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GAYĀ AND BUDDHA-GAYĀ

[EARLY HISTORY OF THE HOLY LAND]

VOLUME I

BOOK I

BY

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"BARUAT INSCRIPTIONS", AND "OLD BRAHMI
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AND KHANDAGIRI CAVER."

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The public and the scholarly world are by this time well aware of the aims and activities of the Indian Research Institute. In its humble way it is trying to resuscitate the magnificent cultural tradition of India by publication of the Vedic and Post-Vedic Literature in critical editions with translations and copious notes. It has also started its Fine Arts Series publications beginning with an illustrated Monograph on Barhut Monuments and Sculptures in three books, and the Indian Positive Sciences Series publications.

With the revised edition of the Vol. I (Book I) of Dr. B. M. Barua's Monograph—Gayā and Buddha Gayā, the Hindu and Buddhist Holy Land, it now starts the Indian History Series which, as it is contemplated, will include similar works dealing with various aspects of the Religious and Cultural History of India and the countries around. The Vol. II (Books II—V) by the same author, which is but an illustrated Monograph on the old shrines of Bodh Gayā is simultaneously published and is included as No. 4 of its Fine Arts Series.

The institute feels that for a comprehensive Religious and cultural History of India, requiring a good deal of generalisations, sufficient data should be collected by an intensive study of the history of all local centres of importance and the present Monograph is offered as nothing but a model of the work which remains yet to be done by different scholars.

The Institute has to record its grateful thanks to Dr. B. C. Law, M.A., B.L., Ph.D., for his kind patronage but for which such costly publications could not have been undertaken.

Taking both the volumes together, the price has been moderately fixed just to cover the printing costs and the Institute expects that all public libraries and lovers of Indology will sympathise with the present venture of the Institute by purchasing its publications.

Indian Research Institute, }
Dated, the 8th Nov., 1934. } Satis Chandra Seal

GAYĀ AND BUDDHA-GAYĀ

BOOK I

PRE-BUDDHISTIC HISTORY OF GAYĀ

1. TASK DEFINED

Our task in this book is suggested in its title. By "Pre-Buddhistic History of Gayā" we are to understand here a systematic historical account of Gayā as it stood prior to and at the time of the rise of Buddhism, and by Gayā we are to understand that portion of the ancient kingdom of Magadha which was covered by Gayā-kshetra as distinguished from Magadha-kshetra. In the following pages we are to present a picture of this ancient holy place chiefly as it is said to have been found by Prince Siddhārtha of Kapilavāstu when he wandered about as a lonely ascetic in Eastern India in the 6th century B. C., giving a sketch of its subsequent history from the time of Aśoka down to the Pāla period and after.

The task thus defined cannot be an easy one. For here we are not so much to draw a picture of Gayā-kshetra long after it had emerged into a world-wide importance on account of its association with some of the momentous events in the life-history of the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, as to give clear glimpses into the dark background from which it emerged into ^{its} an importance.

We are to disabuse our mind of all the false and delusive impressions that are likely to be created by the pious legends of later growth and the numerous shrines of worship and

art built in after ages by the Buddhists, the Hindus and the Jains.

Here we are not so much to witness the play from a front seat reserved for the audience as to go behind the scene and examine the mechanism of the stage and have a view of the unpainted figures of the players.

2. GAYĀ-MĀHĀTMYA—A MONSTROUS LEGEND

So far as Brahmanical literature goes, the Gayā-Māhātmya in the Vāyu-Purāna is the only elaborate legendary account¹ which the modern historian has to rely upon in writing a sober history of Gayā-kshetra. When exactly the Gayā-māhātmya was composed and when it came to form a section of the Vāyu-Purāna are still a matter of conjecture. But certain it is that this pious eulogium of Gayā-kshetra was the literary production of an age when the Vaishṇavas got hold of the Hindu shrines in the old town of Gayā (*purāṇā Gayā*) and its suburbs, and found it expedient to carry on a vigorous propaganda work for attracting annually a large number of pilgrims from the different parts of India. This Vaishṇava eulogium of Gayā-kshetra² was characterised by Dr. Buchanan Hamilton as "a monstrous legend" on the basis of which no sober history of the place could be written. Even Dr. Rajendralala Mitra who spared no pains to glean some historical truths from this eulogium could not help characterising it as "a wild story."³ The reader must, first of all, be introduced to the contents of the

¹ The *Agni-Purāna* presents in chapters CXIV-CXVII a somewhat later, abridged and slightly different version of the *Gayā-māhātmya*.

