by each particular deities like Vishnu (*Mayon*: forest land), Murugan (*Seyon*: mountain region), Indra (*Vedan*: wet land), Varuna (sea coast) and Durga (*Korravai*: dessert land). The early form of Vaisanivam was in the *Vrsniviras* worship which is considered as tribal folk that probably started from proto-historic period. Perhaps, the acculturated concept of Vedic Vishnu would have been inspired from the cult of *Vrsnis Mayon* at *Mullai* region as the God equation with the dark complexion which is similar to the character of lord Krishna (Champakalakshmi 1981: 270- 271).

Furthermore, the spread of *Narayana-Vishnu* worship combined in itself an earlier tribal cult of human sacrifice, formalized and ritualized in the universal concept of cosmic divinity. Vishnu was in the most achieved in pervasive role and protective attributes of the latter stage. This primary development of Vaisnavism in South India is supposed to happen before 5th century A.D. or Pallava period.

The orthodox Brahmanism had successfully abounded the *puranic* or Sanskrititize tradition with local deities worship leading to the development of *Bhakti* concept after 6th century A.D.
The Hindu temple was probably evaluated from simple structure installing natural or folk deities. It gradually approached to the more complicated sanctuary dedicated to the supreme God of the particular religious sect. But the appearances of other Gods are still accepted and also depicted in the temple as minor deities or in related pose with main God.

In spite of beginning with the concept of the “belief in many Gods”, the Brahmanical cults also reflects the other part as “Monolatory” that means the cult of supreme God without denying the existence of the other deities.

**The development of early Brahmanical sectarians: Saivism, Vaisnavism and Sakti.**

**Saivism:**

The development of Saivite cult can be traced back to Harappan period on the basis of known seal believably depicted the *Pasupati* figure, the deity wearing cattle horns as the head ornament. In the *Rig Veda*, there is the God *Rudra* appeared with similar character of Siva of later period. *Rudra* was described as fierce and fearful God who being the cause of death for the people and their cattle and also in priesthood that later known in various name as *Siva*, *Isana*, *Mahadeva*, *Mahesvara*, *Bhava*, *Pasupati* and *Sharva*.

The Vedic literatures like *Yajurveda*, there narrates the story of *Rudra* legend, such as killing *Asura* and destroying their three cities(*Taittiriya Samhita*), breaking into the mythic sacrifice and taking violence possession of offering meant for other Gods.

*Shatarudriya* addressed to *Rudra Siva* as “paśunam patih” or the lord of creators, the text describes him as terrify but so powerful divine. Similar to the other early texts, he was related to priesthood, *rishis*, cremation ground, mysteries and decorated himself with serpent. Furthermore, *Shatarudriya* was emphasized in Tamil *Bhakti* literature known as “Periya purnam” in centuries later.

His divine position as the God of all, the God of destruction and the one who always grants ultimate release is praised in *Shvetashvara Upanishad*. Moreover, the *Mahabhashya* and *Shiva Bhagavata* mention on Siva as the God who related to medical herbs as regarded as doctor of all doctors. He is also associated to animal sacrificed as well as wearing animal hides and carry iron *trisula*, scared lance. In addition, the later *samhita* Siva is the father of *Maruts* and identified with *Agni*.

There is an account regarding to Saivite cult worshippers described the God’s followers as “*Sibae*” in Greco–Roman accounts living in the Punjab during the time of Alexander’s invasion (Singh 2008: 434–435; Sastri 1987: 395). The Saivism had at least formed by six early schools
namely, Rudras (Saivas), Ugras, Bhaktas, Jangamas, Kapilaka and Pasupatas. They are considered to be the faithful followers of Siva. Among them, only Jangamas and Pasupatas have left the trace of their practice while the others were extinct.

The Jangamas is the worshipers of Siva linga as they carry the linga on their head and Pasupatas make a little different by imprinting the image of linga on their body. Later on the Jangamas chiefly confined into South India and the Pasupatas gradually merged into other sects especially for the yogis (Wilson 1972: 8). The wide spread of Pasupata had been practice in South India from 2nd century B.C. onward and subsequently increased in grand scale at the time of Lakulisa who believe to be the incarnation Siva (Bhandakar 1928-29 : 165) had developed this sect to be known as “Vaidika Pasupati” in a few centuries later (Sarma 1987 : 38 ;Swamy 1979 : 112-114).

Actually, the Pasupata seems to be the earliest Saivism sect that associating with aesthetic and mystical practices. The Linga purana and Vayu purana and later period inscriptions, refer to the Nakulin or Lakul in as the founder of this sect, despite of other texts attribute the establishment of Pasupata to Shri kantha. According to D.R. Bhandakar (1908), he stated that the emergence of Pasupata saivism under Lakulisa had started at least from 200 B.C. to 1st century A.D on the basis of Mathura inscription and the reference from Mahabharata (Narayaniya section) (Choubey 1997: 71-72). Moreover, Krishna is figured as devotee of Siva and initiated to Siva-yoga by Upamanyu (Sastri 1956: 68).

There is the trace of Bhairava, the anger form of Siva appearing in the form of dark and furious priest (Banerjea 1966: 84). Those followers known as Kapalika are being naked, smeared their body with funeral ashes, armed with trident or sword and carrying the bowl made from skull.

In the light of Puranic tradition, the iconographic forum of Siva has been created in various forms, regarding to his legends. For instance, there are some of his known forums like Candrashekhara murti (The God who has moon on his hair), Gangadhara (The supporter of Ganga), Vaidhyanatha (lord of physicians), Kalasamhara (The God who against the time), Yamantaka (who destroys the Yama), Nila kantha (The God who has blue neck), Pasupati (The lord of Pasupatas), and Shankara (the beneficent). There is also other manifestation of Siva and Shakti known as “Ardhanarishvara” or the divine couple sitting together as “Uma Maheshvara”.

Besides iconic forms of Siva, the God also commonly worshipped as the “Linga”. The Phallic worship as the symbolic of fertility can be traced back to Vedic period as noticed from Rig Veda disapproving the people who did worship phallus (Sisnadevas). During 200 B.C to 200 A.D., this cult was gradually adopted into Brahmanism by connecting to Siva (Banerjea 1968: 66). The cult of
linga also includes the worship of female creative organ called “Yoni” representing the fertility and creation. The worship of Siva linga is narrated in some puranic literatures and epics like in Ramayana, the Ravana worshiped Rudra in the form of linga. The puranas of Saivite sect have given the supreme status as universal creator to Siva in the form of scared linga in the legend of “Lingodbhava murti”.

The Siva lingas dated during this early period were usually created in simple form and closed to natural shape. There is some remarkable type of linga known as mukha linga which means the linga depicted one or multiple face of Siva, found during this period. The other rare form created as the combination of Iconic image and linga (Vigraha linga) is the Siva linga at Gudimalllam, Andhara Pradesh. These primitive lingas of the early period suggest on the puranic diversion of Siva Anthropomorphic images that were created in various forms under simple iconographic base. Besides being worshiped as principle images, the depiction of Siva linga is also used in the dynastic coins of some states like Taxila, Ujjain and Kushana.

In case of South India, the northern Brahmanical Gods like Siva and Vishnu are known to the Sangam literatures written during this period. There are some comments regarding to Siva in South Indian literature such as Akananuru refers to Siva as the three eyes God who has moon decorated at his matted head and Uma as his consort. The Sangam poet, Nakkirar, praises the Pandhya King as equal to Siva, Vishnu, Balarama and Murugan (Subrahmanya). He refers to Siva as the God of death and destruction (Kurram). From this period onward, Murugan who was considered to be warlord God of South Indian was adopted into Siva family as his divine son as known as Skanda-Karttikeya.

These references show the impact of Sanskritization from the north that legendanly brought to Dravidian land by the sacred sage Agastaya (Sastri 1963: 13-15). In addition, the Tamil text written in the later Chola period also states that Saivism in Chola Kingdom had been brought from north Indian region (Sastri 1956: 72).

According to literature source has given valuable information regarding to Vedic ceremonies performed by royal member during the Satavahana period. The Saptasati, prakrit anthology of King Hala, invoked with the respected reference to Siva. The temples of Gauri, the consort of Siva, are mentioned in Sapasati as also the obscure vrata (vow) of fire and water (Sastri 1963: 32).
Vaisnavism:

The earliest reference of Vishnu is mentioned in *Rig Veda*. He was placed in the group of solar deities such as Surya or accompanied with *Indra* (Gonda 1966: 28-29). The Vedas comment on the God’s divine three steps over the heaven, earth and underworld. Later Vedic texts like the *Taittiriya Samhita* and *Saptapatha Brahmana*, Vishnu is related to the dwarf known as the symbolic of cleverness and spiritual attainment as well as the earth.

Initially, the Vaisnavism developed as the result of the combination of Vishnu sub-sects like *Narayana, Vasudeva-Krishna, Sri* and *Lakshmi* (Jaiswal 1981: 198-228). There are some other sects under the name of the Vaisnavas, the followers of Vishnu, developed during this period or little later known as *Bhaktas, Bhagavatas, Vaisnavas, Chakrinas or Pancharatrukas, Vaikhanasas* and *Karmahinas*.

In short, each schools has their little different in their practices such as The *Bhaktas* worship Vishnu as *Vasudeva* and *Bhagavatas* named their supreme God as *Bhagavat*. The *Vaishnavas* and *Vaikhanasas* strongly devote to *Vishnu – Narayana*. The *Chakrins* or *Pancharatrukas* also worship the Vishnu’s Sakti and performing sacred ritual call *Pancharatra Tantra*. The *Katmahinas* confess to know Vishnu as the sole sources of Universe and they abstain from all of any ritual (Wilson 1972: 6-7).

Although the detail of historical processes referring to this expansion of Vishnu cult is still unclear, it seems that the word Vaisnava used for identifying the Vishnu worshipers in the last portion of *Mahabharata*. Possibly, the cult of Narayana is considered to be one of important elements that absorbed into Vaisnavism.

There are some scholar suggest the *narayana* was originally non-Vedic God. He is mentioned in *Rig Veda* and *Shatapatha Brahmana* as associating with five day sacrifice ritual called *Pancharatra sattra* (Krishna 1980: 3-4). Due to this sacred ritual, The God is in high superiority over all being. Moreover, *Narayana* is related to asceticism as referred in Mahabharata as *Mahayogi* and identified with Vishnu. From this text, there is also important description regarding to the rishi *Narayana* attested to *Saptaratra* cult involving with the *tapas* performance as well as divine character of Brahmana (Mishra 1989: 19).

The cult of Vasudeva also gave an intensive influence into Vaisnavism in the concept of *Bhakti*. The *Ashtayayi* explains the word *Vasudevaka* as one whose object of Bhakti is Vasudeva. Thus, it is the earliest reference to *Vasudeva*, though the executed meaning of Bhakti still uncertain. According to the foreign account, Megasthenes mentioned the *Souraseno* lived in Mathura region.
and worshiped Herakles which probably meant on Vasudeva Krishna as he seen in similarity with the Greek God named Herakles. The life of Krishna has been narrated in many literature sources like Harivamsa, Mahabharata, Vishnu purana, Padma purana and Bhagavata purana. The trace of Vasudeva-Krishna cult in Mathura as it considered as being the house of Vrishi clan who were worshipers of Vasudeva as one of five heroes. The inscription found at Mora in Mathura district refers to the installation of the image of five Heroes by women name Tosha during late of 1st century B.C.-early 1st century A.D.

