

5

Our Brave Kings

Introduction

The ruler needs to be virtuous and intelligent to develop any country. Our country had an equal place with other countries in the world for about two thousand years. The sailors, who travelled in ships in the Indian Ocean, knew our small island by various names such as Sihaladeepa, Silediba, Ceylan, Serendib and Taprobane. The country became famous because of its natural beauty and the valuables exported to other countries in trade. Everyone knew our country as an independent land ruled by brave and intelligent kings who constantly worked for the welfare of the citizens. This lesson will teach you about some of such kings.

5.1 King Pandukabhaya

Prince Deeghagamani was king Pandukabhaya's father. His mother was Princess Chithra. A Brahman named Pandula taught prince Pandukabhaya. Historical books describe that the prince underwent a lot of problems during his childhood. There were people who did not like the prince Pandukabhaya to be the king. They attempted to prevent him from becoming the king. However, the prince overcame all the obstacles by acting intelligently. When he was young, he married a princess named Swarnapali and became the king of the country.

King Pandukabhaya ruled the country residing in Anuradhapura. Then it was

called Anuradhagama, because it was not a well developed area then. The king wanted to develop the area where he was living and to change its name to Anuradhapura.

First, the king identified the area which should be named as Anuradhapura and marked the limits of the city. Then, for defence, he constructed a moat around the area, in which he would intend to build his city. He built four gates to enter the city from the four main directions and constructed a road system to connect the gates. Further, he made the interior part of the city beautiful by constructing gardens and ponds.

The king was intelligent enough to understand that removing garbage was needed when people live in a city. He appointed servants for removing garbage from the city. He appointed five hundred servants to clean the city, twenty two servants to clean lavatories, one hundred and fifty servants to carry dead bodies and another one hundred and fifty to clean and guard the graveyards.

The king built a hospital for the needs of the citizens. He constructed temples and religious places for people who had faith for various religions in order to create religious harmony among them. The blacksmiths believed in a god called Kammaradeva during that time. The king constructed temples (devalas) for the blacksmiths and the aborigines (the Wedda community) to worship their gods near the Western gate of the city. In the same way, he built religious places for other priests for their religious observances.

