

## The Accounts of Suvannabhumi from Various Literary Sources

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### I. Introduction

Suvannabhumi is so mysterious, so ancient a land that its history is shrouded in myths and legends, haze and mist of the remote past. Some Indian literatures and tales say that Suvannabhumi included many far-off islands on the east of India. The voyage to it was full of perils. It was teeming with sources of gold. So those who returned from it became very rich. On the other hand, some merchants faced ship-wreck and other danger on the way in the high seas(Hla Thaug 2003, 37). Due to its mystery and antiquity, contemporary archaeological evidences are very scant. Therefore, demarcation of its boundary is still a puzzle to scholars. However, Pali extracts " *Suvannabhumi gatum navaya mahasamuddam* (Dhammapala 1959, 29)", "*vanija navaya Suvannabhumi gacchati* (Dhammapala 1958, 254)" and "*theropite yava adasanam tava palapetva dipassa samantato rakkam thapesi* (Buddhaghose 2003, 51) are found in the Buddhist canonical texts and their commentaries. These extracts suggest that Suvannabhumi must have been a maritime trade centre which could be reached by crossing the great ocean in ships and located on the land surrounded by water.

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In addition to the Pali word "*Suvannabhumi*" and its Sanskrit word "*Suvarnabhumi*", its equivalents or alternatives such as *Chryse Chora* (Gerini 1090, 64), *Chin-lin* (Nai Pan Hla 1992, 23)<sup>1)</sup>, *Zabaj* (Majumdar 1944, 30)<sup>2)</sup> and *Eldorado* (Hope Sein 1978, 863) occur in Greek, Chinese, Arabic and Latin sources. So, apart from Pali and Myanmar sources, it is required to glean as many external literary references on this golden land as possible and to sift them and put them under scrutiny to be able to throw sufficient light over the accounts of this very land of antiquity. This paper is to be devoted to various literary or textual sources on Suvannabhumi.

Before going on to description of the various sources, elaboration on the word "Suvannabhumi" is to be dealt with. Etymologically, the Pali term "Suvannabhumi" is composed of two members—Suvanna and bhumi. The former can be used both as an adjective and as a noun. It, as the adjective, bears some sense "beautiful, good-looking, handsome, and comely" and as the noun, bears only one sense "gold". The latter, which can be used only as the noun, conveys two different meanings—land and mansion. However, in this context, "bhumi" is preferably taken as "land". Therefore, the literal meaning of Suvannabhumi" is the "Land of Gold" or "Beautiful Land". Connotatively, India merchants regard Suvannabhumi as a land invested with a rich source of wealth and a big center of commercial enterprises (Ray 1946, 2). The Monkhmers describe it as a land where there is a vast stretch of golden paddy fields. The Mon chronicles mention it as a region endowed with golden creeks, golden mansions and golden earth and a fertile land yielding a good harvest of crops (Buddhaghosa 1959, 43).

<sup>1)</sup> *Chin-lin* means "*Golden Frontier*". The Chinese records locates 2000 li west of Funan.

<sup>2)</sup> *Zabaj* or *Zabag* is referred to as Sailendra Empire by the Arabs. It extended over nearly the whole of Suvannadvipa.

## II. Buddhist Pali and commentarial source

The suttas (discourses) expounded by the Buddha were orally recorded until the Third Buddhist Council, that is, about 235 years after the demise of the Buddha. The discourses were first inscribed on palm-leaves only during the Fourth Buddhist Council which was held in Malaya District, Ceylon, about 94 B.C. (Ministry of Religious Affairs 1997, 223) in the reign of king Vattagamini. The commentaries are supposed to appear in about the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.. The following are the excerpt son Suvannabhumi culled from these Pali and commentarial sources.

