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How to Deal with Aboriginal Culture — Ancient Champa as an Example*

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摘 要

本文所要探討的個案是占婆與印度文化之間的關係如何界定，以及如何看待占婆本土信仰等問題。占婆是南島語系民族建立於越南中南沿岸的文化古國，就族群與語言而言為馬來人種，故其分散式政治空間的組合方式為馬來波利尼西亞政體之表現。這種政治文化不同於大陸型集中政權體制，或可稱為分散式海上游牧主義。

因其所處地理位置，占婆自古以來便受到外來文明相當顯著的影響，中國當然是其中之一，不過這跟印度文化在占婆所居顯赫地位相比，顯然遜色不少，從公元二世紀出現在歷史舞台到十四、五世紀，占婆一直受到印度文化（包括印度教與佛教）深刻的影響。法國文化史家則以印度化來稱呼諸如占婆等中南半島各地的印度文化傳承之跡。

法國文化史家 Mus 對占婆文明之印度化之事提出進一步論述，認為這是因為整個古代亞洲，包括占婆與印度，在宗教文化上都普遍存在著一種叫泛靈主義思想之故。泛靈主義使得占婆本土信仰能與印度文化在深層之處互通有無，進而巧妙地將外來文化融合於其中。

然而，泛靈主義真可以說明清楚占婆的本土信仰嗎？本人以為若不回到文化時空脈絡上來談個別相關之具體問題，便容易成為一種全稱式的文化化約論述。因此，就占婆文化而論，吾人之出發點應該是從其所立身的海上游牧主義來著手而非在定義鬆散之泛靈主義上來做文章。

關鍵詞：占婆、海上游牧主義、印度化、泛靈主義、本土信仰、化約主義

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1. Preliminary Remarks: India, China and Cultural Assimilation

As a student of Sanskrit culture, my interest is in ancient Indian religious development, both Hinduism and Buddhism, and Indian cultural arena in East and Southeast Asia. Additionally, I am also fascinated by the highly intricate situation of Indian cultural traditions interacting with different indigenous cultures. We know fairly well that Buddhism imparted new religious dimensions and philosophical discourses to Chinese culture. It is also through China that Buddhism was introduced to other East Asian lands and Vietnam. Culturally speaking, China and India as two major Asian traditions exerted tremendous influence in many parts of Asia. Max Weber, in discussing "the general character of Asiatic religion" has the following remarks:

> For Asia as a whole China played somewhat the role of France in the modern Occident. All cosmopolitan "polish" [Schliff] from China, to Tibet to Japan and outlying Indian territories. Against this India in Asia has a significance comparable to that of antique Hellenism. There are few conceptions transcending practical interests in Asia whose source would not finally have to be sought there. Particularly, all orthodox and heterodox salvation religions that could claim a role in Asia similar to that of Christianity are Indian.[1]

One may term Buddhinization (?), Indianization (or Sanskritization) or Sinicization to what happened in ancient Asian cultural world. Of course, these terms smacks of cultural imperialism nowadays. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that for a long time India and China did play vital roles in dissimilating cultural values. On the other hand, there is a fundamental difference between China and India in terms of cultural orientation. One finds that while political order is paramount over all others in Chinese culture, within Indian civilization the religious order, which is autonomous in relation to the political order,

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[1] Max Weber, *The Religion of India. The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism*, translated and edited by Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindaletrans (Glencoe: Free Press, 1958), p. 329.

assumes greater prominence.[2] The distinctive cultural disposition in these two traditions will become clearly evident when it interacts with other cultures.

In talking about cultural assimilation, it has to be reminded that the interactions between two cultures are never that of one-sided simple absorption. In fact, the dissemination process is extremely complicated that a general term like "cultural influence" is rather imprecise and misleading. We need a more accurate language in recounting the diffusion of cultural values. As the spreading of Indian religious culture eastward to Southeast Asia is widely held as one of the most magnificent cultural events in human history, I am also curious about how the process of the so-called "Indianization" took place in different localities of this region. To sum up, my attempt in this paper is to offer a reference point for us to entertain a different possibility of cultural understanding.

2. Champa as a Reference Point of Indianization in Southeast Asia

The example that I will expound is ancient Champa（占婆）. This kingdom ruled much of the coast of Vietnam roughly from modern Dong Hoi（同匯）in the north to Phan Thiet（籓切）in the south which flourished through the greater part of the first millennium and the later centuries. Champa was gradually assimilated by the Vietnamese. In 1471 its capital, Vijaya, fell under the assault of the Dai Viêt（大越、安南）king Le Thanh Tong（黎聖宗）. From 1471 to its final downfall in 1832 by Emperor Minh Menh（明命）the history of Champa continued a long struggle, as the Chams had to resist expansion from Vietnam to maintain their sovereignty and identity.[3] In this essay I will first discuss the

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[2] "One of the most striking characteristics of Chinese civilization is what might be called the centrality and weight of the political order within that civilization." Benjamin Schwartz, *China and Other Matters* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 114. "A general glance at the history of India—with all due reservations—suggests that in India the religious order is quite independent of and pre-eminent in relation to the political order and one may indeed say that the Hindu social order, to a degree, independent of the political order." Ibid., p. 116.