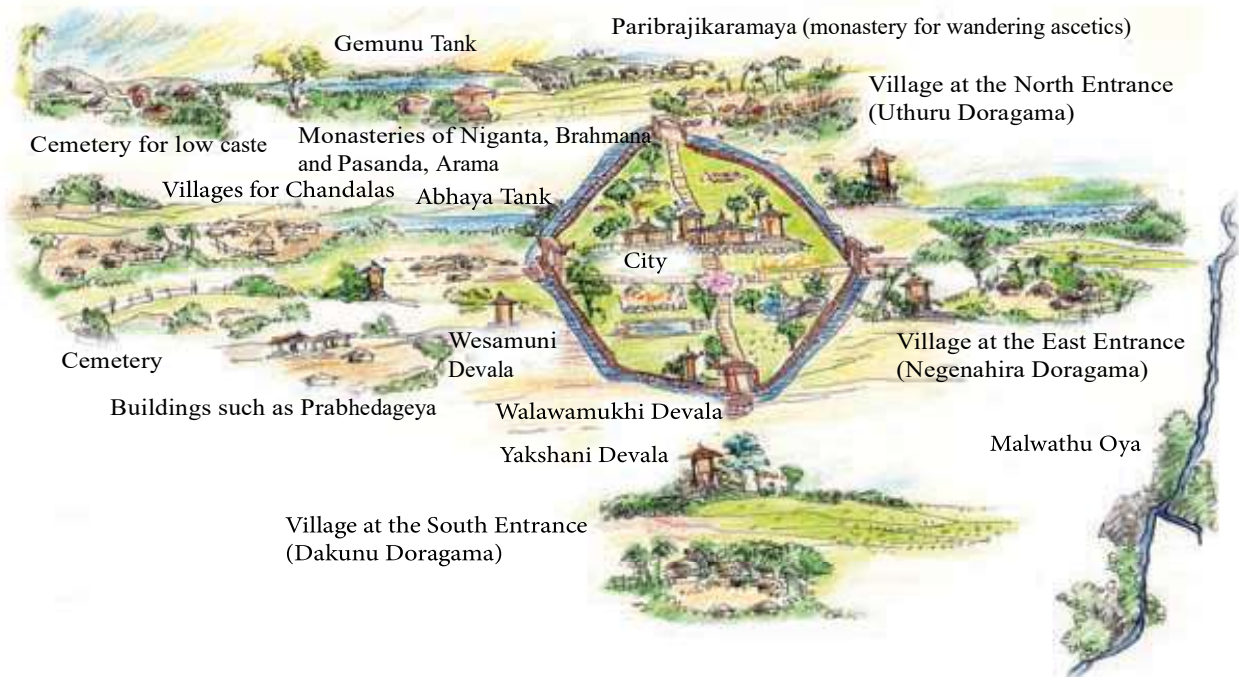


Fig 5.1 A picture of Anuradhapura city drawn according to the description given in Mahawamsa.

It was the king Pandukabhaya who constructed a tank near a city for the first time. Then it was called Abaya Wewa (tank). Today it is known as Basawakkulama tank in Anuradhapura.

King Pandukabhaya ruled the country for seventy years striving hard to render a yeoman service to his citizens. He faced many hardships during his childhood, but he overcame them and dedicated himself for the country's benefit. It is an example for you. You should be determined to be a respectable citizen by taking the king Pandukabhaya's life as an example.



Activity 12

1. Observe the Fig. 5.1 well.
2. Write five sentences about how king Pandukabhaya had created his city.

Important Points

1. Prince Pandukabhaya had to face many hardships during his childhood.
2. However, he overcame all his hardships and obstacles and became the king of the country. Princess Swarnapali was his queen.
3. King Pandukabhaya developed the previous Anuradhagama a city. Later it was known as Anuradhapura.
4. He made Anuradhapura an attractive city.
5. It is King Pandukabhaya who constructed a tank (Wewa) near a city for the first time. It was named Abhaya Wewa.

5.2 King Devanampiyatissa

King Mutaseewa was the father of King Devanampiyatissa. History has no record of who his mother was. King Devanampiyatissa had nine brothers and two sisters. The king was the second child of the family. His name was Tissa before he became the king. Prince Tissa became the king after King Mutaseewa. During that time India was ruled by emperor Ashoka. After king Tissa came into power, he sent a group of emissaries to meet emperor Ashoka. Prince Aritta was the leader of the group of emissaries. On their return to Sri Lanka, emperor Ashoka sent what was necessary for king Tissa for his coronation. King Tissa's coronation ceremony was held according to the instructions given by emperor Ashoka. The title "Devanampiya" used by emperor Ashoka was later added to King Tissa's name. Its meaning was 'adorable to god'.

Arahath Mahinda (Mihindu), the son of emperor Ashoka, with a group of Bhikkhus brought Buddhism to Sri Lanka when king Devanampiyatissa was ruling this country. This remarkable event took place 237 years after the demise of the Buddha. The king acknowledged them with great honour. Arahath Mahinda knew the fact that the king of the country should be intelligent if Buddhism would be established in the country. At this moment Arahath Mahinda asked a few questions from the king pointing at a mango tree close by.

King Devanampiyatissa venerated the group of Arahath Bhikkhus namely Ittiya, Uttiya, Sambala, Baddhasala and the Bhikkhu Sumana Samanera (novice) together with a layman called Bhanduka led by Arahath Mahinda, immensely. He constructed the Mahamewuna garden and a temple called Tissarama in it and offered them to Arahath Mahinda.

Mihindu Thero : O King, what is this tree?

King: Reverend Sir, this is a mango tree.

Mihindu Thero: King, are there other mango trees except for this one?

King: Yes, reverend Sir, there are many other mango trees.

Mihindu Thero: O King, are there other trees except those mango trees?

King: Yes, reverend Sir, there are other trees, but they are not mango trees.

Mihindu Thero: O King, are there other trees except those mango and non-mango trees?

King: Yes, reverend Sir, it is this mango tree.

