GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

I.

THE NICOBAR AND ANDAMAN ISLANDS

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Under the above title we intend to publish separate monographies on Chinese geographical questions, which may serve as materials for a complete treatise of ancient Chinese Geography.

Râkcha-islands 羅 刹 山 *Nicobar-islands*.

The Nicobars, also called Sombrero-islands, from the hat-like form of one of these islands, are situated west of Sumatra in 8° 0' N. and 93° 0' E.

They are generally known by the Chinese under the name of *Râkchas* or Demons who devour men, from the belief that their inhabitants were anthropophagi. In A.D. 607 the Emperor of China *Yang-ti* had sent an envoy to Siam, who also reached the country of the *Râkchas* ¹⁾).

According to *Tu-yen's T'ung-tien* ²⁾), the Nicobars lie east of Poli ³⁾).

1) 煬帝大業三年遣使赤土國、至于羅刹。

Pien-i-tien, Chap. CI.

2) Wylie, Notes on Chinese literature, p. 55.

3) E. coast of Sumatra. For *east* read *west*. Cf. Groeneveldt's remark in his "Notes on the Malay Archipelago", p. 84.

Its inhabitants are very ugly, having red hair, black bodies, teeth like beasts and claws like hawks. Sometimes they traded with *Lin-yih* (Champa), but then at night; in day-time they covered their faces. In A.D. 607 the emperor Yang-ti sent *Chang-tsün* a. o. to Siam, when he also went to the Nicobars ⁴).

According to the "General Topography of Canton" ⁵), the land of the *Rākchas* ⁶) lies east (read *west*) of Poli. Its people are very ugly, having red hair, black bodies, beastlike teeth and hawklike nails. When they sometimes trade with the people of *Lin-yih*, they come at night and cover their faces. Their country produces carbuncles which are like crystals. When one holds this pearls at midday over some tinder, the fire immediately springs from it ⁷).

The same custom of obtaining fire is told of the inhabitants of Poli ⁸).

Every transparent stone, if ground down at the sides and thicker in the middle, forms a natural lens whereby the rays of the sun may be concentrated to a burning point sufficiently hot to light tinder; even a flake of ice cut into the form of a lens may

4) 按杜氏通典羅刹國在婆利之東。其人極陋。朱髮、黑身、獸牙、鷹爪。時與林邑作市。輒以夜。晝日則掩其面。隋煬帝大業三年遣使常駿等使赤土國、至羅刹。

5) Wylie, Notes, p. 36.

6) According to Mannert's *Geographie der Griechen und Römer*, Vol. V, p. 259, the *Agathu Daemonos* (The islands of the good Demons) of Ptolemy are the Nicobars. In fact the natives are very good devils. The greek *Daemonos* is of course only a translation of the sanscrit name *Rākchas* (Demon).

7) 按廣東通志婆利東有羅刹國。其人極陋。朱髮、黑身、獸牙、鷹爪。時與林邑人作市、以夜而來、自掩其面。其國出火珠、狀如水晶。日午時以珠承影取艾依之、卽火出。

8) Cf. Groeneveldt's "Notes on the Malay Archipelago", p. 83.

serve as a burning-glass⁹⁾). The old Chinese made use of such lenses, as I have shown in my "Uranographie chinoise", p. 142, and in my great Dutch and Chinese Dictionary, s. v. BRANDGLAS.

This is all the Chinese authors tell us about these islands. But I wish to call the attention to another name which is incidentally mentioned by the Chinese in their description of *Lambri* (南淳利國): that of 帽山 or "Hat-island", which has been identified by Groeneveldt (Notes, pp. 99–100) with the islands *Bras* or *Nasi*, lying quite close upon the coast of Achin.

The passage translated by Groeneveldt is taken from the *Ying-yai Shêng-lan* (瀛涯勝覽) by *Ma-koan* (馬觀) and runs thus: 國之西北、海內、有一太平預峻山。半日可到。名帽山。之西大海、正是西洋也。名那沒梨洋。西來過洋船隻俱雙此山爲准。

Groeneveldt translates this:

"At the north-west of this country, in the sea, at a distance "of half a day, is a flat mountain¹⁰⁾, called the Hat-island; the "sea at the west of it is the great ocean and is called the Ocean "of Lambri. Ships coming from the west all take this island as a "landmark".

