

Chapter: 5

Trade and Commerce II

5.1. Trade Centres and Routes: Development and Decline

5.1.1. Trade Centres: Rise and Decline

A large part of Indian Territory operated trade on a large scale since the earliest times. With the establishment of strong and able political system, there was development of a network of trade channels and routes to transport of goods from one place to another, and carry out trade with foreign countries as well. With the development of these trade routes, there was simultaneously development of markets, ports, and trading centres. In this way, during this time, there was an overall development of the economy. The state also derived much of its income from the trade. So, the state provided safety measures to protect and foster all kinds of trade interests for the benefit of merchants and the smooth working of the traders.

It is presumable that agriculture always grows in littoral land like Bengal, where water is easily available as a gift of nature. The villages of ancient Bengal flourished as the basis of agricultural economy appeared on the banks of rivers, canals, and reservoirs etc. The urban centres, which were developed in the early days, were also of riverine character. Not only that, urban centres grew up to facilitate trade and industries. These centres of trade and commerce developed always on the confluence of land routes or rivers.

Bengal maintains trade relations with external world since ancient times. The economic prosperity of Bengal mostly depended on its flourishing trade. The scholars unanimously agree with the view. Trade centres played an important role in maintaining trade relations. In ancient period, Bengal's main trade centres were situated in the Ganges or its tributaries (Map-4). Tāmralipta is certainly the oldest port city of Bengal beyond any doubt. It has been identified with modern Tamruk

lying on the river of Rupnarayan in the Medinipur district of West Bengal. Tāmralipta was known by different names such as Tamalites, Tāralipta, Tāmalipta, Tamalini, Tāmaliitti, Tamalipti, Tāmalitas, Dāmalipta, Tāmraliptaka, Tamaralipti, Viṣṇugriha, Stambapura, Tamālika and Tan-mo-lih-ti in different languages and to different people in different times. The Greek and the Chinese sources have suggested its location on the Gaṅgā. It maintained regular trade and commerce with the outside world especially with south-east Asian countries, and through this trade there were people to people contacts. In fact, the emergence of the Tāmralipta port facilitated the transaction of the rural economy into urban economy during second urbanisation around 3rd-4th centuries B.C. Its commercial importance increased because of the fact that it was easily accessible from the Ganges Valley, and thus, not only in Bengal, but in the entire Gangetic basin. The site existed in the remotest past as it is evident from the testimony of the great Epics.¹ But the earliest dated reference to Tāmralipta has been found in the *Geography* of Ptolemy.² The Greek geographer puts the city on the Ganges, referring to the Tāmaliites. In the first and second centuries AD, Tāmralipta seems to share along with other ports on the Indian coast a profitable trade relationship with the Roman world. It is evident from the remains of sprinkler and rouletted ware that are thought to have originated in Rome.³ Tāmralipta's reputation as an emporium expanded across India and even beyond its boundaries. The Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien, when he visited India around 399-414 AD, found the maritime settlement of the Buddhists.⁴ Two hundred and fifty years later, Hiuen-Tsang wrote that being situated in the Bay of Bengal, it could be reached both by land and water, and it contained rare and valuable merchandises and a wealthy population.⁵ Another pilgrim or traveller who followed Hiuen-Tsang wrote about the port, "Tāmralipta is 40 *yojanās* south of the eastern limit of India. There are five or six monasteries; the people are rich."⁶ Thus it comes from the available sources of three Chinese pilgrims that Tāmralipta was the place of embarkation for Arakan, Burma, Java and China in the east, Coromondal coast in the

south, as well as the Malabar Coast and the land of Yavanas in the west. It is mentioned in the *Kathāsaritasāgara*,⁷ Tāmralipta was the home of the rich traders, who operated trade with Sri Lanka and Suvarṇadvīpa and gave jewellery and other valuable articles to the sea in order to ensure safe and secure sea journey. The same story is repeatedly mentioned in the *Manasāmaṅgala* and *Chaṇḍīmaṅgala Kāvya*s of later times.⁸ But the useful career of the great port of eastern India came to a sad end in 7th century. Due to the three main reasons, the port of Tāmralipta declined:⁹ 1) the break-up of the Roman Empire (476 A.D) and subsequent unsettled relationship between the eastern Roman empire and the Sāssanids, which resulted in the loss of the most important markets for Tāmralipta; 2) chaotic political condition in Bengal in the 7th century A.D. and 3) the silting up of Ganges, on which the port (Tāmralipta) was situated also in 7th century. As a result its difficulties were felt to bring or send the goods to river from the wide hinterland. On the other hand, the significance of Samandar port lying on sea-route was increasing day by day, and that was used in international trade. All of the products of eastern India that were in demand in international trade were found here. For this reason, the importance of ancient maritime trade of Tāmralipta might have diminished. B.C. Sen refers to its fall due to ‘the disappearance of the channel linking Tamruk to sea, which made the island more or less joined to the mainland and was largely responsible for its downfall.’¹⁰

There was another port-city in ancient Bengal, namely Gaṅge. Scholars are of different views identifying the location of Gaṅge. Most of the scholars located her between the extreme mouths of the Ganges. We don’t have any definite literary and archaeological evidences of the earliest period regarding the commercial centre or even of a settlement called Gaṅge. The port was named after the river Gaṅgā. The accounts of the *Periplus* and Ptolemy indicate that during their time the whole of deltaic Bengal was organised into a powerful kingdom with its capital at Gaṅge, a great market town on the banks of the Gaṅgā. The city of Gaṅge is placed by

Ptolemy considerably to the south-east of Tāmralipta.¹¹ But *Periplus* considered Tāmralipta and Gañge as the same.¹² However, according to Ptolemy Tāmralipta and Gañge were two separate ports in ancient Bengal. Surprisingly in the post-Ptolemy era, there is practically no reference to the Gañge Port in Hindu, Jaina and Buddhist literatures. But on the contrary there are ample references to the Tāmralipta port during this time. Nihar Ranjan Ray¹³ believes that Gañge was an important port of ancient Vaṅga, and it was alive for the first three hundred years of the Christian era. It was equally important like Tāmralipta. Recent discoveries carried on at Chandraketugarh in the 24 *parganās* of West Bengal have been compared with Gañge. But no positive conclusion can be drawn until concrete evidence comes to light.

It was Chandraketugarh, which rose to prominence in the initial stage due to its convenient geographical location. The river Vidyādhari flows about five or six miles away from the south of Chandraketugarh, and another river Padmā, probably less than one mile to its north. The traces of river bed are found near the site. The village of Degaṅgā, five-six miles to the west of Chandraketugarh, is found to have a chain of marshes intervened by dried up sands running between them indicate probably the traces of the extinct river.¹⁴ The name 'Degaṅgā' seems to be very significant. This gives us an initial connection with the river Ganges. 'Degaṅgā' may have derived its name from the local dialectical corruption of 'Devi-Gaṅgā' or 'Dvitiya Gaṅgā'. It seems that Chandraketugarh might have derived from the name of Chandraketu, a local ruler of medieval times.

It has been mentioned that the discovery of fragments of gray ware assigned to 7th century BC has brought Chandraketugarh to light. The evidences show that Chandraketugarh was a flourishing town from the 4th century B.C., to the post-Gupta period.¹⁵ Chandraketugarh was not only famous for trade and commerce, but also for cultural linkages with Buddhism. Ample evidences available testify that Chandraketugarh as market-town or port in Lower Bengal from pre-Maurya period

to the end of the Gupta period. The discovery of wine vases of Roman origin and the terracotta figures displaying Hellenistic influence testify to the relation between Greco-Roman world and Chandraketugarh. Undoubtedly, the navigability of the river Vidyādhari gave this site with an extraordinary opportunity to flourish as a city-port in lower Bengal at least up to the Gupta period. However, its ancient nomenclature is not recorded in early indigenous literatures. Some have identified Chandraketugarh as Gaṅge of *Periplus* and Vaṅga of *Milinda-pañha*.¹⁶

The Mahāsthān Inscription palaeographically assigned to the Maurya period reveals another centre of trade named Puṇḍranagara. Cunningham located Puṇḍranagara at Mahāsthāna in the Bogra district.¹⁷ In the Gupta period, Puṇḍranagara was designed as the provincial headquarter of the *bhukti* of Puṇḍravardhana. The province of Puṇḍravardhana survived as late as the last days of Sena rule. It is difficult to determine when the city declined or was abandoned. But, it may be assumed that by the 13th century A.D., the name Puṇḍranagara had been replaced by that of Mahāsthān. The centre played a role as entrepot of trade among the different parts of the Indian subcontinent. Traders always used to merchandise their trade item through this route. Thus the role played by Puṇḍranagara as entrepot also gave her into prominence as trade centre.

The Gunāighar grant of Vainyagupta inscribed in 188 Gupta Era, records gift of land to a Buddhist monastery. The grant also indicates the ports of ships at Cuḍāmaṇi, Nagaraśrī and Praḍāmāra. The channel between the two ports was the eastern boundary line of the Vihāra. To the south, the channel open to ships connected to the large marshy land at Gaṇeśvara, was the boundary line and to the north the channel leading to the port Praḍāmāra.¹⁸

In the 10th century AD Śrīdhara in his *Nyāya-kandalī* mentions Bhūrisriṣṭhi in Dakṣhiṇa Rāḍha as a centre of learning as well as a centre of *śreṣṭhīs* or merchants and bankers.¹⁹ The location is again mentioned in 11th century's work *Prabodhachandradaya* of Kṛṣṇamiśra and *Satyapirer Kathā* of Bhārata Chandra Ray in

the 18th century A.D. It means that the port, which appeared in 11th century A.D., continued even in the 18th century A.D. It testifies the brisk commercial transaction between Bengal and her neighbouring centres. The site has been identified with the present village of Bhursat on the right bank of the Damodar in the Hoogli district.²⁰

Samataṭa was also well connected with Kāmrūn (Kāmarūpa) by means of the Brahmaputra. Moreover, Meghna and her two tributaries, Surma and Barak could create more internal communication opportunities with Sylhet region. It is also evident that the river Kṣīrodā remained navigable at least from the 7th to the 10th century A.D. As Devaparvata no longer remained the political centre of the Chandras since the early part of the 10th century, the importance of this riverine port seems to have lessened.

The historical site named Tilda, located very close to Tamluk, has proved to be an important archaeological site. An excavation at Tilda in 1955 has brought to light its antiquity from the pre-Gupta to the post-Gupta period.²¹ It may have been included within the territorial unit of the Tāmraliptaka kingdom. Terracotta and potteries discovered from Tilda closely resemble those discovered from Tamluk.

It seems that Raghunāthbāri, another site, a few miles away from Tamluk, was connected with the city-port of Tāmralipta through a riverine route. It was located on the bank of river Gouri, which was known to have met with Rupnarayan near Tamluk. A series of discoveries found from Raghunāthbāri reveals its cultural and commercial contacts with the western world through the city-port of Tāmralipta.

Bāhiri, situated down the sea coast in the district of Medinipur, have yielded terracotta objects and figurines representing toy carts, ram carts and pottery, which bear testimony to its antiquity. The terracotta and potteries are assigned to Kuṣhāṇa, Gupta and Medieval periods.²² Bāhiri maintained a relation with the outside world, of course through the port of Tāmralipta.

Another site, Rādhāmoṇighāt, located in the same district, is famous for yielding proofs of cotton-yarn and weaving industries. Evidences confirms the export of cotton to foreign countries from this area. Tāmralipta, no doubt, had played an important role in exporting the merchandise to foreign countries.

Traces of anchorage of ships and boats are found in Bandar located in the confluence of the Silavati and Dwarkeswar. The Rupnarayan River is still navigable from Tamaluk to Bandar. The boats and long iron chains have been discovered from here. There is reason to believe that Bandar was one of the market town supplying and receiving merchandise to and from the port of Tāmralipta. No archaeological remains have been found so far. However, its fame as a port in the Portuguese period may have its beginning in the early period, when Tāmralipta was a famous port in early Bengal.²³

Harinārāyaṇpur, located four miles of south of Diamond Harbour, seems to have been an important settlement in the lower Bengal from the Maurya to the Gupta period. The medium of exchange that probably existed in the Maurya era and later as discovered in this site, indicates that Harinārāyaṇpur was a busy town witnessing business transactions since early times. It flourished as a mart and maintained maritime trade as evident from the available sources. The terracottas unearthing from Harinārāyaṇpur assigning to the Gupta period bear close link with other sites in north India such as Ahichhatra, Bhita, Kumrahar, Patna etc.²⁴ It is reasonably presumed that this was an important centre of commerce in littoral Bengal at least up to the Gupta period. Sometimes after the Gupta period, the market town seems to have lost importance, because no archaeological evidence of the post-Gupta era has yet to been found.

The ancient place of Hariharpur and the adjacent village Māhinagar were located nine miles away from the southern part of Calcutta and about a mile away near a blue river, which was perhaps an ancient course of the Ganges or one of its tributaries in the past. Archaeological discoveries found so far testify to the

inhabitation at this site from the earliest times to the post-Maurya period. It can be assumed from the discoveries that there was interlink between lower Bengal and western and north-western India since ancient times. Some antiquities refer to the relations with the Greek-Roman world. It may be mentioned in this connection that the remains of rouletted dishes, coloured bowls, a fragmented footed goblet of Graeco-Roman origin and numerous grey wares have been unearthed. It is difficult to determine the exact chronology of this market-town. It seems that this site had lost its importance after the post-Maurya period. The reasons behind its decline are not yet known to us. Terracottas and potteries discovered from this site bear close resemblance not only with those from other sites of lower Bengal, but also with those from sites locate in the other parts of India such as Sind and Punjab. We know that that these sites (Sind, Punjab) had a close relation directly with Graeco-Roman world in course of trade and commerce in the early centuries of the Christian era testifying to the importance of Hariharpur as a trading centre. There is little scope for doubt that this market-town played effective role for which the city-port of Tāmralipta flourished. There is no doubt that market-towns such as Hariharpur and Harinārāyaṇpur took special role in the riverine economy of Bengal.

Deulpota, another site of importance in the lower Ganges valley was located in the eastern bank of the Bhāgīrathī. Archaeological discoveries indicate that it was an important trade centre from the very early times to the Gupta era. These findings assigned to the Gupta testify to provide a rich tradition of Deulpota in the realm of maritime trade and commerce.²⁵ It is probably advisable that Deulpota was closely linked with Tāmralipta. Perhaps Deulpota was a prominent city up to the Gupta period, if not later.

Archaeological excavations at Berāchāmpa and the area around it comprising the sites of Devālaya, Haḍipur, Shānpukur and Jhikrā have brought to light the existence of a city port that might easily challenge the position of Tāmralipta.

Another port that is often mentioned by the Arab writers is Samandar in the country of Dharmapāla (pronounced as Dhaum, probably referring to the kingdom of famous Pāla king Dharmapāla). A perusal of the country of Dharmapāla vis-à-vis the kingdoms of Balhara and Juzr strongly suggests that the Arabic authors meant by the name Dharmapāla the Pāla kingdom in Bengal. The name of the port Samandar appears to have been named after *samudra* or sea, thereby implying that it was located probably on or near the coastal regions in Bengal. Al Idrisi (1162A.D)²⁶ informs us that an island visited by various types of merchants lay close to Samandar. It should logically be identified with a port in or near modern Chittagong. Both Ibn Khurdadbeh and Al Idrisi speak very highly of Samandar as a port. Moreover, Al Idrisi states that Samandar was situated on a *khawr* that reaches it from the city of Qashmir.²⁷ Ibn Battuta during his visit to Bengal in 1334 arrived at a major port in the Bengal coast, named Sudkawān. It was very close to the great sea, and Ibn Battuta undertook a northerly journey from Sudkawān by a boat along the Blue river identified with the Meghna. It would strongly suggest that Sudkawān was located near Chittagong.²⁸ Thus Samandar and Sudkawān may have been the same port in and around Chittagong in the Samatāṭa-Harikela regions of early Bengal. Samandar or Sudkawān of course stole the limelight as the premier port in the Bengal coast. But Samandar could not avoid isolation; it seems to have been connected with other ports in Bengal littorals. These ports had fewer reputations than Samandar, were mostly riverine in character and played an important role in internal river communication in coastal Bengal. These river ports provided vital connectivity to the adjacent areas of delta with the main ports of the coast.

The emergence of Samandar as a centre of the sea level activities is generally related to the political history of Bengal and the tragic death of the port of Tāmralipta in particular. Due to the fall of Tāmralipta, the traders could move away to a more suitable place. But the demand for commodities from Kāmarūpa (Assam), which could be exported to Bengal faster, must have prompted both Kāmarūpa and

international traders to look for recourse. And this recourse was provided by Samandar. H.B. Sarkar has pointed out that in the 8th century A.D. there seems to have been a revolutionary change of trade route from the Ganges Valley to the far south making India and Sri Lanka directly half way bases on the east-west trade route through Andaman and Nicobar to the Malay Peninsula. However, Sarkar thinks that the history of Tāmralipta was lost much before the turbulent years of *mātsyanyāya* from the mid-7th to the middle of the 8th century A.D. Once the sailors and the mariners sometimes found ways to travel across the Bay of Bengal in the second half of the 7th century A.D.²⁹ Samandar provided such opportunities under stable political condition. After analysing all the available data Shahnaj Husne Jahan informs us that Samandar came into prominence sometime in the 7th century A.D., flourished in the 8th century A.D., began to decline in the 9th century A.D., and was extinct by the 13th century A.D.³⁰ In all likelihood, the position of Samandar as an international seaport shifted to Vikramapura in the 10th century and in the 13th century to Sonārgaon and Chittagong.³¹

The maritime port of Samandar could be connected to the internal parts of Samataṭa through Gumti, Dakatia, Titas and Choto Feni. The Gazetteer of Tripura states that it is also true that in the early 20th century, the main mode of transit for Comilla and Tripura hill districts was the Gumti river. Timber, bamboo, canes and thatching grass would be sailed down the river while salt, rice, cloth and iron-ware would be sent upstream.³² Devaparvata, capital of Samataṭa became a port located on the legendary river Kṣīrodā. Devaparvata was indeed well connected with Samandar. In addition, Kṣīrodā and Gumti could provide riverine connectivity to the Samandar with Tripura. From the north, Samandar was originally connected with the inland ports of Kāmarūpa. The products of Kāmarūpa were exported from this port. The information may be gleaned from the narratives of Al Idrisi and Ibn Battutā. Arab writers tell us about the communication of Samandar with Uranbin (Odisha), Kāñchipuram and Sri Lanka. It was supported by Ibn Battuta, who once planned to

come to Bengal from the Maldives. He hired a fleet and reached Sudkāwan through Malabar along the coast of Coromondal. This indicates the maritime link between a port of south-eastern Bengal and Maldives through western sector of the Indian Ocean. It must be said that south Indian ports were also well connected with Bengal ports. While coming back, he travelled from Sudkāwan to Java in a Chinese *junk*. So in addition to trade with the Maldives, the coast of Bengal was connected to south-east Asia. The extensive communication between the east and west coast of India through the Bengal coast has been supported by the existence of a wide hinterland. The hinterland included Arakan, Kāmarūpa and wide areas of deltaic Bengal. The possible reason for this was that Chittagong was called the premier port by the Portuguese.

