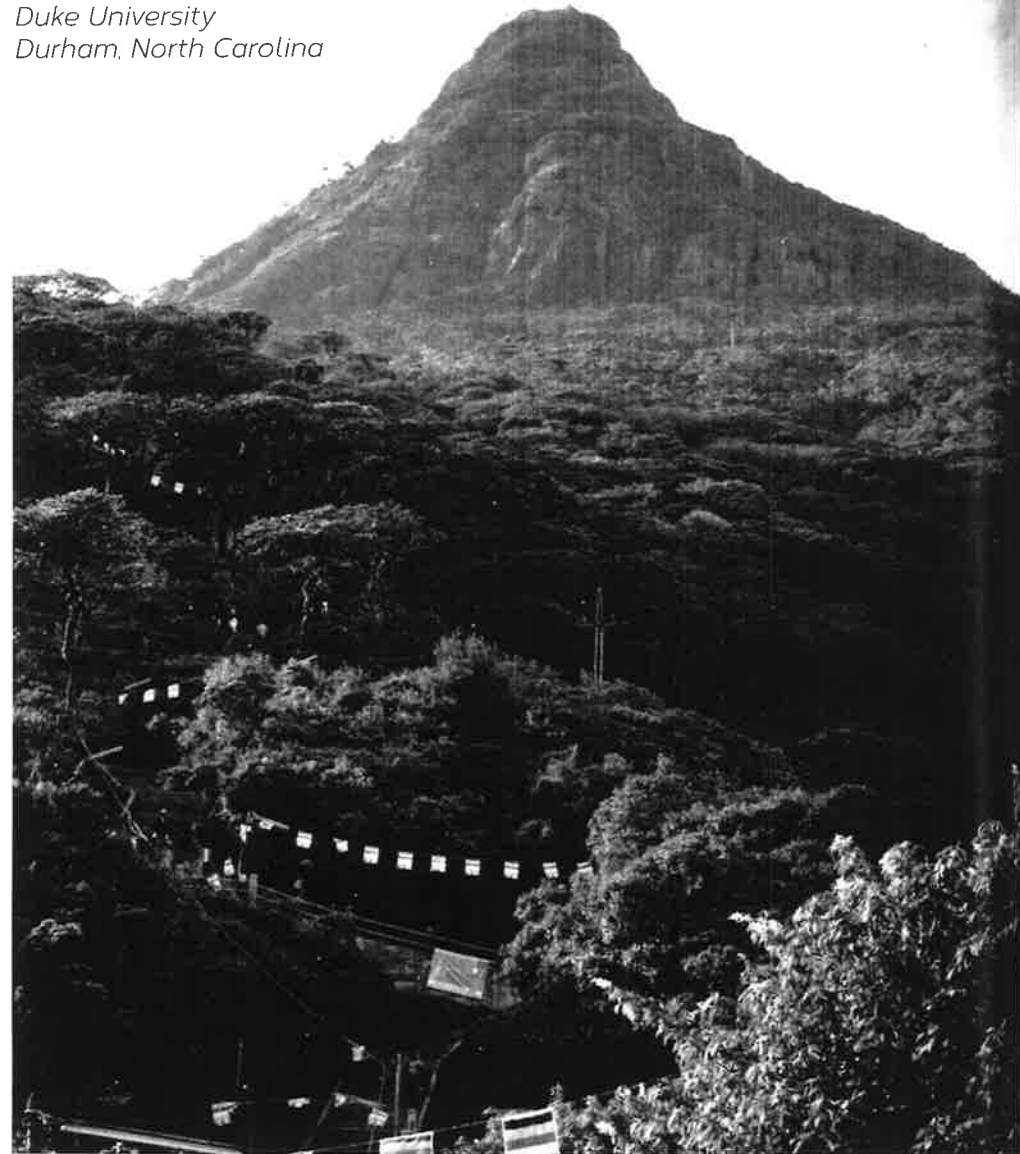


THE SPACING OF PILGRIMAGE: Two Journeys to Sri Pada in Sinhala Verse

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In the southwestern rainforest of Sri Lanka stands the pilgrimage mountain of Samanala, or Sumanakūṭa as known in Pali, Adam's Peak in English, and Sri Pada as most commonly called in colloquial Sinhala thanks to the Buddha's sacred footprint (śrī pāda) atop its summit. While the mountain found mention in literature from around the world over the past millennium (spanning Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Chinese, many European languages and beyond),¹ the significance of Samanala on Lankan literature was especially pronounced. Compositions dedicated directly to the mountain go back as far as the thirteenth-century, when Vedeha Thera composed a Pali poem that described the landscape in rich detail.² Later, as literature vernacularized into Sinhala, Samanala only grew in importance.

Sinhala Samanala poetry developed after the genre of *sandēśa* poems had flourished in Lanka during the fifteenth century. Inherited from Sanskrit, this style of composition organized itself around place names, describing a route from one locale to another and a message (*sandēśa*) delivered upon arrival.³ This poetic structure had a massive impact on subsequent Sinhala works, even those not titled *sandēśa* nor concerning messages. Poems describing pilgrimage pathways or river routes, for example, mapped Lankan space similarly, anchoring almost every quatrain with a place name, with the full route outlined by poem's end. The first Sinhala work to apply this structure to trail stops of the Sri Pada pilgrimage pathway was the sixteenth-century *Saman Sirita*.⁴

1. For an easy overview of the Peak, see: Markus Aksland, *The Sacred Footprint: A Cultural History of Adam's Peak*, Orchid Guides (Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2001).

2. Vedeha Thera, *In Praise of Mount Samanta* [Samantakūṭavaṇṇanā], trans. Ann Appleby Hazlewood (London: The Pali Text Society, 1986).

3. Steven P. Hopkins, "Love, Messengers, and Beloved Landscapes: *Sandesakavya* in Comparative Perspective," *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 8, no. 1-3 (2004).