In the corrected version of this book, given in the *Pien-i-tien*, this passage runs thus:

西北大海中有平頂巨山。半日可至。曰帽山。海乃西洋也。曰那沒黎。船皆以此山爲指南。

9) 削冰令圓起、以向日、以艾承其影、則有火。Fide 博物志。

10) Groeneveldt's translation of the characters 太平預峻山 by "a flat mountain" is not correct. They mean "the lofty (峻) mountain (山) of Peaceful Foreboding" (太平預), on account of its being the safe landmark for the scamen.

To the northwest (of Lambri), in the ocean, is a flat-topped big mountain, which can be reached in half a day, and is called Hat-island. The sea (there) is the Indian ocean, called *Naburi*. All the ships take this mountain as their compass.

In the outlandish history of the Ming-dynasty (明外史) we have another version, viz.:

西北海中有山甚高大、曰帽山。其西復大海名那沒黎洋。西來洋船俱望此山爲準, "At the north-west, in the sea, is a very high and big mountain; the great sea west of it is called the Naburi-ocean¹¹⁾. Seaships coming from the west all look out for this mountain to direct their course".

All these descriptions agree in saying that this island had a high, lofty and big mountain, with a flat top. Now this is not the case with the islands *Pula Bras* and *Pulo Nasi*, which are so low that the Dutch have been obliged to build a light-house upon the former one, that the seamen may not be shipwrecked upon them, when wishing to make either for Achin or the strait of Malacca. Now for ships coming from the West (Araby, the Persian gulf and India) the first land hailed are the *Nicobar-islands* or *Sombrero-islands*, as they are also called, on account of the high mountain in the middle group, whose top resembles an umbrella or one of those large, flat spanish hats called "sombrero". The channel between the great and little Nicobars is called to the present day in our Maps "Channel of Sombreiro".

As the Chinese name *Mo-shan* means exactly the same as *Pulo Sombrero* (Hat-island), I am inclined to believe that these two islands are identical and to be referred to the hat-shaped middle island of the Nicobars.

11) I dare not transcribe these characters as *Lambri*, as Groeneveldt does, because they are quite different from 南渤利 pronounced *Lam-put-li* = *Lambri*; whilst this ocean is called 那沒黎 or 那沒嚟 *Na-but-li* or *Nabutlai* = *Naburi* or *Naburai*.

Among the products of this island, the Chinese mention a species of coral, called in Singapore *Akar batu* or Stone-root, and in Java *Akar bahr* i. e. Sea-root. It is the *Plexaura antipathes*, a coral containing a horny, black stem which makes it very flexible and capable of resisting the heaviest surge. Of this root belly-girdles are twisted in Singapore against pains in the loins. In Java glangs or bracelets are made of it tipped with a golden snake head and tail, which are very graceful and considered as amulets.

It is curious that neither the Dictionaries of Von de Wall and Pijnappel, nor even the new "Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch Indie", mention this *akar bahr*, which every child in India knows and a bracelet of which I sent years ago from Batavia to my sister as a curiosity.

The Chinese description of it is very accurate: "For about 20 feet off the side of Hat-island, grow in shallow water sea-trees which are gathered by the people, and sold as a very precious article, it being a coral. The highest of such trees is three feet high; its stem is as thick as a thumb, of a deep ink-black colour and glossy as jadestone. The branches at the extremity are very flourishing¹²⁾ and lovely, and of the greatest part of the top of the stem cap-buttons and other articles can be cut¹³⁾.

An objection could be made that the Nicobars are too far off,

12) The text has 婆娑 *p'o-so*, which means "to gambol", instead of 蓊蓊 *p'o-so*, "flourishing and thriving".

13) 按瀛涯勝覽帽山邊二丈上下、淺水內生海樹。彼人撈取爲寶物賣。卽珊瑚也。其樹大者高三尺。根頭有一大拇指大。根如墨之沉黑。如玉石之溫潤。梢上極枝婆娑可愛。根頭大處可碾爲帽珠器物。

as it is said the Hat-island was only half a days sailing distant from Lambri. But as we will presently see that the Andaman-islands could be reached from Hat-island in one or two days, sailing in a north-easterly direction, the distance from Lambri (Achin) to the Nicobars could be easily effected in half a day, as Lambri or Hat-island could be reached in three days and nights sailing from Sumudra ¹⁴).