² The *Agni-Purāna* version may be appropriately judged as a *Yājñika* (Śākta)-Vaishṇava eulogium of Gayā.

³ Mitra's *Buddha Gayā*, p. 10.

Gayā-māhātmya in order that he may judge for himself what these signify and how far these deserve credence.

3. GAYĀ-MĀHĀTMYA—ITS CONTENTS

The Gayā-māhātmya which forms the concluding section of the Vāyu-Purāna comprises altogether eight chapters, its first chapter standing as the 105th chapter and its eighth or last chapter being counted as the 112th chapter of the Purāna in its entirety. That the Gayā-māhātmya represents a distinct entity among the several sections or books of the Purāna is proved by the fact that it has been commenced with a prologue and concluded with an epilogue and its chapters have been so arranged that the succeeding chapters hang on the first as elaborations of the themes presented in the first or opening chapter. The concluding stanzas constituting its epilogue state in clear terms that the Gayā-māhātmya might otherwise be called *Gayākhyāna* or *Gayopākhyāna*. "The bardic narration of the legendary story of Gayā." and *Gayā-mahimāna*, "The traditional eulogium of Gayā." Its prologue¹ and epilogue clearly bring out this fact that it was intended to serve this twofold purpose: (1) to extol the high antiquity, great sanctity and special importance of the holy tract of Gayā (*Gayā-kshetra*), and (2) to emphasize its authenticity and value as a pilgrim's guide-book (*Gayā-yātrā*).

Brahmā is said to have declared that the entire tract of Gayā was 5 *krośas* in extent; that Gayā proper repre-

¹ Vāyu-Purāna, 105 3. 112.1-67 :

Nārada uvācha :

*Sanatsumāra me brūhi tīrtham tīrthottamottamam |
tārakaṃ sarva-bhūtānāṃ pathatāṃ śrīvatāṃ tathā ||*

senting the inner zone of the tract of Gayā was $2\frac{1}{2}$ *krośas* in extent; and that Gayāśīna or Gayāśūsha determining the extension of the ancient town of Gayā and representing the innermost zone of the tract of Gayā was 1 *krośa* in extent.¹ It is boldly claimed that there is no spot within the holy tract of Gayā where there is not a *tīrtha* or *sanctorum* (bathing place or shrine) worth visiting,² which is to say, all the *tīrthas* associated with the name of Gayā were situated within this geographical extension.³

It is stated that Gayā was a holy tract in the kingdom of Kikaṭa or Magadha which in its western extension included the sacred river Pūnpūn and in its eastern extension included the pleasant woodland of Rājagriha.⁴ We are led to think that the kingdom of Kikaṭa-Magadha was extended so far towards the west as to include the Son region.⁵

It is certain that, according to description in the Gayā-

¹ Vāyu-Purāṇa, 105.29, 106.65 :

*Sārdha-krośa-dvayaṃ mānuṣ Gaye'ti Brahmaṇeitam ||
pañchakrośaṃ Gayā-kshetraṃ, krośam ekaṃ Gayāśīraḥ |
tan madhye sa, va-tīrthāni prayacchantu hitaṃ nṛinām ||*

Cf. Agni-Purāṇa, 115.42.

² Vāyu-Purāṇa, 105.47 :

*Gayāyāṃ na hi tat sthānaṃ yatra tīrthaṃ na vidyate |
sānmidhyaṃ sarva-tīrthānāṃ Gayā-tīrthaṃ tato varam ||*

Cf. Agni-Purāṇa, 116.27-28.

³ Vāyu-Purāṇa, 105.30 :

*Tan madhye sa, va-tīrthāni trailokye yāni santi vai |
śrāddhakṛid yo Gayā-kshetre pūtrīnām anṛiṇo hi saḥ ||*

⁴ Vāyu-Purāṇa, 108.73 :

*Kikaṭeṣhu Gayā punyā, punyaṃ Rājagrihaṃ varanā |
Chyavanasyāśramaṃ punyaṃ, nadī punyā Punahpunā ||*

⁵ Vāyu-Purāṇa, 108.74. Rajendralala Mitra observes (*Buddha Gayā*, p.8, f.n. (a)) : "Kikaṭa (? Kikaṭa) is now accepted as a synonym for Magadha; but it was evidently the name of the southern portion of it. Its area, given in the Deśavali, a mediæval work, would barely cover the district of Gayā."

