CHAPTER - VII

Foreign Lands (Outside India) Known To The Buddhists As Mirrored In The Early And Later Buddhist Texts:

Greater India in the conception of the Brahmanical writers — Purāṇas, Kāvyamīmāṃsā, Ptolemy's Geography, Buddhist literature; Yavadvīpa in the Rāmāyana; Suvarṇadvīpa in Brahmanical and Buddhist literature; epigraphic records corroborating the information about foreign countries; other lands outside India mentioned in Pali Canonical texts; different seas in the Jātakas; extra-ordinary routes in Pali literature; Chinese sources on India's relation with adjacent lands.
CHAPTER VII

FOREIGN LANDS (OUTSIDE INDIA) KNOWN TO THE BUDDHISTS
AS MIRRORED IN THE EARLY AND LATER BUDDHIST TEXTS.

That the ancient Indians had at least a vague conception of some countries beyond the limits of the Indian subcontinent, is hinted by the seven-fold and four-fold divisions of the earth as proposed by the Brahmanical and the Buddhist texts. In fact the nine subdivisions of Bhāratavarṣa in the Purāṇas indicates clearly that the Purānic writers knew a Bhāratavarṣa which was evidently greater in connotation than its real limits. These nine divisions according to the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa are: Indradvīpa, Kaśerumata, Tāmravarṇa, Gabhastimat, Nāgadvīpa, Saumya, Gāndharva, Varuṇa, and a ninth one 'encircled by seas' (sāgarasamvṛta). The ninth division is not referred to by name in the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, but the name is supplied by the Skanda Purāṇa as Kumārikā and by the Vāmana Purāṇa as Kumāra. The Kāvyamānasā of Rājasēkhara also gives the name of this division as Kumārī. It should be noted here that the Vāmana and the Garuḍa Purāṇas replace Saumya and Gāndharva by Kaṭāha and Siṃhala. These nine dvīpas are separated by seas

1. Ch. 57, Sl. 5-7; CAGI, Appendix I, p. 749.
2. Kumārikākhanda, 39. 69; Stud. Ind. Ant., p. 82, f.n. 4.
3. XIII. 10-11; Stud. Ind. Ant., p. 82.
4. p. 92; CAGI, Appendix I, p. 750.
5. Stud. Ind. Ant., p. 82.
and are mutually inaccessible. But Bhāratavarṣa as we now note it is not separated by seas within itself, nor are its component parts mutually inaccessible. Bhāratavarṣa is not thus our India with its present geographical limits. This Purāṇic Bhāratavarṣa denoted a much larger area than India proper, and this fact becomes evident from the description of the ninth island which stands for India proper. There have been attempts to identify the eight other islands by scholars. S.N. Majumdar Sāstrī identifies Indradvīpa with Burma, and Kašerumāt with Malay Peninsula. Tāmravarṣa or Tāmrapurāṇa is generally identified with Śrīlanṇā which was known to the Greek geographers as Taprobhane and as Tambapanni in the inscriptions of Aśoka. Gabhāstimat cannot be properly identified. V.S. Smith tries to identify Nāgadvīpa with the Jaffna peninsula of Ceylon. Saumya has not been identified, but Kaṭāha, the substitute reading in the Vāmana Purāṇa has been identified by Coedes with Kedah in the Malay Peninsula.

6. Ibid., p. 81.
11. Ibid., p. 85, f.n. 1.
12. Ibid., p. 85.
Gāndharva cannot be satisfactorily identified, but Simhala, the substitute reading may denote a part of Śrīlāṅkā.  

In Ptolemy's geography south east Asian region is given the name of 'India Extra Gangem'. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea mentions some of the Far Eastern countries as Chryse or the Golden Land. Ptolemy also refers to Chryse Chora (a literal translation of Suvarṇabhūmi) and Chryse Chersonesus (golden peninsula = Malay Peninsula). Ptolemy very clearly distinguishes these countries as two different ones included by him within Trans-Gangetic India.

Among the four-fold division of the globe as found in the Buddhist literature Uttarakuru (the Ottorogorras of the classical writers) was in Chinese Turkestan, and Godāna was the name by which Khotan was known in ancient times. In ancient Chinese transcription of the name as Yu-t'ien was in early pronunciation (g)iu-den, i.e. Godāna.