4. P.E.P. Deraniyagala, ed. *Deva Varnanā Kāvya* (Colombo: Ceylon National Museum, 1960). The 1788 *Kāṭakirili Sandēśa* is another example: *Kataragama Deviṅḍunṭa Sandeśa Kavi 1700-1900*. (Dehivala: Tisara Prakāśakayō, 1970).

In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, printing presses pervaded Colombo and a literary boom followed the technology shift from etched palm-leaves to inked pages. The tradition of Samanala poetry was popularized with many amateur versifications of pilgrimage experiences. Intentions varied, sometimes within the same poem, ranging from devotional to advisory to descriptive. Several books were written by pilgrimage veterans distilling decades of experience into poetic advice for the next generation. Some poems were meant for ritual recitation, and others were frivolous, with less technicality or originality. Along the way, the mountain became a symbol for the emergent nation, the crest of a motherland needing care.

I have translated two short Samanala poems below.⁵ The first, written in 1923, described an older style of pilgrimage taken on foot, a group walking upland from the coastal city of Galle. The second, from 1924, presented a new trend in pilgrimage travel: the train. Different modes of transportation yielded different poems, but both engaged in spacing out pilgrimage, binding Buddhists not only across the island, but also across generations, emplacing literal directions of worship within temporal spaces of soteriological significance. Although written only a year apart, the poems stand on either side of a continental divide in pilgrimage mobility. The 1923 work evoked a slower gait of the past, while the 1924 work relayed the rapidity of worship-travel available since the railway extended to this part of the Lankan highlands in 1884,⁶ instituting, along with later cars and buses, the style of single-day pilgrimage predominant at present.

I will briefly summarize both poems citing verse numbers in pa-

5. Both are housed in the Colombo National Museum Library's Sinhala pamphlet collection, filed under call-number 104/C8. For a Sinhala overview of many Samanala-relevant poetry pamphlets in the CNML collection and elsewhere, see: Karuṇādāsa Rūpasimha, *Śrī Pāda Vandanā Sāhitya* (Koḷamba: Ās Goḍagē saha Sahōdarayō, 2013).

6. Archibald Campbell Lawrie, *A Gazetteer of the Central Province of Ceylon*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Colombo: George J. A. Skeen, Government Press, 1896). 334. See entry for "Hatton."

renthesis. The poem from 1923 was titled *Śrīpāda Vandanāva saha Gālu Kōralē siṭa yana Vandanākārayingē Gaman Vistaraya*, or *Sri Pada Worship and the Journey Description of the Pilgrim Going from Galle Korale*, by T.H. Udāris.⁷ The verses varied, some describing activities of pilgrims, others incorporating Buddhist allusions, but the last line of almost every quatrain named a place, driving the journey forward. Pilgrimage preparations were described first (1-3). As the group walked, thoughts were directed toward Samanala, but also toward *jātaka* stories about past lives of the Buddha (4-6). Such stories were obliquely referenced throughout the poem, indicated below with annotations. The poet then introduced the "guru," or leader of the pilgrimage group (7-8), responsible for directing ritual and singing poems.⁸ Several *ambalam* were also mentioned (9, 21, 23, 27). These open-air rest-halls served pilgrims, but also local traffic, sites of trade and conversation that brought religious visitors into varied streams of political discourse.⁹ Ratnapura marked the last major town from which pilgrims departed (26-28). Around Pavanella (39) the real climb began, place names thereafter more landmarks than settlements, while the final hoist to the summit was made with chains (55-56). Along the way, the poet weaved stories of the Buddha imprinting the footprint (19, 25, 44, 64) with allusions to Gautama's birth and enlightenment (41, 62, 63, 66). Battles with Mara recurred, too, sometimes as a singular foe, and sometimes pluralized to represent desires and defilements the Sage overcame. Overall, like many Samanala compositions, Udāris' poem is about *moksha*, using pilgrimage to come ashore from the ocean of *samsara* and see *nirvana*.

7. T.H. Udāris, *Śrīpāda Vandanāva Saha Gālu Kōralē Siṭa Yana Vandanākārayingē Gaman Vistaraya* (Amibalangoḍa: Vijaya Yantrālaya, 1923).

8. On the "guru" role's evolution, see: Premakumara De Silva, "Anthropological Studies on South Asian Pilgrimage: Case of Buddhist Pilgrimage in Sri Lanka," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 4, no. 1 (2016).

9. C.E. Godakumbara, *Panavitiya Ambalama Carvings* (Colombo: Archeological Department, 1981); Michael Roberts, *Modernist Theory. Trimming the Printed Word: The Instance of Pre-Modern Sinhala Society* (Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 2002).

The poem from 1924 was titled *Samanala Gamanā Laṅkāraya saha Śrī Pāda Vandanāva*, or *Samanala Journey Adornment and Sri Pada Worship*, by G.M. Salā.¹⁰ After worship of the three refuges (1-4) the poet described his wife's request to go on pilgrimage (7). They set out via the crowded Rambukkanna train station (9-11) and journeyed through the hill country, naming passing villages in classic *sandēśa* structure.¹¹ Salā's style compared to Udāris' was more straightforwardly descriptive of the journey, yet the medium of his travel also made his descriptions repetitive at times, a probable effect of trains on perception, high speeds requiring monotonous observation of distant landscape rather than details of the roadside.¹² The poet and his wife changed trains at Peradeniya Junction (21-23), then reached their final stop of Hatton (30-32), the town through which most pilgrims travel today. From here, the poet journeyed on foot toward and up the Peak describing rituals similar to Udāris' poem, like putting on white clothes and tying coin offerings. After verse 42, the poet included the standard Pali stanza used to worship all śrīpādas, suggesting the book was also meant as a manual to be brought on pilgrimage. From there, the poet described the styles of offering and worship around the footprint (43-46), then turned to several intentionally repetitive verses suited for call and response (53-57). Near the end came injunctions toward correct behavior (62, 64), common in many Samanala poems. Like Udāris' poem and many others, the most dominant theme in Salā's work was attaining *nirvana*, an aspiration that the merit of pilgrimage helped to fulfill.