Moreover, the Vasudeva cult from Mathura had spread up to Besnagar as seen from the epigraphic evidence at Besnagar pillar. It refers to Herodorus, ambassador of Greek to Sunga court, as the Bhagavata. The high status of this devotional cult also seen from the temple construction dedicated to Samkarshana and Vasudeva and stone enclosure for worshiping in Rajastan as it mentioned in the Nagari and Gosundi inscription.

In South India during the time of Satavahana, King Gautamiputra Satakarni performed Vedic royal ritual as well as was being the great patronage of Brahmanism and the worshiping of epic divine heroes like Rama, Kesava (Krishna) and Arjuna. The famous of epic Sanskrit heroes, especially from Ramayana and Mahabharata, are also noticed in early Tamil poems. The poets had quoted the scene of the three “crown Kings” (mudi-araśa) of Tamil country, Cera, Pandaya and Chola, claimed to face opposing each other’s on the eve of great battle in Kurukasetra (Sastri 1963: 32).

In the early Christian era, there were the variety of Vaisnava images produced in the Mathura district. Exactly, the image of Krishna is the most in numbers but there also found the small stone sculptures of Vishnu in various forums such as Varaha. In addition to sculptures, the coins of Indo-Greek King found at Afghanistan are also depicted the Balarama and Krishna dated at 2nd century A.D. The concept of Avatara is also important in Vaisnavism. In Bhagavat Gita has stated that the Avataras of Vishnu will be done for only specific purpose that is for destroying evils and protecting the morality. The number of his Avatara is conventionally respected as ten, but names are different according to the texts. Sculptures from Mathura suggest that the Avatara of Vishnu was in its beginning. Concurrently to the full emergence of the Vishnu Avatara, the Chatur vyuha concept (the cosmological theology of Vaisnavism with the basis explanation of Vasudeva Krishna legend) was widely accepted toward the end of Kushana period.
The Sakti worship:

The worship of Goddess associated with fertility had been practiced from the prehistoric period and gradually adopted into Brahmanism as Sakti cult. This acceptance of primitive cult has seen from some puranas. The Brahmanas tried to bring some of these fertilized and nature goddesses together into Brahmanism and presented them as different manifestations of the female dominated character known as “Sakti” (Banerjea 1966: 115-123).

The earliest reference of Sakti as female divines in Sanskrit literature is mentioned in Durga Gayatri of Taittiriya Aranyaka (10.1). There are the names of some Goddesses which later associated with Sakti cult like Katyayani, Kanyakumari and Durga. In case of Durga, she is described as the energy goddess and daughter of Sun. The Goddess’s complexion is glorious like flame, thus, she is related to sacrificed and aesthetic rituals.

The early Sanskrit literature like Satarudriya section of Maitranyayi Samhita refers to the Gayatri mantras of several puranic deities, particularly Girisuta-Gauri, the mountain Goddess. The Mundaka Upanishad mentions on the Goddess Kali and Karali as two of seven toughs of Agni. In several puranas, the Goddesses are considered to be the portion of great Sakti Durga. Later Vedic texts also mention on the Bhavani and Bhadrakali (Singh 2008: 439). The Periplus, Greek account, refers to an auspicious place where known as Comari related to the Goddess Kanyakumari worship in South India. The local or Village Goddesses was worshiped in this region before the coming of Brahmanical culture. It is noticeable from their names and cults appeared in later Brahmanical texts, being consort or sister of male Sanskritized Gods (Sastri 1963: 22-25; Whitehead: 1988; Elmore 1929: 159). There is the Goddess of war and victory known as “Koravai” who was worshipped in Tamilakam during Sangam period. Possibly, she would be associated with Saivite cult as consort of Siva (Mahalakshmi 2011: 353-354; Venkataraman 1956: 252-254).

An extensive growing of Durga cult is noticed from epic and Sanskrit literatures such as Mahabhrata (Virata Parva 4.6; Bhishma Parva 6.23) and Harivamsa (VishnuParva). There she has been given many different names such as Narayani, Tribhuvaneshvari, Shri, Ratri and Katyayani. The Goddess sculptures of this Mahishasura madhini form are found in plenty numbers from the earlier time and referred in texts such as Markandeya purana and Devi-Mahatmaya.

At Mathura and Sonkh, the large numbers of Durga images including Mahishasura mardhini are discovered and dated from 200 B.C.-300 A.D. The stone plaque found at Sonkh is also depicted the Durga in this special form. The worship of Durga as Mahishasura mardhini might be getting higher popularity in subsequent period and widespread in the subcontinent.
Besides of Durga who certainly associated with Saivite cult, the Sri or Lakshmi also related to Vaisnavism at around 3rd-4th century A.D. The Goddess Sri is worshiped as the Goddess of fertility, prosperity and fortune from the Vedic period as mentioned in Vajasaneyi Samhita and Taittiriya Aranyaka. The Ramayana and Mahabharata, praise her as the consort of Vishnu. The earlier form of Lakshmi is known as “Gaja Lakshmi”. She is accompanied with white elephants, poring holy water over her from pitchers held in their upraised trunks. This Gaja Lakshmi is always seen as carving images depicted on the gate of temple. Her stone or terracotta images are discovered at archaeological sites such as at Sonkh and Atranjikhera (period IVD: 200-50 B.C.).

As being the Goddess of wealth, her image has been depicted in the dynastic coins of Shunga, Scytho-Pathain, and the coins of Ayodhya (1st century B.C.), Kushana and Gupta.

In South Indian sangam literature, Pattuppattu, has mentioned on craving image of Goddess Lakshmi on the door panels indicated that the Goddess also being the symbolic of auspicious as well as seen in the north.

Similar to the development of other sects, the Surya worship as a part of Brahmanical sects was introduced during this period. The cult of Sun God might be brought from outside India, possibly by the Magas who arriving with the Sakas (Brockington 1992: 88). Although the Surya had initially appeared in Rig Veda, the God had subsequently tended to decline in significance and remained only the daily rising invocation of the Sun as Savitr with Gayatri (Rig Veda 3.62.10).

The innovation of the Magas was to install the Sun God surrounded by the divine attendants in the sanctuary. Because of the similarities between Persian Sun God and Indian Surya worships, the influence might have been exchanged relatively and the cult became one of the leading sects during the first millennium A.D.

The Mahabharata comments on the cult of Surya and their worshippers as well – regarded group (Brockington 1992: 90). The puranas also mention on the Surya cult had firstly introduced by Sambha, Krishna’s son who was cured from leprosy by the Sun god. According to the legend, Sambha established the temple dedicated to Surya and the priests of Sun temple were Saka (Magas). The mythology has given a glimpse of the cultural link between Surya cult and Vaisnavism by considering Krishna’s son as the founder of this cult.

Beside of the puranic legend, the iconography of Surya from Kushana period also suggest on the outsider influence toward Sun worship in India. The Surya images always created in human form wearing Kushana costume and hiding his feet in boots when he stands on the golden chariot. These decorations reflect the central Asian art influence. The Surya worship had been wide spread
over north and central India as seen from a number of Surya sculpture found at Madhaya Pradesh. In case of eastern region and Southern peninsular, the cult of Sun God is considered to be developed later, possibly after Gupta period.

During this period the Brahmanism had developed from the beginning as Vedic sacrifice cults to the religious formation in the name of Brahmanism. It was certain growth under the branch of sectarian diversion ac associating with the more complicated philosophy and *puranic* tradition. From more than thirty Vedic Gods and Goddesses of nature, the later period philosophy had integrated them into a few major supreme deities with their associated divine characters. It can be stated that the devotional concept was leading to the worship of principle image. These are the significant feature of this period which was rapidly proceeded more extensively in the facets of arts and philosophy in the Gupta period.

**The period of consolidate Brahmanism:** around 4th-6th centuries A.D.

Paralleling with the prosperous of arts and cultures, the development of Brahmanism during this period had flourished along with the more complicated branches of various sectarians and Sanskrit religious literatures. Thus, this period is supposed to be termed as the phase of Brahmanical revivals or philosophical consolidation as seen through literature sources as well as the increasing in numbers of Brahmanical temples, monasteries and their sculptures. In Indian subcontinent was witness the growing aspiration of religious orders to response on the basis of new social values and material needs as seen through the large scale of temple construction and allied intuitions in the early medieval period from around 5th-6th centuries A.D. (Nandi 1973: 1).

The Gupta temples dedicated to Saivism or Vaisnavism, though have been destroyed, the remains of a few extent shows the development of Indian architecture in primary form such as some temples at Deogarh, Eran, Nachna Kutra (Pravati temple) and Bhitargaon. The temple of Bhitargaon is considered to be constructed as *Parsvadevatas* temple where the three images of Gods like Varaha, Durga and Ganesh depicted at the niches of three directions (Benerjea 1968: 91). Possibly, the *Parsvadevatas* temple will be influenced into the construction of *Panchayatana* temple of mediaeval period.

At the southern Deccan region during late 5th century A.D., the Chalukya of Badami and the *Pallavas* contributed the early Brahmanical structures like rock cut cave temples and *sikhara-vimana* style of stone monuments. The most splendid examples are seen from the group of *pancha ratha* at Mahabalipuram (Tamilnadu) and Badami caves (Karnataka).
The growth of Brahmanical activities has simply seen from the puranas, there are some references on the various rites, vratas (vow) and tirthas (pilgrimage) as important part of religious practice. The sectarian symbols and philosophies had been more attached to the entire levels of society as found from state or dynastic seals and coins.

Beside of religious devotion, the Kings had issued the eulogy inscriptions (prasasti) to proclaim their sect’s affiliation. For instance, the Guptas had always asserted themselves as Bhagavatas, so as the Vakatakas declared to be the worshippers of both Saivism and Vishnu. Similar to the complicated social organization, the major Brahmanical sects were growing up with the more intensive devotional traditions, separated into various sub-sects and given more concentrated toward supreme Gods like Siva, Vishnu and Goddess.

Although each of Brahmanical sectarian has their distinctive features and philosophy, the various religious ritual and traditions were sharing same cultural background. As being the subsequent period of devotional phase, the supreme God images were created and enshrined for worshiping. The worship of images was not only practiced by Brahmanical sectarian but also Buddhists and Jains. This interactive character is also noticed from the architectural structures, symbolism and iconographical elements that shared distinctive features among the sects. Beside the religious arts, the religious toleration was evidently seen from the worship of composite Gods like Harihara and Ardhanarishvara as well as the amalgamation of Gautama Buddha into the Vishnu Avataras.

In addition to religious practice, the syncretism was appeared in epigraphic sources when the authors initially invoked the name of Gods from different sects together. This significant feature is noticed from the inscription of Varahadeva, minister of Vakatakas during the reign of Harishena (Singh 2008: 509).

However, there was also limitation of religious syncretism and sometime the relation between dominated sectarian was not in peaceful. The competitive and challenging spheres were noticed in the religious arts, doctrine and political patronage. This example clearly reflects in iconic forums such as Devi trampling over other Gods, the several mythological scene of Siva against Vishnu such as Lingodbhava murti and Sarabha defeating Narasimha. The same way is also seen in Mahayana Buddhist deities and Brahmanical Gods. This competitive manner became more violent in the later period, especially in South Indian art.
Although this time the devotional practice was increasingly dominant, the Royal ceremonies still maintained the Vedic cult such as *ashvamedha, agmishtoma, aptoryama, Ukthya, shodasin, brihaspatisava and vajapeya*. According to the epigraphic source, the *Pallavas* and *Bharashivas* also performed *shrauta* sacrifice.

There are also some *yupa* inscriptions erected by the order of royal member of Gupta dynasty in Bihar. The royals were maintaining their legitimation with the *sharauta* sacrifice rituals and also the Kings concurrently connected themselves with the well-known sectarian cults. They used to get their sectarian honorific entitles and commonly patroned the temple construction.

