

## EPIGRAPHIC AND HISTORICAL STUDIES NO. 20 :

### THE BUDDHAPĀDA OF VĀT PAVARANIVESA AND ITS INSCRIPTION

by

A.B. GRISWOLD and PRASERT NA NAGARA\*

#### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.

According to the Mahāvamsa, the Buddha visited the island of Ceylon three times; and during the course of his third visit he rose miraculously to the top of Mount Sumanakūṭa (Adam's Peak), pressed his footsole into its rocky summit, and left the famous Footprint (Buddhapāda) there which is still an object of intense veneration for the Buddhists of Ceylon and Southeast Asia.

Like an impression made by a seal in soft wax, the Footprint is thought of by the faithful as a precise mirror image of the Buddha's own footsole. It is a shallow concavity in the rock, about 1.65 metres (m) in length, in proportion to his height which, according to the Buddhāvamsa, was 18 cubits, say about 8.50m. Orthodoxy holds that the Footprint once had the same auspicious markings as his footsole, consisting of a large Dhammacakka ('Wheel of the Doctrine') and 108 lesser signs<sup>1</sup>. These markings are not now visible; but the Footprint formerly had a protective cover, of stone or metal, engraved with the stylized outline of a footsole exactly the same length as the Footprint, with all the auspicious markings reproduced on it. The cover eventually disappeared; but numerous copies of it, regarded as copies of the Footprint itself, are still in existence<sup>2</sup>.

The Footprint is held sacred as a *cetiya*, a Reminder or 'Monument' of the Buddha<sup>3</sup>.

\* Breezewood Foundation, 3722 Hess Road, Monkton, Maryland 21111, USA; Undersecretary of State, the Office of University Affairs, Rajadamnoen Nawk Avenue, Bangkok 2, Thailand.

<sup>1</sup> The marks (see *JSS* 59/1, pp. 170-188) remind us of the paraphernalia of divination by podoscopy, which relies on an inspection of the lines and creases in the footsole, as palmistry relies on an inspection of the lines and creases in the hand. Just as a palmist's chart might use little pictures instead of letters to label the *mountain of Mercury* or the *mountain of the moon*, so the diagrammatic Footprints may derive ultimately from ancient podoscopic charts in which the 108 signs were labels of auspicious skin formations. Considered from another point of view, they are a condensed gazetteer of the universe — 16 upper heavens with their Brahmā gods; six lower heavens with their Devas; the stars and the planets; the earth with its geography and samples of the good things it contains: Mount Meru, surrounded by seven concentric rock-walled seas, four great continents with their associated islands, seven great rivers and lakes, the flora and fauna of good omen, the regalia of benevolent kings, and the ritual utensils of monks. Since the Buddha wears all these things on his footsole, they are subordinate to him and support him; they are but small items in the encyclopedia of his boundless power and wisdom; and they announce his utterly exceptional character. When he wishes to proclaim that a land is his inheritance, he places this prodigious seal on it. See Griswold, in *The Arts of Thailand*, ed. T. Bowie, Bloomington, 1960, p. 98 f.

<sup>2</sup> See *JSS* 61/1, p. 111, note 153.

<sup>3</sup> Used in this sense, the word "monument" is not necessarily a piece of architecture. Like the Latin word *monumentum* (from *monēre*, "to remind"), it can mean any of a large variety of objects that serve as reminders.



It belongs to the category called **paribhogacetiya**, a 'cetiya by association', which includes places the Buddha visited, the Bodhi tree under which he achieved Enlightenment, or objects he used, such as a seat he sat on, the almsbowl he carried or the robes he wore. Any copy of a **paribhogacetiya** is an **uddesikacetiya**, an 'indicative reminder', i.e. an object which the general opinion regards as a suitable reminder of the Buddha, deriving its efficacy from the model it is copied from<sup>4</sup>.

Copies of the Footprint were believed to possess a large measure of the supernatural power of the original. In practice the model for such copies was not so much the Footprint itself as the protective cover on which the auspicious signs were clearly visible. In accordance with the tradition of the Indianizing world, the copy did not need to be exact, but needed to have some exact relationship with the original. Thus a Southeast Asian monarch who wished to make a copy of the Footprint might send an emissary to Ceylon to measure its length, or the length of the outline of the footsole on its cover, and to take impressions of the Dhammacakka and each of the 108 auspicious signs. When the emissary returned, work on the copy could begin. The material used for it — stone, metal, wood, or clay — would be a matter of choice; so would the style of drawing or modeling, which in any case would depend on the experience and training of the craftsman who executed the copy; and a considerable degree of freedom in the composition was permissible. It would be sufficient if there were an outline of a footsole of the proper length, complete with the Dhammacakka and the 108 auspicious signs; but the signs could be placed in one order or another, in rows outside the Dhammacakka, or radially within it<sup>5</sup>.