The early Buddhist texts mention such people as Čīna, Kausīkam, Khasa, Bahlhi, Tukhara, Pahlava Parata, Saka, Vokkana.

--- 413 ---

13. Ibid.
15. Ibid., pp. 54-55.
16. Ibid., p. 55.
and Ramatha. The Tukharas were the people of Tokharistan mentioned in the early Chinese records as Ta-hia. The Vokkanas were the people of Wakhan region.

The Rāmāyaṇa mentions Yavadvīpa in connection with the description of countries belonging to the four cardinal points which were to be searched in quest of Śītā. The Rāmāyaṇa also refers to the Suvarṇa Rūpyaka dvīpa,(the same as Chryse and Argyre of the Classical writers) and the Naravyāghra which are also found in a few other sources. Some versions read Suvarṇa kuḍyaka dvīpa (the same as the Island of the wall of Gold of the Chinese and Tibetan writers) and Samudra dvīpa (cf. the name Sumātrā derived from Samudra) respectively.

Among the Far Eastern countries Suvarṇabhūmi (gold-land) or Suvarṇadvīpa (gold-island) was known to the Indians from very ancient times. Popular works like Brhatkathā, Kathāsaritsāgara, Kathākośa and Jātakas as well as serious literary works, mainly Buddhist, like the Milindapāñha, Niddesa and others show acquaintance with these two terms. In the

19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
Brhatkathāślokaṭaṇḍ śaṁgrāha we come across the story of Saṁdasa who sailed for Suvarṇabhūmi with a gang of adventurers. The Arthasastra of Kautilya mentions Aguru of Suvarṇabhūmi.

The Buddhist literature also abounds in references to Suvarṇabhūmi. We come to know from a Jātaka that Prince Mahājanaka sailed with some merchants in a ship bound for Suvaṇṇabhūmi in order to get riches there. Other references to sea-voyage from Bharukaccha to Suvarṇabhūmi are met with in the Jātakas. Such a journey has been described in details in the Suppāraka Jātaka. The Milindapaṇha also refers to Suvaṇṇabhūmi with other geographical names in a list. The Mahākarmavibhaṅga tells us of merchants sailing to Suvarṇabhūmi from Mahākosalī and Tamralipta. Apart from merchants and adventurers eager to obtain riches, missionaries also sailed to Suvarṇabhūmi with a religious purpose. Thus Thera Uttara and Thera Sona are well-known to have gone and preached Buddhism there. The Mahākarmavibhaṅga attributes the

24. Ibid., p. 38.
25. The Geography of the Far East, ... p. 55; J. VI, 22.
26. J. III. 124, 360; Geography of the Far East ..., p. 55.
27. J., IV. 86; Jātakamāla, No. XIV.
   Sylvain Levi, p. 50ff.
30. Suvarṇadvīpa, Vol. I, p. 39; Mhv. ed. Geiger, p. 86. This is confirmed by the Kalyāṇī Inscription of Pegu.
conversion of Suvarṇabhūmi to Gavāmpati. The Śānasavāgaśa (p. 32) also relates to the voyage of Gavāmpati to Suvarṇabhūmi.

The Sanskrit Buddhist text Divyāvadāna refers to a land where the soil is gold, which evidently denotes Suvarṇabhūmi. The Purāṇas also speak of a country outside Bhāratavarṣa the mountain and soil of which consist of gold.33 The Rāmāyaṇa tells us of an isle with the wall of gold and the Buddhist Sanskrit work Saddharmasūryupasthānāsūtra mentions this isle too.34 It has been pointed out by R.C. Majumdar in his Suvarṇadvīpa that the word bhūmi in Suvarṇabhūmi originally stood for soil or land in general, and there was no idea of contrasting it with dvīpa, island or peninsula (pt. I, p. 45).

It seems that the merchants who sailed to this land with a quest of riches and earned much more than their expectation, related stories about the fabulous wealth of the land to their countrymen and thus created all sorts of mythical traditions about this isle abounding with spices, gold and all precious metals and minerals. Suvarṇabhūmi may be identified with countries extending beyond the eastern and northern coasts of the Bay of Bengal or Ramannadesa, i.e. Lower Burma or Pegu.