The frequent occurrences of the *bahr harkal* in Arabic accounts, such as *Akhbar al-Sin-Wal'Hind*, generally attributed to Sulaiman, urges us to re-examine this dominant historiographical standpoint. Later on, the term appears with remarkable frequency in all subsequent Arabic and Persian accounts. The name *harkand* or *harkal* is derived from Harikela, one of the well known subdivisions of early Bengal, denoting the present-day areas of Chittagong, Noākhāli and Comillā in Bangladesh.³³ *Bahr* refers to the sea. So *bahr harkal* must have been the sea of Harikela denoting the Bay of Bengal. A perusal of the Arabic account also gives an impression that their authors had a better awareness of the Bay of Bengal than the Classical writers, whose descriptions were often vague.

Significantly enough, an inscription of Chandra ruler Śrīchandra found near Dhaka, dated AD 971, explicitly refers to Vaṅgasāgara.³⁴ The term should denote the sea (*sāgara*) of Vaṅga which indicates the deltaic Bengal (i.e. the Dhākā-Vikramapur-Faridpur regions). Thus it may not be difficult to understand that *bahr harkal* and Vaṅgasāgara corresponded to the same maritime space, i.e., the Bay of Bengal.³⁵

Ptolemy refers to Sābhār located near the Ganges as a country that produced diamonds. It seems to have functioned as an inland riverine port. It emerged firstly

as *navyāvakāśika* (administrative centre) and then as *sambhāṇḍāriyaka* (a trade centre with warehousing facilities) in ancient and early medieval Vaṅga. Trade at this centre (Sābhār) and its riverine linkages with the Bengal coast could have flourished after its establishment as an administrative centre under the early rulers of Vaṅga and also the Chandras. Around the 6th century AD, it emerged as riverine port while in the 3rd quarter of the 10th century A.D. it was a *sambhāṇḍāriyaka*. The site of Sābhār, therefore, twice came into limelight in four centuries as a riverine port having linkages with the littoral areas of Vaṅga, first as *navyāvakāśikā* in the 6th century A.D. and then as *sambhāṇḍāriyaka* in the 10th century AD. But the history of Sābhār between the 6th and 10th centuries A.D. remains unknown. Precisely during this time, epigraphic evidences suggest that Devaparvata, situated in Samataṭa-Harikela region emerged as another riverine port in prominence.

In this context, Devaparvata may be mentioned. It was located in or about Maināmati in Comilla, Bangladesh. Devaparvata has figured as a port on the river Kṣīroda as early as in the second half of the 7th century A.D. It once again figures prominently as a riverine port in a Copper-plate of Bhavadeva Abhinavamṛgaṅka (c.765-780), a Deva ruler of Samataṭa.³⁶ The last known reference to Devaparvata is traced in the Paśchimbhāg Copper plate (AD 930) of Śrīchandra (c. AD 925-975), the greatest ruler of the Chandra dynasty of eastern Bengal.³⁷ That Lāmbīvana (i.e. present-day Lālmāi, close to Maināmati) was searched by hundreds of sailors for medicinal herbs (mentioned as Lāmbīvanamatra *nāvikaśātairanviṣya*) further speaks of Devaparvata as a riverine port. After the decline of Tāmralipta, this port played an important role in maintaining trading activities.

Another port has been mentioned as Gaṅgāsāgara. Alberuni enlightens us to the regular riverine movements from Varanasi to Gaṅgāsāgara, where the Ganges flows into the sea via Pāṭaliputra, Mungiri (Monghyr) and Janpa (i.e. Champā near Bhagalpur).³⁸ In 1192 AD, the local ruler of the South 24-Parganas district, named Śrīmaddommanapāla, is known to have relinquished his life close to what was known

as Gaṅgāsāgara.³⁹ A close perusal of the description of Dommanapāla's *svīya-muktikṣetra* shows that near Gangāsāgara a place stood called Dvārahātaka. It appears to have been an exchange centre situated near the *dvāra* or gate of what may have been the confluence of the Gaṅgā with the Bay of Bengal. Vaṅga was an important centre of overseas trade mentioned in the *Milinda-pañha* and the *Mahānidessa*. The authors of the *Periplus* and Ptolemy mention the coastal and direct travel, from the port of Gaṅge and Tāmralipta to foreign lands, especially the south-east Asian countries.

The veteran writer Ibn Battuta in the 13th century A.D. refers to Sonārkawan (Sonargong). He records the Chinese *junks* using to say for the countries of the Far East.⁴⁰ Incidentally, Ibn Battuta does not mention Tāmralipta, possibly it was extinct by the 13th century AD. Probably the port had refrained in importance due to the thriving of port of Sonargong. The identification of this port is still obscure. Nevertheless, the description given by Ibn Battuta, testifies to its location somewhere near the confluence of the Meghna and the Brahmaputra. The part of Bengal obviously carried out trade through this port.

Vikramapura, the capital city also flourished as trade centre, has been referred to in the inscriptions of the Chandras, the Varmans and the Senas. Formerly, it was the capital of Chandras and the Varmans. Ultimately Vijayasena conquered it after defeating the Varmans and made their capital.

Saptagrāma, situated on the bank of the Sarasvatī River, is known as a rich port of lower Bengal from the description of Ibn Battuta. Its fame has also been mentioned in the *Maṅgalakāvya*s of the medieval period. Vrindabon Das, who flourished two centuries later than Ibn Battuta, has given a description of Saptagrāma teemings with the houses of rich merchants.⁴¹ Vipradāsa in his *Manasāmaṅgala* has described Saptagrāma as 'a beautiful city of gods.' Caesar Frederick found Sātgaon a reasonably fairy city.⁴² Some scholars have identified 'Ganges Regia' which is referred to by Ptolemy with Saptagrāma on the strength of

the argument that Ptolemy placed it between Kambyson and Mega in his map. Some scholars also have taken Saptagrāma resemblance with Tillagrammon of Ptolemy.⁴³ The remains found from this site mark the possibility of growing Saptagrāma as a centre of trade and commerce. But it is difficult to mark, when it rose in to prominence. Though it is known to have become the capital in 1206 during Muslim rule in lower Bengal, Saptagrāma did not achieve its position of prominence as a centre of trade and commerce much earlier than 13th century A.D. It might not have been as famous as Tāmralipta, but it probably served to a great extent the commercial life of the country. When the market town became a metropolis in the 13th century A.D., political fortune was added to its commercial prosperity. The rise of Saptagrāma as the most affluent city-port clearly indicates that the fall of Tāmralipta has already been set in. But the early career of Saptagrāma as one of the trade centres in lower Bengal can be estimated in the light of the antiquities discovered so far.

Wari and Bateswar, two adjacent villages in Narsingdi district in present Bangladesh were also famous for its relation with nearby regions. It flourished as a trade centre found from the discoveries. Its location was on the bank of an ancient course of the Brahmaputra. This can mean only that it was an estuarine port. During the early historic period, Wari-Bateswar functioned as a maritime port and was already integrated in the Bay of Bengal littoral trade network. The port was possibly made up for public utilities, warehouses and production centres for manufacturing semi-precious stone beads, pottery including NBPW and rouletted ware. But after a certain time the site declined. The possible reason for the decline of Wari-Bateswar as a port is the change of the course of Brahmaputra.⁴⁴ Because of the fall, some other sites in the neighbourhood must have taken up the role of Wari-Bateswar.

Sena epigraphs provide the names of some places such as Betaḍ, Vetadda and Chaturaka lying on the western side of the river Hoogli. The information

gathered clearly speaks highly of its importance in the country's trade and commerce, mainly riverine.

Thus, the archaeological discoveries in the Lower Ganges Valley bear witness to the existence of urban settlements, which testify to the growth and prosperity in the post-Maurya and Gupta periods, though their emergence could be discovered from the pre-Maurya period. The available evidences indicate a cultural link and commercial association between the lower Ganges Valley and the north and north-western region of India. On the other hand, on the basis of excavations and exploration urban settlement also developed in this area, presumably it occurred due to trade and commerce, which already flourished in this region. In this study, we can assume that the most important factor behind the process of urbanization was the trade and commerce, although there were other lesser factors too.

5.1.2. Trade routes

All industrial products, above all, should finally reach to the ultimate consumer. The manufactured goods to spread over the various distributing centres require a network of trade channels and of transport facilities. It is through this network of trade routes that ultimately there came about the growth and development of important markets, trade centres and ports for the export and import of the commodities. Naturally, therefore, the various land and sea routes, adopted by a country, are intimately connected with its growth and economic development. Hence, since the very dawn of civilization, trade routes have always played a leading role in harmonizing the unevenly distributed economic resources over the whole earth. From time immemorial, trade routes have been used to facilitate the flow of products from places to places. It became a necessity in order to bring a balance and reduce waste from surplus production, where they are plentiful in a scarcely populated area. It is difficult to identify the evolution of trade

routes in this country. Their evolution has taken place over the ages, and a large number of groups will have to participate in providing their distinct character.

India's fabulous wealth, from the earliest times, attracted not only the merchants of the remote land, but also the invaders. Foreign pilgrims often visited the country to satisfy their religious zeal. Thus they followed a route which later developed into a trade route. It was owing to the political stability during the concerned period, a large part of the Bengal ran a large scale of trade. The region was well connected with other parts of India with land and riverine routes.⁴⁵ Though ancient India had some big cities, yet most people lived in the village and most of the country was covered with dense forest through which the road passed. Often these roads were infested with wild animals and robbers. The steps were taken by the state to protect the traders against predators and wild animals. Food was difficult to procure during travel and travellers had to carry their own provision. These roads were very dangerous to travel alone, and therefore people travelled together in well-organized caravans, which provided reasonable comfort to their members. Although with organized among caravans, merchants had to face many dangers. Moreover, the slow speed of the conveyances (*śakaṭa*) pulled by animals carrying the merchandise and the uncongenial nature of the roads were also threatening to the traders and the travellers.⁴⁶ The state adopted measures to protect and facilitate the trade interest as the state derived a considerable income from it.

In the *Arthaśāstra* the king is said to keep clear trade routes, which was harassed by the king's favourites, work-officers, robbers and frontier chiefs.⁴⁷ To transit the items smoothly from one place to another, guards were stationed on the side of the street all along the way. For any loss or damage of the goods in the time of transit, the officer-in-charge of the locality through which goods were passed, was responsible for the inconvenience.⁴⁸ Manu also advised the king to look after the proper maintenance of the roads and bridges, through which the trade could be

easily transported.⁴⁹ According to Manu, the avoidance of the public highway was a punishable offense. The *Dharmaśāstras* say that the state had the power to impose restrictions on trade and industry. During the period of the Mauryan rule, there was specific care devoted to the construction, repair and protection of roads. A special group of officials was appointed to supervise the construction and maintenance of roads. In this connection, Megasthenes has made mention of an official named *āgoraṇomoi*, whose main duties were concerned with the communication system of the country.⁵⁰ In a single word it may be said that the government always took particular care to see that the traffic on roads went unhampered. It was not only to maintain the stability of their administration, but specially to safeguard the prosperity of their trade.

Geography played an important role in the evolution of the routes. The joy and pain of travel in ancient times depended on the geographical location of the trade routes. The main characteristic of the natural geography of Bengal was its river system since the remote past. It was bounded by the Himalayas to the north and east and on the west we find hilly land, while the southern end abounding in the creeks and the estuaries is washed by the waves of the Bay of Bengal. This geographical location presupposes that from the earliest times Bengal was accessible to each other both by land and river courses. Bengal itself was connected with the rest of India, and the extra Indian territories by land and overseas routes.⁵¹ It is necessary to mention here that the Bengal delta was the only shore of the sea, which was situated in the Ganges Valley. Bengal's own distinct geographical location and the geologically-defined land and sea routes made the communication very easy and smooth. Apart from it, routes of foreign and domestic trade incited the rulers to invade other regions.⁵² The route of foreign and domestic trade no doubt invited the foreign invaders to run into Bengal. A few inscriptions and literature preserve details of military campaigns run by some rulers of ancient India. There are also references of foreign travellers or pilgrims, who visited India or collected information from

other sources. This information, if properly analyzed, gives us an idea about the land and water ways followed by the merchants and military generals from and into Bengal.

Therefore, it is presumed that geographically defined routes contributed to the trading transactions of Bengal. It also patterned the cultural identity and exchange with the external world. This is reflected in different aspects of contemporary life. The communication relied on road and route which is still in its infancy. But it is specifically known that about fourteen hundred BC from the beginning of the Chālcholithic culture of Bengal, there was a great deal of mobility of people. Our archaeological evidences regarding this type of movement are still very rare. But the evidence gathered from such objects like pottery and tool kits used by the pre-historic peasant groups of this part of the country, seems to suggest a sort of connection with other parts of India.⁵³ Moreover, about routes undoubtedly the most concrete witnesses are provided by pilgrims and travellers. Our inscriptions often refer to roads and public highways interconnecting neighbouring villages. These constituted the smaller adjuncts of a larger and more complicated system of roadways that covered northern India by the time of the Buddha and the peninsula by the Mauryan times.

5.1.2.1. Overland Routes

Traders and travellers widely used trade routes to communicate with Bengal or to communicate with other regions through Bengal. These routes were also being used to connect with the lands of the residents of Bengal for trade and consequent cultural and religious purposes and missions. There was an active trade relation between Bengal and the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia, south-east Asia, China and other regions. Like the eastern Mediterranean, many other remote areas were also associated with the coast of Bengal, although perhaps only indirectly. The

Greco-Roman literature, especially *the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, was aware of a land called Gañge by an anonymous author (C. 60 AD), through which a river of the same name was flowing. The river Gañge, i.e. the Gaṅgā, also had its confluence with the sea in the country called Gañge.⁵⁴ Thus, the region defined was the same as coastal / deltaic Bengal. The *Periplus* mentions a port named Gañge located in the same region. The country (Gañge) and the port were well-known for its very fine cotton textile and aromatic oil known as the Gangetic nard.⁵⁵ It should be noted here that Niharranjan Roy added the suffix 'Bandar' to 'Gaṅgā' (river) and renamed the port as 'Gangābandar'.⁵⁶ It is to be noted here that overland and sea routes and internal and external communication systems were deeply regulated by the geography of Bengal as already mentioned. Deep forest, highlands, river and mountain ranges complicated land movement for Bengal to keep contacts with lands beyond. But the sea in the south had given her an opportunity to open communication with the marine world from the ancient times. Keeping in view this perspective, an effort has been taken to trace the main routes, over land and sea, which were utilized in the past for carrying out trade. For the sake of convenience the ancient trade routes may be grouped under two headings, land routes and water routes.

About overland routes, undoubtedly the most concrete witnesses are provided by pilgrims and travellers. Our inscription often refers to roads and public highways interconnecting neighbouring villages. These constituted the smaller adjuncts of a larger more complicated system of roadways that covered northern India by the time of the Buddha and the peninsula by the Mauryan times. Kauṭilya categorically has given preference to land route. According to him the land routes constituted the trade route. This was the corpus of income (*āyaśarīram*).⁵⁷ The importance of a village or countryside road is reflected in *Arthaśāstra*, where it is said that for encroaching on a road to the village and on one to the countryside, the fines were 200 and 2000 *paṇas* respectively.⁵⁸ Kauṭilya speaks of six royal highways

in the imperial area, three running west to east, and three south to north.⁵⁹ References to other royal highways and roads running through the *droṇamukha*, *sthānīya*, the country-side, pasture-lands, harbour-town-village, etc., have occurred in the text.⁶⁰ The king was expected to lay out a *sthānīya* with a market town served by a land-route and a water-route.⁶¹ Most of these roads were probably built by the state probably by collecting revenues. The king is advised in the *Arthaśāstra* to establish and maintain trade routes, water-routes and land-routes. Like Kauṭilya, Arrian⁶² has also referred to 'royal roads', by which designation one has probably to understand broad important roads fit for travel by the royalty, troops and common people alike. Megasthenes told us that the rural officials were instructed to make the roads along with the pillars at every ten *stadia* to show the distance.⁶³

It is to be noted that the relation between Bengal and the outer world was first established through land routes.⁶⁴ The existence of the land route from Pāṭaliputra to Puṇḍravardhana, Puṇḍravardhana to Kāmarūpa, Kāmarūpa to Samataṭa, Samataṭa to Tāmralipta, Tāmralipta to Karṇasuvarṇa, Karṇasuvarṇa to Kaliṅga, Tāmralipta to Bodhgayā, Tāmralipta to Ayodhyā, Tāmralipta to Mithilā and Tāmralipta to Andhra have been mentioned in the inscriptions (Map-5).⁶⁵ These routes, which had changed their directions from time to time, served the purpose of intra-regional mobility and communication within Bengal. It also extended deep into some other regions of the Indian subcontinent and mainland south-east Asian countries.

From the *Jātakas*, we learn of regular journeys from cities, such as Benares by the people, Pāṭaliputra and Champā, sailing down the Ganges up to its mouth, or Dantapura. We often hear about rental and express boats.⁶⁶ There was a land route in the mouth of the Ganges from Pāṭaliputra.⁶⁷ With the growth of Magadhan imperialism during the reign of Haryaṅka, Śīsunāga and Nanda dynasties, the path of 16 *mahājanapadas* gradually merged with the Rajagriha and Pāṭaliputra road system. The main road on the ways of Ganges-Yamuna constituted a kind of Grand

Trunk Road, Tāmralipta on one side and Taxila on the other. There is no history who built this royal road. This road is sometimes referred to as Uttarapatha by Panini and the ‘northern route’ by the Greeks. It is seen that this royal road was passed from the capital city of Pāṭaliputra, called Pālimbothra by the Greek writers, to Kāśi (Varanasi), then to Kosāmbi and Prayāga (Allahabad), Calinapaxa (Kanauj), to Hastinapura. It then crossed Lomanens (Yamuna), Hesidros (Sutlej), the Hyphasis (Beas), the Hydaspes (Jhelum), passed Taxila, crossed the Indus and cut across the Kabul valley. The terminus of this route was formed by Peucelaotis (Puskalavati, now Charsada). From Puskalāvati, it probably branched off to Kashmir in the north and to Bactria in the north-west.⁶⁸ It can be noticed here that the route was later built by Sher Shah, which extended from Sonārgaon in east Bengal to the Indus. The story of Jīvaka travelling from Rājagriha to Taxila in order to receive medical education is a further witness to the existence of link roads spanning the whole of northern India.⁶⁹

This major route of India, split on two parallel lines on either banks of the river Ganges, met at ferry-points and then ran its separate course again. The road matched up to *sahajāti* by the parallel navigational facilities of the Ganges plains, the farthest navigational point of the Ganges, while at the other end laid Tāmralipta.⁷⁰ In the early stage of Buddhism, the roads of Bengal were not as well developed as in places in central and western India. It might be that during the journey of Buddha and his disciples to central India, the importance of the roads in this region has reached its zenith. The Jain *Āchāraṅga Sutra*⁷¹ dating from c.300 B.C. describes the land of Rāḍhas (Rāḍha) as a path-less country. At the time of the visit of Jaina Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvira, it is not necessary that the all the parts of the Bengal were equally devoid of communication. In the Ceylonese chronicle *Mahāvamsā*, the Princess of Bengal had been asked to join a caravan party, which was going on from Vaṅga to Magadha through Lala (Rāḍha, i.e., West Bengal). The caravan party had taken the least difficult land-routes from east Bengal (Vaṅga) to Magadha through Rāḍha (West Bengal). Generally trade-routes followed traditional ways. Therefore,

the caravan route in the sector between West Bengal and south Bihar could be the same as was used by the missionaries of king Aśoka.