King Mahādharmarāja I of Sukhodaya (Lidaiya, r. 1347 - c. 1370 A.D.) caused several copies of the Footprint to be made, and set them up in various parts of his kingdom. For one of them, he says in an inscription, he sent to Ceylon 'to make impressions of the trace of our Lord's Foot which is stamped on top of Mount Sumanakūṭaparvata, to measure its size, and to bring (the impressions) back to be copied for everyone to worship'<sup>6</sup>. When he placed such a Footprint on a hilltop in his kingdom, the name of the hill was changed to Sumanakūṭa to establish its spiritual relation to the great mountain in Ceylon. In another inscription he says of a hill near the capital: 'This hill is called Sumanakūṭaparvata. It is so named because (an emissary) went to make impressions of the Footprint of our Lord the Buddha which is stamped on top of Mount Sumanakūṭaparvata in distant Laṅkādvīpa [Ceylon], and brought them to establish (a copy) on top of this hill so that everyone might get a sight of this imprint of our Lord Buddha's Footsole with the full hundred and eight signs in bright color and that all divinities and men might salute it, honor it and do homage to it. May they attain the happy condition of Buddhahood!' He then reviews the three 'happy conditions' which are accessible, in future lives, to anyone who has made enough merit: human happiness, the happiness of the gods, and the happiness of nibbāna; and he adds: 'If anyone climbs up to the top of this Mount

<sup>4</sup> See Prince Damrong Rājānuhāb, *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam*, translated by Sulak Sivaraksa and A.B. Griswold, Monograph No. II, The Siam Society, Bangkok, 1973, v-viii, 9-11, 19-23, *et passim*; cf. Griswold in *The Arts of Thailand*, *op.cit.*, pp. 30-34.

<sup>5</sup> For variations in the order and interpretation of the signs, see *JSS* 59/1, pp. 170-188. For examples with the signs in rows, see *ibid.*, figs. 3-a, 3-b, and 4 (following p. 188), and *JSS* 61/2, fig. 5 (following p. 128); for the radial arrangement, see fig. 1 in the present article.

<sup>6</sup> See *JSS* 61/1, p. 111.



Sumanakūṭaparvata and worships the imprint of our Lord Buddha's Footprint with firm faith that these three happy conditions can be attained, he will attain them without fail.<sup>7</sup>

The next king of Sukhodaya, Mahādharmarājā II, was forced to become a vassal of Ayudhyā in 1378, but gradually regained a large measure of independence. In 1400 his son Mahādharmarājā III (Sai Līdaiya) proclaimed himself a fully independent monarch; but about ten years later he too was forced to capitulate; and he reigned as a vassal of Ayudhyā until his death in 1419.

At an uncertain date, which we have previously assumed was around 1429 or 1430, the capital of the vassal kingdom was transferred from Sukhodaya to Biṣṇuloka (Sōñ Gvè), presumably on orders from Ayudhyā<sup>8</sup>. Some evidence which we previously overlooked has now persuaded us that the transfer took place during the reign of Mahādharmarājā III, i.e. in 1419 or earlier. All the recensions of the Annals of Ayudhyā, except the 'Luang Prasert' recension (AA/LP), in reporting Mahādharmarājā III's death, refer to him as 'the Lord of Biṣṇuloka' (*cau mōaṇ Biṣṇuloka*), which means that he was ruling from Biṣṇuloka when he died. True, these recensions often give wrong dates, whereas AA/LP gives right ones; but AA/LP is purposely condensed, and details in the other recensions need not be rejected just because AA/LP omits them.

It appears, however, from the inscription of Vāt Saraśakti that Mahādharmarājā III was still reigning at Sukhodaya in 1417<sup>9</sup>. We conclude that the capital was transferred to Biṣṇuloka between 1417 and 1419.

Except for omitting the term 'Lord of Biṣṇuloka', AA/LP reports Mahādharmarājā III's death in much the same words as the other recensions. It says, *sub anno* [CS] 781 [= 1419 A.D.]: 'News arrived [at Ayudhyā] that Mahādharmarājādhirāja [of Sukhodaya] had died, and the whole north country [i.e. the vassal kingdom of Sukhodaya] was in turmoil. [The King of Ayudhyā] therefore proceeded up to Mōaṇ Braḥ Pāñ [Nagara Svarga]. Then Braṇā Pāl Mōaṇ and Braṇā Rāma came out to do homage.' It appears that Braṇā Pāl Mōaṇ and Braṇā Rāma were both sons of Mahādharmarājā III, that Pāl Mōaṇ's succession to the throne was disputed by Braṇā Rāma, and that the suzerain intervened, received the submission of both princes, and awarded the kingdom to Pāl Mōaṇ (Mahādharmarājā IV, r. 1419-38), whose name appears in Palicized form, Paramapāla, in Inscription 12. After the dispute was settled, Pāl Mōaṇ [Mahādharmarājā IV] presumably ruled the vassal kingdom from Biṣṇuloka. It is possible that Braṇā Rāma, about whom we know almost nothing, was viceroy at the old capital.

## 2.

Inscription No. 12 is engraved along the vertical edge of the stone that bears the Buddhapāda we are about to discuss. The inscription, written in Pali, states that the Buddhapāda was

<sup>7</sup> See *JSS* 61/2, pp. 118-119.

<sup>8</sup> See Griswold, *Towards a History of Sukhodaya Art*, Department of Fine Arts, Bangkok, second edition, B.E. 2511, pp. 47-54; also Griswold and Prasert in *JSS* 56/2, pp. 237-242.

<sup>9</sup> See *JSS* 56/2, pp. 230-242. Some amendments are now required. At p. 241, paragraph 2, we no longer believe that Inscr. 12 was executed at Sukhodaya, or that Mahādharmarājā IV was still residing there in 1426. We now think the capital was transferred to Biṣṇuloka between 1417 and 1419.



made in the reign of Paramapāla (Mahādharmarājādhirāja IV), and gives the date, which corresponds to 11 April 1426 A.D. (Julian calendar). The provenance of the Buddhapāda is unknown. According to the general opinion, it was found at Sukhodaya, and brought to Bangkok by Samtec Braḥ Pavaraarāja Cau Mahāśakti Balasebya, who was the Vāñ Hnā Prince or so-called 'Second King' from 1824 to 1832<sup>10</sup>.