The king astutely answered to the questions asked by reverend Mihidu Thero. Mihindu Thero realized that the king was an intelligent person.





Thuparamaya

Thuparamaya was built by king Devanampiyatissa. He did not have an idea of the shape of a tope (Dageba). Therefore, he enquired it from Arahath Mahinda Thero. He pointed out the king that it should be of a shape of a heap of paddy. Accordingly, Thuparama was constructed in a Dhanyakara (paddy-heaped shape). However, it took a shape of a bell as a result of reconstruction work ensued at later periods. At present it has the shape of a bell (Ghantakara).

There are three rows of stone posts around Thuparama. They are ruins of an old building erected to protect the Dageba. A building of that nature was called a Vatadageya. (A Vatadageya is a circular house encircling a tope). A building of Vatadageya for Thuparamaya was erected by King Vasabha. The right collar-bone of the Lord Buddha has been deposited in the Thuparama.

Thuparama Dageba in Anuradhapura was constructed by king Devanampiyatissa. He constructed some other buildings including a Dana Sala (a house for the purpose of collecting and offering meals for Bhikkhus)

named Lahabath Ge. He built a few pirivenas as needed for the studies of the Bhikkhus and named the area as Maha Vihara and offered it to the Maha Sangha.





Sri Maha Bodhi was brought to Sri Lanka during the rule of King Devanampiyatissa. The nun, Ven. Sangamitta Theri, brought this sacred object in a ship from India and landed on the harbour 'Dambakolapatuna'. The Dambakolapatuna harbour was located in Jaffna then. The king who went to welcome both Sri Maha Bodhi and the nun Sangamitta Theri, accompanied

Fig 5.2 During king Devanampiyatissa's rule a sapling of Sri Maha Bodhi was brought to this country by the nun Sangamitta Theri.

them to Anuradhapura ceremoniously. A group of people who represented eighteen crafts arrived in Sri Lanka with the nun Sangamitta. The king planted the Sri Maha Bodhi in the garden 'Maha Mewuna' in a ceremony. Further, he erected a building called Maha Bogeya and offered it to the Maha Sangha. In addition, he constructed places such as ponds for the use of the Bhikkhus.

The king had the caves in Mihintale mountain cleaned and offered them to Arahath Mahinda along with those who had already ordained. These caves are known as Ata Seta Len (sixty eight caves) as they were sixty eight in number.

Another important task performed by King Devanampiyatissa was

demarcating the borders of Anuradhapura city. The king did so with the intention of constructing more Buddhist temples and making the city more beautiful. Arahath Mahinda gave instructions to the king in demarcating the city. Historical records say that the king gave directions to demarcate the city with a plough drawn by two tuskers named Maha Paduma and Kunja according to the instructions given by Arahath Mahinda.



Fig. 5.3 King Devanampiyatissa made arrangements to bring Sri Maha Bodhi and plant it in Anuradhapura in a ceremony.

King Devanampiyatissa was the first king to embrace Buddhism in Sri Lanka. The nun order (Bhikkhuni Sasana or Meheni Sasna) of Sri Lanka started after the ordination of queen Anula, the wife of king Devanampiyatissa's brother. The Bhikkhu order (the Bhikkhu Sasana) of this country started with the ordination of prince Aritta, a son of a relative of the king. We too had the opportunity to be Buddhists due to king Devanampiyatissa's intelligence and piety. You too should be determined to serve the country by keeping the great service done by the king in your mind.



Activity 13

Paste pictures which display the important events given below that happened during king Devanampiyatissa's rule and write three sentences about each of the events.

1. Arrival of Arahath Mahinda Thero
2. Bringing Sri Maha Bodhi
3. Thuparama Dageba

Important Points

1. The title 'Devanampiya' attached to the name of king Devanampiyatissa means 'adorable to god'.
2. King Devanampiyatissa had his coronation for the second time under emperor Ashoka's patronage.
3. Buddhism and a branch of Sri Maha Bodhi were brought to Sri Lanka during the rule of King Devanampiyatissa.
4. Thuparama Dageba in Anuradhapura was built by king Devanampiyatissa.
5. Demarcating Anuradhapura city was done during his rule.