Besides, when sailing from Pulo Bras to the Andaman-islands, the course would be Northwestern and not North-eastern.

The Green Islands ¹⁵) 翠藍山 *The Andaman-islands*

or

The country of the Naked 裸形國 *The Adamites.*

In the beginning of his Chapter on Ceylon, *Ma-koan* says: "When setting sail south ¹⁶) from Hat-island, and sailing with a fair wind in a north-easterly direction, one sees in one or two days the Green Islands, which are situated in the sea. There are 3 or 4 of them, but only one of them is very high and big, and the natives call it Mount *Sundaman*. The people of this country live in nests and dwell in caves. Men and women go stark naked, wearing not even an inch of thread, looking like animals and beasts. The ground does not produce any rice, so that the people nourish

14) 自蘇門答刺國舟行三晝夜可至。In the 瀛涯勝覽集 this follows at the end of the description of Hat-island, and has therefore to be referred to that place.

15) 翠藍, in Amoy *ts'ui-lâm*, is defined by Douglas "bright light-blue"; but as both characters also mean green, I have preferred to translate them so.

16) According to the 瀛涯勝覽集: 自帽山東南 South-east from Hat-island.

themselves with wild Taro, Jackfruits¹⁷), Banians, Cocoa-nuts and such-like fruits; or they catch fish and shrimps in the sea which they eat.

There is a tradition saying that if they wear one inch of cloth on their bodies, they will get rotten ulcers. When, in former times, Śākya Buddha went over the sea, he went ashore at that place, where he undressed and entered into the water for a bath. The inhabitants then stole his clothes and concealed them, when they were cursed by Śākya, so that it came to this pass. To the present day the people cannot put on clothes. People say that the Egg-showing village¹⁸) is this country¹⁹).

17) A corruption of the sanskrit *Djaka*: the *Panasa*, *Artocarpus integrifolia*. Sometimes transcribed 波那娑, 半榲娑 and 般袞娑 (Eitel, Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary, p. 88).

18) According to the 瀛涯勝覽集、赤卵塢, The red-egg village. Cf. *Pien-i-tien*, Chap. 99, 4.

Both terms can also be translated by "the Village which shows its testicles", or "the Village of the naked testicles", as 卵 means as well egg as testicle. My colleague, Prof. Kern, suggests that it may be a translation of the two first syllables of *Anda*(man), because *anda* means in Sanscrit as well egg as testicles; but he says that Andaman has nothing to do with Sanscrit. Otherwise *undaja māna* could mean "Oviparous Barbarians". (Cf. Benfey, Skt. Dict. p. 106 and 699b), when we might report this name to that of the "Country of the Egg-people" said in the *Shan-hai King* to live in the wild regions of the South, and to bring forth eggs, viz. to be oviparous, according to the commentary 按山海經、大荒南經、大荒之中有卵民之國。其民皆生卵[注]卽卵生也。The *Pien-i-tien*, Chap. 107, reproduces an engraving representing a male and female of this country.

19) 自帽山南放洋、好風向東北行一二日、見翠藍山。在海中。其山三四座。惟一山最高大。番名梭篤蠻山。彼處之人巢居穴處。男女赤體、皆無寸絲。如獸畜之形。土不出米。惟食山芋、波羅蜜、芭蕉、椰子之類。或海中捕魚鰕而食。人傳云。若有寸布在身、卽生爛瘡。昔釋迦佛過海、於此處登岸。脫衣入水澡浴。彼人盜藏其衣。被釋迦呪、訖以此。至今人不能穿衣。俗言出卵塢卽此地也。

In the *Sing-ch'a Shêng-lan*, published in 1436 by *Fei-sin* (費信), the following account is given of the Andaman-isles:

"These islands are situated to the North-west of Ambergis island (*Pulo Wai*, cf. Groeneveldt, "Notes", p. 100) at a distance of five days and nights (sailing). There are seven greater or lesser straits (channels) by which ships can pass. The tradition goes that when Śākya Buddha passed these islands and bathed in its waters, his *kashāya* (robe) was stolen, when Buddha swore that if hereafter any one dressed in clothes, his skin and flesh would rot. Hence men and women now all cut off their hair and do not dress. They only use leaves of trees sown together wherewith they cover their fore- and back-side.

