

Charting a Different Narrative in India–Southeast Asia Relations: Case of an Indian State

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Abstract

In the current piece, we trace the rise, spread and subsequent decline of maritime trade relations between the eastern coast of India and Southeast Asia, with special attention to the regional state of Odisha of the Indian Union. Through a narrative history approach, we critically examine the historical accounts of India–Southeast Asia relations. While doing so we focus on Odisha and its shared past with the Southeast Asian region. As India stresses its ‘Act-East’ policy to improve its relations with Southeast Asia, such accounts hold special significance. We revisit historical narratives to highlight how it was not marked by a unilateral process of assimilation but that of acculturation in which both sides contributed to a shared past.

Keyword: Storytelling in international relations, maritime relations, India–Southeast Asia, narrative history

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