*The Mahajanaka Jataka* (Buddhaghosa 1959a, 187), *the Sussondi Jatakav* (Buddhaghosa 1959b, 16) and the *Sankha Jataka* (Buddhaghosa 1959b, 16) of *the Kuddaka Nikaya* mention that Indian merchants encountered ship-wrecks in the middle of the ocean on the way to Suvannabhumi. The *Udana Atthakatha* (Dhammapata 1958, 70) also describes a ship-wreck on an oceanic journey to Suvannabhumi. The *Cariya Atthakatha* (Dhammapata 1959, 29) mentions Suvannabhumi as a sea-port across the ocean. *The Pacittiya Atthakatha* (Buddhaghosa 2004, 74) refers to Suvannabhumi as a sea-port. *The Khallatiya Peta of the Peta Atthakatha* (Dhammapala 1958, 44) relates that seven hundred Indian merchants faced a severe storm in the mid-ocean while voyaging to Suvannabhumi. *The Pataliputta Peta* (Dhammapala 1958, 254) of the same book narrates an encounter of a woman with a Peta who was much attached to her, on an island during the voyage to Suvannabhumi. *The Vinaya Atthakatha* (Buddhaghosa 2000, 51) recounts the visit of Sona and Uttara to Suvannabhumi, which was then attacked by the water ogress. *The Anguttara Nikaya Atthakatha* (Buddhaghosa 1968, 337) locates Suvannabhumi 700 yojanas across the ocean from Ceylon which could be reached in seven day under the favourable monsoon wind. *The Milindapanha* (Nagasena 1999, 340)

places Suvannabhumi between India and China. *The Mahaniddesa Pali*<sup>3)</sup> describes a series of sea-ports along the coast of India and the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal, namely, Tigumpa, Takkola, Tammali, Vesunga, Suvannabhumi. Suvannakuda, Bharukaccha, Surattha, etc.

It is found that the India merchants in the *Sussondi Jataka and Pataliputta Peta* departed from Bharukaccha and Tammalipti for Suvannabhumi. Bharukaccha is identified with modern Broach on the western coast of India (Mukerjee 1951, 100) and Tammalipti with modern Tamruk at the mouth of the Ganges River on the eastern coast (Mukerjee 1951, 101). Takkola is equated with Takupa on the western coast of the Isthmus of Kra (Coedes 1968, 39), Tammali with Ligor on the eastern coast of the Malay Peninsula<sup>4)</sup>, Vesunga with Taikkola on the side of Mt. Kelasaneer Thaton (Chen 2007, 264) Tigumpawith Yangon (Cintamani 2005, 39) and Javam with Java (Cintamani 2005, 10).

### III. Indian sources

The Buddhist Pali texts and commentaries confirm that Indian people had maritime contacts with Suvannabhumi before the enlightenment of the Buddha. In corroboration of Pali and commentarial confirmation. Dr. Niharranjan Ray says that the trade between India and Suvannabhumi date as far back as the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.(Ray 1946, 7). No doubt, trade was the chief stimulus between India and Suvannabhumi. Missionary undertakings, gold exploration and political activities must have followed in its wake. Indian sea-borne tradewas intensified after the discovery of the periodic alternation of monsoon winds in about 45 A.D. by a Greek captain Hippalás

<sup>3)</sup> See *Mahaniddesa Pali*, 100.

<sup>4)</sup> See *Mahaniddesa Pali*, 100.

(Majumdar 1944, 18). This brought India into easier and closer contacts with this golden land. The Buddhist sources states that Indian merchants started to leave Bharukaccha and Tamralipti. It is said that the merchants who set off from Bharukaccha on the western coast of India coasted around the India continent as far as a certain port on the eastern coast and made a direct voyage across the high sea (Majumdar 1944, 4-5), or Tamralipti port in the north and seemed to make littoral voyages along the coast of the Bay of Bengal. But, after the discovery of the monsoon wind, some of the Indians voyaged across the high seas to Suvannabhumi. In those days, Indians ships were fully rigged and large enough to carry 500 or 700 passengers (Mookerji 1912, 100).

As to the location of Suvannabhumi, modern Indian scholars advance different opinions. Dr. R. C Majumdar says in his book *"Hindu Colonies in the Far East"* that Suvannabhumi or Suvarnadvipa are the lands and islands beyond the sea and hills on the east of India. These regions were reputed to possess gold and precious minerals (Majumdar 1944, 7). In the same book, he identifies Myanmar and Thailand with Suvannabhumi and the Malay Peninsula and Archipalego as Suvarnadivpa (Majumdar 1944, 4). Bimala Churn Law in his book *"Geography of Early Buddhism"* equates Lower Myanmar with Suvannabhumi (Law 1979, 70). Mookerji in his master-pieceen titled *"Indian Shipping"* refers to Burmaand the Golden Chersone seas Suvannabhumi (Mookerji 1912, 76). Mukarjeein *"The Culture and Art of India"* states that Sumatra and the East Indies correspond to Suvannabhumi (Mukerjee 1951, 100). Dr. Niharranjan Ray in his work *"Theravada Buddhism in Burma"* puts Suvannabhumi between Indiaand China (Ray 1946, 1). The writer of *the India's Contribution to the World Thought and Culture* applies Lower Myanmar and the Malay Peninsula and Suvannabhumi and Sumatra to Suvarnadvipa (Hla Thaug 2008, 51).