"Neither have they rice or corn, but only descend into the sea and catch fish and shrimps in their nets; they also plant Banians and Cocoa-trees for their food. Ships gone there, had never anchored under these islands. Only on the 22 day of the tenth month of the year *Yin-tsze* of the period *Siu-an-têh* (November 1432), on account of adverse wind and current, (a ship) anchored at this island for three days and nights, when the islanders, mounted on a canoe made of a single tree, came to sell cocoa-nuts. Men and women in this canoe were precisely so as is said above (*viz.* stark naked)" ²⁰).

20) 翠藍嶼。其山在龍涎之西北、五晝夜程。大小七門。門中皆可過船。傳聞釋迦佛、昔經此山、浴於水。被竊其袈裟。佛誓云。後有穿衣者必爛其皮肉。由此男女今皆削髮無衣。止用樹葉紉結而遮前後。米穀亦無。惟下海網魚鰕、及種芭蕉椰子爲食。然船去未嘗得泊山下。宣德壬子十月二十二日、因風水不偶、至此山泊繫三日夜。山中之人駕獨木舟來貿椰實。舟中男婦果如前言。

In the description of Ceylan in the outlandish history of the Ming-dynasty, it is said that in the S.E. (read S.W.) sea, are three or four islands, whose collective name is the "green islands". There are seven larger and smaller channels, through which the ships may pass. The middle island is the highest, and its native name is *Sodaman* ²¹⁾. Its population lives in nests and dwells in caves. They are naked and have cropped hair. There is a tradition that formerly Śākya Buddha passed these islands, and bathed in its waters, when somebody stole his kâshâya. Buddha then swore that any of them who would put on clothes, would see his skin and flesh rot. Since that moment, if they only hung one inch of cloth upon their bodies, poisonous ulcers suddenly broke out. Therefore men and women are all naked, and only sew together leaves of trees to cover their fore- and back-side. This is the reason it is also called "The country of the Naked". The soil does not bring forth any cereals, and they only eat fish and shrimps and wild taro ²²⁾, jackfruit ²³⁾, banians ²⁴⁾ and suchlike. When one sails from there seven days to the west, one sees the Parrot-bill mountain ²⁵⁾, and after two or three days one reaches the Buddha-temple mountain ²⁶⁾, which brings us to the territory of Ceylan ²⁷⁾.

21) or *Sundaman*. It is curious to compare this name with the *Insulae sindae* of Ptolemy, about whose position european geographers differ, some placing them in the strait of Malacca near Banka (Sunda-islands), others among the Nicobars, because Ptolemy places them at 8° N. But I am inclined to believe that his *Sinda* is only the transcription of the native name *Sunda(man)*. Cf. Mannert, "Geographie der Griechen und Römer", Vol. V, p. 259.

22) *Colocasia esculenta* or *indica* (Bretschneider, *Botanicon sinicum*, III, p. 414, N^o. 261).

23) *Artocarpus integrifolia*. See above Note 17.

24) *Musa paradisiaca*.

25) *Pedrotallagalla* (Piduru Tagala), 8,295 feet high.

26) Adam's peak, 7,352 feet high.

27) 東南海中有山三四座。總名曰翠藍嶼。大小七門。門皆可通舟。中一山尤高大、番名梭篤蠻。其人皆巢居穴處。赤身髡髮。相

According to an old tradition Sakya (originally) coming from the Andaman-islands, which lie 5 days and nights sailing from Ambergris-island (Northcoast of Sumatra, perhaps Pulo Wai), landed at this mountain where he left the impression of his foot. At the foot of this mountain is a temple in which the true body of the Nirvāṇa of Śākya is preserved lying upon his side along with Śāriputtra (one of the principal disciples of Śākya)²⁸).

