

## Padalanchana at Anuradhapura

THE *Cūlavamsa*, Chapter 54, v. 44, has recorded that Mahinda IV (956—972) 'restored the beautiful temple of the four *cetiya*s in Padalāñchana which had been burnt down by the troops of the Chola King.'<sup>1</sup>

To the average Sinhalese Buddhist of today, Padalāñchana would connote one and only one sacred place : that is the Footprint on the summit of the mountain called Siripāda or Samanoḷa-kanda in Sinhalese, Sumana-kūṭa or Samanta-kūṭa in Pali, and is generally referred to as Adam's Peak by European writers. The Footprint on Siripāda is venerated by the Buddhists of Ceylon as one of the sixteen great places hallowed by the Buddha in this Island ; it occupies the fourth place in a set of three Pali verses enumerating these shrines, often recited by the faithful in their devotions, the first line of which runs : *Mahiyaṅgaṇaṃ Nāgadīpaṃ Kalyāṇaṃ Pada-lāñchanaṃ*. Another well-known Pali verse includes it among four Footprints left by the Buddha at places widely separated in the Buddhist world, the other three being one each on the banks of the Narmadā river, on the Saccabaddha mountain and in the city of the Yonakas.<sup>2</sup> The Footprint on Siripāda-kanda in Ceylon has been held in great veneration by the Buddhists of Burma, Siam and Cambodia from the twelfth century up to modern times.

The Chronicle does not, in this place, refer to the Padalāñchana of the Sumana-kūṭa or Samantakūṭa, and such an identification on the evidence of modern usage does not seem to accord with the statement that the shrine or shrines restored by Mahinda IV were previously burnt down by the troops of the Chola king. The Chola invasion referred to is that which took place in the reign of Udaya IV (946—954) when Parāntaka I despatched a powerful army to Ceylon, with the object of gaining possession of the Pāṇḍya regalia which were left with the Sinhalese king in the reign of Dappula III. The Chola army succeeded in capturing Anurādhapura,

but did not achieve its main purpose of gaining possession of the Pāṇḍya regalia, for Udaya IV fled with them to Rohaṇa. The Chola army pursued the fleeing monarch, but the Sinhalese recovered from the shock of the enemy's first offensive in time not only to check him before he reached the frontiers of Rohaṇa but also to force him out of the Island and to launch a counter invasion of the Chola dominions, where he was compelled to disgorge the loot that he had taken from Ceylon.<sup>3</sup> Siripāda-kanda is within Rohaṇa and, if the Chola army did not enter that principality on this occasion, they could not have destroyed a shrine on that mountain. Even if we were to argue on the ground that the Peak, being close to the frontiers of Rohaṇa, might have been reached by an enemy who is stated to have failed to penetrate into that principality, the Peak itself, or the wilderness at its foot, was not the type of terrain to which a king in fear of any enemy would have fled. It was in pursuit of Udaya IV that the Chola army might have entered the Peak wilderness, but the Badulla pillar-inscription<sup>4</sup> furnishes us with evidence to indicate that it was to the districts around Mahiyaṅgaṇa that the Sinhalese monarch fled to elude Parāntaka's army. And it is not necessary to march by the Peak to arrive at Mahiyaṅgaṇa from Anurādhapura. Moreover, a general operating in a hostile and unfamiliar country would scarcely have undertaken a campaign in such terrain as the approaches to the Peak, and given hostage to Fortune by making himself easily vulnerable in guerilla warfare by the forces of that country acquainted with the topography. If the Chola forces did not penetrate to the wilderness of the Peak, they could not have burned a shrine connected with the Footprint (*pada-lāñchana*) thereon. The shrine of the Footprint which the Cholas burnt down, and which was restored by Mahinda IV, therefore, must have been somewhere else. These or similar considerations must have weighed with Geiger when he, in his translation of the *Cūlavamsa*,<sup>5</sup> refrained from making the possible identification of Padalāñchana with Siripāda-kanda, and contented himself with pointing out the only other reference<sup>6</sup> to this name in that chronicle, which states that Vajirā, the wife of Sakka-senāpati, 'had a home built in Padalāñchana, and granted it to the *bhikkhuni*s of the universally revered Thera School.'<sup>7</sup> The Peak is hardly a place for the establishment of a convent for nuns who, according to the Vinaya rules, are prohibited from having their places of residence far removed from human habitations.<sup>7</sup>