In eastern India, Kajaṅgala (modern Kākjol) was a strategic location, where direct and exciting routes from different directions of eastern, western and southern vicinity of the land found a point of convergence. Around this place, the river Ganges was divided into two parts- one under the name of Padmā went to Bangladesh, while the other named Ganges-Bhāgīrathī, met the sea at Tāmralipta.

In Kajaṅgala, the Tāmralipta-Puṇḍravardhana road met the regional roads of India, and the early literature refers to many of them. The *Jātaka* stories often refer to traders in the upper Ganges valley going to Tāmralipta for trading purposes. The story of Viḍuṣaka is recorded in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, who went from Ujjayinī to the east and on the way visited Puṇḍravardhana before reaching Tāmralipta, which was not far from the eastern sea. On the way back, the same Puṇḍravardhana had to be revisited.⁷²

We learn from the itinerary of Buddha, his disciples, and others about the routes lying between Rājagṛiha and Kapilavāstu, Rājagṛiha and Śrāvastī, Rājagṛiha-Mithilā, Rājagṛiha-Champā and Rājagṛiha-Bodhgayā-Orissa.⁷³ Traffic of people, goods and animals from north Bengal flowed through Puṇḍravardhana, Mithilā (north Bihar), Champā (Bhagalpur) and Pāṭaliputra. Rāma's itinerary in the *Rāmāyaṇa* indicates that there was a road between Mithilā and Vaiśālī and the port of Tāmralipta was connected both of places by the land route. It seems that people going to Vaiśālī or any other place north of the Ganges from south Bihar had to cross this river at the confluence with the Sona, where the city of Pāṭaliputra was located. The *Mahābhārata*⁷⁴ also describes some of the routes of eastern India in connection with Bhīma's fight with Jarāsandha. It is said that Bhīma conquered the lands in eastern India. After killing the king of Modagiri, he defeated the Puṇḍras. Submitting them, he attacked the ruler of Bengal and defeated Tāmralipta, Karvata, Suhma and all other barbaric people living in the coastal areas. Having defeated these people he

went towards Lauhitya (Assam).⁷⁵ Therefore, we may presume that by the period of the composition of the epic a route connected northern Bengal with central and south-western Bengal.

Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa* indicates that the region, which is now included in Bengal could go through the Ganges.⁷⁶ We are told that Raghu proceeded towards the Bhāgīrathī, leading the Ganges with a large force. This idea is likely that Raghu followed the riverine route along the Ganges into the plains of Bengal. The *Raghuvamśa* further states that subduing the Suhmas, Raghu wrecked Vaṅgas and then proceeded towards the south-west over the Kapisa on his way to Kaliṅga through Utkala.⁷⁷

We have learned about a route connecting south-west Bengal with central Bengal. The evidence furnished by the *Raghuvamśa* perhaps indicates that this road did not stop there, but extended south-westward across the river Kapisa. The river is identified with the Kasai flowing through the district of Bankura and Medinipur. Probably the same route was followed by Yaśovarman of Kanauj. Probably he carried on depredations in Magadha and Vaṅga and travelled through the Odra and Kaliṅga in the south-west.

In the Mauryan period there must have been a land route, connecting Pāṭaliputra with Tāmralipta across the Vindhyačhala forest. It may be recalled that in addition to prince Vijaya⁷⁸ and his followers and relatives, the Maurya emperor Asoka also visited the Tāmralipta port on his way to Ceylon to deliver a branch of the Bodhi tree. It is mentioned in the *Sāmantpāsādika* that Aśoka started from Pāṭaliputra, crossed the Ganges by boat, and then by traversing the Vindhyačhala forest in the vicinity of Pāṭaliputra reached Tāmralipti, from where he was taken to Ceylon by a ship.⁷⁹ The same contacts must have been retained in the post-Mauryan period.

Inland trade was, in a sense, intimately associated with foreign trade by sea-routes. The itineraries of Fa-hien, Hiuen-Tsang and I-tsing furnish before us the

routes, both land and water, that favoured the growth of inland trade. From Pāṭaliputra Fa-hien went through Nālanda and Rājagṛiha and arrived at Gayā. Then he retraced his steps towards Pāṭaliputra and arrived at Benares. After returning to Pāṭaliputra he now proceeded towards home and following the course of the Ganges downstream came to Champā, whence proceeding further he arrived at the country of Tan-mo-lih-ti (Tāmralipti).⁸⁰

The itineraries of Huen-Tsang⁸¹ provide us with the information that he went from Champā to Kajaṅgala, from Kajaṅgala to Puṇḍravardhana, from Puṇḍravardhana to Kāmarūpa, from Kāmarūpa to Samataṭa, from Samataṭa to Tāmralipta, from Tāmralipta to Karṇasuvarṇa, and from Karṇasuvarṇa to Odra, Kangoda and Kaliṅga. In fact, he visited important *janapadas* of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. In his travel details, a network of routes from Patna in the north, Orissa in the south and Bengal and Kāmarūpa in the east have been shown.

I-tsing is known to have travelled from Tāmralipta to Bodhgayā in India during the 7th century AD. First he arrived at Tāmralipta by the sea to go to the holy places of Buddhism in Bihar, almost on the heels of Hiuen-Tsang in 673 A.D. It has been said that ten days away from the Mahābodhi Vihāra, there was a great mountain and bogs. The pass was dangerous and difficult to overcome. I-tsing with his companions first arrived at Nālandā, then ascended the Gṛidhrakūṭa (Vulture's Peak) mountain and lastly came to the Mahābodhi Vihāra. The order of the place-names shows that the party followed the traditional route of Kajaṅgala, because the alignment of the road is located from north to south.⁸² I-tsing⁸³ says that the distance between Tāmralipta and Nālandā was more than 60 *yojanās* i.e. a little over 402 English miles.⁸⁴ The distance between Pāṭaliputra and Tāmralipta by the river route would be around 680 English miles approximately.⁸⁵ So I-tsing followed the short route of Kajaṅgala. On his way, he met some brigands, who attacked him, when his merchant companions left him, much to his shock. On the way back, he met with the same fate indicating the dangers in the land route connecting Tāmralipta with Bodhgayā. It

seems that I-tsing traversed the Chutinagpur plateau, when he refers to a dangerous defile.⁸⁶ The Dudhpani Rock Inscription⁸⁷ refers to a route from Tāmralipta to Oudh.

The *Kathāsaritasāgara* refers to merchants travelling from Puṇḍravardhana to Pāṭaliputra.⁸⁸ Several centuries after I-tsing, Bakhtiyar Khalji invaded Bihar and Bengal. The attacker crossed the confluence of the rivers Ganges and the Sona at Maner.⁸⁹ Then he went to Bihar Sharif and after conquering large parts of Bihar, he encroached the forest area of Jharkhand, through which perhaps another ancient Tāmralipta-Pāṭaliputra road ran.

The Chittagong plate of Dāmodaradeva refers to about a public road (*rāja patha*) passing by the side of village Kāmanāpīndiyāka.⁹⁰ K.N.Dikshit⁹¹ excavated the ruins of two ancient embankment roads near Dhanora. Sandhyākara Nandī⁹² in *Rāmācharita* writes that the regional route connected Varendra with the Himalayan countries. The route after leaving Varendrī moved through Nepal, Sikkim and the Chumbi valley to go to Tibet and China. According to the text, this road was very important, because the road was mainly used for horse trading. It is known that saddle horses used to come to Sena capital, Lakhnauti, regularly. Along with these new roads, the earlier trade route connecting the lower Ganges Valley, with the northern and north-eastern regions ending in southern China, Afghanistan etc., is said to have continued till the 9th century AD.

R.D. Banerjee⁹³ mentions the use of three alternate routes by the invader, through which one could reach from Nadia to Bihar. The first was from Bihar to Bhagalpur or Moṅghyr, then across the Ganges to Gauḍa. Here he could cross the Ganges again along the eastern bank of the Bhāgīrathī to reach Nadia. Again, he reached his destination through the hilly districts of Chotanagpur and Birbhum. Otherwise, he could travel through the pass at Sahibganj along the southern bank of the Ganges and the western bank of the Bhāgīrathī and crossed the river at Nadia.

The recent discovery of Kharoṣṭhī documents in ancient Vaṅga or Bengal has thrown light on the extensive hinterland of the coastal Vaṅga. Kharoṣṭhī was

originally used by Yueh-chi or Kuṣhāṇa people in the north-west of the Indian subcontinent. Its discovery from Chunār in the heartland in the Gaṅgā valley and Vaṅga clearly suggest overland linkages of north western India with the middle Gaṅgā valley and finally with Bengal littorals.⁹⁴ The region was well-known for the availability of excellent horses from central and west Asia. Some of the imported horses had been shipped out from Chandraketugarh to overseas destinations.⁹⁵

There was a route connecting Bengal with western India. Three main routes extending from Bengal to the west were the gateways of communication with north India and central Asia. There was a land route from Puṇḍravardhana to Varanasi and Ayodhyā, through Mithilā or northern Bihar, through Champā (near Bhagalpur), and Pāṭaliputra, near Bodhagayā. This route extended up to the ports of Sind, Saurāṣṭra and Gujrat. A trade route between Gauḍa and Gujarat is mentioned in *Puruṣa Parīkṣā* by Vidyāpati of 15th century.⁹⁶ The second land route running from Tāmralipta to Pāṭaliputra through Karṇasuvarṇa to Rājmahal and Champā.⁹⁷ The third route ran directly north-west from Tāmralipta by way of Bodhagayā to Ayodhyā. It would be logical to assume that the way between Tāmralipta and Ayodhyā in Uttar Pradesh ran through the forest of Jharkhand.

Bengal's connection with southern India was also maintained through other link roads. Hiuen-Tsang in his itinerary states that from Karṇasuvarṇa in Bengal he marched to Uda (Odra/ Udra: Orissa), Kong-ut'o (Kongoda), Kalinga (south), Kosala, Andhra, Dhanakataka (near Amravati), Chola, Draviḍa and Malkuta, and thence to Ceylon. Earlier sources mention a route from Pratiṣṭhāna to Vaiśālī and then to further south. While returning, he visited places namely Vaiśālī, Pāvā, Kuśinārā, Kapilāvastu, Setavya, Śrāvastī, Sāketa, Kauśāmbī Vanasavhaya, Vidiśā, Gonarda, Ujjayinī, Mahasmati and Pratiṣṭhāna. The route thus led to the western coast of India connecting the famous harbour of Surparaka. The town of Vaiśālī was connected with Tāmralipta both by land and sea. Thus the Tāmralipta-Vaiśālī-Pratiṣṭhāna route leading to the south was well recognised. There was a well-organized route to the

south by the eastern coast of peninsular India. The route was located beside the plains between the Eastern Ghats and the sea. The passenger had to cross on his way many rivers like the Suvarṇarekhā, Vaitaraṇī, Brāhmaṇī, Mahānadī, Godāvāri, Kṛiṣhṇā and other smaller ones lying in between. Pāla and Sena rulers of Bengal, Vikramaditya of the western Chālukya dynasty,⁹⁸ Rāja Rajendra Chola⁹⁹ and the east Gaṅga kings followed the Drāviḍa-Andhra-Kaliṅga path on their military campaign to the south or to the north, as the need might be. An inscription of 1200 AD mentions the incident of attack of Kalachūrī king Bijjala (1156-1167 A.D.) against the king of Vaṅgāla.¹⁰⁰ Another inscription found from Mysore dated 1190 A.D. also reports about an invasion against Vaṅgāla king.¹⁰¹ These are clear signs of inland routes across Bengal and south India. The rouletted ware discovered from Śīsupālgarh and Manikpatna in Orissa, Arikamedu, Karur and Sengamedu, Uraiyur in Tamilnadu and Mantai, Kantarodai and Anuradhapura clearly indicate the relation of Gaṅgābandar, Tāmralipti and Wari-Bateshwar of Bengal through south India through coastal route.

Internal trade may most likely be conveyed among the most conveniently located cities on the east coast.¹⁰² From the book of *Periplus* we may derive these coastal links. The Colandia of the Ganges frequented the port called Sopatma. The author of *the Periplus* states that Benares *muslins*, malabathrum and Chinese silk were exported from the Ganges to Masalia and Dosarne.¹⁰³

There was a brisk trade between Bengal and the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia, south-east Asia and China, and consequent religious and cultural contacts and exchanges by land routes. H.B. Sarkar gives a graphic account of the existence of connecting roads in the east Indian region with the Middle East, central Asia, Tibet, China and Burma.¹⁰⁴ There were many frequent routes from north India to central Asia through Kabul and Balkh. The caravans from Byzantium could carry their cargoes by the land route through the country of the Seres to Pālimbothra and thence to the mouth of the Ganges at terminus. In *the Periplus* we get a reference about the export of some Chinese products in India, which were brought from

Thinae by land to Barygaza via Bactria or by the Ganges to Lymyrike or Damircia.¹⁰⁵ Schoff thinks of a northern route from China through the eastern Himalaya mountain range across the Tibet plateau. But the harshness of the climate and severe forests, as the book mentioned, these routes were not used commercially through western Tibet.

It is true that in later times China and Bengal were conveniently connected by the Tibet-Nepal land route, when the Benepa-Kuti pass was opened in 639 AD. This route has been given a generic term, 'Tufan-Nepal Route'. The route carried the Chinese raw silk, silk yarn and silk cloth to Dāmirica by the way of the Ganges. In the middle of the seventh century A.D, King Srong-btsan Gam-po of Tibet, who introduced Buddhism in his country made it easier for the travellers to make journey between Eastern India and Tibet. The rise of the power of the Pālas in Bengal and Bihar was followed by the establishment of close relations between India and Tibet. Traders, missionaries and artists from India visited this remote Himalayan state. But in the 8th and 9th centuries A.D., the 'Tufan-Nepal Route' was not followed by China's pilgrims due to the political ties between China and Tibet. In the 10th century A.D., the route was re-opened and traffic movement was noticed.

The journey to Nepal and Tibet from India in the 11th century A.D. was very much normal. There is more detailed information about the alignments and conditions of routes from the itineraries of some Indian scholars in the land of snow, such as Śantarakṣhita, Padmasambhava and Kamalaśīla. After starting from the Vikramśīla monastery Atīśa and his party apparently entered Nepal through its central part and moved for the west towards Mānasasarovara.¹⁰⁶ Atīśa's travels in Nepal and Tibet were epoch-making for exploring the way to Himalayan countries.

The *Tābāqat-i-Nasiri*¹⁰⁷ mentions an account of a journey from eastern India to Tibet. Bakhtiyar Khalji, a military general after defeating Lakṣmaṇasena marched for Tibet from either Lakhnauti or Deokot (identified with Deokot or Damdamah, south of Dinajpur). At the end of his career, he conducted the operation in Tibet.

There is no clear explanation about the underlying purpose of its project. It can be said, however, that his ambition or desire was to gain more profits by securing mastery over the trade route from Tibet to Kāmarūpa, and thence to Bengal. The other intension might have been to discover a short-cut route to Turkistan.¹⁰⁸

It is said that there were 35 mountains (*dārhh*) between Kāmarūpa and Tibet, through which the horses¹⁰⁹ were brought from the northern mountain to Lakhnauti. Marco Polo in the 13th century AD mentioned that north-east area appeared as a horse supply area to eastern India. He talked about a western way of connecting Aniu (identified with Yunnan) with Caugigu, which was associated with Bengal by a land route.¹¹⁰ Therefore, horses from Yunnan could reach 'Vaṅga' via Pāgān, which were connected to south-eastern Bangladesh and Lusāi and the Tripura hills. According to Polo, the journey of land from Carajan to 'Bengala' could be completed within 45 to 55 days.¹¹¹

There was a route from China to Bengal since ancient times through the northern borders of Burma. Indian settlements in Yunnan and north Burma must have accelerated the movement of men and goods between India and China. The Puṇḍravardhana-Yunnan route through Kāmarūpa and upper Burma met somewhere in the border areas of Kāmarūpa and Puṇḍravardhana. Now the route merged with the Tāmralipta-Taxila route in the region of Puṇḍravardhana and Kajaṅgala respectively. Thus the people travelling from Bengal to China or the Far-East had the choice of at least three routes before them. Chinese accounts of Chang-Kien (126 B.C.), Shang-she, the Chinese ambassador to Afghanistan (420-479 A.D.) and Kia-ten (785-805 A.D.) etc. referred to the existence of many such land routes connecting Bengal with east and south-east Asia. The first route was extended from Tonkin to Kāmarūpa. The route crossed the river Karotoyā and passed through north Bengal and then ran across the Ganges to south Bihar. This route which existed even before the Christian era was known as Trang-Ko *route* in the Chinese texts. This important route connected eastern India with south China and the mainland of south-east Asia.

The second route connected Bengal with Pagan in central Burma through Surma, Kachar valley, Lusāi hills, Manipur and North Burma. The third route connected Chittagong with Lower Burma through Arakans. The important halting stations on this route were Pagan and Prome. The combined Chinese and Portuguese accounts of early medieval period strongly suggest the existence of this land route during that time. It is through this land route that silver from Yunnan/Burma border areas used to flow into Bengal.

There were also some minor routes to Burma, which cut across the Hakawang Valley and passed through Myitkyna to Tipland, near Margherita, and the Chaukan Pass.¹¹² The Donkin, Natu and Jilap also gained importance for providing passages to the eastern countries beyond India.

