CHAPTER IV

THE KING, TRADE AND TRADERS

"By this glorious Mahārāja Gaṇapati-deva the following edict (assuring) safety has been granted to traders by sea, starting for and arriving from all continents, islands, foreign countries and cities" — J. 135.

"Formerly kings used to take away by force the whole cargo viz. gold, elephants, horses, gems etc. carried by ships and vessels, which, after they had started from one country or other, were attacked by storms, wrecked and thrown on the shore" — J. 140.

"We out of mercy, for the sake of glory and merit are granting everything besides the fixed duties to those who have incurred the great risk of a sea-voyage with the thought that wealth is more valuable than even life" — J. 146.

— Motupalli Pillar Inscription of Kakatiya Gaṇapati.
In the chapter immediately preceding the present one mention was made of products meant for consumption of the producer himself and also of those products which the producer disposes of at his discretion. The latter kind of products are exchangeable and placed in the category of commodities. This exchange of commodities for profit or for other commodities is at the root of the economic activity called trade. Trade is of two broad types: (a) domestic trade and (b) international trade. Domestic trade is the commercial exchange between two regions of the same country, while international trade is the trade across political frontiers. Both domestic and international trade are governed by what economists define as the principle of comparative advantage. This act of exchanging goods from one area to another is, however, not the single distinctive trait of a trader. A peasant-woman, for example, while selling eggs and vegetables produced in her own home and garden in a market or a near-by town, is undoubtedly engaged in some sort of trade. But she can hardly be considered as a merchant thereby; she remains a peasant i.e. a producer of goods or commodities. The trader on the other hand "lives by trade, by profitting from wares which others, not he, have produced."

From the basic function of the trader, attention may now be turned to the essential aim of the same, i.e. profit.
Without going into different theories offered by economists on profit, it may be defined as "the income earned by the proprietors of business or industrial enterprise. Such income is of residual character. Whatever be the form of business organization (single entrepreneurship, partnership or joint-stock companies) the proprietors get what is left after paying all the factors hired by them". Prompted by this profit-motive the trader moves from one region to another; he is capable of cutting across geographical barriers.

The itinerant nature of the merchant naturally brings him into contact — direct or indirect — with political authorities of a state or parts thereof. The state authority has to be interested in trade and commerce, because governed by the principle of comparative advantage it brings into the state a considerable amount of requirements from elsewhere and thereby fosters the economy of the country. Reasons are there for the ruler to be interested in trade since it yields to the treasury a considerable amount of wealth in the form of taxes on the entry and departure of traders, on warehousing goods, taxes from sale proceeds, booth tax etc. The trader also requires the ruler, because economic institution depend on political bodies and individual economic activities are hardly practicable in a political vacuum. The functions of the king and traders interact upon another. Economic and political interests often go hand in hand.
It has already been said that the most compelling factor in the activities of a merchant is his profit-motive. The merchant is often ruthless in order to satisfy his seemingly insatiable desire for profit. The old word for merchant, it is interesting to note, is 'chaupan'. The latter word is derived from Latin 'caupo' denoting the proprietor of a wine tavern who also trades in local produce. In the Roman law this caupo was invariably considered as a cheat, a man bent upon fleecing his guests especially if the tavern also comprised an inn or a hostel. The trader no doubt amassed huge fortune out of his profit, but he often did not enjoy social respectability. The antipathy of Adam Smith towards the mercantile community is not difficult to find out and a virtual exclusion of merchants from the respectable society was not an unwelcome proposal to him.

Whether or not the merchant enjoyed honourable position in the society with large accumulation of wealth, he gradually augmented his "power", since wealth is intimately connected with power. This was particularly true in Europe and England since the Industrial Revolution when the mercantile system emerged as a force to reckon with. Taking advantage of the technological advancements and the laissez faire principle, the trader gradually began to invest his surplus wealth in industries. The sole purpose was to accumulate more and more at the cost of the poorer section of the people. Adam Smith came out with this caustic comment: "It is the industry that is carried on for the benefit of the rich and powerful that
is principally encouraged by our mercantile system. That which is carried on for the benefit of the poor and the indigent is too often either neglected or oppressed." It is interesting to note that the rich and powerful are bracketed together by him, indicating that they controlled the key to the economy of the country. Such a situation would lead to an offence against the natural course of social justice. "To hurt in any degree the interest of any one order of citizens for no other purpose but to promote that of some other, is evidently contrary to the justice and equality of treatment which the sovereign owes to all the different orders of society." The political authority appears to have been a mere spectator against the machinations of the mercantile community. The Navigation Acts against the Dutch, described as "perhaps the wisest of all the commercial regulations of England" had behind it definite machinations of the great companies which tried to meet economic as well as strategic aims. This is clearly illustrative of the tightening of trader's grip on the economy and state-affairs of a country.

It may reasonably be asked why the king himself allowed the trader to subordinate the interest of the state in general to his own narrow self-interest. We have already seen that the economy of the state was not controlled by the political authority but by powerful traders. The affairs of the state, particularly aggressive designs, were often largely financed by them and the king had to depend on traders for procuring
funds. Apart from this, the king often granted farming right to the trader over a trade centre or a port in return of a stipulated share of money earned by the trader in such areas. The acquisitive society sustained by a traditional and not a planned economy always encouraged the ruler to procure wealth from all conceivable sources, even by overriding the general interest and well-being of the state.

One of the answers to check the insatiable profit motive of individual merchant has been provided nowadays in the socialist and/or regimented economy, where the State assumes the rôle of a trader to the exclusion of all private enterprise. The active participation of the State in foreign trade was regularly practised in the pre-World War II period only in Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, though the scope of this policy has since then been largely extended. The most comprehensive form of State trading is found in the U.S.S.R., her allies and China. "In these countries state trading is a part of the integrated socialist economy and is used both for the purpose of co-ordinating trade with national planning and striking the best possible bargain with foreign countries". Apart from socialist countries, countries following avowedly capitalist economy also participate in state trading. Thus most of the foreign trade in Argentina is conducted through state owned and state controlled organization. The Commodity Credit Corporation is the main apparatus through which the U.S.A. does extensive trading operations. In India, a
country following mixed economy, a State Trading Corporation has been established to enable the government to engage in foreign trade. Whether it is followed in a communist, capitalist or a mixed economy, the policy of state trading yields a number of common advantages to ruling authorities. In view of the growing trends towards monopolistic buying and selling in international trade in modern times, a state monopoly is preferred to private monopoly. The state by entering into commerce can intercept the excessive profit-making motive of private traders and at the same time strengthens its position to follow and implement a definite economic policy.

With these brief introductory and general remarks we now propose to concentrate on the relation between the king and traders in ancient India. Though India in ancient times was, as is still now, essentially an agrarian country, trade and commerce was regularly practised from a remote antiquity. The vast plains and the life-giving streams of rivers that watered them were conducive to commercial communication. The passes lying in the Himalayas, the Western Ghats, the Vindhyas and the Nilgiris encouraged the commercial adventurists to penetrate through the seemingly insurmountable barriers. Last but not the least of the geographical factors was the sea washing the three shores of the subcontinent. The subcontinent putting out far into the Indian Ocean for about a thousand miles up to Cape Comorin, has substantial parts of
its trade over the sea. A large part of the internal trade of India is still today carried on from port to port along the western and eastern coasts. Such favourable geographical and ecological circumstances gave India a vantage position in the commercial intercourse between the East and the West.

II

The history of commerce in the subcontinent may be traced back as early as the days of the Indus Civilization (c. 2300 B.C. - 1750 B.C.). That this extensive, uniform and organized civilization maintained far-flung commercial contacts with areas within the subcontinent as well as without, has ably been established by archaeologists. The most significant aspect of this trade contact was probably the intercourse with Mesopotamia, known from some cuneiform tablets and archaeological remains. The representation of a ship in a seal, a potsherd and a terracotta relief and the discovery of a dockyard at Lothal in Kathiawad speaks of the fact that a considerable portion of trade in the Indus Civilization was maritime in character. The amount of data regarding trade and commerce in the Indus valley is hardly satisfactory; but information about traders is even scantier. The discovery of some two dozen seals found from Susa and other Mesopotamian cities, either actually Harappan or very nearly copied therefrom, has led scholars to surmise the possible existence of Harappan merchants in Mesopotamian cities. This is probably suggestive of the establishment
of a colony (or something similar to that) of Harappan merchants there. Such a colony of foreign traders could hardly exist without the strong approval and encouragement of the existing political authority who then must have been interested in regular commercial contacts between Mesopotamia and the Indus valley.

Since the decline of the Indus civilization and the beginning of the Vedic age (c. 1500 B.C. - 600 B.C.) the paucity of the literary documents somewhat minimizes; but the information necessary for the present study remains meagre. The Indo-European people were originally pastoral and gradually turned into sedentary agriculturists in course of their settlement in India. The Rgveda, the earliest extant record of the 'Aryan' mind, speaks of some rudimentary trade. A people called Pani, hardly favoured by the composers of the Rgvedic hymn, appears to have participated in trade; but their relation vis-a-vis the king is not known. The question of maritime trade has led to considerable scholarly disputes — one group considering the Rgvedic people as seafarers and other contrasting such a theory. In the later Samhitās and Brāhmaṇas (1000-800 B.C.) the term samudra was used definitely in the sense of the sea. Reference is also found to rich traders (śresthis).

The above information may indicate growth of commercial activities during the 10th and 9th centuries B.C. This may be
supplemented by the evidence of Jewish chronicles during the reign of Solomon (c. 800 B.C.) which describes a naval voyage sent by Hiram the king of Tyre. The journey resulted in the import of gold, silver, ivory, apes, peacocks and great plenty of Almug trees and precious stones which were shipped at a port called Ophir. Ophir may be identified with Abhîra located in Rajasthan; if, however, the word is read as Sophir, as has been suggested by some scholars, it may correspond to Sopara or Surpâraka, a well-known port in the western seaboard. All these probably show maritime trade contacts of West Asia with certain parts of the subcontinent. In this context reference may be made to representation of figures of apes and Indian elephants on the obelisk of Shalmaneser III (860 B.C.). This archaeological evidence seems to corroborate the Biblical evidence regarding India's commercial contacts with Western Asia. The use of Indian teak in the Temple of Moon at Mugheir (the Ur of Chaldees) and in the palaces of Nebuchadnezzar, both assignable to the sixth century B.C., once again points to the same direction. Though these pieces of information throw some light on trade and commerce, the actual relation between the king and traders and the possible motive (or motives) behind maintaining such a relation, if any, cannot be properly appreciated. The 6th century B.C. is a landmark in the history of India, for this witnessed the rise of two great heretical sects, Buddhism and Jainism, remarkable development in
economic life, especially crafts and commerce and the rise of maha janapadas. Though the reconstruction of the history of the age of the Buddha (6th - 5th centuries BCE) is a formidable task, because the available literary sources are all later than the period under review, these have been used by scholars to study the history of period of the Buddha. The Pali canonical texts and the Jataka stories may show that there was a great development and expansion of crafts and commerce.

The Jaina text Bhagavati Sutra refers to a potter-woman named Halahala who employed five hundred potter-women under her. Halahala appears to have had enough financial resources at her disposal; otherwise she could hardly employ other potters under her. Though herself a potter originally, Halahala raises herself to the position of an entrepreneur. Thus, she may be said to have enjoyed greater economic control over the craft she followed. The story seems to highlight one of the salient features of the existing economic condition: it speaks of the gradually emerging class of moneyed-people in whom a considerable wealth had concentrated.

The most outstanding representative of this newly rich class is the setthi (Sanskrit सेठि). The term is used since the later Vedic period, but becomes much more frequent in the Buddhist texts. His wealth is almost invariably computed as 80 crores (astikoti vibhava) — undoubtedly a figurative description but nevertheless indicative of the great fortune amassed by him.
Fick points to the double rôle played by the *setthi*, a private part and an official part. As a private gentleman the *setthi* appears in Buddhist texts in the rôle of a rich merchant and an influential merchant prince. A *setthi* residing at Benares is said to have led five hundred wagons. The term *janapada-setthi* denotes a *setthi* living in the countryside. The rise of the *setthi* to the position of a business magnate was probably due to his success in trading. Moreover a Jataka story depicts that he had stocked huge quantities of grain in his granary. The purpose of such a hoarding must have been the sale of grains at a time of scarcity leading to his earning a handsome profit. In another Jataka story a tailor is said to have lived with him (*setthim nissaya vasantassa turrakarassa tumra kammena jivissama*). An inn-keeper is described to have lived by him (*tum upanissayo eko varuni-vanijo jivati*).

The significance of these two Jataka passages may be sought in the logical interpretation that the *setthi* with enormous surplus wealth at his disposal probably invested capital with smaller traders and craftsmen. The persons thus receiving financial advances are likely to be under the influence of the *setthi* and also would probably pay him some kind of interest — whether in cash or kind. The *setthi* then seems to have derived direct monetary gains by investing capital and also exerted considerable amount of economic control over certain crafts. In the light of this inference
a profound transformation in the character and activities of a big trader during the age of Buddha may be appreciated. The trader is essentially and originally a middle-man between the actual producer and the consumer; the main impulse behind his activities is the profit potentiality of every deal. The *setthi* of the Buddhist texts by investing his enormous wealth in crafts and commerce may be said to have gradually assumed the position of an entrepreneur from his essential role as a mere middle-man. Such a major transformation would naturally result in the considerable expansion of the *setthi*’s sphere of economic activities and his influence on the overall economy of the state.

Apart from being a respectable private trader, the *setthi* appears in an official role as the leader of the mercantile community and holds the office of *rājagaha setthi*. The typical representative of the *setthi* in his official role is Anāthapindika who had under him 500 *anusetthis* (literally junior or subordinate *setthi*s). The most remarkable aspect of the official position of the *setthi* is his close connexion with the king. There is a standard description in the Buddhist texts that the *setthi* goes to the royal court thrice a day (*divasassa tayo vāre rājapatthanamgacchati*). But at the same time he does not figure in the list of *rajabhoggas* or royal officers and hence is not a royal servant. It may be surmised that it is in the capacity of the leader of the mercantile community that he visits the king.
The duties and functions attached to this office are not clearly known from our sources. He, however, seems to have acted as a liaison between the mercantile community which he represents and the king. The principal factor leading to his emergence in the court is doubtless his immense wealth. "He may have assisted the king in framing his financial policy and advised him on the methods and rates of assessment on big business". The importance of the setthi becomes so much that a Jataka story refers to the gift of the East market town to a merchant by the king (pacinayavamajjhaka jamami rajabhogenabhuñjati). This may imply the gift of certain trading facilities or some fiscal exemption to the setthi.

Another person whose economic affluence and social prestige often ran closely parallel to the setthi was the gahapati. The term is derived from Sanskrit Grhapati literally meaning a householder, the lord or master of the householder. Though the gahapati follows the profession of a cultivator (kassaka) and carpenter (darukammika), he is most frequently associated with the setthi. This suggests that he often followed the profession of a rich trader. The general well being of the gahapati is indicated in the Vinayapitaka (II.77) by the term kalyana bhattiko gahapati. In the Pañcaguru Jataka the royal court is said to have been attended among others by ministers, Brāhmaṇas, gahapatis and nobles (amacca ca brāhmanagahapatikādayokhattiyakumāra). The gahapati like the setthi thus attends the royal court. Moreover the
Dighanikāya (II. 16, 176) and the Suttanipāta (p. 106) enlist the gahapati as one of the seven jewels (ratana) of the universal king (cakkavatti) who is provided with hidden treasure by the gahapati. A. N. Bose points out that according to Buddhaghosa this gahapati is explained as the setthi-gahapati. By securing treasures for the king the setthi or the gahapati or the setthi-gahapati obviously satisfied the king's love for wealth and this was probably one of the chief reasons of his position of great eminence to the king.

Attention may here be focussed on a particular gahapati, named Mendaka. Residing in Bhadiyanagara, Mendaka and his family was renowned for their wealth and psychic power. By the latter element Mendaka filled the granary; his wife fed household employees (dāsa-kammakara-porisam) only with the help of a bowl of the capacity of a ālaka measure; his son paid from a single purse containing one thousand coins as half-yearly wage to each of his employees (chammasikam vetam) and his daughter in law provided food as six-month's wage to Mendaka's employees out of a basket of the capacity of only one dona. The magical power of the gahapati is also said to have been applied in his agricultural fields, which were ploughed by his slaves.

The above legend on the psychic powers of Mendaka may contain many improbabilities and fanciful narration. But at the same time it may also show that he was an immensely wealthy person. The source of his wealth was not merely trade, but
agriculture and other allied pursuits. Like other rich men he employed labourers to work for him. This implies that his role was more akin to an entrepreneur than to a simple trader or a middleman engaged in exchange of goods. That is why, he has not been called a setthi-gahapati.

Mendaka also figures as having been fed the entire army of the king and paid them wages in cash and kind. N.-Wagle concludes that his paying the royal army wages in cash and kind "symbolizes his role as a tax-giver". Mendaka, however, seems to have rendered financial assistance to the king for the maintenance of the royal army. From this point of view Mendaka may be considered more as a financier than a tax-giver to the king. The gahapati with vast wealth at his disposal seems to have been in a position to meet certain monetary requirements of the king. The legend may suggest that the close relationship between the gahapati and the king developed, at least to some degree, on economic considerations. It is not also difficult to visualize that the gahapati here would exert considerable influence upon the king, since he assumed the role of a financier to the latter.

The above discussion may help us in understanding the nature of the prestigious epithet gahapati. Following Wagle it may be said that the epithet was assumed by "persons whose growing wealth and influence marks them out as separate from their extended kin group". This seems to have been strengthened by the inclusion of the name of Raja Udena in
the list of gahapatis found in the Samyutta Nikaya and Auputtara Nikaya. The King in question seems to have been the same as the legendary Udayana of Vatsa. The epithet gahapati attached to the name of the king probably underlines the accumulation of great wealth by Uderea. The term in question, thus, is a status symbol not only popular to commercial magnates, but also to royal personages.