māhātmya, Gayā-kshetra extended towards the north as far, at least, as the Preta, Pretaśilā or Pretakūṭa hill,¹ and extended towards the south as far, at least, as the sacred Bo-tree (*Mahābodhitaru*, *Bodhi-druma*) at Bodh-Gayā.²

The *pañchakrośi* Gayā is said to have been extensive enough to contain 55 villages, many fine houses built for the Brahmins and provided with all necessaries of life, the milch-cows, the Wishing and Pāijāta trees, such sacred streams as the Mahārādī, the Ghṛitakulyā and the Madhukulyā, many large tanks and several holy mountains.³

“The Phalgu,” as described in the District Gazetteer of Gayā (p. 8), “flowing north and south, intersects the district. It is formed by the junction, some 2 miles below Bodh-Gayā, of the Nilājan and the Mohānā—two large hill streams, each of which is over 300 yards wide. The united stream flows on to the north past the town of Gayā, where it attains a breadth of 900 yards. The Phalgu here impinges on a high rocky bank, on the steep sides of which are many *ghāts* leading down to the river-bed, while high above are the Vishnupad temple [Fig. 1] with many minor shrines, and the houses of the Gayāwāls. It then runs in a north-easterly direction for about 17 miles, and opposite the Barābar Hills it again takes the name of Mohānā and divides into two branches, which eventually flow into a branch of the Pūnpūn.”

The Gayā-māhātmya is not concerned to describe the

¹ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 108.67-69.

² *Vāyu-Purāna*, 111 26-27. Cf. Rajendralala Mitra's *Buddha Gayā*, pp. 18-19: “In fact, everywhere in the *māhātmya* Gayā is assumed to include the whole area from the little hill Pretaśilā, on the north, to the Bodhidruma, on the south, a distance of 13 miles.”

³ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 106.72-75,

full course of the Phalgu river. It has nowhere mentioned that the two large hill streams, the Nilājan (Buddhist *Nerañjarā* or *Nairañjanā*) and the Mohānā flowed together as Phalgu within the distance of twenty miles or so, and that in the north beyond this distance the united stream Phalgu again assumed the name of Mohānā and eventually flowed into a branch of the Pūnpūn river, being divided into two branches. But it expressly says that the Phalgotīrtha proper was co-extensive with the Gayāsira or Gayāsīrsha hill and its spurs, the Nāgakūṭa, the Ḡṛidhrakūṭa, the Janārdanakūṭa and the site of the Brahmayūpa. its extension from the Gayāsira hill to the North Mānasa tank being 1 *krośa*.¹ If the Gayāsira hill and its spurs determined the extension of the then known town of Gayā (Gayāpurī) from south to north. we can say that this town of Gayā, too, was neither more nor less than one *krośa* in extent. We are further told that that part of the Phalgotīrtha which extended from the Krauñchapāda as far south as the Gayāsira hill proper formed the face or front of Gayāsura (Gayāsoramukha).² It is, then, certain that, according to the Gayā-māhātmya, the ancient town of Gayā was situated on the western bank of the Phalgu river.

The Mahānadī, the Madhukulyā, the Dadhikulyā, the

¹ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 111.41-42, 111.21 :

Sākshād Gayāśiras tatra Phalgotīrthāśritam |
Nāgaj Janārdanād Brahmayūpāch chottara-Mānasāt ||
etaḍ Gayāśiraḥ proktaṁ Phalgotīrtham tad uchyate ||
Nāgakūtād Ḡṛidhrakūtād Yūpād Uttara-Mānasāt ||
etaḍ Gayāśiraḥ proktaṁ Phalgotīrtham tad uchyate ||

² *Vāyu-Purāna*, 111.44 :

Krauñchapādāt Phalgotīrtham yāvat sākshād Gayāśiraḥ |
mukham Gayāsurasya itat tasmāch chhādāham ihīkshayam ||

Ghṛitakulyā and the Madhusravā are mentioned as the important rivers in Gayā-kshetra.¹ The Mahānadī lay just to the east of the gate of Gayā.² The Phalgu is mentioned as a river of Gayā [Fig. 3] which was even more sacred than the Ganges.³ From the position assigned to the Mahānadī it appears that it is the same river as the Phalgu. There are two stanzas in which Devikā may be taken as another popular name for the Mahānadī,⁴ while it is distinctly stated in the Mahābhārata that this Mahānadī was no other than the large river which was known (at least, in part) by the name of Phalgu.⁵