5.3 King Dutugemunu

King Dutugemunu was an intelligent and efficient ruler who reigned our country. His father was king Kavantissa. His mother was Queen Vihara Maha Devi. He had a brother named Tissa. This royal family lived in Magama kingdom. Southern and South-Eastern parts in Sri Lanka belonged to the old Magama kingdom. This region was known as Ruhunu Rata then.

Prince Dutugemunu realized that he could develop Anuradhapura if he had a chance to rule it. He was determined to rule Anuradhapura when he was old enough to do so.

King Elara

Anuradhapura was ruled by a king named Elara before King Dutugemunu ascended the throne. King Elara came from Chola country. He collected the whole income which received to the country from agricultural affairs and the trade affairs at the Mathota harbour located in the coastal area in the western side of Anuradhapura.

He was a righteous king. A chariot of the king hit a pagoda and a part of it was damaged. Mahawamsa states that king Elara took measures to repair the pagoda.

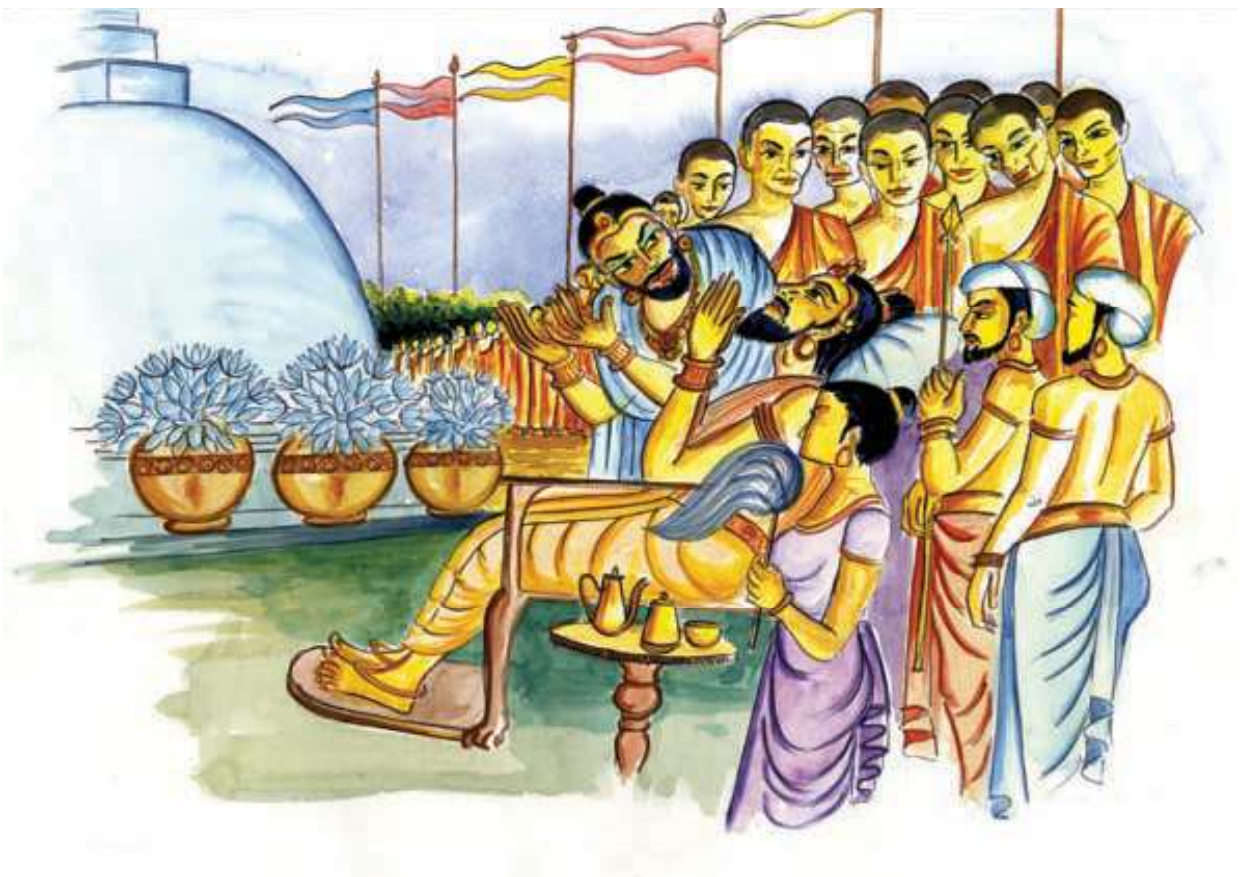


Fig. 5.4 Prince Saddhatissa showed the half-constructed Ruwanweli Stupa after covering the unfinished part with a piece of white cloth to king Dutugemunu who was at his deathbed.

King Kavantissa understood the objective of prince Dutugemunu and prepared a group of strong people suitable for the purpose and took steps to increase the production of food. He sent prince Dutugemunu's brother, prince Tissa to Digamadulla to achieve this

objective. Then Digamadulla was present day Ampara area. Prince Dutugemunu and king Elara had a face to face combat in the place of Vijithapura. Forty four years rule of King Elara came to an end with his death.



King Dutugemunu started constructing Ruwanweli Seya. In historical sources it has been introduced as Maha Tupa. The name Rathnamali has been used in books written in Pali language. It is said that the bodily relics of the Lord Buddha, which had been deposited in Ramagama Dageba in India was later deposited in Ruwanweli Stupa. At the initial stage, the height of the Stupa was 300 feet and diameter of the base of its nucleus was 298 feet. The construction work of this Stupa was finished by king Saddhatissa. His son, king Lajjitissa made some renovation work in Ruwanweli Stupa, but historical or archaeological sources do not substantiate the fact that the Stupa was enlarged by any one.