Apart from the Trang-ko road, most of the routes passing through Central Burma to Bengal were still in progress, but it was manageable at the beginning of the seventh century AD. A detailed description of the route from Tonkin to eastern India was linked with the writings of Kia Tan, which can be dated between 785 and 805 AD. It seems that before the 6th century A.D., if not earlier, people wishing to go to the Far East from the port of Tāmralipta could curtail the tedious sea route to China by getting down at Tavoy in the gulf of the Marbata.

In the 9th and 10th centuries A.D., another land route had been widely used, which extended from Tonkin to Kāmarūpa and from Kāmarūpa to Magadha via Puṇḍravardhana, crossing the Ganges.¹¹³ About three hundred Chinese missionaries followed this route in India in the 10th century A.D. In this connection, it can be mentioned here that Ibn Battuta,¹¹⁴ who came to India from Africa in the 14th century A.D., mentioned a route from Kāmarūpa to China. He describes that from Kāmarūpa he went to China and proceeded to Khansa City.

A route existed from the area of Darjeeling-Jalpaiguri through Sikkim and Bhutan and the Himalayan mountain passes to Tibet and then to China. Some reference to this road is also found in the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* of the first

century when apparently silk and silken products came from China into Vaṅga by way of either this mountain road or the eastern road from Kāmarūpa.¹¹⁵ Perhaps the people of the mountain will have to come down to the plains of Assam using this road.

Another notable land route that existed in south-east Bengal was to Pagan in Myanmar. This route came from Samataṭa/Paṭṭikera to Pagan in central Myanmar. This route ran through the valleys of Surma and Kāchhar (Sylhet and Silchar of present days), and through Manipur and north Myanmar to the destination.¹¹⁶ This link was considered to be helpful in maintaining close matrimonial bonds and political connections between Paṭṭikera in the Lālmāi-Maināmati hills (Comilla district, Bangladesh) and the rulers of Pagan in Myanmar.¹¹⁷ Chittagong was connected with lower Myanmar (ancient Śrīkṣetra or Prome of southern Myanmar) through a land route of Arakan. Through these two routes, trade and cultural relations between Pagan-Śrīkṣetra and Chittagong-Comilla was initially maintained. Tradition on both parties bears enough testimony of this contact.¹¹⁸ H.B. Sarkar gives a graphic account of the existence of connecting roads in the eastern Indian region with the middle-east, Tibet, China and Burma.¹¹⁹

It may be concluded that the land route that connected Bengal with China and Tibet extended to south-east Asia. This route created a long chain of roads which mainly connected Bengal with south-east Asia.¹²⁰ A road started from South China through north Myanmar, Manipur and Kāmarūpa and extended to Afghanistan.¹²¹ In ancient times, China's silk and bamboo were believed to have been exported to Afghanistan across Bengal.

5.1.2.2. Overseas routes:

Water is the ultimate sustainer of human life. Therefore, since time immemorial, water bodies have acted as a very cradle of human civilisation. The water system provides not only fish for food, but also channels for movement. R.S.

Agarwal comments, "The cry of the water was the very cry of adventures, and in their earlier stages man was tempted to hazard their lives at the rivers and seas only to make their own destiny. It is the river which gave them inspiration for starting water transport".¹²² But the unfortunate fact is that the marine history of India is not well documented. Though there are some maritime accounts highlight this narrative, they are largely written and documented by western historians. And that probably is the reason why substantive references to seafaring skills of ancient Indian appear to be missing from India's maritime narrative. Admiral Arun Prakash describes this phenomenon as follows: "One of the reasons for our maritime blindness is that as a nation we have been indifferent to the reading as well as writing of history; both our own and that of others. Whatever little history we do study, has been recorded by western historians who have made full use of the literary license to give it the slant that they wished to".¹²³

It is to be noted that in our respective period, primitive navigational technique and monsoon wind direction accelerated overseas trade. For Indian merchants travelling to south-eastern Asia, the north-eastern monsoon blowing from China in the month of November to February and the south-eastern monsoon flowing from the Indian Ocean in May to October hit south-east Asia. Likewise, it is also believed that the traders from south India also followed the inter-monsoon period of August-September and November to April for sailing back. S.H. Jahan clearly points out that "Bengal lay mid-point between the western arm of the route to South India and the eastern arm to South east Asia. It was single route two-ways, necessitating the use of the inter-monsoon period August-September (for voyages to Bengal) and the north east monsoon and the following inter-monsoon period from November to April for voyages from Bengal".¹²⁴

The trade is largely managed by land and seaports,¹²⁵ which are often referred to as maritime trade. Archaeological and literary evidences strongly assert that in the first century of the Christian era, trade relations between Bengal and

south-east Asia and China were established in maritime and land-related trade. Various indigenous and non-indigenous sources such as the *Periplus of the Erythrian Sea*, *Arthaśāstra*, Ptolemy's *An Outline Of Geography*, *Milinda-pañha* provide valuable information regarding trade of Bengal in our relevant period. Finally, the recent discoveries of Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī script from the ancient historical places like Chandraketugarh, Tamruk etc. prove the use of Kharoṣṭhi and Kharoṣṭhi-Brāhmī script (mentioned as *vimiśrita-lipi* or mixed script in the *Lalitavistāra*) during the early Christian era.¹²⁶ It is believed that from north-western India a group of Kharoṣṭhi-speaking people settled in lower Bengal for trading purpose. Since they were very skilled trader, they used water and land routes. They were initially believed to start the journey of the river along the Ganges to the coast of Bengal. Then they started their journey through overseas to south-east Asia.

The tributaries and distribution of the Ganges provided a network of water channels for maritime activities, which the Kuṣhāṇa people used as their commercial routes for trade and commerce abroad. Tāmrāipta of the lower Bengal was the only port of land-locked north India to provide trade facilities abroad with remote areas of the Indian Ocean. There are enough data suggesting the territory's maritime trade relations with the peninsular and western India, Srilanka and part of south-east Asia.¹²⁷ According to B.N. Mukherjee,¹²⁸ "several indigenous and Chinese texts indicate that in the early centuries of Christian era (4th or 5th century A.D) Vaṅga had direct or indirect trade relations through sea routes with some countries of south Asia, China, Srilanka, Egypt and even certain ports of the peninsular and western India."

The discovery of a large number of trade items found from various parts of south-east Asia, such as Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Burma, Malaysia, and Java etc. has revealed India's maritime trade along the eastern coast. They firmly establish that from the 1st century to the 5th century AD people from south-east Asia and India were involved in ocean trade. Most of the outgoing and incoming products

were transported through the ports of Bengal. Trade was carried on between different market towns situated on the banks of the river. Tāmralipta, Gaṅgābandar/Chandraketugarh (24 Parganas), Wari-Bateshwar, Sābhār (*vaṅgasāgara-sambhāṇḍāriyaka/navyāvākāśikā*) and Chaṭṭagrama (Samandar/Sudkawan) were examples of trade centres. These centres formed the most important ways of communication. The contemporary epigraphs provide interesting information about this. One such epigraph speaks about *tārāpati* or *tārika* who was likely to look after the dues caused by transportation of large amount of goods through ferries.¹²⁹

It is extremely difficult to recommend their exact positions from antiquity, as Bengal's hydrography has changed considerably from the ancient to the modern era. So, the identification and fixing issues of ports of ancient Bengal are subject to debate among the scholars from time to time. But on the basis of literary evidences and archaeological evidences, it has been suggested that there were two major ports in ancient Bengal, which controlled foreign trade, namely Tāmralipta and Gaṅge.¹³⁰ Samandar came in the fray after the ports mentioned above disappeared.

Bengal enjoyed the deltaic features and geographically strategic location from the first centuries of the Christian era. It gave her right to maintain connection through the water route. Gaṅgā-Brahmaputra and its tributaries were the main source of routes since ancient times. Bengal got a chance to connect by the sea with the Indian coastal regions as well as the extra-Indian territories comprising maritime south-east Asia. Archaeological, literary and numismatic sources supply abundant information regarding the waterways connecting different regions along different rivers. Therefore, naturally, in a country like India, which is watered by various river systems, without the provision of water transport the pattern of communication cannot be completed. Since the earliest times, people have stressed water transport facilities and skills. Therefore, between the two ways of communication, the water path was quite preferable.¹³¹

It has not been realized correctly that in the very beginning, people had learnt to travel by water. But it can be guessed that when people saw the floating tree on the river in the channels, eventually they got the initiative and inducement to organize their own river transport on the same basis. It was in the period of the Mauryas that a considerable advancement was made in the naval field. Kauṭilya speaks of a special officer called *navādhyakṣa* (superintendent of ships).¹³² The water routes were both internal and external. The internal water routes were made of natural channels supplied by *nadīpatha* (river route), and the artificial water ways supplied by the dugout channels called *kulyā* (artificial waterway or canal-route). The external route was shaped mainly through *vāripatha* (sea-route). The *vāripatha* was further sub-divided into the *kulapatha* (coastal route) and the *saṃyānapatha* (overseas route).

Bengal maintained trade relations with Pāṭaliputra, Champā and Benares. The archaeological objects are of different periods, indicating the existence of maritime trade between Bengal and Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Srilanka from the third century AD onwards. The *Mahāvamśa* mentions the trade between Vaṅgas and a nearby country of Kaliṅgas through the waterways. These were allies and maintained matrimonial relationship.¹³³ Along with the *Mahāvamśa*, the other Pāli chronicles from Srilanka, the *Rājāvalliya* and the *Dipavamśa* were believed to be the earliest reference to the maritime activities in Bengal.

From indigenous texts, foreign accounts and some epigraphic records, we can collect information related to sea-routes connecting Bengal directly or indirectly with other countries outside of India. A journey from the mouth of the Ganges to Suvarṇabhūmī is known from Buddhist literature.¹³⁴ The *Jātaka* stories often refer to direct sailing from Pāṭaliputra or Champā down the Ganges to Suvarṇadvīpa. Traders and merchants of Pataliputra or Champā had to sail from Tāmralipta for a voyage to Suvarṇadvīpa.¹³⁵ *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* points to close commercial relations between Gaṅge and 'Golden Chersonese' or 'Chryse', which stood for Malay

peninsula and Suvarṇabhūmī.¹³⁶ Ptolemy has referred to a mart named Allosygne near Paloura, identified with Dānton in Midnapur district. It was the point of departure of vessels bound for 'Khryse' or Malay.¹³⁷

Tāmralipta was the oldest port of Bengal. Both Fa-Hsien and Hiuen-Tsang visited it respectively in the 5th and 7th century AD. This port was well connected with remote terrains of China and south-east Asia and was an outstanding port of the Ganges Delta. There were four maritime routes from Tāmralipta. The first route advanced to the west till the eastern Mediterranean regions,¹³⁸ over the south and west coast of India, across Sri Lanka. The second route indicates directly across the Bay of Bengal. It penetrated the narrow Isthmus of Kra reaching the mainland or islands of south-east Asia and to the distant region of China. This route was not perhaps frequented due to risk involved. The third route ran through the coast of Ārākan to Burma and beyond up to Suvarṇabhūmī. The fourth followed via Ceylon to South-east Asia. The *Jātaka* tales, the Ceylonese Pāli chronicles of *Mahavaṃśa* and *Dīpavaṃsa*, the Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī Inscriptions and accounts of Fa-hsien, Hiuen-Tsang and I-tsing clearly gives an account about routes from Tāmralipta to south-east Asia.

The Chinese travellers such as Fa-hien, Hiuen-Tsang and I-tsing referred to Tāmralipta as a place situated on the broad Bay. They respectively visited the port of Tāmralipta in the 5th and 7th centuries AD. While returning from India to China, Fa-hien used the port of Tāmralipta passing the coasts of Kaliṅga and Coromondal to south India and thence to Ceylon. After spending two years in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), he came in another merchant's ship after copying a few manuscripts. After a long and stormy passage he reached Java.¹³⁹ Another Chinese pilgrim named Hiuen-Tsang in the first half of the 7th century AD was advised by a south Indian priest, about perilous voyages through above mentioned passage falling from the cyclones in the Bay of Bengal during the time of north-eastern monsoon wind. He describes that Tāmralipta was well connected by land and water.

By the second half of the 7th century, another Chinese pilgrim I-tsing visited India. It is known from some records on maritime contacts between Bengal, south-east Asia and China. He mentions the names of 37 of his contemporaries, who took this route several times from India. Their first landing station was in Canton in 671 AD by a Persian merchant's ship. Then they travelled to western Java or Palembang in Sumatra. After arriving in another ship, the traders then went to the north coast of Sumatra and passed by the Nicobar Islands. Finally, they arrived in Ceylon. In this way, they changed their ships to Tamruk. After arriving they used to go their journey by land to various parts of India.¹⁴⁰ Tāmralipta, met by land and water route was a place suitable for embarkation for those bound for China.

The inscription of Buddhagupta supplies a maritime trade network of Bengal-Malay peninsula which was in operation in 400 AD.¹⁴¹ The great sailor (*mahānāvika*) Budhagupta of Raktamṛittikā¹⁴² Vihāra proceeded from Karṇasuvarṇa to Tāmralipta to start his journey by the sea.¹⁴³ Mahānavika Buddhagupta might have reached Tāmralipta from Murshidabad by land or riverine route and then he sailed to the Malay Peninsula.

The *Mahāniddeśa* and the *Annals of the Early Han dynasty* indicate a sea route from Huang-che to Ho-Pu. *Huang-che* is identified with Gaṅge of the *Periplus* and *Ho-Pu* might be located in China. This extended trade included a mission to Huang-che with generous gifts and a return mission from Huang-che to offer as tribute a live rhinoceros.¹⁴⁴ The *Periplus* further refers to ship sailing from the ports of the Deccan to the Ganges, and even to the Chryse.¹⁴⁵

A route existed in the ancient period connecting the upper Gangetic valley with Suvarṇadvīpa evidently by way of the ports of the Lower Ganges or littoral Bengal. The *Avadānaśataka*¹⁴⁶ mentions a voyage of a caravan leader of Śrāvastī to Ratnadvīpa. The *Mahākarmavibhaṅga*¹⁴⁷ refers to the experience of traders about the voyage from Tāmralipta to Suvarṇabhūmī. The *Milinda-pañha* mentions that the owner of the ship was rich and he embarked with his frights in the high seas and

sailed to Vaṅga, Takkola, Cina, Soriva, Surattha, Alasanda, Kolapattana and Suvarṇabhūmī.¹⁴⁸

More evidence about travelling the overseas route connecting Bengal with China is provided by Kang-Tai. The Fu-nan-chuan of Kang Tai says that “coming out of the port of Chu-li one enters the great bay travelling straight to the north-west for more than a year one reaches the mouth of river of India, which is called the river Ganges. At the mouth of the river there is a kingdom called Tan-mei, which belongs to Tien-chu sent letters to the Yellow Gate and was appointed by king of Tan-mei.”¹⁴⁹ From the above statement it seems that Tan-mei is definitely identified with Tāmralipta, and it is apparent that in the middle of the third century AD a regular maritime route existed between China and Tāmralipta.

There is a tradition in the *Chau-Ja-Kua* that envoys were sent to the T’ang court from Tien-chu or eastern India in 627-692 AD.¹⁵⁰ The Buddhist scholars like Dharmapāla in the 7th century AD and Dipaṅkara in the 11th century A.D. also proceeded from Bengal to Suvarṇadvīpa.¹⁵¹ V.D. Gogte has claimed on the basis of the X-ray diffraction (XRD) analysis of rowletted wares that made from the clay found only in the lower Gaṅgā plains with the epicentre of the Chandraketurgh-Tāmralipta region.¹⁵² The item is said to have been sent to various places inside the country and also the distant places like Buni culture sites like north Java, Sembiran (on the north coast of Bali), and at sites in Vietnam in south-east Asia.¹⁵³ So it is to be said again that regular communication between Bengal littorals and southern part of the Indian subcontinent and maritime Southeast Asia existed.

It is found from the *Periplus* that ports on the western coast, such as Barygaza, Sopara, Calliena, Tyndis, Damirica, Muziris, Nelcynda, etc. were part of direct partnerships with the Roman world. We know that there was no direct contact of the Roman world with territory concerned. This indirect relation flourished in the first three or four centuries of the Christian era. The articles of malabathrum, Gangetic spikenard, Gangetic *muslins*, silk from Thinae and pearls had

a great reputation in the Roman markets. Pepper and sandalwood, which are thought to be famous in Chryse were carried out by the traders of Bengal to send the items to the western world through Gañge, Nelcynda or Barygaza as the circumstances demanded. The discovery of gold coins of the Roman emperor Constantine and Gordian at Bamandhati is associated with Indo-Roman trade. Goods were exported from ancient Vaṅga country to the Roman Empire through these ports of the western coast. Though the ports of western coast had the lion's share in trade and commerce with the Romans, the role of the port of Gañge and Paloura situated on the coast of Bay of Bengal, were not negligible in Indo-Roman trade. The Bengal goods were transferred to coastal voyages in the port on the Tamil coast, where these were taken to Muziris (Cannanore or Caranganore) in the Cera country. The port was the premier port in Malabar, figuring prominently in the *Periplus* mentioned by Ranabir Chakravarti.¹⁵⁴ Then the voyages went to Alexandria in Egypt after through different stages of seas, land and fluvial journeys.¹⁵⁵ So the ports of Malabar served as an emporium for Roman traders as identified in the *Periplus*. Again the ports were connected by overland routes on the eastern coast of Southern India. Then the route along the coast of Dosarend (Orissa), Gañge (Bengal) and south-east Asia went further.

The Bengal coast during the 6th and the 7th centuries AD was particularly famous for the port of Tāmralipta as already mentioned. But it decayed around the eighth century AD. The adverse economic effects of the decline of Tāmralipta were, however, offset by the rise of a port of considerable importance to the east of the Meghna. This port, generally called Samandar by Arab writers,¹⁵⁶ and Sudkāwan by Ibn Batutta,¹⁵⁷ was conveniently located near present day Chittagong in Bangladesh. The Arab chronicles furnish evidences of maritime voyages from Samandar to Uranshin (Orissa), Kanja (Kañcipuram) and Serendib or Silandib (Sri Lanka).¹⁵⁸

In the latter half of the 7th century, Sheng-chi followed the southern route from China to India and arrived at Samataṭa,¹⁵⁹ where Devaparvata was the capital.

It appeared as a lively inland riverine port between the second half of the seventh and the first quarter of the tenth century A.D. The Copper-plate of Śrīdharanarāta (665-675 AD)¹⁶⁰ describes that this port was encircled by the river Kṣīrodā (modern Khīra or Khīrnāi), and both banks were adorned with boats. The Paśchimbhāg copper plate of Śrīchandra¹⁶¹ dated 930 AD once again described the Devaparvata as encircled by the river Kṣīrodā, on which plied many boats driven by many sailors (*nāvikas*). There is no doubt that Devaparvata had a distinct river communication and close contact with the indigenous river network and maritime linkage with the Bay of Bengal till the first quarter of the 10th century A.D.