Both poems steadily outlined routes, spacing Lankan pilgrimage

from different starting points, approaching the Peak by different directions. Although both shared this *sandēśa*-style structure, their modes of transportation belied differences in temporal orientation. In many ways, Udāris' poem was of the old guard. His group proceeded on foot via the historic southwestern Ratnapura approach, rather than the more recently popularized Hatton route that Salā's train took. Moreover, Udāris' repeated references to former lives of Gautama placed his work in line with another branch of Samanala poetry, modeled not on *sandēśa*, but the *sāhāli* ballad style of Sinhala verse, a type of pilgrimage poem that flourished during the palm-leaf manuscript era of Samanala literature.¹³ This backward gaze onto past lives and former Buddhas was common to many Sri Pada poems and Lankan Buddhist projects generally, creating a karmic inertia in which the merit of many generations became a collective project.¹⁴

Salā's poem, in contrast, looked only ahead, unique for lacking any reference to Buddhist pasts earlier than Gautama. In fact, the only Buddha besides Gautama mentioned was Maitreya, the future Buddha (65). Fittingly, that verse was the most overtly nationalistic of either poem, as this orientation toward Maitreya, and thus toward *nirvana* arriving in the here and now, belied a brand of Buddhism popularized by religious and political reform movements from the late-nineteenth century till present.¹⁵ Salā's pilgrimage transportation fit his dual nationalist and soteriological projects. He and the train sped

13. See Or.6604(129) and Or.6604(197) in K.D. Somadasa, ed. *Catalogue of the Hugh Nevill Collection of Sinhalese Manuscripts in the British Library*, 6 vols. (London: The British Library, 1987-1993). Also WS.164 and WS.254 II in *Catalogue of the Sinhalese Manuscripts in the Library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine* (London: The Wellcome Trust, 1996); *Vīdāgama Mahānētra Prasādamūla Maitreya, Purāṇa Samanala Hālla* (Kōḷamba: Granthālokayantrālaya, 1902).

14. Charles Hallisey, "The Care of the Past: The Place of Pastness in Transgenerational Projects," in *On Religion and Memory*, ed. Babette Hellemans, Willemeine Otten, and Burcht Pranger (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).

15. John Clifford Holt, *Buddha in the Crown: Avalokiteśvara in the Buddhist Traditions of Sri Lanka* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

10. G.M. Salā, *Samanala Gamanā Laṅkāraya* (Kā gallē: Vidyākalpa Yantrālaya, 1924).

11. This was not the first train-based *sandēśa*-style poem. A notable predecessor, though not on a journey to Sri Pada, was a 1902 poem about the south-coast railway: W.G., *Mātara Rēlve Vistaraya* (Kōḷamba: Jātika Lēkhanāgāra, 2008).

12. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

SRI PADA WORSHIP AND THE JOURNEY DESCRIPTION
OF THE PILGRIM GOING FROM GALLE KORALE (1923)

ever forward, the direction Salā looked, it being dangerous to gaze too long over your shoulder when hanging out a railway car. Significantly, Salā mentioned English colonizers three times (16, 22, 31), in the first instance rather favorably, suggesting their railway tunnel projects modernized a legacy of ancient Lankan cave carvings. Although Salā stood on the same summit Udāris had, the conceptual space it claimed in his verse was quite different. As footpaths and *ambalam* gave way to an island tied by metal roads, pilgrimage from afar was suddenly possible “in-an-instant” (*sānakin*), a term Salā used repeatedly. Echoing the motion of trains, clattering along one way at one time on predetermined tracks, the nationalist poet dreamt of new connectivity. In his reverie of modern statehood, fellowships with past Buddhas were traded for Maitreya.

The spacing of pilgrimage was thus as much about legends as land. Samanala poetry recorded actual routes through Lankan villages and towns, interspersing these lines with narrative. The stories chosen revealed conceptual roads of the poets, how they drove to link the community of Buddhists (*sāsana*). The vast temporal space of the past was open, authors able to draw from events in *samsara*, the very mechanism of everyone’s suffering, to piece together a pathway out of it by precedent of prior Buddhas. The vast temporal space of the future was open, too, poets envisioning the *sāsana* flourishing with modern progress. And all spaces, physical and metaphysical, overlapped in the common end of *nirvana*.¹⁶



16. A note on translation style: I have tried to balance comprehensibility with a strict following of the Sinhala. At times, adhering to original word order yields slightly awkward English phrasings, but if the idea is still clear, I maintain that order. The most common occurrence is verbs appearing in unusual places, often at the end of lines. Concluding verbs, however, are important to maintain, being a compositional style in Sinhala to push the poem forward. These works were written in a vernacular style, forgoing high-flown vocabulary and double-meanings. They were likely meant to be read aloud, and doing so often reduces any silent awkwardness of the translation.

1.

The first refuge, let us take the Buddha refuge
The second refuge, let us take the *dharma* refuge
The third refuge, the Sariputta *sangha*¹⁷ refuge
These refuges for all of us, the three refuges

2.

The refuge of Sage Lord Gautama’s refuge
The refuge of the *dharma* preached at the Bō root¹⁸
The refuge of that great Sariputta *sangha*
The refuge, let us take of these three refuges

3.

Buddha Sage Lord’s sacred sole to worship
The face and *pañḍuru*¹⁹ having washed and cleansed
Both hands on head having taken the five precepts
Departed having passed the eight pillars²⁰

4.