Furthermore, during the time of western Chalukya dynasty of Badami, the Saivism and Vaisnavism had been given grand patronages by the Royal family who declared themselves as grand religious devotees. They contributed and maintained both of sectarian temples and also given patronage to their religious institues. In some cases, the depictions of gods of different sects are depicted as parts of temple architecture. It reflects the well condition of religious relationship in the Kingdom.

Interestingly, the royal patronage for religious institutes was not only in the facet of faith and devotion, but also being realized as “religious toleration” that was well practiced among elite groups of ancient and early medieval periods. The disposal of royal patronage toward the devoted sectarians had inspired political concept, as it permitted the making of alliances with a variety of social groups and religious communities.

**Saivism:**

The worship of Siva evidently increased in the society during this period. Siva’s pantheon has firmly established with certain group of divines namely Siva, Pravati, Ganesh, Skanda and minor river Goddess Ganga as his other consort.

In the literature aspect, Siva *puranas* had given more intensive description on the devotional tradition such as the making of God images, forums and adornment, the image installation and the existence of various Saiva sects.

The development of Saiva sects is also noticed in this time, despite of presenting their unity in devoting Siva as supreme God, there are some sects had practiced their individual traditions distinct from others. The *tantric* theology was brought into aesthetic group as one of Saivite sects. The early sects like *Pasupatas* and their sub-branch, *Siva Saidhantikas*, proclaimed themselves as connected to Vedic tradition. The *Kapilka* and *Kalamukha* strongly maintained their authentic practices out of the orthodox frame. During this period, *Pasupatas* possibly revised by Lakulisa, had flourished and
developed in several parts of Indian subcontinent such as Mathura, Deccan region and Orissa where the earliest extant temples were probably associated with the *Pasupata* sect (Singh 2008: 514).

As well as the certain devotional tradition had been taken place, the Siva architectural remains and sculptures have been found at Bhumara and Khoh in central India. The Saiva cult had gradually been involved into royal religious activities as found from their respected invocations in numerous inscriptions and honorific entitiles. For instance, the *Maitrakas* Kings of Valabhi described themselves as *parama- Maheshvara* (the great worshipper of the God Siva).

The *Karamadanda* inscription of the *Kumaragupta I* refers to the linga installation under the name *Prithvishvara* by the high authority person *Prithivishena* (*mantrin* and *Kumaramathya*). At *Udayagiri* cave, Madhaya Pradesh, the inscription records the gifts to Siva (*Sambhu*) by the minister of *Chandragupta II*. The Mathura pillar inscription mentions on the construction of temple and the attached residence by teacher named *Uditacharya* for his teacher, including the installation of two Siva linga images. Importantly, the practice of naming a Siva linga and temple after the patronized persons was introduced in this period. This kind of religious practice was much evident in South India during the Chalukya and Pallavas period and Southeast Asia from the beginning of 6th century A.D.

**Vaisnavism:**

Similar to Saivism, the Vaisnavism had continuously grown up as the great unity of devotional cults and their pantheon became firmly existed. In spite of increasing important of Vishnu elements, the cults of various deities still remained their distinctive identity. It is seen from the infrequent use of the term Vaisnavas in the Mahabharata and inscriptions, though it commonly occurs in *puranas*. In stead of terming the sect as Visnavas, the “*parama Bhagavata*” is more preferable in epics and epigraphic source.

From this time onwards, the various forms of Vishnu and *Avatars* were produced according to several *puranas*. The Vishnu *Avatars* is commonly regarded as ten but in some texts such as *Vayu puranas* had replaced Buddha with Krishna. The worship of *Avatars* became increasing and more prominent. Moreover, there are the temples dedicated to the Vishnu Avatars like Varaha and Narasimha by Vakataka King *Rudrasena II* and his chief queen *Prabhavati Gupta*.

The Vaisnavism had rapidly involved into royal patronage as seen from the emblem of Gupta Kings, from the reign of Chandragupta II onwards. The kings had their honorific entitiles as “*parama-bhagavata*” in their inscriptions. As well as the Pallavas and Ganga Kings proclaimed themselves as great worshippers of Vasudeva Krishna.
There are various inscriptions related to the wide spreading of Vaisnavism under the patronage of royal members and noble families. Several inscriptions record the gifts to the temple of Vasudeva Krishna and Vishnu found in Uttra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. An inscription at Udayagiri caves near Vidhisa, inscribed over two sculpted panels depicting Vishnu and Goddess, refers to the devotion of Royal member of King Chandragupta II. The inscription at stone pillar belonging to the reign of Skandagupta records the installation of an image of Vishnu as Sharngin (wielder of horn or bow called Sharnga) and the allotment of the village where pillar erected. In addition, the Junagarh inscription mentioned on the establishment of Vishnu, the God given honorific name as Chakrabhri, by Chakrapalita who was the noble of Skandaguta court.

During this time the worship of Vishnu pada is evident from Udaygiri cave as central focus of worship related to royal annual ceremonies. The Vishnu pada is also mentioned in the iron pillar at Mehruli as scared symbol of Vishnu enshrined in the temple. Moreover, the worship of Vishnu pada is found in Ramtek, the Vaisnavite center of Vakataka. It suggests the cultural link in the concept of sacred hill like Udaygiri and the worship of Vishnu pada between the Gupa of northern region and the Vakatakas (Willis 2009: 74-75).

The sculptures and inscriptions of this glorious period reflect the more sophisticated iconographic form of Vishnu regarding to the different legends. The Avatara images of Vishnu were created for worshiping, particularly the most magnificent one like Krishna-Govardhana.

In case of far south region, the Vaisnavite cult had been well developed along with Saivism which was leading to the process of religious reformation known as Bhaktism of few centuries later. In Slipadikaram, mentions temple of Krishna and Baladeva at Madurai, Kaveripattinam and other places. Additionally, this time was also the most flourished period of Vaisnavism as it had widely boarded to Southeast Asian countries.

The cult of Sakti and other deities:

The cult of Goddess was popular during this period as seen through the frequent reference mentioned several names of Goddess and her relationship with supreme Gods in Sanskrit literatures. The Sakti cult was evident from goddess sculptures found in different parts of India especially in eastern region. These images are expressed Goddess in both Ugra (anger) and Saumya (comforting).

The most prominent one is Mahishasura mardhini images that created in both sculptures and craving on the wall of caves or temples as seen from Udayagiri cave 6 and Bhumara in Central India. As for the far south, the relief images of Goddess Durga found at Tiruchirappalli cave temple and Mahabalipuram constructed during Pallava period. Moreover, the Sakti also had a maternal aspect as
she was the mother of Gods like Ganesh and Skanda. The cult of seven *Matrikas* possibly started from this period and had temple dedicated to them by *Kumaraksha*, minister of *Vishvavarman* of Dashapura (Singh 2008: 516).

In addition to the development of Sakti worship, the cult of other Gods like Brahma, Surya, Skanda and Ganesh were being well practiced during this time. The Brahma is eulogized in *Brahma purana* and *Brihatasamhita* as well as *Vishnu dharmottara*. Form these texts the Godswas given an iconographic form as sacred sage who has four face same as arms. Although he was part of supreme gods in *puranic* pantheon or legendly related to some important pilgrimage places, the God does not have his individual temple or being supreme God of any devotional cult like Siva and Vishnu. He is always placed in the temple as subsidiary deity whose images displayed in the decorated niches of temple.

The cult of Surya worship that started from earlier period became well-accepted as he usually mentioned in *puranas* on the God’s worshiping ritual, *Sakas* priest and festivals. The remains of Surya temples are found in central and western India. Epigraphic evidence attests to such temple at Gwalior, Indore and Ashrameka in central India. The patronage of Surya cult was ranked from royal members to merchant guilds as noticed from mandasor inscription and Indore copper plate. Moreover, Surya also known as *Chitraratha* was one of the worshiped God of *Shalankayana* dynasties of Andhara region.

For Skanda or Karttikeya in north India, the earliest evidence of this God in archaeological context is his image appeared in punch-marked coins of earlier centuries. The young God was evident from this period and gradually connected to Saivite pantheon as the supreme god’s eldest son. Skanda was possibly worshiped in royal court of the King of Ikshvaku, *Santamula*, who was grand devotee of this God. There is the reference of constructing temple dedicated to him by the person name *Dharuvasharman* mentioned in Bilsad stone pillar inscription at Uttra Pradesh. The King of Gupta dynasty, *Kumaragupta* had used peacock, the vehicle of Skanda, as his royal emblem.

The worship of Karttrikeya in South India had also been prominent as well as the Kings of *Kadambha* dynasty had declared themselves as the grand devotees of this particular God. In Tamil country, the God is known as Subrahmaniyam or *Palani Andavar* according to the folk legend. Subrahmaniya have two consorts known as Vali and Devasena.
The God Ganesha or known as Ganapati became an important God during this period. Some texts mention him as the leader of the *ganas*, *yaksha* and goblins, the wild followers of *Rudra Siva*. Ganesha was considered as the benevolent God who bestowes success and removes obstacles from the path of devotee. In Gupta and post Gupta period, Ganesha was depicted in several posed like sitting, dancing or standing.

In case of Southern India, there was also witnessed of the various Brahmanical sectarians flourished in the society. The *Silapadikaram* refers to Vedic ritual and also mentions on important Gods such as Indra, Siva, Vishnu, Murugan and several goddess like Durga. The cult of Krishna was also existed there. The great heroin such as *Kannaki* was worshiped as the manifestion of *Pattini*, local Tamil Goddess. She was worshiped by merchants in South India. There is the reference stated that Chera King *Senguttavan* constructed the shrine for *Pattini*. The *Pattini* cult was well established in South India and later the Goddess was brought to orthodox Brahmanical pantheon as part of Kali cult.

**The period of integrated and reformation of Brahmanism:** around 600-1200 A.D.

After the fall of Gupta Empire in north India, the religious development of early medieval period was growing up rapidly as well as the political structures and agrarian societies in regional Kingdoms.

During this long period, the Brahmanism was only been respected in only single path as devotional rituals or complicated philosophies, it gradually assimilated into entire levels of the society from administrative policy to the “*Bhakti movement*” of local devotees. This occurrence has seen through the literary sources like inscriptions, religious texts, arts and monuments. Brahmanism reached to the highest point of devotional worship noticed from an intensive of temple construction and pilgrimages. Beside of the distinct cults of supreme Gods, the Tantric theology had widely influenced into various sectarians and sucessfully dominated on particular religions such as Mahayana-Tantric Buddhism and *Saiva-tantric or Saktism*.

The religious reformation during this period was also formed by various thoughts or *darshanas* as seen from texts and records of public debates. During this time, the reformation of Brahmanism philosophy was successfully introduced by one of the most influential visionary, *Shankara charya* who brought about the *Avaita Vedanta* at around 8th-9th century A.D.

The relationship between different sectarians had sustained in both peaceful interaction and rivalry. It is evidently reflected from sculptures, architecture and literatures. In case of religious temples, the sacred monuments were the center of patronage from various sections of society.
There is an evidence of sectarian syncretism in the form of Panchayatana temples. The main temple is enshrined the main deities (Siva linga or Vishnu image) and surrounded by four minor temples containing four other cult deities (Banerjea 1968: 94). This kind of architectures is found from the Lakshmana temple of Khajuraho and the group of Osia temple in Rajastan. During this mediaeval period the temple construction had well developed to be more complicated by increasing procession path (prakaras), surrounded minor temples and extended ground architectural structures. The examples are provided from the architectural plan at Jagannarth in Orissa and Sri Rangam in Tamilnadu.