Another Chinese priest named I-tsing sailed north-east from Simhapura (Ceylon) sometime before 685 A.D and reached Harikela.¹⁶² The region was the eastern limit of Eastern India and a part of Jambudvīpa. We also know of Tan-kwong, a priest, who followed the sea-route from Canton to eastern India and came to Al-li-ki-lo (Harikela).¹⁶³ All of these, in their journey to Samataṭa or Harikela, in all probability must have arrived at the port of Samandar, and then went to the respective sites through riverine routes. So, it can be concluded that trade relation of Samandar with China existed via Malayan peninsula. Samandar was a port in the coastal route from the Coromondal coast up to the Gangetic valley, and it was plied by ships of smaller tonnage.

The maritime port of Samandar could have been linked with the interiors of Samataṭa through the Gumti, Dakatia, Titas and Choto Feni. This is true even in the early 20th century. Kṣīrodā could have also provided Samandar's riverine connection with Tripura. Both of its banks were adorned with a cluster of boats.¹⁶⁴ To the north, Samandar was indeed connected with inland ports of Kāmarūpa. Ibn Khurdadhbih's record clearly points to Samataṭa's connection with Kāmarūpa by means of the Brahmaputra.¹⁶⁵ Moreover, the Meghna and its two tributaries, Surma and Barak, could have facilitated further inland connection with the Sylhet region. The land

routes could connect the entire north-eastern regions of India as well as Bhutan, and even the trans-Himalayan region of Tibet.¹⁶⁶

The maritime routes of 'Basra-Samandar' (Chaṭṭagrāma) and 'Samandar-Kacha-Śrīvijaya' were the most significant trade networks between the 9th to 12th centuries.¹⁶⁷ The most detailed account of the trading routes was given by Ibn Khurdadhbīh. He described the coastal voyage from Basra in Iraq, along the western coast of India through the Palk Strait and round the shores of the Bay of Bengal.¹⁶⁸ Numismatic evidences in the form of Abbasid coins also ensure the existence of trade routes to connect Basra (at the head of the Persian Gulf) and Siraf (an important port in Abbasid Empire situated on the eastern coast of the Persian Gulf) with Samandar in Bengal. By the middle of the mid-12th century this communication must have continued when Al-Idrisi wrote his *Kitab Nuzhatu-l Mushtak fi Ikhtiraqu-l Afaq* and described cities and port in South Asia.¹⁶⁹ Samandar, near Sandwip Island, must be marked with a port in or near Chittagong in present Bangladesh about the 9th century onwards. Both Ibn Khurdadhbīh and Al Idrisi speak very highly of Samandar as a port. Al Idrisi mentions three places along with Samandar, i.e. Kashmir, Kanauj and Kāmut (Kāmarūpa). He describes that in 15 to 20 days the aloe wood by the river was brought from Kāmarūpa to Samandar.¹⁷⁰

A sea-route of Bengal has been described in detail by Ibn Battuta, who arrived in Bengal in 1334 AD. Ibn Battuta started his journey from the Maldives and reached Sudkawan via Serendib and Malabar (Coromandel coast).¹⁷¹ In his return journey, he travelled from Sudkawan to Java in a Chinese junk. His journey by a Chinese junk is further pointer to the connection between the Bengal coast and Chinese harbours via the Malacca straits and south-east Asia. It is known that Atīśa Dipaṅkara went to the Suvarṇadvīpa during the years of 1011 to 1023 A.D. He took a journey to the Suvarṇadvīpa by a merchant vessel. This vessel, several months' after harsh travel, brought him to that island (Suvarṇadvīpa). On his way back, he moved from Suvarṇadvīpa to Tāmradvīpa (Srilanka), and finally to the coast of Bengal.¹⁷² So

in the early medieval times, the maritime routes and links existed between south-eastern Bengal (Samandar/Sudkāwan) and south India, Maldives, south-east Asia and China. These ports also played an important role in the island riverine transport in coastal Bengal.

Another site named Wari-Bateshwar¹⁷³ played a vital role in organizing trade in Indian Territory and abroad. In the early historic period, Wari-Bateshwar served as a maritime port and was already a part of the Bay of Bengal coastal trade network. The location of Wari-Bateshwar on an ancient course of Brahmaputra means that this was an estuarine port. In the light of literary evidences and archaeological findings, we can strongly build up our argument. It is known from *the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, which was written in the 1st century A.D., and hence is contemporaneous with the time when Wari-Bateshwar was a maritime port. The maritime trade route connecting Wari-Bateshwar and south-east Asia did exist. The discovery of knobbed vessels at Wari-Bateshwar, possibly made of high tin bronze, and similar bowls at Ban Don Ta Phet in west-central Thailand and Than Hoa province in Vietnam further substantiates maritime contact of Wari-Bateshwar with south-east Asia. Westward, the route could touch Chandraketurgarh and move further west to the eastern coast of south India and then possibly on to Ceylon. If Gañge mentioned in the *Periplus* was the same as Chandraketurgarh, then Wari-Bateshwar was possibly only a point, which was of subsidiary importance in comparison to the maritime port of Arikamedu in south India.

Another site appeared named *Vaṅgasāgara-sambhāṇḍāriyaka* in Yolamandala. This area, although not located in a literal tract, was a close association with the eastern sea through the internal riverine route. The word means a commercially connected centre in the Bay of Bengal. In the first half of the 6th century A.D., when Tāmralipta emerged in its height, Sābhar came to notice as an inland riverine port.

Recent archaeological discoveries in the coastal areas of Medinipur and South 24 Parganas districts have brought to light ancient historical sites such as Bāhiri, Tildā, Tikasi, Amritberia, Harinārāyaṅpur, Deulpota, Boral Ātghārā, Nātsāl etc. that were situated on the Ganges or its branches. Due to their geographical locations, they could be considered as port cities and the content from these sites is identical and comparable to the Tāmralipa and Gaṅge. The sites such as Bāhirī, Tiladā and Tikasi were connected with the river and consequently with seaborne trade of south western Bengal.¹⁷⁴ Dvārahātaka¹⁷⁵ in the Sundarban area stood on the eastern bank of the river Gaṅgā and emerged as a small riverine outlet. Ranabir Chakravarti¹⁷⁶ thinks that with the convenience of internal riverine channel, Dvārahātaka emerged as a local trade centre and also was linked to the opening to the sea. But it should be reminded that this riverine port cannot be compared with Tāmralipta and Gaṅge with respect to the volume of exported and imported materials. But their riverine contacts to the river and ultimate access to the sea lead us to conclude that they were smaller ports. They could have acted as supporting or feeder ports for a much larger harbour nearby, such as Tāmralipta and Gaṅge.

The broad network of rivers of Bengal brought high level of mobility in the communication facilities of the region. The rivers provided important links to the deltaic peninsula with major ports on the Bay of Bengal. Thus it correctly indicates that the areas of Vaṅga region continued to connect with the Bay of Bengal and the littoral areas of present Bangladesh through many rivers in the early medieval times.¹⁷⁷

Thus from the above discussion, it may be concluded that agriculture and trade seem to have played an important role in the economic development since remote past. Bengal's favourable geographical location, presence of a number of rivers carrying enormous volume of water accelerated its trade and commerce with the outer world. The location of the Bay of Bengal was favourable for the advancement of marine activities in Bengal. Rural economy mostly depends on

agricultural production. A large alluvial fertile area helped to increase the variety of agricultural products, such as cotton, spices, wheat, pulses etc. This led to surplus production. This excess surplus production was needed to be exported. Basically, the north-western immigrants settled here mainly as farmers and traders. During this time the most significant achievement of trade was expansion. Bengal seashore is actively associated with the countries of south and south-east Asia. This has resulted in cultural exchange and some basic changes were made in the socio-economic lives of the people of Bengal. Trade has greatly helped in the mobility of labour and led to the establishment of many markets, which later took the character of urban centres. Economic prosperity was reflected in every aspect of society and widened the path of potential change for urban growth. Large scale industries came, industrial and architectural activities increased, new ceramic types came together, change of life style, and food habits of common people were noticed. In general, there was an urban prosperity among some of the class people. New urban centres were formed and most of them are close to the main trade routes or rivers.

So, we can say that Bengal became the centre of the second urbanization. All the perfect features of urban life, trade, interest, public place, entertainment house, shop etc. are indicative of the improvement of the existing conditions of the people's material life. In this way, we can say that under Kushāṇas the process of urbanisation had increased due to political stability, opening of new commercial routes, enormous foreign and domestic trade. These developments were supported by the issue of a large number of coins and increased knowledge of art and craft. The growing urban settlement and the amount of this city came to influence the people's material life during the first century of the Christian era.

5.2. Transport

Trade and commerce has been facilitated by the transport by carrying goods from origin of production to that of the area where it needs for consumption. The

surplus production is transferred to those areas which are inadequate in those items. Movement of people from one place to another in purpose of trade, geographical discoveries, and religious zeal depend upon the transport facility. It brings positive change to human life and thus improves the economic condition. So the medium of trade and communication has always been the main backbone of trade and commerce.

It is the key to the unlocking of the country's resources. The growth of cities, towns, trade routes, marts, ports, domestic and foreign trade is influenced by transport. Among the major media of transport, we must refer to the vehicles and conveyances as well ships and vessels. It connected the different regions of the country not only with one another, but also with the outside world through land and sea routes. In view of the above, the ancient transport system fell under two divisions: land and water.

Animals have been used as an important means of communication through land for carrying goods and passengers since the remotest time of human civilization. Animals were used for transporting goods over short distances, and where the easy way of transport was not possible. Animals such as horses, elephants, bullocks, and donkeys proved to be of great use. But they were used mainly in the war to carry the materials of war. Patañjali refers to camels, bullocks, horses and elephants called the beasts of burden. Manu refers to the beast of burden, which included the horses, elephants, camels, and donkeys.¹⁷⁸ According to him, the beasts of burden were trained and marks were endowed on them as a token of such training.¹⁷⁹

Since the time of the Indus Valley Civilisation, cart was the means of transportation. These carts were mainly pulled by the oxen. The transportation by carts was very slow and tiring. Usually the carts were grouped under three division: 1) Laghuyanā (small vehicle which included chariots), 2) Golīṅgam (a cart of medium size drawn by bulls) and 3) Śakaṭa (big cart).¹⁸⁰ The carts were distinguished

by the distances, long and short, which they were designed to cover. Of these the Disayatta were used for distant traffic like the modern mail and express trains, while the Samvāhanīya were those vehicles which were used for local use only like the modern shuttle or local trains or buses.

The first to consider are chariots which are so often mentioned in Vedic Literature. In view of their importance, a separate officer called Rathādhyakṣa was appointed to supervise the manufacturing of the different types of chariots. There were several kinds of chariots used in the ancient period. Such chariots were classified as *aupvāha ratha* (carrying the agricultural products to the market), *pāriyānika* (passenger chariot), *mahāratha* (parcel cum passenger chariot), *viyadajānāim* (used as carrying heavy goods), *devaratha* (chariots of gods), *pusyaratha* (festal chariot), *vaiyika* (training chariot), *parapurabhiyanika* (chariot used for invading enemy's stronghold).¹⁸¹ The chariots were the most speedy land cart of the time carrying goods and other commodities. The operator of the cart was called as *praveta*, *sārathi*, *sūta* or *prajita*. The chariots were specifically pulled on a particular type of road, which was built mainly for this.¹⁸² The chariots were usually named after the names of animals pulling the chariots. It has been referred to by Patañjali that chariots drawn by horse (*aśvaratha*), by camels (*auṣṭraratha*), and by donkeys (*gardabharatha*).¹⁸³ According to Manu, the beast of burden carrying goods should be properly trained and endowed with lucky signs.¹⁸⁴

Golīgam was more or less exclusively a commercial vehicle, used in transporting articles of trade from one place to another in wagons drawn by bulls. The bull yoked to draw cart was generally called *anda-vah*.¹⁸⁵ All the oxen drafted for drawing carts were usually called by this name. The *Silapadikāram* has also given information about some other carts namely, *kollavandi* (a cart drawn by bullocks), and *kudarapaddi* (a cart with hooded top).¹⁸⁶

Kauṭilya has made a detailed reference to the various groups of these commercial carts and their cart-men.¹⁸⁷ As the volume of trade increased, a brisk

trade used to be carried through the medium of these carts.¹⁸⁸ For example we learn that, when the huge monolithic pillar of Aśoka was transported outside, a very big cart, at least 50 feet long, was used for the purpose. All these throw ample light on the great advancement achieved by the ancient Indian transport system. The cart-drivers were called by the name of Cakaracara.¹⁸⁹ The state adopted measures to safeguard the interests of the carts and of the beasts of burden, drafted to pull the carts. Legal enactments were made to preserve the safety of the horses, elephants and to ensure the safety of carts. Hence severe punishment was inflicted upon those who either stole or caused any injury to the horses, elephants and the carts. Such corporal punishment was awarded for the stealing of carts and chariots as cutting of one foot.¹⁹⁰

In all types of transportation, waterways dominated the scene in Bengal. These waterways may be classified as two categories: First, throughout the year, the navigable huge deep rivers which were capable of carrying the products of different sizes were used for carrying goods. The Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers may be placed in this class. These rivers, along with their tributaries and interconnections, worked as corridors or natural routes for long distance water traffic. Due to the lack of statistical information, it was quite probable that in the ancient and medieval period, they carried a large part of the internal trade of the province. Especially in the rainy season, this power has increased greatly, because the remotest areas of the country are only accessible by waterways. Indeed, that all other ways of transportation at that time were difficult. These rivers received very high importance in the settlements of past trade and collection centres.

In the second category, small and shallow rivers and streams can be included, which were navigable in some cases throughout the year and on the other hand only in the rainy season and for small country boats. From times immemorial, people have stressed the advantage and efficiency of water transport. Hence as between a water route and land route, the water route was preferable. There is ample reason

to suppose why transport by water routes was so much preferred in those times. First, transportation by water was so cheap that it could easily carry a vast volume of commerce. Then again, a river or the sea was a natural highway found ready-made by men and open to all without any hindrance. Also the sustenance of water transport required no expense on construction and maintenance or on supervision. Obviously, therefore, men remained carefree in carrying traffic by water routes. Lastly, transport by water requires the expenditure of less energy, physical or mechanical. Moreover, gliding by water is so smooth that water transport required less labour potential.

Dilating upon the naval development of those days, Kauṭilya has grouped the boats and ship of those days into four groups according to their degree of utility. They were namely *potavaṇika* (commercial), *svanāva* (private), *rājanau* (royal), and *himsrikā* (war ships). The *potavaṇika* was further subdivided into *samyati* and *pravāhaṇa*. Of these, the *samyati* was an ocean-going commercial vessel, used specially for transporting merchandise. But in times of emergency, they could also be diverted for the conveyance of military supply.¹⁹¹ It is testified that two Burmese merchant brothers, named Tapoosa and Palekot, crossed the Bay of Bengal in a huge ship that carried full five hundred cart loads of their own goods, besides other miscellaneous goods.¹⁹² Another big ship has been mentioned in the *Samkha Jātaka*, the size of which was eight hundred cubits in length, six hundred cubits in width and twenty fathoms in depth. It had three big masts.¹⁹³ The second category was that of *pravāhaṇa* which was meant mostly for passenger traffic. Sometimes they too had a great carrying capacity.

Svanava is meant smaller ferry boats which were plied by private persons mostly for passenger traffic. They enjoyed a greater freedom of movement and were allowed to cross the rivers at all times and places. Obviously, we have to leave out of consideration the study of *rājanau* (Royal boat) and *himsrikā* (war ship) because they are irrelevant to our purpose of studying trade.

Although, of course, it is well known to all that significant development at a pan-Indian level was made under the Mauryas. In this light, Megasthenes records a naval department with the chief naval Superintendent. Kauṭilya also speaks of a special officer called *nāvadyakṣa* (Superintendent of Ships).¹⁹⁴ This officer was assigned a large number of duties to be performed.

In the case of Bengal, land and waterways played the same role as they did in the context of entire India. A certain amount of trade was carried on along the land routes. Unfortunately, our knowledge about the internal trade routes is very meagre. There were only few stray references in the inscriptions in the accounts of foreign travellers and contemporary literatures. Foreign travellers were generally interested in foreign trade and what they mentioned were mostly in connection to that. Nevertheless, the itineraries of Fa-hien and Hiuen-Tsang point to the existence of the internal land routes, which connected some of the important cities in the country. We notice that various ancient divisions of Bengal were closely connected with each other through roads. Many of these existed since ancient times. We get a reference to public road (*rāja-patha*) in the Chittagong plate of Dāmodara.¹⁹⁵ The two embanked roads have been excavated near Dhanora by K.N. Dikshit.¹⁹⁶ Most of these roads touched the frontier of Bengal and the travellers, pilgrims and traders used it as well. We find the references of bullock carts,¹⁹⁷ elephants,¹⁹⁸ horses, boats¹⁹⁹ and vessels.

The waterways occupied a prominent place among the components of the trade and commercial activities of Bengal and it happened due to the geographical location of Bengal. The waterways can be divided into two categories- first large deep rivers, which were navigable throughout the year and able to bear different craftsmanship. This class may have the Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Meghna rivers. Along with their tributaries and distributaries these rivers worked as natural routes for long distance waterborne trade. It is potentially sufficient, although there is statistical information in ancient and medieval times; they carried a greater part of

the island traffic of the province. Especially in the monsoon season, this power has increased greatly, because even the remotest areas of the country were only accessible by waterways. These rivers received very high importance in the settlements of past trade and collection centres.

In the second category there were small and shallow river or streams which were navigable in some cases throughout the year, and in other cases only in the rainy season, and often only for small country boats. There is a reference in the *Raghuvamśa* to the skill of people making boats for all purposes.²⁰⁰ All these references specifically point to the fact that the river was a major means of transportation from one part of the country to another.