The Madhuscavā is a small rivulet, which flows down into the Phalgu river throughout the year from the east side of the Gayāśīta hill proper, the modern Brahmayoni hill. The Ghṛitakulyā, the Dadhikulyā and the Madhukulyā are nothing but three little parallel cataracts that flow down the southern slope of the Bhasmakūṭa hill during the rains and completely dry up during winter and summer. A little higher up towards the peak of the Brahmayoni hill

¹ *Vāyu-Purāṇa*, 109.16-17, 106.74-75, 112.30, 105.44.

² *Vāyu-Purāṇa*, 110.6 :

Tato Gayā-praveśe cha pūrvato'sti Mahānadī.

It seems that *Mahānadī* is the same with what is now known as the river *Mohānā*.

³ *Vāyu-Purāṇa*, 111-16 :

*Gangā pādodakam Vishnoḥ Phalgurhyādi-Gadādharaḥ |
svayam hi dravaḥ ūpena tasmād Gangādrikam vṛduḥ ||*

The high sanctity of the river Phalgu is brought forth thus in the *Agni-Purāṇa*, 115.17-33 : "the *tīrtha* is called Phalgu from the fact of prosperity and heaven being the product (*phalam*) thereof."

⁴ *Vāyu-Purāṇa*, 109.7, 112-30 : *Devikā cha Mahānadī.*

⁵ *Mahābhārata*, *Vanaparva*, 85.12 :

Sā cha puṇyajalā tatra Phalgu nāmā Mahānadī |

Cf. Mahābhārata, Vanaparva, 82.83, 82.97, and 86.11, where the Mahānadī appears to have been distinguished from the Phalgu river.

one may mark out three such other cataracts bearing the name of Subhrā, Agnidhārā and Kapilā, the last named cataract feeding the waters of the Rukminikunḍa. The Ākāśagangā symbolising the Milky Way of the sky is a similar cataract to be located on a hill to the east of the Bhasmakūṭa.

We have still to ascertain the distance in miles covered by the five *kos* extension of Gayā-kṣetra. According to modern Indian usage, one *kos* is broadly equal to two miles. We may maintain that this equivalence holds true also of *krośa* as employed in the Gayā-māhātmya. If the full extension of Gayā-kṣetra ranged over a distance of five *krośas*, and the holy tract of Gayā extended as far south as the Bo-tree at Bodhi-Gayā, which is situated six miles to the south of the town of Gayā and as far north as the Pretaśilā hill which is situated five miles on the north-west of the town of Gayā it is evident that five *kos* extension of Gayā-kṣetra covered the distance of not less than ten miles from south to north.

We need no longer be in the dark about the precise meaning of the expression explained by the Brahmin caretakers and beneficiaries of the shrines and bathing *ghāts* of Gayā and pilgrims' guides called Gayāvāls. The expression *pañchakrośa*, "five *kos*," signifies the widest circuit of pilgrimage to be completed by a "Gayā pilgrim with the Vishnupada temple as its centre." The intended meaning has thus been brought out in the District Gazetteer of Gayā (p. 215):

"In another courtyard (of the Vishnupada temple) close by stands a small granite temple dedicated

to Vishnu as Gadādhara or the mace-bearer, and near its north-western corner there is a small rough pillar, and a rude carving of an elephant, called Gaj, from which the five *kos* forming the circuit of pilgrimage are measured.”

From this explanation, it is clear that the utmost circuit of pilgrimage which a Gayā pilgrim is expected to complete denotes the circumference of a circle of which the radius is five *kos* or ten miles. From a certain date the extension of five *kos* became the maximum traditional circuit of pilgrimage to be travelled over by a pilgrim to each Hindu holy place, whether it is Gayā, Kāśī or Prayāga.¹

The Gayāśira, the Muṇḍapriṣṭha, the Prabhāsa, the Udyanta, the Gītanāda, the Lhasmakūṭa, the Nāgakūṭa, the Gridhrakūṭa, the Ādipāla, the Aravin daka, the Rāmaśilā, the Pretaśilā—these are the sacred hills and rocky peaks, ridges and spurs in Gayā-kshetra.²

