

Buddhist Accounts of Maritime Crossing in the Southern Seas



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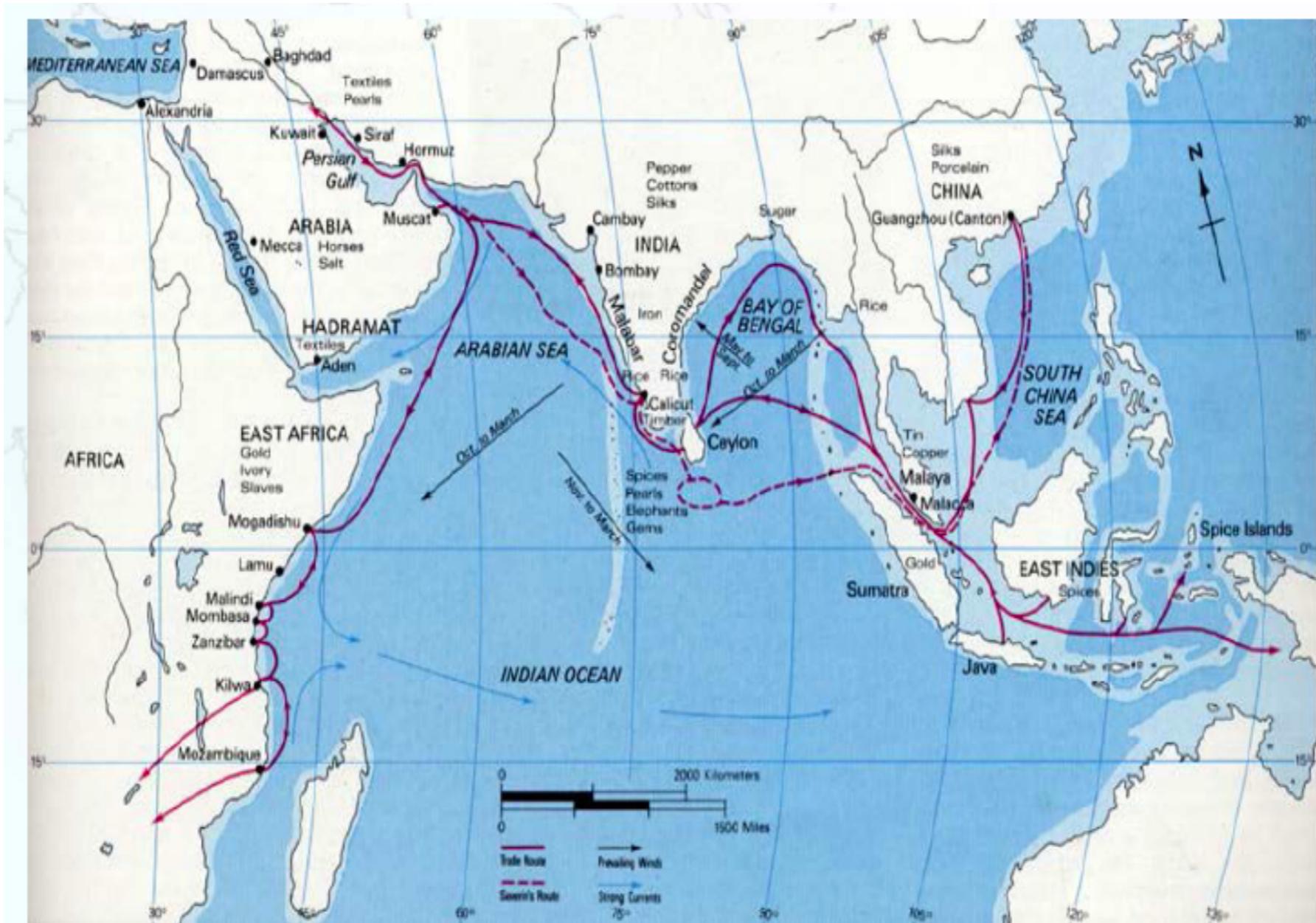


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Monsoon winds and trade goods