In addition to river, the evidences procured from epigraphic records of the Guptas, post-Guptas and Pāla-Senas prove the activities of the Bengalee people in regard to shipping. Some words such as *jola* (channel) and *khalla* (canal) have been found from the Bhutichandra inscription²⁰¹ which indicates the activities of the Bengalees in the river. The references to *nāvātākṣheṇī* (ship-building harbour), *nau-bandhakas/naudaṇḍakas* (parking station/ boats) found in the Copper-plate Grant of Dharmāditya,²⁰² *nauvāṭaka* (warships or mercantile marine officer)²⁰³ in the Khālimpur Copper-plate of Dharmapāladeva,²⁰⁴ *ardhanauvāṭaka* (mercantile marine junior officer) in Madanpur plate of Śrīchandra,²⁰⁵ *naukādhyaḥṣa* or *nauvyāpṛtaka* (naval officer) and *nauvitāna* (bridge by fleets or boats) in the Deopārā inscription of Vijaya-Sena²⁰⁶ are gathered from different copper plates. These references establish the importance of boats and their sea faring activities in Bengal. The Khālimpur plate speaks of a variety of boats which formed a bridge on the Bhāgīrathī (*nanavidha-nauvāṭaka-sampadita-setubandha*).²⁰⁷ Among early literary texts the *Arthaśāstra*, *Raghuvamśa*, *Amarakoṣa*, *Rāmacharita*, *Charyāgīti* and in the later period, the *Maṅgalakāvya*s also throw some light on boat building and shipping. *Raghuvamśa* describes Bengalee as *nausadhanodyatana* (expert warrior in the boats).²⁰⁸ The early *Charyāpadas* frequently mention boats and mention their component parts.

Moreover, the references collected from the accounts of Fa-hien, Hiuen-Tsang and I-tsing also yielded enough information about the fact. They give information about the sailing of merchants' vessels for missionary, military and commercial purposes. The technical knowledge of Bengal about the construction of ships or fleet is clearly indicated by the information provided by different sources. In the time of Kālidāsa,²⁰⁹ the rulers of Vaṅga appeared to have been famous for their nautical resources. The pirate-like activities of a Prince of Dāmalīpta (Tāmralīpta) have been described in Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracharita*. The references in the *Charyāpadas* to the life of a boatman, construction of boats and the actual method of plying boats clearly indicate that shipping was held to be an important industry. Sandhyākaranandī in his *Rāmacharita* states that Rāmapāla went to subdue to the Kaivarta rebellion in Varendrī after crossing the Ganges through a bridge of boats. We learn about Bengal ships from the *Maṅgalkāvyas* which seem to have preserved a tradition of earliest times. In order to cite an example, the fleet of Dhanapati *Sadāgar* (merchant) consisted of ships named Madhukara, Dūrgāvara, Goarakhi, Saṁkhachūḍa, Siṅhamukhī, Chandrapāna and Choṭamukhī. The whole fleet was known as 'Saptadīṅgā Madhukara'.²¹⁰ We have no doubt about the continuity of the efforts of Bengalees in maritime activities along the coasts and adjacent sea routes.

The economic life of ancient India evinces a developed state co-operative agency, which inspired the formation of organizations for mutual assistance. The *sārtha* denotes the ancient transport agency. It provided all assistance to the traders. The *sārtha* not only controlled the inter-state trade, but also covered the trade of outer world. The Vedic literatures indirectly hint the transport agency. At that time there were thousands of horses for the transport corporation's chariot. The names of proprietors of some transport corporations were probably Paramajya, Ninditāśva, and Prapathi.²¹¹ Rathaspati are the general manager of the corporation.²¹² The members of the *sārtha* were called *sārthika*. It comprised mostly traders and merchants. In addition, the Brāhmaṇas were also members who looked

after welfare of the people along with traders. The chairman of corporation was called *sārthvāha*.²¹³ He had much more information about foreign countries. The administration of the *sārtha* was his responsibility. He had the duty to assemble a huge number of carts, wagons, along with drought animals to load up the merchandise. Besides, he also maintained daily expenditure of the *sārtha*. The security branch of the *sārtha* had the responsibility to maintain security. Perhaps the roadways engineering department was attached to this branch. In the Vedic period Puṣana was considered to be the presiding deity of this branch. He was regarded as the *pathikṛita* or road maker.²¹⁴ He was also named as the protector of road.²¹⁵

5.3. Warehouse

A warehouse, commonly known as godown is a building for storing manufacturing goods.²¹⁶ It is used by the importers, exporters, manufacturers, etc., for transiting the trade items. The surplus production also needs a warehouse. Since the ancient times, trade and commerce was the lifeline of Indian economy. It gave immense revenue sources to individual or a state. There happened extensive growth of agriculture which created a surplus production. So, in view of that, India needed storage of manufactured surplus products so that she would consume it in the time of crisis. It needed to be stored to meet the crisis when the area faced drought, deficit of production. After meeting the local demand, the surplus production also facilitated trade and commerce.

Since very early times, the producers felt the need of making warehouses. In the *Mahāvastu*,²¹⁷ we find reference to store-house (*bhāṇḍasālā*) where the manufactured goods were stored. The Mahāsthān Inscription²¹⁸ clearly speaks of surplus production stored in the granary or store house (*koṣṭhāgāra*) under the supervision of local officials located within the fortified area. It must have been a public granary. The granaries were said to have been three storeyed (*tigabha*) structured. It also appears from the description that there were stored at least three

kinds of grains including paddy (*dhānya*), sesame (*tila*), and mustard seeds (*sarshapa*). The items were stored as a precautionary measure from the urgency or emergency (*atīyāynka*) such as famine, drought, etc. The storehouse also must have been used as a hub from where the items were to be transported to other parts of India and also abroad.²¹⁹ The *Gabbhini Sutta* clearly refers to some royal stores for the consumption of oil (*tela*), butter (*sappi*), for Brāhmaṇas.²²⁰ Excavations at Bāṅgarh also testify to the existence of a granary belonging to the Pala period.²²¹ There is also the reference to a granary located in Devīkoṭa assigned to the late Pala period.²²² It refers to a land gifted attached to the granary (*kosṭhāgāra*). Thus the references to the granary clearly mark the existence of consciousness among the people of Bengal about the sense of storing the crops.

The existence of warehouse in early Bengal also has been proven by some land grants. The term Vaṅgasāgara-*sambhāṇḍāriyaka* is found from the Madanpur Plate of Śrīchandra. It may stand for a place where items could be appropriately stored (*samyak*). Such storage of items may logically be associated with commercial activities at a given centre of exchange.²²³ This leads to a further inference that an exchange centre such as the one under consideration could also have offered warehousing facilities (*sambhāṇḍāra*). One may logically infer that an exchange centre could be called a *sambhāṇḍāriyaka* as it offered suitable storage or warehousing facilities. The other term Vaṅgasāgara may denote the sea of Vaṅga. Thus the compound expression, Vaṅgasāgara-*sambhāṇḍāriyaka*, must have referred to an exchange centre associated with the trade in the Bay of Bengal.

Now the question naturally comes to our mind regarding the possible location of *sambhāṇḍāriyaka* in early Bengal. The copper plate where the Vaṅgasāgara- *sambhāṇḍāriyaka* referred to was discovered in Yolamaṇḍala included within the Puṅḍravardhana-*bhukti*.²²⁴ N.K. Bhattasali places Yolamaṇḍala to the north of the river Dhaleswari in the Manikganj subdivision of the Dhaka district.²²⁵ Ancient Yolamaṇḍala seems to have covered areas around modern Sābhar. The

name Sābhar is possibly derived from Sanskrit *sambhāra* which means wealth, collection or storage of commercial items, etc.²²⁶ Sābhar is also a very well known archaeological site. Such name would aptly fit a riverine archaeological site with definite commercial significance. The discovery of the Madanpur Copper-plate of Śrīchandra from the Sābhar area may therefore strongly suggest that a *sambhāṇḍāriyaka* (trade centre with warehousing facilities) could very well have existed at Sābhar in the early medieval times. Vaṅgasāgara-*sambhāṇḍāriyaka* thus would closely correspond to present day Sābhar and it also appears to have been a riverine port under the Chandras.²²⁷

Another term *puṭabhedana* is found in the *Mahāparinivvānasūttanta* of the *Vinayapiṭaka*. It gives an account of Buddha's visit to Pāṭaligama which is called a *puṭabhedana* with the *mahājanapada* of Magadha (generally identified with southern Bihar). The term *puṭa* stands for covered boxes of merchandise. So the term *puṭabhedana* is logically taken to mean a place where lids of the boxes or packages of merchandise were broken or opened (*bhedana*). The meaning of the term is also attested to by *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* of Buddhaghosa, the commentator on the *Vinayapiṭaka*. He refers to the term as *puṭa-bhedanaṭṭhanam* and *bhāṇḍa-bhāṇḍikānāṛimocanaṭṭhānam*.²²⁸ Thus the term clearly denotes a centre of trade. In the context of its reference to Pāṭaligāma it was logically translated as a centre of interchange of all kinds of ware. The *puṭabhedana*, located at the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Son, must have facilitated riverine commerce and communication. In the same chapter the discussion shed light on the transport and warehouse which are also a part and parcel of trade and commerce.

¹ Ray, P.C.,(tr.), *The Mahābhārata of Krishna Dwaipayāna Vyāsa*, Vol. II, *Sabha Parva*, 1884, Calcutta: Bharata Press, p. 30.

² McCrindle, J. W.,(tr.), *Ancient India as described by Ptolemy*, London: Trubner & Co, 1885, p. 168,

³ *Indian Archaeology*, 1954-55, pp. 19-20.

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- ⁴ Legge, James (tr.), *A Record of the Buddhistic Kingdoms being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fa-hien of His Travels in India and Ceylon (AD. 399-414)*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886, p. 100.
- ⁵ Beal, Samuel. (tr.), *Si Yu Ki, Buddhist Records of the Western World, Vol. II*, London: Trubner & Co., 1884, p. 200-201.
- ⁶ Takakusu, J.R.,(tr.),*A Record of the Buddhist Religion as practiced in India and Malay Archipelago (AD. 675-691) by I-tsing*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896, p. XXXIII, XXXIV.
- ⁷ *Kathāsaritasāgara*, VI. 211; III. 175.
- ⁸ Dasgupta, T.C., *Aspects of Bengali Society from Old Bengali Literature*, Calcutta, 1935, pp. 30ff.
- ⁹ Jahan Shahnaj Husne, 'Samandar: An Important Centre for Maritime Activities in Bengal', *Journal of Bengal Art*, Vol. 5, 2000, p. 233.
- ¹⁰ Sen, B.C., *Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1942, p. 38-39.
- ¹¹ Ptolemy, *Geographike Huphegesis*, VII. 1. 81.
- ¹² Schoff, W.F., (tr.), *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea : Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean by a Merchants of the 1st Century*, London: Longmans, Green, and Co.,1912, p. 255.
- ¹³ Ray Nihar Ranjan, 'Tāmrālipta and Gañge- Two Port Cities of Ancient Bengal and Connected Considerations', *Geographical Review of India*, Vol.41 (2), 1979, pp. 205-222.
- ¹⁴ Sen Gour Pada,(thesis),*Some Aspects of the Economic Life of the Lower Ganges Valley C. 1st Century A.D. to 8th Century A.D.*, Burdwan: The University of Burdwan, 1977, p. 133.
- ¹⁵ Goswami, K.G., 'Chandraketugarh and Its archaeological importance', *Indian Museum Bulletin*, Vol.1, No. 2, 1966, pp. 42-46.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ *Archaeological Survey of India*, Vol. XV, 1879-80, Calcutta, p. 110.
- ¹⁸ Bhattacharyya, D.C., 'Newly Discovered Copper-plate from Tipperah', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VI, 1930, p. 59.
- ¹⁹ Cf. Bhandarkar, D.R., 'The Nagar Brāhmaṇas and the Bengal Kāyasthas', *Indian Antiquary*, Vol.61, 1932, p. 50.
- ²⁰ Yule, H., *Cathary and the wory thithed etc.* , London, 1899, p. LXXI.
- ²¹ *Indian Archaeology, A Review*, 1954-55, p-23, Pl. XXXV, B& C.
- ²² *Indian Archaeology, A Review*, 1956-57, p. 81.
- ²³ Sen Gour Pada., *op.cit*, p. 126.
- ²⁴ Mukherjee, S.K., 'Some interesting Gupta terracotta figurines', *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XIII, Nos. 1-4, 1971, p. 187-188.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Nainar, S.M.H., *The Knowledge of India as Possessed by Arab Geographers down to the Fourteenth Century AD with Special Reference to Southern India*, Madras: University of Madras, 1942, p. 89.

²⁷ *ibid.* *Khawr* means inlet or creek. But Elliot translates it 'river', Elliot and Dowson. (ed.). *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Vol. I, London: Trubner & Co., 1867, p. 90.

²⁸ Lee, Samuel (tr.), *The Travels of Ibn Batuttā: In the Near East, Asia and Africa*, New York: Cosima Classics, 1829, p. 246.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 128, 134-135.

³⁰ Jahan Shahnaj Husne, 'Samandar: An Important Centre for Maritime Activities in Bengal', p. 240.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Morrison, Barrie M., *Lālmāi, a Cultural Centre of Early Bengal: An Archaeological Report and Historical Analysis*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974, p. 7.

³³ Mukherjee, B.N., 'The Original Territory of Harikela', *Bangladesh Lalitkalā*, Vol. I, 1975, pp. 115-119. Generally the area denotes an area to the east of the Meghna a river.

³⁴ Basak, R.G., 'Madanpur Plate of Śrīcandra, year 44', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVIII, Part. VI, 1950, pp. 51-58. A revised reading of the date was given by D.C. Sircar, 'Madanpur Plate of Śrīcandra, year 46', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXVIII, 1950, pp. 337-339.

³⁵ Chakravarti, Ranabir, 'Vaṅgasāgara and Other Related Terms: An Examination', in Asok Datta (ed.), *History and Archaeology of Eastern India*, Delhi: Book & Books, 1999, p. 254-264.

³⁶ Sircar, D.C., 'Copper-plate Inscription of King Bhavadeva of Devaparvata', *Journal of Asiatic Society (Letters)*, Vol. X VII(2), 1951, pp. 83-94; Sircar, D.C., *Select Inscriptions*, Vol. II, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1965, p. 744-750.

³⁷ Chaudhury, K.G., 'Paśchimbhāg Copper-plate of Mahārāja Śrīchandradeva (10th Century AD)', in the *Nalinikanta Bhattasali Commemoration Volume*, Dhaka: Dhaka Museum, 1966, pp. 166-198; Sircar, D.C., 'Paśchimbhāg-plate of Śrīcandra, Regnal Year 5', *Epigraphic Discoveries in East Pakistan*, Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1973, p. 64.

³⁸ Sachau Edward, C., *Alberuni's India (An Account of the Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Geography, Chronology, Astronomy, Customs, Laws and Astronomy India About A.D 1030)*, London: Kegan Paul Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd. 1910, p. 200.

³⁹ Sen, B.C., 'The Rakshasakhadi Copper-plate of Śrīmaddommanapāla', *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. X, Issue. I, 1934, pp. 321ff (Published first time); A revised reading was later offered

by D.C. Sircar, *Indian Culture*, Vol. I, pp. 379-382; Sircar, D.C., 'Rākṣhaskhāli (Sundarban) Plate: Śāka 1118', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol.XXX, 1953-54, pp. 42ff.

⁴⁰ Gibb, H.A.R., (tr.), *The Rihālā by Ibn Battutā: The Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1929, p. 268.

⁴¹ Das Vrindaban, *Chaitanya Bhagavata*, Antya, Ch. 5.

⁴² Thomas, Hickock, *The Voyage and Travaile: of M. Caesar Frederick, Merchant of Venice, Into the East India, the Indies, and Beyond*, London: Richard Jones and Edward White, 1588, p-23; Foster, William.,(ed.), *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, London: Oxford University Press, 1921, pp. 18,25-26.

⁴³ Mitra, S.K., *Hughli Jelār Dev Deul*, Calcutta, 1971, pp. 2,199, 202-203.

⁴⁴ Jahan, Shahnaj Husne, 'Archaeology of Wari-Bateshwar', *Ancient Asia*, Vol. 2, 2010, p. 144.

⁴⁵ Strabo, *Geographikon*, XV,I,11; Ptolemy, *op.cit.*, VII, 1, 73; Cowell, E.B., & W.H.D. Rouse (ed. and tr.), *The Jātaka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births*, London: Luzac & Company Ltd., 1901, No. 442, p-10; *Mahāvamsa*, XIX, 6 and 23; Corder, Henri., *T'oung pao*, Series-II, Vol. VI, Leide: E.J. Brill, 1905, p. 520.

⁴⁶ The comparative advantages and disadvantages of water and land routes have been brought under review in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya. The text in the book follows as:

"My teacher says that of the two trade-routes, one by water and another by land, the former is better, in as much as it is less expensive but productive of large profit.

Not so, says Kauṭilya, for, a water route is liable to obstruction, not permanent, a source of imminent dangers, and incapable of defense, whereas a land-route is of reverse nature.

Of water routes one along the shore and another in mid-ocean, the route along and close to the shore is better, as it touches at many trading port towns; likewise river navigation is better, as it touches at many trading port towns; likewise river navigation is better, as it is uninterrupted and is of avoidable or endurable dangers.

My teacher says that, of the land-routes that which leads to the Himalayas is better than that which leads to the South. Not so, says Kauṭilya, for with the exception of blankets, skins and horses, other articles of merchandise, such as conch-shells, diamonds, precious-stones, pearls and gold are available in plenty in the South.

Of routes leading to the South, either that trade-route which traverses a large number of mines, which is frequented by people, and which is less expensive or troublesome, or that route by taking which plenty of merchandise of various kinds can be obtained is better.

This explains the selection of trade-routes leading either to the East or to the West." *Arthaśāstra*, VII, 12

Precious precepts and modern critics given by a practical man in this world will get something unjustified in the above mentioned arguments.

⁴⁷ *Arthaśāstra*. II. 1. 38.

⁴⁸ *Arthaśāstra*. IV.13. 7-10.

⁴⁹ Kane, P.V, *History of Dharmasāstras (Ancient and Medieval Religious and Civil Law)*, Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1930, pp. 137-157; Muller, F. Max and G. Buhler (ed. and tr.), *The Sacred Book of the East, Vol. XXV, The Laws of Manu*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886, pp. 216-252.

⁵⁰ Cf. Kalota, N.S., *India as Described by Megasthenes*, Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1978, pp. 71-96; cf. Thapar, R., *Aśoka and the Decline of Mauryan Empire*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 81

⁵¹ Bhattacharyya, Amitabha., *Historical Geography of Ancient and Early Medieval Bengal*, Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1977, p.103.

⁵² A few inscriptions and texts preserve details of this military operation conducted by some rulers of ancient India. We also have accounts of foreigners who either visited India or collected information from other sources. From the analysis of this information properly it is learnt about the concept of land and water routes, which are actually followed by merchants and military generals from and into Bengal. In the *digvijaya* section of the Sabhāparva of the Mahabharata it is said that Bhima achieved military victory in Eastern India including the lands, which now included in Bengal. Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa* indicates that the region which is now included in Bengal could go through the Ganges. We are told that Raghu proceeded towards the eastern sea with a large force. It is likely that he followed the route along the Ganges into the plains of Bengal. The *Raghuvamśa* also said that by defeating Suhmas, Raghu wiped out Vaṅga and traveled to south-western to Kaliṅga. We have already seen in the Mahabharata which referred to a route connecting South-western Bengal with Central Bengal. The evidence provided by *Raghuvamśa* suggests that the route did not terminate there. It extended south-western areas across the Kapisa River, resembled with Kasai flowing through the districts of Bankura and Medinipur. According to the *Gauḍavaho* of Vākpati the same route was followed by Yaśovarman of Kanauj. He carried on depredations in Magadha and Vaṅga and travelled through the Odra and Kaliṅga in the south-west.