Fig. 5.5 It is said that a cow came to the king Elara's palace and tolled a bell to inform the crime committed by the king's son by running his chariot over her calf (the cow which came to the place was the mother of the slain calf). This picture shows how that story was drawn in a Buddhist temple in 19th century (kind sponsorship for the picture: Professor Rev. Haguranketha Dheerananda Thero).

In this fight prince Dutugemunu was supported by ten clever and intelligent army commanders to defeat King Elara. Nandimithra, Suranimala, Mahasona, Gotayimbara, Theraputtabhaya, Bharana, Velusumana, Kanchadeva, Pussadeva, Labhiya Vasabha were those ten army commanders. The inscriptions made by some of these commanders have been discovered. After prince Dutugemunu became the king in Anuradhapura, these ten army commanders were known as 'Ten Great Giants' (Dasa Maha Yodhayo). The tusker called 'Kandula' too was a great support to the king.

King Dutugemunu built several topes (Dagebas) and religious places in Anuradhapura. Miriswetiya, Ruwanweliseya and Lowamahapaya were some of them. The king passed away before he could finish the construction work of Ruwanweliseya Dageba. Later its work was completed by king Saddhatissa, the brother of king Dutugemunu. Historical records say that king Dutugemunu constructed ninety nine Dagebas and religious places. In addition, the king did much work for the benefit of the citizens. The king ordered his subjects to pay respect to king Elara's grave whenever they went passing it.

People made impressive stories about king Dutugemunu, his parents, his brother and his army commanders who supported him in the fight on account of the king's heroism. Though the king was known as 'Dutugemunu', his real name was 'Gamini Abhaya'. The name Dutugemunu was used after he became the king. The word 'Dutu' derives from the Sanskrit word 'Drushtha'. Its meaning is 'intelligent'. Your history teacher will tell you stories about king Dutugemunu in the classroom.

Though the achievement of any objective is difficult, it can be done by acting intelligently and courageously along with proper planning. Being loyal to one's country and religion, respecting those who deserve and loving his country men are some prominent qualities that could be seen in King Dutugemunu's character. You, who have been born in a country where such great kings lived, too should make an effort to live in the same manner.