[3] For a survey of Cham political history after 1471, see Po Dharma, "Status of the Latest Research on the

distinctive political features of Champa and then proceed to illustrate the characteristics of its cults and show how possibly aboriginal Cham religious culture perceives Indian tradition and becomes assimilated with it.

To be precise, Champa is a general term for the polities organized by Austronesian-speaking people along the central and southern coast of Vietnam.[4] The Chinese documents since the Han period have preserved the history of this area for more than a thousand years from 192 A.D. This area was called Lin-yi（林邑）by the Chinese annalists until 758 A.D. and from 875 the name was changed into Chan-ch'eng（占城）, understood as equivalent to Champāpura or "City of Champā." The Chinese annalists, because of their cultural predilection, prefer to call this area as a kingdom.[5] In fact, Champa should more properly be understood as "an archipelagically–defined cultural-political space."[6]

Date of the Absorption of Champa by Vietnam," Pierre-Bernard Lafont, ed., *Proceedings of the Seminar on Champa* (Rancho Cordova, Ca.: Southeast Asia Community Center, 1994), pp. 53-64.

[4] The following elucidation of the geography and the political culture of Champa is based on the following chapters: Keith W. Taylor, "The Early Kingdoms," Nicholas Tarling, ed., *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, vol.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 137-182; Kenneth Hall, "Economic History of Early Southeast Asia," *The Cambridge History of Southeast*, vol. 1, pp. 252-260.

[5] This cultural predilection can be also found in Chinese concept of a Funan（扶南）as a state. Wolters' observations are pertinent here: 'The elaboration of the features of a "Funanese" typology, however, depends on an altogether different set of signifiers that owe their origin to Chinese preoccupation of a "state." The Chinese supposed, for example, that any state should be associated with rules of dynastic succession and be described by fixed boundaries. No such polity existed anywhere in earlier Southeast Asian history except...in Vietnam. Yet the Chinese were unable to conceptualize "Funan" as being anything other than a "state," albeit an unstable one, and, because of this Chinese perspective, "Funan" has become the earliest Southeast Asian example of what sociologists refer to as a "patrimonial bureaucracy," a model that does not seem to fit the prehistoric evidence." Oliver W. Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 24. It is also interesting to observe that in Chinese historical records Champa had been classified under the list of "barbarous tribes"（東南夷列傳 or 南蠻列傳）as Champa was next to the southernmost territory of the Middle Kingdom and waged war against the Empire from very early times. From a Chinese perspective, it yet remained to be domesticated by the universal kingship. Although the distinctive Indian features such as Brahmins as priests(「謂師君為婆羅門」《南齊書》), the use of written language (Sanskrit) and the practice of Buddhism(「俗有文字，尤信佛法。」《舊唐書》) in Champa were noticed by the Chinese annalists, they obviously did not consider them to be signs of civilization. The political order remains the focal concern of the Chinese annalists.

[6] Taylor, "The Early Kingdoms," p. 153; Anthony Reid, *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000), pp. 39-53.

Geographically speaking, the land of Champa stretched along the coast of modern Vietnam for almost 1000 kilometers. It was consisted of many small island-like enclaves delimited by the seas and the mountains. It was a continental terrain most close to the morphology of an archipelago. These enclaves are relatively isolated from the continent by a thick belt of mountains to the west, open to the sea in the east, and separated from each other by rows of mountains that extended into the sea.[7] Because of its geography, the Malayo-Polynesians were the first peoples who appropriated this territory.[8]

The peoples of Champa are Malay in terms of ethnicity and language. Their organization of political space, as an expression of Malayo-Polynesian polity, is quite different the polities found in continental settings, or on heavily populated islands such as Java. Maritime nomadism is the traditional Malayo-Polynesian culture from which the political authority derived.[9] It was dispersed, with a disposition for small group maintaining relative independence to move around as they desired.[10] Thus the land of Champa was broken up into many small littoral enclaves with a lengthened alpine hinterland. This region therefore does not belong to the conventional category of unified kingdom, but was understood as island-clusters within a larger archipelago.[11]

As the Cham polities controlled the southern region of Vietnam from the

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[7] For a general territorial extent of Champa, see Quách-Langlet, "The Geographical Setting of Ancient Champa," *Proceedings of the Seminar on Champa*, pp. 21-42.

[8] Taylor, "The Early Kingdoms," p. 153; Reid, *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia*, pp. 39-53.