Beings of the universe minds releasing to *moksha*
The sole placed on that Samanala mountain summit

17. The words *dharma*, *sangha*, *moksha*, *nirvana*, and *samsara* are not written with diacritics as they are now fairly common terms in English, and in this instance translate Sinhala poetic equivalents, usually *dam*, *saṅga*, *mok*, *nivan*, and *sasara*.

18. That is, at the foot of the *bōdhi* tree, under which the Buddha gained enlightenment.

19. An offering in which a coin is washed, wrapped in cloth, and tied to pilgrims’ wrists or shrines to God Saman.

20. Presumably a landmark.

Beautiful God Saman²¹ recalling
Passing Igalagama²² and going everyone

5.
For ages on the diamond throne residing
The group to that Mara war going
By the garland of those ten perfections
Passing Elpitiya, too, we are going

6.
In the age for receiving that courageous buddhahood
Jumped amid the conflagration for the offering of flesh
In power, that God Sakra the moon middle having bespeckled²³
Pal, let us pass Katangoda and go quickly

7.
For the poem, correct words are not spoken always²⁴
The gods will assist us all
Being under the guru for the going journey
Gone for rice in Talagaspe correctly

8.
The Sage having bound, went off and proceeded to the sky
Residing, the pleasing king having seen by the two eyes
Giving punishment, the guru's words not scolding falsely
Passing Amugoda and going mind made happy

21. The guardian deity of the Peak, sometimes called Sumana, who requested the Buddha's footprint. For an overview of the god, see: Premakumara De Silva, "God of Compassion and the Divine Protector of Sri Pada: Trends in Popular Buddhism in Sri Lanka," *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* XXXIV, no. 1&2 (2008).

22. The first of many place-names to follow. Rather than use diacritics, I have translated place-names with their official English spellings where available, so that the routes might be more easily mapped by interested parties.

23. Referencing *Sasa Jātaka*, no.316, one of the most popular in Sinhala poetry.

24. An expression of humility standard in Sinhala poetry.

9.
Destroyed, the Sage King broke and removed the Maras
From that the fruit of *moksha*-comfort received in *nirvana*
Without the fruit of the ears,²⁵ the impure body fatigued
Stopping in an *ambalama*, let us go having relaxed

10.
Born as a quail, the Sage King in antiquity
With happy mind two teachers protected
Having gone along with Sakra in that *nirvana* fire²⁶
Turning by the Pitigala road and going

11.
On the rock the sole the Sage Lord blesses
In the age, to beings the *moksha* path showing
Powerfully Lord God Saman worshipping
In the jungle passing the chili garden (Miriswatta)

12.
Noble Sage Lord proceeding while taking plantains
To proceed, the ascetic reclined in the mud
From this, handfuls and handfuls of jasmine flowers bloomed
Releasing heat and fatigue, alight in Pussewela

13.
Traveling human beings on this going path
Watching, the manner of beings giving sound
I give merit to Lord God Saman without stubbornness
Let us pass Māḍunmulla and go in arrangement

25. *kanpala*, presumable referring to listening to the *dharma* preached.

26. Referencing *Vattaka Jātaka*, no.35.

14.
As high as the sky, heads given for offering
Lakes and mountains indeed shining as much
Reverence, our full moon having offered
With happy mind arriving at Hevessa
15.
To eat, fish and rice binding at first
To drink, that water consumed, jaggery in rucksacks
Assist us, god of Saman Summit
Let us leave to go, passing Mandadola
16.
Hunted, the Sage born as the hare
Shot, King Piliyak knowing nothing²⁷
Noisily, poetic *bana*²⁸ tunes singing
Going to Maddekanda and alighting
17.
To draw all beings ashore from *samsara*
Placed that sacred foot gem on top
Turned, that Mara shame struck there happily
At Boralugoda let us give merit to the gods
18.
In the time born as the monkey, the bodhisattva in that forest
Those beautiful Maras infiltrating
Causing thundering, the bolt striking the women²⁹
Bathing in the Maguru river and tying *pañḍuru*

27. Referencing *Sāma Jātaka*, no.540.

28. Sometimes translated as sermon, but in its broadest sense meaning spoken Buddhist lessons of any form.

29. Referencing *Anuvartinā Jātaka*, no.407.

19.
Shining left foot on the mountain head placed
Desirously goddesses having offered flowers worshipping
The group giving accumulated merit to the gods
Passing Pallekumbura, came to the forest
20.
When first filled with true buddhahood
Without end, offering alms to beggars
Removed, breaking Mara while on the diamond throne
Mother recalled while in Dotālhela
21.
Good people with fear of *samsara* in this same age
To the Sage Lord offered oil and flowers without diffidence
In Bambarabotuwa there is an *ambalama*
We are going to worship the sacred foot of Samanala
22.
Sweet to the ear, listen to the sermon
Worship the sacred foot going to *nirvana*
Giving merit to the gods, taking leave
Passing Kukulegama, too, we go
23.
From before, the Sage sacred foot originating
Having guarded, that God Saman abiding
From afar, coming beings taking oil and flowers
In the Karavita *ambalama* relaxing

24.
In the country many people going to worship
In the mouth if that nonsense is spoken it is incorrect
God Saman immediately giving charge
In the Batepala rest hall stopping

25.
Lord God Saman's petition accepting
Reaching the sky plane, the sacred foot placing
Having rested and gone, the sacred foot worshipping
Going, Kotamulla, too, passing

26.
In a city that increases mental happiness, pleasing
With the police court, too, trying and resolving cases
For beings, the divine royal mansion of Saman is pleasant
Behold Ratnapura, like the divine city good

27.
People who made merit before born in that city
The fruit from that, merchants greatly come and spread
Near a water canal was a banyan at that time
We arrive at the *ambalama*, friend

28.
For the Sage Lord taking *puja* offerings
For oneself, procuring things to eat and drink
Giving merit to the gods and taking leave
To worship the sacred foot, from the city departing