---

32. Ibid.
    Suvarṇabhūmim prthivipradesam.
34. Suvarṇadvīpa, Vol. I, p. 45; cf. Matsya Pu., Ch. 113, vv. 12, 42.
35. The Geography of the Far East ..., p. 58.
and Moulmein according to Smith. P.C. Bagchi in his article 'Cultural and Colonial Expansion: Central Asia, China and the Far East' remarks very wisely: 'It is impossible to locate this Land of Gold in any definite geographical region as with the progress of navigation towards the east the name was gradually shifted to other regions. It was not so much a gold yielding region as an Eldorado for merchants from which they returned with fabulous riches.'

The merchant-class, adventurers, hermits and monks played an important part in discovering adjacent lands beyond the Indian boundary. There are numerous instances in the Buddhist literature which contain descriptions of perilous sea-voyages undertaken by wealth-loving traders, fortune-hunters and daredevil adventurers. They had to confront various types of dangers and hardships in foreign lands full of difficulties. As they had to pass through such perils, very naturally they could develop a keen sense of observation which helped them to take note of the geographical peculiarities of those foreign lands. Again, the monks and hermits whose main interest lay in preaching religion to the people of foreign lands and convert them to their own faith, also had to face problems there. They tried to know the land in order to make the missionary activities smooth and comfortable. Thus though

the purposes of the fortune-seeking traders and adventurers as well as the religious monks and hermits were very much in contrast with each other, the result was the same in producing a sober geographical knowledge of the foreign lands.

The epigraphic records also corroborate the information obtained from the literary sources regarding lands outside Indian border. The name of Śrīvijaya in Sumātrā occurs several times in the inscriptions of the Cola dynasty of South India. In the reign of Hājarāja I (985-1012 A.D.) a Sanskrit inscription mentions Māravijayottigavarman as the king of Kotā (Kedah in the Malaya peninsula) and Śrīvijaya. Suvarṇadvīpa and Yavabhūmi are mentioned in the 9th century copper plate of Devapāla of the Pāla dynasty of Bengal.

Now, we may pass on to the Pali canonical texts for gleaning the geographical details about foreign lands and cities supplied therein.

The Jātakas contain a rich storehouse of place names located outside India. Though many of these places cannot be identified properly, it seems that they were used to be visited by ancient Indian mariners for the purpose of commercial transactions.

---

39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., pp. 26-27.
Thus Nāgadīpa was an island which was located on the way from Bharukaccha to Suvaṇṇabhūmi. According to one Jātaka story it was also known as Serumadīpa. It was famous for sweet-scented Timira flowers. Nāgadīpa has been identified by Jayaswal with Nicobar. According to some the Nāgas had different settlements simultaneously or at different times. Serumadīpa, according to Jayaswal, may be identified with Purānic Kaśerudvīpa located in Malay Peninsula. The description given in the Jātaka agrees with this location. Again the Tibetan version of the same story refers to it as Kaśeru. Moreover, the two words Seruma and Kaśeru are only two differently pronounced forms of the one and the same words.

Another island, Ahidīpa, also called Karadīpa, is

42. Pre Buddhist India, p. 405; J. II. 128, III. 187-88; IV. 238.
43. J. III, 187.
45. Pre Buddhist India, Sec. V, Ch. III, p. 447.
46. Ibid., pp. 447-448.
47. Ibid., p. 448.
48. Pre Buddhist India, p. 448.

cf. Lābu-Alābu, Kalābu; Timun-Antiman-Kantimun; Tumba-Oḍumba-Koṭumba — all these are loan words of Austro-Asiatic root and prevalent in the Far Eastern Islands.
mentioned in the Jātaka. It could be reached from Kāviri-paṭṭana in a short time. The Kāradīpa received its name from the Kāra trees. If Jayaswal's identification of Nāgaḍīpa with Nicobar be accepted as correct, Kāradīpa or Aḥidīpa may be located somewhere in the group of Andaman islands.