[9] For the distinctive cultural features of maritime nomadism in Champa, see Hall, "Economic History of Early Southeast Asia," pp. 252-260.

[10] "The revival of interest in the Cham is a reflection of this new appreciation of diversity and ambivalence in the region. The Cham were an embarrassment to both Vietnamese and Khmer nationalism, a reminder that borders had not always been where they came to rest in the colonial era, and that group identities were by no means fixed or immutable. They were a maritime and mobile people whose influence was felt as far afield as Java, Sulawesi and the Philippines, but who defied attempts to draw lines on the map indicating where they 'belong.' In this they were characteristic of Austronesian-speakers, the mariners and rovers par excellence of the pre-modern world." Reid, *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia*, p. 40.

[11] Taylor, "The Early Kingdoms," pp. 153-154. Cf also, Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels. Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800-1830*, vol.1: *Integration on the Mainland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.349-351.

second to the fifteenth centuries A.D., it represented the achievements of a culturally integrated yet decentralized polity.[12] The recurrent movement of the Cham royal center, among several river-mouth centers, corresponds to relocate of ascendancy from the overlord of one Cham river valley to another, there was a permanent one. The Cham center at Indrapura（Tra-kieu 茶喬）on the coast served as the locus of Cham royal ceremony that elevated a sense of cultural harmony among the diverse populations of the Cham realm.[13] Similar to its contemporary Southeast Asian civilizations in Cambodia and Java, Champa left magnificent temple complexes and abundant inscriptions written in both Sanskrit and Cham.

Because of its geographical location, Champa has been exposed to the influence of foreign cultures since early times. As a result, Cham culture was highly cosmopolitan and was in constant interaction with its neighbors by the land and the sea to the south and west. The emergence of the kingdoms in Champa as described in Chinese annals testified to the early contact of Champa with the more ancient civilizations of the outside world. China is certainly one of them. However, Chinese influence here remains minor in comparison with Indian cultural expansion.[14] Historians often termed Indianization as the widespread transmission of Indian culture, both Hinduism and Buddhism in

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[12] "Contrarily to what has been asserted in some publications, national sources present the country, which is usually called the Indianized kingdom of Champa, not as a centralized state but a kind of federation whose components enjoyed political autonomy, which is more or less effective depending on the period. There were sometimes four or three kingdoms, namely Amaravati in the North, Vijaya in the Bình-Định province and Panduranga in the Phan-Rang-Phan Rí region. Panduranga seems to have sometimes included Kauthara (region of Nha-Trang) which , in other times, was separated from Panduranga to become a fourth component of Champa." Po Dharma, *Le Pānduranga (Campā), 1802-1835. Ses rapports avec le Vietnam*, 2 vols. (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1987): 56, quoted in Bernard Gay, "New Perspectives on the Ethnic Composition of Champa," *Proceedings of the Seminar on Champa*, pp. 51-52, n.7.

[13] Hall, "Economic History of Early Southeast Asia," *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, vol. 1: 252-254.

[14] The Cham predilection for Indian culture rather than Chinese is in contrast with that of the Vietnamese. While Vietnamese culture was highly Sinicized, the penetration of Indian culture in ancient Champa was remarkable. It is of course difficult to explain how this cultural preference happened. However, it is clearly shown that Cham culture was highly religiously orientated.

many parts of Southeast Asia.[15] Champa is one of the outstanding examples of Indianization in this area. Coedès defined Indianization of Southeast Asia as the following:

> Indianization must be understood essentially as the expansion of an organized culture that was founded upon the Indian conception of royalty, was characterized by Hinduist [sic] or Buddhist cults, the mythology of the Purāṇas, and the observance of Dharmaśāstras, and expressed itself in the Sanskrit language. It is for this reason that we sometimes speak of "Sanskritization" instead of "Indianization".[16]

Indeed, the presence of Indian culture in Champa is remarkable. The ancient remains of Hindu temple complex in My Son (美山) and the numerous royal inscriptions written in Sanskrit since the second century well attest to this fact . The cult of Hindu deities, Brahman, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Devī as witnessed by the archeological sites clearly shows the deep penetration of Indian religious culture. In particular, Śaivism was preponderant over others as it connected with the royal ideology and kings relied on it for the protection of the land and the lineage. Thus, in the royal inscriptions the name of Maheśvara was the foremost among the deities in the salutation list.[17]

Vaiṣṇavism only played a secondary role comparing with Śaivism. Buddhism also had its place here but often intermingled with Hinduism.[18] Tantrism, both the Buddhist and the Hindu, which had been a pan-Asian religious phenomenon since the middle of the first millennium, also left its traces in Champa. The employment of the abhiṣekanāma (consecrated royal title) by the royal house clearly indicates the implementation of the Hindu kingship. The social divisions in Campa apparently also derived inspiration

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[15] George Coedès. *The Making of South East Asia*, trans. H. M. Wright (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966) ; *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, edited by Walter F. Vella, translated by Susan Brown Cowing (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968).