From the above discussion it may reasonably follow that the setthi as the leader of the mercantile community found access into the political circle primarily on the basis of his immense wealth. But since the setthi — essentially a trader — could rarely be free from the impulse of profit-making, he would probably utilize his position in the royal court to satisfy his love for gain with little concern for the overall economic well-being of the state. Under such circumstances he would become slowly but surely the key to the economy of the country. This may consequently minimize the importance of the role of the state authority in economic life of the country and he would come under the economic influence, if not clutches of the setthi. In this connexion mention may be made of a Jataka story which describes the capture of setthi along with queens and princes for execution. The story seems to suggest involvement of setthi in some kind of conspiracy against the king. The nature of the conspiracy — whether political, economic or both — is difficult to specify. But nevertheless it reflects the
machinations of the setthi against the king, obviously to further his profit motive. The position of the king appears to have jeopardized who then took stern measures to suppress the growing influence of the setthi.

III

The 6th and 5th centuries B.C. witnessed the rise of sixteen maḥājanapadas or great states (monarchical as well as non-monarchical) and the struggle for political supremacy over north India among them. Of these sixteen states Magadha became the most powerful during the reign of the Nandas in the 5th and 4th centuries B.C. The last quarter of the 4th century B.C. is marked by the Macedonian invasion of India by Alexander the Great, the downfall of the Nanda dynasty and the foundation of the Maurya empire by Candragupta Maurya. This was an epoch-making incident because for the first time the vast tract of land stretching from Afghanistan to Northern Karnataka and from Saurashtra to Orissa was unified under one central authority. The history of India during the Maurya rule (c. 324 B.C. to 187 B.C.) may be studied chiefly on the basis of two contemporary sources: (a) the accounts left by Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to the court of Candragupta Maurya and (b) the inscriptions of Aśoka.

Megasthenes in course of his description of the administration of public affairs (Fragment XXXIV) speaks of great officers of the Maurya realm. One group of them, called
Astynomoi, i.e., officers in charge of the city, is described to have been divided into six bodies each consisting of five members. Of the six bodies, "the fourth class superintends trade and commerce. Its members have charge of weights and measures, and see that the products in their season are sold by public notice. No one is allowed to deal in more than one kind of commodity unless he pays a double tax. "The fifth class supervises manufactured articles, which they sell by public notice. What is new is sold separately from what is old and there is fine for mixing the two together". The above account shows that trade came under close surveillance of the ruler. The sale of goods is made by public notice and at least in one case by the officers themselves. This suggests the state's participation in marketing and distribution of goods. The steps against dealing in more than one article and also against mixing old articles with new ones are undoubtedly rather stern measures taken against the blind profit-motive of the private trader. Megasthenes also says in this context that the city officers jointly had to take care of markets, harbours and temples. This probably indicates the Maurya ruler's interests and involvement in trade.

Megasthenes says elsewhere that "the admiral of the fleet lets out ships on hire for the transport both of passengers and merchandise or to sailors and merchants. The shipbuilders were not only exempt from taxes but also
were paid by the government. This implies that ship building industry was controlled by the state. The trader therefore may be considered to have been dependent on the ruler for the availability of ships which are explicitly stated to have been lent out on hire to traders. By lending ships on hire the ruler received a handsome amount of money from traders. The monopoly control of the king over shipping probably leaves to the trader no other alternative but to use such ships. Thus the Mauryan king seems to have participated in commerce in various ways. The state control on shipping and maritime voyages was designed to yield financial advantage to the king.

Megasthenes has also referred to officers called Agoranomoi, in charge of the countryside. Among other things they are to "construct roads and at every ten stadia set up a pillar to show the by-roads and distances". Arrian speaks of a royal highway running westwards from Palimbothra.

This description of the Classical authors may be appreciated in the light of two Asokan edicts found from Jamghan in Afghanistan (ancient Lampaka country). Both the records were dated in the year 16 of Priyadarsin mlk' (i.e., king Priyadarsin = Asoka) and written in Aramaic. Reference is made therein to 'Krapy' (Kārapathi). The term kara, an Iranian word, stands for the military chief or the lord. Pāthi means way. The word then means the lord's way i.e. a
royal highroad and may easily be compared with the Indian word rajapatha.

This krapy or the royal highway may easily be identified with the 'royal road' referred to in the Classical texts. The route in question appears to have run from West Asia to the confines of India and thence through Taxila and several other places to Palimbothra or Pataliputra. The route must have passed through Lamghan.

Interestingly enough, the Laghman edicts also contain information regarding measurement of distance (the unit called Qstn is identified with the measurement called bow) of various places from the findspots of these edicts. The edicts were written among other things for the purpose of marking distance. There seems to have been a regular system of recording measurement of distance in this krapy. This once again closely agrees with the Classical accounts which inform us about the regular system of recording distances on the royal highroad during the Maurya period.

The second Laghman edict ends with the following line: Whsw prtbg skn zk (ptyt?) 10. The word prtbg is of particular interest in this context. This has been logically equated with the Sanskrit word pūrtabhāga and translated as "the Dispenser of Meritorious work". So Whsu of the Laghman edicts had the official designation of prtbg. This meritorious work seems to have comprised of providing wells and shelters and shady trees on the roads, maintenance of
roads etc., as is known from the R.Es and P.Es of the same king. The functions of the officer in question run closely to those of the Rajukas/Rajjukas of other Asokan edicts. This class of Maurya officers, bearing considerable resemblances with the Agoranomoi of Classical texts, appear to have been entrusted with _inter alia_ supervision of public works.

The data gleaned from two Laghman edicts of Asoka, if and when studied along with the Classical texts throw light on (i) the existence of a royal highway passing through Laghman and connecting far-flung areas; (ii) the official system of recording measurements of distance of various places and (iii) the probable existence of a public works department. Such official/administrative arrangements seem to have facilitated a regular infrastructure for trade and commerce. A managerial state of unitary nature like that established by the Mauryas is likely to have launched and maintained such infrastructure of commerce with a trade orientation.

The above account on state management of shipping, state care of overland communication system and the appointment of officers to supervise trade and commerce amply shows that the Maurya ruler and not the individual trader was the key figure in the commercial economy. The picture seems to have substantially different from one reflected in the Buddhist texts where the trader probably forced the ruler to come within the orbit of his influence. The Maurya ruler seems to have realized that in the preceding period the
laissez faire policy gave the impetus to the trader but hardly yielded substantial economic gains for the ruler. By devising and implementing the policy of state control on trade and commerce the Maurya emperor shifted the advantage from the trader to himself.

IV.1.

During the reign of Asoka contacts with five kings of western Asia seem to have been regularly carried. They were Antiyoka (i.e. Antiochus II Theos), Turāmaya or Tulāmaya (i.e. Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt), Amtekina or Antikini (i.e. Antigonus Gonatas) of Macedonia, Maka or Maga (i.e. Magas of Greece) and Alikasudara (i.e. Alexander of Epirus or of Corinth). According to Asoka’s edicts such contacts were established to propagate Dhamma. Similar connexion was also established with Tambaparni i.e. Tamraparni identified often with the island of Ceylon. The extensive contacts of India with distant territories, however, were not snapped up with the downfall of the Maurya empire (c. 187 B.C.) within half a century after the death of Asoka. The disintegration of the mighty Maurya empire led to the rise of a number of independent states over the ruins of the empire. The post-Maurya period in the political history of ancient India is also marked by a series of outside incursion by different peoples from Western and Central Asia e.g. the Indo-Greeks, the Scythians, the Parthians and the Yüeh-chih (= Kusānas).
One of the well-known political personalities of the period under review was King Kharavela of Kalinga. In spite of prolonged debates regarding his date among historians, he is usually placed in the second half of the 1st century B.C. The Hathigumpha Inscription recording the achievements of this king refers to horses, elephants, jewels and rubies as well as numerous pearls in hundred which he (i.e. Kharavela) causes to be brought here from the Pandya country. Of these valuable articles, attention may be drawn to elephants. Jayaswal has referred to an account of Aelian regarding elephants of Taprobane (i.e. Ceylon), "The islanders export them to the mainland opposite which they construct expressly for this traffic .... they dispose of their cargoes to the king of the Kalinga's." The mainland opposite the island of Taprobane may be identified with the Pandya country, situated on the east coast around the Tinnevelly district, Tamilnadu. The King of the Kalinga's is obviously the king of the Kalinga people. Aelian thus probably refers to a trade in elephants from Ceylon to Kalinga with the Pandya country playing the rôle of an intermediary. In the light of this information the epigraphic evidence of bringing of elephants by Kharavela the king of Kalinga may show that he was engaged in trade in elephants referred to by Aelian. The Pandya country was traditionally famous for pearl fisheries. The Hathigumpha Inscription refers to mūta (i.e. mukta) or pearls
among items brought by Kharavela from the Pandya country. So, at least elephants and pearls, if not other items mentioned along with these, were procured through trade. We may, therefore, conclude that the king in question here himself participated in foreign trade. The Kalinga king seems to have been engaged in trade out of the impulse of gaining certain extremely valuable objects.

The most important event in the commercial history of India during this period was the Indo-Roman commerce. The beginning of this trade probably developed from the reign of Augustus (B.C. 27 – A.D. 14). During the second half of the 1st century B.C. major parts of the known Western World, Egypt and West Asia were brought under the jurisdiction of the Roman empire, paving the way of peaceful contacts between distant areas. Almost simultaneously a steep rise can be seen in the demand of exotic and luxury items from the Orient e.g. pepper, spices, fine muslins, perfumes, unguents, pearls and precious stones like pearls, berly and diamond.

There was, however, a major geographical factor in this great boost of trade. Strabo writes in the first century A.D. during his stay with his friend and companion Aelius Gallus, who was at that time the prefect of Egypt, that "about one hundred and twenty ships sail from Myos-Hormos to India, although in the time of the Ptolemies scarcely one would venture on this voyage and commerce with the Indies."

The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, an account of
maritime trade in India left behind by an anonymous Greek sailor, and the Natural History of Pliny refers to a particular wind called Etasian or Hippalus Wind which the Greek sailors used to reach India in a relatively shorter time. The Periplus says that the journey to India was taken upon during the month of Epiphi i.e. July. Earlier the sailors used to make the journey in small vessels sailing close around the shores of the gulfs; and Hippalus was the pilot who by observing the location of the ports and conditions of the sea, first discovered how to lay his course straight across the ocean. For at the same time when with us the Etasian winds are blowing on the shores of India the wind sets in from the ocean and this southwest wind is called Hippalus, from the name of him who first discovered the passage. From that time to the present day ships start, some direct from Cama and some from the Cape of Spices and those for Damrica throw the ships' head considerably off the wind. Pliny too refers to this Etasian/Hippalus wind.

Describing the routes from the Roman World to India he gives the following account: The route followed by the fleet of Alexander under Onesicritus and Nearchus who sailed from Patala (= Indus Delta) to Susa in seven months. "Subsequently it was thought that the safest line is to start from Ras Fartak in Arabia with a West Wind and make for Patala the distance being reckoned 1332 miles. The following period considered it a shorter and safer route to start from the same cape and steer for the Indian harbour of Sigerius
(Jaigarh) and for a long time this was the course followed, until a merchant discovered a shorter route. Then describing the latest and shortest route from Alexandria to India, Pliny says "the most advantageous way of sailing to India is to set out from Cella; from that port it is a 40 days' voyage, if the Hippalus is blowing, to the first trading station in India, Muziris." The account of Pliny shows how the overseas trade with India developed in four stages by proper utilization of the Ebasian wind. Each of the succeeding stages in the development of the sea routes proved to be shorter and safer than each preceding one. Another interesting feature of the various stages of development of the sea-route is that the shorter and safer the journey, the more it was directed towards the southern part of India. Thus in the early stages ships came to Patala, then to Jaigarh in Western Deccan and finally to Muziris in Kerala.

The Ebasian or the Hippalus wind, largely responsible for the phenomenal increase in the volume of the Indo-Roman commerce, is invariably identified with the south-west monsoon winds. Therefore, the discovery of the south-west monsoon is considered by scholars to have played an instrumental role in Indo-Roman commerce. Since the Hippalus wind appears to have been a seasonal wind, it can be passed as a monsoon (Arabic Mausim = time, season) wind. However, very recent studies on the origin and nature of south-west monsoon on the basis of satellite photographs (called APT) appears to show what modern scientists call monsoon wind has its origin
somewhere south of the equator (about 10°S). The APT also reveals that as the monsoon approaches India, it becomes mixed with another westerly jetstream coming from the Gulf of Aden and Arabia. The Etasian/Hippalus wind which so greatly facilitated Roman sailors to come to India, in that case, appears to have been the same as the westerly jet stream which flows from the Gulf of Aden and mixes with the south-west monsoon.

The other important factor in this maritime commerce between India and Rome was to some extent political. The later years of the 1st century B.C. and the early part of the 1st century A.D. witnessed the rise of a number of formidable powers in Eurasia. They were China of the Later Han Dynasty in the Far East, the Roman empire in the West, the Parthian Empire in Iran and the emergent Kusana empire with its stronghold in Bactra. Available sources of our information show that there was a common point of interest among the Romans, the Parthians and the Chinese: that was the silk and silk which China solely produced, the Romans craved as a luxury item and the Persians as intermediaries sent it to the Roman world. Of these states the Parthians in Iran occupied a position in between the Chinese and Roman empires and controlled considerable portions of the famous silk route. Traders whether going to the Roman empire or entering China from the west had to pass through the Parthian empire which extracted commercial taxes at a very high rate. The Parthian empire as an unavoidable intermediary was not
only a political power but also a commercial power. The political relation of Parthian empire with Rome also deteriorated in course of time. The Roman emperors were on the look out of a viable economic alternative to the inimical and exacting authorities of Parthian empire. At this time, the Etasian/Hippalus wind was discovered and applied in an increasingly intelligent manner. This brought Indian sub-continent in commercial contact and removed the Parthians from intervening. The overland silk road made room for the overseas trade.

It has already been taken into account, on the basis of Pliny's description, that in one of the stages of the development of the maritime trade the Roman sailor terminated their voyage in the lower Indus country. The utilization of the Hippalus wind by Roman sailors has been assigned to the date around A.D. 1. So, the commencement of the Indo-Roman trade in the Indus Delta must be placed in or after A.D. 1. There can be little doubt that the area in question attained considerable importance as one of the terminating points of the Roman sailors.

Contemporary sources of information indicate that the lower Indus valley was included within the realm of Parthian king Gondophares I. The king in question is variously known as Gudavhrasa/Guduvharsa/Gudrayharasa from his coin and suggested to have ruled from c. A.D. 20/21 to at least A.D. 45/46. He is also found to have assumed the imperial title Maharaja Rajatiraja Mahata.
The Act of Thomas, the Syriac version of which is assignable to the 3rd century A.D. refers to a man called Ḥabban, "the merchant of Gudnaphar". Gudnaphar may be identified with the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares I.

In the account of the first Act of Judas Thomas the Apostle it is known that Judas was entrusted with preaching in India by Lord Jesus, though the Apostle was rather reluctant to go there. At that time "a certain merchant, an Indian ... whose name was Ḥabban" and who was "sent by king Gudnaphar that he might bring to him a skilful carpenter", came to Jerusalem knowing that Ḥabban was in search of a skilful carpenter, Jesus asked the merchant whether he would like to purchase Thomas as a slave and carpenter. The lord "bargained with him for twenty (pieces) of silver (as) his price and wrote a bill of sale thus: "I Jesus the sone of Joseph the carpenter, from the village of Bethlehem, which is in Judia, acknowledge that that I have sold my slave Judas Thomas to Ḥabban, the merchant of king Gudnaphar".

The text in question (which is often legendary in character, but not entirely devoid of a substratum of truth) then leaves little doubt that Gondophares I employed a merchant to procure for him a skilful carpenter. Ḥabban here seems to have acted as a commissioned agent of the king and may be categorized as a royal merchant of Gondophares I. This is incidentally our earliest known definite information regarding a royal merchant in ancient India.
While on board the ship during the return journey to India Habban the merchant asked the technical qualifications of the carpenter. Judas claimed proficiency in working in wood and hewn stone. He also knew the art of making royal palaces. Habban should have been amply satisfied because the carpenter was skilled in building royal palaces.

"And when Judas had entered into the realm of India with the merchant Habban, Habban went to salute Gudnaphar, the king of India, and he told him of the artificer whom he had brought for him". The act of saluting the king further underlines that the royal merchant was responsible to his master. Gudnaphar then deposited handsome amount of money with Judas and asked him to build a palace.

But Judas actually spent the sum regularly in charity and missionary activities. When the king was reported about the alleged misappropriation of funds, he "became very furious in his anger and commanded that Thomas and the merchant who had brought him, being bound, should go to prison ..... He took the resolution that he would burn him, after being flayed, with the merchant his companion". The king seems to have naturally felt cheated. He was furious not only against Judas but also against Habban who failed to have satisfied his requirements as a royal merchant.

The story may show that the royal merchant had to face serious consequences in case the specific need of his master
was not fulfilled by him, intentionally or unintentionally. Interestingly enough the king in one place considers Habban as the companion of the carpenter, while in earlier paragraphs Habban was described as the merchant who had brought him. Gudanaphar then seems to have been convinced that his merchant not only brought him an inefficient and cheat carpenter, but also was himself a party in the plot of misappropriating royal money.

A royal merchant like Habban, however, must have been the most important or one of the front ranking commercial magnates, since he would be employed by none other than the king. It is natural for the king to employ the most efficient merchant or the merchant who would serve the king's requirements the best. The story highlights the close relationship between the king and merchants.

The lower Indus country figures as Scythia in the Periplous. The river Sinthus i.e. Indus (= Sindhu) is described as flowing through the coast district of Scythia. "This river has seven mouths, very shallow and marshy, so that they are not navigable except the one in the middle, at which by the shore is the market town, Barbaricum. Before it there lies a small island and inland behind it is the metropolis of Scythia, Minnagara; it is subject to Parthian princes who are constantly driving each other out."