The Phalgu, the Mahānadi, the Dadhikulyā, the Ghritakulyā, the Madhukulyā, the Madhusravā, the Agnidhārā, the Kapilā—these are the holy rivers and streams.³

The Phalgutīrtha, the Śīlātīrtha, the Rāmatīrtha, the Gadālolatīrtha, the Vaitaraṇī, the Bṛhmasara, the Brahma-kunḍa, the North Mānasa, the South Mānasa, the Rukmiṇikunḍa, the Pretakunḍa, the Nikshārā-pushkariṇī, the Mātāṅgavāpī—these are the principal bathing places.⁴

¹ There is a familiar saying in Bengal, *ye nā karite pañchakosi, tār kiser kāsī?* “He who does not complete the circuit of five *kos*, has he done the pilgrimage to Benares?”

² *Vāyu-Purāna*, 108.12-13, 108.61, 108.68, 109.14-15, 109.36, 109.43, 111.22, 41-42.

³ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 105.44, 106.74-75, 108.16, 108.57-58, 109.16-17. *Agni-Purāna*, 106, adds the river *Ākāśaganḍā*.

⁴ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 108.2, 108.17, 108.44, 111.2, 111.22, 111.24-25, 111.30, 111.75-76. *Agni-Purāna*, 105.27-33, mentions also the *Haṃsatīrtha* and the *Koṭīrtha*.

The Pañchaloka, the Saptaloka, the Vaikuṅṭha, the Goprahāra, the Dharmāraṇya—these are the sacred sites.¹

The Akshayaṇya, the Grīdhra-kūṭavaṇya, the Brahma-prakalpita Āmra, the Bodhidruma Āsvattha—these are the sacred trees.²

The Vishṇupada, the Krauñchapada, the Rudrapada, the Brahmopada, the Kāśyapapada, the Dakṣiṇāgripada, the Gārhapatyapada, the Sabhyapada, the Āvasathyapada, the Śakrapada, the Agastyapada, the Sūryapada, the Kārtikeyapada, the Gaṇeśapada—these are the various sacred footprints.³

The Dharmasīlā, the Kākaśīlā—these are the sacred stones.⁴

The Ādigadādhara, the Gayatī, the Sāvitrī, the Sandhyā, the Sarasvatī, the Gayāditya, the Uttaraṅka, the Dakṣiṇ-ārka, the Śveṅka, the Naimiṣa, the Gaṇanātha, the Eight Vasus, the Eleven Rudras, the Seven Rishis, the Somanātha, the Siddheśa, the Kapardīśa, the Vināyaka, the Nārāyaṇa, the Mahālakṣmī, the Brahmā, the Śrīpuru-shottama, the Mārkaṇḍeyaśa, the Koṭīśa, the Āngireśa, the Pitāmaha, the Prapitāmaha, the Vriddha Prapitāmaha, the Janārdana, the Puṇḍarikākṣha, the Phalguchandī, the Śmaśānākṣhī, the Maṅgalā, the Yama Dharmarāja, the Dharmeśvara—these are the visible forms or images of various deities.⁵

¹ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 109 16, 111 23, 111 35

² *Vāyu Purana*, 105 45, 111 26 27, 111 35

³ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 109.18-19, 111 44 56.

⁴ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 107.43, 108 15, 108 23, 109 46.

⁵ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 109 20-24, 111 26 112 58. The *Agni-Purāna*, 106.1-16, mentions also the deities known as *Jagannātha*, *Balabhadra* and *Subhadrā* (composing the Hindu

The Gayāsira or Gayāsīrsha, as known to the author of the Gayā-māhātmya, is a set of such rocky hills, peaks and ridges as the Gayāsira hill proper (*sākshāt Gayāsira*), the Muṇḍapriṣṭha, the Prabhāsa, the Nāga-kūṭa, and the Gṛidhrakūṭa ranging over a distance of 1 *krośa*. This set of rocky formations which is said to have been co-extensive with the Phalgotīrtha determined the extension of Gayāpuri, the old city of Gayā and innermost zone of Gayā-kshetra.

The Gayāsira hill proper [Fig. 4] forming the southern or more accurately the south-western limit of the old city of Gayā is no other than the rugged hill to the south of Gayā town "which rises some 400 feet above" this town and is now known as the Brahmayoni hill on account of the fact that it has "a small natural fissure in the rocks at the top," which "is looked upon as the *yoni* or womb" of Brahmā. This fissure is just wide enough to allow a man anyhow to crawl through it and "it is believed that by crawling through it the pilgrim escapes rebirth from a human womb."¹ The peak of this hill with its southern ridge presents the figure of an elephant set on the ground.