[16] Coedès, The Indianized States of Southeast Asia, pp: 15-16.

[17] Claude.Jacques, ed., *Études Épigraphiques sur le Pays Cham* (Paris: Presses de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1995).

[18] Ian Mabbett, "Buddhism in Champa," *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 289-313.

from the ideals of Hindu social formation.[19]

The above illustration shows conclusively that Indian culture held undisputed sway over Champa. This process of Indianization lasted for more than a millennium and left an indelible mark on the land of central and southern Vietnam. Nonetheless, the Cham culture gradually turned away from India after the second half of the thirteenth century. The capture of Vijaya by the Vietnamese only speeded up the destruction of Hindualised Cham culture.[20]

One could not help wondering how Indian culture came to the land of Champa and became its "national emblem". At first, the view on the diffusion of Indian culture over large parts of Southeast Asia was mainly based on analogies with Greek, Roman, or Western expansion. Nevertheless, there was no evidence for Indian conquests in Southeast Asia, nor for any large-scale Indian emigration or colonization. Coedès argued:

> Indian penetration or infiltration [in Southeast Asia] seen almost always to have been peaceful; nowhere was it accompanied by the destruction that brought dishonor to the Mongol expansion or the Spanish conquest of America. Far from being destroyed by the conquerors, the native peoples of Southeast Asia found in Indian society, transplanted and modified, a framework within which their own society could be integrated and developed.[21]

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[19] 馬司倍羅（Maspéro, Georges）（著）、馮承鈞（譯），《占婆史》（*La royaume de Champa*）（台北：台灣商務印書館，1962），頁 4-10.

[20] "The latest Sanskrit inscription so far discovered is dated 1252, and Champa's cultural decline was partly a result of the Muslim invasions of the late twelfth century in India, severing it links with Indochina and thus strangling the cultural contact which had over the centuries breathed new life into the civilization of Hinduised Champa. The latter was also in decline because the country's defeats in warfare during the thirteenth century at the hands of the Khmers, the Vietnamese and the Chinese, had damaged the credibility of the Hinduist[sic] order, which was held to have been ordained by the gods themselves. The people gradually lost their faith in it, and the spiritual values on which Hinduised Champa had depended were undermined, thus contributing still further to the country's destablisation in the thirteenth century." Perre-Bernard Lafont, "Les grandes dates de l'histoire du Champā," *Le Campā et Le Monde malais* (1991): 14; quoted in Emmanuel Guillon, *Cham Art. Treasures form the Dà Nang Museum, Vietnam*, trans. Tom White (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001), p. 19

[21] Here, Coedès also comments on the Chinese mode of cultural expansion. "The Chinese proceeded by conquest and annexation; soldiers occupied the country, and the officials spread Chinese civilization." (*The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*. p. 34) While this may oversimplify the fact, it certainly points

It is by and large agreed now that the influence of Indian culture, religion in particular, should be ascribed to the endeavors by some Southeast Asian aristocracies to incorporate important elements of Indian culture into their lands. The presence of the assorted nature of Indian culture in this area since the beginning of the Christian era is a strong indication that at that time, the local upper classes were able to embrace those forms of Indian culture which were consistent with, or could be appropriate to, their own beliefs and customs. This has much to do with the ocean commerce between South and Southeast Asia as Po Dharma pointed out that "Champa attracted the ships of Indian merchants very early-that was the origin of its Indianization." (le Campā a très tôt attiré les navires des marchands indiens-qui furent à l'origine de son indianisation.)[22] The continuous nature of such relations between the South and Southeast Asia lasted at least until the emergence of Western maritime dominance, which rendered such constant interaction more difficult or almost impossible.[23]

3. Mus on Indian and Indigenous Cults in Champa

How did indigenous cultures in Southeast Asia come to terms with Indian culture? To be sure, this is a complicated and thorny issue that needs to be examined scrupulously. In this paper, I will give an example of how this problem is tackled instead of proposing a thesis on this matter. The manner in which Indian ideas blended with indigenous cults in could be best illustrated from the instance of ancient Champa, as it derived its cultural inspiration most consistently and continuously from India for over a thousand years. What I will depict below mainly follows the thesis that Paul Mus first proposed in his article "Cults indiens et indigènes au Champa."[24] I then will make a short

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to the basic cultural difference between China and India as mentioned before.

[22] Dharma Po, *Quatre lexiques malais-cam anciens* (Paris: Presses de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1999), p. 7

[23] de Casparis and Ian Mabbett, "Religion and Popular Beliefs of Southeast Asia before c. 1500," *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, vol. 1, pp. 281-282.