As it was executed in 1426, when in our opinion its founder, Mahādharmarājā IV, was reigning at Biṣṇuloka, it seems more likely to have been originally installed at Biṣṇuloka than at Sukhodaya. We suspect the Vāñ Hnā Prince brought it from Biṣṇuloka to Bangkok in 1829, at the same time that he brought the great statue named Braḥ Buddha Jinasiha, also from Biṣṇuloka, which is now in the uposatha hall of Vāt Pavaranivesa<sup>11</sup>.

The Buddhapāda was published in 1895 by Fournereau in *Le Siam ancien*, together with Auguste Barth's excellent Romanized transcription and French translation of the Pali dedicatory inscription<sup>12</sup>. The inscription was again published in 1924 by the late Professor George Coedès, who found only a few places in Barth's work that required amendment<sup>13</sup>. We follow Coedès in designating the inscription as No. 12.

Fournereau, who took rubbings of the Buddhapāda and its inscription around 1891, tells us that it was at 'Vāt Vāñ Hnā,' but it is not clear precisely what place he is referring to. Probably he means Vāt Pavaranivesa, where it now is, and where it may have been ever since it arrived in Bangkok<sup>14</sup>.

The Saṅgharāja Samtec Krama-braḥyā Vajirañāna Varorasa made a Siamese translation of the Pali text in the early years of the twentieth century, which was, however, not published until very recently<sup>15</sup>. His translation differs from that of Barth and Coedès in several places,

<sup>10</sup> Coedès, *Recueil des inscriptions du Siam*, I, Bangkok, 1924, p. 151.

<sup>11</sup> Lingat, "History of Wat Pavaraniveṣa", *JSS* 26/1, p.

<sup>12</sup> Fournereau, *Le Siam ancien*, I, Paris, 1895, pp. 242-254.

<sup>13</sup> Coedès, *Recueil des inscriptions du Siam*, I, Bangkok, 1924, Inscription No. 12, pp. 151-156. The Siamese section of the same work, ประชุมศิลาจารึกสยาม ภาคที่ ๑, Bangkok, B.E. 2467, contains a translation of Coedès's comments, a transcription of the Pali text into modern Siamese characters, and a translation of it by Nāy Pvan Induvamsa (now Luang Boribal Buribhandh), pp. 153-155; reprinted B.E. 2515 (transcription and translation of the Pali inscription only), pp. 180-181. According to Fournereau (*op. cit.*, p. 242), the stone was discovered at Vāt Mahādhātu, Sukhodaya, by the future King Rāma IV in 1834, and sent to Bangkok together with Inscriptions I and IV; but this is almost certainly a mistake; Fournereau seems to have confused it with Rāma Gāmhēn's Manāsilā throne.

<sup>14</sup> Fournereau, p. 242. He adds in a footnote: 'Cette pagode faisait partie du palais du second roi; depuis la mort de ce dernier, elle a été abandonnée; il faut se garder de la confondre avec le musée du même nom dont il a été fait mention d'autre part' (*ibid.*, p. 242, no. 1). The Vāñ Hnā Museum, nucleus of the present National Museum, came into existence in 1877, after the death of the last 'Second King,' when three of the buildings in his palace were turned over to it, including the Buddhaisvarya Hall which had been his Chapel Royal. As Fournereau says that Vāt Vāñ Hnā was *not* the same as the Vāñ Hnā Museum, he is evidently not referring to the Buddhaisvarya Hall. He may be referring to the so-called Vat Braḥ Kēv Vāñ Hnā, which stands northwest of the National Museum, on a piece of ground formerly belonging to the Vāñ Hnā. More likely he means Vāt Pavaranivesa, which was founded by the same Vāñ Hnā Prince who is thought to have brought the Buddhapāda to Bangkok. The sālā in which it is now located is shown as No. 11 on the plan in Lingat, *History of Wat Pavaraniveṣa*, *JSS* 26/1, between pp. 100 and 101; cf. *ibid.*, p. 101 note 2.

<sup>15</sup> สมเด็จพระมหาสมณเจ้ากรมพระยาวชิรญาณวโรรส, ประวัติศาสตร์และโบราณคดี, Bangkok, B.E. 2514. Besides this translation, and that of Nāy Pvan Induvamsa, we know of only one other Siamese translation of the Pali text: this is the one published anonymously in ประชุมจดหมายเหตุสมณยุชยุชยา ภาค ๑, Bangkok, 2510.



one or two of which are not without significance. The most important is the term **jayanāthissara** near the end of line 1, where it is part of the titulature of Mahādharmarājā IV. Barth and Coedès, relying on the spelling, translated the expression as '*maître de la victoire*', and took it as a mere honorific epithet. The Saṅgharāja, however, who was well aware of the irregularities of Pali spelling in the Sukhodayan inscriptions, took it to be a variant of **jayanādissara**, 'the Lord of Jayanāda'. He knew that the name 'Jayanāda' in the fifteenth century had nothing to do with the present province of Jayanāda (*Chaināt*), but he wrongly identified it with Nagara Svarga or some place near there. Prince Damrong Rājānubhāb, in a letter written towards the end of his life, rightly identified it as one of the old names of Bīṣṇuloka<sup>16</sup>. The poem *Yuan Pāi* makes the identification a certainty<sup>17</sup>. If, as we now believe, Mahādharmarājā IV was ruling at Bīṣṇuloka in 1426 when the Buddhapāda was carved, the 'epithet' takes on a real historical meaning. In our translation, therefore, we have tentatively accepted the Saṅgharāja's rendering in this respect.