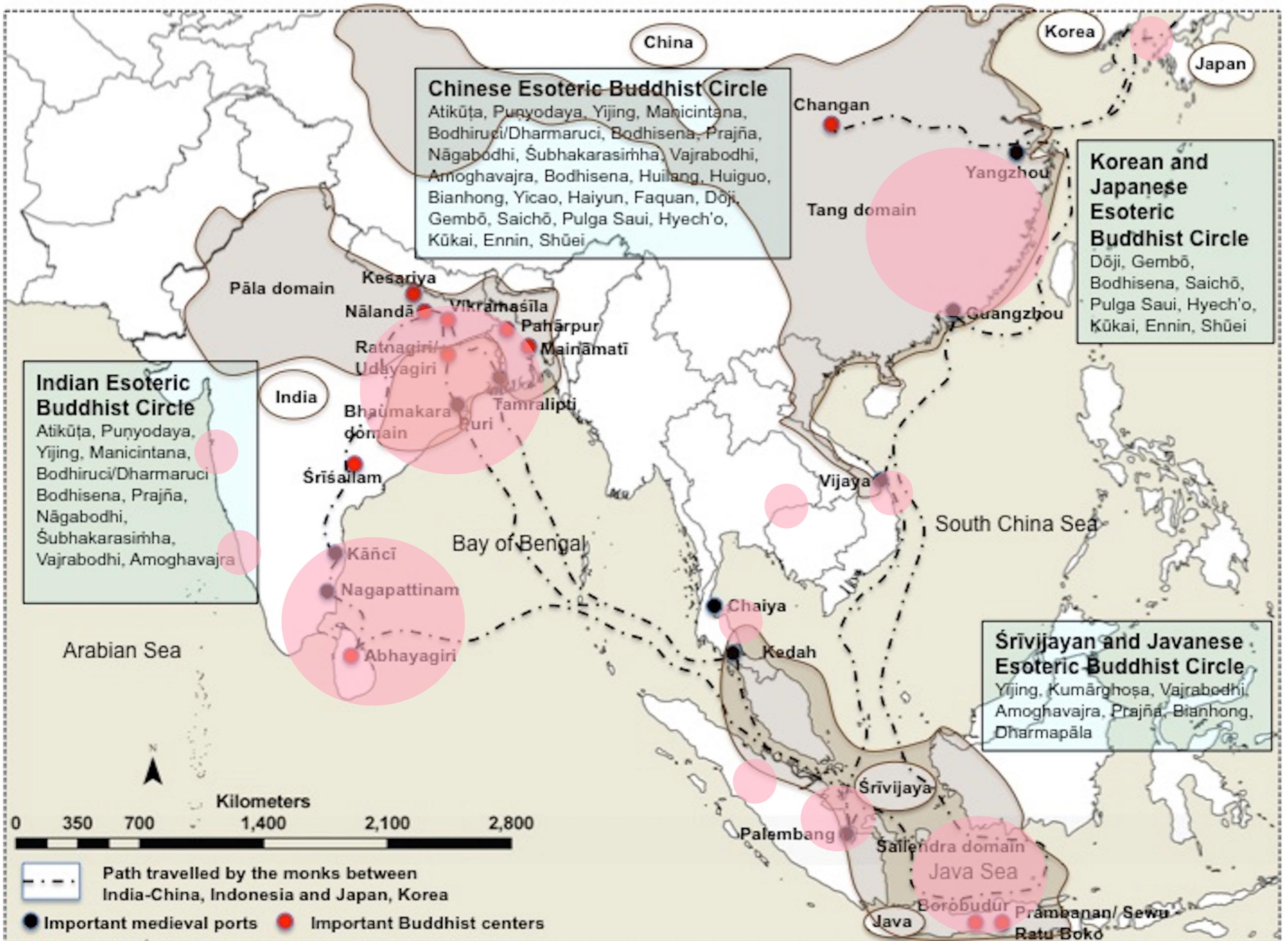
George Cœdès: eastward expansion of Indic civilization is to a considerable degree the result

of a continual outflow of seamen, originally recruited from among 'merchants of the sea', of whom many types are depicted in ancient Buddhist literature (1968: 21).

3rd century AD: steady traffic of itinerant monks travelling both eastwards and westwards along the sea paths linking the swathe of territory comprised within the Indian Subcontinent and Japan.

It would seem that most of the monks travelling both ways between India and China preferred the maritime route to the overland one, or at least sought to include a maritime leg in their journey, which usually included stopovers in Sri Lanka and Nusantara.

No less than 25 monks are recorded to have arrived in China in such way between 420 and 479; 66 individuals involved in the maritime transmission of Buddhism to China, out of the total estimated number of 103 monks.



Establishment of female **bhikṣunīsaṅgha* in China via Sri Lanka in the course of just a decade in the 5th century by the South Asian monks **Guṇavarman* (Qiunabamo 求那跋摩, 367–431) and Saṅghavarman.

Central Asian monk Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 704–774) sent back a Sanskrit text from China to his old master Ratnabodhi in Sri Lanka after translating it.

Indian Parāmiti: reached Canton by 705 and went back his homeland by boat

Korean Hyecho (fl. 8th century, one of Amoghavajra's disciples): travelled to India twice within his lifespan—at least once via the maritime route.

Jātaka tales and Sino-Japanese and Tibetan biographies of monks travelling from China to India and/or vice-versa: perils of sea travel.

Imagined entities/supernatural beings (marine monsters, Nāgas, etc.); actual dangers, i.e. storms, unfavourable winds, pirates, and unskilled or unscrupulous crews.

Faxian, *Vajrabodhi/*Vajrabuddhi, Amoghavajra, Prājña, Mañicintana, Hien-chen/Ganjin (688–763) experienced multiple setbacks.



Development in coastal areas of “Saviour Cults” focusing on the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara, Tārā (especially in her *aṣṭamahābhaya* aspect), and Mahāpratisarā as protectors of travellers, and of sailors in particular, against the perils encountered along their journeys.

Pre-7th century Buddhist texts such as Jātakas, the *Divyāvadāna*, the *Mahāvastu*, and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*.