These Parthian princes are usually held as the successor of Gondophares I, whose interest in trade has already been
discussed. The author of the *Periplous* has provided us with a fairly exhaustive list of items of export and import at Barbaricum. Among the imports were "a great deal of thin clothing, and a little spurious, figured linens, topaz, coral, storax, frankincense, vessels of glass, silver and gold plate and a little wine". The items of export are as follows: costus, bdellium, lycium, nard, turquoise, lapis lazuli, seric skin, cotton, cloth, silk yarn and indigo.  

A glance at the list of articles mentioned above would immediately suggest that these were mostly, if not all, luxury items commanding high price. It is significant to note that, according to the author of the *Periplous*, "the ships lie at anchor at Barbaricum but all their cargoes are carried up to the metropolis by the river, to the king". The merchandise appears to have been brought under the notice of the king before being finally readied for transaction. This may suggest two possibilities: (a) the king at Minnagara probably imposed some amount of control over the import — export transactions and therefore supervised the merchandise. (b) He might himself have been interested in some of the luxury items which had to be reserved for him; that is why, all the merchandise had to be shown to him (or at least to his officials). In view of both the possibilities the interest of the king in the luxury items transacted in Indo-Roman commerce is unmistakable. The king may be said to have profitably utilized the Indo-Roman trade to enrich the treasury,
either in the form of levy of commercial tax or in the form of acquisition of valuable articles for himself.

The Kuśāṇas who were responsible for the overthrow of house of Gondophares I made their powers felt in the north-westernmost territory of the subcontinent, even before the extinction of the group of Gondophares I. An interesting inscription on a gold plate throwing light on the history of this period was probably found somewhere in or near Swat. Palaeographically the record is assignable to the first half of the 1st century A.D. The main purpose of the inscription, dated on the 8th day of the month of Śrāvāṇa of the regnal year 14 of Senavarma, king of Oḍi, seems to be perpetuate the disposition of the body relics of the Buddha inside a stūpa called Ekakūṭa stūpa. Among the divine and human beings who (or whose memory) were honoured on the occasion mention has been made of Maharaya Rayatiraya Kuyula Kataphsa's son Devaputra Sādaskana. Kuyula Kataphsa, identifiable with Kuśāṇa monarch Kujula Kadphises, is suggested to "have been the imperial overlord of Senavarma, the king of Oḍi". The inscription therefore is to be referred to an early phase of Kuśāṇa rule in the Indian subcontinent.

The gold (for the purpose of preparing the plate itself) is said to have been under the care of Valia's son Makadaka, the gahapati. We have already seen the gahapati as a person of great affluence, often pursuing trade and
commerce. The content of the record may indicate that the subordinate ruler under the Kuśāna monarch was supplied with gold for writing the incident of constructing and dedicating a stūpa under royal initiative. We have seen earlier that the gahapati often had intimate connexion with the political authority and acted as a supplier of goods and objects to the king. A similar role of the gahapati vis-a-vis the king seems to have continued in the first century A.D. in some areas of the then Kuśāna realm.

The lower Indus valley, the Indo-Scythia/Scythia of the Classical texts, is called Shen-tu, Tien-chu in Chinese accounts. The Hou Han shu describes that Shen-tu (also called Tien-chu) was conquered by Yen-kao-chen or Vima Kadphises, the first Yueh-chih king to conquer a part of the Indian subcontinent. "Since then", the Hou Han shu continues, "the Yueh-chih became extremely rich". So, the Hou Han shu recognizes that the conquest of the lower Indus valley by Vima was followed by a phenomenal increase in the prosperity and power of the Kuśānas. The same text also informs us that "the people of Ta-chin (the Oriental Provinces of the Roman Empire) had traffic by sea with Tien-chu, the profit of which is ten-fold."

In the light of this discussion it is difficult to miss the lively interest of the Kuśāras in Indo-Roman trade which had one of the principal centres in the lower Indus valley. The economic gains of different conquests of the
Kusānas in different phases of their history and their interests in international commerce in Central Asia and in the Indian subcontinent have already been discussed and need not be repeated here.

IV. 2.

From North India we may pass on to the Deccan, particularly western Deccan, where a considerable number of towns, market centres and ports flourished. At least one of the four sea-routes from the Roman world to India, according to Pliny, reached Sigerius i.e. Jaygarh, situated in western Deccan. The Periplous has given an exhaustive account of ports and towns of Dachinabades, which is derived from the Sanskrit word Daksināpatha from which the English word Deccan originated. The geographical connotations of the term Dachinabades of the Periplous and Daksināpatha are, however, not identical.

The most famous port in the Deccan during the period under review was Barygaza of the Periplous and the Geography of Claudius Ptolamy. The name was derived from Sanskrit Bhṛgukaccha (Bharukaccha in Prākrit) which also figures in indigenous literature as a flourishing port. Situated at the estuary of the lower course of the river Narmāda the port was connected with various other trade centres and cities as is evident from the Periplous. From Minnagara much cotton cloth was brought here for export to the western
world. Much agate, carnelian, Indian muslin and mallow cloth and ordinary cloth were sent from Osene (i.e. Ujjaini) to Barygaza. Paethana = Pratisthana, the capital of the Satavahanas and Tagana = Ter were respectively at the distance of twenty days' and ten days' journey from Barygaza. A large amount of cotton cloth, muslin and mallow cloth and other merchandise were brought from the two places to Barygaza. The picture emerges out of the above information is that Barygaza had a large hinterland which was connected with it by a wide net work of overland routes.

Barygaza and areas around it were ruled at this time by Nambanus/Mambanus, according to the Periplous. The king is easily identifiable with Saka Kaśñarāta king Nahapāna who is known from inscriptions and coins issued by him or during his reign. The Periplous gives a thorough account of items meant for export and import through this port. The items of import as listed in our text are as follows: various types of wine, metals like brass, tin, copper, lead, precious stones like coral, gold stone or yellow stone (identified as topaz), cloth of all sorts, storax, sweet, clover, gum sandarch, gold and silver specie, perfumes and unguents. In the same section the account continues: "In those times, moreover, there were imported, as presents to the king, costly silver vases, instruments of music, handsome young women for concubinage, superior wine, apparel, plain but costly, and the choicest unguents."

This description speaks of import of items specially
meant for the king. These were naturally goods of highest quantity and price. Interestingly enough, unguents meant for the king are expressly said to be choicest, while the same article brought as a general items for import" is neither costly nor great in quantity." The statement of the author of the *Periplous* that articles were imported for the king as presents is somewhat peculiar. Who presented them to the king? The answer is not provided in the *Periplous*. If it is the merchants who presented the king with choicest articles, then the merchants probably paid them as some sort of a nājrana, in order to keep him in good humour. In that case the king has hardly to pay anything for the import of costly materials. Thus, the king derives certain economic advantages from the Indo-Roman commerce. Apart from the overall economic prosperity of his realm brought about by brisk commerce and a regular levy of commercial taxes, the king utilizes the commerce to acquire choicest articles of luxury, probably free of cost.

The author of the *Periplous* makes some more interesting comments regarding the port of Barygaza. A lengthy description has been found on the difficult access to the port of Barygaza. The gulf of Barygaza was narrow and at the very entrance of it stood a narrow strip of shoal, rough and beset with rocks. "For this reason native fishermen appointed by Government are stationed with well-manned long boats called trappaga and cotymba at the entrance of the river, whence
they go out as far Syrastrene to meet ships and pilot them up to Barygaza. This arrangement of providing pilotted vessels to sailors engaged in Indo-Roman trade undoubtedly speaks of Nahapānā's interest in and care of Indo-Roman commerce. We have already examined why and how he was to be interested in this commercial intercourse.

The account of Barygaza in the Periplous is followed by that of Calliene (Kalyan near Bombay). "The city of Calliene in the time of Elder Saraganus became a lawful market town; but since it came into the possession of Sandares the port is much obstructed, and Greek ships landing there may chance to be taken to Barygaza under guard." The two political personalities figuring in the above passages are Elder Saraganus and Sandares identified respectively with Satakarnī I and Sundara Satakarnī of the Sātavāhana dynasty. The present passage speaks of a naval blockade resulting in the obstruction of Calliene, while ships originally bound for Calliene were brought to Barygaza. Since Nahapāna was ruling over Barygaza, the naval blockade was effected by none but him. The hostile relation between Nahapāna and his contemporary Sātavāhana kings has already been discussed in an earlier chapter. By causing a diversion of trade from his enemy's port Nahapāna not only enforced a virtual economic starvation on Calliene but also probably succeeded in bringing larger number of ships to his own territory. The absence of Calliene in Ptolemy's Geography suggests its disappearance from the economic scene — at least for the time being — most probably
as a result of Nahapāna's designs. Nahapāna's lively interest in Indo-Roman trade has already been discussed. This interest was at the root of his enforcing an economic sanction through a naval blockade at Calliene.

Nahapāna's success against his arch-rival, the Sātavāhanas, was, however, not long-lasting. A glorious Sātavāhana revival was achieved mainly through the efforts of Gautamīputra Satakarnī, the greatest of the Sātavāhana kings, who defeated Nahapāna and extirpated the Kṣaharāta family. The large Sātavāhana domain, carved out by Gautamīputrā mostly at the cost of the Saka Kṣaharātas, was retained to a certain extent by his son and successor Vasisthīputra Pulumā. Reference may be made to an epigraphic record from Kanheri (which formed a part of the Sātavāhana empire) which has palaeographic affinity to records of Pulumā or of a little earlier. The inscription reads: "Success! The cave of there, the reverend Mitrabhuti, the meritorious gift of the Sāgarapālogana." The term Sāgarapālogana may be interpreted as those "looking after the ocean" or "sea-observers." It would not be unreasonable to suggest that the term Sāgarapālogana may mean the same thing as or similar to Basilikoi Alēis (royal boatmen employed by the government) employed by Nahapāna for piloting ships to Barygaza. Viewed from this light, the Sāgarapālogana may be considered as some sort of royal boatmen, employed by kings who had certain interest in Indo-Roman trade. They could be
employed under the Saka or the Satavahana king. However, since the record is found in an integral part of the Satavahana empire, there is little likelihood that boatmen employed by Saka rulers came to donate a cave in the enemy territory. Therefore these sagarapaloganas appear to have been employed by the Satavahanas. The Satavahana empire, during its heydays, included in it considerable amount of areas lying in or near the sea coast (cf. Gautamiputra Satakarni's epithet 'tisamudatoyapitavahana'). The Satavahana rulers probably also shared with their Saka rivals interests in the Indo-Roman trade and employed sagarapaloganas with a view to watching over and guarding sea-routes frequented by traders engaged in the Indo-Roman commerce.

The political domination of the Satavahanas over western Deccan and parts of western and central India, largely due to the military achievements of Gautamiputra, was challenged and considerably reduced by Rudradaman I of the Saka Kardamaka family. That Rudradaman conquered certain areas from the Satavahanas which played important part in Indo-Roman commerce, has been discussed in an earlier chapter. The Junagarh Rock Inscription which eulogises the career and achievements of Rudradaman I (Saka Era 72 = 150 A.D. credits the king for having rendered protection to nagara-nigama-janapada from robbers, beasts and diseases. Nagar usually means a town, and janapada the country-side. Nigama also means a market place, a city or a town. It also stands for a road or a
caravan or company of merchants. Since the word *nagara* has already been used in the sense of a town, the term *nigama* may not better be taken in the sense of a town also. The alternative meaning of the same term may reasonably be applied. In that case Rudradaman I appears to have rendered protection to, among other things, to roads/caravans/company of merchants. Such a measure of protection is taken against robbers, beasts and diseases. References to towns and countryside and roads/caravans/company of merchants in Rudradaman's record may point to trade and commerce carried through the rural and urban areas lying within the said king's realm. Protective measures then appear to have been enforced in order to ensure safety to traders and encourage commercial activities in the domains of Rudradaman I which included areas important from the point of view of the Indo-Roman trade. Though the Junagarh Inscription does not explicitly mention Rudradaman's connexion with or interest in Indo-Roman trade, he could have been hardly unaware of this profitable trade, especially because he lived during the heydays of Indo-Roman commerce. In view of his possible knowledge and interesting Indo-Roman trade, the importance of measures adapted by Rudradaman I to ensure safety to *nagara-nigama-janapada* may be appreciated better.

IV. 3.

The account of Pliny on the development of overseas trade from Alexandria to India shows that sailors gradually began to frequent more and more the ports of farther south
the region in question was politically dominated by three important kingdoms viz. those of Colas (country around Kaveripattinam and Urayur), Pandyas (around Madura), and Ceras (in Kerala).

The most outstanding entrepot in Damirica was Muziris prominently figuring in classical as well as indigenous literature. The port was included in the Cerabothras (of the Periplous) of Caelobothras (of Pliny) kingdom i.e. the Keralaputra or Cera kingdom. The Periplous gives the following description: "Muziris ... is a city at the height of prosperity, frequented as it is by ships (from Ariake and Greek ships from Egypt)". That overseas trade from the west was the root of the economic efflorescence of Muziris is clearly recognized by the Greek sailor. He has also described in details the items of import and export transacted through this port. The most important of the items were probably pepper, pearls and textiles, all these being luxury goods.

It is interesting to note that in Puram 343, Kuṭṭuvān
the Cera king is said to have presented to visitors at Mużiri (i.e. Mujiris) the rare products of seas and mountains. Visitors at a great entrepot like Muziris are likely to have been merchants, most probably the Yavanas or Graeco-Roman traders. Making presents to foreigners with rare products may be interpreted as samples of commodities fit to be exchanged through trade. It may also be inferred that the foreign trader was presented with rare goods in order to induce him to pay frequent visits to the port. In any case the Cera king Kuṭṭuvan seems to have realized the economic significance of regular visits by foreign traders and shown a definitely favourable attitude to them.

In this connexion it may be mentioned on the basis of Tabula Beantingariana that a temple of Augustus was established at Mużiris. Such a temple appears to have been constructed or at least meant for Graeco-Roman traders. This implies a regular settlement or some sort of a colony of yavana traders established at Muziris; the construction of a temple for foreigners is rather unlikely in an area not frequently visited and inhabited by them. One may not have to stretch one's imagination to a great degree to assume that settlement of foreign traders must have been approved of and encouraged by the existing political authority. This also then may point to the interest of the ruler in Indo-Roman trade, upon which the prosperity of Muziris is stated to have depended.

Among other important ports were Nelcynda called
Neacyudi by Pliny and Bacare which figure in the *Periplus* as being included within the Pandian territory. The Pandian king, at least according to one version, figures in Strabo's *Geography* as having sent an embassy to Augustus Caesar, the celebrated Roman emperor. An important aspect of this mission was a letter sent by the Indian king to Augustus. "He (the Indian king) ... set a high value on being Caesar's friend and was willing to grant him a passage wherever he wished to go through his dominions, and to assist him in any good enterprise". Warmington has successfully established the commercial character of this Indian embassy. We have already discussed that Augustus was interested in establishing direct commercial contact with India, obviously to obviate the inimical and exacting Parthians. The Indian king seems to have sent to the Roman emperor an open invitation to initiate regular commercial intercourse through his kingdom. The Pandya king appears to have been quite aware of the economic advantages and importance of such a trade contact. The economic interests of rulers of two far-flung countries may be said to have coincided. This exemplifies how a diplomatic negotiation between two countries was rooted to their respective commercial interests.

The kingdom of the Colas included in it the famous port of Kaveripadānī, celebrated in *Sangam* texts. It is called the Khaberos Emporium by Ptolemy. The very name of the port suggests its close connexion with the Kāverī river. The port
has been discussed in great details in a Tamil epic, the *Silappadikāram*. The *Silappadikāram* is a literary work of the post-Sangam phase, datable to 4th - 5th century A.D. Though composed after the heydays of Indo-Roman commerce are over, it seems to have faithfully preserved, to a considerable degree, earlier information concerning Indo-Roman trade in general and the importance of Kaveripaddinam in particular.

In Canto II (of this text) entitled *Manaiyarampatutta-kādai* we come across the following account of Kaveripaddinam, also called Puhār. "The varieties of foreign merchandise, rare commodities brought to the city by ships and caravans were so vast that, even if the whole world, encircled by the roaring seas, flocked into it, its wealth would not become diminished". This clearly shows that the port of Puhar thrived upon its foreign trade, a fact corroborated by classical and indigenous texts. The *Silappadikāram* repeatedly refers to Yavana traders, i.e. traders from the Roman world "whose prosperity was never on the wane". In Canto VI entitled *Kadaladukai* mention is made of "different kinds of goods brought in ships by foreign merchants who have left their native homes and settled there". Some foreign traders, mostly Graeco-Romans, then appear to have settled at Puhar and established some sort of a colony there, probably in the same manner as they did at Muziris.

Canto V of the same text entitled *Indiravilāvūredutta-kādai*, describes different quarters of the city: e.g. streets of grain dealers, localities meant respectively for washermen,
makers of muslins, wine sellers, fishermen selling fish, dealers in white salt, seller of betel leaves, dealers in scents, mutton-vendors, oil-mangers, meat vendors; dealers in bronze, manufacturers of copper, carpenters, strong armed blacksmiths, sculptors, potters, goldsmith, jewellers, tailors, cobblers, skilled workers, of all sorts etc. Mention is also made of king's street, the car street, the broad highway "where highborn merchants lived on either side, the street of agricultural communities etc. Separate quarters were provided for dancers, entertainers, musicians etc. Two things may emerge from this account: (1) the division of the city into a number of quarters provided for different occupational groups implies the existence of a strong authority and (2) an element of hierarchy or classification in the settlement pattern of the city on the basis of vocations into quarters may be detected: the so-called "higher" or aristocratic classes lived in quarters separated and segregated from those of the artisans, entertainers etc. Such an aristocratic class included among others great merchants. The key to the rise of merchants to social eminence was definitely their wealth gained through commerce.