29.
The Sage placed the sole upon Samanala
Shining in the manner of the flag in the three worlds
Not taking excessive fatigue for the going journey
Climbing the Godigamu cliff and going to worship

30.
Nirvana having desired, the Sage sacred foot worshipping
We give merit to lord gods Saman and Vishnu
Heat having extinguished, passing Malwala
Let us journey carrying the three refuges

31.
A beautiful merit hall; a shop near there
There is water to bathe for living beings near there
Giving merit to gods, we all without stubbornness
Now passing the Ilukwatta river

32.
On the summit of those seven peaks being born
In the lake that entourage of five-hundred became
In power that learned poet strongly striking³⁰
The temple, too, of Gilimale visible

33.
To the travel-guru we are subject always
Having taken journey fatigue, not going further
Heat having extinguished, beings' minds purified
Passing Samanwatta let us all go pleasingly

30. The allusion in this quatrain is obscure.

34.
Without being heated, the whole crowd of going beings
Though there were faults, don't tell the guru
Bathe in the waters of Maskeliya
Having happily bound *pañḍuru*, depart

35.
In the country many people coming to worship
Always around speaking *bana* without diversion
If there is too much chatter in the mouth, it is amiss
Passing Batepola, too, we go

36.
Having performed *samsara*, courage to be released
Having desired, that head, eyes, flesh gave for *dāna*
Having streamed, the crowd comes to worship the sole
Having split, let us stop in that *maṇḍala* happily

37.
In the afternoon eating drinking and putting on white garments
Offering to the Sage Lord, taking oil and flowers
To the gods giving merit, taking leave
For the journey setting out saying *sādu*³¹

31. A common devotional exclamation of Lankan Buddhists, somewhat akin to "amen."

38.
When the Sage went by a ship with his mother
The ship broke apart in the middle of those waters
Raising mother on shoulders swam ashore³²
Dodanbābila Hela, behold this one, too, friend

39.
Right-side foot in Mecca establishing³³
In Lanka the left foot going to Samanala
The god group today having shown up worshipping
Having gone through Pavanelia, worshipping the sacred foot

40.
Guarding before the precepts, born in the rabbit caste
Saw Sakra proceeding as though a *raksha*
Without sadness offered bodily flesh to him³⁴
Akka, your Linihela is this one, too

41.
Steadfast eagerness, the Sage at the Bō root became enlightened
Mara's group having come for war was defeated
That sole to worship, everyone of us
Passing Paruttella let us go quickly

32. This seemingly references *Mahājanaka Jātaka*, no.539, but in the original the mother warned against the voyage, not accompanying the bodhisattva. The story may have been modified by themes of mother-worship running throughout Sinhala literature, including this composition.

33. In the eighteenth century, a story developed that the Buddha had left another footprint in "Makkama," or Mecca, an issue discussed at length in my dissertation "Mountain at a Center of the World."

34. This is the same *jātaka* referenced in verse six. It appears again at this trail stop, Linihela, presumably because of sacrificial similarities. Lihini Akka jumped off the cliff there after the Buddha said she would never bear children.

42.
From country after country to worship the sole
Having bound ties of *pañḍuru*, too
To worship sacred-foot places of the twenty-eight Sages
Having remembered the three refuges at Getaneluwa

43.
Becoming frightened to go ashore from *samsara*
Because the wealth and two children given to the Brahmin³⁵
That Sugatha Sage sacred foot to worship
At the watershed, let us give merit to the gods

44.
Having proceeded to Kalaniya city in that age
Having preached the *dharma*, the *naga* quarrel evaporated
Having done that, offered the gem throne³⁶
Having gone by Kotalā shining, worshipping the sole

45.
From taking the five precepts, having purified the mind
Always to offer oil and flowers to the Sage Lord
With merit giving to Visnu and Sumana
Let us go from Gettanpane to worship

46.
To worship the sacred sole without *karma*
Colorful Saman, assist in this for us
Dharma preached at the *vehera*, the Sage Lord resided here
I see Dharmarajagala with both eyes

35. A knock at the worldly attachments of non-Buddhists.

36. The event described in this quatrain immediately preceded the Buddha's ascent of Samanala to leave his footprint. The Buddha prevented a war between *naga* kings over a gem throne, and in return they gifted it to him.

47.
Hearing the sound of the water at Sitagangula
Songs the water pump sound gives
Pulling water there below above
The Sitagangula river here is visible

48.
From before the sacred foot had been established
From afar the many of us coming to worship
Day with courageous power making merit
At Heramitipana relaxing

49.
Various all of us coming to worship
Behold the Sage sole there visible
By my mother,³⁷ eyes shedding tears
Gonatella happily climbing

50.
Having seen the sacred foot of our Buddha
Having worshipped, to the gods we give merit
Having bowed, hear reverent poetic words
Having stayed, let us go in Andiyamalatenna

51.
In a former age was born the Sage Vessantara
When two children were given to the Brahmin³⁸
Mara groups broken and removed, went to *nirvana* city
We go having passed Gurugalhela

37. *ammapalla*, a sort of oath

38. Referencing *Vessantara Jātaka*, no.547.

52.
Nourished double, milk caused to drink by mother
Without releasing fatigue, I give merit to become enlightened
Smashed defilements broken and removed, I go to *nirvana*
At Kudagiridamba giving merit to the gods

53.
Nearby mountains and cliffs having seen by both eyes
Endowed with *chakravartin* comfort for us
In the manner of the moon at rising service time
The Āhela Pillar, friend, this one, too, so to speak

54.
To sky and earth gods, merit giving
Immediately God Saman observing
Great crowd having worshipped, descending down
At Mahagiridamba we here ascend