Faxian

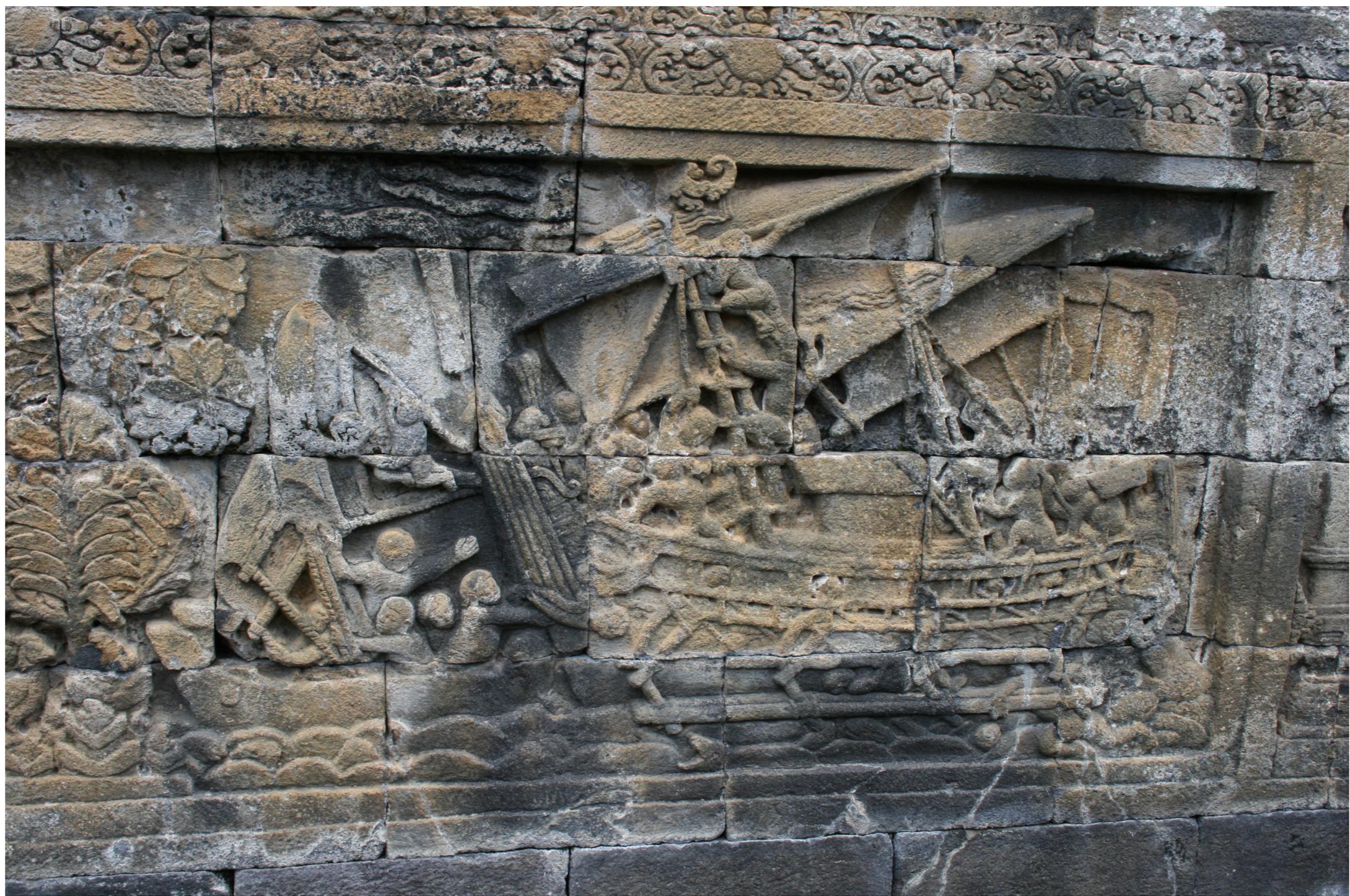
Faxian 法顯 (337/342–ca. 422) was among the first Chinese monks to have reached India by land and sea travel. The account of his journey, the travelogue *Gaoseng-Faxian-Zhuan* 高僧法顯傳 (*The Biography of the Eminent Monk Faxian*) is the earliest in its genre. Some portions narrate his disastrous passage to China via Sumatra or Java and the narrow avoidance of catastrophe—shipwreck first, then a hostile crew.

Spent some years in Northeastern India (i.e., Nālandā) and Sri Lanka to acquire copies of various important Sanskrit texts.

In 408 or 409, travelled on a mercantile ship (*yānapatra*) from the Eastern Indian port of Tamralipti to Sri Lanka, and from there on a large boat to China via Southeast Asia.

Between Ceylon and Sumatra, on the third day after setting off, the ship ran into a storm that lasted for thirteen days.

After having received these Sanskrit-texts (in Ceylon) (Faxian) embarked on a big trade-vessel which had about 200 persons on board; in the back a smaller vessel was tied (to the big one), because travelling by sea was dangerous in case that the big vessel got shipwrecked. They encountered favourable monsoon winds heading east; but after three days they encountered a violent storm and water penetrated the vessel. **The merchants wanted to enter the small vessel, but the people in the small vessel feared that this would mean too many people and cut the rope.** The merchants feared for their lives and were afraid that the ship would be filled with water. So they threw all the unnecessary cargo overboard into the sea. **Faxian, too, threw his water-pot, his water-bowl and other stuff into the water, but he was afraid that the merchants would get rid of his sūtras and statues. So he called upon Avalokitasvara [Guanshiyin 觀世音] with devotion and took his refuge in the whole saṅgha of China saying:** “I have gone so far in order to seek the dharma I (now) beg for this immense stream of water to be calmed”. After having been in this storm for thirteen days they (finally) reached the shore of an island. After the high tide had gone out again they saw the leak in the ship and repaired it. After that they set off again. (Deeg, 2010a, p. 156)



The 13-day storm mentioned by Faxian probably took place in between Sri Lanka and the Andaman or Nicobar islands, where the ship is likely to have eventually landed.