The same text informs us that "there were assembled in these streets the five great groups of king's councillors (aimperumkulu) and the eight great bodies of the king's retinue (epperayam), princes of blood royal, sons of merchant aristocracy, fast riders on horse back, groups of elephant
riders and charioteers whose chariots were drawn by horses, for the glorification of their highly reputed ruler's sway over the glorious world" (Canto V. The term aimperumā-kulu has been explained by the commentator as denoting some royal officers including the minister, the purohita, the commander, the ambassador and spy. Two inferences may be drawn from the above account. First, royal officers and top-ranking merchants assembled to supervise in different streets or quarters of the city inhabited by different occupational groups. Such a regular system of supervision obviously points at State's keen interest in this trade-centre. The Canto II unequivocally states: "The untold wealth of the sea-faring merchants of the rich city made even far famed monarch covet it". Secondly the supervision of the city is entrusted not only to government officers, but also to merchants. The merchant is thus on par with administrative officers, though his usual activities are not directly connected with statecraft. The extension of the activity of the merchant from trading to state affairs was largely due to his economic affluence. Wealth in its natural course begets power; the merchant probably utilizes his wealth to gain considerable recognition from the political authority. In Canto I mention is made of "an inland merchant prince (mūsattuvān) of abounding wealth who along with his relations, was placed in the foremost rank of the aristocracy by the monarch of that great kingdom". The passage clearly speaks of the close relationship vis-a-vis the king and traders, and the principal factors
in this relationship is wealth.

In the Geographike Huphegesis, after the Khaberos emporium, the name of another emporium Poduca is found. The same port also figures in the Periplus. The place has been identified with the archaeological site of Arikamedu (near Pondicherry). Two sectors (Northern and Southern) which were excavated were found to have been occupied in the first and second centuries of the Christian era. The Northern sector has yielded a substantial structure more than 150' ft. in length, built about 50 A.D. The building has been identified by excavators as a warehouse. The existence of this suggested warehouse makes Arikamedu or Poduca a centre of trade. The Southern sector has yielded among other things two walled courtyards associated with carefully built tanks supplied and drained by a series of brick culverts. According to the excavation reports the tanks and courtyards were used for production/preparation of muslin cloths which the classical authors highly spoke as an export item. At the same time two gems, carved with intaglio designs, typically Graeco-Roman, suggest the existence of western craftsmen. There are also found a red-glazed pottery, known to have been made in Italy during 1st century B.C. — A.D.; two handled-jars or amphorae are characteristic of mediterranean wine vessels. Moreover a large number of Roman lamps and glass wares have also been unearthed. The combined testimony of these finds prove that Arikamedu like Puhār and Muziris was a trading station where
Graeco-Roman traders established their own settlement. Such a settlement of foreign traders in an area outside their homeland (or homelands) is difficult to establish, as have been already pointed out, without the direct interest of the ruler in whose territory the 'colony' is established.

We have already noticed that some ports and trading station were known as emporium in the Periplus and the Geographike Huphagesis. Particularly in the Geographike Huphagesis the term emporion (i.e. emporium) is used in a very restricted sense, not found in the survey of the "west" (mostly included in the Roman empire and also Egypt also under Roman empire) and not uniformly applied to all market towns in or near the sea-coast. "It denoted an oriental market town, lying on or near the sea-coast and beyond the imperial frontiers of Rome." In such emporiums permanent lodges of western traders were established definitely under formal agreements with the appropriate Indian ruler.

This rapid survey would at least reveal that the economic importance of the Indo-Roman commerce rarely escaped the notice of rulers, particularly those whose territories had direct commercial contact with the west. The rulers seem to have received traders with a gesture of open invitation and even allowed them up some sort of colonies. It is the prospect of gain that prompted an Indian ruler to open diplomatic negotiation with the Roman empire. The Indian ruler not only enriched his treasury by collecting levies on the increasing
volume of commerce, but also procured choicest and luxurious articles for himself through traders.

V. 1.

After the 2nd century A.D., there was a decline in the commercial exchange between the Roman empire and India. The Roman empire mainly imported from India very costly luxurious goods. Pliny, the well-informed adviser of Vespasian (69-79 A.D.), is known for his proverbial comment that Rome was drained of its wealth by Indian trade amounting 12,500,000 denarii per year. Sometime later Rome began to import more and more bulk commodities like cotton than the luxury items. At the same time India found it harder to supply the very products that it exported for gold. At the same time the Mediterranean basin assumed the role of supplying a number of commodities as an intermediary to the Roman world. The volume of trade between the Roman empire and India gradually lessened. On the other hand the Arabs and the Abyssinians filled the vacuum to a considerable degree. The contact between India and South-east Asia became increasingly closer.

A change also occurred in the political history. The downfall of the Kusānas was followed by the rise of a number of local independent states over greater parts of Northern India. The foundation of the Gupta dynasty in Magadha in c. 319-20 A.D. once again ushered in an age of political unification of Northern India. Samudragupta, (c. 335-375 A.D.),
Candragupta II (c. 375 A.D. - 414 A.D.), Kumāragupta I (414-454 A.D.) and Skandagupta (c. 454-467 A.D.) ruled over an extensive domain which during its heydays embraced practically the whole of Ṛṣyāvattra i.e. North India. The history of the Gupta dynasty is mostly known from epigraphic records.

A number of epigraphic records are found from Damodarpur (Dinajpur District, Bangladesh) which in ancient times seems to have been incorporated in the Pundravardhanabhukti, an integral part of the Gupta empire. These records belong to the reigns respectively of (1) Kumāragupta I, G.E. 124 and G.E. 128, (2) Budhagupta, 163 G.E. and another undated, and (3) an unknown king having name ending in Gupta, G.E. 224. All these are land-sale documents recording the sale of uncultivated, unyielding, revenue-free and fallow land, belonging to the state, to individuals. These records begin with the name of the reigning Gupta emperor adorned with usual imperial titles, the name of the provincial governor appointed by him, followed by that of the district officer. The officer in charge of the district (visaya) seems to have been helped (saṃvyavahā) by four persons viz. Nagarasresthi, Sārtthavāha, Prathamakulika and Prathamakāyaṣthha.

The term Nagarasresthi literally means the sresthī of the town (nagara); D.C. Sircar identifies him with the guild-president, probably meaning that he was the president of the merchants' guild. Sārtthavāha stands for, according to Sircar, the merchant; he may also be considered as the
representative of the caravan (or inland) traders. Prathamakayastha
and Prathamakayastha mean respectively the first among
the artisan and the first among scribes. Apart from the
Kayastha, who is the scribe and probably employed by the king,
the three others appear to have been important citizens,
probably members of the elite group. How they were appointed —
whether by selection or election or nomination is uncertain
at the present stage of our knowledge. But what is interesting
is the inclusion of two persons belonging to mercantile commu-
nity in the adhisthamadhikarana i.e. the city-council. The
merchant has generally little direct involvement in adminis-
trative affairs. His precise functions in such a city-council
cannot be ascertained due to the paucity of data. That he
probably enjoyed some administrative prerogatives in the city-
council, however, may not be an unreasonable hypothesis. This
may mean either that the merchant was gradually making his
presence felt in the politico-administrative circles, or he
included in the 'broad' as a representative of his own commu-
nity. At the root of recognition of his importance in adminis-
trative affairs must have been his affluence based upon trade.
The economic well-being of merchants in undivided Bengal
during the period under review is a likely possibility, since
one of the foremost ports within the Gupta territory was Tamra-
lipta modern Tamluk in Midnapur District.

The Gupta empire ceased to exist from 570 A.D. as is
evident from the Sumandal C.P. The process of the disinte-
gration of the Gupta empire which started from about the end of
the reign of Budhagupta (c. 476-500 A.D.) presented an opportunity to ambitious feudatory ruler to gradually defy central authority and assume independence. Among such states rising on the ruins of the Gupta empire in different parts of North India and Northern Deccan was the Kalacuri dynasty. A ruler Vismusena (also called Visnubhata), having subordinate titles Mahâkârta-krtika, Mahâdandana-ayaka, Mahâpratihâra, Mahâsâmanta and Mahârâja, is known to have issued an order in the year 649 from the residence (vâsaka) at Lohâta. The charter was endorsed in the year 357. According to D.C. Sircar the two dates are A.D. 592 A.D. and 605 A.D. Lohataka/Lohataka grama is identified with modern Rohar in the Gulf of Cutch. The titles of Vismusena undoubtedly points to his subordinate political status and he probably owed allegiance to the Kalacuris.

The purport of the record is that Vismusena being approached by the Vanigrâma community favoured the community with the ruler’s âcâra-sthâ-patra used in the protection and settlement of the people of his dominions (janapadasa ... pariraksana sannivesânâya). The Vanigrâma, also spelt as Manigrâma, was a famous mercantile community in early-medieval times, particularly active in the Deccan and South India. The earliest reference to the term is found in a 2nd century inscription from Karle, though the community came into prominence in later times. It was D.D. Kosambi who clearly established the relation between Manigrâma and Vanigrâma/Vaniya-grâma in sense of an association of merchants.
The charter issued to the Vaniggrāma community by Visnusena contains seventy-two ācāres or customary laws some of which are of considerable interest from the point of view of traders. The property of a person who died sonless cannot be confiscated by royal officials (Aputrakam na grahyam, clause No.1). The royal officers are asked not to break open or violate unmara, which Sircar translates as thresh (Unmara-bheda na karaniyo rāja-purusena; clause No.2). All the members of different guilds are not to flock to the same market (savya-srenīmān-ekāpaka-nako-na-deyah — clause No.12). A merchant belonging to another district or kingdom should not be accepted as a witness in a criminal case involving persons of a locality where he happened to be present on account of some reason or other (Para visayāt-karanābhyya-grato vanijakah para-resa-nā grahyah — clause No.16). Merchants staying abroad for a year were exempted from paying any entrance fee while returning to their native place; but an exit tax had to be paid by them when they went out on business again (Varga-paryusita vanijah pravesyaṃ suṅkatiyatrikan na dāranīyah; nairgamikaṃ deyam — clause No.52). These appear to have been certain favours and exemptions — fiscal and legal in nature — offered by the ruler to a trading community. Rohar which, according to Sircar, is the same as Lohatagrama is the chief sea port of the Anjar District. Sircar suggests that Lohāṭa was a port in ancient times. A settlement of a mercantile community in or near the sea-port would naturally be conducive to the development of trade and commerce of the region concerned.
It is significant to note that the charter was issued for "the protection and settlement of his dominion" (Janapadasya ... pariraksana-sannivesana). This is probably a policy similar to that of janapadanivesa of the Arthasastra which also recommends the ruler to show certain anugrahas or favours to initial settlers to a newly colonized area. Viewed from the ruler seems to have allowed some exemptions and favours to a mercantile community in order to probably induce them to establish settlements in his territory.

The record also refers to a number of taxes — mostly toll dues and ferry charges — to be levied by the king. The settlement of a trading community probably near a sea-port at once ensures brisk commercial intercourse and enables the king to fill up his treasury by various types of commercial taxes. The settlement of Vanigrama here appears to have been economically advantageous for the ruler and that is why such a policy is followed.

A few other clauses are concerning distillaries and dealings in wine. Wine appears to have been prepared according to certain norms and standards, obviously set by the government, the violation of which was punishable with varying rates of fines. This practice may suggest some amount of governmental invigilation over production of wine and the business in wine.

More interesting may be the content of two other clauses. The first says: "Asadha-masi Pausa ca draṣṭavyam mana-pautavam; asanṛgṛhm śa-padah saha dharmikena." Sircar
comments that "the mana-pautava which had to be examined in the months of Asadha and Pausa seems to have been a storehouse where grains were measures and stored". But the term mana-pautavam may better be taken in the sense of weights and measures, and not in the sense of a store house. The clause probably stands for regular examination of weights and measures in every Asadha and Pausa and some sort of fees (adana, dharma) had to be paid to the government (obviously by merchants). The ruler thus maintains some of his economic control by arranging a compulsory checking of weights and measures. This step is taken definitely with a view to safeguard against and prevent fraudulent practices of traders which may not only go against people's interest in general but also may adversely affect the proper collection of commercial taxes payable by merchants to the king.

Clause No. 26 states: "A-samvidya vyavaharatam 'sulkadikam ca dhanyad pravesyato niskayasayato va sulkam-astagunam dapyah". According to Sircar, the regulation means that if a store-house collected fees and stored and disposed of grains without informing royal officials it had to pay eight times the usual tax i.e. ten silver coins." The passage, especially the terms pravesyata and niskasayata, may suggest that the ruler closely watched marketing and distribution of an essential commodity like grain. Some amount of invigilation over traders' activities by the ruler may reasonably be inferred.
A study of different clauses of this very interesting charter may highlights its two broad features: (i) the king in question shows an inviting and encouraging attitude to the Vanigrama community by allowing certain favours and exemptions; (ii) but at the same time probably does not allow to shift the entire economic initiative in their hands. The ruler closely supervises over two vital aspects of trade: standardization of weights and measure and marketing and distribution of certain commodities. This combined policy of simultaneously encouraging settlement of traders and close invigilance over their activities is followed to safeguard and further the economic interests of the ruler.

VI. 1.

The next period which may be taken to range from 7th to 13th centuries A.D. is marked in the history of Indian commerce by the growing trade-ties with the Arabs and Eythiopians. With the downfall of the Roman empire the Arab traders assumed the position of the Roman traders. The rise of Islam as a militant religion since the 7th century A.D. led to the great expansion of the Islamic world, of which the Arabs were a part, as far as Spain in Europe. The Arab traders were responsible for the supply of Indian products to Europe. On the other hand, India also maintained brisk and regular commercial ties with islands of South East Asia. Products of South East Asia, often craved in European markets as items of top-luxury, came to Indian ports and marts;
therefrom these were shipped to the Western world. Due to its geographical situation India was in a position to play the very important role of an intermediary. This, however, is not to mean that India only participated in transit trade. There were certain articles — mostly luxury items — which were meant for exchanges between India and the Arab world; perhaps the most important item was the horse which was not native of India but which was indispensable to political personalities.

Political consolidation and unity which are often conducive to peaceful and regular commercial intercourse were, however, not to be seen either in North India, the Deccan or South India. Regionalism was gaining ground in Indian political scene. The Pālas, the Pratihāras of North India, the Cālukyas, the Pallavas, the Rastrakūtas and the Kalyāṇī Cālukyas of the Deccan and South India had imperial aims and designs, but could not consolidate their political gains to maintain an imperial authority. The Colas of South India, however, were an imperial power of considerable duration (c. 9th—12th centuries A.D.). The disunified political condition was further disturbed by the regular and systematic Muslim inroads resulting in political chaos and instability and plunder (particularly in North India).

Our researches of this period are, however, largely facilitated by the availability of a considerable amount of original records. There are large number of epigraphic materials and also the accounts of Muslim chronicles in the best tradition
of Perso-Arabic historiography. Accounts of Marco Polo and Chinese documents also immensely help us in this respect.

Beginning the survey with North India one finds the rise of Harṣa of Pusyabhūti dynasty at Kanauj and his arch rival Saśānka in Gauda and also the first attempts by Muslim invaders to invade the subcontinent or parts thereof. The Chachnamah which contains an exhaustive account of the designs of Muhammad Bin Kasim, the general of Hajjaj, speaks of the conquest of Brahminabad in Sind.

Having conquered Brahminabad Muhammad bin Kasim placed Wīḍā at the superintendence of the municipal affairs of the town. "He gave the management of money-matters and revenue accounts to the charge of four persons from amongst the merchants of the place". Existence of a handsome number of merchants at the city and the importance of Brahminabad as a mart itself is probably implied here. The four merchants appointed by invaders must have been outstanding members of their community, probably on the basis of their wealth or business ability or both. The Muslim general perhaps thought it fit to appoint local important merchants for revenue administration, since merchants as local elements would probably be more acceptable to the vanquished people than regular officers of the victorious army. These merchants were, however, under strict orders that "each and everything was to be brought to the notice of Wīḍā and that they were never to do a thing or dispose of any business without first
consulting him. The appointment of merchants as revenue administrators under the close supervision of the city superintendent had thus for its aim the assured and regular collection of taxes. These merchants though working under vigilance of invaders, however, probably got an opportunity to extend their scope of activity i.e. from traders to administrators.

While Muslim invaders were busy overpowering Sind and its upright king Dahir in the first quarter of 8th century A.D., an interesting record issued by a feudatory king Prthivīśandra Bhogadakti comes from Anjaneri in Western India /Dated 710 — 711 A.D./. The record contains the recolonization of the old town of Samagiri pattana, together with four other villages. The charter was made over to the whole town, two of the representatives (of the town council ?) being Elasresthi and Karaputasresthi. "The merchants residing in Samagiri are not to pay octroi duty in the whole kingdom as long as the moon and sun will endure". /Samagiri vāstavyam vanijam candrārkkakalikam sukamādiyam samstarājye masti./ There are some other exemptions and favours like the non-escheatment of the property in absence of a male heir, no breaking of the household (umurabhedah), no obligation towards providing royal officials with food and drinks etc. recorded in the charter. While Vats. and Disalker think that such favours were granted to merchants, Mirashi appears to have been more correct in taking these applicable to all citizens of the newly colonized area. The merchants, however, gain a definite fiscal favour
i.e. the exemption from toll taxes. The commercial character of Samagiri is clearly evident from the suffix pāṭṭana, meaning a trade centre. The record explicitly states that the trade centre was devastated earlier पूर्वमुत्सादितम, this probably adversely affected the economy of the region. The town was resettled/recolonized in order to realize its commercial potentials. Such a programme could be fruitful by a regular settlement of merchant. With this end in view the ruler, Prthivicandra Bhogasakti takes a favourable attitude to traders, encourages, if not offers inducements to, their settlement. The king's attitude to the traders here is largely guided by his interest in the long-term development of the trade centre.

Another interesting record, palaeographically assignable to c. 8th century A.D. is the Dudhpansi Inscription. It is known from the record that three merchant brothers viz. Udayamana, Śrīdhartamana and Ajitamana came to Tamralipti from Ayodhya and amassed great fortune. On their way back home they halted at a village Bhramarasalmali near modern Hazaribag. The king of the region, Ācīsimha, at that time came to the forest, contiguous to the above mentioned village and two others adjacent to it, on a hunting expedition. The king ordered for an avalagaka (or avalagara) literally means supply/present which was paid by the eldest of the merchant brothers. He subsequently became one of favourites of the king and ultimately the rāja of Bhramarasalmali at people's request and with royal approval. He also at the request of the inhabitants of two other villagers sent his brothers Śrīdhantamana and Ajitamana.
to rule, subordinately to himself over Nabhutisandaka and Chingala*. The reference to people's request (or wish) as a factor in the political rise of these Mana brothers does not necessarily mean an example of election or selection of king; it is often used as a conventional way of eulogy.