傳釋迦佛昔經此山、浴于水。或竊其袈裟。佛誓云。後有穿衣者必爛其皮肉。自是寸布掛身、輒發毒瘡。故男女皆裸體。但紉木葉蔽其前後。故又名裸形國。地不生穀。惟啖魚蝦及山芋、波羅蜜、芭蕉實之屬。自此山西行七日見鸚哥嘴山。又二三日抵佛堂山。即入錫蘭境。 *Pien-i-tien*, Chap. 99, II from the 明外史, Anno 1459.

²⁸) 按廣東通志。。。。相傳釋迦從翠藍嶼來。嶼在龍涎西北、五晝夜程。登此山、猶存足跡。山下有寺。中貯釋迦涅槃真身。側臥、及舍利子。 *Pien-i-tien*, Chap. 99, II.

In the History of the Ming we have the variant: 佛牙舍利俱存于寺, the Tooth of Buddha and Śāriras (bones and other relics) are all preserved in this temple.

The *Adjāibs* (Merveilles de l'Inde by Devic and Van der Lith, p. 134, LXXXV) place this temple in Great Andamān and report that this temple was made of gold and say that it contains the grave of Salomon, son of David. But this is impossible, as these islanders were like wild beasts, man-eaters and living like birds on trees. Page 69 of the same work, we read the story of a sailor who came to the Andamān-islands where he remained some time to recomfort himself, to take rest and to make a provision of fresh water, fruits and banians. I saw nobody there, he continues, but some fishermen in canoes which came from between the trees.

The *Adjāibs* design by Great Andamān the island of Ceylan where, at the foot of the Adam's peak, was a Vihāra containing the mortal remains of Buddha, who, by Arab authors, is called Adam; whilst the *Adjāibs* make of him Soléiman = Salomon.

The Andamāns mentioned on p. 67 of the Merveilles are the real Andamāns, and Great Andamān is Ceylan. If ever such a golden temple with the remains of Buddha had existed in the Andamāns, the English would since long have found its vestiges. But the natives were much too barbarous to build temples, as they do not even build huts for themselves.

For us, who believe only in Buddha as a personification of the sun, this legend is very simple.

For the inhabitants of India the Andaman-islands lie in the East, the place where the sun rises out of the sea (the bath of Buddha). Sometime afterwards the sun rises naked, i. e. stripped of the morning-clouds (stealing of Buddha's clothes) above the horizon and, gradually approaching Ceylan, the sun hovers a moment over the highest peak of the island (where the Hindus of the coast of Coromandel could see him pass) and left there the impression of his foot — some natural cavity like the Rosstrappe in the Harz and other places in Europe. Having passed this mountain, the sun comes over the "Adam's bridge" to India.

For those who still believe that Buddha was a human being, it will be difficult, nay impossible, to explain this legend, as the so-called historical Buddha was born in Kapilavastu, never went out of India, and surely was never in the Andaman-islands.

In the main the chinese description of the Andamans agrees with those given by Marco Polo and even by modern authors, and it is unnecessary to refute Mr. Phillips' opinion that the Green islands were the Nicobars (Doolittle's Handbook, Vol. II, p. 555).

Phillips having erroneously read 梭馬蠻, in Amoy *So-be-ban* instead of 梭篤蠻 *So* (or *Sun*)-*tok-ban*, has identified it with the name *Sambelong* on European maps. But *sambelong* is a clerical error for the Malay *sěmbilan* (nine) = *Pulo sěmbilan*, the Nine Islands — in Chinese 九洲.

The Chinese *Sundaman* has a very curious resemblance with the name *Andaman* which these islands bear in our maps. But what does the name mean? T. Cadell (Geographical Magazine, Vol. V, 1889, p. 57) says that the Malays call these islands *Pulo Hándúmán*, which, by a slight change of pronunciation, would turn into *Anda-*

man which he thinks to be = *Hanúmán*, the Monkey God of the Hindus. This etymology seems to me quite false, *Hanúmán* not being capable of changing into *Handumán*.

