

## Buddha's visits to Sri Lanka

### 1<sup>st</sup> Visit :

The Buddha first visited Sri Lanka on the full-moon day of Phussa (December-January) 9 months after His Enlightenment while dwelling at Uruvela. He came to Mahanaga garden and stood in mid-air over an assembly of yakkhas (demons) dwelling in the island. He drove the yakkhas out and they left for Giridipa. The Buddha then preached to countless devas who attained to the realization of Truth. The Buddha freed Sri Lanka of the yakkhas because he foresaw that this island would be the stronghold of His teachings after His passing away.

The Buddha gave a handful of His hair to the <sup>Prince of Deva</sup> deva Mahasumana of the Sumanakuta mountain who built a stupa which was later extended into the M<sup>h</sup>iyangana Thupa. \*

### 2nd Visit :

Place : ~~Nagadi~~ Nagadipa (Northern Sri Lanka)

On the new-moon day of Citta (March-April), the Buddha made a second visit to Sri Lanka. This was in the 5<sup>th</sup> year after His Enlightenment. This visit was to save two hostile Naga kings from an impending war which, if fought, would have been disastrous to both parties. The quarrel was over a gem-studded throne. After settling the dispute, the Buddha preached the Doctrine and countless nagas were converted.

The Buddha received the throne as a gift but He left it behind for the Nagas to honour.

### 3rd Visit :

On the second day of Vesak Poya (Vesak Full Moon in May) the Buddha visited Sri Lanka a third (and last) time – this time to Kelaniya with 500 monks. This was in His 8<sup>th</sup> year of His Enlightenment. Having discoursed to the nagas, He visited Sumanakuta and left His left footprint on its summit (Sumana Mountain). He also consecrated 16 sacred shrines.

The Buddha knowing that His Dhamma would be preserved in its pristine purity for a very long time in Sri Lanka, told King Sakka to protect the Buddha Sasana and the Sinhala race.

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Total number of visits to Sri Lanka = 4.