The detail about the smaller boat attached through a rope to the main vessel calls to mind a relief representing just such a tender boat attached to a larger vessel on the 8th-century Borobudur in Central Java.

Faxian stayed in this country for about five months until he went aboard of another merchant ship with about two hundred people. They loaded food supplies for fifty days and put to sea on the sixteenth day of the fourth month. After Faxian had settled on the ship it headed north for Guangzhou.

After one month at sea, on the stroke of the second hour at night they encountered a black wind and vigorous rainfall. All the merchants were afraid. **Again Faxian begged Avalokitasvara [Guanshiyin 觀世音] and the *saṅgha* of China for support.** At daybreak all the brahmins met and discussed the matter saying: “It is because this *bhikṣu* is with us, that we are in such trouble and great misery. **We should maroon the *bhikṣu* on an island.** We do not need to be in such danger because of one person”. But Faxian’s *dānapati* (lay supporter) said: “If you maroon the *bhikṣu* then you have to do the same to me. Otherwise kill me. If you maroon this Sramana and I reach China (country of the Han), I will go to the ruler and report on you. The ruler of China is a supporter of the Buddhist dharma and pays reverence to the *bhikṣu* and to the *saṅgha*”. Thereupon the merchants hesitated and did not dare to abandon Faxian.

At that time it was continuously clouded; although the officers of the ship observed (the sky) they committed (navigational) mistakes. After more than seventy days they ran out of food supplies and water. They used seawater for cooking and distributed fresh water in portions of two *sheng* a person, but they still ran out of it. The merchants discussed the situation and said: “Under normal conditions the journey to Guangzhou lasts fifty days. It is not normal that after so many days we still have not arrived there!” (Ibid., p. 156–157)

Faxian

[佛國記 T51: 866a7–14] (Hu & von Hinüber, 2015, p. 315)

[1] Often there were pirates at sea and if one encountered them one could not come out of it unscathed.

[1] There are many pirates on the sea. If one encounters them, then the whole (crew) will perish.

[2] The big ocean extends without limitation and no direction is recognised; only the movement of the sun, the moon and the stars can be observed.

[2] The great ocean spreads itself out endlessly, so that one has no sense of direction. Only by observing the sun, moon and stars was it possible to proceed on course.

[3] When the sky is covered or if it rains the ship is driven along without even having these means of orientation.

[3] If it is cloudy and rainy, (the ship) is driven onwards by the wind without any guidance.

[4] After nightfall one sees huge waves grapple with each other as if they were fire-coloured giant turtles, crocodiles (or) other kinds of sea-monsters. The merchants were very frightened because they did not know in which direction they sailed.

[4] In the darkness after the nighttime, one only sees the great waves wrestling each other and emitting a bright color like that of fire, with giant turtles, crocodiles and other sea monsters. (In such a situation) the merchants became very frightened and didn't know in which direction they should navigate.

[5] The ocean was deep and (seemed) bottomless and there was no place where they could cast anchor. Only when the sky brightens up could one again recognise the direction, reposition the ship and continue the journey. If reefs are encountered there is no way to survive.

[5] Because of the depth of the bottomless ocean, there is nowhere to drop the (perpender) stone. The right direction can only be found again when the sky becomes light. Then the (seamen) can reorient (the ship) and navigate it in the right direction. If she collides with any hidden rock, there is no way to survive.

[正法華經 T9:129a2–10] (Hu & von Hinüber, 2015, p. 316)

Imagine that millions upon millions of people set out into the deep and bottomless ocean in order to search gold, silver and different pearls; the legendary wish-pearl like the bright moon; crystal and lapis lazuli; mother of pearl and agate; coral and amber; and their ship was fully loaded with those treasures. Suppose a powerful tempest had shipwrecked their vessel in whirling waves like black mountains, crossing the area of demons Yakṣa and encountering the fish–devils Makara. If only one person among the crew pray to the dread and goodness of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and calls out his name, all of passengers would be freed from the distress and demons. Because of this (mastery) he is called Avalokiteśvara.

Compare the Sanskrit *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* 289 (Wogihara/Tsuchida, 1958, p. 362), which explicitly mention the “demonness’ island” (*rākṣasīdvīpa*):

sacet punaḥ kulaputra sāgara-madhye... sa potas teṣāṃ kālikāvātena rākṣasīdvīpe kṣiptaḥ syāt tasmimś ca ca kaścīd evaikaḥ syāt yo ’valokiteśvarasya bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasyākṛandaṃ kuryāt sarve te parimucyeramś tasmād rākṣasīdvīpāt.

Compare 24.6: *saci sāgaradurgi pātayen nāgamakarasurabhūtālaye / smarato avalokiteśvaram jalarāje na kadāci sīdati*, “If one happens to fall into the dreadful ocean, the abode of Nāgas, marine monsters and demons, he has but to think of Avalokiteśvara, and he shall never sink down in the king of waters”.

Recurrent trope in Buddhist hagiographical literature.

Huijiao 慧皎 (approx. 497–554) reports that the South Asian monk *Guṇabhadra 求那跋陀羅 (394–468), who arrived in Guangzhou in 435, prayed to Avalokiteśvara during his sea voyage from Sri Lanka to China, when there was neither wind at sea nor drinking water on board.