[24] *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 33 (1933): 357-410. This article was reprinted as *L'Inde Vu de l'est: Cultes indiens et indigènes au Champa* (Hanoi, 1934). It was translated in English

comment on his thesis.

Mus suggests that, long before the Aryans came to India prior to the second half of the second millennium BCE, there was already a network of cults throughout Asia, among which the cult of the spirits was very prominent. He uses animism to denote this indigenous practice and proposes:

> What I mean [by animism] is that the inhabitants of ancient India, Indo-China and southern China believed in spirits, present in all things and in all places-disembodied human soul, spirits of waters and woods, etc. and that they also credited certain men with magic power of conjuring them up and warding them off.[25]

The omnipresence of the spirits is only one side of the religious practice of animis.. The other side is the belief that through proper procedures, we are able to summon them, to appease them or to forestall them. The sorcerers with their techniques of conjuring up spirits aid communal harmony. Among the spirits, the lord of the soil is given a very outstanding position. The cult of the lord of the soil, the communal tutelary spirit, was centered on the conviction that fertility was the domain of the lord of the soil which produced fruits, harvests and cattle. The lord of the soil was not so much an anthropomorphic spirit dwelling on the earth and became the earth itself. Because of that, it was indistinct and distant, but by a delicate relationship pf bi-presence it could be both indistinct as the earth and it also manifests in a sacred site or object, normally a stone, a tree, or in a sacrifice. Mus says:

> [The lord of the soil] is not a superhuman being, but a being to be abstracted from man; invisible, but made in his image, if we could see it. Its basis is rather in events than in the human person. At a later stage, the thought came to be endued with anthropomorphism and there was a god of a locality; but, at the level we are trying to visualize, the locality itself is a god. An impersonal god, defined above all by a localization.[26]

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as *India Seen from the East: Indian and Indigenous Cults in Champa* (Monash University Press, 1975).

[25] Paul Mus, *India Seen from the East: Indian and Indigenous Cults in Champa*, p. 9.

[26] Ibid., p. 11.

It was clear that once this cult of the lord of the soil was established, the first problem was to reach the amorphous deity to make him attentive of the needs of the community worshipping him. In order to provide him with eyes that can see the followers and ears that can listen to their entreaties, the followers of the cult resorted to a sacrificial victim. This victim is either a man or an animal. During the ceremony, the victim provided for the deity a personal vehicle for him to see the believers and to hear their prayers.[27]

On the other hand, the ancestors of the group can serve as delegates between the lord of the soil and the human group, since they were buried in the soil and hence restored to it. Through the chief who acted as in-between agent and under the guise of the chief's ancestors, the lord of the soil was conjured up with eyes and ears that could see and hear.[28] The local chief served as priest in the cult of the lord of the soil. He stood in intermediate connection with the spirit, capable of embodying it during ritual events.

A similar cult existed in India before the Aryans arrived, and the Hinduism and Buddhism that developed later display its chief features under Aryan expansion. Hence at the time when Hinduism and Buddhism were introduced to Champa, they came not as total strangers because of a substratum of common belief. Thus, Indian religion and culture that moved with it were transmitted. With the later decline of the remarkably Indianized high culture of royal lineages, pre-Aryan features emerged.

Among many sophisticated examples that Mus gives in his essay, here I will summarize the Cham cult of the lingas. The Indian cults, notably those of the Hindu god of terror and destruction, Śiva with the *linga* (a phallic symbol) as his icon, were fashioned in the manner of prior Cham cults such as those of the lords of the soil identified with the region of particular communities. In all these cults, the deity was personified by an icon, often a rough stone (easily substituted by the linga of Śiva). He could be drawn near by the invocations of the followers only through ritual appeal to this icon. Such rituals were aimed especially to the assurance of fecundity. The *yoni* (womb) stone as an ablution

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[27] Mus, *India Seen from the East: Indian and Indigenous Cults in Champa*, pp. 12-14.

[28] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

cistern on which the linga stood, which received the sacred liquid poured over the linga, represented the fertilized earth. Thus, a Hindu high god was, as occurred also in India, adjusted to suit the purpose of indigenous religion, becoming in the process part of a specific tradition identifying a community within its territory.[29]

The state cult of Champa was founded on the identification of the king with Śiva, physically expressed in the royal linga which was the symbol of the super human nature of king. The royal nature merged with godlike essence in the appearance of the linga. The subtle identity of the sovereignty, the enduring and imperishable principle of its existence dwelled in the linga, in this form it was identified with Śiva. The king was the embodied deity. This is the glorification of the king in the particular form of a manifestation.[30]

