Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative (ECAI)
New Projects: Visual Anthropology and GIS Digital Approaches on Monsoon Asia, focusing on the Melayu Community of Sri Lanka

David Blundell
National Chengchi University

Innovative Ways of Linking Cultural Data on Austronesia

PNC
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Austronesia Team Study Zone

Figure 1
Distribution of the Austronesian Language Family and Major Subgroupings. Adapted from the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, National Australian University. Structure of the Austronesian Language Family from Blust.
Austronesia Team since 1997

Our research team is interdisciplinary representing ethnography, history information science, GIS mapping, and audio-visual media.

Projects are studies of people, their languages and cultures, and utilization of their lands and resources.
Team Members

Austronesia Team Coordinators
David Blundell
Michael Buckland
Jeanette Zerneke

Institutions
UC Berkeley
Shung Ye Museum
Academia Sinica
National Chengchi University
Navigating the Maritime Silk Road

For voyaging in Monsoon Asia, installations are planned to be animated and interactive, using 3D immersive theatre environments and apps for hand-held devices pioneered by ALiVE, Hong Kong.
Regional Atlases:
Taiwan, Lanyu, and the Batanes of the Philippines
Historical Maps
Tracing Maritime Buddhism
Earliest drawings of ships
The *bodhi* tree given by King Asoka arriving by ship for planting in Sri Lanka.
Anuradhapura hydraulic civilization in Sri Lanka extended from coast to coast, 3rd cen BCE to 10th cen. Buddhism along with trade went to SE Asia.
Sigiriya (Lion Rock, සිඩිරීය)
King Kasyapa, 5th cen
MURALS AT TIVANKA PILIMAGE

ARCHEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT
COLOMBO 7, CEYLON
Borobudur, is a 9th-cen. Buddhist monument, Java.
On the monument – an early depiction of an oru.

In the following slides, from the stone relief, the ship was reconstructed to sail across the Indian Ocean.
Featuring the *Oru* – Oceangoing Ship

The *oru* is a craft described as a log based dugout canoe with single-outrigger.

Apart from that form, there are two other related forms: double outrigger and double hulled craft.

Both single and double outrigger canoes are to be found, in the global context:
(a) Madagascar and east coast of Africa, (b) Sri Lanka, (c) Indonesian archipelago, and (d) across the Pacific.
Oru, ethnography of sailing, coast of Sri Lanka.
As far back as two millennia ago people in the trappings of this new international spiritual authority at the time to become known as Buddhism introduced a web of connections forming a world trade system in a tropical region of peninsulas and islands.
Austronesian (Malay-Indonesian) built ships transporting people and cargo across the Indian Ocean that continued up to the early part of last century.

As the Southern Ocean currents have washed the shores from Arabia Saba to Java, there have been voyages of the earliest people who have laced the seas from East to West and West to East. The Sinhala and Tamil chronicles of South Asia allude to the overseas people approaching their shores as being Eastern, Javaju, and Western, Yavana.
Elements of Research

Archaeology / Inscriptions

Stories and Legends

Ethnography

Sailing Craft Technology

Mapping Routes

Destinations
2nd Century Archaeology / Inscriptions

Excavations of ancient ports and settlements reveal timber of hull and planks of large vessels in South Asia and Sumatra.

Inscriptions: for example on stone in Malaysia at Bujang Valley a salutation was given to the Buddha for safe passage from Sri Lanka by Buddhagupta (Sinhala).
Palembang, Srivijaya, was piled above an inland tidal mangrove delta of the Moesi River which exhaustively unraveled itself in a thousand ribbons to the sea that commanded the great spice trade.

Minor Tun-sun and the Red Earth Land (Ch’ih-T’u) rested along the East Malayan coast as isthmus city-states in federation with continental Fu-nan.

In the series of trade circuits there was a portrait of metropolitan territories—like the night sky clustered with stars rendering a different magnitude, hue, galaxy, life length, dimension and relative primacy, they all comprised the whole.
Travelling Monks – Navigation from East Asia to South Asian ports was routine for more than two thousands years especially in the 2nd century CE with the rise of the international dharma faith. Monks travelled the sea routes to reach lands of Buddhist sources.
Faxian’s Buddhist Cave

For example, Faxian, a Chinese monk, stayed among the native inhabitations of Sri Lanka in a cave dating back to the Paleolithic Age, 30,000 years ago. On his return, he stayed five months in Java. Back in China, the monk spent the remainder of his life translating and editing his collection of Buddhist texts, and wrote on the lands of his travels.
Stories and Legends

Sanskrit and Prakrit literature, evolving from earlier oral traditions, has made numerous allusions to the lands reaching toward the sunrise. Southeast Asia and the islands held promise of princely wealth behind golden walls and gates. There, scattered lands of rugged mountain and forest terrain exhausted themselves to the sea.

Stories of the Jataka (Lives of the Buddha) tell of princes and merchants bound for Suvarnabhumi to trade.
Narratives are important to give color to Buddhist ports. The literate South Asia dawned with the innovation of Brahmi script (3th cen BCE to 5th cen) revolutionizing secular textual communication in South Asia. These early texts, like the unprecedented visual arts of the time, are Buddhist.
Epic Story in Brahmi script

An example is a story by the Tamil merchant prince, Seethalai Satthanar. He wrote the epic *Manimekalai (The Girdle)* in 30 long poetic texts. The original manuscripts in Tamil were written in Brahmi script. The story is about the life of a Buddhist nun with a magic bowl.
Modern Tamil version
Ethnography

Ethnological research based in the present tells of the ethnographic present tracing back three to five generations.

This information shares an edge with earlier patterns.
Mapping Routes

Seafaring routes explore voyaging methods in the rhythm of the Monsoon and against the wind sailing techniques that give lines of direction for mapping across open seas.
Sri Lanka Oru

http://vimeo.com/19077398  Web-movie
In 2004, a *tsunami* hit Sri Lanka
Melayu fishermen and their boats were swept away.
A ray of light came as an oil lamp – relief arrived to help the people and their material culture.
Melayu Community 2013, Hambantota relief village sponsored by Buddhist Tzu Chi, Taiwan.
Conclusion

The Austronesia Team is producing components of the Atlas of Maritime Buddhism related to:

1. Ships –
2. Routes and Timelines –
3. Trade Winds –
4. Ports –
5. Travelling Monks –
6. Stories –