The Mana brothers were no doubt petty rulers. But at the same time the transformation of traders into rulers, however small and insignificant, cannot be missed. The principal reason of this pronounced change in their rôle was, according to the epigraph, their ability to meet the demand for some supply of goods or money. Whatever they presented to the king must have had certain economic importance. In fact these merchants, having huge wealth at their disposal, was in a position to provide the king with supply. This implies that they could satisfy king's financial desires. The record leaves us in no doubt that the presentation to the king was closely followed by the merchant brothers' intimate connexion with the king and ultimately acquisition of administrative powers over three villages. This may be considered as an example of the purchase of political/administrative power by the wealth of a merchant. The maxim that wealth begets power is not difficult to appreciate here.

Among the articles of very high demand which traders dealt in was the horse. In pre-industrial societies the horse was actually indispensable and had hardly any better substitute in military designs as well as speedy communication. The king and other important members of the ruling class had naturally
genuine interest in obtaining this animal. The Pehoa In­
scription of 883 A.D. contains an account of horse trade (ghotaka-
yatru) and horse-dealers at Prthudaka (modern Pehoa) adjacent
to the Eastern Sarasvati (pracisarasvatisannidhanam). It also
discloses thirty-three or thirty-four horse-dealers and their
respective countries/localities. Reference is found to the
sale of horses, mules, and other animals to king, thakkuras,
(feudal lords/landed aristocracy) of janapada at Prthudaka
Prthudaka ghotaka-ghotikavegasaranupadivikrayasya
rajakopyopakraye thakkura janapadadyupakraye.

The king's participation in the horse trade as a
buyer is absolutely clear here. Moreover, the record also
says that at Traighataka and other places horses were meant
for sale to king only. Traighatakadisthane su kevalam raja-
kiya evopakraya .... 7 So, while at Pehoa purchase of
horses by others along with the king is recorded, there were
at least more than one horse-trade centre where participation
of other people as purchasers of horses is completely debarred.
So, the king has excluded all other intended buyers from some
centres of horse trade. It is not unreasonable to suggest
that the king had the prerogative to reserve for himself
horses of best-breeds. This is probably a case of state-
control on a limited scale imposed upon a particular item.
What is of considerable significance is that this particular
commercial policy is framed essentially to suit and promote
king's interest in the purchase of horses.
Attention may also be drawn to another record viz. the Chicacole Plates of Madhukāmārṇava (Ganga Kaliṅga Era (?)). It states that three villages of Patuagrama, Hondsoravaḍa and Morakhini were combined into one Vaisyāgraḥāra which was exempted from all taxes and entrances of royal officials. The Vaisyāgraḥāra was conferred upon Śrī Erapa Nayaka, the ornament of the spotless family of merchants. Agrahāra or tax-free village is usually given to Brāhmaṇas to encourage their settlement in a particular area. Arguing in similar line this Vaisyāgraḥāra seems to have been conferred upon merchant Erapanāyaka in order to encourage his settlement.

Next we may take into a story concerning traders figuring in the 14th century text called Prabandha Cintāmanī by Merutūṅga Acārya. A certain prince asked for a permission from his father, the reigning king, to capture commodities of a foreign ship which on account of being driven out of its course during cyclones, would harbour at Somesvarapattana. Somesvaramatti is identifiable with the well known city and port of Somnath (Pattan Somnath) in Gujarat, which was visited by merchant-vessels. The ruler forthwith forbade the attempt of princes who, however, without paying any heed to the royal command captured the whole merchandise of a storm-wrecked ship and brought it to the king. Kṣemarāja having made over all that wealth to the king asked whether this was an honourable or dishonourable act. The king replied "Now let me tell you why I forbade you to carry off the property of your
neighbour, when you first asked me. When in foreign countries kings praise the government of all sovereigns, they say scornfully that in the land of Gujarat there is a government of robbers.

In ancient India foreign ships were sometimes robbed of their merchandise at royal instigation if ships anchored at unscheduled ports. Such a predatory policy did satisfy the king's immediate financial desire; but it was certainly restrictive of commerce, since traders rarely favoured an insecure territory. In the ultimate analysis the king has little to gain, because traders would certainly avoid ports of such a territory. Thus in the long run this proves to be a thoroughly uneconomic policy. The economic ill-effects of the predatory policy to traders must have been clearly visualized by the king of Gujarat who expressed his strong disapproval of the evil schemes of his son. The enlightened attitude he bears to traders would ultimately yield economic gains to him in the long term.

VI. 2.

Passing on to the Deccan from North India one probably finds some expansion of the scope of commercial activities there due to the proximity of the sea on both sides. This is not to exclude any possibility of overland trade in the Deccan. In fact the *Periplous* amply testifies to the existence of a regular network of overland trade-routes in the Deccan.
An anecdote found in the *Dasakumaracarita* of Dandi, who flourished in South India in the 7th century A.D. states that a valuable article in possession of a courtesan was found to have been a stolen property. She was at first reluctant to disclose the source wherefrom she procured it. But under the pressure of the king the name of the innocent merchant Arthapati was divulged. The king was intent upon inflicting capital punishment on Arthapati. The king was then requested in the following manner: "Since there is a privilege granted to the merchants by the Mauryas that they should not be punished with death in this kind of crime; in case you are angry, you may banish this wretch from the country after confiscating his entire property." \[\text{ Arya, Maurya-datta esa varo vanijam-idrsesu=}
\text{aparadhesu n=asti asubhir=abhiyogah; yadi kupito=si, hrta-}
\text{sarvasvo nivasaniyah pEpa esa iti.} \]

The Mauryas here are identified by Sircar with the homonymous imperial family of Magadha. The interesting fact is that for the same offence (i.e. theft here) administration of justice is differently meted out to merchants and other people. This may be considered as a judicial concession of the king to traders. But on the other hand the king is entitled to confiscate entire property of the trader as a punishment. Such a confiscation of the property of a trader, who often belonged to the wealthy section of the society, appears to have been economically advantageous for the king. The king by showing some semblance of pity to the trader does not seem to have suffered any loss.
The Deccan during the 8th and 9th centuries A.D. were largely dominated by the Rāstrakūta of Manyakheṭa. A Rāstrakūta charter from Chinchani in Thana District (near Bombay), Maharashtra, dated 926 A.D. says that during the reign of Indra III (915-28 A.D.), there was a ruler named Madhumati belonging to the Tajika community. He is said to have received from Kṛṣṇarāja (= Kṛṣṇa II, 878-915) the entire mandala or territorial division of Samyāna. It is also stated that Madhumati conquered chiefs of all the harbours (velākula) of the neighbourhood apparently on behalf of his master. 

Samyāna of this record is undoubtedly modern Sanjān in Thana district. That it was a port is evident from the term paṭṭana attached to it in the Grant of Vijala dated Saka 975. Its proximity to the sea is borne out by the expression chief of velākula (harbours) in Samyāna. The Tajikas are the Arabs and Madhumati is the sanskritized form of the Arabic named Muhammad. The Rāstrakūta seem to have taken the assistance of Arabs to conquer the region of Samyāna.

But the Arabs during this time had hardly become a military power in the Deccan, unlike that in the North. On the other hand their presence in the Deccan was probably due to their commercial activities. The Rāstrakūta by utilizing Arabs in conquering Samyāna brought the commercially important area under their fold and placed the Arabs as their subordinates there. This must have facilitated commercial activities between the Arabs and the Rāstrakūta empire. The Rāstrakūta may be
said to have militarily cooperated with the Arabs to foster trade with Arab merchants. The similar policy was continued during the reign of Kṛṣṇa III (946-965 A.D.), as is evident from his grant from Chinchani enumerating the Tajikas among the people under his overlordship. The commercial prosperity of the area in question is indicated by names of merchants coming from Bhilama (Jodhpur, Rajasthan) to Sanjan in Kṛṣṇa III's record. From the end of the 10th century onwards the region seems to have come under the sway of the Silahāras after the downfall of the Rastrakūta kingdom. The names of merchants figuring in the Chinchani grant of Cāmunḍarāja, a feudatory ruler under the Silaharas, dated 956 Saka may indicate that the economic importance of the area remained more or less intact.

The Deccan from the late 10th century witnessed for a considerable period a protracted struggle between the Colas of South India and the Western Cālukyas of Kālyāṇi. The Colas were also engaged in bitter hostilities with the Eastern Cālukyas of Vengi. The Colas, particularly during the reigns of Rājarāja I and Rājendra I (985-1044 A.D.), made a few successful penetrations into some parts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnatakā.

A record of the great Cola emperor Rājendra Cola (1012-1044 A.D.) found from Hunsur Taluq in Karnatakā contains certain interesting information. The inscription dated in the 9th regnal year of Rājendra (i.e. c. 1026 A.D.) states that one
Barama Gavunda in Te ..... nāḍ fell upon Rājendra-Cola-Setti of that nāḍ as a result of Rājendra-Cola-Setti died. Huli-madda, son of Alasabandhi, Rājendra Cola's chief in that nāḍ put to death Maddayya who had lightly slain Cola-Setti.¹³⁸

Terms like Rājendra-Cola-Setti, Cola-setti etc. points to a merchant employed by the Cola emperor Rājendra. Since the merchant in question is not mentioned by his personal name, it appears that he was assigned to a royal office by the political authority of the time. Interestingly enough the record speaks of the assassinated merchant as the Rājendra-Cola-Setti of a particular nāḍ, i.e. nāḍu or a province. This may imply that Rājendra Cola could have employed a number of royal merchants and placed them over different territorial divisions.

The exact purpose for appointing the royal merchant(s) by the Cola emperor cannot be ascertained at the present state of our knowledge. But the importance of the office of the Cola-setti can by no means be doubted since the provincial chief of Rājendra in Te...nāḍ put to sword — obviously with his master's approval — the murderer of the royal merchant of Rājendra Cola.

From Karnataka are found several records of the 11th century A.D. in which mention is made of a mercantile community known as 500 svāmīs. This was one of the outstanding organization of merchants in the Deccan during the period under review. The existence of a large number of mercantile community under the general name 500 svāmīs speaks of brisk trade and commerce in the Deccan.
The area of western Deccan particularly around Karnataka was politically dominated by the Hoysalas (also called Poysalas) who had been earlier feudatories under the Western Calukyas of Kalyani, but later became an independent power. A Hoysala record dated in c. 1104 A.D. comes from Chickmagalur in Karnataka. The inscription praises Tribhuvanamalla Poysaladeva as the chief protector of traders in Dālīge. The king in question may be identified with Ballāla of this family. The record, however, does not specify the nature of the dangers and obstacles from which he claimed to have protected traders. Nevertheless, this appears to have been an important function and achievement of the king; otherwise, he would not have taken so much pride in protecting traders.

Almost twenty years later (c. 1125 A.D.) an inscription from Krishnaraṇaḷapet Taluq, Karnataka, refers to one "Nolabi-setti who was the Poysala Setti, the promoter of the Vīra-Balanja dharmma, adorned with many qualities from the five hundred vīra sāsanas, and the Paṭṭanaśvāmi of Dora-samaudra".

Poysala Setti is the same as Hoysala setti, i.e. a setti or merchant of the Hoysala dynasty. The expression Vīra-balanja-dharma corresponds to vīra-vanija-dharma or the code of conduct of the heroic traders. Actually Vīra-balanja was the name of the most noted mercantile corporation throughout the Deccan and South India during the period under review. This association of traders was also known as the Five Hundred
Svamis of Ayyavola (modern Aihole). Pattanasvami, another epithet assumed by Nolabisetti, may also be explained here. In more or less contemporary Tamil inscription pattinam stands for ports located primarily on or near the sea-coast, in contradistinction to erivirapattinam meaning ports and marts of the interior. Pattana in the present record may, therefore, be taken in the sense of a centre of exchange of commodities situated on or near the sea-coast. Pattanasvami would then mean the lord or the master or the administrative chief of such a trade centre, though it may also denote "the chief or leader of a mercantile community in a town." The above explanations of different epithets of Nolabi-setti would invariably point to his prominent position as a rich merchant. This was probably instrumental for his close association with the Hoysala ruler and his appointment as the royal merchant of the Hoysalas.

Dorasamudra was one of the prominent urban centres and in fact one of the alternative capitals under the Hoysalas. The revenue earning potentialities of a rich centre of exchange probably did not escape the notice of the Hoysalas. It may be logically inferred that Nolabi setti, already an outstanding merchant belonging to one of the most influential mercantile communities, was appointed a royal merchant and placed in charge of Dorasamudra for ensuring the collection of a handsome amount of revenue from this entrepot, a stipulated share of which would go to the royal treasury and the rest to the merchant.
The trader with his natural profit motive was perhaps the person fit enough to raise substantial amount of revenue to the royal treasury. Judged from this point of view the royal merchant appears to have been empowered with certain farming rights regarding revenue matters. The royal merchant, if made the master of the pattana at Dorasamudra, appears to have assumed administrative responsibilities also.

A Śilahara record belonging to the reign of Gandarāditya (c. 1110-1138 A.D.) comes from Kolhapur and is dated in S.E. 1058 i.e. 1136 A.D. Merchants hailing from different areas are said to have assembled at the market place in Kavadegolla where a temple of Pārśvarāth was consecrated by Nimbadevarasa, a feudatory of Gandarāditya. They agreed to grant certain taxes and levied for the worship of the Tīrthaṅkara Pārśva-nātha, the repair of the temple and the supply of food to ascetics living there. Among the merchants assembled for this purpose one is described as the "Gandarāditya devasa rāja-sreṣṭha Vesappayyasettiyum", i.e. Vesappaya setti, the royal merchant of Gandarāditya. Thus a royal merchant is appointed by the said king.

Seven years later more or less a similar grant was made during the reign of Gandarāditya's son and successor, Vijayāditya. This stone inscription from Miraj dated S.E. 1065-66 i.e. 1143-44 A.D. states that certain merchants who were foremost in the Trading Corporation of the Heroic Traders (Virabaranāja) assembled at Sadamba. They donated some dues
on commodities like arecanut, oil, clarified butter etc. evidently sold at the market of Sedambal, in favour of god Madhavesvara. There is a marked similarity in contents of the two Silahara records. What is more remarkable is that the second record speaks of one Mirinjeya Boppanayya-rajasresthi, as being one of the merchants present during the grant of gifts. Boppanayya is thus a rajasresthi or royal merchant hailing from Mirinjeya or Miraj. It is not explicitly stated who was the king that employed Boppanayya as the royal merchant. But the inscription being issued during the reign of Vijayaditya, he appears to have employed Boppanayya as his royal merchant.

One may remember that only seven years before, the royal merchant of Gandaraditya, the predecessor of Vijayaditya was some one else, i.e. Vesappayya and not Boppanayya. So, there can be seen a change in the office of the royal merchant with the change of rulers. This is more evident by the fact that the same Vesappayya setti also figured in the Miraj Inscription of Vijayaditya, not as a royal merchant, but as the Mahavadduvyavaharī, i.e. a great trader or senior merchant. Though Boppanayya setti of Mirinja is known only from the Miraj record, the Kolhapur inscription includes the name of one Boppi setti of Mirinji. Considering the phonetic affinity between Boppanayya and Boppi and also taking into account that both hailed from Miraj, the two names may be inferred to have indicated the single person. The conclusion that seems to emerge from the comparative study of Kolhapur and Mirinji
records, is that the office of the royal merchant was not a permanent one. The possibility that they acted as commissioned agents of the reigning kings for fulfilling certain commercial and financial needs of their masters, cannot altogether be ruled out.

The activities of the highly renowned mercantile community the 500 Svamis of Ayyavole are known from an inscription from Karnataka dated about 1150 A.D. The following description about the mercantile community is quoted below:

"Famed throughout the world, having acquired five hundred vīra-sāsanas, protectors of the vīra-bamāju-dharma, born to wanderers over many countries; the invaluable articles in their bags as their wealth, visiting the Cera, Cola, Pāndya, Maleya, Magadha, Kauśala, Saurāstra, Dhanurāstra, Kurumbha, Kambhoja, Gaulla, Lāla, Barvvara, Pārāśa, Nēpāla, Ekapāda, Lambakarna, Strī-raja, Gotamukha and many other countries; and the prāmas, nagaras, kheḍas, kharvvāgas, madambas, pattanas, dronamukhas and samvāhanas and by land routes and water routes penetrating into the region of six continents, with superior elephants, well-bred horses, large sapphires, moonstones, pearls, rubies, diamonds, lapis lazuli, onyx, topaz, corals, emeralds, cardamoms, cloves, bdelliums, sandal, camphor, musk, saffron, malegaja and other perfumes and drugs, by selling which wholesale or hawking on their shoulders, preventing the loss by custom duties, they fill up the emperor's treasury of gold, his treasury of jewels and his armoury of weapons."
Even allowing some amount of exaggeration in this record, a substratum of fact beneath this account cannot be overlooked. The far-flung commercial network of this community through overland and maritime route speaks highly of their mobility. The articles they dealt in may be broadly classified into (1) animals, especially those necessary for communicational and military purpose; (2) precious stones and mineral objects of diverse types and (3) perfumes, spices etc. These are not essential commodities of daily need, but luxury items within the purchasing power of the very rich client like kings and nobles. What is more interesting is the statement that they fill up the king's treasury of gold, jewels and armoury. Thus it appears that these merchants were the suppliers of valuable goods to the king. It may also mean that their trading activities led to the collection of handsome amount of levies for the king. Whatever way we may explain the above statement the economic importance of this mercantile community can hardly be missed. This may amply illustrate why the king often had to show favours to important trading communities.

