

“Aa Kaa Maa Bai”

(“Time period of maritime trade in Ancient India”)

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This “Aa Kaa Maa Bai” represents the time of journey for ships to south-eastern island countries in ancient time. At that time, the ships were sailed with the help of wind and ocean current. “Aa” stands for the month ‘Aasadha’, “Kaa” stands for the month of ‘Kaarttika’, “Maa” stands for the month ‘Maargashira’ and “Bai” stands for the month of Baishakha in Hindu Calendar.

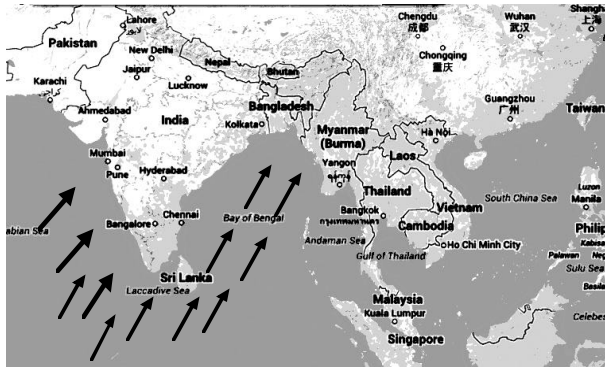
“Aa Kaa” represents the Hindu month *Aasadha*(mid June to mid July) and the month of *Kaarttika*(mid October to mid November). During this period, the south-west monsoon comes up and the wind direction is from south-west direction towards north-east direction. The direction of ocean current in Indian Ocean from south-west to south-east with a curved shape. With this help of wind and ocean current, the ships were sailed from Kalinga to south-eastern island countries like Brahmadesh(Myanmar), Melaka(Malaysia), Shyamadesh(Thailand), Champadesh(Cambodia), Java, Sumatra, Bali and Borneo(East Indies) etc. as up journey or from Simhala(Sri Lanka) to Kalinga as return journey. As the south-west monsoon is so active, the ships (Boita) normally take two to three months to reach south-eastern island countries from Kalinga.

“Maa Bai” represents the Hindu month *Maargashira*(mid November to mid

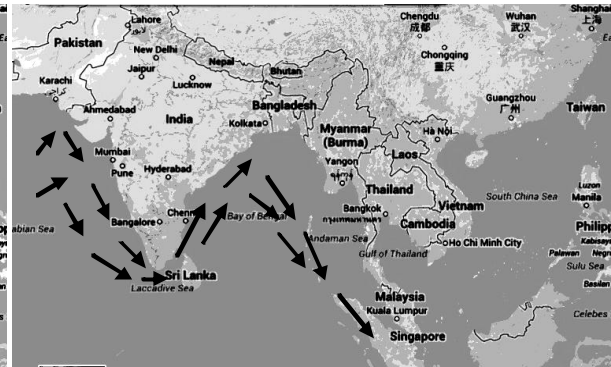
December) and the month of *Baishakha*(mid April to mid May). During this period, the north-east monsoon comes up and the wind direction is from north-east direction towards south-west direction. The direction of ocean current in Indian Ocean from south-east to south-west with a curved shape. With this help of the wind and ocean current, the ships were again sailed from south-eastern countries to Kalinga as return journey or from Kalinga to Simhala(Sri Lanka) as up journey. As the north-east monsoon or retreat monsoon is less active in comparison to south-west monsoon, the ships(Boita) take three to four months to reach Kalinga from south-eastern island countries.

If you combine the “Aa Kaa” and “Maa Bai”, it becomes the complete ship journey to south-eastern island countries in ancient time. “Aa Kaa” represents up journey of ships and “Maa Bai” is the down or return journey of ships from ancient Kalinga to South-eastern island countries and vice-versa for Simhala(Sri Lanka).