55.
Those constructed posts planted firmly
Good iron chains on both sides stretching
Firmly both hands courageously grasp
Climb! Courageous strength from gods receiving

56.
Taking courageous strength, mind making firm
Being silent scrambling up
Having diverted the Mara group, from *samsara* winning
With courageous strength having gone, sound of *sādu* saying

57.
Without variance, country crowds there residing
In the manner of gold stars, the pinnacle shining
From this, settling our done sins having gone
By the power of the three refuges, came ashore

58.
Universal beings to come ashore from *samsara*
The sole the Sage placed for beings to worship
In this age this merit for the gods accruing
Placing the forehead and worshipping to see *nirvana*

59.
Sādu sādu, the sacred sole of the Buddha
Sādu sādu, by two eyes seeing
Sādu sādu, placing the head and worshipping
Sādu sādu, in the future *nirvana* seeing

60.
Gods remove these faults
The poet not taking errors near us
Lord Ganesh, for this make the wise eye be given
By this made merit in the future *nirvana* seeing

61.
Devas, suras, brahmas, Shiva and Upulvan³⁹ removing faults
Mother, father, guru, poet, these faults giving up is good
All royal comfort and glory having experienced, *moksha nirvana* future
This written poetry book by T.H. Udāris

39. A Lankan deity whose cult merged with that of Vishnu: John Clifford Holt, *The Buddhist Viṣṇu: Religious Transformation, Politics, and Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

62.

Being born from the belly of Maha Māyā, *brahmas* on both palms
*Kaludevo*⁴⁰ ascetic matted hair atop in coils having placed
 Having experienced vision of pure footprint on summit of mountain
 cliffs

That same sacred foot lotus I worship with hands on head

63.

Baby prince meritorious, the fruit of the sky womb by bond
 Descended, worshipping the noble son with both hands on head
 That noble one who brought about *moksha* for Lady Lanka
 That same sacred foot lotus I worship with hands on head

64.

By Sumana's spoken message, the Lord Dharma King
 proceeded from Kelani city on the sky-plane mountain summit
 The three worlds lacking the 216 foot marks
 That same sacred foot lotus I worship with hands on head

65.

The advice of Death, the Noble World Lord having accepted
 Black chariot's done compassion, from that, *moksha* city won
 The beautiful footmarks on the mountain summit having placed
 That same sacred foot lotus I worship with hands on head

40. *Kaludevo* is unclear, but perhaps references beings of the Lankan Devol cult, comprised of sorcerous deities and *yakka* spirits, befitting a matted locks comparison. In some cases, the Devol gods were also connected to Samanala. See: Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Cult of the Goddess Pattini* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

66.

Son Rahul, giving no suffering to the son, departing
 With the horse, the ministers not knowing anything of that
 Experiencing sight of the attractive footprints, all is understood in the
 three worlds

That same sacred foot lotus I worship with hands on head

67.

You having defeated the stars, the flesh that conquered the flesh of
 earthen soil
 Head as high as Meru, the blood that conquered the waters of the fish
 ocean

The Sage Lord who made and gave footprint *moksha* to Lady Lanka
 That same sacred foot lotus I worship with hands on head

68.

With eighteen cubits, rays brightly shining
 Having taken the mustard-seed trip,⁴¹ in the buddha-body there is no
 smallness
 Sage Lord who took the appropriate journey through the three worlds'
 three stages

That same sacred foot lotus I worship with hands on head



41. Alluding to a popular parable from the *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā*. See: Eugene Watson Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends: Translated from the Original Pali Text of the Dhammapada Commentary* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921).

SAMANALA JOURNEY ADORNMENT
AND SRI PADA WORSHIP (1924)

1.
Huge king glorious and
Shining queen, son the gem
In that age having sent, reached well
Our enlightened Sage worship always
2.
For beings the mental pillar
Preached *dharma* countenance
Hundreds of thousands, the *dharma* refuge
Secondly bow to that great pillar
3.
Three worlds' culmination noble
The *sāsana* protecting, pleasant
Sariputta and Mogalana
To that *sangha* gem thirdly bow
4.
Having bowed to the three gems
I present that merit to the gods
Though there are faults, having removed
For a long time cause blessings to be given to the poet
5.
By good knowledge loving love
Heard, sinful minds removed
Having poeticized as this place
I speak the Samanala journey description

6.
With loving mind my spoken words accept at this time
Samsara journey in suffering state, in *dharma* there is extreme purity
Ferocious sin having removed, to receive *moksha* the mind desires
Beautiful going for worshipping Samanala
7.
“Loving virtuous husband,” you spoke those words
“Though going, I am happy with this life truthfully.
With my own husband for the Samanala journey tomorrow,
Without fearing, let us descend to the road in the morning so beautiful”
8.
Fragrance blowing flowers, taking rosewater with the right hand
Accoutered invaluable gold ornaments for the garland around the
neck
At that time parents' foot having worshipped, took leave
Bringing along good friends, I alight on the journey
9.
Refuge, three-world-teacher Sage virtues having recalled lovingly
Beseeched the god having tied *pañḍuru* offerings gloriously
That day with a benevolent mind, with my own wife
Happily I arrive at the train station in Rambukanna
10.
Oh dear, there the great crowd gathering without limit
With loving mind, *sādu* sound spreading gloriously
Tickets brought, I happily beckon the wife
With loving mind I board the train beautiful

11.

Taking leave, the train having said *hū*
In an instant adorning to go on the journey departed
Happily I direct my eyes when beholding on that day
Very pleasing beautiful fields seen without limit

12.

Gardens of beautifully priceless fertile fields well shining
Behold in pretty Madawala the village area beauty
Now this when we look on the left side, too, gloriously
Seeing the area of Kiriwallapitiya so beautiful

13.

With meritorious mind sitting in the coach while beholding beauty
I see a beautiful valuable open field with my own eyes
Behold there the famous Hathpotha Walawwa
Here at the beautiful left side is the famous highway

14.