The second half of the 12th century A.D. may be marked as a time of troubles. The Western Cālukya dynasty was gradually losing its power and glory. Bijjala fished in troubled waters and usurped the Cālukya throne. The Yadavas of Devagiri and the Hoysalas of Dorasamudra, erstwhile subordinate powers under the Western Cālukyas became independent rulers. The region of Eastern Deccan, especially Vengī and
areas adjacent to it saw intense struggle between the Calukyas and Colas over Vengi. A number of local independent ruling houses raised their head. One of such new powers was the Kākatiya dynasty of Warangal in Andhra Pradesh. The most brilliant phase in the history of this dynasty is marked by the reign of Gaṇapati (1188-1261 A.D.). At the beginning of his reign the condition of the Kākatiyas was bleak, since Gaṇapati's father was killed and he himself was imprisoned by Yadava Jaitugi, though later released. From this adverse situation Gaṇapati was able to make the Kākatiya kingdom one of the formidable powers in the Deccan. The empire extended from the Godavari District upto Chingleput and from Yelgandh up to the sea.

From the region around the Kṛṣṇa delta and the adjacent coastal areas Gaṇapati's Motuppalle Pillar Inscription is found dated 1244/45 A.D. Motuppalle is just located below and to the south-east of the Kṛṣṇa delta. It figures in the Travels of Marco Polo as a famous port. Gaṇapati's record from Motuppalle is expressly stated to have been abhayaśāsana i.e. a royal charter of security, issued in favour of traders. L. 135 of this inscription reads: "By this glorious Mahārāja Gaṇapati deva the following edict (assuring) safety has been granted to traders by sea, starting from and arriving from all continents, islands, foreign countries and cities". The royal proclamation guaranteeing security
to traders may strongly imply that previously traders had enjoyed little safety in carrying commercial activities in and around Motupalle. And the Motupalle Pillar Inscription exactly echoes our thought. In l. 140ff, the king frankly admits: "Formerly kings used to take away by force the whole cargo, viz. gold, elephants, horses, gems etc. carried by ships and vessels, which after they had started from one country or another, were attacked by storms, wrecked and thrown on the shore." 

It reasonably follows that traders consequently began to avoid the port; otherwise Ganapati need not have to declare security for traders afresh. Ganapati also stated, "We out of mercy for the sake of glory and merit are granting everything besides the fixed duties to those who have incurred the great risk of a sea-voyage with the thought that wealth is more valuable than even life". 

A large number of items of export and import — mostly luxury goods — are enumerated as dutiable products in the record. Apart from levying taxes on these articles, Ganapati also collected a duty on "one in thirty on all exports and imports". This reasonable fiscal system must have encouraged traders from abroad to select Motupalle as one of their major ports of call, and such a
decision could have obviously resulted in the collection of a regular and handsome amount of revenue by Ganapati.

Marco Polo, the celebrated Venetian traveller (1254-1324) who came to this port in 1293 A.D. spoke highly of Mutfili/Mushli i.e. Motupalle. The most interesting statement of Polo is that he calls the Kākatīya as the kingdom of Mutfili/Musuli. The importance of the port has increased to such an extent that the name of the port was applied to denote the whole kingdom. At the root of the phenomenal increase of importance of the port was the master-stroke of issuing the abhayāsāraṇa to traders at Motupalle. Ganapati could easily have satisfied his personal interests by following the older policy of capturing merchandise of traders. But he seems to have prudently realized that a predatory policy could at best enrich the treasury of the ruler for a short-term; but it was certainly restrictive of commerce, thereby lessening the amount of revenue normally leviable.

More or less contemporary to the Motupalle inscription is a record of Yadava king Simhana coming from Dharwar in Karnataka dated 1247 A.D. The present inscription contains the name of one Malli Śreśthi, the husband of Cikkamba and the son in law of Bici-rāja. Malli Śreśthi has explicitly been stated as famous among traders. He is said to have received from his father-in-law, i.e. Bici-rāja the ādhipatya (probably meaning governorship) of Beluvalarājya. This is probably indicative of Malli śreśthi's close association
with and participation in administrative activities. Since he is considered as the foremost among traders he must have accumulated a substantial amount of wealth out of his trading gains. But his activities did not remain confined only to trade and commerce, but extended into the domain of state-affairs. It appears that wealth accumulated by him was probably one of the criteria, if not the chief criterion, of his inclusion in administrative circles. In the 8th century inscription from Dudhrani the merchant brothers utilized their wealth and became rulers over villages; but here Mallisresthi is endowed with governorship of a particular province. This may represent the phenomenon of traders gradually becoming rulers, chiefly on the basis of their great affluence.

While merchants were gradually entering into the domain of politics in the Yadava kingdom, the Nayakas, who served in the neighbouring state of the Hoysalas, are described in an inscription dated 1257 A.D. to have "put down conspiracies and acquired control of all the merchants". Since the record speaks of suppression of conspiracies against the Hoysalas and control over merchants at the same time, the merchants may reasonably be held to have been among those who laid such conspiracies. The nature of the conspiracy - whether economic or political or both - has not been specified in the record. Nevertheless it appears more or less certain that merchants were sometimes becoming powerful enough to dominate the king, or at least attempted to do so.
VI. 3.

The further South in the period between the second half of the 10th and middle of the 12th century A.D. was greatly dominated by the imperial Colas. In strong contrast to the 'dark' socio-economic and political picture of medieval Europe, the Asian theatre during the period basked under the glory of farflung maritime commerce. The Fatimids in Egypt (969 A.D.), the Arabs, the Khmers in Angkor (944), the Ly in North Vietnam (1009), the Burmeses at Pagan (1044), the Chinese under Sung dynasty (960) and, the last but not the least, the Colas lived in this age of East-West commerce. The geopolitical situation of the Cola empire — with access to the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal — made it an influential intermediary in the East-West commerce. Discussions have already been made elsewhere on the aggressive orientation of the Cola monarchs towards the sea, particularly the Bay of Bengal.

The heydays of the Colas began since the reign of Rājarāja (985-1014). During this period Mamallapuram was one of the principal ports of the Cola empire. The port, originally growing out of a mere fishing village during the Pallava times, was one of the prized centres of commerce. Hall suggests on the basis of epigraphic records that it was important for Rājarāja to establish a relationship with this port. It is interesting to note that the local assembly was entrusted with reorganization of the administrative set up of this entrepot,
although the port was placed under the charge of one of his subordinates. Among persons included in the responsible posts of the local assembly, one belonged to the ticaiyirattaiñ-
ñurruvar, a well-known organization of itinerant merchants.\footnote{156}
The association and importance of member(s) of a mercantile corporation in the context of municipal organization of a port town therefore may be accepted. The affluence of traders appears to have been considerably responsible in the extension of the domain of their activities — namely from trading to administration. The importance of the port in question, however, was somewhat reduced with the brisk rise of Nagapattam in Tanjore.

According to the 
\textit{Annals of the Sung dynasty}, the first mission to China from Chu-lien (i.e. Cola country) arrived in China in 1015 A.D. The name of the Chu-lien king is given as Lo-tsa-lo-tsa identifiable with Rājarāja.\footnote{157} This is also corroborated by Chau-Ju-Kua who narrates in the following manner: "In former times they (i.e. the Colas) did not send tribute to our court, but in the eighth year of the ta-chung and siang-fu periods (1015 A.D.) its sovereign sent a mission with pearls and like articles as tributes". The historicity of a mission sent by Rājarāja, therefore, may be taken for granted.

The Chinese political authorities actually began to assess the importance of international trade since the end of the 10th century A.D. With the purpose of promotion of foreign
trade with China "a mission was sent abroad by the Emperor with credentials under the imperial seal and provisions of gold and piece goods to induce the foreign traders of the South Sea and those who went to foreign lands beyond the sea to trade to come to China". Viewed from this light, Rājarāja's mission to China must have had a trade orientation. Diplomatic negotiations between two political powers thus began mainly for opening commercial dialogues between the two.

The above conclusion seem to gain further grounds in the light of the Ling-wai-tai-ta. It is known therefrom that Chinese traders with big ships intent upon visiting the country of the Arabs had to tranship at Ku-lin for boarding smaller boats before proceeding farther westwards. Ku-lin is modern Quilon (Kollam) in Kerala, a well known port of ancient times. Rājarāja's conquest over littoral part of Kerala by a naval battle is well known. Moreover, epigraphic evidence is there to show the presence of a merchant from Kurakkeni-kollam (= Quilon) at Nāgaṭṭinam, the foremost official port of the Colas. The gleanings from the above sources, therefore, strongly underline the commercial character of the Cola embassy to China and intelligent assessment of international trade by the Cola king.

The Cola naval power literally proved to be irrepressable during the reign of Rājendrā I (1014-1044), who defeated a number of powers of South East Asia. The contact was, however, not confined to naval exercise. The Śrī Vijaya
monarch Saṅgrāmavijayottungavarman is known to have constructed the Cudāmanī vihāra at Nagapattinam. Historians usually try to discern a material interest beneath this apparent cultural contact. The existing commercial activities show that Śrī Vijaya assumed a place of great importance in the trade between China and India. Cultural contacts between Śrī Vijaya and the Cola empire then presuppose commercial exchanges.

Interesting information is derived from a few inscriptions discovered on the walls of the Karonasvāmin temple at Nagapattinam. One of the epigraphic documents records, during the third regnal year of Rājendra (1014-15), the gift of a jewel set with precious stones to the deity called Nagaiyalar. The jewel is said to have been caused to be made by a person (name lost) who was the agent (kāmī) of the king of Śrī Vijaya (Śrī Vijaiyattaraiyar). The agent of the Śrī Vijaya king is explicitly mentioned by name (Nimalan-Agatit-savajān) in another record also assignable during the reign of Rājendra Cola. "The possibility of the two individuals figuring in this and the record referred to above being identical cannot be overruled". A third inscription dated in the 7th regnal year of Rājendra records two gifts each of 87¾ of chinakkarakam (or China gold) and one of 60½ of Undigaippon by Śrī Kuruttan Kesuvan alias Agaralekai, the agent of Kidarattaraiyar.

The agents of the king of Śrī Vijaya and Kadāram who
made gifts of precious objects at Ragapartum may reasonably be
considered to have acted so on behalf of the royal master,
though inscriptions make no explicit mention in this respect.
In the background of the Asian maritime commerce of this age,
the gifts from Sri Vijaya may be interpreted, following Hall,
as a part of cultivating commercial entente with the Cola
empire. Significantly enough China gold figures among
gifts from Sri Vijaya. It is not difficult to infer that
Chinese products could reach Cola ports via Sri Vijaya,
which then seems to have assumed the position of an interme-
diary.

Attention may now be drawn to yet another record of
Rajendra's reign, viz. the Puttur C.P. during the 8th year
(1020 A.D.) of Rajendra. The heaviest of Cola copper plate
charters, this Puttur C.P. — consisting of 55 plates —
records that "the king of Kamboja sent his chariot as a
present to the Cola monarch in order to win the latter's
friendship and thereby save his own kingdom". The
Kamboja king is to be identified with the Khmer king
Suryavarma I and not with a ruler of the Kambojas of North-
western India which was beyond the sphere of Cola political
and diplomatic influence. Historians often give a political
overtone to the gift of Kamboja ruler to Rajendra in the
sense that the Kamboja king probably intended to befriend
the Cola emperor in the face of threat from Sri Vijaya.
R.C. Majumdar and G. Coedes, the two great specialists on
this line, saw in the gift of the Khmer king a request for Cola military help.

Hall, however, points to the fact that in an inscription from Chidambaram during the reign of Kulottunga I, Rajendra is said to have received a stone which was presented to him by the Kamboja ruler. Interestingly enough the piece of stone was shown to Rajendra as a curious object *Sri-Rajendra-Soladevarka Kambojarajan katcyagakkattina*. There is no mention of any request to the Cola king for military assistance. Along with this it must be remembered that in and around 1020 A.D., when the Puttwar C.P. was composed, the naval power of Kamboja reached its peak. So, it would be rather unlikely for the Khmer king to ask for military help from the Cola king during this period. The gift of the chariot then seems to have been received also as an object of curiosity in a manner similar to that of the Chidambaram record. The political colour seems to have been injected into the record by the Cola eulogist. Hall takes the next step ahead and argues — with strong grounds — that "the Khmer king sent a chariot and this stone as curiosities to win the friendship of the Cola in an economic rather than in military sense".

Rajaraja and Rajendra ruled during a time of brisk international maritime commerce. They seem to have assessed the importance of this trade — at least from the point of
revenue — and also the significant role of the Cola territory as a commercial intermediary. Their interest in encouraging foreign trade contacts and diplomatic dialogues therefore seem to have been largely motivated by the prospect of handsome economic gains.

Kulottunga I (1070-1120 A.D.) perhaps the last worthy successor of Rājarāja and Rājendra, is also known to have maintained widespread contacts. Viśakhapatīṇam, one of the secondary Cola ports in the Andhra coast, was administered by Kulottunga's son Rājarāja Mummudi Cola in 1076. The port was subsequently renamed Kulottunga Cola Paṭṭinam. The naming of the port after the reigning Cola emperor is an unmistakable evidence of Kulottunga's interest in sea-borne trade. The port in question is also found to have been looked after among others by an itinerant mercantile organization.

A mission from the Burmese king Kyanzittha (1077-1112 A.D.) is said to have been received, according to the Shwesandaw Pagoda Inscription, by the Coli king. Kyanzittha being a contemporary of Kulottunga, the latter may logically be identified with the Coli king. Commercial character of similar missions has already been discussed earlier and the present one may also be explained in a similar manner. The commercial importance of the kingdom of Pagan seems to have been hinted by a contemporary Chinese text, the Ling-wai-taī-ta of Chou-chu-fei (1178 A.D.). According to it, one way to
to Chu-lien (i.e., in Cola country) was to go
to go there from the Pagan kingdom. About fifty years later
Chau-Ju-Kua in his account on Chu-lien states: "Some say that
one can go there (China) by way of the kingdom of Pu-Kan".
Pu-kan is undoubtedly the same as Pagan. The intermediate
position of Pagan in the contact between China and the Cola
empire thus stands attested. The diplomatic efforts of
Kyanzittha and Kulottunga therefore appear to have been
commercially motivated.

The Song Annals of China reveal the name of a Cola
king, Ti-hu-kia-lo, who sent an embassy from Chu-lien in 1077.
The Cola king is suggested to have been Deva Kulo(ttuunga), and
this is further supported by the reference to the year which
definitely falls within Kulottunga's reign. Seventy two men
were sent in course of this embassy who "were given 81,800
strings of copper cash, ..... in return for the articles of
tribute comprising glassware, camphor, brocades, rhinoceros
horns, ivory, incense, rose-water, yretchuk, asafoetida,
borax, cloves etc.". The commercial character of this
mission is beyond doubt and the Colas seem to have made a hand­
some profit. The Cola emperor seems to have been participating
in foreign trade.

The same emperor is eulogized as "one whose fame is
spontaneously sung on the further shore of the ocean by the
young women of the Persians. /"Syacchandam parasinartaruna-
yuvatihirggiyate yasya kirtti. /177/Joitien by analysing
letters of Jewish traders pointed out a regular contact of
West Asia with Malabar coast, included within the Cola realm. Several letters speak of specific visits of Jewish traders to ports on the Coromandel coast too. Thanks to the researches of Goitien, branches of Fustat (Old Cairo) merchant families are found to have actively participated in the ports of Malabar and Coromandel coast. If the above eulogy of Kulottunga is considered to have had at least some amount of truth in it, it then probably implies regular contacts of Kulottunga with West Asia. The nature of the contact on the basis of circumstantial evidence may be suggested to have been at least partly commercial.

The above discussions therefore seem to highlight that Cola emperors were probably interested to explore and exploit profit potentialities of international trade in which South India during the period vigorously participated. The items of trade were mostly luxury goods of fancy price. The revenue-earning possibilities of trade in such costly items hardly escaped the notice of Cola kings under whom the Colas emerged not only as a political power, but also as a front-ranking commercial force.

This discussion may be brought to a conclusion by observing that with the widening scope of far-flung maritime commerce in and through the Cola realm, mercantile organizations naturally came to the limelight. We have already referred to several inscriptions recording the participation of local mercantile communities (or a member thereof) in the
administrative system of the trading station. As late as the
time of Rajendra III, an inscription (1256) from Gandagopāla-
pattām (in Nellore) states that an itinerant mercantile
organization, along with the local ur assembly, controlled
the collection of levies associated with boats and ships.

Their affluence firmly embedded in widespread trade, the
merchants were in a position to extend the horizon of their
activities and enjoyed administrative prerogatives. They also
seem to have bargained from the political authority certain
farming rights concerning revenue matters. The king's love
for gain thus seems to have been juxtaposed by the trader's
desire for 'power'.

The Kottayam Plates of Vīra-Rāghava, the ruler of
Kerala dated 1320 A.D. according to Kielhorn, though this
is disputed, records that a merchant named Iravikorttan alias
Seramān-loka-pperun-jetti of Magodaiyarpattinam was conferred
with the title of Manigramam. We have already seen that
Manigramam was the name of a mercantile corporation in penin-
sular India. That the term also signified a title is evident
from the record. The inscription declares some privileges,
prerogatives and rights to be enjoyed by the recipient of the
title. Among these the rights over 'the export trade', 'mono-
poly of trade', 'right of proclamation', 'monopoly of trade
in four quarters' are particularly significant. Venkayya
identifies Magodaiyarpattinam with Magodai which figures in
Cola records as having been captured by Rājendra Cola. This
place is then to be located near Cranganore. The merchant in
question seems to have been here allowed with certain monopoly rights probably applicable to the pattana or port-town mentioned above. No direct information, not even suggestions, is given in this inscription regarding the intention of the king in conferring Manigrāma title on the merchant. A probable hypotheses may be offered here: the ruler establishes an outstanding merchant with certain rights over the port, which may be considered as 'farming right'. Such farming rights are offered by the ruler probably against a stipulated share of money to be earned by the trader out of the port.