*Guṇabhadra collaborated at Daochang temple with Baoyun 釋寶 (376–449), a junior friend of Faxian who accompanied him during part of his journey to India. The detail about Avalokiteśvara in *Guṇabhadra's account might have been inspired by either Baoyun or Faxian himself.

“for future studies on the travel journals of Chinese pilgrims to India, such as Faxian, Xuanzang (玄奘) and Yijing 義淨, their relation with the canonical scriptures should be taken more into account, as most of the scriptures were thoroughly studied by these learned monks” (Hu & von Hinüber, 2015, p. 318).

Ample evidence of intertextuality and cross-pollination between genres—the travelogues presenting an intriguing mix of literary images and factual data

Luxiang's biography of *Vajrabuddhi, who travelled by sea from India to China via the Indonesian Archipelago (i.e. Sumatra and Java):

I set forth from the western country [India] to cross the southern ocean [to Java] in a fleet of more than thirty great ships, each one carrying more than five or six hundred persons. Once, when we were crossing in convoy in the very middle of the great ocean we ran into a typhoon. All the ships we depended upon were tossed about [like drift-wood], and the ship I was on was about to be inundated. At that time I always kept the two scriptures [i.e. the full and abridged versions of the *Vajraśekhara*] I was bringing nearby so that I could receive and keep them and do the offerings. **Now, when the captain saw that the ship was about to sink, everything on board was cast into the ocean, and in a moment of fright the one-hundred-thousand-verse text was flung into the ocean, and only the superficial text was saved.** At that time I aroused my mind in meditation, doing the technique for eliminating disasters, and the typhoon abated, and for perhaps more than a quarter mile around the ship wind and water did not move. All on board took refuge in me, and bit by bit we got to this shore and arrived in this country. (Sundberg & Giebel, 2011, p. 147).

Only the single ship carrying Vajrabuddhi was able to escape this disaster because he recited the [*Mahāpratisarā-dhāraṇī*] (*Suiqiu*, 隨求). These events occurred when the master was twenty days short of reaching the Chinese coast, thus probably in Southeast Asia

Chinese monk Xuanzang (600?–664) lost some scriptures while he was crossing the Indus river on a boat on his way back to his homeland:

His scriptures and images were loaded in a boat with his companions to sail across the river, while the Master waded through the river on his elephant. He had appointed a man in the boat to take care of the scriptures and some seeds [...]. When the boat sailed to midstream, a turbulent gale suddenly arose. The waves tossed the boat and almost overturned it. The man who was asked to look after the scriptures was so frightened that he fell overboard, but was rescued by the other passengers. Fifty bundles of scriptures and flower seeds were lost, while his other property narrowly escaped damage. (Li 1995, p. 157).

And:

As the master had lost some scriptures while crossing the Indus, he sent someone, after arriving in this country, to Kucha and Kashgar to seek new texts. (ibid., p. 167).

When I was crossing the Indus [on my way back home], I lost a pack of scriptures. I am now sending you herewith a list of the lost texts, of which I request that you send me new copies by some convenient messenger. (ibid., p. 233).

Amoghavajra's biography:

In the twelfth moon of the twenty-ninth year he left Nan-hai on board a K'un-lun [i.e. Malay] ship. When they reached the boundary of Kalinga [i.e. Java] they met with a heavy storm. Each merchant, being terrified, tried to propitiate [the gods] by the method of his own country, but without result. All of them knelt down to pray for help and protection. Hui-pien and other disciples also wept bitterly. Amoghavajra said: "I have a plan. Don't worry". Thereupon, with a five-fingered *vajra* of Bodhicitta in his right hand and the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in his left hand, he recited once the *Mahāpratisarādhāraṇī* and performed the rite [required for this *dhāraṇī*]. The wind subsided immediately and the sea became calm and clear. Later they came across a large whale, which, emerging out of the sea, emitted jets of water like a mountain. It was even more threatening than the previous calamity and the merchant were ready to give up their lives. Amoghavajra performed the rites as before, and told Hui-pien to recite the *So-chieh lung-wang ching*. At once all the dangers disappeared. (Chou, 1945, p. 290).

Standard trope match with information found in the Taisho canon that in 758 Amoghavajra actually submitted a copy of the *Dhāraṇī of the Great Protectress who is Universally Radiant, Pure, Incandescent, a Wish-granting Gem, and the Sealed Essence of the Invincible King of Mantras* (普遍光明清淨熾盛如意寶印心無能勝大明王大隨求陀羅尼經, that is the *Mahāpratisarādhāraṇī*) to Emperor Suzong (T2120.829b2–21) to be carried as an amulet. This confirms that Amoghavajra had access to a version of this text, and transmitted it to East (and, possibly, Southeast) Asia.

Mahāpratisarāvidyārājñī:

Fear not, fear not, merchant gentlemen. Calm down. I shall save you from this ocean of trouble... I have the famous great spell, called ‘Amulet’ [i.e. the Mahāpratisarādhāraṇī]. It subdues all the wicked, being of great power and might. I am going to save you from this intense suffering and great danger with it”.

Then, at that time, the great trader painted the Great Amulet, Great Queen of Spells, and fixed it at the top of a flagstaff. Immediately after the Great Amulet had been fixed at the top of the flagstaff, all those Timiṇilas saw the ship transform into a single mass of flame. Then those Nāgas, becoming benevolent, approached them and began to pay them reverence. The Timiṇilas, having been burnt by the might of this Great Amulet, Queen of Spells, fled and were destroyed. The merchants were led by those great Nāgas to a distinguished Great-Jewel Island.