Again, near the beginning of line 5, the stone on which the Buddhapāda was carved is qualified with the term **sukhodayapurāṇite**, which could mean either 'brought to Sukhodaya' or 'brought from Sukhodaya'. Barth and Coedès, believing that the Buddhapāda was originally installed at Sukhodaya, naturally opted for the first; the Saṅgharāja, believing it was originally installed in some other city, opted for the second. It is hard to say which is right, because the stone was doubtless first brought to Sukhodaya from the quarries, and later brought from Sukhodaya to Bīṣṇuloka.

The Buddhapāda (see figure 1) is carved on the upper face of a huge slab of stone, measuring 3.60m by 2.17m, with a thickness of 20 centimetres. The technique used is partly *bās-relief* and partly engraving. Originally, as we may assume from inscriptions describing other Sukhodayan Footprints, the entire composition must have been painted in a variety of colors, and gilded in places, to bring out all the details of the carving clearly.

In contrast to most of the Sukhodayan examples, which like the famous original on Adam's Peak depict a single Footprint, this one is a 'Buddhayugalapāda', representing the impressions of both feet. The most conspicuous mark on each is the Wheel (Dhammacakka). The 108 signs are arranged radially inside it, with 8 signs in the innermost circle, and with 12, 16, 16, 24, and 32 in the progressively larger ones. The Footprints are carved as shallow depressions, with the toes slightly deeper, like the impressions made by a supernatural foot in soft clay. The Wheel and the other signs are carved in low relief, as if they were the impressions of the lines and creases in the footsole. The remaining parts are engraved with floral designs, which are now nearly obliterated.

The pair of Footprints is enclosed in a rectangular frame consisting of a double engraved line. Surrounding the frame is a broad band, engraved with drawings of monks. This band in turn is enclosed in a rectangular frame made up of three engraved lines. Between the first

<sup>16</sup> สำนวนสมเด็จพระเจ้า

<sup>17</sup> See Griswold and Prasert, A Fifteenth-Century Siamese Historical Poem, in Cowen and Wolters (eds.) *Southeast Asian History and Historiography: Essays Presented to D. G. E. Hall*, Ithaca and London, 1976, pp 123 ff.



and second line is a row of fully opened lotus flowers, and between the second and third there is some writing. The only part of the band and the outer frame which survives in reasonably good condition is the row seen at the bottom of figure 1. There are 16 monks in this row, plus 3 in each corner<sup>18</sup>. Supposing there were 16 monks in the opposite row, and 18 in the side rows, which are a little longer, the total, counting those in the corners, would be 80. The writing between the second and third engraved lines of the outer frame, so far as it is legible, gives the names of the monks, who are evidently the Buddha's 80 principal disciples. Fournereau copied as many of the names as he could, and then filled out the rest from a marble inscription at Vāt Sudāśana on which the names were said to have been copied from the Buddhapāda itself<sup>19</sup>. The French missionary Père Schmitt then put them into Romanized transcription in accordance with the extraordinary system he had devised<sup>20</sup>.

The dedicatory inscription engraved on the vertical edge of the slab of stone (figures 1, 2) consists of 7 long lines of Pali. The first 5½ lines are in prose, composed in a florid style, the remainder in verse (*anuṭṭhubha*).

In accordance with the custom for Sanskrit and Pali inscriptions at Sukhodaya, the Khmer ('Khôm') script is used. The letter *ñ* is sometimes written in the ordinary way, with the following consonant subscript to it, e.g. in *vidyāvaṇsa* (line 4), *maṅgala* (line 6), *alaṅkatā* (line 6). The anusvāra (*ṃ*) is usually written as a rounded circumflex over the preceding consonant, e.g. in *saṃvacchare* (line 2), *titthiyaṃ* (line 2), *saṃyutte* (line 2), *chāyāyaṃ* (line 2), *saṃgharājassa* (line 3), *rājabalaṃ* (line 4), *cīraṃ* (line 7), *sakalaṃ* (line 7), *mahiṃ* (line 7). But either *ñ* or the anusvāra may be replaced by a mark resembling the mai-hān-ākāśa (˘), put above the following consonant; and in these cases we follow Coedès in transcribing the mark as *ñ̃*, e.g. *chatiṇsa* (line 2), *sumedhañkara* (line 3), *alañkata* (line 3), *sumedhañkaro* (line 3), *sañghanāyako* (line 3), *suriyavaṇsa* (line 4), *lañkadīpassa* (line 5), *medhañkara* (line 6). In most cases there is no clear distinction between *i* and *ī*, or between *u* and *ū*: apparently, for example, we have *jiva* (line 2) for *jīva*, *sila* (line 3) for *sīla*, *silā* (line 5) for *sīlā*, *dassaniyā* (line 6) for *dassanīyā*, *paripuraṇa* (line 2) for *paripūrāṇa*, *rohiṇi* (line 2) for *rohiṇī*, and *samantakuṭa* (line 5) for *samantakūṭa*. There are a few Sanskritic forms, e.g. *sākya* (line 1), *yogya* (line 2), and *vidyā* (line 4). There are some traces of erasure and correction, and some mistakes or irregularities in spelling<sup>21</sup>, e.g. *gottama* (line 1), for *gotama*, *dhumika* (line 1) for *dhammika*, *vuḍhi* (line 4) for *vuḍḍhi* or *vaḍḍhi*, *patte* (line 5) for *paṭṭe*, *lañkadīpassa* (line 5) for *laṅkāḍīpassa*, *pamāna* (line 5) for *pamāṇa*, and *mahīpālā* (line 7) for *mahīpālā*. The forms *lañcane* and *lañcanā* (both in line 6), for *lañchane*, *lañchanā*, are not classic; but the deaspiration is not uncommon in Pali<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Each triad consists of a tall monk flanked by two smaller ones. This arrangement, at least in part, may have been suggested by the space available at the corners. Fournereau (p. 245) thought each triad represented a Buddha flanked by a pair of Bodhisattvas, but as the central figure has no ushnisha it cannot be a Buddha.