It is clear that in India the cult of Śiva largely drew its strength from the equivalence between the local deity and the celestial god. This had the effect of localizing the god of heaven on the earth, in the position of patron.[31] In terms of the cult of the lingas in Champa, a dual relationship was established: on the one hand, between the local god and the ancestors (or the chief, or the priest) of the community occupying this region, and between the supreme god and the local deity on the other. This is how the gods and human beings came to merge together as the patrons of the land.[32]

Evidently, Mus here argues for the generic character of religious cult in Asia. Religious cults whatever they may do, create a community so that people can live with each other. A religious cult is persuasive to the extent that it succeeds through symbols and by identifying with diverse things that in fact are very different form one another. We can see this sort of identification, of mutual imposition, in the relationship between priest and ritual, between chieftain and ancestors, between king and god and between Indian culture and aboriginal

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[29] Mus, *India Seen from the East: Indian and Indigenous Cults in Champa*, pp. 28-49. Casparis and Mabbett, "Religion and Popular Beliefs of Southeast Asia before c. 1500," p. 282.

[30] Mus, op. cit., p. 44.

[31] Christppher. J. Fuller, *Camphor Flame. Popular Hinduism and Society in India* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1992), pp. 106-127

[32] Mus, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

lore.[33]

The cult in Champa attempted to close the gap between the authority of the state sovereignty and that of the local community chiefs by symbolically identifying with each other in successive layers. We probably can argue that the Cham thought of the relationship between Indian and local in their culture as identifying metropolitan with provincial or they did no even bear this in mind. From one point of view, we may regard it totally Indian; from another, as completely indigenous. It seems to us most legitimate to say that it was a mixture of the two, but in a sense this may also be inaccurate. For the Chams, their culture was unique; they simply defied the modern western categories of discourse.[34]

4. Observations on Mus' Theory of Indian and Indigenous Cults in Champa

As Coedès argued above that the cultural exchange between Indian and Southeast Asian lands had been peaceful and productive which lasted for many centuries without resorting to war and force. Military aggression and cultural imperialism in a sense of modern European colonialism are foreign to Indian cultural dissemination. To be sure, "Indianization" in Asia is the very exemplification of cultural exchange and the globalization of religion. It offers us a precious lesson about the nonviolent propagation of cultural values.

It is also unmistakable that cultural orientation may have determined what Champa chose for their cultural integration. However, this choice may not be predetermined since Cham aristocrats can have the alternative of India or China as both cultures were highly sophisticated and readily available. On the other hand, when Cham royal house chose India rather than China as their model culture, the decision had been irreversible. Champa then became a conspicuous example of the so-called "Indianized state".

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[33] Mus, *India Seen from the East: Indian and Indigenous Cults in Champa*, p. xi.

[34] Ibid., pp. xi-xii.

Is there is an underlying congruency between indigenous Cham culture and Hinduism? It is an intricate question which certainly allows many plausible hypotheses and Mus' is one of them. He offers a very absorbing thesis for us to ponder the possible connection between India and other parts of the Asia in terms of interactions of religious values. He also advances an elaborate and ingenious argumentation to supply the missing links. His exploration is brilliantly imaginative and exceedingly sophisticated. Furthermore, the case of Champa is particularly significant as it represents a culture which is most consistently in interaction with Indian intellectual current in Southeast Asia.

For my part, there are at least two related issues involved in regard to Mus' interpretations of Indian and indigenous cults in Champa. The first one is his suggestion of network of cults called animism in pre-historical Asia. The second problem is the so-called pre-Aryan culture in India. For Mus, these two issues are actually interconnected and he tends to consider them to be one and the same concern. Leaving much-disputed issue of pre-Aryan culture in India aside, here I will look into the problem of animism from a critical perspective to cast reflections on the matter concerning the categorization of the aboriginal culture.

Some early historians of religion and anthropologists seemed to have a tendency to construct animism as a significant portion of the worldview of primitive people. E. B. Taylor, one of the most systematic exponents of primitive culture and animism, considers that animism "characterizes tribes very low in the scale of humanity."[35] From his evolutionist and Christian standpoint, animism could be summed up phenomenologically as well as philosophically as he argues:

> It is habitually found that the theory of Animism divides into two great dogmas, forming parts of one consistent doctrine; first, concerning souls of individual creatures, capable of continued existence after death or destruction of the body; second, concerning other spirits, upward to the rank of powerful deities. Spiritual beings are held to affect or control the events of the material world, and man's life here and hereafter; and it being considered

[35] Edward Burnet Taylor, *Primitive Culture*, Part 1: *The Origin of Culture*; Part 2: *Religion in Primitive Culture* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), part 1: 10.