That beautiful train quickly going on the day
Let us look at the Kansalagamu area beautiful
There pretty Welibingeya tunnel saw, too, beautiful
Here at the valuable Udugama area riches well shining

15.

Seeing coconut, arecanut, and plantain tree gardens, mind tranquil
Behold the station built in beautiful Kadigamuwa
With eyes having beheld there beauty, both of them
Bayankara mountain tunnel I see—glorious

16.

In knowledge, the city made with beautiful full riches
An ancient cave seemingly cut when created by pundits

These days work like that done by English people
With eyes behold the Miyangala tunnel beautiful

17.

Near the rock I saw a field richly beautiful
The Thalagolla school of arts visible gloriously
Behold amidst the pretty field the sermon house beautiful
The Alagalla station seen, too, with both eyes

18.

While running from the train when beholding happily
Earth spread where the mountain dugout is seen
Beautiful valuable area of Maliyadda seeing
To the station called Balana approached

19.

Happily we two, these minds for merit cleared
When journeying, I see the beauty and so on
Beautifully Dewanagala and Bathalegala there well made
Behold the beautiful highway at the elbow bend.

20.

Beholding highway beauty, both lovingly
To Kadugannawa station coming at that time
Very pleasing my beloved your own eyes directing
Behold the display on the summit atop Godella

21.

That beautiful train for the journey departed
Happily the *sādu* sound spread among all the people
Mental happiness increasing, fields passing having gone there
To the Peradeniya Junction station approached

22.

Having come, English gentlemen standing at the train
Saying descend at Peradeniya station here
Saying board the Gampala rail there
Great crowds without end happily having gone making noise

23.

Those spoke words having heard, here we two at that time
Happily having gone I take spots on the Gampala train
That day the coach departing left for the journey
Gloriously approached the Gampala train station

24.

Instantly departing at the place the train was running
We see here beautiful points without limit
With eyes beholding beholding beauty when going
Having gone, the train stopping at Ulapane

25.

Beautifully valuable train station having seen longingly
After many moments departing for the journey happily
A mind repentantly regarding merit in the beginning
That train which had gone in Nawalapitiya

26.

Mental love increasing, there beauty seen with eyes
Serenely the train, too, departed
Meritorious good people living setting up home gardens
Hangran Oya having seen, minds became happy

27.

Aware of the time, the train coming on the journey then
With breadfruit, champak, ironwood, jakfruit, gardens made pure

Flowers good *mañdārā* trees decorated glorious and slender
The Galboda train station I see, well-known

28.

Lovely body with very pure beauty filled
Pearl neck adornments gathered without limit
At that time the train quickly having gone running
Stopped at the station called Watawala

29.

With affectionate love having seen the beauty, mind happy
With compassionate virtue having recalled the Lord God's blessing
Without fear departed, the train for the journey
The train went in an instant to Rozella

30.

With eyes having beheld the beauty there, became happy
Behold the pretty highway beauty well
That train quickly having gone at that time
The station called Hatton approached

31.

Limitlessly there white gentlemen being gathered
Saying for Hatton plantation here indeed get down
People without an end gathering, *sādu* saying
Happily everyone going near the shops

32.

A line of people at the shop drinking tea
A line of people inquiring at the rice shop
Without an end crowds happily go and make noise
From these signs Hatton town shaking

33.
With loving affection the great crowd taking the five precepts
With compassionate mind departed, oil and flowers taking
Beautiful invaluable Nanu Oya I see gloriously
All went to Maskeliya happily on that day
34.
Lovingly all cooking rice and enjoying gloriously
For Lord God Sumana Saman offered *pañḍuru*, too, bound there
Happily departing, to the great forest⁴² having passed
With glory we all arriving at Gangulathenna
35.
In that place without an end vendors gathering
Here to come there is tasty *dodol*⁴³
If eating here, bread and buns receiving
From sacred beauty there shaking
36.
Without an end crowds take the five precepts and observe higher pre-
cepts
A line of people in the water of Sitagangula submerging
A line of people putting on white clothes and tying *pañḍuru*
For whatever, a line saying *karunāva*⁴⁴
37.
A line of people losing consciousness, going mad
A line of people straying, entering the forest

42. *himagata*, a term sometimes used for the mountain itself and sometimes its entire forest range.

43. A common sweetmeat still ubiquitous in traiside shops.

44. Literally meaning "compassion," *karunāva* is a common term on Sri Pada pilgrimage, uttered "for whatever," usually whenever the going gets tough.

- A line of people remaining saying the *Tunsarana*⁴⁵
A line of people not receiving the *karma* of worshipping, too
38.
The novice came asking where is the gold gem?
Saying let us now eat the prepared food
Sitting and swallowing two or three *aggala*⁴⁶
To *Ōḍu* not having gone, in the group all nobly speaking⁴⁷
39.
With compassionate mind, *sādu* sound exhibiting at that time
With loving affection the great group left for the journey
Beautiful oil, flowers, rosewater taking in the right hand
Went happily, the whole group to Gettampana
40.
There without an end the great group gathering
Gloriously novice people encompassing, forming a circle
Stopping there, at the sacred foot a line worshipping
From suffering, a line losing consciousness and falling
41.
"*Sādu sādu karunāva*" a line saying
"*Sādu* God Saman bless" a line saying
With the *sādu* sound the great group going away
With the *sādu* sound Samanala mountain shining

45. Literally meaning "three refuges," *Tunsarana* is an older poem from the manuscript tradition that made the jump to print culture. It is still available in market-side shops annually, recited by a minority of pilgrims.

46. A homemade hardened cake sweet brought by pilgrims.

47. The first and last lines of this quatrain are ambiguous. *Ōḍu* may refer to the deity *Oḍissa*, used for black magic.