In Andhara region, the temples construction was widespread during this medieval period (624-1324 A.D.) with the emergence of new ideology related to the temple patronage and role of participants of particular sects (Rao and Suryanarayana 2011: 268). The grand donation given to the temple was ranked from precious gifts to immovable property like well, tank, garden and land. They reflect not only new concepts of patronage but also clearly indicate a transition from pastoral economy to settled agrarian economy. Many temples constructed during this period were attached with choultries (assembly hall) and mathas (surrounding shrines) for specific purposes. They serviced the society by serving food to pilgrims, teachers and students.

Due to successful administrative function in large infrastructural activities, temples had a hierarchy of employees appointed and maintained by temples. Thus the medieval temple was an independent organization with its own administrative functions, finances and traditions (Rao and Suryanarayana 2011: 274).

In addition, according to this milieu, the temple gradually evolved as the center of multiple activities responded the social group variations accommodating them in different roles and became notable institution of importance. The role and function of medieval temple has been critically studied and explained by scholars from different perspectives (Champakalakshmi 1989: 278-307; Prasad 1991: 261-67; Thapar 1987: 33-40; Talbot 2001: 87-125).

It is noteworthy to state that the temple became an institution influencing the behavior pattern of worshippers and was getting patronage from various aspects of the polity, economy and society in different periods and regions.

The royal patronage, especially after 10th century A.D., had involved in magnificent constructions. It was leading to the emergence of royal temples as the ideology of “God-King”. From this period onwards, religious identities became more distinctive leading to the self-conscious of being “Hinduism” during the period of early interaction with Islam (Lorenzen 1999).
The cults of Vaisnavism and Saivism:

The emergence of Vaisnavism had been prominent in Indian subcontinent from the earlier time upto medieval period. But in some places like South Indian Kingdoms, this cult was not much accepted in compared with Saivism of the same period. However, there are some dynasties had being great patrons of this cult like Chalukya of Vengi, Chola (Nandivarman III), the Chalukya Chola of Andhara region (1075-1173 A.D.) and Kakatiya. Although most of the Kings of these dynasties showed strong preference for and were more inclined to Saivism, but they generally were non-sectarians. Hence, Vaisnavism was patronized in tolerant manners as seen from some of the royal temples dedicated to Vishnu.

The Vaisanavite played an important role in the development of Bhakti movements. Vishnu in his avatars as Krishna and Rama were the devotional center of the devotees. Perhaps, the Krishna cult known as “Bhagavatas” evidently occurs in Harivamsa, supplementary texts of Mahabharata narrated the Krishna’s legends, and Bhagavata puranas. Their devotional love and suffering due to the separation with Krishna has inspired the Bhakti devotion in concept of faithful and sacrificed emotion. The supreme devotion was clearly composed in Bhakti works flourishing in this glorious period such as Gita Govindha of Jayadeva (12th century A.D.) and Brahmavaivarta puranas.

In case of Saivism, the philosophical developments of various sects are reflected through religious texts and temple construction over the entire subcontinent. There were some brunch of Saivism extended from previous schools with an elaborated interpretation like Siva Siddhanta, Kashmiri Saivism, Pasupata, Kalamukha, Kapalikas and Vira Saiva sects. According to Saiva Aagamas, these schools contain the words directed from Siva and supposed to be taught in the limited group of students. The Saiva Agamas texts seemed to be composed in South Indian, during 400-800 A.D. These Agamas, though mainly concentrate in an important of religious practice, ritual and knowledge, they reflect an influence from Bhakti ideology as considering merit of Siva Bhakti as great as performing Vedic sacrifices.

Siva Siddhanta became the prominent sect in South Indian. The disciples followed the concept of Siva as the most supreme God and accepted the authorities of Vedas, Agamas and hymn of saints. But they interpreted the Vedic ritual in the view of Siva Bhakti. This superior position of Siva had also been extensively followed by Kashmiri Saivism found by the sage Vasugupta at around 8th-9th century A.D. Although, there are some similarities in elements between the dogmatic of Kashmir Saivism and those of South India Saivism, they differ their philosophy clearly as Kashmiri being idealist while South Indian schools pluralist in its feature (Sastri 1956: 78). In South India, especially at Karnataka, Andhara and Deccan regions during 100-1324 A.D., Kalamukha and
Pasupata sects had successfully flourished in these regions which was later on influenced by Vira Saiva and Siva Siddhanta around 13th-14th century A.D.

The Pasupata, Kalamukha and Kapilaka were still major sects of this time. The important centers and worship of Pasupatas (Mahesvaras) in South India were practiced at Sri Kalahasti and Gudimallam temples. In addition, Sri Kalahasti temple was given grand patronages from royal families of Cholas, Telugu Chodas, Yadavarayas and Kakatikeyas (Choudary 2008: 2-25).

In spite of once being importance, they left no trace of their literatures or philosophical texts. These sects had established monasteries and well organized priesthoods. The Kapilakas were Tantric Saivite aesthetics living in the forest and carrying skull bowl for begging. They were described as performing penance in different way out of orthodox Vedic ritual. The Kalamukha might be an extended branch of Pasupatas or known as Lakulasaiva and gave philophical influence to later Saivite sect, the Virasaivas of Basavana. The followers of Lakulagamas declared themselves as great worshipers of Siva linga as they used to carry on their body. But the Agamas are not available upto present days (Filliozat 2001:3). The other name of Virasaiva sect is “lingayata” named after their devotion toward the worship of Siva linga.

This sect was well developed in Karnataka between 11th-14th century A.D. From that certain area, there are many inscriptions recorded gifts as well as donation to the Saivite temples during 12th-13th century. The Kalamukha and Pasupati were being at the summit of their glory in social and religious aspects. The first dynasty patronized the Lakulisaiva was Chalukya of Kalyani (12th century A.D.). The intensive studies of Saivite sects of early medieval period are available from the works of some scholars such as V.S.Pathak (1960), Subramanian (1985), Fillozat (1955; 1960), Lorenzen (1972, 1991) and Sanderson (1988: 660-704).

Remarkably, the Bhakti movement was the great challenge during this period when the extremely devotion to Gods either Siva or Vishnu approached to the people without any limitation of caste and gender. This social development regarding to religious perspective had widely happened over entire of the country, especially in Deccan and South India. The groups of Bhakti followers in South India was divided into two sects as Saivite saints (Nayanar) and Vaisanavite saints (Alvars). They composed or gave strong inspiration to many of literature works such as Periyapuranam (the stories of 63 Nayanar) and Nama Alvars (devotional poems for Vishnu). There were the flourished pilgrimage cities of both sects in South India. For instance, the Saivite centers are namely Kanchi, Tiruvorriyur, Melpadi and Kodambalur, in case of Vaisanavite, Sri Rangam is being the most famous one.
In Deccan region, the cult of Bhaktism was started a little later after the end of 13th century A.D. as the emergence of the Jyannaneshvar saints and Phalki pilgrimage related to the God Vithoba. At the northern part of Karnataka is witnessed the great development of Virasivas (Sivite Bhakti) formed by Basavana. Sri Madhava Charya was in the major role of Visnavite Bhakti cult in southern Carana region. Lasting at the northern and eastern region, Mathura was flourished as the center of Krishna Bhakti worship as well as Jagannath of Puri.

Most of northern Bhakti saints were ardent devotee of Vishnu as Krishna and Rama such as Soordas, Tulsidas, Meera and Swami Chaitanya. Their works were inspired and interpreted from early medieval Bhakti cult. Thus, according to the emergence of Bhaktism, it can be assumed that Brahmanism in early medieval period was the period of religious reformation particularly in philosophical perspective.

**The Sakti cult:**

The glorious development of Saktism had been processed along with Tantric cult which widely assimilated into various Brahmanical sects. One of the important texts related to Sakti cult composed during this period is Devi Mahatmya giving narrattion and illustration of the goddesses in literature way. The well developed ritual of Saktism is witnessed from number of temples and sculptures belonged to this cult. Durga, Matrika and Yoginis were the prominent goddesses who were installed or depicted in the shrines in superior position as mother and consort of Gods. Their temples were established over entire subcontinent especially in eastern and southern India where the cult of local Goddess had been widely spread.

The inscriptions of the early medieval period often refer to the local Goddess in regional Kingdoms. For instance, in Orissa, the Goddess Viraja and Stambheshavari were mentioned as well as Kamakhya Devi of Assam. The puranic literatures reflect an attempt to integrate the local Goddesses together for being various manifestation of the great one known as Adi Sakti. The cult of Goddess, according to Kalika puranas, was performing by regular rights and Tantric rituals. These practices are beginning with animal or human sacrifices and the indulged in wild manners. Interestingly, the Saktism pilgrimages (pithas) had raise up to forty two sacred places during the early medieval period showing an extensive spreads of this Tantric cult as it maintaining its significant features such as the powerful consorts of Gods, divine maternity and wrath Goddess for devils in modern Brahmanism (Kinsley 1996,1988 ; Dikshitar 1991 ; Cladwell 1999).
Since the process of Indianization had been developed in Southeast Asian from the beginning of 4\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. onwards (Smith 1999), the cultural tradition influenced by Indian had gradually become more prominent in this region especially for the religious ritual and philosophy. As witnessed through the nature of Brahmanical practice and the associated religious elements like architectural remains and sculptures, Most of them reflect the initial impact from early of 5\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. Thus, it can be said that the Brahmanical trends developed under the realm of Gupta and a little later period from Indian subcontinent gave strong influence into early Southeast Asian religious rituals and assimilated to various part of cultural factors like politics and social organization.

**The Brahmanism of Southeast Asian states before 15\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.**

The Southeast Asia presents a variegated cultural pattern. Geographically, this region can be devied into mainland and maritime Southeast Asia with Malay Peninsula located in between. As far as religion is concerned, after 15\textsuperscript{th} century A.D., the diversity is less pronounced since Islam strongly predominates mostly in Maritime Southeast Asian region except Philippine which presently been Catholic Christianity.

In mainland Southeast Asia, on the other hand, *Theravada* Buddhism is established religion of all states except Vietnam where both *Mahayana* Buddhism and Confucianism predominate. The Hindu- Buddhist religion prevails in Bali and also tribal folk beliefs still have persisted almost everywhere in remote areas. Furthermore, the great religions in Southeast Asia have been influenced by early folk beliefs. Thus, it is the great challenge for interpreting them. If possible, it would have helped us to understand the development of Southeast Asian culture as seen through the antiquities remaining in this present day.

The source of development of Brahmanical or other religious studies in this large region is beset with mainly two limitations. It is due to the nature of early Southeast Asian religions and the limited condition of literature source. At the first reason, the difficulties are seen through the process of political foundation in Southeast Asian states which always being attached to religious rituals, especially Brahmanism, in both devotional and political magnetized aspects. In addition to administrative sphere, the religious cults were mostly sustained by assimilating into the other fields such as socio-economic and folk lore. Because of being intermingled into various fields, the study in religious development could not be simply separated from the other backgrounds.

Secondly, although there are plenty in number of sources related to religious aspect as the result of the high value of religious influence in the society, the permanent material records such as inscriptions have always associated with the temple of another religious institution. Therefore, they are being available in some certain area where the particular sect extensively developed. Moreover,
unequal distribution rather than rarity of epigraphically sources is exactly one of the most difficult problems for examining the comparable cultural development of early historical phase in this entire region. For instance, the emergence of epigraphic reference in ancient Cambodian (Khmer) and Southern Vietnam (Champa) was available from the 5th century A.D and at central Javanese plateau from 8th century A.D. The eastern region and Bali are not earlier than 10th century A.D. and at last from Sumatra the earliest dated at the end of 7th century A.D then finally lost its appearance after 13th -15th century A.D. (Casparis and Mabbett 1999: 227).