During ancient period, “Aa Kaa Maa Bai” indicates the time period of journey of country-made ships (Boita) in Indian Ocean. The ships (Boita) were sailed with the help of wind energy and current of the water in early time. So, the ships sailed with the help of wind as a definite



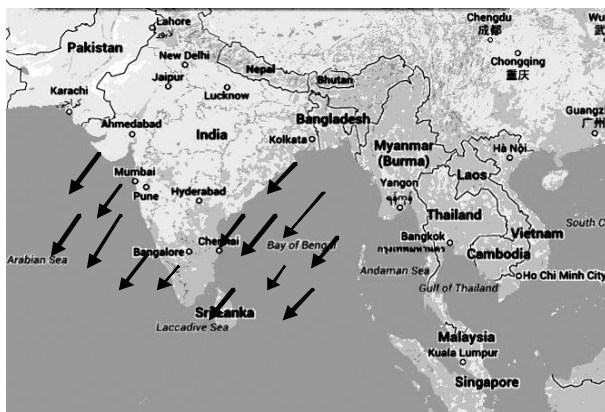
South-west monsoon or monsoon



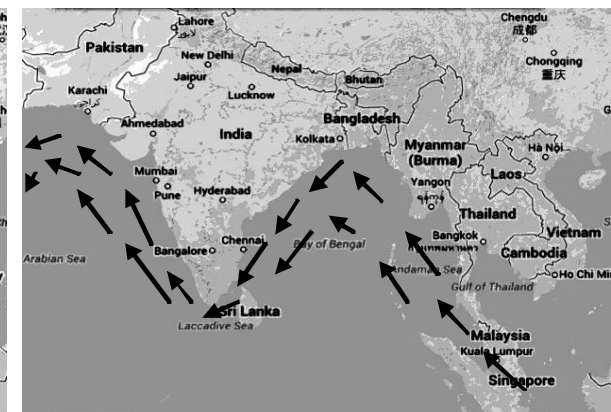
Current circulation during monsoon



Ancient country made ship(Boita)



North-east monsoon or retreat monsoon



Current circulation during retreat monsoon

(This direction of wind and ocean current is best illustrated by the above pictures.)

size of thick cotton attaching with ropes to the pillars (mastul) of the ships.

From very ancient civilization like Sindhu Valley civilization in India, there was another civilization of India developed in the south-eastern coastal part of India, that is Kalinga civilization. This civilization is the amalgamation of Aryans and Dravidians for which it became culturally richer civilization of the ancient India. Kalinga was most fertile land of south eastern coast of India in between the river "The Ganga" and the river "The Godavari". This patch of land extended its boundary more by different Kingdoms as we learned from Ancient History. Now-a-days Kalinga is consisted of three states namely West Bengal(Banga), Odisha(Utkal) and Andhra Pradesh(Kalinga). The people of Kalinga were bravest ("Kalingah Sahasikah" in Sanskrit language). The ocean along the coast of Kalinga was known as Kalinga Sagar (Kalinga Ocean). At that time, the only way of communication medium was through water and that were through rivers, lakes and oceans.

After observing the swans swimming across the river, the people of Kalinga got an idea and with the help of floating objects they were able to make a country-made ship like swan-

shaped and named it as "Boita". These ships were able to sail in water with the help of wind and current from one place to another part of land in water. By passing of time, they could able to develop big ships (Boita) and sailed the ships to a greater distances that are south eastern island countries adjacent to Kalinga.

The people of Kalinga were sailed their ships with the help of monsoon wind or trade wind and ocean current to south eastern island countries for trading & business and finally they established their business centres. They also spread their religion and culture like Hinduism and Buddhism. Finally, they settled there and started new number in business. They also built beautiful monuments thereat which were till now heritage sites of their respective countries.

Lastly, we feel proud of our ancestors who were doing maritime trade and business with a brave heart and full of honesty leaving four words i.e. "Aa Kaa Maa Bai" to memorizing their maritime trade forever in the auspicious day "Kartika Purnima" of every year.

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