In addition to the modern scholars' identifications, some Indian old treatises also mention the accounts of Suvannabhumi. *The Ramayana Epic* relates that five hundred monkeys led by Sugriva went over to Suvannadvipa in quest of Sitadevi. This Suvannadvipa is mentioned as Sumatra by Moorkerji (Mookerji 1912, 56). *The Bihakatha* describes Kalasapura as the capital of Suvannabhumi, which is located in Lower Myanmar or in the part of Malaysia by Majumdar (Majumdar 1944, 15). *The Dviparnta* mentions Kanakapuri as the capital of Suvannabhumi. It is identified with Bago by Mookerji (Mookerjee 1951, 213).

#### IV. Ceylonese Sources

Although India was the cradle of Buddhism, Ceylon was the main catalyst for its oversea propagation. It is accepted that Buddhism, in Mahavira tradition, started to take a firm root on the soil of Ceylon from the time when Ven. Mahimda reached it during Asoka's time. Thenceforth, Buddhism gained more strength and continued to survive up to the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.. Then due to a 12-year famine, the Fourth Buddhist Council was convened at Aloka Cave in Malaya district in Ceylon under the auspices of Ven. Mahadhamm ara kkhitain 94 B.C. during the reign of king Vattagamani. It lasted for one year and the Buddha's discourses were first inscribed on palm-leaves in the mean time.<sup>5)</sup> Therefore, needless to say, a plethora of Buddhist texts have appeared in Ceylonsince. Among these books, the *Dvipavamsa* (4<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) and *the Mahavamsa* (6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) the most celebrated Ceylonese Chronicles, are the first to have described the visit of Sonaand Uttara to Suvannabhumi. However, some scholars threw

<sup>5)</sup> See Ministry of Religious Affaris. 1997. *The Teachings of the Buddha (Basic Level)*. 223.

doubts over the authenticity of these chronicles due probably to their great antiquity. In 1837, a British scholar James Prinsep could successfully decipher the scripts engraved on an edict of king Asoka (Hla Thaug 2008, 35). Thenceforth, other edicts of Asoka were found recording the names of missionary monks and the countries they went to and most of them are found identical with those mentioned in the *Dvipavamsa* and the *Mahavamsa*. Thus did the edicts of Asoka authenticate the claim made by the Ceylonese chronicles, silencing the scholars who voiced doubts about their validity.

The names of leaders of the missionary groups and of the countries they were deputed to record by *the Mahavamsa* are:

- (1) A group led by Ven. Majjhantika was deputed to Gandhar.
- (2) A group led by Ven. Maharevata was deputed to Mahimsakamandala.
- (3) A group led by Ven. Rakkhita was deputed to Vanavasi.
- (4) A group led by Yonaka Dhammarakkhita was deputed to Aparanta.
- (5) A group led by Ven. Mahadhammarakkhiti was deputed to Maharattha.
- (6) A group led by Ven. Maharakkhiti was deputed to Yonaka.
- (7) A group led by Ven. Majjhima was deputed to Himavanta.
- (8) A group led by Ven. Mahimda was deputed to Tambapanni.
- (9) A group led by Vens. Sona and Uttara was deputed to Suvannabhumi (Hla Thaug 2008, 43).

This chronicle does not locate these countries exactly. Subsequently, modern Scholars tried to identify them. According to them, Gandhara is identified with Afghanistan, Mahimsakamandala with Mysore, Vanavasi with Melabar, Aparanta with Gujarat, Maharattha with Maharashtra, Yonaka with Greek, Turkish and Southern Russia, Himavanta region with Bhutan, Tibet, etc. Tambapanni with Srilanka and Suvannabhumi with Ramanna province (Hla Thaug 2008, 43). Especially, scholars argue heatedly over the identification of Suvannabhumi. Although Ven. Mahanama, the author of the *Mahavamsa*, did not