Similar to the epigraphic source, the literary sources are more unequal distributed over this area and this particular period. In mainland Southeast Asian, except northern Vietnam, there is no trace of literature from any early states. For the maritime region, the literature sources written in old Javanese language are dated as early as during eastern Javanese dynasty from 10th century A.D.

Similar to Sumatra and Malay Peninsula including Thailand, this kind of writing evidences have clearly appeared at almost end of 13th century A.D. Beside of unavailable locally written literature source for cultural reconstruction, Chinese accounts as well as archaeological data provide valuable information regarding this point. Interestingly, the distribution of historical sources both secondary and archaeological evidences were intensively found at the sites where were important political or religious cities of Kingdoms as well as economical centers.

In the glorious light of archeological sources, especially magnificent temple sanctuaries that extensively constructed over Southeast Asian region, they are also in such valuable indication reflecting the well-known sectarians during ancient time. In addition to arts and architectural values, the beautiful facets of religious beliefs were depicted on these splendid structures. There are some important Brahmanical monuments were established from late of 9th -13th century A.D. in Cambodian (Angkor Wat and surrounding temples), eastern Java and Bali (Prambanan sanctuary) as well as Southern Vietnam (The group of Brahmanical temples at Misson) etc. These temples were mainly patronized by the royals of different powerful dynasties of each Kingdom. Apart from being the core factor of devotional process toward Brahmanical Gods, royal temple construction in Southeast Asia contains an implication of King superior position through the sacred rituals. For domestic aspect, the shrines also support economical activities in the place they erected.

At last, the folklore which still has been practicing up to these days also provide some glimpses of primitive cult of early society. There are many local deities or totems that later gradually assimilated and respected as part of Brahmanical rite. For example, the animistic cult of worship, the decreased ancestor’s spirits and wandering natural Gods have been practiced in agricultural society located at the remoted area of Thailand (Wongstesh 2006). In the same way, the cult of Holy Spirit
of “Phi” in Laos and Thailand has regarded Phi in various categories such as the family ancestors, natural spirits even related to Brahmanical semi-divine being like Yaksha, Asura or Naga who magically provide fertility and prosperity for the devotees. The royal ceremony conducted in Siamese (Thai) court of early 14th century A.D., though establishing as Buddhist Kingdom, the Brahmanical influence also clearly seen in the sacred ritual for increasing the ritual sanctity with the senses of awareness and fearful.

Combining the available aspects together, it can revise the development of religious culture through the aspects of social history, philosophy and arts. At first step, the section should be started from the early chieftoms period (the beginning of Christian era to 5th century A.D.) to the period of Indianized Kingdoms (around 5th to end of 13th century A.D.).

The early Chieftoms: beginning of Christian era- 5th century A.D.

This section is concerned with the transitional period from the beginning of Christian era to the 5th century A.D., in relation to the epigraphic source locally recorded in Southeast Asian and Chinese accounts. This time is considered to be the initial emergence of early Kingdoms and Chieftoms. The overseas relationship had been in contact with both Indian and China, but the Indian influence was the most extensive over this region. This process of cultural expansion is commonly termed as “Indianization”. In spite of getting much influence in Indian traditions, the firm identities of Indian large scale emigration or military troops is very less in any context. Therefore, according to the evidences discovered during these days, the process cultural influence should have attributed to some local elites or chiefs who gradually brought Indian tradition into their communities and started the assimilation process.

From above sentence, though the early impact could directly impress only privilege groups in some certain areas where the numbers of cultural heritages are seen through the age, the cultural admiration from the courts was never completely separated from the majority and much of it steadily to the agricultural masses. In addition, it was also able to assume that the selected cultural process done by the leading group was also influenced by the popular culture.

The level and manner of Indian cultural impact into local cults of Southeast Asia differs from one particular area to another. For instance, in Champa, the orthodox Brahmanical linga cult mounded on the primitive belief in natural and fertility gods of different identified communities. In this folk practice, these gods were represented in rough stone and could be approached to faithful prayers through specific ritual for each particular icon. Also, this ritual closely related to the concept of fertility in agricultural society. Thus the superior Brahmanical God, as same as the Saivite
development in India, slowly became an important part of particular tradition identifying the community with its territory (Cadière 1958: 1; Mus 1975: 7).

The cult of “natural or fertility” Gods was commonly rooted over entire Southeast Asian states, leading to the more attesting in Brahmanical assimilation process. There are some inscriptions dated to pre Angkorean period (before 900 A.D.) mentioned on the “God of stone pond” installed in many shrines. This God was supposed to be local deities that inhabited or identified with feature of landscape (Mus 1975). The cult of local patron Gods related to Kingship in old Mon region (Burma) was not only being community identified spirits, but also reflected the trace of ancestor worship.

In Southeast Asia, the worship of Holy Mountain was well established as happened in India. This cult became more prominent after assimilated to Brahmanical concept. In case of Indonesia where fertilized with the mountain ranges and thick forests, the cult of Holy Mountain had been well developed under the concept of “God’s abode” like Kailasha in Brahmanical mythology. Thus, Siva became lord of mountain (Girindra or Girisa) and Brahma identified with the volcanic subterranean fire. In eastern Java region, there are splendid monuments constructed under the sacred mountain concept as Kailash or Sineru in Buddhism such as Chandi Panataran and Borobudur in central plateau.

Furthermore, in ancient Cambodian Kingdom, the construction of magnificent temples in pyramid form reflect the primary concept related to the cult of sacred mountain, devoted to either Brahmanical supreme Gods or Mahayana Bodhistattva. This devotional feature was later on inspired the magnificent temple construction which was developed far beyond Indian tradition.

In Southeast Asian region before arriving of Indian impacts, there were practice their folk beliefs. For instance, the mountain spirit cult in Ba Phnom, southern Mekong delta in Cambodia, has the trace of sacrifice addressed to local Goddess “White mother (nak ta Me Sa)”. This ritual was sponsored by royal family and continuously conducted at the sacred place as recently as 19th century A.D. (Chandler 1979: 54-62; 2008: 25-27).

In the light of archaeological contexts, the folk beliefs that originated in Southeast Asian are evident in some special artifacts such as the drums from Dong Son culture, northern Vietnam. They reflect aspects of primitive folk belief during the late century B.C. With their highly decoration patterns, some of them show the symbolic images that are currently found in myth and ritual (Higham 1989: 201; Kampers 1988). The funeral ceremony was broadly practiced during Megalithic period providing an important perspective on the belief of life after death as well as social status. In the other ways of cremation before the coming of Indian rituals, at Tun Sun state located at the Malay Peninsula, the people left the corpse being offered to the birds. In Funan state, the decreased bodies
were brought into cremation, deposited to the sea, grave burials and exposures (Wheatley 1966: Pelliot 1903: 279).

In case of semi-God worships, there is some important evidences regard to this cult like the nats, local deities worship in Burma. The cult of Nagas was the main tutelary spirit of Sri Vijaya Kingdom as well as the Nagini was respected as the famine royal ancestor in ancient Cambodia. The depictions of Ganas, Yakshas, Apsaras and mythic creators as religious followers commonly seen in temple architectures of Southeast Asia reflect the form of primitive cult. Similar to the sacred animal worships, some animals are attached to Brahmanical mythology such as snakes or eagles were integrated to Brahmanical based mythology as Naga and Garuda.

The beliefs of magical items like amulets, talisman, and portents pervaded the religious life of entire society. It can be assumed that the magic features in Southeast Asian already emerged before the coming of Indians. The trend of primitive cults gradually assimilated into orthodox Brahmanism in Southeast Asian states can be seen clearly when the social organization developed from local chiefdoms becoming the regional Kingdoms during the glorious phase of Indianize tradition.

**The regional “Indianize” Kingdoms period:** Mainland and Maritime Southeast Asia (from 5th century A.D. to the end of 13th century)

**Mainland region:**

Initially, Brahmanism and Buddhism had been grown up together in cultural prospective left to all Indianized states in the mainland Southeast Asia. The cultural expansion had mainly appeared in the form of religious elements which assimilated into various state factors. With strong admiration and respects toward Indian culture, the Kings had full right chance to formally adopt or patronize any cult either Siva or Vishnu during his reign, but the other still persisted. Their representative devotional activities were remarked over the countryside mostly seen as temples or monasteries.

The rivalry between sectarians was rare, only few are known. In this case, the example is provided from I-Shing record dated at 7th century A.D. regarding the Buddhism had been persecuted in Chenla Kingdom (Takakusu 1986: 12). In fact, it could happen as the result of the absent in significant evidence of Buddhism during Jayavarman I period, but normally in ancient Cambodian Kingdom the peaceful relationship between different sects is noticed from epigraphic sources as the Kings had given patronage to Saivism (Pasupata-Saiva), Vaisnavism and Buddhism in both Hinayana and Mahayana.
The role of Brahmanas flourished from early period since the Kings had honorably invited them to their courts for conducting sacred rituals related to the sovereignty. It is still in doubt that the Brahmanas who brought Indian culture and were respected in the Southeast Asian courts either they were Indian or literate local priests in Indian tradition.

In case of Indian Brahmins, despite of many restrictions regarding to travel crossing over seas that would ritually polluting their caste, these prohibitions might have a little practical effect and would not have struggled some priests for the quest of fortune and prosperity in the distant land. Possibly, the learn Brahmanas initially stayed at the Southeast Asian port and were invited to the court after their sacredness was well known. This case might have been happened only sometimes, but not on large scale. The epigraphic evidence attests this suggestion as the mention of Indian gotra (Family name) is very rare existed in Indian source and also not normally mentioned in Southeast Asian inscription (Casparis and Mebbett 1999: 287).

Generally, if possible, they would prefer to mention these priests from outside Kingdom by common term as “Indian Brahmins” (pradesh) (Coedes 1968: 118). Therefore, according to epigraphic source, the majority of Brahmanical priests might have been Southeast Asian origins or born from Indian Brahmin families settled in this region, perhaps many of them could have afforded for knowledge in Brahmanical rituals and Sanskrit language from Indian ashrams. For instance, during the reign of Indravarman I of Angkorean period, the royal Brahmins named Sivasoma was said to have educated in India under the celebrated Vedanata teacher Śankara (Coedes 1948: 205).

However, the Brahmanas either Indian or local origins had great influence in Southeast Asian court of various aspects such as political consultants, religious teacher and ritual conductors. Their position in the court was commonly known as Purohita and in some cases they were given the princesses who were the King’s daughter or sister for marriage. This type of royal marriage clearly suggests the strengthen of the political alliance between the Kings and religious families.

The high position of Brahmins had not only appeared in Hindu court like Angkorean Kingdom, in Buddhist courts at Pagan and Sukhothai in Thailand (after 13th century A.D.), the Brahmanical priests also worked there as royal ceremonial consultants.

As the Buddhist Kings, they most concerned on the spiritual merit and moral perfection rather than the sacred rites and ceremonies of Brahmanical rituals that was left as the court Brahmins duty. Although the Kings declared themselves as the great devotee of Buddhism, Mahayana or Theravada, they also gave patronage to Brahmanical acitivities as seen in the reign of King Jayavarman VII of Angkorean period. During his time, some Saivite temples were constructed as the royal gifts to the
Brahmins who conducted royal sacrifice and religious consultant named Jayamangalratha and Vidyeśavid.