Important Points

1. King Dutugemunu united the country.
2. The king hailed from Magama.
3. The parents and the brother of King Dutugemunu helped him immensely to succeed.
4. Ten clever and intelligent army commanders assisted the king to unite the country.
5. Mirisawetiya, Ruwanweliseya and Lowamahapaya were built by this king.
6. King Elara who ruled Anuradhapura before King Dutugemunu was a righteous king. He ruled Anuradhapura for forty four years.

Activity 14

Select any topic given below and make a speech in the class.

1. King Dutugemunu
2. King Elara
3. King Kavantissa



5.4 King Valagamba

King Valagamba was another great ruler who reigned our country. King Saddhatissa was his father. Historical sources do not state who his mother was. He had three brothers named Thulattana, Lajjatissa and Naga. His brother Naga became the king later and was known as Kallatanaga. Queen Somadevi was King Valagamba's wife.

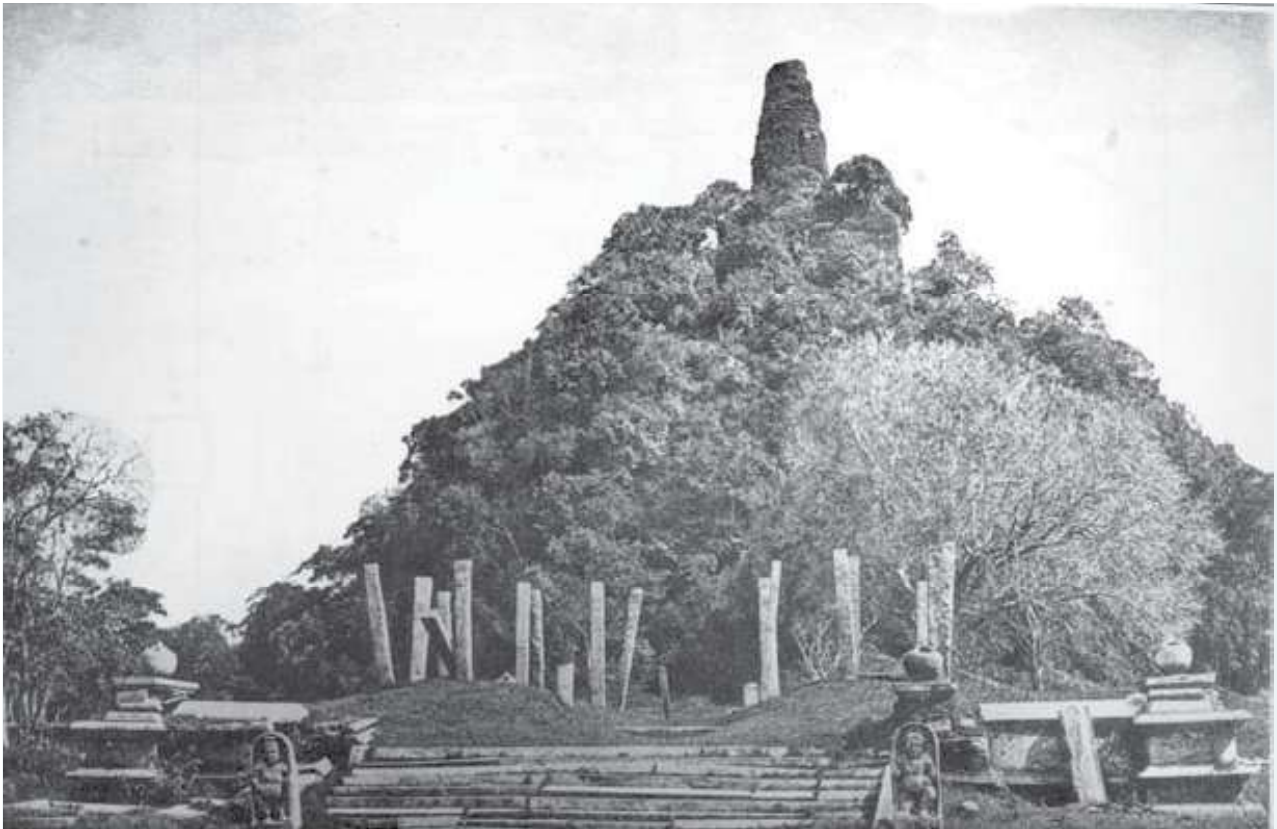
King Valagamba's rule was a little difficult time. He had to face a group of invaders who came from South India and a problem created by a Brahmin called 'Tissa' who protested against him. However, the king, who was wise and brave, overcame all his difficulties.