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- ⁵³ Sankalia, H.D., *Pre-History and Proto History of India and Pakistan*, Bombay: University of Bombay, 1962, pp. 471-513
- ⁵⁴ B.N. Mukherjee, 'The Earliest Limits of Vaṅga', *Coins and Currency Systems of Early Bengal*, Kolkata: Progressive Publishers, 2000, pp. 45-51.
- ⁵⁵ Schoff, W.H., *op.cit* p. 47-48.
- ⁵⁶ Hood, John, W.,(tr.) *History of Bengali People (From the Earliest Times to the Fall of the Sena Dynasty) ,tr. from original Bengali Bāṅgāṅir Itihās of Niharranjan Ray*, Calcutta: Orient Longman, 1994, p. 252.
- ⁵⁷ *Arthaśāstra*.II.1.38.
- ⁵⁸ *Arthaśāstra*, III. 10. 5.
- ⁵⁹ *Arthaśāstra*. II. 4. 1.
- ⁶⁰ *Arthaśāstra*.II. 4.4.
- ⁶¹ *Arthaśāstra*, II. 3. 3.
- ⁶² McCrindle, J.W., (tr.), *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great as described by Arrian, Curtius, Diodoros, Plutarch and Justin*, Westminster: Archibold Constable and Company, p. 93, 349.
- ⁶³ McCrindle, J.W., (tr.), *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, London: Trubner & Co., 1877, p. 86.
- ⁶⁴ It has been mentioned that close contacts between Bengal and the Western countries was facilitated firstly by the advent of Achaemenids towards the east and then by the conquest of Alexander in Asia. But in India, at the beginning of the 6th century BC the process of development of interconnection started with the rise of 16 *mahājanapadas*. Under the patronage of most generous rulers of these *mahājanapadas*, the main paths were constructed in their regions, which were further expanded later. Buddhist tradition leaves the impression that Jivaka, the famous physician of Buddha's time living at the capital of the Magadhan Empire, went by the overland linking road going to Taxila to receive his medical education.
- ⁶⁵ Hood, John. W.,(tr.), *op.cit*, p-67; Anil Kumar, *Trade in Early Medieval Eastern India (c. A.D. 600-A.D.1200)*, New Delhi: Janaki Prakashan, 2001, p. 89; Himansu Bhusan Sarkar, 'Bengal and Her Overland Routes in India and Beyond', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Vol. 16, p. 1-4, 1974, pp. 92-119.
- ⁶⁶ Davids, Rhys, *Buddhist India*,(first published in London, T. Fisher Unwin,1911), Calcutta,1959, 8th Edition, p. 44f

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- ⁶⁷ Srivastava, Balaram., *Trade and Commerce in Ancient India from Earliest Times to C.A.D.300*, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1968, p. 80.
- ⁶⁸ Sarkar, H.B., 'Bengal and Her Overland routes in India and Beyond', p. 94.
- ⁶⁹ Thakur, Amarnath, *Buddha and Buddhist Synods in India and Abroad*, New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1996, p. 80.
- ⁷⁰ Ratnam, P., (ed.), *Studies in Indo-Asian Art and Culture*, Vol. I, p. 219ff; Sarkar, H.B., 'Bengal and Her Overland Routes in India and Beyond', p. 95.
- ⁷¹ *Achāraṅga Sūtra*, I.8.3; Jacobi, Harmann, *Sacred Book of the East*, Vol. XXII, *Jaina Sūtras*, Part-I, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1884, p. 84.
- ⁷² Tawney, C.H. (tr.), *The Ocean of History, translation of Somadeva's Kathāsaritsāgara*, Vol. II, Calcutta: Baptist Mission, 1884, p. 132.
- ⁷³ Trenckner, V., (ed.), *The Majjhima Nikaya, Vol. I*, London: Oxford University Press, 1888, p. 2.
- ⁷⁴ *Mahābhārata*, Sabhāparva, XXIX.
- ⁷⁵ *Mahābhārata*, II, 133.
- ⁷⁶ *Raghuvamśa*, IV, 37.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁸ Buddhist chronicles speak of the invasion of Ceylon in the 6th century B.C. by Vijaya Simha, who gave his name to the island; he is said to have sailed in a ship which could hold over seven hundred people. Iyengar, P.T. Srinivas, 'The Trade of India', *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. II, 1925, p. 43.
- ⁷⁹ Takakusu, J. & Nagai, M., (eds.), *The Sāmantpāsādikā*, P.T.S. London, 1924, pp. 96-97.
- ⁸⁰ Legge, James (tr.), *op.cit*, p. 100.
- ⁸¹ The account left by Hiuen-Tsang gives some interesting details about the routes connected with different areas of Bengal in the 7th century AD. The Chinese pilgrim from Ka-chu-wu-khi-lu travelled in the east and crossing the Ganges reached the country of Pun-na-fa-tan-na country. Then the pilgrim went towards east and crossed over a might river to Kia-mo-lu-po. From Kia-mo-lu-po he went to San-mo-ta-to and then to Tan-mo-lih-ti. After reaching Tan-mo-lih-ti he went to *Kio-lo-na-su-fa-la-na* and then to south-westwards over 700 *li* one could reach the country of Wu-cha. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, Vol. II, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1904-05, pp. 182-193ff.
- Ka-chu-wu-khi-lo has been identified with Kajaṅgala near Rājmaḥal and *Pun-na-fa-tan-na* with Puṇḍravardhana. The 'mighty river' resembles Karatoyā and Kia-mo-lu-po with Chinese

corruption of Kāmarūpa. San-mo-ta-to, i.e. Samataṭa is territorially equivalent to Tripura-Noakhali region. Kio-lo-na-su-fa-la-na is probably Karṇasuvarṇa which may be identified with the Chiruti region of the Murshidabad district. The description mentioned above indicates that the journey started from Kajaṅgala to Kāmarūpa via Puṇḍravardhana. Another route linked Assam with South East Bengal, while through a coastal Bengal a link was formed between a south-east and south-west Bengal. Cunningham, Alexander., *The Ancient Geography of India*, London: Trubner and Co., 1871, pp. 478-505.

⁸² Takakusu, J.(tr.), *op.cit.*, pp. XXXI-XXXII.

⁸³ *Ibid*, Notes, p. XXXIV.

⁸⁴ According to the calculation of Cunningham, one *Yojanā* of Fahien was equal to 6.71 English miles. Cunningham, A., *op.cit.*, p. 485.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁸⁶ Oldham, 'Route, Old and New', *Bengal: Past and Present*, Vol. XXVIII, 1924, pp. 21-36.

⁸⁷ Kielhorn, F., 'The Dudhpāni Rock Inscription', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. II, 1893, p. 345ff.

⁸⁸ Tawney, C.H.,(tr.), *op.cit.*, p.86.

⁸⁹ Sarkar, J.N., (ed.), *History of Bengal*, Vol. II, Delhi, B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1943, p. 22.

⁹⁰ Majumdar, N.G., 'Chittagong Copper-plate of Dāmodara', *Inscription of Bengal*, Vol.III, Rajshahi: The Varendra Research Society, 1929, p. 158ff.

⁹¹ *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1922-23*, p. 109.

⁹² Sarkar,H.B., 'Bengal and Her Overland Routes in India and Beyond', p. 111f.

⁹³ Banerjee, R.D., 'Lakṣmaṇasena', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, New Series, Vol. IX, 1913, pp. 271ff.

⁹⁴ Mukherjee, B.N., 'Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī Inscriptions in West Bengal (India)', *Indian Museum Bulletin*, Vol.XXV, 1990, p. 34; Chakravarti, Ranabir, *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, p. 132.

⁹⁵ Chakravarti, Ranabir, 'Early Medieval Bengal and Trade in Horses: A Note', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 42, No-2, 1999, p. 207; Chakravarti, Ranabir, *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, p. 120-121.

⁹⁶ Hood, J.W. (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 68.

⁹⁷ Tawney, C.H. (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 86.

⁹⁸ In the second half of the 11th century Vikramaditya VI of the Western Chālukya family of Kalyāṇa subdued the ruler of Gauḍa and Kāmarūpa. The information has been furnished by the

Vikramāṅkadevacharita of Bilhaṇa. He also followed the same route as mentioned above. *Vikramāṅkadevacharita*, III. 74.

⁹⁹ In the first half of the 11th century, a general of the great emperor Rājendra Chola conducted a military operation. According to the Tirumālāi Rock Inscription, the Chola emperor first conquered Kośāla and then suppressed the rulers of Oḍḍa-viṣaya, Taṇḍa-butti, Takkaṇalāḍam, Vāṅgādeśa and Uttalāḍam and reached Gaṅgā. Odda-visaya is identified with a province of Orissa. Taṇḍabhutti is obviously Daṇḍabhukti. It is identified with the region round modern Dātan in the Medinipur district of West Bengal. Tankkanaladam and Uttaladam are resembled with Dakṣhiṇa Virata or southern Berar and Uttara- Virata respectively. Chola inscription could identify Vāṅgādeśa as East Bengal. Therefore, Rajendra Chola's forces followed the traditional route connecting South Bengal with Orissa and the region beyond. Hultsch, E., 'Tirumālāi Rock Inscription of Rājendrachola I', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IX, 1907-08, p. 233; Majumdar, R.C., 'The Overseas Expeditions of King Rajendra Chola', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 24, No. 3/4, 1961, pp. 338-342; Ganguly, D.C., 'Vāṅgā-deśa', *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XIX, No. 4, 1943, p. 298; *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XIII, Issue. I, 1937, pp. 151-152.

¹⁰⁰ Fleet, J.F., 'Inscriptions at Āblur', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. V, 1899, p. 257.

¹⁰¹ Rice, L., 'The Hoysala King Bitti-Deva Viṣṇuvardhana', *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1915, pp. 527-531.

¹⁰² Sastri, K.A.N. (ed.), *A Comprehensive History of India*, Calcutta: Orient Longmans, 1957, p. 438.

¹⁰³ Chakravarty, H.P., *Trade and Commerce of Ancient India*, Calcutta: Orient Longmans, 1967, p. 65 f. n.

¹⁰⁴ Sarkar, H.B., 'Bengal and Her Overland Routes in India and Beyond', pp. 93-119.

¹⁰⁵ Sec.64, p-308.

¹⁰⁶ Chattopadhyaya Alka., *Atīśa and Tibet: Life and Works of Dipaṅkara Śrījāna (Alias Atīśa) in Relation to the history and Religion of Tibet with Tibetan Sources*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, Publishers, 2011, pp. 311 ff; Sarkar, H.B., 'Bengal and her Overland Routes in India and beyond', p. 104ff.

¹⁰⁷ Elliot and Dowson, (ed.), *op.cit*, p. 61.

¹⁰⁸ Karim, Abdul, 'Tābāqat-i-Nasirī', *Bāṅglāpediā*, National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh, 2006.

¹⁰⁹ It was known from Minhāj that about 1500 horses were brought to Lakhnawati for sale from *KRMBTAN* daily. This area has been spelt and pronounced in various ways such as Karambattan, Karamptan and Karapatan. It is mentioned in the context of Bakhtyar's campaign in Kamrud

(identified with Kāmarūpa in the Brahmaputra valley, Assam). This attack to the northeast started from Lakhanawati. After crossing the Brahmaputra through a stone bridge Karambattan was reached by Bakhtyar's army on the sixteenth day of their expedition. It is difficult to identify where exactly Karambattan was. Raverty, H.G. (tr. & ed.), *Tābāqat-i-Nasirī of Minhaj-ud-din bin Siraj-ud-din al-Juzjani*, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1881, pp. 565-68. Bhattasali placed it at Kera Gompa in the south-west of Bhutan and Toghan prefers an area in the northern fringe of Tibet. Bhattasali, N.K., 'Muhammad Bakhtyar's Expedition to Tibet', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 9, 1933, pp. 49-62; Digby, Simon., *War Horses and Elephants in the Delhi Sultanate*, Oxford: Orient Monographs, 1971, pp. 45-47 and footnote. So Lakṣmaṇāvati was well-known for its mountainous horses from the north-east (either Tibet or Bhutan). The horses in the mountains seem to be branded as Kohi and they were different from varieties of Arab, Persian Tatatri and Baladasti types. So the mountainous horses appeared in Eastern India supplied from hilly areas. It was also suggested by Marco Polo in the late 13th century. This horse also reached the coastal of Tamilnadu from the Bengal littorals.

¹¹⁰ Chakravarti, Ranabir., *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, pp-174-75; 'Horse Trade and Piracy at Tana(=Thana, Maharashtra, India): Gleaning from Marco Polo, *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 33, 1991, pp. 159-182.

¹¹¹ Yule, H., and Cordier, H., tr. *Travels of Ser Marco Polo*, Vol. 2, London: J. Murray, 1873, pp. 106-109, 120.

¹¹² Sarkar, H.B., 'Bengal and Her overland routes in Indian and beyond', pp. 105.

¹¹³ These references to this route are available from a valuable source of Chang-Kien composed in the 8th century. The accounts of Chang-kien have been taken by scholars to indicate that products of South China were carried to Afghanistan. But there is evidence in this respect. Sheu-tu, according to B.N. Mukherjee should be placed in the lower Indus region. I-tsing also said that in the 3rd-4th centuries Chinese priests came to India from Szuchuan via upper Myanmar. Raychaudhury, P.C., *History and Civilisation of Assam*, p. 381; Hood, John, W., (tr.), *op.cit*, p. 68-69; Bhattacharyya, A., *op.cit*, p. 107; Majumdar, R.C., *Hindu Colonies in the Far East*, Vol. I, Campa, Lahore, 1927, p. 258.

The Arthaśāstra tells us that Kāmrupa was famous for her clothes, sandals and *aguru* of the finest qualities. Apparently they were carried out in different centers of trade and commerce in northern India along the highway to traffic. It is likely that the highway did not end in Assam but came to South China through the hilly areas of Assam, Manipur and Upper Burma.

¹¹⁴ Gibb, H.A.R., (tr.), *Ibn Battuta: Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354*, London: Routledge, 1929.

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- ¹¹⁵ Hood, J.W.,(tr.), *op.cit*, p. 69.
- ¹¹⁶ Chowdhury, Abdul Momin, 'Bengal and Southeast Asia: Trade and Cultural Contact in the Ancient Period', *Ancient Trades and Cultural Contacts in South-east Asia*, Bangkok, The Office of the National Culture Commission, 1996, pp. 96-97; Hood, J.W., *op.cit*, p. 69.
- ¹¹⁷ Sircar, D.C., 'Mainamati Plates', *Epigraphic Discoveries in East Pakistan*, Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1973, p. 57-59; Morrison, B.M., *Political and Cultural Regions in Early Bengal*, Jaipur-Delhi: Rawat Publication, 1980, p. 52; Chowdhury, A.M., *Dynastic History of Bengal*, Dacca: Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1967, p. 163.
- ¹¹⁸ Bhattacharya, B., 'Bengali Influence in Arakan', *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol. XXXIII, 1927, pp. 134-144; Harvey, G.E., *History of Burma*, London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1925, p. 42.
- ¹¹⁹ Sarkar, H.B., 'Corpus of Inscriptions of Java', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain, and Ireland*, Vol. XVI, p. 99ff.
- ¹²⁰ Majumdar, R.C., *Ancient Indian Colonisation in South-east Asia, Baroda*: Oriental Institute, 1963 (2nd Edition), p. 4.
- ¹²¹ Chakravarti Adhir, 'Bāṅglā o Bahirbiśhwa (Prāgauponivbeshik Kal)', *Itihas Anusandhan* 4, (in Bangla), Calcutta, 1989, p. 53; Bhattacharya, Nripendra, *Bāṅglār Arthanoitik Itihas*, (in Bangla), Calcutta, 1390 BS, 2nd Edition, p. 19; Hood, J.W.,(tr.), *op.cit*, p. 68.
- ¹²² Agarwal, R.S., *Trade Centres and Routes in Northern India*, Delhi, B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1982, p. 71.
- ¹²³ Prakash, A., *From the Crow's Nest*, New Delhi, Lancer Publishers, 2007, p. 58.
- ¹²⁴ Jahan, Shahnaj Husne, *Excavating Waves and Winds of (Es) change: A Study of Maritime Trade in Early Bengal*, Oxford: BAR International Series, 2006, p. 163.
- ¹²⁵ Ports are communicating places where goods and people and cultures are transferred between land and marine sites. It is a knot where the ocean and the internal transport line meet and intervene. Site and situation are two physical and cultural factors that determine the origins, evolution and growth of a port. The site is the area of land and the associated waters on which the port and port town are actually developed. It includes local topography, drainage and soil/land stability as well as the depth, temperature and movement of waters within it. On the other hand 'situation' brings together physical as well as cultural aspects. "It is the geographical position of a port in a broad sense; it incorporates the socio-economic and human environment of the hinterland on the one hand and the port's relationship to world sea lanes and other sea ports

on the other". The trade networks connect marketplaces which may contain a 'nodal point' within the networks.