pinpoint Suvannabhumi, Wilhelm Geiger, the translator of this book, mentioned Lower Myanmar with its adjacent districts as Suvannabhumi in the footnote but confessed his doubt about this identification (Geiger 2000. 86.). However, *the Mahavamsa* describes a visit of a group of monks from Kelasa Vihara headed by Ven. Suriyagutta to ceremony of construction of the Mahaceti in Ceylon during the time of king Dutthagamani the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. (Geiger 2000. 194). The site of Kelasa Vihara, which is traditionally believed to have been built to accommodate Sona and Uttara, is still extant on the site of Mt. Kelasaneer Thaton. Therefore, this extract from *the Mahavamsa* serves as a convincing evidence proving that Thaton (Taikkala) is the very Suvannabhumi visited by Sona and Uttara. A Ceylonese scholar Malalasekera in his *magnum opus* named "*Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*" express that Suvannabhumi is generally identified with Lower Myanmar, probably Bago and Mawlamyaing district. It probably included the coast from Yangon to Singapore. The chief place is Sudhammangara (Thaton) at the mouth of the Sittaung River (Malalasekera 1960, 1263-65).

## V. Greek and Roman Sources

There had been relations between India and the West during about the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (Mookerji 1912, 89-90) When Alexandria the Great conquered the northern part of India, Greek and Roman trader and adventurers frequented the eastern Asia more than before. During the Andra Period (200 B.C.-250 A.D.), there was trade both over land and by sea, between western Asia, Greece, Roma and Egypt as well as China and the East (Mookerji 1912, 116). Discovery of the monsoon wind by Hipalasin 45 A.D. resulted in progress of maritime trading between India and the West as well as the East. Finding of a Roman



lamp dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. and Buddha statue of Amaravati style showing the Greek drapery in the robes belonging to the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> A.D. (Lemay 1954, 63) certifies the arrival of the Greeks and Romans in South-east Asia during the early Christian Era. There Greeks and Romans who set their feet on the soil of South-east Asia recorded the accounts of the eastern countries. Among the accounts are the book of Pomponipous Mela (43 A.D.), *the Geography of Ptolemy* (140 A.D.), Pliny's *Natural History* (77 A.D.) and the *Periplus of Erythrean Sea* (100 A.D.). Pomponious Mila placed Chryse Chora (Gold Land) and Argyra (Silver Land) on the east of the mouth of the Ganges.

Pliny considered that Chryse Chora was either a peninsula or an archipalego in South-east Asia. He put it on the border of the country of the Silks (Chinese) (Citamani 2005, 34).

*The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* did not clearly refer to any direct voyage between South-India and golden peninsula (Chryse Chersonese) but misplaced the Malay Peninsula near the mouth of the Ganges (Majumda 1944, 18). This suggests that the writer of this book had not been to South-east Asia personally.

Ptolemy who himself reached South-east Asia endorsed Rakhine coast as Argyra (Silver Land), the coast of Lower Myanmar as Chryse Chora (Gold Land) and the Malay Peninsula as Chryse Chersonese (Golden Peninsula). He found the towns named Barakura and Sada in Argyra and Tamala, Sabara, Besynga and Sarabai in Chryse.

Gerini who did research on Ptolemy's *Geography* says that Ptolemy's Chryse Chora is partly identical with Svaannabhumi. He identified Barakura with Dhannavati near present Mrauk O, Sada with Thandwe, Tamala with Pathein, Sabara with Dala near Yangon, Besynga with the mart near Si-guttara Hill or with Thaton and Sarabai with Mergui (Gerini 1090, 37-77).

## VI. Chinese Sources

It is believed that a trade land-route between India and China via ancient Myanmar was in use about 300 years before the birth of Christ (Chen 2007, 216). The Chinese are said to start to use the Silk Road linking China with Romain about 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. (Hla Thaug 2008, 94-95). During the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium, Chinese pilgrims made difficult land journeys to India and collected Buddhist scriptures and visited the sites of important events of the Buddha's life (Miksic 1997, 20). When some of them returned home, they voyaged to China through Indonesia. So they could record the then condition of South-east Asia region. In addition, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D., the Wu Kingdom sent Chu Yingand K'ang T'ai as envoys to Campa, Kamboja and other South-east Asia city-states to find ways of extending Han cultures overseas and to investigate the trade in South-China Sea (Chen 2007, 65). The travelogues and records of the seen voys and pilgrims can give some clues to Suvannabhumi and Suvarnavdipa.