42.
 With loving affection arriving at the Saman mountain summit
 Gorgeous there, the beauty unable to complete
 With compassionate mind flowers and lamps offering gloriously
 Having spoken this *gāthā*, worshipped the Sage sacred foot

—(śrīpāda worship *gāthā*)—

On the sandy bank of the river Nammadāya,
 on a mountain Saccabaddha, on the Sumanā summit,
 in the city Yonaka is the Sage's foot.
 I bow my head to the great footprints.

43.
 A line of camphor, flowers, lamps offering
 A line of priceless silk cloth offering
 A line of metal walking sticks offering
 Absolutely from the *sādu* sound shining

44.
 A line of gems, pearls, jewels offering
 A line of betel and sandalwood offering
 A line of food and drink offering
 With these signs the sacred foot worshipping

45.
 A line around of mountain range beholding
 A line of rivers' colors beholding
 A line of people the forest beholding
 With a happy mind worshipping the sacred foot

46.
 A line noble God Saman beholding
 A line God Saman's blessing receiving
 A line that solar orb beholding
 With absolute happiness the sacred foot worshipping

47.
 Cold striking, some people shivering
 Without fear saying *karunāva*
 Saying I came from far far away
 Both hands raised, sacred foot worshipping

48.
 The manner of the sun rising a line beholding
 Behold there, beauty bright falling
 Removing demerits, minds making merit
 Famous good sacred foot worshipping

49.
 Having worshipped, journeying back
 Beseeching to the god, merit clusters giving
 With good love, happy sounds making
 Majestic magnificent sacred foot worshipping

50.
 Joking laughs no one uttering
 Not being ill-natured for lowly benefit
 Made to receive merit, demerits removing
 For the world the noble sacred foot worshipping

51.
 Sugatha Sage Lord having proceeded to Sri Lanka
 With great happiness placed the sacred foot on Samanala
 Flowers and lamps offering at this same time
 Let us, too, worship the Sage sacred foot of Samanala
52.
 On the gemstone place the sacred foot very pure
 Various goddesses, gods, and brahmas worshipped
 For this Lanka island existing majestic power
 With a happy mind worship the sacred foot of Samanala
53.
 God Sumana Saman's command recalled
 God Sumana Saman's blessing at this time
 Lord God Sumana merit taking very pure
 Happily let us worship the Sage sacred foot of Samanala
54.
 Gautama named Sage Lord proceeding to Samanala
 Prosperous left sacred foot placed on Samanala
 Worldly beings reached, worshipping Samanala
 Demerits removed, let us worship the sacred foot of Samanala
55.
Sādu our noble Sage proceeding to Samanala
Sādu the god worshipping on Samanala
Sādu to beings *moksha* presenting at Samanala
Sādu let us worship the sacred foot of Samanala

56.
Sādu rays always spreading at Samanala
Sādu another offering's wealth received at Samanala
Sādu giving, worshipping Samanala
Sādu let us worship the Sage sacred foot on Samanala
57.
Sādu in this world worshipped Samanala
Sādu for the three worlds magnificent Samanala
Sādu from the sound shining Samanala
Sādu let us worship the sacred foot of Samanala
58.
 Meritoriously pinnacle-three-world-teacher Sage proceeded to Sri
 Lanka, little brother
 God Sumana's invitation having accepted on that day, little brother
 With beauty well-filled on the mountain of Samanala placed the mark,
 little brother
 On this day the head, too, giving on the sacred foot-lotus, worship,
 little brother
59.
 Atop the gem rock placed the left foot mark, little sister
 Having taken a stone, Great King Nissanka very lovingly, little sister
 Covered the gem rock, the sacred foot set atop that, little sister⁴⁸
 With a happy mind arriving, that same sacred foot let us worship, lit-
 tle sister

48. Referencing a common story that twelfth-century king Nissankamala rediscovered the footprint, which was imprinted on a sapphire, and covered it with stone for safekeeping.

60.

Having come from the belly of the sky, gods and *brahmas* always worshipping, little brother
 People of noble caste gathered and worshipped, collecting and taking merit, little brother
 Lord God Saman's blessing taking with loving kindness, little brother
 If happy to receive *nirvana* comfort, worship Samanala, little brother

61.

To speak another fact, I think lovingly, little sister
 If spoken, may people without wisdom absorb that, little sister
 Learned noble ones, though there are errors, must take the verses, little sister
 If there is a compassion for the nation, take this to mind, little sister

62.

A line going for worship after vagabondism, little brother
 Some people going to steal others' things, little brother
 Now a line of people going to take prestige cleverly
 Did you see the sermon of the consequence befalling them for that, little brother?

63.

Adorned anklet, hairpin, ring, and necklace beads, little sister
 That good white dress having put on according to your own custom, little sister
 Like that, everyone having taken the shoulder shawl and covered, little sister
 If always being so, there is no one to say that is a fault, little sister

64.

Many people said they're going from home to worship, little brother
 Rightly placing lies and false words bringing about, little brother
 Coming home, heavily demerits having taken, fatigue undergone, little brother
 Here those people shamed the nation, little brother

65.

To protect the Sinhala national clan, foreign customs having removed, little sister
 No matter how many times you go in your life, do not do demeritorious customs, little sister
 Worship the plentiful Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha and do *dharma* merit, little sister
 Pure buddha-becoming Maitreya Muni having seen, see *nirvana*, little sister

66.

Wind lived between from the earth to the high *brahma* world
 By spirits, demons, gods, *brahmas*, humans, and beings of water and land
 Though I have any error, having discarded with compassionate mind
 Both hands raised, I give merit to share devoutly

67.

All various beauties bearing in the Godandeni region, friend
 I, the poet leader G.M. Salā, at this time am the poet
 Until our supramundane Sage *sāsana* exists smooth
 May this book I wrote gloriously make Lanka famous



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