Abayagiri Stupa in Anuradhapura was constructed by King Valagamba. After constructing the Stupa and its temple, the king offered it to a Bhikkhu called Kupikkala Tissa Thero who had assisted him much when the king was in a time of stress. The king offered Abhayagiriya temple to the monk in order to pay him gratitude. The Abhayagiri temple later became an international education centre.

Another important event that took place in King Valagamba's rule was writing of Buddhist religion in books. Until then the monks had preserved Buddhism by learning it by heart. The doctrine preached by Lord Buddha includes in the Thripitaka (the three scriptures). The transformation of Thripitaka from oral



Fig. 5.6 King Valagamba thought that the Buddhist doctrine, which had been preserved by memorizing so far, would be distorted. Therefore he gathered the Maha sangha (Monks) and the doctrine was written down.



Abhayagiri Stupa was built by King Valagamba. He offered the Stupa to a monk named Kupikkala Tissa. At the initial stage of its construction work, the height of the Stupa was 350 feet. The diameter of the nucleus of its base was 355 feet. Its present height is 245 feet. There is no historical proof to find what sacred relic has been deposited in the Stupa. King Gajabahu I enlarged the size of the Stupa and built four gates in its compound. Four vestibules (Vahalkada) were built in four main directions during King Kanittatissa's rule. A large number of monastery buildings belonged to the Abhyagiri Vihara (temple).

tradition into the written form is called 'writing down' or 'inscribing'. It was written in 'Aluviharaya', a temple in Mathale.

There was a terrible famine during the time when King Valagamba was hiding in the forest. This famine, which was a result of not having rain for years, was called 'Beminitiyasaya' (the famine named Beminitiya). Some Buddhist monks, who had learnt the Thripitaka by heart, too passed away due to the famine. The king

was intelligent enough to understand that it was difficult to preserve Buddhism only through the process of oral tradition. Moreover, it would be harmful to the valuable Buddhist doctrine. Therefore he made necessary arrangements to transform it into the written form. It was a noble service done to the Buddhists living all over the world by the Sri Lankans.

The king conferred caves to the monks. Several inscriptions in which his name appears have been found. In the

inscriptions his name is mentioned as 'Pitha Raja' (father king). It was another name used to introduce him then. Mahawamsa says that the king earned this name because he looked after his brother's son as a father after his brother died. His brother was king Kallatanaga. The name 'Pithu Raja' has been referred to as 'Pitha Maha Raja' and 'Pitha Raja' in the inscriptions.

The queen Soma Devi, the wife of king Valagamba too was a brave woman. When the king had problems from a group of invaders from South India, she went forward to protect the king without fear. They abducted the queen and took her to South India. The king brought her back to Sri Lanka after defeating the enemies. He made her his consort. Even contemplating of a queen who was so brave and loyal to the country makes us feel proud.

King Valagamba did many things for the benefit of the people. He was interested in building Pirivenas (educational institutes in temples for monks) to enhance the education of monks. He gave instructions to build a Stupa called Somaramaya in memory of the place where queen Soma Devi went forward to the enemies. That stupa was offered to the monks.

The way that king Valagamba strived to work for the benefit of the country by overcoming the hardships he encountered sets a good example to you. You too should be determined to shape up your own life by taking the intelligent and far-sighted king's life as an example.

Important Points

1. King Saddhatissa was the father of prince Valagamba.
2. During the ruling time of King Valagamba, he had to face some troubles from enemies.
3. Queen Soma Devi, his wife, was a brave woman.
4. The events such as writing Thripitaka in books and building Abhayagiri Stupa were some great services rendered by King Valagamba.



Activity 15

Write an essay of ten sentences on the topic 'King Valagamba was a Great King'.

