

A STUDY ON THE PLACE WHERE WAS THE PALĀPATGALA MONASTERY

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Introduction

It is important to re-search the history of Buddhism, when enhancing it. History is the discipline of recording and interpreting the past events involving human beings. But, the history is not the reality of the past and not impartial or impersonal. It is accepted now that the history is a discourse which is built by the historians (White, 1987).

There are many important historical places related to the history of the Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, some of these places have been unrecognized or misrecognized.

Materials and Methods

Objective of this research is to build a new discourse about the location of the Palāpatgala monastery, which has a relationship with the development of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. The controversy of the location of Palāpatgala monastery is a long-lived matter. A different idea about its location has been exposed by newly found literary and archaeological evidences.

The major historical source which was based for this qualitative research is *Madhuvāpī Vihāra Vitti Varṇanāva saha Dahanāka Paṭuna*, the annals record of Mīvāva *Sri Vijēvardhanārāmaya* in Nārammala (Kurunāgala District). Asgiriye Talpata and the donation paper of Vēgiriya Nātha Dēvāla in Kandy were supportive sources. Moreover, information which were given by the present chief incumbent of Rukmalē Giri Guhārāma Vihāra in Nārammala, also have been used.

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Results and Discussion

According to the historical chronicles, King Parākramabāhu II has constructed a monastery at Palāpatgala. Most of the scholars believe that Palāpatgala is in the Ratnapura District near the Adam's Peak and they have created a sound discourse to prove it (Lanerolle, 1930, 510-27). Ven. Kiriāllē Gnānavimala advocated for that notion prominently.

Nevertheless, the hidden annals record *Madhuvāpī Vihāra Vitti Varṇanāva saha Dahanāka Paṭuna* which was found by this researcher, says that Palāpatgala was located near Dambadeniya. The present structure of the text is the result of an effort taken by two authors. The original text was written by Ven. Anōmadassī who was the chief of the Mīvāva chapter during 1543-1562 CE. But the exact year when this prose was completed is not known. Thereafter, Ven. Sandanangama Siddhārtha has extended it describing the history of the Mīvāva *Vihāra* from the end of the period of Ven. Anōmadassī in 1819 CE.

Aforesaid annals record mentions that a monastery has been built on the rock of Palāpatgala by King Parākramabāhu II, in the village named Rukmalāva near Sirivardhanapura in Dambadeniya.

තවද ශ්‍රී වඩනපුරාසන්නයේ පිහිටි රුක්මලාව නම් වූ ග්‍රාමයෙහි පිහිටි පලාපත්ගල නම් පව්නයෙහි ආරක්ෂාකරණයක් කොට ධුතාංගධාරී රුක්ම ප්‍රතිපත්ති පුරණයෙහි සමත් සංඝයාට පූජා කර වදාලාය.

It confirms that Dambadeniya, Rukmalāva and were the places located near each other. The name 'Sirivardhanapura' has been considered as another name for Senkadagala Nuvara. But, it is an accepted fact that Sirivardhanapura in Senkadagala was built by King Parākramabāhu IV in the Kurunāgala period (Asgiriyē Talpata, 1969, 05-06). Therefore, it can be assumed that there were two separate cities which had the same name.

Kalundāva, a village near Nārammala was recognized as Sirivardhanapura by Ven. Degammāda Sumanajōti (Sumanajoti, 1964, 14-15). King Parākramabāhu II and his father Vijayabāhu III have used an attribute with their names as "Nāmbambara Kālinga". A field named 'Nāmbambara' is still there in the Kalundāva village. Similarly, Kalundāva

is also situated ½ k.m. beyond Rukmalē. Today too, there is a village called Rukmalē close to Dambadeniya. There is a rock and a monastery that still exist there. Caves, ruins of moon stones, guard stones and stone pillars can be seen too.

There is a further evidence which confirms that Palāpatgala was situated in Dambadeniya. According to a donation paper (1529 CE) of Vēgiriya Nātha Dēvāla in Kandy, it was renovated by a Māhimi named Upagupta who came from the monastery of Palāpatgala near Maha Dambadeniya.

Besides, Asgiriye Talpata also supports to confirm this. According to that, the head of the crew of Bhikkus who was sent to the Asgiri monastery at Senkadagala Nuvara in Kurunāgala period was Ven. Dambadeniyē Vanaratana and he was the acolyte of Ven. Palābatgala Dharmakīrti (Asgiriye Talpata, 1969, 06). The annals record of Mīvāva says that Ven. Dharmakīrti was appointed as the first chief of Palāpatgala monastery.

තවද ඒ රජහු පලාපත්ගල ආරක්ඛණවාසයේ ගණනායකත්වයට ශීල ගුණ විභූෂිත ධුතාංගධාරී රුක්ෂ ප්‍රතිපත්ති පුරණයෙහි සමත් ක්‍රීටිකධර යාපවු නුවර අවිච්චබ්බන ආරක්ඛණවාසී දිලුලාගල දීපංකර තෙර සාමිත් අතවැසි ධර්මකීර්ති තෙර සාමිත් ව්‍යවස්තා කොට වදාලාය.

There is a royal grant which was given by King Kīrti Srī Rājasimha, when this monastery was renovated by him. Instead of the name Palāpatgala, the name of Rukmalē Giri Guhārāma Vihāra has been used in the royal grant. Apparently, the name of Palāpatgala has become non-existence for this place by that.

It seems that the name of this place has been used in two ways, as Palābatgala and Palāpatgala. This might have happened due to the carelessness or dilatoriness of transcript writers. Apparently, when translating Sinhala terms first, in to Pali and again in to Sinhala this could have happened.

- Ex- Bintāna > Mahi angaṇa > Miyuguṇa
- Valasgala > Accapabbata > Asgiriya

The original Sinhala derivations has changed completely in these names and etymological stories also have been recreated. The Pali translation

of Palābatgala is 'Pūṭabhattasēla'. According to Anāgatavamsa wrote in Kurunāgala period, it's meaning is 'the rock which has a shape of a parcel of cooked rice'. It is difficult to say what usage is the most ancient, because now we have only the transcriptions and not the synchronous or original texts. But, the donation paper of Vēgiriya which was written in Kōttē era is a original source and it indicates this place as Palāpatgala.

Conclusion

Although this place has entrusted as a property of the department of Archaeology in Sri Lanka, excavations have been not started yet. The present chief incumbent of this vihāra, Ven. Polvattēgedara paññāsāra said that some ruins have been destroyed by squatters. According to the aforesaid annals record, King Parākramabāhu II has established a inscription at the Palāpatgala monastery. Two inscriptions which are mentioned in this annals record are still visible. Therefore It is important to pay attention to this evidence when confirming whether is this the place which Palāpatgala monastery was located.

Keywords: History, Discourse, Palāpatgala monastery

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