> that they hold intercourse with men, and receive pleasure or displeasure from human actions, the belief in their existence leads naturally, and it might almost be said inevitably, sooner or later to active reverence and propitiation.[36]

Animism has become a theory of primitive religious practices for Taylor without referring to a workable framework in different indigenous cultures. Furthermore, we can never be sure if there is such an elaborate theoretical construction within primitive thinking. Religious practices are surely connected with local beliefs but this does not mean that there is a general theoretical framework behind them. Taylor's sole concern was to construct a universal and objective classification of animism which is radically distinct from monotheism. He is not interested in exploring practical data which provide those religious practices a sense of their uniqueness. Animism almost becomes a synonym of primitive religious cults and beliefs irrespective of locality. Conspicuously lacking in context, animism here is too general and too vague to capture hidden nuances of *any* indigenous religious cultures. It is theoretically conceivable that there might be a fusion between Cham indigenous beliefs and Indian culture in history, but this does not mean that animism in general can be subsumed easily within Hindu culture. They are actually *different* religious traditions which take time to achieve a genuine synthesis. For example, it has been argued that Shinto is also an animist religion indigenous to Japan. Ito contends:

> In short, a variety of supernatural beings appear in the world of indigenous Southeast Asian religion, and those entities maintain an easy concourse with the world of human beings. In turn, I find that this issue suggestive in the context of the ancient Japanese concept of *kami* for several reasons. First...it is likely that the Japanese people widely venerated minor *kami* rooted in the same kinds of animistic conceptions of ambiguous spirits or souls as appear in the indigenous religious world of Southeast Asia.[37]

It is undeniable that similar indigenous beliefs also existed in ancient

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[36] Taylor, *Primitive Culture*, Part 1. 1:10.

[37] Mikiharu Ito, "Evolution of the Concept of Kami," Nobutaka Inoue, ed. *Kami* (Tokyo: Kokugakuin University, 1998), p. 22.

Japan and was comparable in appearance to Southeast Asian animism. Granting the facial resemblance between them, Southeast Asian indigenous cults and Japanese Shinto apparently belong to two very different religious traditions with their own distinctive religious history. Kitagawa argues that unlike its Southeast Asia counterpart, though undergone many vicissitudes, nowadays Shinto remains a distinctive Japanese religious tradition without losing its own original fluidity. He points out:

> Having no founder, no official sacred scriptures, and no fixed system of ethics or doctrines, Shinto has been influenced historically by Chinese civilization, especially Confucianism and Buddhism. Nevertheless, it has preserved its abiding, if nebulous, ethos throughout the ages. Thus, in a real sense, Shinto may be regarded as the *ensemble* of contradictory and yet peculiarly Japanese types of religious beliefs, sentiments, and approaches, which have been shaped and conditioned by the historical experience of the Japanese people from the prehistoric to the present.[38]

As a tradition of its own, Shinto simply defies reductionism. To speak of Shinto as a kind of animism is to reduce its flexibility, subtlety and multi-dimension into a fixed general system of beliefs. This inevitably wipes out the integrity and context of any local cultures. In fact, to employ a term like "animism" here is to distort not only Cham indigenous cults but also Japanese Shinto. Surely, the local cultures of entire Asia could probably be unified under the thesis of animism in one way or the other. Yet, this abstraction will ultimately subsume any highly specific cultural matrix under the general category of animism which obliterates the intricacies of each indigenous culture.

In an age of pluralism, what we need is not a universal theory which can explain everything with its all-inclusive claim. We should carefully provide the clarification of difference rather than the imposition of the semblance in comparing cultures. We have to contextualize a given case in a sensible manner so that broad dimensions are readily discernable. In case of Indian and Cham

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[38] Joseph Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 139.

indigenous cultures, what we shall begin with is not animism in assumption, but a more precise delineation which can clearly spell out their cultural relevance.

In his proposal for an alternative to cross-cultural comparison, Jonathan Smith urges that we should start with the endeavor of careful description. He explains:

> Description is a double process which comprises the historical or anthropological dimensions of the work: First, the requirement that we locate a given example within the rich texture of its social, historical, and cultural environments that invest it with its local significance.[39]

Therefore, instead of theorizing animism, I suggest here that we should first locate Champa within its indigenous Austronesian cultural context. It should be Malayo-Polynesian maritime nomadic cultural orientations rather than general animism which serve better to delineate the meaning of Cham cultural integration. We shall contextualize Cham indigenous culture so that its unique features can be ascertained. Reid's exploration of Chams in the Southeast Asian maritime system though has no immediate bearing upon the subject, can still give us some suggestive thoughts on the subject:

> This common commitment to maritime commerce helps explain why many Southeast Asian Austronesians retained greater similarities in culture than would be expected by their wider dispersion. Relatively close contacts at periods during the last thousand years have made possible some cultural borrowings which bulk larger than the shared linguistic heritage of the remote past in contemporary construction of identity. The ports of Champa had some particularly strong connections which are explicable in terms of the trading system in the South China Sea.[40]

I am not suggesting that the trading system in the South China Sea can explain what occurred to Champa in terms of its ancient cultural formation. However, the privileged position of Champa might give its rulers and

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[39] Jonathan, Z. Smith, 'The "End" of Comparison. Redescription and Rectification," Patton, Kimberley C. and Benjamin C. Ray, eds., *A Magic Still Dwells. Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2000), p. 239.