The importance of the Manigrāma may be better appreciated in the light of the text named Payyanur Pattolā. "You are going a long distance ..... and you (therefore) necessarily want escort; the chief setti of Kova, Anjuvannam-kuttam, the children of manigrāma and ourselves — we of the four nagaram — are the only four communities esteemed as ko-kkudi (families held in high estimate by the king)." The nagaram and the manigrāma are two mercantile communities. The record speaks of their elevated position in the eyes of the king; this was obviously due to their great affluence gained through trade. They are considered among aristocratic families in the kingdom. The escort provided for them seems to have been arranged by the ruler, since he recognizes the special position of these commercial communities. The ruler then may be said to have considerable interest in trade and commerce. The text clearly illustrates the close cooperation between the king and the trader for satisfying their mutual interests.
Lastly in this section we take up the accounts left behind by Rashiud Din (1310 A.D.), Ibn Battuta (1332 A.D.) and Abdullah Wassaf (14th century A.D.). Along with these the Travels of Marco Polo will also be taken into account.

An exhaustive description regarding trade and commerce in Ma'abar is found in those works. It stretched, according to Rashiud Din from Kulam to Silawar (or Nilawar of Wassaf = Nellore ?), extending about 300 parasangs along the coast. The name of the country is of Arabic origin. Yule opines that the word signifies passage or ferry and "may have referred either to the communication with Ceylon, or as is more probable to its being in that age the coast most frequented by travellers from Arabia and the Gulf. Ma'abar is often identified with the Coromandel coast, but it is not always accepted; following Yule it could also be located on the western sea-board.

Rashiud Din tells us about various sorts of choice merchandise and clothes being imported from Chin and Machin and Sind and Hind. Ma'abar exported, according to the same writer, silken stuff, aromatic roots, large pearls to Irak, Khurasan, Syria, Rum and Europe. Wassaf's description on this subject runs closely parallel to Rashiud Din's. The far-flung trade connexions of Ma'abar definitely made it one of the areas of outstanding economic importance in India. Wassaf further says that whatever commodities and goods were imported from the remotest part of China and Hind into Ma'abar, his agents and
factors shall have the first selection until which no one else was allowed to purchase. When he had selected his goods he dispatched them on his own ships or delivered them to merchants and shipowners to carry to the island of Kais. There also it was not permitted to any merchant to contract or bargain until the factors of Malik-ul-Islam had selected what they required and after that the merchants were allowed to buy whatever was suited to the wants of Ma'abar. With the prices obtained by their sale such goods were purchased as were suitable for the home-market; and the trade was so managed that the produce of the remotest China was consumed in the farthest west. No one has seen the like of it in the world. This exhaustive account does not really leave much to explain. Ma'abar appears to have assumed the very important role of an intermediary as it arranges for the supply of Chinese goods in the remote area of Kais. The king of Ma'abar, probably a ruler of the Pandya dynasty, is found to have himself participated in this trade, obviously prompted by the profit potentialities of this commercial intercourse. As the king makes arrangement for selection of goods, through his agents, imported from China, the best commodities would naturally be set apart for the king. Moreover, since he deals with these goods of best quality, the chances of profit is more certain and the amount of gain much larger. It is, therefore, hardly surprising and quite logical on the part of the ruler at Ma'abar to have restricted the initiative of private merchants. He consequently
minimizes the competition from and dependence on traders. His position is further strengthened by the possession of commercial vessels; once again he has to depend less on traders for their ships. Rashiud Din thus does not seem to exaggerate when he says "Ma'abar is, as it were, the key of Hind". It is also interesting that the title of the King of Ma'abar was Dewar meaning "in the Ma'abar language, the lord of wealth". A substantial part of his wealth must have been derived through his participation in and effective control over foreign trade.

Apart from this general account of trade and commerce in Ma'abar, our authors have explicitly referred to the horse-trade in Ma'abar. Rashiud Din says: "..... there are no horses in Ma'abar, or rather those which are there are weak; it was agreed that every year Jamali-d-Din Ibrahim should send to the Dewar 1400 strong Arab horses from all islands of Kish and 10,000 horses from all the islands of Fars, such as Katif, Iahsa, Bahrein, Hurmuz, Kilahat etc. Each horse is reckoned worth 220 dinars of red gold current". Wassaf also gives us similar information on this subject. Polo apart from telling all these, further adds that horses hardly lived long in Ma'abar principally due to mismanagement and maltreatment of horses. While this was distinctly disadvantageous for the Dewar, the Arab merchants reaped great benefits out of it by receiving regular orders for the supply of horses. "The horse merchants", according to Polo, "never
bring any ferrier with them, but also prevent any ferrier from going thither, lest they should in any degree baulk the sale of horses, which brings them in every year such vast gains." A considerable amount of money was certainly drained off to buy horses. It was hardly a profitable proposition for the king to procure each year fresh herds of horses; Marco Polo considers the royal expenditure after horses as a sheer wastage. But since horses were absolutely indispensable for the king, there is no other alternative for him but to depend on Arab traders for the supply of horses. It is significant to note that the king of Ma'abar maintained his economic upper hand over traders of his own country; on the other hand concerning horse-trade he was actually dictated by Arab traders' terms and danced to their tune.

Ibn Battuta, another great traveller, has left behind a very valuable account of Mulayabar (= Malabar) which extended from Sandabur (= Goa) to Kawalam (= Quilon). Malabar has been given the epithet of pepper country by Ibn Battuta, indicating that pepper was the most important product of Malabar. It was also one of the valuable articles of commerce having regular demands in foreign markets. Ibn Battuta has also referred to a number of ports included within Mulayabar. One of them was Manjur (= Mangalore).

"There is a colony of about four thousand muslims there, living in suburb alongside the town. Conflicts frequently break out between them and the townsperson but the sultan makes peace between them on account of his need of merchants".
This interesting passage evokes certain comments and inferences. Manjrur being a port, the majority of its inhabitants, including the four thousand Muslims, were probably traders. The establishment of a colony of Mohammedan merchants speaks of their regular commercial connexion with Manjrur. Moreover, we have already pointed to the possibility that king's approval was one of the major factors in the settlement of a colony of foreign traders. The reason of the frequent clashes between the Muslims and other traders/inhabitants at Manjrur has not been specified by Ibn Battuta. One of the plausible causes could be the conflict of commercial interest between them. Such clashes, if regular, would naturally hamper commercial activities at Manjrur. Besides, Muslim traders would become anxious regarding their security and would even leave Manjrur which would be definitely detrimental to the commercial interests of the king. That is why the king intervened in the clashes between Muslims and other groups of dwellers at Manjrur and was eager to maintain peace, order and security, so vital for the prosperity of the port in question.

VII

The preceding sections were devoted to the study of epigraphic and literary materials for finding out actual incidents regarding king's interests, if any, in trade and commerce, and the relationship between the king and traders. In this section similar lines of enquiries will be pursued.
on the basis of theoretical treatises.

It has already been pointed out earlier that terms like vanik, sresthi began to appear as early as the age of Later Samhitás, indicating to the regular commercial activities. In the Gautama Dharmasutra the duties of the king and the administration of justice have been discussed. In the matter of judicial administration the king is advised to take into account several factors and norms. He must follow the Vedic institutes of law. At the same time "cultivators, traders, herdsmen, money-lenders and artisans (have authority) to lay down rules for their respective classes". Such rules appear to have been framed by respective guilds of artisans and merchants, and represent the respective srenidharma. It is implied that the king should take into account such srenidharms or administer justice following guild-laws in case of dealing with judicial problems of guilds. So, these srenidharms may be considered as a parallel source of law to customary laws. Among different groups formulating their own regulations, one is that of the traders. So, the administration of justice concerning traders had to be meted out according to their own laws. The different occupational groups mentioned in the Gautama Dharmasutra may be said to have become economically powerful and important enough to force the king to accept the validity of their respective srenidharms. The Gautama Dharmasutra, probably assignable to the 5th/4th centuries B.C., thus speaks of certain
economic groups, including those of merchants, making their presence felt in the royal court. This more or less corroborates the evidence of Buddhist texts, discussed above, pointing to the increasing importance of the seththis in the economy of the country and also in the royal court.

This situation of the big trader's stranglehold over the king in the Buddhist texts, however, alters remarkably in the Arthasastra of Kautilya. A thinker of foremost rank of the royalist school, Kautilya hardly allows any one other than the king to take initiatives in economic affairs, which according to him is the source of success in all spheres of life. Kautilya makes no attempt to hide or to soften his bitter distrust and suspicion about traders whom he considers as dangerous as thorns (kantaka) to the state. King's control over trade and commerce and constant vigilance over traders' activities are strongly urged in the Arthasastra.

For the inspection and regulation of trade and commerce the king is to appoint a high-ranking officer viz. Panyādhyakṣa (Director of Trade). The duties of this officer may broadly be divided into two (1) concerning trade in his own country (svavisaya) and (2) concerning trade abroad (paravisaya). The Panyādhyakṣa should be thoroughly conversant with diverse types of commodities (maraṇībhājanam panyānam), whether produced in land or in water (sthalalajājanām), whether brought to the market by overland or riverine route (sthalapathaśātipathopayātanām), the fluctuation in prices
These data are necessary for framing the policy of distribution of commodities by the Panyādhyaṃaka.

If an abundance in the supply of a particular commodity leads to its fall in price, the state will arrange for its centralized distribution and fix up the price also. The fixed price may, however, be changed when the situation is brought under control. Thus the state assumes here the role of a open buyer, checks the fall in price and probably creates a buffer stock. Here the ruling authority thus ensures the producers' interest. On the other hand, a scarcity in the market will be met by releasing this buffer stock. That the traders conspired among themselves to corner certain goods and to raise price is stated by Kautilya who imposes fine on such culprits. \(\text{Vaidhakānāṃ vā sambhūya panyamāva rundhatamarghena vikṛtapātām vā sahaśram danda.}\) The steps against unscrupulous traders are taken to ensure the consumers' interest.

The Panyādhyaṃaka is also entrusted with commodities produced in royal farms and factories which are to be distributed through a single channel. \(\text{Rajapanyamekukham vyavahāram sthāpayet.}\) The king in the Arthasastra does not merely control activities of private traders but also participates in business as a parallel producer and trader. The distribution of royal goods, significantly enough, is to be made through a single channel (ekamukham), so that competition
with other products and their producers is minimized. The sale proceeds of the royal goods will be daily deposited to the Panyadhyaksa by other officers (panyadhyaksasyarpayeyuh). The sale of goods produced in royal farms and factories do provide a regular income to the royal treasury.

The Panyadhyaksa may allow private traders to deal in royal goods. But in that case the goods are to be distributed through various channels. So, the private traders are to face competition among themselves, but the state when dealing in same goods leaves hardly any room for competition. But they are to pay a compensation fee in case they fail to earn the expected profit. This implies that the state is not prepared to suffer any loss in the sale of royal goods and any loss suffered by the actions of private traders must be made good. Moreover the private trader dealing in royal goods are also to pay vyaji of different rates, more or less comparable to present day sales-taxes. Since these private traders appear to have functioned as commissioned agents of the king, they may be put into the category of royal merchants. The 'royal trader' is under strict control of the state and hardly allowed to enjoy any economic initiative.

Goods produced in foreign countries are, however, to be imported literally with favourable invitation. Along with the open
encouragement to import of goods, sailors and traders coming from abroad are allowed various concessions. Perhaps the most interesting concession granted to foreign traders is in matters of money a foreign trader cannot be sued in a court of law.

The Panyādhyakṣa is also entrusted with fixing the policy of prices, which is closely connected with that of distribution. While fixing the price of commodities the Panyādhyakṣa should take into account the following factors: money invested, interest charges, road cess, ferry dues and 5% profit for inland trade and 10% profit for foreign trade. "For those who increase the price beyond that or secure (a profit beyond that) during purchase or sale, the fine shall be two hundred paras for (an additional profit of) five paras in one hundred paras. Moreover traders are to declare the quantity and price of his goods thrice in the public; then the intended buyer would purchase goods from them. "In case of competition among purchasers, the increase in price together with the duty shall go to the treasury". By fixing prices the Panyādhyakṣa not only maintains stability in the market but also keeps the private trader in check who always try to gain as much profit as possible by fleecing ordinary customers.

The above account of Panyādhyakṣa's activities is concerned with trade in his own country. He is also to take
into account trade abroad (paravisaya). "In foreign territory, however, he should ascertain the price and the value of the commodity (taken out) and the commodity (to be brought) in exchange and should calculate the profit after clearing expenses for duty, road cess, escort-charges, picket and ferry dues, food, fodder ... account". Once again the Panyādhyakṣa is to explore the profit potentials out of import-export exchange after clearing all costs. B.C. Sen considers that the Panyādhyakṣa undertakes some sort of trade missions or sends members of mercantile community who are entrusted to explore, negotiate and execute under the instructions of the state authorities. Following B.C. Sen it appears that prominent private traders were sent as representatives in the State Trading Missions. Once again there is a distinct possibility of private traders being employed as commissioned agents of the king. In case no profit is earned abroad, he should assess whether export or "bringing in goods in exchange for goods" would be more advantageous for the state. During his trade missions in foreign territories he should establish contacts with forest chieftains, frontier officers and chiefs in city and countryside to secure their favour. This is done probably to befriend these people in a foreign territory/territories who would prove no bar to smooth commercial intercourse. The Panyādhyakṣa is also advised on some important aspects of seaborne (varinātha) and riverine (nadīpatha) trade.
The above account may show how much the king was interested in trade and commerce, and how firmly he controls traders. But mere control of traders is not the ultimate aim of Kautilya. He always assesses and emphasizes upon the profit potential of every commercial move of the king. The Panyādhyakṣa is expressly directed to go wherever there is profit and avoid what is unprofitable. 

\[ \text{Yato labha statagacchet / Alabham parivarjayet.} \]

The Kautilyan scheme of king's regular participation and involvement in trade is not found in such great detail in other theoretical treatises. Still, however, the Manu-samhitā allows the king to confiscate the whole property of a trader who out of greed exports goods of which the king has a monopoly, or the export of which is forbidden. Thus the text in question recognizes king's monopoly rights over certain commercial items and upholds king's economic interests.

The Smṛti-Candrika, a well known digest, supplies information of a different kind. The text in question lays down that the samuhas (groups) had the authority of making samayās (compacts) for "overcoming misfortunes like droughts and oppression of thieves and king and these compacts were binding not only upon themselves but also upon the king". Illustrating this statement the author of this text explains that śrenis have such rules as that a certain commodity would be sold by a particular śrenī and none else. The emerging picture from this dictum is one of trader's control
and upperhand over the ruler. The text recognize, that kings sometimes acted oppressively, in a way little different from that of a thief. Such a king obviously oppresses the trader to make economic gains. This is viewed as a misfortune and bracketed with droughts. The text also approves the traders' reaction of forming \textit{samayas} to offer united resistance against king's predatory tendencies.

VIII

The data so far gleaned is temporarily and spatially of scattered nature. It is difficult to depict a complete picture by piecing together these data. But despite the scattered evidence, it is more or less certain that political authorities in different parts of the subcontinent during different times rarely lost sight of the economic importance of trade and commerce. The king seems to have realized the immense revenue-earning potential of trade and commerce. The king in ancient India often followed some sort laissez faire policy regarding traders' activities. The trader was allowed to carry on his trade without any major intervention of the state-power — except when his activities went against states' interests — and the king enriched his treasury by imposing certain levies on merchandise.

But sometimes kings of exceedingly greedy nature follow a policy of fleecing traders by excessive taxes or by predation. The king undoubtedly derives considerable amount
of wealth by this policy and his love for wealth is satisfied. But such a policy is certainly restrictive of commerce, as traders would soon react by avoiding ports/marts/towns included within the domain of an extortionate ruler. It is worth stating that Chau-ju-kua in 1225 A.D. explicitly refers to the fact that the Chu-lien (Cola) country was rarely visited by traders because of heavy taxes levied there. In the long run the diminishing volume of trade naturally affects the financial position of the king in an adverse way. We have already seen how Ganapati realized the folly of the predatory policy followed by his predecessors. There are also intelligent and prudent rulers like Ganapati who rejected the predatory policy and invited traders to compensate the losses suffered due to following shortsighted commercial policies.

It is interesting to find that despite the shortcomings of the predatory policy against traders it was not totally rejected; on the contrary Marco Polo and Arab chroniclers, regularly refer to piracy and looting encouraged by rulers. Piracy is reported by Polo in the kingdoms of Eli, Gozurat and Tana. According to Ibn Battuta Calicut was the only port which was free from such evil practices. The usual method was to rob the ship of all its goods if it halted at an unscheduled port. Such a policy, as we have already stated, was thoroughly uneconomic. Kautilya urged upon the rulers to behave like fathers to traders who fell a victim of shipwreck. It may logically
be asked why then rulers often defied these healthy norms and looted merchandise. An interesting information is supplied by Polo in course of his description of Tana. "These corsairs have covenant with the king that he shall get all the horses they capture and all other plunder shall remain with them. The king does this because he has no horse".

The king, therefore, had to allow and uphold piracy for obtaining horses. Thus it is horse trade that becomes a force to reckon with in statecraft. The account of Polo may illustrates how the demand for a particular commodity shaped and guided king's political actions.

In ancient India the state rarely assumed the managerial role. It is only in the Maurya period and the prescription of the Arthasastra that the king imposed firm control over traders, himself engaged in production and participated in commerce like any other individual trader. It is interesting to find that Kautilya who considers traders as harmful as kantaka did not advocate their total exclusion. The main aim of Kautilya is to reserve for the king economic initiative and put traders under his control. Though in the section on Paryādhyāyaka Kautilya says that the Director of Trade should frame distribution-policies so as to cause welfare to people, the main economic advantage is kept for the state. The people receive only some fringe benefits.

While the Maurya and the Arthasastra states imposed state control on trade of commodities -- essential as well
as luxury — kings of the subsequent times imposed control only over luxury items (e.g. pearls, gold, other precious metals etc.) and other items which had definite importance to the ruler (e.g. horse). The theoretical treatises also sanctioned state-control over such restricted number of items. The aim of the king was, therefore, to safeguard his own economic interests.

This naturally means that the importance of traders to kings remained more or less constant. The relationship vis-a-vis the king and the royal merchant (including his commissioned agents) also calls for attention. Since the kings appoints the royal merchant, the latter would logically have to be responsible to his employer. His tenure at the office of the royal merchant probably depended to a considerable extent upon the satisfaction and whims of the king. Such a situation may arise particularly in a managerial state, like the one conceived in the *Arthasastra*.