A port named Gambhīra is referred to in the Jātaka. R. L. Mehta suggests that it may have some connection with the Gambhīra river flowing 7 or 8 miles north of Amrādhapura in Śrīlāṅkā.

The name of Tāṁbapaññī or Tāṁraparṇī island is frequently mentioned in the Buddhist texts. The Jātakas, the Ceylonese chronicles Mahāvaṃsa and Dīpavaṃsa, the Buddhist Sanskrit text Divyāvadāna and the Asokan epigraphs all mention the name of Tāṁbapaññī or Tāṁraparṇī as an oversea island. Tāṁbapaññī is most probably identical with Śrīlāṅkā also called Lāṅkāḍīpa, Ojadīpa, Varadīpa and Maṇḍadīpa. The island was 32 yojanas in length, 18 yojanas in breadth and 100 yojanas in

49. Pre-Buddhist India, Sec. V, Ch. III, p. 378; J. IV. 238.
50. Pre Buddhist India, Sec. V, Ch. III, p. 392; J. I. 239.
51. J. I. 127, 129; Dvy., p. 453 says Tāṁradvīpaka;
   Dpv., VIII. 20; Mhv., 7. 38, 41; 14. 35 etc.; Select
   Inscriptions, Vol. I, p. 18 (Asoka's R.E., II, Girnar
   Version).
52. MGAI, p. 192; Mhv., 15. 127, 132, 93; Dpv., IX. 1;
   I. 73; VIII. 20.
circuit. It was surrounded by the ocean. There was a city called Sirisavatthu in Tambapanni where paddy grew wild. It is evidently identical with the Tamraparni of the Puranas and Taprobane of the Greeks.

A kingdom called Baveru has been referred to in the Jatakas. This kingdom was conspicuous by the scarcity of birds there. We are told that peacocks were first introduced there by the Indian traders. Baveru has been identified with Babylon. The fact of taking peacock from India receives a tacit support from the Greek and Roman sources.

Ekabala was a foreign country lying outside India but it cannot be identified. Sahkhapala was the king of this country. A parrot is said to have gone to the Ekabala country and as it passed through India it came to Uttarapancala.

We hear of a lake called Simbalî which was situated across the seven seas from Jambudîpa where lived the Supannas.

---

53. Dpv., XVII. 1.
54. J. II. 127, 129.
55. PHAI, p. 294.
56. J. III. 126, 127; Pre Buddhist India, p. 410.
57. Buddhist India, p. 104.
58. Pre-Buddhist India, p. 410.
59. J. No.546; Studies in the Buddhist Jatakas by Dr. B.C.Sen, p. 54.
60. Pre-Buddhist India, p. 437.
It may be said to be equivalent to Śālmala a foreign country of the Purāṇas which is identified by N.L. De with Chaldia.  

The canonical commentary Nīdīsa and the semi-canonical Milindapañha present a long list of trade centres in the Far East. The Mahānīdēsa (the Large Exposition) contains a detailed itinerary of a sea voyage in which we come across the names of a number of foreign lands and extraordinary paths. Among the place names referred to in the passage of the Mahānīdēsa we may mention Gimbha, Takkola, Kālamukhā, Vesāţga, Verūpatha, Java, Tamāli, Vaṅka, Suvaṇṇakūṭa, Suvaṇṇabhūmi, Tāmbapāṇi, Yona, Paramayama, Alasanda, Mārukāntara denoting foreign countries. In the Milindapañha also we read a passage containing an abridged list of geographical names some of which are found in the Nīdēsa list. We find the names of Vaṅga, Takkola, Cīna, Sovīra, Suraṭṭha, Alasanda, Kolapaṭṭana and Suvaṇṇabhūmi in this list. Another list of names is also found elsewhere in the same text — Saka and Yavana, Cīna and Vilāta (Cilāta), Alasanda, Nikumba, Kāsi and Kosala, Kasmīra and Gandhāra. By comparing the Nīdēsa list with similar lists in the Milindapañha and in the Ślokasamgraha (which is based on the much older Bṛhatkathā), Prof. Levi

---

62. The Geography of the Far East, p. 56.
63. Ibid., p. 56; Mahānīdēsa, P.T.S., pp. 154-55, 415.
64. Miln., p. 327.
65. Ibid., p. 331.
comes to the conclusion that it is a stereotyped series giving the names of places a navigator might visit while sailing along the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal, i.e. seaside localities in Burma, the Malay Peninsula, Java and Sumatra, and then making for India via Ceylon (Tambappāṇi).