This great spell, the Great Amulet, is endowed with wisdom and it is empowered by all the Tathāgatas. This is why, Great Brahmā, it is called a great spell. It should, by all means, be held fixed at the top of a flagstaff. It calms all types of winds, cold-spells, untimely clouds, lightning and thunderbolts... (Hidas, 2012, pp. 222–224):



Popularity of Mahāpratisarā and the spell she personifies, the *Mahāpratisarādhāraṇī*, among Buddhist travellers—monks and traders alike—is suggested by textual and material evidence.

Mahāpratisarā was especially popular in the monastic institutions of eastern India, and was made the object of a nearly pan-Asian cult. Various textual and iconographical attestations of this protective deity are documented in Java (8th–10th century), as well as in Bali, Sumatra, and Mindanao in the Philippines.

A gold foil recovered from the ca. 10th-century Cirebon shipwreck off the Java north coast, containing a *dhāraṇī* addressed to the goddess personifying the spell.

1) *Mañicinta(na), who arrived in Loyang in 693, and who first translated (a lacunose version of) the *Mahāpratisarādhāraṇī* into Chinese in the same year (T1154).

*Mañicintana is credited with the Chinese rendering of the *Amoghapāśakalparājasūtra* (不空罽索陀羅尼自在王咒經, *Bukongjuansuo tuoluoni zizaiwang zhou jing*, *Scripture of the Amoghapāśadhāraṇī, Sovereign Lord of Spells*, T.1097); Amoghapāśa is a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara whose lasso saves those in danger.

A report by Su Ting on *Mañicintana's maritime travel to China narrates about the latter's encounter with a statue of Avalokiteśvara in the Southern Seas.

2) *Prajña (Boruo 般若, alt. Bolaruo 般刺若, 744–ca. 810), who shipwrecked and got stranded on a beach, thereby losing all his scriptures except a manuscript of the **Ṣaṭpāramitāsūtra* that was lying there, and which he eventually translated after he arrived in China (T788).

Introduction of a Sanskrit commentary to the *Tārāstuti* by Candradāsa, relating an anecdote regarding the composition of the hymn:

“This Master Candradāsa, when he was onboard of a ship at sea while the ships were shattered through winds etc., uttered with great devotion, in order to name the subject of the Stotra (*stotrārtha*), [devoted] to the noble Tārā, in the beginning [i.e. as its first verse] the promise to express [Tārā’s] virtues that surpass all the three worlds; [this he did by] indicating the connection [the reason for composing the work?], the subject, the purpose, etc. Through the excellence of his words the water retreated from that place”. (Hanneder 2008, p. 176)

A similar legend is associated with Candragomin, who authored a series of *stotras* to Tārā preserved in the Tibetan canon; these *stotras* describe shipwreck and other dangers of sea-travel (cf. *Sragdharāstotra* by [the Kashmirian] Sarvajñamitra)

Atiśa's biography:

I, the monk Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna, for thirteen months was on board a ship, on my way into the presence of the guru of Golden Island. When five months had passed [on board], a son of the gods (*devaputra*), Maheśvara, in order to destroy my aspiration to achieve enlightenment for the sake of others (*bodhicitta*), caused a storm to move in, blowing in the wrong direction. Changing himself into the great Makara [“Fish Swallower”] sea monster, he obstructed [our passage] in front. From the sky he caused a thunderbolt to fall right on top of me. At that time, due to my meditating on loving-kindness [wishing all beings to be happy] and compassion [wishing no living being to experience suffering], the tempest was completely calmed and I saw six great bolts of lightning stuck motionless in the sky.

Yet the Makara sea monster was still blocking [our progress] in front, and the surface of the ocean was being churned about by this strong wind with such force that this ship of ours, too, like a prayer flag flapping in a strong wind, was rocking and rolling all about. One moment it was lifted toward the sky, the next moment it seemed to be plunging into the very depths of the ocean. The four great banners, one in each direction, broke off. Although four massive iron weights had been let down [as anchors] into the depths of the ocean from each of the four directions, it was as if a massive drum was being beaten, with a howling noise, a thundering sound, light [at the horizon] and great flashes of lightning erupting, all of which made every one of the companions extremely frightened. As they were thus trembling in fear, again I entered into equipoise, meditating on loving-kindness and compassion. (Decleer, 1995, p. 535)

For twenty-one days we were utterly unable to continue, but as soon as we were truly safe from further fear, on each of the four directions [of the ship] we raised the great wind banners, we hauled up the four massive Iron [anchor weights]. Then, as an opportune wind arose for one and a half months without break by day or night, we remained on the great ocean and proceeded.

After seven months had passed, again, from in front, a storm arose and we were driven back by the wind over the distance of one day's travel. I prayed to my guru, to the precious three, and to the Dākinīs and dharma protectors. Soon storm subsided by itself, yet a strong wind in the right direction failed to arise. Because of the [little] merit of the sentient beings [on board], half a month was lost there, which I meditated on the to enlightenment based on loving-kindness and compassion. Eventually a right wind arose and we took off again. It took us a further two months and twenty-six days to reach the shore across the ocean. (Decleer, 1995, p. 540)

Imaginific elements; no factual space and time. The storm and danger of shipwreck appears to be just a pretext to strike and attack to the enemies of Buddhism in the Subcontinent and overseas.