[40] Reid, *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia*, p. 43.

aristocrats chance to contemplate its cultural assimilation in a borderer perspective, political, religious as well as other practical concerns. The eclectic nature of Cham indigenous culture readily lends itself to the incorporation of Indian culture. This provides a unified religious culture and new political identity among its dispersed polities. For a maritime nomadic culture like Champa, all these endeavors are done with an eye on the domestication of Indian culture rather than Indianization of the local cultures. After all, with its commercial prominence Cham society was neither primitive nor isolated as ports of Champa were well-connected with other lands in Asia. This is also true in terms of its astonishing cultural vigor:

> We must recognize how very robust Cham society was. Cham Buddhism, like Cham Hinduism, was nourished by vigorous internal cultural traffic, and enjoyed the patronage of rulers and aristocrats who could afford to maintain temples, monasteries and libraries throughout the countryside, fragmented though this countryside may have been.[41]

5. Conclusion

To explicate Southeast Asian Austronesian indigenous culture in its own context rather than subject to a general scheme of undifferentiated "primitive" culture is the thesis put forth in this paper. Indeed, ancient Champa offers us a fascinating example of cultural synthesis in the history of Southeast Asia which involves complex interactions of important contributing factors. To explicate this development simply as Indianizaton is incomplete, being not able to account for years of assiduous efforts initiated by the Chams to assimilate foreign cultures into their own society. On the other hand, although animism is a term so far most widely used in the academic community to depict the original religious cults in Southeast Asia, it is not specific enough to make sense of the distinguishing indigenous Cham cults. More important, the term "animism" smacks strongly of evolutionism as the stale dichotomy between

[41] Mabbett, "Buddhism in Champa," pp. 292-293.

"them primitives" and 'us moderns" is diametrically imposed. Cham indigenous cults should be situated and contcxtualized in ampler frameworks of Austronesian maritime nomadism so that original cultural meaning of sprit cult can be adequately conveyed. Furthermore, when the Chams aspired for cultural glory, their social and political formation must already be highly complex so that a significant adoption of Indian religion and political cultures could be secured. After all, Champa politiy was well situated to take the advantage of cultural emulation. In the long duration of cultural interaction between Champa and India, it is the Chams who took the initiative for an essential transformation. They were not passive players in the process at all. A meaningful synthesis would be inconceivable if the Cham culture was not fertile enough for a consequential rejuvenation.

We have to go beyond reductionism when we come to terms with a highly open and sophisticated indigenous culture like Champa. Animism, as a point of reference, may help us get hold some general features of a native thinking to a certain degree, but it is simply not truthful enough in explicating a cultural formation *sui generis*. We have to put a curb on our desires of conceptualizing or even manipulating other cultures, particularly unhistorical related ones. When Champa emerged in history in the second century, it was already an exceedingly sophisticated Austronesian culture with cosmopolitan connections. What is required for Champa studies at this juncture is to address the problem squarely and give interpretation in proper context without any unwarranted postulations. To conclude, the point of departure for Champa should be Austronesian maritime nomadism rather than animism.

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How to Deal with Aboriginal Culture —— Ancient Champa as an Example

Pochi Huang

Abstract

The example that I expound in this essay is ancient Champa （占婆）. Champa is a general term for the polities organized by Austronesian-speaking people along the central and southern coast of Vietnam. The peoples of Champa are Malay in terms of ethnicity and language. Their organization of political space is an expression of Malayo-Polynesian polity. Maritime nomadism is the traditional Malayo-Polynesian culture from which the political authority derived.

Because of its geographical location, Champa has been exposed to the influence of foreign cultures since early times. China is certainly one of them. However, Chinese influence here remains minor in comparison with Indian cultural expansion. Historians often termed Indianization as the widespread transmission of Indian culture, both Hinduism and Buddhism in many parts of Southeast Asia. Champa is one of the outstanding examples of Indianization in this area.

Mus employs Champa as an example to give a graphical depiction of Indianization. He uses animism to depict the indigenous religious cults in Champa and argues that animism is an ancient pan-Asian phenomenon which makes harmonious cultural synthesis between Indian and indigenous cults in Champa possible. In response to his thesis, I argue that animism is a reductionist way of grasping indigenous cultures. We should interpret indigenous cultures in their proper context so that broad local dimensions are readily discernable. In case of Champa, what we should start with is *maritime nomadism* rather than animism.

Keywords: Champa, maritime nomadism, Indianization, animism, indigenous cults, reductionism