The Muṇḍapriṣṭha is a pillow-like ridge upon which rests, as the fantastic Hindu legend in the Gayā-māhātmya puts it, the back of the head of the giant Gayāsura.² It is a small hill, which is situated on the western bank of the Phalgu river. As a matter of fact, the Phalgotīrtha proper

Triad), *Mādhava*, *Gauṛī*, *Kāleśa*, *Siddheśvara*, *Vaiāha*, *Nṛisimha*, *Śrī*, *Rāma*, *Sitā*, *Garuda* and *Vāmana*, among others

¹ *District Gazetteer of Gayā*, p. 216 Cf. *Vāyu-Purāna*, 108 84, for the traditional belief in the efficacy of crawling through *Brahmayoni*.

² *Vāyu-Purāna*, 108.51-55, 108.12.

(*sākshāt Phalguvīrthaka*) representing the main bathing place in the Phalgu river lies just under this hill.¹ There is a tank at the foot of this hill, where a pilgrim may perform ablutions to enable the departed spirits connected with his family to go to heaven.² It is on a spot on this hill, known as Krauñchapada, that the famous sage Krauñchamuni and it is on a declivity of this hill that the well-known sage Lomaharshana Lomaśa attained *siddhi* or final beatitude by practising severe austerities.³ This rocky formation of the earth is otherwise known as Krauñchapada on account of the fact that it bears the sacred footprints of the silent contemplative Krauñchamuni who meditated upon it assuming the posture of a *krauñcha* or crane.⁴ That part of the holy river Phalgu which extends with its several bathing *ghāts* from the Krauñchapada or Muṇḍapriṣṭha to the Gayāsira hill proper is said to have formed the face of the giant Gayāsura,⁵ apparently in the sense that the Gayāsira set of hills is directly confronted by it. So far as the description in the Gayā-māhātmya goes, the Muṇḍapriṣṭha is no other than the modern Vishṇupada hill which represents "the centre of the Gayā pilgrimage."⁶

The Muṇḍapriṣṭha is overshadowed by another hill which is called Prabhāsa, "the Luminous," because it is illuminated by the sun.⁷ The suggested etymological explanation of the name may easily lead one to think that a certain image of the Sun-god is installed upon its top. But

¹ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 111.45 :

Muṇḍapriṣṭham naḡādhasāt sākshāt tat Phalguvīrthakam. |

² *Vāyu-Purāna*, 108.76.

³ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 108.75.

⁴ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 109.45, 111.45.

⁵ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 108.77.

⁶ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 111.44.

⁷ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 108.13.

the Gayā-māhātmya does not leave us in the dark as to what special object of worship is to be found there. It expressly says that a Sivaliṅga stands there as a pinnacle of the hill, and that this *liṅga* is but a visible symbol of the deity honoured by the name of Prabhāseśa, "the Lord of the Prabhāsa hill."¹

The Gridhrakūṭa hill is called Gridhrakūṭa or Vultures' Peak on account of the fact that the great sages attained the final beatitude by meditating upon it, assuming the posture of a vulture. Its special sanctity lies in the fact that a *liṅga* of the Śiva deity honoured by the name of Gridhresvara, "the Lord of the Gridhrakūṭa hill," is installed upon it. This hill bears also the footprints of Śiva. There is in this hill a cave where a pilgrim offers oblations to the manes, and there is also a banyan tree,² which a pilgrim worships for the attainment of his highest desires. There is, moreover, a sanctified boundary called Sūlakshetra for offering *pinḍa* to enable the spirits of deceased forefathers to go to heaven.³ It will be a mistake to suppose that the Gridhrakūṭa of the Gayā-māhātmya is one of the five hills which surrounded Girivraja or Old Rājagriha, the most ancient known capital of Magadha. This Gridhrakūṭa is evidently a hill in the neighbourhood of the old city of Gayā.

Across the Muṇḍapriṣṭha stands another hill called the Ādipāla. The latter hill has a statue of the elephant-faced god Gaṇeśa enshrined upon it.⁴

¹ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 108.14.

² The tree has died out and no trace of it is to be found now.

³ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 108.61-64.

⁴ *Vāyu-Purāna*, 108.65.