The Brahmanical development in mainland region was maintained in two sects distinctively as Saivism and Vaisnavism like happened in India. For better understanding, it is dividing into two sections as followed.

**Saivism:**

The appearance of Saivism is evident from two ancient Kingdoms located at the mainland region, Angkorean Kingdom (ancient Cambodia) and Champa (Southern Vietnam). At these states, Saivism assimilated not only into folk beliefs or devotional practices, but also the political perspective.

Exactly, the cult of linga worship had been broadly practiced in Mekong delta region before the emergence of Angkorean after 9th century A.D. The royal linga, either erected by the order of King for devotional ritual or being victorious symbol, they have been reflected the royal admiration toward Siva, for being the great one over the others Gods. This concept was leading to the step temples construction on the top of sacred mountain of political centers for royal linga installation. Perhaps, this Devaraja (God-King or King of the Gods) cult that evidently emerged at around 9th century A.D. seemed to get intensive influence from this subject (Coedes 1948: 324-329; Kulke 1993: 327-381; Chandler 2008: 39-42).

In addition, Saivite devotion was only placed in political aspect, but also importantly appeared as the religious cult and center of Saiva-Bhaktism. According to epigraphic sources, there was the Siva Pasupati noticed in the inscriptions (Wolters 1979: 431; Bhattacharya 1955: 479-490).

The earliest reference to Pasupati cult in ancient Cambodian Kingdom found in the inscription at Isanpura (Sombor-Prei Kuk) dated at 627 A.D., records the linga installment by Brahmin named Vidhayaviśesa who supposed to be priest of Pasupata sect (Bhattacharya 1955:479, 1961b: 25). Moreover, the inscription at Phanom Bayang, dated at the early of 7th century A.D., mentions the establishment of Siva pada by Brahmin Vidhyabindu. The inscription has its invocation praises on Siva and gives glimpse of Saivite philosophy, Saiva-Vedanta. Thus, it can be stated that from the 7th century A.D. onwards, Saivism was one of the dominated sects in ancient Cambodian Kingdom.

Regarding to the name of royal linga erected during pre Angkorean period, one of common name is “Bhadresvara”. This honorific name was also mentioned in puranas and inscribed in the seal from Bhita, dated at around 4th-5th century A.D.
In fact, The Khmers might not adopt this name directly from India perhaps they entitled the divine of Kingdom as Bhadresvara after the great conquers over Champa Kingdom where the royal religious center named as “Bhadrapura (Mi son)” abode of the great divine “Bhadresavara” from 4th century A.D. (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 21). At Isanrapura (SonborPrei Kuk), there was the Vaisanivite temple dedicated to Vishnu under the name of Charkatrithaswamin. The group of monuments is surrounding the main Saiva temple, under the glance of Siva Prahasteśvara (linga).

Thus, it is suggested on the religious toleration in ancient Cambodian Kingdom. In addition, there are three inscriptions regarding the cult of Hari-Hara (Śankara narayana) proving the cultural relation between two sects (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 26). In fact, the cult of Hari-Hara had initially witnessed from the late 7th century A.D. at Phanom Da Mountain. The lingas, Vishnu and Hari-Hara images found from the site suggest the syncretism in early Khmer Brahmanism (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 15). Moreover, the cult of Hari-Hara in pre-Angkorean period was considered as the religious symbol of political unity between “lower” and “upper” Chenla states (Lavy 2003: 21-39).

This kind of acculturation or syncretism in Brahmanical development, especially an intensive worship of Hari-Hara in pre Angkorean period, is always noticed from the religious history of Khmer Kingdom. The Royals were great patronage in Brahmanical activities of both sects, including Mahayana Buddhism.

In Khmer Brahmanism, the gifts, temple construction and land grants to Brahmanas were the duty of overlords. For instance, during the reign of King Suryavarman II who had stronghold in Vaisnavism, he ordered to sending the gifts as his high regards to the Sri Bhadreśvara (Wat Phu temple : southern Laos). According to the inscriptions at Phanom Sandak and Preah Vihar (Sri Sikhreśvara) temples, the high Brahmins who summoned for this royal gifts donated all the valued gifts to the Pasupati (Bhadreśvara) at the years 1116 A.D (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 38; Coedes 1968: 135-154). In Northeastern plateau of Thailand, there is the Saivite-Pasupati temple patronized by royal members of Suryavarman II known as Phanom Rung temple or Romaya giri aśrama.

The trace Pasupati cult, though it would be much complicate to identify its origin of cultural relation, Vasundhara Filliozat has given some suggestions on the similarity of Pasupata Saivism cult in Cambodian and Karnataka before 15th century A.D. According to her study, there are some important linkages such as the names category of Brahmin (-pandita,-rashi, and -siva), the high minister post in Brahmanical section (Brahmana-Kshatriya) and the distinctive style of Saivite architectures. In conclusion, Filliozat stated that perhaps the Pasupati Saivism in ancient Cambodian Kingdom might have some influence from the Chalukyas of Badami, Kalyani, Rastrakuta and
Hoyasala (Fillozart 2001, 2004:24-27). These *Pasupatas* could have crossed the ocean for the grace of Siva as they did not concern on caste or limited Brahmins condition (Wolters 1979: 433).

In addition to the similarity in artistic style, the installation of deities from other sects in Saivite – *Pasupati* temple was commonly practiced in ancient Khmer temple. This salient feature of Brahmanical toleration is not available only in South Indian *Pasupati* temple, but also at *Avantipura swami* temple located in Kashmir (Sahni 1913-1914: 63-97).

The Sakti cult of Saivism known as Devi had been intensively worshiped during pre-Angkorean period but did not have individual cult like in India. Many inscriptions mention the installation of Devi image in Saivite temples. Possibly, the Sakti cult was dominated under Saivism. The worship of *Ardhanarishvara* was practiced but very few sculptures are discovered from Cambodia and Thailand.

In case of Champa Kingdom, the royal religious capital at *My son* (Bhadrapura) was flourished with the cult of royal linga by several Kings from the 4th century A.D. The linga were always named after the King and Siva entitles such as “Bhadreseligavara” (Bhadravarman and Ishvara) or “Sambhubhadresvara” (Sambhuvarman and Bhardresvara) etc. (Finot 1901: 14).

As a result of Javanese invasion at around 8th century A.D., *Mi son* was destroyed by invaders. After the long period of political crisis, King *Jayasimhavarman* II established the new Saivite center at *Po Klong Garai*, southern region, at the late of 13th century A.D. The royal lingas in Champa were made of gold in specific forms like *muklinga*. The depiction of Siva in iconic forms were also commonly made in Champa as standing Siva in *Sukhasana murti* with multiple arms, *Siva nataraja*, *Bhairava*, *Sadhasiva* (Siva seating in the deep meditation) and *Ardhanarishvara*. The worship of *Sivapada* was possibly practiced during 8th century A.D. (Boisselier 1963: 22). The Sakti was known as “*Bhagavati*” was commonly worshiped in this country. Ganesh and Skanda always associated with Siva but their individual images are very rare. *Hari Hara* exists only in inscriptions without any discovered image (Finot 1901: 22; Boisselier 1963: 29). Regarding to the artistic style, Champa art developed paralleling with Khmer art but remained their distinctive appearance which was closer to Indian canon.

The form of devotion attesting to Siva or his linga in Southeast Asian Saivism suggests that the cult was emerged as part of personal worship rather than religious purpose and developed away from social and sectarians divisions. This significant feature is proved by the numbers of inscriptions mostly notified the Saivite cult as the personal God who had particular relationship with a divinely inspired rulers.
Thus, the worship of Siva in ancient Cambodia is possible to interprete as the sacred method for supporting the supreme position of King as “the God on earth”. In the same way, at the court of Ly dynasty in Vietnam (11th-13th century A.D.), the Kings were respected as the concentration of the spiritual energy of the land (Taylor 1986: 143).

**Vaisnavism:**

The worship of Vishnu possibly started from the beginning period of Indian impact. Vishnu image is the earliest iconic image of Brahmanical God in this region. Although Vaisnavism arrived to Southeast Asian countries in the same time of other sects, this cult likely appeared lesser dominated in the distant land compared with Saivism and Mahayana Buddhism.

However, the remains at Phanom Da Moutain, the number of Vishnu images dated to pre-Angkorean period were discovered. One of them has eight arms and honorific name as “Hari Kambujendra” or Great Hari the sovereign deity of Kambuja (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 15, 1964:72-74). Moreover, during the reign of King Jayavarman I, though Saivism was an important cult of the kingdom, the Vaisnavism was still patronized as seen from the installment of Kapila-vasudeva by royal order at Prasat Phum Crei (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 26).

In ancient Cambodian Kingdom, the inscription of Queen Kulaprabhavati dated to the early of 6th century A.D. attests the royal patronage in construction of hermitage and water reservoir for the benefit of Brahmnis. The record also mentions the myth of Śesa naga. In the inscription of Gunavarman, dated to the middle of 5th century A.D., indicates a grand devotion to Vishnu in the form of Vishnu pada named Chakratritha swamin. The prince ordered to erect this sacred feet, placed the donations to the sanctuary at the disposal of Bhagavata priests (Ceodes 1931: 2ff.; Bhattacharya 1955: 111, 1961 b: 25).

There are some references regarding to the Vaisanavite sect known as “Bhagavatas”, “Pancharatra” as well as “Satvatas” in ancient Khmer inscription. These names of different sects are evidently used as the generic name of Vaisnava. For instance, the pre Angkorean inscription of King Jayavarman I records on the installation of Vishnu image under with honorific name of Acyuta by the Bhagavata named Dharmapala. During the King Yashovarman I (889-900 A.D.), the Vaisnavas (pancharatra) was figured as one of important cults of ancient Khmer Kingdoms along with Saivas (Pasupatas) and Buddhism. The King established Vaisanavite temple for the hermits which is known as Prasat Khomnap.
The relationship of Vaisnavism and Saivism had gone smoothly and peacefully in the reign of King Rajendravarman (944-961 A.D.). In the inscription at Prasat Pre Rup, the court poet mentioned the four *vyuha* (*catur vayuha*) of Vishnu as the most distinctive element of *Pancharatra* and the royal servant who had knowledge of *Pancharatra* ritual (Bhattacharya 1955: 113). In the time of Jayavarman V, the Vaisnavism and Saivism were given patronage equally as noticed from the inscriptions refers to the *Satavata* priest working in the court as royal teacher for the King who was supposed to be Saivism devotee.

Interestingly, there were no cultic rivalry between Saivism and Vaisnavism in ancient Cambodian Kingdom. The peaceful sphere is noticed from the epigraphic source mentions the family member of *Panchagavya* (Vaisanavite court priest). His son who was mentioned as “…profundely versed in the Saivite doctrine…” also performed the ritual for Vishnu image erected by his father. Similar to Narayana the fervent Vaisnavas, according to *Prasat Kok Po* inscription, the Vaisnavite priest erected the *Nandi* and sculpture of *Mahakala* (Siva) at the door of sanctuary of Vishnu (Bhattacharya 1955: 113).

The scholar or *Bhagavata* pandit was also mentioned in *Banteay Sri* Inscription as “…a relation and spiritual friend…” of the Saivite *guru* of the King, *Yajnavaraha*. During the reign of King *Suryavarman* I, the Vaisanavite priest named *Kavisvarapandita* was respected as *guru* of many important hermitages of the Kingdom.

In addition, this Vaisanavite *guru* also erected an image of *Bhagavati* and consecrated a linga. During the reign of King *Jayavarman* VI, the King was strongly devoted to Vaisnavism as seen from the inscriptions at *Phanom Sandak* and *Preah Vihara*. The epigraphic sources stated that after his royal consecration, the King visited the Vaisanavite sanctuary at *Vishnu Champeśvara* (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 37).