1. *Jhāpitaṃ Coḷa-rājassa balena Padalāñchane  
Catunnaṃ cetiyānaṃ so ramaṇīyaṃ ghaṇaṃ akā*

This verse can be understood to mean, as in the above translation of Geiger, that there was one shrine for all the four *cetiya*s. It is more likely that the author meant 'a shrine for each of the four *cetiya*s.'

2. *Yaṃ Nammadāya nadiyā puline ca tīre  
Yaṃ Saccabaddha-girike Sumanācalagge  
Yaṃ tattha Yonaka-pure munino ca pādāṇi  
Taṃ pāda-lāñchanaṃ ahaṃ sirasā namāmi.*

3. *Cūlavamsa*, LIII, vv. 39ff.

4. *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. III, pp. 78ff.

5. Part I, p. 182, footnote 5.

6. *Cūlavamsa*, chapter 52, v. 63.

7. Vide, *Dhammapadaṭṭh akathā*, P. T. S. ed. Vol. II, pp. 51, 52. The Vinaya Pitaka, P. T. S. ed. Vol. II, p. 278.

Thus, these two references to a Padalāñchana in the *Cūlavamsa*, in themselves, contain evidence to show that Sumana-or Samanta-kūṭa was not meant by them ; but they do not indicate where in fact this Padalāñchana was. The evidence necessary to identify the Padalāñchana referred to in these two contexts of the chronicle, is forthcoming in the old Sinhalese glossary to the *Mahābodhivamsa* (*Mbg.*), a text ascribed to the Polonnaruva period, but for which the tenth century would not be a date inconsistent with its language. The Pali *Mahābodhivamsa*,<sup>8</sup> in the section named *Mahāvihāra-paṭiggahanakathā*, gives an account of the legendary visits to this Island by the four Buddhas of this *kalpa*, mentioning in particular the spots hallowed by each of the Buddhas spending a few moments seated in meditation thereon. The account of the visit of Kakusandha, the first Buddha of this *kalpa*, ends with the statement that the Teacher, after hallowing the site of the future Thūpārāma, and after preaching the *dhamma*, proceeded to the terrace named *Ratanamālaka*, rose into the air from that site, and returned to Jambudīpa. The Sinhalese gloss explains *Ratanamālaka*, not only by giving the Sinhalese equivalent of the name, *Ruvanmaḷuyehi*, but also with the comments : *Hē dān satara-Budun pada-lasa pādum-desē maha-sā-tānhi*,<sup>9</sup> 'that is at present the site of the main *ceṭiya* (*stūpa*) in the shrine of the Footprints (*padalasa*) of the four Buddhas.'

Koṇāgamana, the second Buddha of this *kalpa*, is said to have hallowed the same spots as did his predecessor. He likewise terminated his tour of Anurādhapura at the future Thūpārāma, and rose into the air for the return journey from Sudassanamālaka to the east of the last mentioned place. For *Sudassana-malake*, the *Mbg.*<sup>10</sup> has the following gloss : *Sudasunmaḷuyehi, hē dān Padalasa pādum-desen devana maha-sā tān*, 'at the Sudasunmaḷu, that is at present the site of the great *ceṭiya* which is the second from the east at Padalasa.' The corresponding account of the visit of the Buddha Kassapa ends with the statement that the Teacher rose to the air for the return journey from the Somanassa-mālaka, which, too, was to the east of the site of the future Thūpārāma. The gloss in the *Mbg.*<sup>11</sup> for *Somanassa-mālake* is *Somnas-maḷuyehi : hē dān Padalasa pādum-desen tun-vana mahāsā-tān*, 'at the Somnas-maḷu, that is at present the site of the great *ceṭiya*, which is the third from the east at Padalasa.' The historic Buddha, during the last of the three visits he is believed to have paid to Ceylon, rose to the air

for the return journey after spending a few moments on the site of the future Silā-*ceṭiya*. The gloss of the *Mbg.* on the word *Silā-*ceṭiyā*tṭhāne* of the *Mahābodhivamsa* is *Sala-sū-tānhi du, hē Padalasa satara-vana kūḍā dāgāba ya*,<sup>12</sup> 'also at the site of Sala-sā; that is (at present) the small fourth *dāgāba* at the Padalasa.'