The records of the two Chinese envoys tell that Sirima ascended the Khmer's throne in 205 A.D.. To extend his empire, he led his troop to the Malay Peninsula and annexed ten city-states there. When he was on the march to Chin-lin (Golden Frontier), he fell ill (Coedes 1968, 40). Generally, Chin-lin is equated with Suvannabhumi. Coedes applies it to Suvannabhumi or Suvannakuda (Coedes 1968, 40). Dr. Nhharranjan Rayreferstoits as the Gulf of Muttama, which is equivalent to Chinn-lin-ta-wanin Chinese (Ray 1946, 21). Dr. Than Tun thinks that Chin-lin is a vast area embracing the Gulf of Muttama and the Gulf of Thailand. The records of the Chinese envoys located Chin-lin 2000 li west of Funan (Ray 1946, 20).

Another important town revealed by the Chinese records is a sea-port called Mi-chen in Chinese, which was in existence before the advent of the Christian Era, Chen Ye Sein identifies it with "Lbir-cin"

in Mon meaning "Sea-elephant". He continues that Vesunga of *the Mahaniddesa* is the Indian equivalent and Besynga of Ptolemy the Greek equivalent, both of which are the same as the Mon word "Lbir-cin". He adds that Lbir-cin is the same as Taikkala on the side of Mt. Kelasa. The Chinese records say that this town survived up to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Chen 2007, 68-69), and was destroyed by Nan Choa in 835 A.D.. In the light of the *Mahaniddesa Pali*, Vesunga is one of the adjoining areas of Suvannabhumi. Thus can identification of Vesunga with Taikkala or Lbir-cin strengthen the assumption that Chin-lin is Suvannabhumi.

Pertaining to the date of Taikkala, Chen Ye Sein on the basis of the Chinese records, says that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.. Indian merchants landed at Fu-kan-tu-lu (Takuapa) in the Malay Peninsula and there they transferred boats and went along the Malay and Taninthari coastst as faras Lbir-cinor Taikkala and thence continued on their land journeys to Pyudesa. Therefore, Indians called Takuapaas Pyugamadvara (the door-way to the region of Pyus) (Chen 2007, 293-94). This explanation supports that Taikkala, which is identified with the very Suvannabhumi by the Kalyani Stone Inscription (1476 A.D.), had existed before the 2<sup>nd</sup> B.C..

Moreover, Chinese monks Hsuan-Tsaing and I-ching pointed out a Theravada Buddhist country between Sirkhetra in Lower Myanmar and Isanapura in Cambodia by the name of To-lo-po-ti. Coedes restored this Chinese term as Dvaravati (Lemay 1954, 67). There is a persistent tradition that Nakhorn Pathom, with the Pra Pathom Ceti 30 miles due south-west Bangkok, is Suvannabhumi. Reginal Lemaysays that there was an ancient city called "Chaisiri or Sirichai" in the site of modern Nakhorn Pathom, which was visited by Sona and Uttara. Pra Pathom is traditionally believed to have been constructed during their visit (Lemay 1954, 67-70).

I-ching who reached Srivijaya in South-Sumatra in 671 A.D. identified Srivijaya or Shin-lo-fu in Chinese with *Chin Chou* meaning "Gold Isle" meaning "Suvarnadvipa" in Sanskrit (I-Tsing 1966, XII). Hsuen Tsang says that Suvannabhumi may lie in Bengal along the River Son, tributary of the Ganges (Geiger 2000, 86).

## VII. Arabic sources

No contemporary or near-contemporary Arabic evidences on Suvannabhumi is found, for Arabic trading ships started to penetrate South-east Asia early in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Aung Thwin 2005, 50). Therefore, all Arabic sources regarding this golden land are supposed not earlier than the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D.. Anyhow, these Arabic records more or less have some value in bringing to light the account of Suvannabhumi. Particularly, Arab writers Alberuni, Mas'udi, Abu Zayd Hasan with one voice refer to the islands of Srivijaya as Suvannabhumi or Survanadvipa.

Alberuni is of opinion that the islands of Zabaj or Srivijaya were situated among the eastern island of the ocean which was nearer to the Chin than to India. They were called "Suvarnadvipa" by the Hindu and also called "Suvannabhumi", for they obtained much gold, if they washed only a little of earth of the country (Majumdar 1944, 32).

Mas'udi says that the king of this country was Maharaja and his territories were very vast and rich in natural resources and the soil yielded much wealth producing all sorts of species and aromatics (Majumdar 1944, 32).

