



## **S. Thomas' College**

### **2004 Magazine**

#### **Sri Pada**

The old faithful. The land mark for early sea farers, Arab, Greek and Persian who came to this little isle in the Indian Ocean in search of gems, jewels, ivory and spices. Sri Pada, Samanala Kanda Samanthakuta, Swargarohana or Adam's peak. It is revered for near 2,600 years by Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians alike. In ancient times Sri Pada not only was guiding the sea farers but was a bewitching mystery to many and erudite person from far and near.

A must visit destination of many a foreign visitor the mention of Sri Pada in different names is noted in their writings afterwards. The earlier such record found is by Fahien the Chinese Monk who stayed in Sri Lanka for two years around 399 A.D. Agreeing to the description of the Mahawansa on how the footprint came to be Adam's peak, he noted that "When Buddha came to Sri Lanka wishing to transform the wicked nagas by his supernatural power, he planted one foot at the north of the royal city and the other at the top of a mountain the two being fifteen yojana's apart. Classical Tamil literature mentions Samanalakuta when the footprint of Buddha rests in "Manimekhalai" an epic poem. Some other known writers who mention Sri Pada and the traditional worship is their writings include Marco Polo who visited Sri Lanka in 1293. Robert Knox who was captured by Rajasingha II in 1660, John Davy in 1821 Sir James Emerson Tennent in 1860, William Skeen in 1870, Edward Carpenter in 1910, C.M. Enriquez in 1927 and R.H. Basset in 1929.

Today thousands ascend and descend the mountain through the two routes, North and South each night. The Hatton route in the North provides a more easy way with modern amenities and enabling the climb within a day draws more pilgrims and visitors. Ratnapura though a difficult route still retains its own share of pilgrims mainly from the southern parts of the island who enjoy several days climb in the traditional way. Sadly this multitude of pilgrims or visitors though a boon to the surrounding villagers who live on the seasonal income has become a bane to this glorious mountain.

All in all Sri Pada is the heart and soul of Sri Lanka and all efforts need to be deplored in preserving this mountain and its surroundings for its basic survival.

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