As to the identification of the place names of foreign lands found in the Niddesa and Milindapaṇha, it may be said that all of them cannot be satisfactorily identified, but it is almost certain that they denote countries outside the geographical limits of Jambudīpa.

The identity of Gumba of the Niddesa list (or its variant Kumbha reminding us of Nikumbha of the Milinda text) is not certain. Takkola corresponds to 'Takola the port of commerce' placed by Ptolemy on the coast of Trans Gangetic India in the country of Golden Cheronesus. It is perhaps situated on the western coast of the Malay Peninsula, to the south of the Isthmus of Cra. Its connection with the Trans Gangetic countries in the east established by the evidence of Ptolemy's Geography, may tempt one to locate it near the mouth of the river Tokosanna, mentioned by Ptolemy, near Arakan.

67. The Geography of the Far East, p. 57.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
tribe of the same name, the Kālamukhas inhabiting the eastern region as noticed in the Epics, according to Dr. R.C. Majumdar, should be located on the Arakan coast. Vesuna corresponds to the trading port Besunga of Ptolemy, lying near the Land of Gold (Khruse Khora). Verūpatha, the name of which comes immediately after Vesuna in the Nīdāsā list, may be the same as 'the town of Berabai' mentioned by Ptolemy after Besunga 'further to the south which appears to point out to the region of Tavoy'.

Java may indicate the islands of Java and Sumatra together or simply the famous island of Java. Ptolemy mentions it as Jabadion (=Yavadvīpa, the island of barley). Ptolemy says that this island had extraordinary fertility and produced plenty of gold. Its capital Argyra (the city of silver) was situated at its western extremity. Between India and Java Ptolemy places a series of islands inhabited by cannibals (the Purusādaka of the Rāmāyaṇa).

Another mention of Java has been found by Prof. Sylvain Levi in the 'Sūtra of the Twelve Stages of Buddhahood' translated into Chinese in 392 A.D. by the monk Kālodaka: In the ocean there are 2500 kingdoms of which 180 subsist on cereals and the rest

70. Ibid.
71. Ibid., pp. 57-58.
72. Ibid., p. 58.
73. Ibid.
74. India and Java, Bijanraj Chatterjee, Pt. I, p. 23.
on fish and turtles. The kingdom of the ruler of the first island is Sseu-li; this kingdom serves only the Buddha. ... the fourth (island) in Cho-ye, it produces the long pepper (pipa) as well as ordinary pepper. Sseu-li, Prof. Levi is sure, is Ceylon, devotion to Buddha being one of the traditions of the island. Cho-ye, he thinks, is Jaya, which is meant for Java. The 'pipa' is 'pippali' in Sanskrit. The Chou-fan che (a Chinese work in the 13th century) mentions pepper as one of the chief products of Java.

From the Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa (written about the 8th century) Prof. Levi cites a passage in which the islands of Karmaraṅga (near Ligor), the island of cocoanuts, Verusaka (Baros in Sumatra) and the isles of the Nude (Nicobar), Bali and Java are mentioned as places where the language is indistinct, rude and too full of the letter 'r'.

Tamāli and its variant Tambaliṅga remind us of the name of Tambraliṅga occurring in a Sanskrit inscription dated 1230 A.D. discovered at Jaiya in Malay Peninsula and so it can be easily located in that region.

