

## Editors' Note

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Succeeding the brilliant and dedicated leadership of Professor Tschung-Sun Kim of *Acta Via Serica* for the last eight years, I have assumed the responsibility of its editorship beginning with the present issue. Simultaneously, Professor Jungmin Ha has been appointed to Academia Via Serica and is expected to play an instrumental role in moving the institute to a new phase of development.

The current issue of *Acta Via Serica* presents five articles and four book reviews. Four of the articles address issues related to the Maritime Silk Road, reflecting the avid interest in this topic in Silk Road studies.

First, Jun Kimura's essay examines the archaeological remnants of shipwrecks along the Maritime Silk Road, focusing on Southeast Asia, especially central Vietnam. In so doing, it attempts to provide a perspective on the dynamism of types of seagoing ships involved in long-distance trade and how the system of cross-regional shipments of heavy and bulky items, such as metal objects, fragrant woods, glass, and ceramics sustained and impacted the religions, societies, cultures, and regional economies.

Pipad Krajaejun's article draws attention to the political/administrative aspects of the Maritime Silk Road, especially the emergence of early polities and communities in the Thai-Malay Peninsula. By examining three important routes that connect Khao Sam Kaeo (1) to Pak Chan or the Isthmus of Kra, (2) Phu Khao Thong, and (3) Klong Thom and Tha Chana or Ranod, this study aims to analyze and comprehend the trade and transit networks established in these areas. It is an outcome of the "Suvarnabhumi Database for Education" and the "Assessment of Suvarnabhumi Knowledge" projects, whose purpose is to create an online database of historical and archaeological data ranging from the late prehistoric to the early historic periods.

Dayalan Duraiswamy's paper explores the cultural and trade links between India and Siam and their impact on the Maritime Silk Road. It argues that there were cultural and trade interactions between India and Siam from prehistoric times and they continued in vital forms into later periods. Thus, Indian influence is distinctly visible in various aspects of Thai culture including art and architecture, mythology, script, language, and rituals. He also points out that, situated in a strategic position midway between the West and East Asia, India and Siam played a significant role in the maritime transactions in Asia and beyond.

Andrea Acri's essay analyzes objects—such as steles, metal or stone statues, metal

foils, and coins—bearing inscriptions in Sanskrit and the Siddhamāṭṛkā, Nāgarī, and Proto-Bengali/Gauḍī scripts produced in Java during the medieval period (ca. 8th–13th century). It contextualizes these objects against the background of the pan-Asian networks of Buddhist Tantras and their circulation along the Maritime Silk Road. The essay suggests that the rapid spread of varieties of Mahāyāna/Mantrayāna Buddhism from the Indian subcontinent to Java and East Asia during its “first wave” from the 8th to the 9th century occurred in parallel with the diffusion of the Siddhamāṭṛkā script. In contrast, the “second wave” of Tantric Buddhism, which linked the Indo-Tibetan and East Asian Buddhist worlds was associated with the Nāgarī and Proto-Bengali/Gauḍī scripts in East Java. It also tries to answer questions concerning foreign or local agency and audience as well as transregional connectivity.

Finally, in an article on a monument in Spain at the western end of the Silk Road, Soojeong Yi examines the Great Mosque-Cathedral of Córdoba. With a special focus on the concept of “cultural hybridity,” it attempts to explain aspects of the unfolding of cultural hybrids in the architectural details of the monument to demonstrate them in a positive sense.

As the sole scholarly journal on the grand subject of the Silk Road published in English in South Korea, *Acta Via Serica* aims to be one of the major academic arenas based in East Asia in the field. The editorial board warmly invites contributions on new findings and innovative interpretations related to the subject.

Juhyung RHI  
*Editor-in-chief*