The royal merchant in the *Arthasastra* state is not a superior of goods to the king, but is actually supplied with royal goods produced in royal farms and factories. It is not unusual in an ancient managerial state to utilize the expertise of prominent traders for the promotion of distribution and sale of royal products, in addition to government officials employed for the same job. The *Arthasastra*, however, imposes severe restrictions on the activities of the royal merchant. He is not given the prestigious title *rajaśresthī*
or even srestha, but is simply called vaidehaka, which usually denotes just any ordinary merchant. The Arthasastra state does not give any quarter to the royal merchant and actually bosses over him.

The ideal of a managerial state seems to have been realized to a considerable extent by the Maurya state. After the end of the Maurya rule, an all-India empire of unitary character practically never appeared in the history of ancient India. The absence of the unitary state and the lack of state-owned economic enterprises shifted the onus from the state authority to the royal merchant. The latter almost invariably began to act as the procurer of revenues from a particular area and the supplier of luxury and costly goods to the king. The logical outcome of this would be the increasing dependence of the ruler upon his commissioned agent(s) for acquiring goods and revenue.

The king often had to acknowledge the importance of traders by inviting them to settle in his territory with concessional terms, by creating Vaisyagrahāras, and by arranging for their safety in long-distance trade. The trader seems to have extracted considerable facilities from the ruler whenever the situation favoured. We have found a number of information showing that the trader accumulated so vast wealth that he entered into the elite group. Moreover, the trader also managed for himself access into the royal court and sometimes assumed administrative offices. The
trader seems to have acquired (if not purchased) political-administrative authority on the basis of their affluence. Since his actions are guided primarily by profit-motive, the trader while functioning as an administrator may also be influenced by the same motive. Traders thus become a potential 'power-group' parallel to the king. If guided by a blind profit-motive this 'power-group' may even override the interest of the state and jeopardize the economic position of the king. That is why Kautilya always advocates for their suppression and we have referred to an inscription mentioning the suppression of traders' conspiracies.

Despite the potent danger of traders to become a parallel power-group, and king's suspicion against them, the king is generally found to have maintained a friendly attitude to foreign traders; in fact the foreign trader was granted some remarkable facilities — commercial and administrative — which the indigenous trader hardly enjoyed. The king often allowed them to establish their own colonies usually near an important port or market town. The abhaya-sāsana of Gaṇapati was issued to traders coming from afar i.e. foreign traders. The king at Manjrur, according to Ibn Battuta, intervened in the dispute between foreign Muslim traders and local people, obviously to safeguard the interest of Muslim merchants. Even Kautilya, the arch hater of traders, shows a much softer attitude to foreign merchants by granting them parihāras, allowing a higher rate of profit.
for them and also exempting them from any legal actions in money-matters. Why the foreign trader was so much favoured in contradistinction to traders of ruler's own realm? It is possible that the ruler was responsible for the safety of foreign nationals and also had to offer them lucrative terms to attract them for settling in his own kingdom. Besides we may offer another hypothesis, based on logical guess-work.

While indigenous traders had enough chances to become economically and politically so powerful as to threaten or defy the authority of the king, foreign traders settled in a particular country were always numerically a smaller group. They invariably had to depend upon royal support and patronage. It is hardly likely that foreign traders could defy the king or involve in machinations against the existing political authority. It was, therefore, probably much more advantageous for the king to cultivate intimate relationship with the more 'loyal' group of traders.

The relationship between the king and traders is therefore complex and variable. The king's interest in trade and commerce was largely prompted by his profit-motive. From the point of view of love for gain, the king's attitude was hardly different from that of traders. Under normal circumstances the economic interests of both often coincided: the ruler required traders to enrich his treasury and the trader, in his turn, needed the political authority for protection.
and patronage. But even beneath this apparent relation of reciprocity, one can discern a strong under-current of rivalry and suspicion. The king was on the look out to satisfy his love for gain by assuming upper hand over traders and the merchants always eager to wrest the economic initiatives from the ruler to their own fold.
NOTES

1. Samuelson states that "whether or not one of the two regions is absolutely more efficient in the production of every goods than the other, if each specializes in the products in which it has a comparative advantage (the greatest relative efficiency), trade will be naturally profitable to both regions. Real incomes of productive factors rise in both places". Economics (Eleventh Edition, 1980), pp. 626ff. and p. 631.

Geographical specialization has a definite role to play in trade and commerce. With each country or parts thereof engaged in specializing in the most advantageous products, the total output of the world as a whole augments; but trading countries also lose their self-sufficiency because none produces all its requirements. The answer to this problem is to exchange the products of a country with the products of others in order to procure the remainder of this requirement. This naturally amounts to trade. Vide, J.K. Mitra, Economics, an Introduction to its Basic Principles (1967), pp. 442-43.

2. The town or the city rather than the village is usually conducive to trade. The close association between towns and trade may be evident from the fact that till the beginning of the 12th century the word "mercator" meaning _______

contd ...
merchant and 'burgensis' denoting a city dweller stood for the same thing. See Leo Huberman, Man's Worldly Goods (1937), p. 28.

3. Ernst Samhaber, Merchants Make History (1963), p. 16.

4. J.K. Mitra, op. cit., p. 290. Among different theories of profit, the leading ones are as follows: (a) the risk theory, (b) the uncertainty bearing theory, (c) the rent theory, (d) the marginal productivity theory, (e) the wage theory and (f) the dynamic theory. These have been summarized by J.K. Mitra and also discussed by William Barber, A History of Economic Thought (1967).


6. An exhaustive discussion on the changing concept of Mercantile system/Mercantilism is found in Charles Wilson's Economic History and the Historian (1969), pp. 62-72. The interpretation of the term by classical economists was made primarily from the economic point of view. The German historical economists on the other hand deflected in it the direction of power. Wilson, however, sums up by highlighting the dualistic theory that has always been latent in the historiography of mercantilism.


8. ibid., pp. 203-04.

9. M.P. Ashley, Financial and Commercial Policy under the Cromwellian Protectorate (1934), Ch. XIII.


11. ibid., pp. 492-493.
16. For reports on excavations at Lothal see *IAR*, from 1954-55 to 1958-59.
18. R.C. Majumdar (ed.), *The Vedic Age* (1955), pp. 399-400.
20. R.C. Majumdar (edt), *The Vedic Age* (1955), p. 248 contains a summary of the controversy regarding the sea trade in the *Rgveda*. Despite the great divergence of opinion among scholars, this much is clear that the *Rgveda* itself describes the Indus and the Sarasvati as flowing down to the sea. So, the knowledge of the sea, distinct from the river or the mouth of it, seems to contd ......
have established during the period under review. How far the sea was utilized for economic, and particularly commercial purposes, is still difficult to answer.

21. H.G. Rawlinson, *Intercourse between India and the Western World* (1977), suggests that most of the names of the items of commerce were probably derived from Indian words. It follows that these were then Indian products.


23. Economic condition of the period of the Buddha has been discussed in T.W. Rhys Davids's *Buddhist India* (1933), Richard Fick's *Social in North east India Buddha's* (1920), D.D. Kosambi's *Introduction to Indian History* (1956) and *Culture and Civilization of Ancient India* (1970), etc.


29. E. Samhaber, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15, narrates a story of famine in China. The wisest officer of the realm was sent under imperial order to inquire about a famine-stricken province. The people of that province told the officer that "It's all the fault of the merchant Wang. He bought up all grain and kept it in his vast storehouses".

contd
so that he might sell it at a usurious price". On the basis of this report the merchant was imprisoned. He was however too intelligent and influential to be put into chains. He promised to secure the supply of grains from abroad, obviously at a high purchasing cost and even at a higher price from the people. All the suppliers of grains were under his influence. He took full responsibility of bringing food in the famine-hit area but with this characteristic remarks "I want to make a profit; I must make a profit. I am a merchant, not an official. If I lose through a miscalculation then I have failed as a merchant and that is the end of me. I want to make money — I must make money — by serving the community". The emperor had to set him free.

33. Jat., VI. 344.
34. T.W. Rhys Davids, Pāli-English Dictionary (1925), pp. 77-78.
35. ibid., p. 77.
38. B.N. Mukherjee, Rise and Fall of the Kushāna Empire (to be published), p. 356.


41. Ibid., pp. 151ff. Wagle has discussed here the intimate relation between the king and the gahapati.

42. Ibid., p. 152.


45. Of the Zeda Inscription of Kaniska I (yr. 11), where the king is described as Marjhaka (1. 2). Sten Konow explains Marjhaka to be an older form of the Khotani Saka word Malysaki, i.e. Malzaki (EI, XIX, pp. 1ff.). It carries the same sense as gahapati. Also see SI, p. 141, note 5. Thus the Kusana king seems to have followed the custom (already known among Indian kings much before him) of assuming the title gahapati. The epithet is evidently used to denote the monarch's great wealth.

46. Jat. VI. 135.

47. The account of Megasthenes is now lost and preserved only in excerpts of three other classical accounts of Strabo, Arrian and Diodorus. Summarized versions of Megasthenes' accounts in these three texts often differ from one another.


50. Ibid.


52. Ibid, p. 87.

53. Ibid, p. 189.


56. B.N. Mukherjee, *op. cit.* (see Note No. 54).

57. Ibid.

58. In the Hathigumpha Inscription Kharavela is said to have extended in his 5th regnal year an aqueduct which had cont'd .......
originally been excavated by a Nanda king tivasasata earlier. The expression tivasasata may mean 103 or 300 years. According to the first view Kharavela is to be dated 103 years after the last known date of the Nandas, i.e., 324-103 = 221 B.C. On the other hand the second interpretation places him 300 years after the last known date of the Nandas, i.e., 324 B.C. - 300 = 24 B.C. The latter view seems to be more probable. See R.C. Majumdar (ed.), *The Age of Imperial Unity* (1968), pp. 215-16.


64. *Periplus*, section 57.

65. *Pliny*, VI, 26, 96-101

66. The term monsoon has its origin in the Arabic word *Mausim*, denoting season. To the Arabs it stood for the winds of the Arabian Sea which blow for about six months from the south-west and six months from the north east.

contd . . . .
"It is now applied generally to the type of wind system in which there is a complete or almost complete reversal of the prevailing direction from season to season", G. Moore, A Dictionary of Geography (1974), p. 145.


69. EFKH, pp. 52-59.


71. A.F.J. Klijn, The Acts of Thomas (1962) (Abbreviation: AT) The text is known to have the following versions:

(i) Syriac, (ii) Greek, (iii) Latin, (iv) Arabic, (v) Armenian, (vi) Coptic and (vii) Ethiopic. Of these the Syriac version is the earliest (ibid, pp. 1-17 and p. 17).

72. AT, p. 66, para 2.

73. AT, p. 65, para 2.

74. AT, p. 73, para 17.

75. AT, p. 75, para 21.

76. Periplous, section 38

77. Ibid, section 39

78. H.W. Bailey originally edited this record in JRAS (1980), No. 1, p. 21ff. Also see B.N. Mukherjee, "New Light on

79. EFKH, Ch. II.
80. HHS, Ch. 118, p. 9.
81. HHS, Ch. 118, p. 9.
83. Periplous, section 50.
84. Periplous, section 44. The expression Basilikoi Aleis may be translated literally as the man in the king's domain who go round the sea.
85. Periplous, section 52.
86. The Nasik Inscription of the reign of Vāsisthīputra Puḷumāti (regnal year 19) and the coins found in the Jogulthembi hoard prove the victory of Gautamīputra over Nahapāna.
88. ibid.
89. That the Satavahana domain included in it a number of ports, marts and towns is amply borne out by Classical authors.
90. 11.10-11: "Svayamabhigatajana-padaṇipati\text{-}ta/yu/-" contd ...
Sārārana-dena dasyu-vyāla-mṛga-rogādhīranupa sṛṣṭa-purva

91. Monier Williams, Sanskrit English Dictionary, p. 545.
92. K.A. Nilakantha Sastri, A History of South India (1966),
    pp. 115-46, and V. Kanakasabhai, Tamil-Eighteen Hundred
    Years Ago (1954).
93. Periplous, section 54.
94. ibid, section 56.
95. P.T. Srinivasa Aiyengar, 'The Trade of India (from the
    Earliest period up to the 2nd century A.D.)', IHQ, Vol.
    II, pp. 38ff.
96. K. Miller (Edt.), Die Peutingerische Tafel (1962),
    Segment XII.
97. Strabo, Book XV. A variant reading states that it was
    sent by a king called Poros.
98. E. Warmington, The Commerce Between the Roman Empire
99. E.L. Stevenson, Ptolemy's Geographike Huphgesesis (1932),
    p. 150.
100. V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, The Silappādikāram (1939).
    The dating of this epic is a controversial problem.
    According to some scholars, it belonged to 6th/7th
    centuries A.D., while some others place it in 4th/5th
    centuries A.D. There is, however, little doubt that
    it preserves in it information referring to the condi-
    tion prevailing in the early centuries of the Christian
    era.
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101. ibid, Canto II, 1-11.
102. ibid, Canto VI, 142-143.
103. ibid, Canto V, 7-63.
104. ibid, Canto V, 157-168.
105. ibid.
106. ibid, Canto II, 1-2.
107. ibid, Canto I, 30-39. The term Mahāsattuvan is probably derived from Sanskrit Mahāsārthavāha, the great trader or the great caravan trader. In view of the reference to manaikan in the same text, equivalent to Sanskrit Mahānāyaka, i.e. a sea-captain, Mahāsattuvan may be considered as an inland trader.
108. E.I. Stevenson, op. cit., p. 150.
109. Periplus, section 60.
111. ibid, pp. 24-26.
112. B.N. Mukherjee, EFKH, p. 47.
113. ibid, pp. 47.
114. The term Āryavartta literally denoting the abode of Aryans is defined as the land between the Himalayas and the Vindhya and stretching from sea to sea (Manu, ii. 22). The Allahabad Pillar Inscription also uses the word in the same sense while describing Samudragupta's conquest(s ?) over Āryavarttarājas.
117. SI, p. 291, f.n. 8.
118. ibid.
119. EI, XXVIII, pp. 79ff.
120. EI, XXX, pp. 163-81.
125. ibid, p. 172.
127. EI, II, pp. 343-47.
129. EI, I, pp. 184-190.
130. ibid.
132. IEG, pp. 10-11.
135. EI, XXXII, pp. 45-60.
136. ibid., pp. 61-76.
137. ibid., pp. 45-60.
138. ibid., pp. 61-76.
139. EC, IV (1897), p. 83: Inscription No. 10.
140. EC, VI (1901), p. 43: Do 72.
144. IEG, p. 266.
145. CII, Vol. VI, pp. 229-34.
146. ibid., pp. 241-45.
147. IEG, p. 357.
148. EC, VII, pp. 86-88, Inscription No. 118.
149. EI, XII, pp. 188-196.

150. There are some other comparable evidence to show more or less similar reactions of traders elsewhere and attendant economic repercussions. The Hou Han Shu (106.0870 d) describes Ho-P’u as being famous for pearl fisheries during the Later Han period (around the middle of the 2nd century A.D.). In earlier times the governors of Ho-P’u had all been by and large avaricious and corrupt. They exacted as much revenue as possible from pearl trade. People engaged in pearl fisheries and pearl trade understandably left the province, leading to economic decline in the area. Meng Chang, contd .......
the new governor, however, discarded this policy and facilitated the return of pearl traders to Ho-P'u (E. Schafer, "The Pearl Fisheries of Ho-P'u", MAOS, 72, pp. 155-168).

Similarly two business letters belonging to the 12th century, one sent from Aden to India and the other from Aden to Cairo refer to a naval invasion of Aden by the king of Kish. The king of kish was definitely attracted by the commercial importance of the port of Aden. But at the same time, as Idrisi reports, much of Indian trade had diverted from the Sea of Oman to Aden owing to the rafacious of the king of Kish who later invaded Aden for the love of gain (S.D. Goitien, "Two Eye-witness Reports on an Expedition of the king Kish against Aden", BSOAS, XVI, pp. 247-57).

153. EI, XXXIV, pp. 32-41.
154. EC, IV (1897), p. 100: Inscription No. 9.
155. K.R. Hall, op. cit., pp. 82-83.
156. K.R. Hall, ibid., p. 83; f.n. 32.
160. Chau-Ju-Kua, op. cit., p. 94.
161. ARE, 157 of 1956-57.
162. K.A. Nilakantha Sastri, op. cit., p. 220.
163. ARE, 164 of 1956-57.
164. ARE, 166 of 1956-57.
165. ARE, 1956-57, p. 15, also see pp. 15-16.
166. ARE, 166 of 1956-57.
168. ARE, 1949-50, pp. 3-5.
169. EI, V, pp. 103-104.
171. ARE, 201 of 1910.
175. ibid., p. 94.
177. EI, V, pp. 103-104.
179. The above discussion on commercial interests of Cola rulers is largely inspired by the two articles of K.R. Hall referred to above.

180. ARE, 78 and 79 of 1963-64.

181. EI, IV, pp. 290-97.


183. Relevant portions of the accounts of Rashiuddin and Abdulla Wassaf are translated respectively in History of India as Told by its Own Historians (1867), Edited by Elliot and Dawson, Vol. I and Vol. III. Ibn Battuta's account is translated by H.A.R. Gibb (1929).

184. Elliot and Dawson, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 32.


186. Elliot and Dawson, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 32.

187. Ibid.

188. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 69.

189. Ibid., p. 69.

190. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 33-34.


194. R.P. Kangle, Kautiliya Arthasastra in 3 Vols (1972); R.C. Basak, Kautiliya Arthasastra (Bengali) in 2 Vols.

195. KAS, IV. 2. The very adhyāya is named Kantakasodhana and the section concerned is devoted to suppression traders (Vaidehakaraksanam).
196. KAS, II. 16.
197. KAS, IV. 2. 19.
198. KAS, IV. 2. 28-30.
199. KAS, II. 21. 8-9.
201. Manu, VII. 399.
203. Chau-Ju-Kua, p. 95.
204. KAS, II. 28. 8-10.