--- 425 ---

75. Ibid., p. 24.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid., pp. 24-25.
80. Geography of the Far East, p. 58.
Tamāli, is not evidently Bengal, but, as pointed out by Sylvain Levi, the island of Banka to the east of Sumatra (between Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula). 81

Suvaṇṇakūṭa is probably identical with Suvarṇa-
kuḍyaka of Arthasastra, Harivamsa and Kṣemendra's Rāmāyaṇa-
maṇijari. 82 Levi draws our attention to a passage of the Saddharmasmṛtyupasthāna which places an island called the Wall of Gold to the east of the Jambudvīpa in the ocean of Jewels; it is entirely covered with a soil of gold and inhabited by demons who are fearful in appearance and powerful. 83

The existence of this country to the southeast of Asia is also corroborated by Chinese Geography of the past Christian period which mentions a country called Kin-lin situated more than 2,000 li to the west of Pu-nan (Cambodia) along a large bay. 84 Sylvain Levi believes that Suvaṇṇakūṭa or Suvarṇakuḍyaka should be equated with the Chinese Kin-lin. 85

Turning to the west of India we find the names of Yona, Paramayona, Alasanda (and perhaps Marukāntāra) as foreign lands. Yona refers to the Greek country and Paramayona to Greater

82. Ibid., p. 24; Geography of the Far East, p. 58.
83. Geography of the Far East, p. 58.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
Greece. Alasanda is identified with Alexandria. Marukāntāra has not been satisfactorily identified, but it may have some reference to the deserts of northwestern India or China or even of northern Asia. Pali texts seem to display acquaintance with China and Egypt. The Milindapañha refers to Cīna, Cīlāta or Vilāta. Cīna is evidently China, Cīlāta or Vilāta may be placed on the Upper Indus. Cīnaraṭṭha is also mentioned in a list of places in Jantu-Kāṇṇika's verses in Apadāna.

The Jātaka stories bear evidence to sea-bourne trade and contain references to trade routes through ocean and seas. A number of seas has been mentioned in the Jātakas. These names are full of significance as they are descriptive of the unique characteristics of different seas. Here we may recall the description in the Purāṇas of the globe being divided into seven concentric islands encircled by seven seas of salt, sugar-cane juice, wine, clarified butter, curd, milk and water respectively.

86. Ibid., p. 59.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Miln., p. 331.
90. Trenckner, Miln., p. 166 (Pt. II).
91. Ibid.
The Jātaka mentions the Aggimāla sea which was like a blazing fire giving out streaks like that of the midday sun. Merchants from Bharukaccha had to pass through it in quest of riches. Gold was abundantly found here. According to Jayaswal, it refers either to the Arabian coast near Aden or some portion of the Somali coast.

The Kusamāla sea was green and grassy-like. Merchants from Bharukaccha went there for trading purposes. Great quantities of emeralds were to be found there. This ocean is named probably after the Kusādvīpa of the Purāṇas. It may be identified with Nubia on the North East Coast of Africa. This identification led to Captain Speke's discovery of the sources of the Nile. The Kushites were masters of Nubia as early as the 22nd-18th century B.C. as their name appears in the inscriptions of that period. The name and description of the Kusamāla sea draw a comparison with the Sargassō Sea in the Atlantic Ocean. The first branch of the famous Gulf-stream current comes round in an oval direction and joins the North Equatorial current, and the water inside the oval streams of current remains stagnant and currentless. Various kinds of

93. Pre Buddhist India, Sec. V, Ch. III, p. 368; J. IV. 139, 140.
94. Pre Buddhist India, Sec. V, Ch. III, p. 368; JBOES, VI, p. 195.
95. Pre Buddhist India, Sec. V, Ch. III, p. 383.
96. Pre Buddhist India, p. 383.
97. Pre-Buddhist India, Sec. V, Ch. III, p. 383; Jayaswal, JBOES, VI, 195.
vegetation grow in this water which is known as the Sargasso Sea. Again the Kusamala sea is said to produce great quantities of emeralds. We know that Colombia in the north west of South America is famous for its high quality emeralds.

Sargasso Sea lies to the north of South America. Though it is very difficult, so to say impossible, to connect the Kusamala sea with the region of the Atlantic Ocean, i.e. the Sargasso sea and Colombia, the strange similarities between the two are striking and interesting. One may be tempted to identify the Kusamala sea with the Sargasso sea on the basis of these similarities which, however, should be treated as accidental in the scarcity of further positive proofs.

In the Khuramala sea, fish with bodies like men and sharp razor like snouts live in and out of water. This sea was also to be passed by in course of their journey by the merchants of Bharukaccha. Diamonds were found here. Jayaswal says that the Babylonian National Legend of their Man-Fish (Cannes) who was supposed to have lived in the 'Khur' was a Babylonian god mentioned in their inscriptions of the time of Khammurabi.