The Vaisnavism had reached to its most glorious time during the reign of *Suryavarman* II, (1113-1150). He contributed the magnificent construction of *Angkor Wat* or known in Sanskrit name as “*Vishnu loka*”. There are many scenes narrating the myth of Krishna and Vishnu on the walls of monument. They reflect the high admiration toward the Vishnu and Krishna as the great *puranic* heroes and powerful protector. The flourish of Vaisanavite cult during this period was almost contemporary to the time of Śankaracharya and Ramanuja in India. This coincidence also happened in Java Island, where the King of *Kediri* dynasty always considered themselves as the incarnation of Vishnu.
Exactly, the association of Vishnu with the Surya also appeared in ancient Cambodian Kingdom. The Surya sculptures of pre Angkorean period (7th century A.D.) reflect the western Indian or Scythian influence from the tunic cloth and ornaments. In addition, there is an inscription mentioning “Śakabrahmanas” (Sythain or Sakas Bhramins) who worshiped the Sun God (Bhattacharya 1967: 130).

In case of Champa, although the Vaisnavism was not much prominent as Śaivism, this cult also mentioned as important sect of this Kingdom. The inscriptions of Vaisanavite are lesser in numbers than others, but related reference of Vishnu associating with Brahmanism confirms on the stronghold in the society.

The Cham Kings sometimes elaborated themselves equal to Vishnu or even regarded as the divine incarnation. The King Jaya Rudravarman and Sri Jaya Harivarmandevadeva declared themselves as a part of Vishnu incarnation as well as Krishna and Rama (Majumdar 1985: 194). There are many of Vishnu images in common form such as standing with four armed or seating over his vehicles. The Krishna avataras and Vishnu-Narayana reclining on the Śesa nagas are found in Champa. The images of Vishnu as well as Lakshmi were enshrined in the main religious centers like My son and Po nagar (Finot 1901: 18-22).

The worship of Vishnu Sakti, Lakshmi, has been generally found in ancient Cambodian, Champa and Indonesia. The most common figure of the Goddess is Gaja Lakshmi, symbol of fortune and prosperity. The golden images of Lakshmi was also mentioned in the inscriptions of ancient Cambodia and Champa as giving to the temple by Kings.

In case of mainland region, though the cult of Vishnu had not been much conspicuous in compared with Saivism, the concepts of great kingship related to Vaisnavism was overlords of this region. There are the ideal puranic King like Rama and Krishna were in high favor of the local Kings as noticed from the honorific entitles. In Thailand Ayuthaya Kings (late 14th century A.D.) officially named themselves after the puranic heroes like Rama I, Ramesvara or Narayana Maharaja. It is possible to state that the influence of Saivism and Visnavism still existed after the 13th century A.D., but their distinctive feature had changed for befitting in Buddhist society like Thailand and Burma.
The Maritime region:

The difference in geographical nature in the maritime region caused an important distinctive feature on the development in political history as well as in religion. These are the large area which the process of Indian impacts was introduced in the early of Christian era and finally associated with royal courts. At this region before the coming of Indian cultures, the people of various parts already lived in high level of social development, supporting the élite groups to select and adapt that more delicate culture. Similar to the religious aspect, these area was flourished with Brahmanism, especially Saivism and apparently later Mahayana Buddhism. While Hinayana and Jainism are almost absent from any evidence. Vaisnavism had also extended in quite limited appeal.

The old Javanonese religious literatures from 11th century mention the main three sectarian in the society known as “Tri paksâ” namely Saivas, Saugatas (Buddhism) and the Mahabrahmanas (yogis or rishis) each under the supervision of a central government official called “dharmadhikara”(Pigeaud 1960: 258, 479-493). The latter even less in number but was no mean unimportant. These Mahabrahmanas has large scope of meaning include the court priest who engaged in royal ceremonies and education.

The core basic of Brahmanical known as caste system existed as theoretical division of social structure (Casparis 1981; Casparis and Mebbett 1999: 305; Devahuti 1965: 80). Moreover, Indian culture as a part of expansion of political power was in favored of the kings in very early time at least before 8th century A.D. proven by Sanskrit usage for royal sacred rituals.

In fact this region reflects distinctive feature of religious syncretism between Brahmanical and Mahayana Buddhism which was evident after 12th century A.D. It caused the new form of indigenous Hindu-Buddhism (cult of Siva-Buddha) practiced in Bali and some parts of Indonesia in present day.

The early inscriptions of Indonesia dated to 4th-5th century A.D. attest the existence of Brahmanism in the inscriptions erected by the King Mulavarman (Kutei: Kalimantan) and Purnavarman (Taruma: Java island). Those of Mulavarman mentioned the precious gifts given to Brahmans by using the specific terms for different kinds of donations in Indian puranic tradition. In addition to royal grant, the Vedic ritual conducted by Brahmans was mainly recorded.

According to the inscription, King Puranavarman also ordered to erect the Vishnu pada referred to the King foot prints and elephant along with the royal inscription. The Vishnu (king) foot prints are bigger than life size and carved next to inscriptions or surrounded by religious symbols. In fact, the worship of sacred foot prints was not newly introduced in maritime region under Indian tradition.
There is the evidence of the worship of human (ancestors) foot prints still practiced in Indonesia as part of ancestor worship in Neas Island at the western coast of Sumatra (Vogel 1918:232, 1920; Casparis 1986)

Thus, the sacred treats of Sumatra region and other primitive cult were continued under the Sanskritized form (Vogel 1918; Casparis 1986). The royal ceremonies in Javanese courts associated to Brahmanical rite as example as the two important ceremonies (Casparis and Mebbett 1999: 306-307; Devahuti 1965: 91) known as Abhiseka (royal consecration) and Sraddha (funerary rites including Sati performed only by queen).

However, it can be considered that the influence of Brahmanism is neither limited in any specific period nor the performance of any rituals. Exactly, the Brahmanical practices which evidently chosen by élite group was also commonly followed by the locals in some basic extents such as education in asramas or hermitage life.

At Diang Plateau of central Java Island, besides extensive remains, sculptures and inscriptions, there was the communities of Rishi or so called as Guru or Deva guru who had settled there from the beginning of Christian era to at least 11th century A.D. The high respect to the Saivite priests was related to the Javanese popular Gods, Agastaya. The worship of Haricandana God who was unknown in India is seen from the old Javanese inscriptions and usually related to Agastaya.

But the cult of Haricandana is very less in context of any religious evidence and limited only in epigraphic sources (Casparis and Mebbett 1999: 308). Agastaya in Javanese tradition was given high respected place noticed form Dinaya inscription (760 A.D.) The inscription records the single image of Agastaya in the Brahmins (twice-born) house. Although the earlier reference of Agastaya is still unknown, the cult of holy sage in Malay Peninsula and Java region is an interesting subject which required special attention. There might be the relation in religious duty on the expansion of Brahmanism in distant land of celestial sages likely Bhrigu in Champa as well as Hiranyadama (the first Brahmins who conducted Devaraja cult to Jayavarman II) with the cult of Agastaya in Java. According to Bosch, he has suggested the probability of common origin of these three legendary sages (Chhabra 1935: 78; Chatterjee 1928: 80).

In case of literary sources, there is also evidence of Brahmanical ritual associated with primitive cult of nature Gods. The old Javaenese texts show this distinctive manner as they firstly invoke Brahmanical supreme Gods like Siva, Vishnu, and Brahma, the following are sun, moon and other natural creature or Bhutas. Sometime the six Vinayakas or Ganesha are also figured in this listed accompanied with Dikhpalas. The Sakti known as Durga occurs among the secondary deities
as the Goddess is related to the honorific man-eater demon abiding in cemeteries (Santiko 1987: 146ff.).

Another aspect of the Austronesian deities in the mainstream of Brahmanical tradition is the worship of *Si Pamumguan* (crocodile) and *Tandang Luah* (river deity). These mystic creatures were worshiped in Sri Vijaya Kingdom according to the inscriptions discovered from Malay peninsular and Sumatra (Coedes 1930: 40, 55)

The river deity was possibly the patron deities of this Kingdom, associated with the river *Musi*. The cult of natural deities assimilated into superior Brahmanical God noticed on the Javanese mythology regarding the sacred mountains where being abode of Gods like Mahendra and Brahma.

This story has been narrated in the 15th century A.D. work of *Tantu Panggelaran*; the Kailas was carried to Java and placed at the east of Island where the mountain *Gunug Sumeru* located. The myth of Brahma regarded as the God of fire was started from 10th century A.D. by setting his abode at the top of *Gunug Boromo*, the active volcano. Moreover, the smaller mountain, *Penanggungan*, at Surabaya has been worshiped according to its perfect shape. There are numerous of temples, mainly after 15th century has been discovered along the hill slope (Romondt 1951).

However, the worship of mountain as abode of superior Gods is also seen in Indian mythology. The royal dynasties often pay homage to one particular mountain like Eastern Ganga dynasty of Orissa respected to the Mountain *Gokarna*. It is similar to the worship of sacred rivers like Ganga, Yamuna, Kaveri and Sarasvati etc. Thus, ancient Indian and Javanese cults are normally similar in character, leading to the confusion either the primitive cult was brought into Brahmanical tradition or Brahmanism had assimilated as part of primitive lore.

**Saivism and Vaisnavism:**

The worship of Siva as the superior one was practiced from the early of Christian era. The trace of Vaisanavite cult was also practiced there, but lesser in extend. Mahayana Buddhism had dominated in Sumatra, Malay peninsular and Kalimantan. In Java region, the Mahayana Buddhism was flourished only during the Sailendra dynasty, 750-850 A.D., and again by the side of Saivism during time of Majapahit period (1250-1450 A.D.).

Saivism was definitely prominent in the royal court and gradually extended to secondary centers of countryside. In the agricultural society, Saivism was influenced into the concepts of fertility or assimilated into folk ritual.
In the light of old Javanese literature, most of the texts were inspired by Saivism. Similar to archaeological evidences, a numbers of Siva image are reported from the sites and monuments located in both central and eastern Java Island including Bali.

The statues of Siva and associated deities of this sect are found abundantly such as Durga, Ganesh and especially Agastya. The Siva iconographic feature are always created in general form as Siva-Mahadeva, having four armed with ascetic hair dress, third eyes, and characteristic accessories like trident, rosary, and snake sacred tread, etc. The God is adored with royal garment in peaceful appearance. The Bhairava or Mahakala images are rare sculptures. The door keepers, Mahakala and Nandisvara, are also depicted next to the hall of principle images or linga.

Generally, the worship of Siva in his most simple form as linga was commonly accepted. Siva lingas in Javanese art were made created indifferernt forms. There is an interesting observation states that the Siva famous forms in South India such as Nataraja and some composite forms like Somaskanda was not well accepted in Javanese arts.

Besides of single standing image and representing in the form of linga in the main sanctum of Sivite temple, the composition form of God accompanied with his associated dieites namely, Mahisasura madhini, Ganesh and Agastaya images are depicted on the wall in four directions. This character reflects the significant feature of ancient Javanese art.

Though this Tri-ad composition as Siva, Durga and Ganesh is commonly known to Indian art, the southern position in Javanese tradition usually depicted the sage Agastya instead of Daksinamurti in South Indian pattern. According to Poerbatjaraka (1926), the Agastya has been interpreted as Maha rishi who having great in knowledge befitting in his divine character. Moreover, there was temple devoted to Agastya at eastern Java in 760 A.D. when the sage was getting high worshiped in Java. Furthermore, the divine composition may symbolize the royal court position as Siva represented the King, Durga as the Queen, Agastaya being royal spiritual adviser and Ganesh in the post of minister (Stutterheim 1936).

