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THE INFLUENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES DURING PREHISTORIC PERIOD

The Influence of Indian Culture in Southeast Asian countries during prehistoric period: An Analysis in special context to recent discoveries

Introduction

India has never been the isolated country. Harappan Culture/ Civilization had a commercial relationship with Mesopotamia and Egyptian countries and later period the cultural elements of India diffused towards southeast Asian countries. Many ancient texts like Ramayan, Pali Nideshak described the Suvarnadwipa which means the island of the gold, suvarnabhumi, the land of the gold karpur dipa (land of the camphor). Southeast Asian countries are rich in the production of coconut (Narikela Dvipa). In Ramayan, Rama visited Lanka which was made/constructed of Gold. Many Chinese sources also describe the presence of the Brahmans in these regions. After the origin of Buddhism in India, It diffused in entire world, mainly to Southeast Asian countries. During the period of the Chola, they conquered south east asian countries. The Indianistain of the south east asian culture was the result of trade and commerce.

Many southeast Asian countries are following the practices of their ancient period. However they had adopted any other religion but they have not left their cultural values. This shows the depth of Indian culture in Southeast Asian countries.

Gradual diffusion of Indian Culture towards Southeast Asian countries

During the prehistoric period , we see the cultural similarity between the cultures of eastern India with the cultures of Burma, China, Tibet etc. If we study the potteries of the prehistoric period, we see the similarity in the ceramic cultures of both of the regions.

There is much evidence collected during the 19th centuries from eastern Indian sites regarding the cultural migration and influence from Northern India towards northeast and eastern India. The records however are kept in London. Robert Bruce Foote found many pieces of evidence from Pallavaram, Madras, and Boucher de Perthes (France) in 1863. Still there are many places where the archaeological excavation could not be done properly. The Neolithic people of the eastern Indian might have migrated to south east asian region and could carry the cultural features there.

Beginning with the pioneering work of Sir John Lubbock (1867) who reported for the first time the evidence of the prehistoric archaeological record from Northeast India in the Athenaeum of London in 1867. The credit should be given to British anthropologists and archaeologists who contributed in archaeological research before the independence of India. During pre Independence India many discoveries were made by Robert Bruce foote regarding the pre historical sites. He was the person whose contribution towards the paleolithic sites in India is unparalleled . However after Independence of India many archaeologists like HC sharma also analyzed the significance of the Robert Bruce foote's work. On the bases of neolithic sites , HC sharma successfully explained about the migration of the people from one place to another place in the search for a subsistence base.

There are many historic sites discovered by the archeologist explaining about the cultural significance. HC sharma in his arctic published in 2003 shows that the research is confined to basically surface sites and rarely excavated sites of the Neolithic cultural period. J.P. Mills in the 1930s also stated that "the spade, the chief tool of archaeologists had hardly been used in research in Assam" The surface finds and excavated material failed to provide detailed understanding of subsistence and settlement patterns of the early farming communities.

This part of India still suffers from insufficient data for reconstructing its past cultures though it has a long history of more than 140 years of archaeological research.

However we have very rich archaeological sites explaining the evidence of the cultural flow but because of lack of sufficient discoveries and the excavation the picture is still to uncover. However on the basis of the literary sources it can be clearly mentioned that the migration of the people could be there. Migration of the human has been the general characteristic during pre historic era because humans

had to migrate from one place to other place in the search of new subsistence bases. On the basis of archaeological and anthropological study this migration can be predicted. During the Paleolithic phase, many african men migrated towards India and from India towards the south east asian countries. Definitely they must have carried some cultural element with them towards various parts of Eurasia.

The academic discussions among the Lower Palaeolithic archaeologists are centered on the debate about the timing and geographic expansion of the earliest “Out of Africa” hominid migrations. In recent years, the “Out of Africa” model has been playing a vital role in the Old World Palaeolithic scenario, which implies that Homo erectus ventured outside the African continent at 1.8 million years or slightly before.

Nearly four decades of intermittent prehistoric investigations (initiated in the mid-1970s) in the Garo Hills of Meghalaya revealed the existence of several assemblages with Paleolithic elements. The artifacts which have been identified (or rather, claimed) to be of Lower, Middle and Upper Palaeolithic traditions of European nomenclature were collected from secondary depositional contexts and have been placed to different cultural stages on the basis of typological ground. Some of the industries have been compared and correlated to Indian as well as Southeast Asian tradition. As these artifacts are mostly surface collections and the chronology is not yet well understood, the issue of the presence of Palaeolithic artifacts remains as a “dilemma” in the prehistory of Northeast India (Hazarika 2012).

In the recent research done by the Chinese scholars, the evidence of the cultural flow can be predicted. Recently in 2006 the archaeologists of China Londo, Chiang, Hung, Chiang and Barbara analyzed the culture on the basis of the DNA study. He studied the DNA sequencing of three distinct gene regions in a phylogeographic approach to investigate the domestication of cultivated rice. Finally he concluded about the cultural relationship between India and China, mainly Indo chinese regions of southeast Asia. Indochina may represent the ancestral center of diversity for the wild rice *Oryza Rufipogon*.

Phylogeographic analysis suggests that cultivated rice, *Oryza sativa*, was domesticated from its wild progenitor, *Oryza Rufipogon*, at least twice in at least two different geographic regions in eastern Asia and that the products of these two independent domestication events are the two major rice varieties, *Oryza sativa indica* and *Oryza sativa japonica*. Based on this geographical analysis, *Oryza sativa indica* was domesticated within a region south of the Himalayan mountain range,

most likely eastern India, Myanmar, and Thailand, while *Oryza sativa japonica* was domesticated from wild rice in southern China.

T.C. Sharma (1991) has pointed out that scholars all over the world are of the opinion that archaeology in Northeast India is very important for world archaeology, because this region is supposed to have played a great role in the domestication of a number of food plants essential for man, including rice. Therefore, It may clearly proved that , during prehistoric period there must have been the interconnectivity between Indian culture with the culture of southeast Asian region

In the Historic Period, we have clear evidence available showing the cultural interrelation between India and southeast Asian countries. After the evolution of Buddhism and the diffusion of Buddhism towards the southeast Asian countries may be the one reason behind that cultural connection to southeast asian countries. Beside, many traders and Merchant During the Asokan period, Many messengers and representatives of the Asoka were sent to various regions of the world and they not only reached there but some of them settled there and in this way, they brought the Indian culture with themself.

Cultural flow from southern India towards the south east asian countries did not start only in historical period because of commercial relationship or political relationship but this migration had been continuing from India towards the south east asian countries for thousands of year

General migration of the Human can be seen in the direction of the rivers flow because, for the men migration in the direction of rivers flow was easy. In lack of technology, humans could not migrate against the river's flow. And hence the cultural migration from the northern India towards the southern India and then southeast asian countries should not be surprising Burma (myanmar), Thailand, Việt Nam, Cambodia, and Laos, Malay World are the regions where the cultural connections with india are found on large scale. The numerous reason behind the culture influence on these regions can be described.

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