Abu Zayd Hasan states that Zabaj faced towards the direction of China. The distance between the two was a month by sea and even less, if the winds were favorable. The islands were thickly populated and very fertile and endowed with gold (Majumdar 1944, 31).

In brief, it is found that the Arabic merchants called Srivijaya "Zabaj" and identified it with Suvannabhumi, which was again equated, with Suvarnavdipa by them.

### VIII. Myanmar sources

No contemporary archaeological evidence on Suvannabhumi has been so far discovered in Myanmar. The earliest epigraphic document of Suvannabhumi is the Kalyani Stone Inscription erected by king Dhammaceti in 1476 A.D. It was inscribed in Monand Pali.

The Kalyani Stone Inscription records that Taikkala located half on the side of Mt. Kelasa and half on the plain at its foot was Suvannabhumi visited by Sona and Uttara. This town was called "Golamattikanagara" for many houses in this town were made up of mud and clay in the fashion of the Gola people (Khin Gyi Pyaw 1997, 38).

*The Thaton Chronicle* claims that Taikkala Suvannabhumi was established by king Rajacove in 336 B.C. Then he assumed the regnal title of Srimasoka. It lasted for 241 years and was ruled over by a line of ten kings. In the mean time, Sona and Uttara visited it. King Yugandharaja shifted the capital to the site of the present Thaton due to sea-erosion in 94 B.C. (Khin Gyi Pyaw 1997, 31).

With regard to the founding of Taikkala, *the Chronicle of Mons and Their Religious Shrines* says that about 100 years before the appearance of the Buddha, a town was founded by grandfather of king Sapaw at the foot of Mt. Do Kha Lun. So it was called Don Taikkalun. In course of times, it was gradually corrupted to Don Taikkala. In 336 B.C., King Rajacove moved his capital Harisabhumi Sudhamavati to the site of Don Taikkala. Therefore, the new capital of Rajasove came to be known as Taikkala (Shwe Naw 1899, 29-36).

It is noticed that the writers of old Myanmar treatises and chronicles have different views on the location of Suvannabhumi.

*The Sasanalankara Sardan* identifies Thaton with Suvannabhumi (Mahadhammasankyan 1956, 22).

*The Sasanavamsa* describes that Suvannabhumi is one of three provinces of Ramannadesa (Pannasami 1952, 40).

*The Maharajavamsa* (Great Chronicle) says that Suvannabhumi may be Thaton or Chiang Mai.

*The Sasanabahusutappakasani Kyan* mentions Thaton as Suvannabhumi (Rajinda 2004, 51).

*The Glass Palace Chronicle* describes Thaton as Suvannabhumi (Pe Maung Tin and Luce 1960, 71).

*The Jambudipa Uhon Kyan* equates Chiang Mai with Suvannabhumi (Furnivall 2005, 14).

*The Buddha Naing Ngan Taw* remarks that Suvannabhumi should include a large territory embracing Java, Borneo, the Malay Peninsula, Singapore, Ramannadesa, Taninthari, Combodia and Thailand (Samvarabhivamsa 1990, 167). But it pinpoints Sumatra as the Suvannabhumi visited by Sona and Uttara (Cakkapala 1958, 230).

*The Jambudipa India Nay Pon Kyan* identifies Surattha with Suvannabhumi (Candima 1928, 260-70).

Modern Myanmar scholars forward different opinions on Suvannabhumi.

Forchhammer is the first to link the Suvannabhumi of the Ceylonese chronicles with Taikkala situated on the side of Mt. Kelasa. He paid a field trip to Mt. Kelasa in 1884. On the trip, he discovered some documents indicating the existence of an ancient city (San Win 1985, 80).

In 1891, Taw Sein Ko visited and found ruins of an old city -walls and moats in the Ayetthema and Winka Village at the foot of Mt. KelÈsa. Traditionally, Winka and Ayetthema are collectively taken as Taikkala (San Win 1985, 80).

Dr. Than Tun is of his opinion that Thaton is not the very Suvannabhumi referred to by *the Dvipavamsa and the Mahavamsa*. There stands a hill called Mt. Kelasa 30 miles to the north-west of Thaton, The site of this Suvannabhumi is located half on the side of this mountain and half at the foot of it (San Win 2002).

Major Ba Shin states that Suvannabhumi lies along the coastal areas on the Gulf of Muttama between the Sittaung and the Thanlwin Rivers (San Win 2002).