<sup>19</sup> Fournereau, pp. 62, 63.

<sup>20</sup> Fournereau, 245-248. The names in Schmitt's transcription will be found in Fournereau, 245 ff.

<sup>21</sup> See Coedès, *Recueil des inscriptions du Siam*, I, p. 153, notes 1-4.

<sup>22</sup> See Geiger, *Pali Grammar*, § 40.2. We are indebted to Professor Kamaleswar Bhattacharya of Paris for this reference, as well as for many comments on obscure points in this inscription. For the orthographical peculiarities, cf. Barth in Fournereau, *Le Siam ancien*, footnotes to pp. 249-251.



The entire prose portion of the text is a single sentence, replete with long-winded honorifics which make it difficult to follow the thread of the narrative. Barth showed much ingenuity by translating it into a single French sentence, retaining the general word order and phrase structure of the original as far as possible; and Coedès reproduced Barth's translation with only a few amendments. Our translation follows the same model; and though we have made several compromises in word order and phrase structure we cannot boast that it is easy reading<sup>23</sup>.

The purpose of the text is to commemorate the dedication of the Double Footprint, on a date corresponding to Thursday, 11 April 1426 A.D. (Julian)<sup>24</sup>. The slab of stone on which it was carved had been brought to (?) Sukhodaya by the Mahāthera Vidyāvamsa in the reign of Mahādharmarājā III (Sai Līdaiya, r.c. 1398-1419), presumably with the intention of carving a Footprint on it. For some reason, perhaps connected with the transfer of the capital to Biṣṇuloka, the plan was not carried out until the following reign, when it was revived by the Vanavāsī Siri Sumedhaṅkara Saṅghanāyaka, who had been a disciple of the Vanavāsī Siri Sumedhaṅkara Saṅgharāja. Under his instructions, by authority of the reigning king, Mahādharmarājā IV, the work was completed in 1426.

Who were these two monks, the master and the disciple, who had the same names in religion? The term Vanavāsī shows they both belonged to the order of Forest Dwellers. The master, who was not necessarily still alive in 1426 when the inscription was composed, had the rank of Saṅgharāja, which in the Sukhodaya period apparently meant the head of an order within a given province, in this case the head of the order of Forest Dwellers in the province of Sukhodaya. The disciple had the rank of Saṅghanāyaka, presumably equivalent to Saṅghaparināyaka which, at that time, seems to have meant the head of an order throughout the kingdom<sup>25</sup>. In the name Siri Sumedhaṅkara, *siri* is merely an honorific, and *su-* is a non-essential auspicious prefix: the essential element in the religious names of both the master and the disciple was simply Medhaṅkara, the form in which the disciple's name is given in the verse portion of the inscription.

The order of Forest-Dwelling Sihalabhikkhus (Ceylon monks) had been established at Sukhodaya in the fourteenth century. It was introduced by monks from Nagara Bann (Martaban) in Rāmaññadesa, the Mòn country in Lower Burma, where there was a flourishing community of Sihalabhikkhus who professed to conform to the most orthodox Theravādin tradition, and whose leaders were either themselves Sinhalese or else had studied and been reordained in Ceylon. The most esteemed among them were the Araññavāsī or Vanavāsī, the 'Forest Dwellers', who, disdaining the amenities of city life, took up their abode either as hermits in the forest or else as residents of 'forest monasteries', located according to the usual rule at least 500 bow-lengths (say, one kilometre) from the nearest town or village<sup>26</sup>.

In 1361, at the invitation of Mahādharmarājā I (Līdaiya, r. 1347-c. 1370), a certain Mahāsā-mī Saṅgharāja, who was an eminent Forest-Dwelling Sihalabhikkhu, came from Martaban

<sup>23</sup> See Note 1 to the translation (p. 121).

<sup>24</sup> See Note 7 to the translation (p. 121).

<sup>25</sup> See *JSS* 62/1, 95-98; cf. below, note 28.

<sup>26</sup> *JSS* 60/1, 48-144; *JSS* 61/1, 119-180; *JSS* 62/1, 89-121.