Marco Polo (Chap. 167, Ed. Pauthier, p. 580) calls these island *Angamanain*, which Yule believes to be a dual form of *Angaman* for *Andaman* (The Book of Ser Marco Polo, London 1875, II, 292); but this etymology is also to be rejected because the old chinese transcription gives *So-(or Sun)damán*. Besides, the principal group of the Andamans does not consist of 2 islands, but of 3, separated by two channels, as a glance at a good map will show.

The *Pien-i-tien* (Chap. 107, I, fol. 30) gives a description of Andaman, here called 晏陀蠻國 *An-to-man kwoh*, quoted from the *San-tsai Tu-hwui*, running thus: "The country of Andaman can "be reached from Lambri with a fair wind. This land has a "circumference of 7000 chinese miles. The body of its population "is black as lacquer, and they are called Mountain-barbarians. "They catch human beings, so that the skippers dare not approach "its shores. They have no iron in their country, and make only "weapons of sharpened shells. In their country is a sacred foot-print, and they have made a gilded couch whereupon a dead man "lies, who has not decayed through all ages. There is always a "huge snake which guards it, whose hairs are two feet long, so "that people dare not approach. There is also a well, whose water "overflows twice a year, discharging its water into the sea. The "sand and rocks over which it runs all turn to gold" ²⁹⁾.

29) 按三才圖會、晏陀蠻國自蘭無里國順風而去。其國周圍七千里。人身如黑漆。號山蠻。能食生人。船人不敢近岸。地無鐵。惟磨蚌殼爲刃。其國有一聖跡。用渾金作牀。承一死人。經代不朽。常有巨蛇衛護。其蛇毛

In the engraving added to this description, this so-called Andaman-man wears a petticoat, has a mantle over his shoulders hanging down to his heels, and wears rings round his upper arms and wrists; whilst we have seen, and also know, that the Andaman-islanders go stark naked.

This whole notice is copied from Arab sources³⁰⁾ and we have the same confusion as among these latter between Great Andamân, or South-Ceylan, and little Andaman, our Andaman-islands.

The sacred footprint (Adam's foot) and the gilded couch containing the mortal remains of Buddha, as also the well overflowing twice a year, all point to Adam's-peak and the vihâra at its foot in South-Ceylan.

In the History of the Ming-dynasty we read in the Description of Ceylan that "in a rock on a mountain near the shores of the sea, is a footprint of about three feet length, of which the old men say that when Buddha came from the Green Islands (Andamans) he put his foot in this place and that his footprint has remained there. In this footprint is a flake of shallow water which never dries up. People dip their hands in it and wash their eyes and faces therewith, calling this the purification of the water of Buddha. At the foot of the mountain is a vihâra where the true body of Śākya rests on its side upon a couch, whilst near him lie the tooth of Buddha and other relics"³¹⁾.

長二尺。人不敢近。有一井、一年兩次溢、流入海。過沙石經浸盡成金。

30) Merveilles de l'Inde, p. 134, Chap. LXXXV, p. 256, 260.

31) 海邊山石上有一足跡、長三尺許。故老云佛從翠藍嶼來踐此。故足跡尚存。中有淺水、四時不乾。人皆手蘸、拭目洗面。曰佛水清淨。山下僧寺有釋迦真身側臥牀上。旁有佛牙及舍利 (明外史 A.O. 1459). *Pien-i-tien*, Chap. 99, III v°.

The *Ying-yai Shéng-lan* equally speaks of this rock with a big footprint more than two feet deep and eight feet long, of which tradition says that it is the foot-print of the Patriarch Adam, our *Poan-ku* ³²), and repeats the legend of the never tarishing *well* in this footprint ³³).

The chinese author quoted above, gives to the Andaman island a circumference of 7000 chinese miles, about 2500 english miles, much too large for the Andaman islands and even for Ceylan, whose circuit is estimated now to be less than 700 english miles, though it is said that it was formerly much larger ³⁴).

I will return in a later paper upon this question when treating of Ceylan.

32) 石有巨跡、深二尺餘、長八尺。傳云祖阿
 聃生人足跡。卽盤古也。 *Ibid.*, l. c. 1V 7°.

33) 其跡有泉不涸。 *Ibid.*, l. c.

34) Pauthier, *Le Livre de Marc Pol*, p. 583, note 2; Yule, *Marco Polo*, II, p. 254, Note 1.