As individual deities, Durga and Ganesh were commonly worshipped in Java. Durga is related to the death and cemeteries, but Ganesh is still regarded as the God of success who removes all of obstacle. Thus, the image of Ganesh always placed in the risky place like near by the river crossing, mountain passes or even the road which being aware of robbery (Sarkar 1971).

According to the concept of Brahmanical trinity known as Tri murti, though it is well established in India, this concept did not get much attainment in Javanese art. Both Brahma and Vishnu were in great veneration. Numerous sculptures of Brahma are reported comparatively much
more than in India or the other parts of mainland Southeast Asia (Casparis and Mebbett 1999: 313). However, his consort, Sarasvati and the swan (*humsa*) are rarely represented, only a few images show the deity seated on the big bird.

The emergence of Vaisnavism in maritime region is clearly seen in numerous Vishnu images made of stone and metal. Vishnu stone images are discovered in Malay peninsular and Java region. The sculptures were made in the simple standing form with strong influence of Pallava art of 6th – 7th century A.D. Interestingly, the early Vishnu images are mostly reported from ancient port sites, suggesting the well expansion of Vaisnavism along the trade connection (Dalsheimer and Manguin 1998: 87-116).

From the literature sources, the Vaisanavite communities had described as relatively small but influential. According to the most important history text, *Nagarakertigama* (12th century A.D.) provides valuable information of royal court of *Majapahit* religious activities. During Kediri and Majapahit periods that known as the most glorious time of Vaisnavism many kings were praised as “partial incarnations” (*angsawatara*) of Visnu. King *Jayanagara* (1309-1321 A.D.) was supposed to return to the abode of Hari after his death (*Nagarakertigama*: 48-3a) and worshipped in the form of Vishnu image (Krom 1931: 170-175). The Vishnu incarnation as Rama was well known in Java art, but there is no other example of a foundation devoted to Rama as deity. Compared to South India, this kind of foundation are able to recognize.

In Javanese tradition, the cult of divine prototype in the kingship concept as Krishna and Rama was much closed to the royal idealistic. Apart from the God, his associated deities and vehicle was also given important spaces in Javanese mythology and arts. The Sri or Lakshmi, beside of being prosperity Goddess and consort of God, the goddess is worshiped as the rice goddess who promotes the fertility of rice fields, especially in western Java under the name of *Ni Pohaci Sangyang Sri* (Hidding 1929 ; Tessier 1977 : 101).

Beside of the Gods, Garuda, the divine vehicle, is also worshiped as the mythological creator. In Javanese art, Garuda represents Vishnu’s mount and also the God himself. The admiration of this powerful magical bird is clearly noticed from the eastern Javanese *Candi Kedaton* dated at around 14th century A.D. The monument has series of reliefs devoted to the legend of Garuda (*Garudeya*). In addition, the Garuda is still regarded as the great creator and getting high respect from the people upto this present day.
Although the Brahmanical ritual practiced in ancient Javanese Kingdom was mostly similar to Indian tradition, the temple construction in Javanese art concept was probably quite different. The pattern of temple construction in Indian art usually follows the concepts of combined forms that the temple does not contribute by itself but forms part a groups or complex. On the contrary, the Javanese temple complex is very large and comprising hundreds of separate buildings. This character signifies the great God position as the superior one of the universe. So as the King who regarded as God on earth rules his state consisting of concentric circles with the King is the core center. The significant type of Hindu temples is well known as the group of temple at Prambanan (Roro Jonggrang).

In case of the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra which was governed under the Sri vijaya Kingdom, this region was strongly predominated by Mahayana Buddhism (Wales 1976: 81-120). But there are some exceptions like the Brahmanical monuments and sculptures of both sects found at the Khao Kha and Khao Sri Vijaya hills located at the southern Thailand and numerous sites of Bujang valley, Malaysia.

In case of Bujang valley, though an epigraphic source is absent, the discovered pottery may identify the date of site as the end of 11th century A.D. (Lamb 1961: 79-81). At Padang Lawas, northern Sumatra, there might be the place of Bhairava cult as seen from the depiction of dancing Yakshas on the wall of staircase of Biaro Bahal (I) dated from 7th century A.D. There also several Brahmanical statues have been reported from Sumatra. It suggests the familiar trend of religion with Java region. Unfortunately, there is no religious palm-leaf text preserved in Sumatra, as they are available in Java (Suleiman 1980: 9-10).

The greater Java Island at the middle 13th century was flourished with Saivism as well asin eastern Java and Bali. Two sites are being remarkable regarding to the beauty and size are Singhasari and Panataran. At Singhasari, besides splendid Brahmanical sculptures are depicted in the temple of Siva, the Prajnaparamittra image is also presented there. This interesting manner suggests the closed relationship between Saivism and Mahayana Buddhism. At Panataran, dated to the 14th century A.D., was fully constructed under the concept of sacred mountain as the abode of Siva.

The religious coalition is noticed as early as 8th century A.D. in the inscription at Kerulak mentioning the installation of Manjusri Bodhisattva associated with Brahmanical Gods like Indra and Tri muriti. During the reign of King Kertanagara (12th-13th century A.D.), the new form of Brahmanism which united to Mahayana Buddhism was introduced in the concept of Siva-Buddha (Sang Siva-Buddha). But the reality of Siva-Buddha concept is still in controversy as Siva-Buddha image is not found (Gonda 1971; Santoso 1975: 40-127).
In case of Brahmanical syncretism, the evidence is provided from the making of Hari-Hara images which was well known during Majapahit period.

The Brahmanism in Java was flourished mostly in the eastern region and maintained their glorious time through the splendid of arts and literature. Due to the Islamic invasion, the center of Brahmanical culture moved eastward to Bali where the indigenous Javanese culture is in well preserved up to the present day.

**The Brahmanism in Southeast Asia: conclusion**

The Brahmanism in Southeast Asian states initially developed under Indian tradition then reflected their distinctive features through various kinds of arts and structures. They are different in the level of Indian impact and geographical variation. In general, examining from arts, iconography and architectures, it is much complicated to identify the exact places in India where the majority of Brahmanical culture originated. However, the epigraphic sources provide much valuable information regarding the category of Indians who were in the role of Brahmanical expansion.

There are two groups with different purposes of coming to the distant lands, the merchant guilds and Brahmanas. The first group, the *nana desī* merchants not only concerned on trading matters, they also supported the construction of Brahmanical temple, mostly related to Vaisnavism. For instance, the known Tamil based merchant guild *Manigramam* had settled in *Tu Kua Pa*, southern Thailand, and constructed the water reservoir named “Avani narayam” after the entitle of Pallava King *Nandivarman* III (Sastri 1978:176-177 ; Abraham 1988: 29-33). This inscription was found near by the group of Vishnu images dated to 9th -10th century A.D., suggesting an important role of the merchant group in religious activity.

The merchant guilds played an important role in religious patronage as clearly seen from *mandasor* copper plated dated to Gpta period. Thus, if the wealthy merchant guilds commonly gave financial supports to religious institutes in India, it could be followed in the same way in Southeast Asian region (Manguin 2010: 178; Clémentin-Odjha 2008).

Beside of commercial purpose, Chinese account mentioned on the Brahmmins who departed from their country for the chance of prosperity under the King of distant land and large settlement of *Brahmanas* families along the Malay Peninsula during early of Christian era. This information suggests the early impact of Brahmanism in Southeast Asian that it was introduced by the priests of various sects. The coming of religious culture from India was welcomed in the courts and followed by Kings who wished to support the sacred ritual in order to increase their superior political status.
There were numbers of learn Brahmins worked in high status in Southeast Asian courts, especially in ancient Khmer and Javanese Kingdoms. The inscription from Sombor Prei Kuk (no.16: K438) mentions on the Indian Saivite Brahmins named Durgaswamins who believed to depart from Daksinapatha (South Indian possibly Deccan region) and being acknowledged in Taittiriya schools (Coedes 1952: 25; Boisselier 1963: 38). The other case was Saivite Brahmins named Šakraswamin who married with princess Šobhajaya, he established Saivite temple and installed Tripurantakesvara image (Siva) inside the sanctum. According to his name, the Brahmin was possibly from north India region (Bhattacharya 1961b: 27). Some of high families born Brahmins were given the female royal members for getting married in purpose of increasing political alliance. Besides getting high political status in the royal court, they also gave much patronage to the Brahmanical activity.

In the light of epigraphic references, the honorific name of deities belonged to Saivism and Vaisnavism also reflect the origins of Brahmanism in ancient Cambodia. There are some distinctive names like Kedareśvara commonly used in pre Angkorean inscriptions. In fact, this name also appeared in India as one of the twelfth “Maha Lingam” at Himalaya and Kedara is name of Svayambhuva linga (Rao 1916 (II): 83). This name also occurs in Karnataka as the name of Kedareśvara temple in Karnataka (Fillizart 2004: 27). There are several names of Siva related to north Indian origin such as Amareśa, Amratakeśvara, Acaleśvara, Naimišeśra, Vireśvara and Kanakaleśvara. And also some entitles which were known in western India, such as Prabhasasomeśvara and Vrddheśvara. In case of South Indian influence, some specific linga names are mentioned in Khmer inscriptions as Kadambeśvara, Tilakeśvara and Jalangeśvara (Bhattacharya 1961 b: 51-56).

The concept of pilgrimage and religious centers in India was well known in Southeast Asian Brahmanism. The inscriptions found in Cambodia and Java regions mention the tirtha (sacred pilgrimage place) in India. In central Java region, Canggal and Tuk Mas inscriptions compare the purifying of the holy river of the county with Ganges (Sarkar 1971: 13-14; 1974: 15-23). In the same way with ancient Cambodian inscriptions, there are some of important tirtha names such as Ayodhya, Kasi, Ganga, Prayaga and Kuruksetra etc. (Salomon 1990: 160-161).

In fact, these tirtha were typically used as formulaic and rhetorical manner rather than meaning on the inhabitances of these places in Southeast Asian states came from or even exactly visited the mentioned tirtha in India (Coedes 1968: 30, Sarkar 1965: 303). Moreover, though these tirtha names and Indian toponyms in Southeast Asian inscriptions are mostly northern Indian origins, it does not have any absolute means on being dominated Brahmanical tradition in the states where the archaeological evidences indicate the predominance of eastern, western and southern influences.
in the Indianization process of Southeast Asia. The northern Indian names would rather mean on the cultural traditions that was brought to Southeast Asia like *epic-puranic* lore (Jacques 1962: 249-250).

The Brahmanism of both mainland and maritime regions had similar character in reflecting the level of Indian cultural influence in particular hierarchy of their society. According to Sylvain Lévi (1928: 21), he rightly observed that in Indochinese Penninsular and Indonesia, the presence of Brahmanical tradition is no way being revival with Buddhism. Although the kings and élite groups were able to adopt them as finest culture, it was not “Civilization” that expanded “deeply” into the masses.

Thus, social life of the local class still continued without minding on any intensive philosophy like *Manu* and other complicate religious texts. But in India it was otherwise, Brahmanism is strongly involve in social order and the two were identical. This reason clearly explains the cultic rivalry in India while this phenomenon is not evidently found in Southeast Asia. On the other view, the sacred rites and flok beliefs practiced by locals could also effected the process of cultural adaptation that merely dominated by privilege groups. Hence, the development of Brahmanism in early states was not only seen as finest ritual of the royals, but also amalgamated with folk beliefs which strongly influenced the peoples.