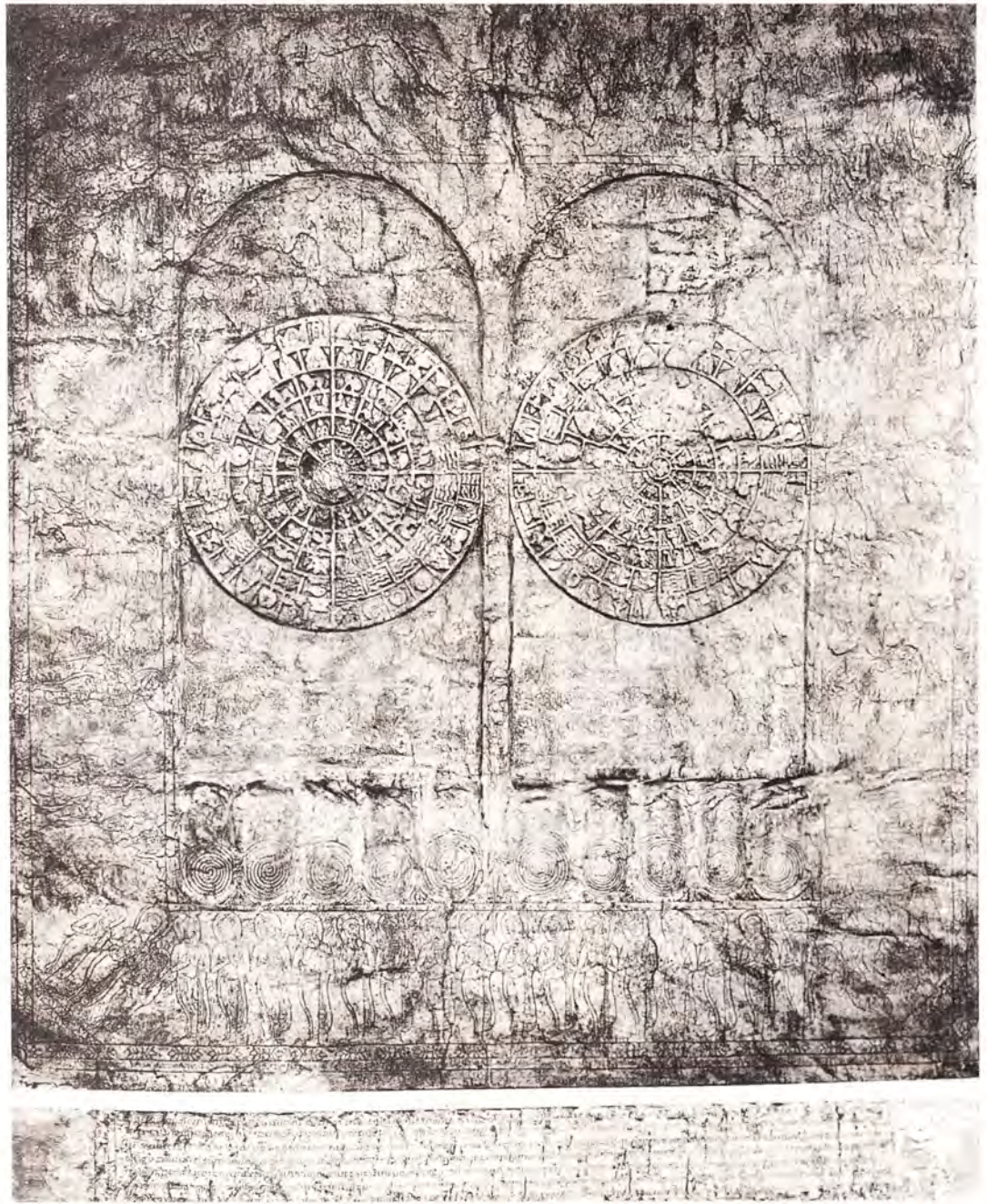


FIGURE 1.





FIGURE 2.-A



FIGURE 2.-B



and settled at Sukhodaya<sup>27</sup>. The King showered him with honors, entered the monkhood for several months to take religious instruction from him, and put him in charge of all the Forest-Dwelling monks in the province of Sukhodaya<sup>28</sup>. He was still active as Saṅgharāja at Sukhodaya as late as 1385, for in that year, according to a gold-leaf inscription, a cetiya was erected there by 'the Brah Mahāsaṅgharāja Cau, the virtuous man who had been Mahādharmarāja's teacher'<sup>29</sup>. The Sukhodayan inscriptions apparently do not give his name; but evidence from Burma and Ceylon suggests he should be identified with the Saṅgharāja Medhaṅkara, the author of a learned Pali work named **Lokappadīpasāra**<sup>30</sup>. We must, however, add a caveat: the identification rests on the belief that the words **mahāsaṅgharājena Lidayarājassa gurunā** in the colophon to that work ('by the great Saṅgharāja, the preceptor of King Lidaya') mean that he was the preceptor of Mahādharmarāja I (Līdaiya); but as no date is given it is possible that he was the preceptor of Mahādharmarāja III (Sai Līdaiya).

However that may be, it seems likely that the Vanavāsī (Su)medhaṅkara Saṅgharāja of Inscription 12 was the same person as the author of **Lokappadīpasāra**.

We cannot propose any particular identification for the younger Sumedhaṅkara in Inscription 12. The monastic name (Su)medhaṅkara was adopted by many Forest-Dwelling Sīhalabhikkhus<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> JSS 61/1, 119-176.

<sup>28</sup> It has usually been assumed that, as Saṅgharāja, he was put in charge of all the Forest-Dwelling monks in the kingdom, or perhaps in charge of the entire monkhood. But in the Sukhodaya period the term Saṅgharāja seems to have meant the head of one particular order in a given province only. In the same year, 1361, if we have correctly interpreted a mutilated passage in Inscription 9, another monk, Paramagrū Tilokatilaka Tīratanaśīlagandha Vanavāsī Dharmakitti, was made Saṅgharāja in charge of the Forest-Dwelling monks in the province of Sajjanalaya by Mahādharmarāja I. As far as we can make out, each of the three orders — Gāmvāsī, Brah Rūpa, and Vanavāsī — had its own Saṅgharāja for a given province, and its own Saṅghaparināyaka for the whole kingdom. We gather from Inscr. 9 that Paramagrū Tilokatilaka retained the title of Saṅgharāja until 1406, when he was promoted to Saṅghaparināyaka. See JSS 62/1, 95-98; also p. 112 and note 70. We do not know whether there was any Supreme Patriarch for the entire monkhood throughout the kingdom in the Sukhodaya period (see JSS 62/1, 95).