Dadhimala was a sea looking like milk and curds. Merchants from Bharukaccha came to this sea also seeking for

98. Pre Buddhist India, Sec.V, Ch.III, pp.388-89; J. IV. 139.
99. Pre-Buddhist India, Sec.V, Ch.III, pp. 388-89.
100. Ibid., Sec.V, Ch. III, p. 401; J. IV. 140; G. 110.
Riches. Silver was produced in abundance here. Jayaswal says that this sea by the Kusa country is evidently what we call the Red Sea, both the names having been derived from the appearance of the sea thickened by the peculiar matter which floats in it. ¹⁰¹

The Nalamāla sea looks like an expanse of reeds or a grove of bamboos. This sea was also used to be crossed by fortune-seeking merchants. It was full of the coral of the colour of the bamboos. ¹⁰² It was a canal which took the Jātaka mariners from Kuśamāla country into the Volcano Sea (Valabhāmukha). It existed, as pointed out by Jayaswal, in the time of Seti I, 1380 B.C.; this canal joined the Red Sea near the Bilfer Lake with the Nile and made a navigation from the Red Sea into the Mediterranean possible. This canal seems to have ceased to exist from 609 B.C. ¹⁰³ After a very long interval in 1859 A.D. De Lesseps Ferdinand took up the responsibility of excavating the Suez Canal which seems to be the modern representative of the ancient Nalamāla Sea.

¹⁰⁴ The Jātaka mentions the Valabhāmukha sea as a terrible inhuman one 'where water is sucked away and rises on every side; water thus sucked away on all sides rises in sheer

101. Pre-Buddhist India, Sec.V, Ch.III, p.401; JBOBS, VI. 195.
102. Pre-Buddhist India, Sec. V, Ch. III, p. 404.
103. Ibid., p. 429.
104. Ibid.
precipices leaving what looks like a wall, a terrific roar is heard which seems as if would burst the ear and break the heart'. It was to be reached by the Nalamāla canal. The Valabhamukha sea may be identified with the Mediterranean sea wherein volcanoes are still to be seen. In fact one of the main volcano-belts extends from Iceland via Azores or Acores and Cape Verde Islands to the Gulf of Guinea, and then branches off to West Indies on one side and to the Mediterranean Sea and to the middle of Asia on the other side.

Now, we may turn to the extraordinary routes mentioned in detail in the Niddesa list and also in the Milindapañha (p. 280), Vimānavatthu (LXXIV), Jātaka (III. 541), Vāyu Purāṇa (Ch. 47, V. 54), Matsya Purāṇa (Ch. 121, v. 56), Kātyāyana's Vārtika (Patañjali's comments on Pāṇini's Sūtra, V. 1. 77) and Gaṇapātha of Pāṇini (V. 3. 100). Kātyāyana associates these ways with merchants and the Milindapañha agrees in a way substituting seekers of wealth for merchants. The Vimānavatthu definitely connects them with oversea countries and thus agrees with the Niddesa and Bhattachārā Sīlokasamgraha in this respect. The Purāṇas also mention them in connection with countries outside India. Such unusual roads enumerated in these texts are: Jajamapathā, Ajapathā, Menḍhapathā, Saṅkupathā, Chattapathā, Vaṃsapathā, Sakunapathā, Musikapathā, Daripathā and Vettādhāra. The characteristics of
these paths may be partially explained in the light of 'the story of Sāmādasa', the merchant's son, as narrated in the Slokaśāmgraha. The Saddhammapajjotikā of Upasena (1080 A.D.) the commentary on the Mahāniddesa also helps us in understanding the real nature of these paths.