The Sinhalese word *padalasa*, in the above extracts from the *Mbg.*, is the exact equivalent of the Pali *Padalāñchana*. At the Padalasa, according to the *Mbg.*, there were four *ceṭiyas*, evidently built respectively over Footprints left by the four Buddhas of this *kalpa*. The *Cūlavamsa* states that, at the Padalāñchana, where a shrine or shrines were restored by Mahinda IV, there were four *ceṭiyas*. It is therefore reasonable to take the Padalāñchana referred to at *Cūlavamsa*, LIV, v. 44, as identical with the Padalasa of the *Mbg.* Three of the *ceṭiyas* at this Padalasa (Padalāñchana) were believed, at the time the *Mbg.* was written, to mark three legendary sites which are definitely stated in the *Mahābodhivamsa* as well as in the *Mahāvamsa*, to have been to the east of the Thūpārāma. A shrine here might well have been burnt down by the Chela troops in the reign of Udaya IV, for they occupied Anurādhapura and also consigned to the flames the Temple of the Tooth, the Dhammasaṅgaṇī House and the Mahāpālī within the city (*Cūlavamsa*, LIV, v. 45). The Padalāñchana referred to in the *Cūlavamsa*, LIV, 44, was thus situated to the east of the Thūpārāma. The other reference in the *Cūlavamsa* to the Padalāñchana, as we have seen, informs us that a residence for nuns was established there. A site to the east of the Thūpārāma would not have been inappropriate for a nunnery.

Three of the four Footprints to the east of the Thūpārāma were left by the three previous Buddhas rising to the air from that spot. Mihintale is also eulogised in the *Mahābodhivamsa*<sup>13</sup> as being sanctified by the Footprints of the three previous Buddhas. According to the *Mahāvamsa*, it was on this hill, known by three other names in these mythical times<sup>14</sup>, that the three previous Buddhas alighted on their visits to the Island. The ancient belief thus seems to have been that an indelible impress of a Buddha's foot would remain at a spot from which he rose to the air or to which he alighted. In these actions, greater pressure would naturally have been exerted on the ground by the feet than in normal walking.

8. P.T.S. Edition, pp. 126ff. This account corresponds to *Mahāvamsa*, XVI, vv. 75—165 and I. *Mahābodhivamsa—granthipada-viveraṇaya*, edited by Śrī Dharmārāma-Nāyaka Thera, 1910 p. 131.

10. *Op. Cit.*, p. 131.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Mbg.*, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

13. P.T.S. Edition, p. 117. *Tinṇam pubba Buddhānam padalāñchanapavitte Ambatthale.*

14. *Mahāvamsa*, XV, vv. 62, 96 and 131.

The *Mbg.* also places to the east of the Thūpārāma the site of the Silā-cetiya, which, according to the faithful, has the honour of being the piece of ground in this Island on which the Buddha trod for the last time. The *Mahāvamsa* (XXXIII, 24) informs us that a Silāthūpa was founded by Lajjitissa (circa 119—110 B.C.) to the east of the Thūpārāma. We are not told here that this monument was built over a Footprint of the Buddha, but the location of the Silācetiya<sup>15</sup> to the east of the Thūpārāma by the *Mbg.* would justify us in the assumption that the *stūpa* was built to mark a spot believed at that time to have been the last at which the Buddha sat in meditation on the third visit. The *Dīpavamsa* (XIX, 13) also credits Lajjitissa with the construction of the Silāthūpa, without, however, stating where it was. There was, however, no unanimity in ancient times about the identity of this Silācetiya or-thūpa. The devotees of Mihintalē, it appears, were not content with that sacred hill having the Footprints of the previous Buddhas only. For we are told by the *Pūjāvalī*<sup>16</sup> that the last place hallowed by the Buddha on the third visit to this Island was Maha-sala-sāya (P. Mahā-silā-cetiya) at Mihintalē. The existence, in ancient times, of a Silā-cetiya at Mihintalē is attested by the *Mahāvamsa* as well as the Habarana rock inscription of about the fourth century.<sup>17</sup>