Sripyanchi U Mya applies Thaton to Suvannabhumi (Mya 1985, 3).

Dr. Tha Hla claims that Suvannabhumi is in Dvaravati in Thailand (Tha Hla 1985, 181).

Tin Hla Thaw mentions that Suvannabhumi is the region comprising Lower Myanmar, Thail and the Malay Peninsula.

U Bo Kay assumes that Suvannabhumi or Suvarnadvipa is a gigantic regions covering Indo-China Peninsula embodying Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Lower Myanmar (Bo Kay 1962, 76).

Sao Saimong Mangrai says that Suvannabhumi is Ramannadesa (Saimong 1976, 156-161).

Sayagi U Po Latt says that there are two Taikkala towns, one is Winka Village and the other Ayetthema (San Win 1985, 80-81).

U San Win supposes that Winka was an ancient sea port and Ayetthema a guard-post (Moore 2003, 17).

Khin Maung Gyi asserts that Sumatra should be regarded as Suvannabhumi (Khin Maung Gyi 1997, 1).

According to Dr. Htin Aung, Thaton is Suavannabhumi. But he continued that, however, Myanmar alone should not be taken as Suvannabhumi but the entire region (Ramannadesa and Dvaravati) occupied by the Mons should be regarded as Suvannabhumi. Thaton was their window to the sea and the great world of Buddhist India (Htin Aung 1976, 6).

Dr. Nai Pan Hla opines that although Thaton is considered as Suvannabhumi, it in the light of some scholars, covers a long coastal area stretching from Patheingyi on the coast of Lower Myanmar up to Tokin on the coast of China Sea. This is logical because the Mons occupied not only the environs of Thaton but also Thailand in ancient times. This view is validated by the discovery of Mon inscriptions and artifacts in Thailand (Nai Pan Hla 2005, 19).

## IX. Conclusion and Suggestions

In conclusion, as this paper is dealt only with literary or textual references, it is impossible to draw a decisive conclusion on the location of Suvannabhumi. Anyhow, the above references show that varieties of Suvannabhumi emerged at different times in different regions of Asia -Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia and India: Suvannabhumi visited by Indian merchants including the Bodhisatta before the enlightenment of the Buddha for the commercial purpose, Suvannabhumi haunted by gold explorers just before or after the Christian Era, Suvannabhumi landed by Ven. Sona and Uttara in about the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. for the missionary purpose, Suvannabhumi reached by Ptolemy in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D, Suvannabhumi colonized by the Khmer Army in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. and Suvannabhumi frequented by Arab merchants in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. for the trading purpose. It is noticed that some scholars, neglecting the varieties of Suvannabhumi, tend to stubbornly identify their own variety with one on the agenda, depending on the sources available only to them. Therefore, it is suggested that they should do a thorough and scientific research to know whether these varieties are different or overlapped or identical in terms of time and space. Only then will they come to know which variety is identical with their own, subsequently being able to locate it



and to expose its history.

Key Words : Suvannabhumi, Maritime trade, Missionary,  
Ramannadesa, Indo–China Peninsula,

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<국문초록>

**문헌을 통해 본 수완나부미의 의미**

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수완나부미(Suvannabhumi, 황금의 땅)는 인도상인, 황금탐험가, 모험가, 선교사, 그리고 여러 나라에서 온 사람들이 자주 드나들었던 매우 오래된 지역이었다. 그러나 현재의 수완나부미는 잊혀진 존재이다. 그로 인해, 이 지역이 어디서 번성했는지, 언제 생겨났는지, 역사적으로 얼마나 오래 존재했는지에 대해서 정확하게 아는 사람은 없다. 따라서 현대인에게 이 지역은 여전히 알 수 없는 수수께끼 같은 곳이다. 이 논문은 다양한 문학적 문헌(빨리문헌과 해제, 옛 인도의 논문, 근대 인도학자들의 글, Dvipavansa와 Mahavansa라 불리는 두 가지의 유명한 신할라족 연대기, 일부 중국측 기록과 번역본, 일부 아랍상인과 작가들의 기록, 미얀마의 전통적 연대기와 근대 미얀마 학자들의 주장)에서 발췌한 수완나부미에 대한 여러 내용들을 소개하기 위한 하나의 노력이다. 이러한 자료의 검토와 더불어 필자의 소견을 결론부분에 덧붙였다.

주제어 : 수완나부미, 해상무역, 선교사, 라마나데사, 인도차이나 반도