<sup>29</sup> JSS 61/2, 124-128. He was very likely the 'Brah Mahātherasaṅgharāja' who is referred to around 1379 in the Inscription of Vat Trabaṅ Jān Phōak (I/18 ff.); see JSS 59/1, pp. 165, 168.

<sup>30</sup> JSS 61/2, 91-99; JSS 62/1, 114-121.

<sup>31</sup> Coedès proposed to identify one or the other of the two Sumedhaṅkaras in our inscription with a monk from Jiān Hmāi (*Chieng Mai*) called Mahāmedhaṅkara, who went to Ceylon with a large group of monks in 1423. There they were reordained as Sīhalabhikkhus; they returned to Siam in 1424; and in the next several years they founded communities of Sīhalabhikkhus at Ayodhyā, Sajjanālaya, Sukhodaya, and in Lān Nā. See Coedès, *Recueil des inscriptions du Siam*, I, p. 152; and BEFEO XXV/1, p. 105 note 4 (continued on p. 106). This Mahāmedhaṅkara is mentioned briefly in Sāsanavamsa, and discussed at some length in Jīnakālamālī; see *The History of the Buddha's Religion* (Sāsanavamsa), trans. B.C. Law, London, 1952, p. 56; Coedès's translation of Jīnakālamālī in "Documents sur l'histoire politique et religieuse du Laos occidental", BEFEO XXV/1, 104-110; and *The Sheaf of Garlands of the Epochs of the Conqueror, being a translation of Jīnakālamālīpakaraṇam of Ratanapañṇā Thera*, by N.A. Jayawickrama, London, 1968, 129-138 [note that the person referred to in the index of Professor Jayawickrama's translation, p. 223, s.v. Mahāsāmi—*Atūlasaktyādhikaraṇa* —is not Mahāmedhaṅkara, but a Thera named Saddhammasaṅgha, who was not ordained until 1463/4; see *ibid.*, p. 160]. Coedès's identification fits very well with the probable date when these monks visited Sukhodaya (see BEFEO XXV/1, p. 105 note 4); but there is a possible objection to it: if a monk, who was already a Thera in one sect, lost his seniority on being reordained in another sect, the Mahāmedhaṅkara from Jiān Hmāi could not have been either a Saṅgharāja or a Saṅghanāyaka in 1426; but it appears from Inscription 9 that the rule of loss of seniority was not always obligatory (see JSS 62/1, p. 120).







TRANSLATION<sup>1</sup>

[Lines 1-6; in prose.] In the year one thousand nine hundred seventy after the Parinibbāna of the perfect Buddha Gotama Siri Sākyamuni, who was adorned with a profusion of the highest qualities such as omniscient wisdom (as if) with countless jewels of different kinds, and who was the foremost of those who act for the welfare of others<sup>2</sup>,—in the year of the horse, the thirty-sixth year since the birth of King Dhammarājādhirāja<sup>3</sup> who is the Lord of Jayanāda<sup>4</sup> and foremost among the righteous<sup>5</sup>,—in the hot season, in the bright fortnight of the month of Vesākha, on the fourth lunar day, Thursday<sup>6</sup>, a propitious day linked to the lunar mansion of Rohiṇī, when the shadow of (the gnomon cast by) the rising sun was eleven pādas (in length)<sup>7</sup>:—the chief disciple<sup>8</sup> of the Saṅgharāja Vanavāsī Siri Sumedhaṅkara who<sup>9</sup>, adorned with an abundance of virtues such as stainless moral conduct, supreme wisdom, and the rest, (was like) a mine of jewels,—(the disciple) named Vanavāsī Siri Sumedhaṅkara, graced with the most excellent virtues of moral conduct, wisdom, and the rest, who is the Saṅghanāyaka, the most

<sup>1</sup> To help guide the reader through the labyrinthine sentence that runs from line 1 to the middle of line 6, we subjoin the following paraphrase, broken into shorter sentences, with the diction simplified, the honorifics omitted, and some explanatory matter added:

In the year 1970 of the Buddhist Era, a year of the horse, the 36th year of the age of King Mahādharmarājā IV [Paramapāla], in the hot season, in the bright fortnight of the month of Vesākha, on the fourth lunar day, a Thursday [11 April 1426 A.D., Julian], the Vanavāsī Sumedhaṅkara Saṅghanāyaka, who had been the chief disciple of the Vanavāsī Sumedhaṅkara Saṅgharāja, caused the Buddha's Footprints to be portrayed on this large slab of stone. The stone was brought to (?) the city of Sukhodaya by the Mahāthera Vidyaṃsa, in the reign of Mahādharmarājā IV's father, Mahādharmarājā III (Sai Lidaia). The Footprints, which the Saṅghanāyaka caused to be portrayed by the authority of Mahādharmarājā IV, are similar and conforming in size to the Buddha's Footprint on Mount Sumanakūta (Adam's Peak) in Ceylon. They are resplendent with the eminent sign of the Wheel, and perfect with the 108 auspicious signs.