Lively and quite accurate depiction of an actual incident at sea. Mention of the massive weights used as anchors to stabilise the ship during the tempest and throwing overboard of anchor-stones fastened to the ship with chains during a storm: cf. the Sanskrit *Kathāsaritsāgara* and the Prakrit *Samāicca*. It must have reflected an actual practice in seamanship.

“Nepalese” boat. A Newar reminiscence of Atiśa’s sea journey to insular Southeast Asia may be the vignette dedicated to an image of the Buddha Dīpaṅkara—also considered the protector of the sailors—in Java (f. 2r) in the early 11th-century illustrated manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* (CUL Add. 1643).

Iain Sinclair (2016, p. 165) has noted that the identification of an image of the Buddha Dīpaṅkara at Thaṃ Bahī, the monastery founded by Atiśa, with the merchant Siṃhalasārthavāha (“caravan-head Siṃhala”) of *Divyāvadāna* 36 etc. may be a vestigial memory of Atiśa’s journeys.

Sanskrit and Newar version of the *Siṃhalasārtha Avadāna* contain a narrative of shipwreck. Merchant travelling with 499 companions, having shipwrecked on the river Brahmaputra reaches the country of Ratnapura in Tambradvīpa inhabited by flesh-eating demonesses (*rākṣasī*), and manages to save himself thanks to the intervention of Avalokiteśvara.

Sejarah Melayu: Nila Utama's sea voyage

When they were come out into the open sea, a storm arose and the ship began to fill with water. Bale as they might they could not clear her and the boatswain gave order to lighten the ship. But though much was thrown overboard, they still could not bale the ship dry. She was by now close to Tělok Blanga, and the boatswain said to Sri Tri Buana, “It seems to me, your Highness, that it is because of the crown of kingship that the ship is foundering. All else has been thrown overboard, and if we do not do likewise with this crown we shall be helpless with the ship”. And Sri Tri Buana replied, “Overboard with it then!” And the crown was thrown overboard. Thereupon the storm abated, and the ship regained her buoyancy and was rowed to land (Brown, 1952, p. 30).

Familiar narratological elements: storm and need to jettison the precious cargo to avert shipwreck.

*Vajrabuddhi - *Vajraśekhara Tantra*, Nila Utama - royal diadem.
Legitimation: founder of tantric lineage vs royal dynasty.

Braginsky detected a nucleus of shared narrative motifs between the *Sejarah Melayu* and other Classical Malay texts, as well as (East) Javanese Pañji romances (Braginsky 2005, pp. 119–126, and note 37; 2015, p. 94, fn. 35).

Motif of the shipwreck with that of the drowned crown and the prince who is thrown by the waves to the shore of the country, where he marries the local princess and becomes king. In order to do so, the hero often becomes a character of low social status, and then is upgraded to his new kingly status. This basic myth, belonging to an (archaic?) “royal cluster”, has been transformed in the course of time under the impact of religious and cultural ideas (Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic).

Nila Utama-Tri Buana episode in the *Sejarah Melayu* could have been inspired by textual accounts or oral narratives popular in Sumatra and Java during the Hindu-Buddhist period.

Braginsky (2005, esp. Chapter 2) and Wolters (1970, esp. Chapter 8): connection of this text and its author (a genealogist/performer) with Śrīvijaya. Kwa (n.d.) has regarded the *Sejarah Melayu* as a covertly Buddhist text, permeated by a worldview and political ideology stemming from the type of Sanskritic Mahāyāna/Mantranaya Buddhism practised in Śrīvijaya.

Nila Utama is the “ruler of the whole of Suvarṇabhūmi”, and declares him to be the son of Sañ Sapurba, ruler of Palembang, and brother of Sang Maniaka. The names of these three characters apparently derive from those of the three heavenly nymphs (*apsaras*) Suprabhā, Tīlottamā and Menakā featuring in Sanskrit texts, such as the *Mahābhārata*, as well as the 11th-century East Javanese *kakavin Arjunavivāha*, as part of Indra’s entourage.

Hooker and Hooker (2001, p. 40):

“at various times and in a number of places, elements of the *SM* narrative were selected for incorporation into other narratives and ‘localized’”, and therefore the various versions of the *Sejarah Melayu* need to be considered in terms of a “larger corpus of narratives, each of which is aligned with some basic tenets of the SM tradition, but which add their own local inputs”.

Similar case of localisation in narratives of the *Siṃhala Jātaka*, *Divyāvadāna*, *Kāraṇḍavyūha*. Could the author of the *Sejarah Melayu* have borrowed the account of aversion of shipwreck from an earlier source—which might in turn have derived from a Mahāyāna scripture, a Jātaka, or even a monks’ travelogue—, reworking it in an original way and stripping it out of the Buddhist element so as to suit the Islamic fashion of his time?



In 671, the Chinese monk Yijing praised the high level of Buddhist scholarship he found in neighbouring Śrīvijaya (Sumatra), where he stopped—en-route from Guangzhou to Nālandā and from there back to China—to read Sanskrit Sūtras and learn Malay:

'If a Chinese priest wishes to go to the West in order to hear (lectures) and read (the original), he had better stay here [i.e. in the city of Bhoga, Śrīvijaya] one or two years and practice the proper rules and then proceed to Central India' (Takakusu 1896:xxxiv).