A third Silā-thūpa of an early date is referred to in the *Dīpavamsa* (XIX, 17) in a verse which has not yet been satisfactorily interpreted. In recording the establishment of the Abhayagiri Vihāra by Vaṭṭagāmaṇī Abhaya, this chronicle says: *Abhayagirim patitthapesi Silāthūpam cetiyam antare*. Oldenberg's translation of this half-verse is: 'He erected the Abhayagiri (monastery) between the Silāthūpa and the Cetiya.'<sup>18</sup> The use of the word *antare* in this verse, following a noun in the accusative case, is paralleled by *Dakkhiṇa-vihāram antare* at XXII, 58, where *antare* clearly means 'in' or 'within,' not 'between'. *Silāthūpam* as well as *Abhayagirim* are objects of *patitthāpest*. The translation would thus be: 'He established the Abhayagiri (monastery and) the Silāthūpa which is within (its) *cetiya*.' What the text connotes is that Vaṭṭagāmaṇī built the Silācetiya which forms the core of the Abhayagiri Dāgāba, the huge pile built encasing this being the work of later hands. As the ancient belief was that the Silāthūpa marked the site from which the Buddha rose to the air to return to Jambudīpa from Ceylon, and thus received the Footprint of the Master,

15. 'Silā-thūpa' and 'Silā-Cetiya' are synonymous.

16. *Pūjāvalī*, edited by Bentota Saddhatissa Thera, 1953, p. 708.

17. *Mahāvamsa*, chapter XXXIV, v. 31; E. Müller, *Ancient Inscriptions in Ceylon*, No. 61. See also *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon* for 1951, p. 22.

18. *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. II, p. 217.

such an interpretation of the above verse would accord with the claim of the inmates of the Abhayagiri Vihāra, recorded by Fa-Hien, that the *stūpa* of this monastery was built over a Footprint of the Buddha.<sup>19</sup>

It would, of course, be an invidious task, particularly at this distance of time, to adjudicate between the claims of various religious institutions for the possession of the Silāthūpa. The shrine of this name within the establishments which acknowledged the authority of the Mahāvihāra was located, according to the *Mbg.*, at the Padalānchana to the east of the Thūpārāma. The only ancient *stūpa* at present to be seen to the east of this Dāgāba is that now popularly, but erroneously, believed to be the shrine erected over the ashes of Saṅghamittā-therī.<sup>20</sup> This is evidently not the Silāthūpa, for it is not built of stone. It may be one of the four *cetiyas* at the Padalānchana. The reference to three of these monuments as *maha-sā*, great *cetiyas*, was probably in comparison with the fourth, which is called a *kuḍā* (small) *dāgāba*, and not on account of their actual size. The remains of the Silācetiya and the other two *cetiyas* might well have been cleared away when the site came to be used as the cremation ground for the abbots of the Bō-tree temple in modern times. No thorough investigations on the site are practicable due to the presence of the monuments (*alu-vihāres*) built in memory of these dignitaries. It is also not impossible that the four *cetiyas* of the Padalānchana at Anurādhapura were further to the east, and that their remains had to yield place to the bungalows for medical officers erected by the Public Works Department.

*Yam kim ci samudaya-dhammam sabbam tam nirodha-dhammam!*

## S. PARANAVITANA

19. Samuel Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World* (Boston, 1885), Vol. I, p. 1xxiii.

20. Saṅghamittā's body, taken out of the city by way of the eastern side of the Thūpārāma (*Thūpārāma-puratthato*), was cremated at a spot within sight of the great Bodhi tree (*Mahābodhi-padassit*). The *cetiya* in her honour was built where her body was cremated (*Mahāvamsa*, XX, v. 52).