<sup>2</sup> Parahitakaravara (line 1): parahita, 'the good or welfare of others' + kara, 'causing, making or doing' + vara, 'best', etc. The Pali Text Society's Dictionary glosses the adjective *vara* as 'excellent, splendid, best, noble', and adds that as an attribute it may precede the noun which it characterizes, e.g. *varapaṇṇa*, 'of supreme wisdom', or follow it, e.g. *ratanavara*, 'the best of gems', or be inserted between noun and apposition (or predicate), e.g. *ākinna-vara-lakkhaṇa*, 'full of the best marks'. Buddhaddatta Mahāthera's *Concise Pali-English Dictionary* (Colombo, 1957) glosses the adjective *vara* simply as 'excellent, noble'. Monier Williams glosses Skt. *vara* as 'choicest, valuable, precious, best, most excellent or eminent among (with genitive, locative or ablative, or in a compound)'. Barth, followed by Coedès, preserves the latter meaning, rendering *parahitakaravara* as '(le) meilleur des bienfaiteurs d'autrui', and usually adopting a similar construction to render *vara* elsewhere. To some extent we follow their example; but as *vara* occurs no less than nine times in our inscription we have tried to avoid monotonous repetition by allowing ourselves some degree of freedom in rendering it.

<sup>3</sup> Mahādharmarājā IV (Paramapāla or Pāl Mōaṅ, บาลเมือง); see Introduction, p. 114. As he was in his 36th year in 1426, he was probably born in 1391 (in the traditional arithmetic, any part of a year counts as a whole one; but as we are not told in what month he was born, our estimate may be wrong by one year).

<sup>4</sup> Jayanāthissara (line 1), presumably put for jayanādisara, 'Lord of Jayanāda' (Bisnuloka); see Introduction, p. 116.

<sup>5</sup> Varadhumika (line 1), for varadhammika.

<sup>6</sup> Jivativase (line 2), for jivativase, 'on the (solar) day of Jīva', i.e. Thursday (Jīva is one of the names of the planet Jupiter; see Barth, in *Le Siam ancien*, I, p. 252, note 7).

<sup>7</sup> The date and hour are calculated by Barth as Thursday 11 April 1426 A.D. (Julian), at about 30 minutes after sunrise (see Barth, *ibid.*, p. 252, notes 7, 9, and 10). If we were to read the sentence literally, we should have to understand that the Saṅghanāyaka caused the Footprint to be portrayed on the stone at the date and hour indicated. In fact, of course, the work must have been completed beforehand, though a small part may have been purposely left unfinished which could be ceremonially added at the time of the dedication. As a practical matter, we assume that the date and hour refer to the time the dedication ceremonies began.

<sup>8</sup> Aggupaṭṭhāko (line 3) means a chief disciple who is a devoted personal attendant to his master; the most conspicuous example is Ānanda, the devoted attendant of the Buddha.

<sup>9</sup> Sc. the Saṅgharāja.



eminent chief of the monks,—by authority of the noblest of (kings) possessing the power and glory of the gods, (namely) Sirisuriyavaṃsa Paramapāla Mahādharmarājādhirāja<sup>10</sup>, son of Dhammarājādhirāja<sup>11</sup>, endowed with the highest qualities of prosperity and wisdom,—on this large slab of stone which, through the favor of King Mahādharmarājā<sup>12</sup>, august father of Paramapāla Dhammarājā the Lord of Men, had been brought to Sukhodaya by the Mahāthera Vidyāvaṃsa, skilled in the arts<sup>13</sup>, — (he, the Saṅghanāyaka,) caused to be portrayed<sup>14</sup>, similar and conforming in size to the precious monument<sup>15</sup> of the Footprint manifested by the supreme Lord of the World on the Samantakūṭa<sup>16</sup>, the foremost among mountains, which is the delightful jeweled crown of the island of Laṅkā,—these twin imprints of the feet of the Buddha, the best lord of the sages,—which are extremely charming, radiantly beautiful, resplendent with the eminent sign of the Wheel in diverse colors<sup>17</sup>, and perfect with the hundred and eight supremely auspicious marks.

[*Lines 6-7: in verse.*] These imprints of the feet of the Prince of Ascetics, graced with the Wheel and complete with the blessed auspicious marks, beautiful and delightful, which the wise chief of the monks named Medhaṅkara<sup>18</sup> caused to be made by the favor of the wise Dhammarājā<sup>19</sup>, may they endure in safety for five thousand years<sup>20</sup> for the sake of those who seek merit in the religion of the Lord of the World! As a consequence of this meritorious work, may (all) living creatures be made happy, and may the kings of the world protect the whole earth in accordance with the Dhamma!

<sup>10</sup> Mahādharmarājā IV; see note 3.

<sup>11</sup> Mahādharmarājā III (Sai Līdaiya), r. c. 1398-1419.

<sup>12</sup> Mahādharmarājā III.

<sup>13</sup> We assume that suvicitakamma (line 4) is put for suvittakamma (su, 'well' + vitta, 'variegated, ornamented, decorated' + kamma, 'work'), cf. cittakamma, 'painting', 'the art of painting'. This interpretation seems to yield a more satisfactory sense than Barth's translation, '*habile à exécuter ce qu'il a bien médité*'.

<sup>14</sup> Cittakāreti (line 6). We use the non-committal expression 'portrayed' because we assume the operation included both carving and polychroming.

<sup>15</sup> Ratanapadacetiya (line 5); for the word cetiya, which we have translated as 'monument', see Introduction, p. 112.

<sup>16</sup> Samantakūṭa is a doublet of Sumanakūṭa (Adam's Peak).

<sup>17</sup> We assume that vividhavicita (line 6) is put for vividhavicitta; cf. above, notes 13, 14.

<sup>18</sup> The Saṅghanāyaka (Su)medhaṅkara.

<sup>19</sup> Mahādharmarājā IV.

<sup>20</sup> Sc. until the year 5000 of the Buddhist Era, when, according to an old prophecy, the Buddhist religion will disappear. We have omitted the word cīraṃ ('for a long time') from our translation, as it is redundant.