Jannupatha was the road on which one has to crawl on knees. Ajapatha is the way where goats only can be used for carrying merchandise. Mendhapatha is the road on which one has to depend on rams. Saṅkupatha is the rocky path where the steep assents are climbed with the help of spikes, stakes, iron hooks and cords etc. Sakunapatha or the path of birds in the Brhatkathā invariably reminds us of the story of Sindbad and his adventure with the Roc birds in the Arabian Nights. Chattapatha is the way where one gets down like birds with the help of an open parasol made of skin which resists the air and gradually descends on the ground. It clearly indicates the use of parachutes for getting down. The Vettadhāra or Vettācāra is the way where the adventurer has to use a ladder of canes to climb up to the top of a mountain by catching hold of creepers (vetra). The Vāṃsapatha is the road where one has to cross a river holding on the bamboos which overhang the banks. Musikapatha seems to signify a very

106. Ibid., p. 59.
107. I., p. 347.
108. The Geography of the Far East, p. 60.
narrow and difficult path which only men with the skill of moving very smoothly like rats can go across. Daripatha is perhaps the path which passes through a gorge or a ravine or mountain pass.¹⁰⁹

The enumeration of these mountain paths clearly suggests how the merchants and fortune-seekers had to face various sorts of dangers and hardships while passing through the foreign lands, full of perils and risks.

We shall now turn to the evidence supplied by the Chinese writers on India's relation with adjacent lands.

We come to know that the first two lay disciples of the Buddha, Trapusa and Bhallika belonged to the Bahlīka country and they were the first to build topes in their own city on their return.¹¹⁰ Yuan Chwang testifies to the existence of these topes in the vicinity of Balkh. The first Chinese envoy to Ta-hiu (Tokharistan) Chang K'i'en records the presence of Indian merchants in that country who were intermediaries between South West China and the Oxus Valley, the caravan routes passing through Northern India.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹. Ibid., pp. 59-61; Cosmography and Geography... p.68, F.N. 116.
¹¹¹. Ibid., p. 764.
centuries B.C. starting from the coast of Tonkin and ending with the Indian coast. It describes a connected itinerary: Ho-p'u, Pi-tsong, Tu-yuan, Yi-lu-mu, Chen-li, Pu-kan-tu-[Ju, and Huang che. These names seem to stand for Gambu, Vesuṅga, Taṅgana, Ilāvar (dhana), Tamāla, Pugam (?) and Gaṅga. 112 Dr. P.C. Bagchi draws our attention to these Chinese records and rightly observes: 113 'We, therefore, find here most of the principal names of the two itineraries discussed above. This is positive evidence that regular sailing from the Gangetic valley upto Tonkin was already known in the second and first centuries B.C. It is, therefore, likely ... that Indian merchants knew and settled down in various places in the trans-Gangetic regions, both peninsular and insular, as far as North Annam along the coast much earlier than was hitherto believed.'

Again, a Chinese account refers to the port of T'eu-ku-li which is identical with Takkola of the Niddlesa list. 114 The Annals of the Han Dynasty speak of an embassy in A.D. 132 from King Tiaopien (Devavarman?) of Ye-tiao. There should be no doubt that this Ye-tiao is the same as Yavadvipa or Ibadio. K'ang Tai in his account of the Pu-nan, however, refers to this kingdom as Chu-po situated in the sea

112. Ibid.
113. Ibid., p. 772.
114. Ibid., p. 774.
to the east of Pu-nan. He also refers to Ma-Wu island (corrected to Ma-li) to the east of Cha-pu. These two islands are identical with Yava and Bali.

The Chinese knew the earliest Hindu kingdom of Java under two different names, viz., Ye-tiao (Yavadvipa) and Chu-po (Javadvipa). It is the latter name which was preferred by the Chinese writers. Fa-hien in the beginning of the 5th century A.D. calls it Chu-po. 116

From the indigenous and foreign evidences, it becomes clear that the ancient Indians, from very early times, visited the overseas countries of the Far East as well as some countries of the West. Though there is a certain amount of over-colouring in the Indian texts here and there, yet the kernel of the facts can well be distinguished and extracted from the extravagance of fiction. The same thing happens in the Greek Epics Illyad and Odyssey where we come across descriptions of strange foreign countries, islands and seas, the foundation of which is laid on personal experience of the mariners, but which are at many places blurred by colourful exaggerations of the adventurers who thus wished to puff up their credit and show themselves as undaunted dare-devils in the eyes of their countrymen.

115. Ibid., p. 776.
116. Ibid.