Bukit Larangan' or the Forbidden Hill: symbolic representation of the Mount Potala of Avalokitesvara for Sri Tri Buana to relocate his 'lion-throne.'

Sri Tri Buana: « man of prowess »/aspirant to rulership and quintessential incarnation of the Godhead.

Transmission of 'foundation myth' of divine genealogy and historic ancestry from Palembang to Melaka, and subsequently, Johor. Both Seri Teri Buana and Paramesvara landed in Singapore after leaving Palembang.

Motif of crown.

Suvarṇadvīpa

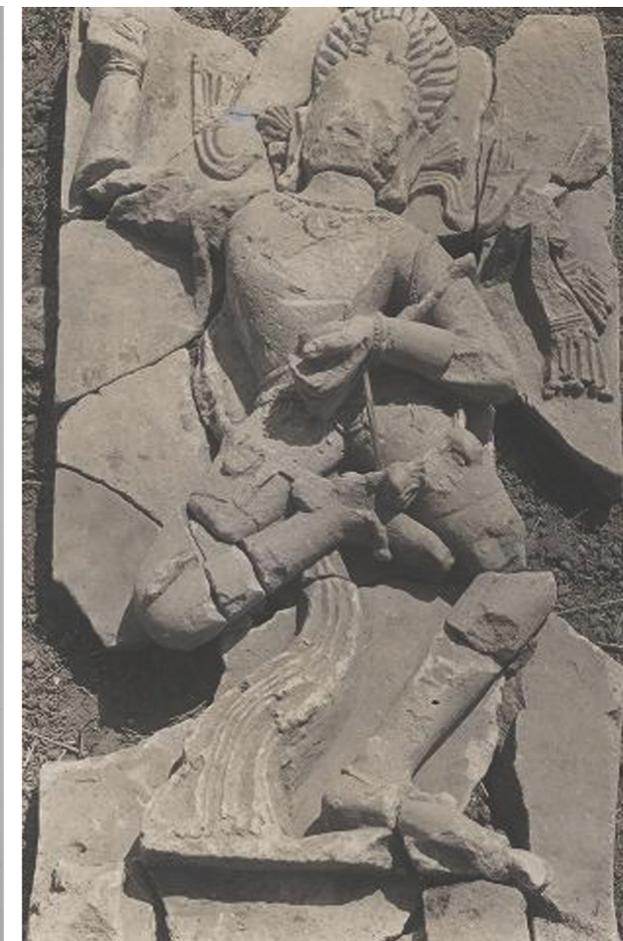
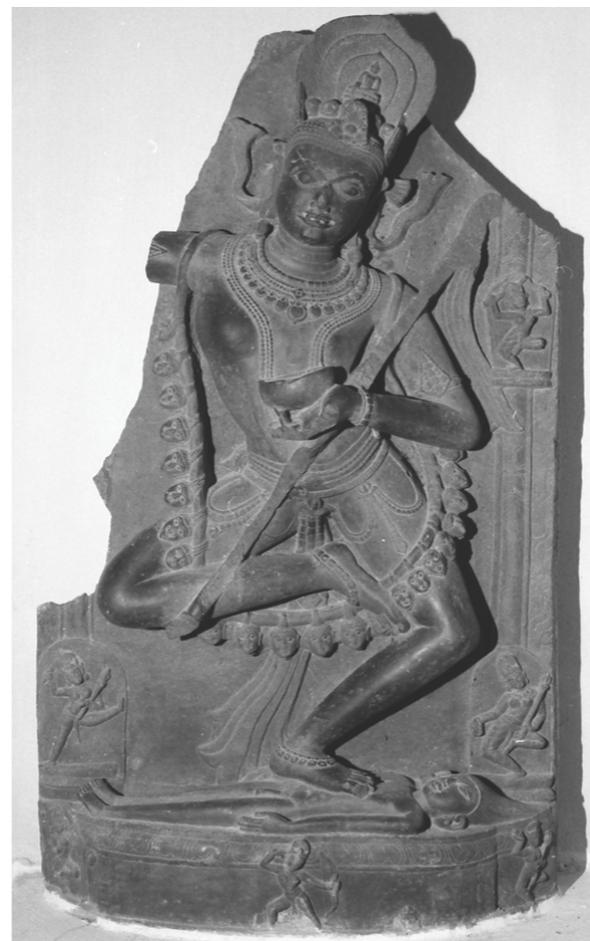


Sumatra (and Cambodia) in the 11th–13th centuries were centres of Hevajra/Heruka cults

Fragments of *Hevajratantra* in *dhāraṇīs* and reference to Hevajra cult in inscriptions.

Statue of Hevajra from Padang Lawas

Netravibhaṅga commentary on *Hevajratantra* attributed to Dharmakīrti of Suvarṇadvīpa





Ādityavarman's « Buddhist Bhairava » / Mahākāla?

14th-century inscription of Saruaso II, which praises the crown prince Anaṅgavarman, son of Ādityavarman, the last line of which mentions his “daily meditation on Hevajra” (*hevajrānityāsmṛtiḥ*).

Ādityavarman himself may have followed the same ideology and ritual technology adopted earlier by Kublai Khan and Kṛtanagara, who equated themselves to the central demonic/warring deities of the *maṇḍalas* of the *Guhyasamāja* or the *Hevajra*.

Malay royal ceremonies: Dagger *kṣurikā-
maṇḍākinī*



Thank you

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