- ¹²⁶ *Lalitavistāra*, X; Vaidya, P.L., (ed.), *Lalitavistāra*, Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1958, p. 88; Mukherjee, B.N., 'Decipherment of the Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī Script', *Monthly Bulletin*, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1989; 'Discovery of Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions in West Bengal', *The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies*, Vol. XXIX, No. 2, 1989-90, p. 6 f'; 'Kharoṣṭhī Inscriptions in Eastern India-New Discoveries', *Journal of Central Asia*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, pp. 196.
- ¹²⁷ *Milinda-pañha*, VI, 21, 360; *Mahāniddesa*, I, 15, 174; *Etude Asiatique*, Vol. II, Paris, 1925, pp. 1-55; *Periplus*, Sec. 60; Legge, James (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 100-101.
- ¹²⁸ Mukherjee, B.N., 'Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī Inscriptions in West Bengal (India)', p. 17.
- ¹²⁹ Shastri, Hirananda, 'The Nālanda Copper-plate of Devapāladeva', *Epigraphica Indica*, Vol. XVII, 1923-24, p. 321; Barnett, D., 'The Muṅgir Plate of Devapāladeva: Samvat 33', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XVIII, 1925-26, p. 306.
- ¹³⁰ Ptolemy, *Geographike Huphegesis*, VII, 1, 73; Legge, James (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 100-101.
- ¹³¹ There is ample reason to suppose why transport by water routes was so much preferred in those times. First, transportation by water is so cheap that it can easily carry a vast volume of commerce. Then again, a river or the sea is a natural highway found ready-made by men and open to all without any let or hindrance. Also the sustenance of water transport requires no expense on construction and maintenance or on supervision. Obviously, therefore, men remained carefree in carrying traffic by water routes. Lastly, transport by water requires the expenditure of less energy, physical or mechanical. Moreover, gliding by water is so smooth that water transport requires less labour potential. *Ibid*, p. 72.
- ¹³² Kangle, R.P., (ed.) *The Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra*, Bombay, University of Bombay, 1960, pp. 80-83.
- ¹³³ Geiger, Wilhelm, *The Mahāvamsā or The Chronicle of Ceylon*, London: Oxford University Press, 1912, p. 51
- ¹³⁴ *Vinaya Text*, III, p. 338.
- ¹³⁵ Malalasekera, G.P., *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names*, Vol. I, London, John Murray, 1937, p-482; Gopal, L., *Economic Life of Northern India c. AD 700-1200*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1965, p. 140.
- ¹³⁶ Schoff, W.H., (tr.), *op.cit.*, pp. 227, 260-261.
- ¹³⁷ Sastri, Surendranath Majumdar., (ed.), *McCrimdell's Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy*, Calcutta: Chatterjee, Chatterjee and Co. Ltd., 1927, p. 167f.

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- ¹³⁸ Thapar, Romila., 'Great Eastern Trade: Other Times, Other Places(Maritime Trade in the First Millennium AD)',*The Fourth Vasant J. Sheth Memorial Lecture*, Mumbai: The Vasant J. Sheth Memorial Foundaion, 2002, p. 3-10.
- ¹³⁹ Quaritch, H. G., *The Indianisaion of China and of South-East Asia*, London: Bernard Quaritch Ltd., 1967, pp. 10-11.
- ¹⁴⁰ Takakusu, J., A , *op.cit*, appendix map, pp. XXX-XXXIV; *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. X, p. 109ff.
- ¹⁴¹ Low, Lieut, Col., 'On an Inscription from Keddah', *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XVIII, Part. I, 1849, pp. 247-249; Frazer, Alexander, 'Report on a Route from the Mouth of the Pakchan to Krau, and Thence Across the Isthmus of Krau to the Gulf of Siam', *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, 1863, pp. 347-362.
- ¹⁴² The identification of Raktamṛtika is not beyond doubt. Krom had proposed long time ago that it should be within India. Hiuen-Tsang mentions a monastery named as Lo-to-wei-chi near Karṇasuvarṇa. Lo-to-wei-chi can be the Chinese corruption of Raktamṛtika. The recent discovery of a seal from Chiruti in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal claims that the historic monastery named Raktamṛtika Mahāvihāra was situated in that locality. It is noteworthy that the Chiruti region is nearer to the Bhāgīrathī, which could serve as the main channel of the maritime trade of Bengal and Far-East. Majumdar, R.C., *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far-East*, Vol. II, Suvarṇadvīpa, p-82; *Bulletin de L'Ecole Francaise d' Extreme Orient*, Hanoi, Vol. IV, 1904, p. 231; Krom,N.J., *Javaansche Geschiedenis*, 1932, Martinus Nijhoff, p. 73; Gopal, L., *op.cit*, p. 139; *Bṛhatkathāslokaśaṅgraha*, XVIII, p. 176; *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*, II, p-183; *Kathāsaritsāgara*, III, p. 175; Majumdar, R.C., *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far-East*, pp. 82-83.
- ¹⁴³ Majumdar, R.C.,(ed.), *op.cit*, p. 671; Chatterjee, B.R., *India and Java*, Calcutta, Prabasi Press, 1933, p. 47 ff; Bagchi, P.C., *Sino-Indian Studies*, Vol. II, No. 2, Visva Bharati, p. 62.
- ¹⁴⁴ *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 23-24.
- ¹⁴⁵ Schoff, W.H., (tr.), *op.cit*, p. 260.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Avadanasataka*, I, p. 23f, 129 f. II, p. 60 f.
- ¹⁴⁷ Levi, S.M., (ed. & tr.),*Mahakarmavibhaṅga*,Paris,1932, p. 50f.
- ¹⁴⁸ *Milinda-pañha*, p. 359.
- ¹⁴⁹ Petech. L., *Northern India According to the Shui-Ching-chu*, Rome, 1950, p. 63.
- ¹⁵⁰ Hirth, F., and W.W. Rockhill,(tr.), *Chu fan Chi by Chau-ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the 12th and 13th Centuries, entitled Chu-fan-Chi*, St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences,1911, p.111.

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- ¹⁵¹ Majumdar, R.C., *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far-East*, Vol. I, p. XVIII; *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XIII, 1937, pp. 593-596.
- ¹⁵² Gogte, V.D., 'The Chandraketurah-Tamluk Region of Bengal: Source of the Early Historic Rouletted Ware from India and Southeast Asia', *Man and Environment*, Vol. XXII, No. 1, 1997, p. 83.
- ¹⁵³ Ray, H. P., 'The Archaeology of Bengal: Trading Networks, Cultural Identities', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 49.1, Leiden, 2006, p. 80.
- ¹⁵⁴ Chakravarti, Ranabir, 'Early Historical India: A Study in its Material Milieu (c.600 BC-AD300)', *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, pp. 54-55.
- ¹⁵⁵ Chakravarti, Ranabir, 'Befriending the Bay: Maritime Trade and the Eastern Seaboard of the Sub-continent (Prior to C.1500)', 52nd Foundation Day Lecture, *Bangladesh Asiatic Society*, Vol.3, 2004, p. 17; Begley, B., & R.D.de Puma, (ed.), *Rome and India-The Ancient Sea Trade*, Delhi, 1922, p. 30.
- ¹⁵⁶ Among the Arab writers Ibn Khurdadhbih was the one who was a Persian scholar. He held the position of chief of post and information in northern Iraq and a close associate of Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tamid. His work deals with routes and distances and covers regional, descriptive and economic geography. Although the original version of the work is lost, what survives by the same title is an abridged version prepared in c. 845-847 A.D. Ibn Khurdadhbih notes that Samandar was a port where ships would arrive after a journey of around three days from Kalyakan (Calingapatam), al-Lawa and Kanja (two other ports on the eastern coast of India). The port was located at a distance of fifteen to twenty days' journey by means of a river from Kāmrūn (Kāmrūpa in Assam). Ahmad, S. Maqbul, *Arabic Classical Accounts of India and China: Book One Al-Masalik Wa'l-Mamalik and Book Two Akhbar Al-Sin Wa'l-Hind*, tr. From the original Arabic with commentary, Shimla: Indian Institute of Advance Studies, 1989, p. 5, 22-25; Minorsky, V., (tr.), *Hudud al-Alam', The Regions of the World': A Persian Geography*, London, Luzac & Co., 1937, p-87; Elliot & Dowson, (eds.), *op.cit*, pp. 18-25.
- ¹⁵⁷ Gibbs, H.A.R., (tr.), *op.cit*, pp. 267-271.
- ¹⁵⁸ Elliot and Dowson, (ed.) *op.cit*, pp. 16, 23-24, 30.
- ¹⁵⁹ In the first half of the 7th century, Hsuan-Tsang traveled to Samataṭa, an area close to Harikela. Samataṭa was known for communication in different parts of Southeast Asia. There is valuable indication from Huen-Tsang about this. His account clearly mentions that trade relations existed between Tāmrālipta and Southeast Asian countries and islands regions. He has written a valuable indication that in the early 7th century, the Samataṭa area gradually started as a point of contact

between the coastal region and long-distance journey to the Bay of Bengal. Huen-Tsang drew our attention by mentioning the names of six countries in Southeast Asia that had contact with Samataṭa. The countries are: Shi-li-cha-ta-lo (Śrīkṣetra in Myanmar with its capital at Prome on the Irrawaddy), Kia-mo-land-kia (Kamalanka, identified with Pegu and the Irrawaddy delta in Myanmar), To-lo-po-ti (Dvāravatī, the famous kingdom of Myanmar in Sandowe region), I-shung-na-pu-lo (Isanapura to the east of Dārāvati), Mo-hochen-po (Mahāchampa in Vietnam and Yen-nio-na-chen (Yamanadvīpa). There is a clear indication that these regions between the Samataṭa and the mainland Southeast Asia had already started in the first half of the 7th century, probably through overseas. Beal, Samuel (tr.), *The Life of Hiuen Tsiang by the Shaman Hwui Li with an introduction containing an account of the works of I-tsing*, op.cit, pp. 132-33; Chakravarti, Ranabir., *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, pp. 134-35.

¹⁶⁰ Sircar, D.C., 'The Kailān Copperplate Inscription of King Śrīdharanarāta', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, 1947, pp-221-241; Sircar, D.C., *Select Inscriptions*, Vol.2, pp. 36-40.

¹⁶¹ Chaudhury, K.G., 'The Paśchimbhāg Copperplate of Śrīchandra', in *N.K. Bhattasali Commemoration Volume*, Dacca: Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1966, pp. 166-199; Sircar, D.C., 'Paśchimbhāg Plate of Śrīchandra', *Regnal Year 5*, pp. 19-40.

¹⁶² During the last quarter of the seventh century, I-tsing reported on the journey from Sri Lanka to Ho-lai-ka-ko (Harikela). The region is identified with the Noakhali, Comilla, Chittagong and adjacent areas in Bangladesh. He started a journey from China to South Asia. After a month's journey, he reached Śrī-vijaya (Palembang in Sumatra), then came to Kedah via Mo-lyo-yu (eastern coast of Sumatra). From there he went to southern India and eventually went to Sri Lanka. He again flew back from Sri Lanka and after nearly a month's sail, I-tsing reached Ho-lai-ka-lo (Harikela) in eastern Bengal. Harikela maintained contact not only with Srilanka but also with some ports in Southeast Asia. Lahiri, Latika., *Chinese Monks in India: Biography of Eminent Monks Who Went to the Western World in Search of the Law during the Great T'ang Dynasty*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986, pp. 94-96.

¹⁶³ Beal, Samuel.,(tr.), op.cit, p-XXXIX.

¹⁶⁴ Rashid, M. Harunur, *The City and Its Environments, Maināmati-Devaparvata: A Survey of Historical Monuments and Sites in Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1997, pp. 233-275.

¹⁶⁵ Elliot and Dowson, (ed.). op.cit, p. 16.

¹⁶⁶ Jahan, Shahnaj Husne, 'Samandar: An Important Centre for Maritime Activities in Bengal', *Journal of Bengal Art*, Vol.5, 2000, p. 238.

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- ¹⁶⁷ Jahan, Shahnaj Husne., *op.cit*, p. 170-172.
- ¹⁶⁸ Ahmad, S. Maqbul., (tr.), *Arabic Classical Accounts of India and China: Book One Al-Masalik Wa'l-Mamalik by Ibn Khurdadhbih and Book Two Akhbar Al-Sin Wa'l-Hind by Sulayman Al-Tajir et Al*, Shimla: Indian Institute of Advance Study, 1989, p. 38-39.
- ¹⁶⁹ Elliot and Dowson, *op.cit*, p. 90-91.
- ¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷¹ Gibb, H.A.R.,(tr.), *op.cit*, p. 246.
- ¹⁷² Chakravarti, Ranabir., *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, p. 181.
- ¹⁷³ Archaeological excavations at different times of Wari and Bateswar were concluded. Cultural content discovered so far from the site indicates that this site had been gradually occupied at a stretch from historical to modern times. Rowletted ware, semi-precious stone beads, and glass beads were especially given importance for their commercial value. Knobbed vessels are additional materials found at Wari-Bateswar which were also important for their commercial value. Dilip Kumar Chakrabarti tried to identify Wari-Bateswar with Ptolemy's Sounagoura. It was possibly the first urban centre in the region. It was a port city and it might have had trade relations with many other cities. It can be said on the basis of above facts, that probably from the 3rd century B.C, Wari-Bateswar had already been integrated into the Bay of Bengal coastal trade network. H.Jahan proposed that Wari-Bateswar's position on the ancient course of Brahmaputra is only to identify that it was an estuarine port. Its cultural materials indicating maritime trade such northern Black Polished Ware, Rouletted Ware, Semi-precious stone beads, glass beads, and knobbed vessels are roughly dated from 3rd century BC to 3rd century AD. Apart from Tāmralipta and Gañge, we do not have any literary evidence that the products and the people are transported from and to this port. But archaeological evidence is available claiming as a sea port of Wari-Bateswar at the initial stage of the Christian era.
- ¹⁷⁴ Datta, Asok., 'Tāmralipta and Gañge-Two Port Cities of Ancient Bengal: Myths and Reality', *Journal of Bengal Art*, Vol.9 &10, 2004-2005, p-122; Sengupta, Gautam., 'Archaeology of Coastal Bengal', in *Tradition and Archaeology: Early Maritime Contacts in the Indian Ocean*, eds. By H.P. Ray and Jean-Francois, New Delhi: Manohar, 1996, pp. 113-128.
- ¹⁷⁵ Sircar, D.C., 'Rakṣhāsakhadi (Sundarban) Plate: Śaka 1118', pp. 43-45.
- ¹⁷⁶ Chakravarti Ranabir, 'Between Villages and Cities: Linkages of Trade in India', in G. Berkemer, Hermann Kulke, Tilman Frasch, and Jürgen Lutt,(eds.), *Explorations in the History of South Asia: Essays in Honour of Dietmar Rothermund*, Delhi: Manohar, 2001, p. 109.

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- ¹⁷⁷ Chakravarti, Ranabir, *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, p. 150.
- ¹⁷⁸ Manu, IV, p. 120.
- ¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 67-68.
- ¹⁸⁰ Kangle, R.P. (ed. and tr.), *op.cit*, p. 83.
- ¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 91, 157.
- ¹⁸² Kauṭilya records different types of roads as follows: *rājamārga* (highway), provincial roads (connected different parts of a province with its administrative headquarters), *hastipatha* (path for elephants), *ratha-patha* (road for chariots), *paśu patha* (path of cattle), *ksudra-paśupatha* (road for smaller animals like sheep etc.), and *manuṣya-patha* (path for men). Mookherjee, R.K., Chandragupta Maurya and His Times, Madras University Sir William Meyer Lectures: 1940-41, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1966, p. 210; cf. Acharya, N.N., 'The Trade Routes and Means of Transport in Ancient India with special reference to Assam', in D.C. Sircar (ed.), *Early Indian Trade and Industry*, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1960, p. 38.
- ¹⁸³ Muller, F. Max and G. Buhler (ed. and tr.), *op.cit*, p. 43.
- ¹⁸⁴ Manu, IV, p. 68.
- ¹⁸⁵ *Rigveda*, X. 59. 10: 85. 16.
- ¹⁸⁶ Dikshiter V.R. Ramchandra (ed. & tr.), *The Silapadikaram*, Madras, 1938, p. 109.
- ¹⁸⁷ Kangle, R.P., (ed.), *op.cit*, p. 201.
- ¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 154.
- ¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 201.
- ¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 144.
- ¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 83.
- ¹⁹² Bishop Bigandet, *The Life or Legend of Gautama, the Buddha of the Burmese*, Rangoon, 1858, p. 101.
- ¹⁹³ Mookerjee, R.K., *Indian Shipping, A History of the Sea-borne Trade and Maritime Activity of the Indians from the Earliest Times*, Bombay: Longmans, Green and Co, 1912, p. 21.
- ¹⁹⁴ Kangle, R.P (tr.), *op.cit*, p. 80-83.
- ¹⁹⁵ Majumdar, N.G., 'Chittagong Copper-plate of Dāmodara', p. 158.
- ¹⁹⁶ *Archaeological Survey of India*, 1922-23, p. 109.
- ¹⁹⁷ Majumdar, N.G., 'Naihati Copper-plate Grant of Vallālasena', p. 78.
- ¹⁹⁸ Mukherjee, R.R., and S.K. Maity, 'Kamauli Copper-plate Grant of Vaidyadeva', p. 381.
- ¹⁹⁹ Majumdar, R.C.,(ed.), *op.cit*, p. 619.

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- ²⁰¹ Sircar, D.C., 'Inscriptions of Chandras of Arakan', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXII, 1957, p. 109; Sircar, D.C., 'Fragmentary Copper-plate Grant from Arakan', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXVII, 1967, pp. 1-66.
- ²⁰² Pargiter, F.E., 'Three copper plate grants from East Bengal', *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXXIX, 1910, p. 201; Sircar, D. C., 'Faridpur Copper-plate Inscription of the time of Dharmāditya-Regnal Year 3', p. 350-354; Sircar, D.C., 'The Kailān Copper Plate Inscriptions of King Śrīdharanarāta of Samata', pp. 221-241.
- ²⁰³ Basak, R.G., 'Madanpur Plate of Śrīchandra: Year 44', pp. 55-56.
- ²⁰⁴ Kielhorn, F., 'Khālimpur plate of Dharmapāladeva', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. IV, 1896-97, pp. 243-253.
- ²⁰⁵ Basak, R.G., 'Madanpur Plate of Śrīchandra: Year 44', p. 56.
- ²⁰⁶ Majudar, N.G., 'Deopārā Inscription of Vijayasena', pp. 42-56.
- ²⁰⁷ Kielhorn, F., 'Khālimpur plate of Dharmapāladeva', pp. 243-251.
- ²⁰⁸ Velankar, H.D., (ed.), *Raghuvamśa of Kālidāsa*, Bombay: Nirnaya Sagara Press, 1948, Canto 4, 36.
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- ²¹⁰ Sen, Gour Pada, *op.cit*, pp. 197.
- ²¹¹ *Rigveda*, VII. 1. 30.
- ²¹² *Rigveda*, 64.10; X. 93. 7.
- ²¹³ Vāṇaparva, 61.122
- ²¹⁴ Śāṅkhayāna Srauta Sūtra. HI. 4. 9. XVI. 1. 17; *The Sūtra* XVI. 1. 18.
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- ²²⁶ Bhattasali, N.K., 'The Ghugrahāti Copper-plate Inscription of Samāchāradeva', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XVIII, 1925-26, pp. 74-86.
- ²²⁷ Sābhar emerged firstly as *navyāvākāśikā* and then as *vVaṅgasāgara-sambhāṇḍāriyaka* of ancient and early medieval Vaṅga. Trade at this centre and its riverine linkages with the Bengal coast were largely responsible for its being considered as an administrative centre under early rulers of Vaṅga and also the Chandras. Around the sixth century AD it emerged as a riverine port, while in the third quarter of the tenth century it had a *sambhāṇḍāriyaka*, i.e. it probably offered storing /warehousing facilities. Chakravarti, Ranabir, *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, p. 151.
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