5.5 King Vasabha

The parents of King Vasabha are not known. There are no historical records on his parents. He had spent his childhood at his uncle's place. The uncle of King Vasabha served as the army general of the country. King Vasabha belonged to a lineage named 'Lambakarna'. The people from the lineage of Lambakarna were in charge of documentary affairs of the country then. A few great kings from the Lambakarna lineage ruled Sri Lanka. King Vasabha was the first to rule this country representing the Lambakarna dynasty.

This king rendered a great service to the progress of Buddhism and the citizens. Specially, the development process of

constructing tanks took place during king Vasabha's rule. He constructed eleven tanks large in size for the first time. Twelve canals were constructed to carry water from tanks to the paddy fields. The Elahera canal (Elahera Ela) which carries water up to a distance of 30 miles was constructed by King Vasabha.

A few places where there are tanks constructed by King Vasabha have been discovered. The tank named 'Mayenthi' constructed by him is presently known as 'Mahawilachchiya Wewa'. The tank named 'Manaketi' then is presently known as 'Manankattiya Wewa'. The tank presently named 'Nochchipothana Wewa' was called 'Wathamangana Wewa' then. All these tanks are located in Anuradhapura district. The engineers of



Fig. 5.7. King Vasabha took steps to construct the city wall of Anuradhapura by making it taller.



The king had learnt that the aroma of Desaman flowers (jasmine) was the sweetest of all other flowers. The king wanted to check whether it was a truth. He kept a handful of flowers from a few varieties in a room. He placed the same quantity of jasmine flowers among the other varieties too. Then he went out of the room and closed the door behind. After some time, the king opened the door and suddenly smelt the aroma of jasmine flowers before that of the other flowers. Thus, he accepted that what he had learnt was true. The story shows how watchful the king was in believing something.

King Vasabha introduced the system of carrying water through tubes under ground instead of the then existed system of taking water through canals to bathing ponds.

The king divided the country into areas and appointed officers to oversee them in order to make the administration easy. Accordingly, a minister named 'Isigiriya' was appointed to oversee the present day 'Jaffna' area. This information has been written in a golden plate. This golden plate is called 'Vallipuram' golden plate. There is a record in the Vallipuram golden plate that minister Isigiriya constructed a temple in Jaffna. Since the golden plate was found in a place named 'Vallipuram' in Jaffna, it is called by that name.

The king rendered a great service to enhance the beauty as well as the security of Anuradhapura city. He made arrangements to build a wall around the Anuradhapura city. The ruins of this wall

could be seen in Anuradhapura even today. He constructed ponds in the city and developed a system to take water to them from the tanks. The king instructed relevant officers to rear swans in them.

His contribution to the enhancement of Buddhism was also great. He constructed a Vatadage around Thuparama Dageba, and a Pohoya Geya (Chapter house) in the Isurumuniya temple and conferred them to the monks.

He constructed Stupas in the Sithulpawwa temple in Tissamaharama. Further, he took steps to renovate the temples situated in various parts of our country.

The king had to invest a large sum of money for the betterment of his subjects. The king introduced a tax system because he wanted to encourage people to use public property carefully and to find needed money to maintain them. Accordingly, those who used water in the tanks had to pay a certain amount of money as tax. In turn, the money collected in that way was

spent on renovating the tanks.

King Vasabha, who ruled the country for forty four years, created a new era in this country. His courage, intelligence and watchfulness set a good example for your life.

Important Points

1. King Vasabha was the prime-mover of the dynasty called 'Lambhakarna'.
2. He rendered a great service to the irrigation of this country. He constructed 11 large tanks.
3. The 'Vallipuram' golden plate was written during his ruling time.
4. The king introduced a tax system to increase the local income of the country and divided the country into administrative units for easy ruling.



Activity 16

Write answers to the questions about king Vasabha.

1. What is the dynasty king Vasabha belonged to?
2. Write one step that the king made to make his ruling (administration) easy.
3. Write two services that king Vasabha rendered to the country's economy.
4. What is the name of the golden plate which was written during king Vasabha's rule?

5.6 King Mahasen

King Mahasen was a great king who ruled our country. His father was king Gotabhaya. King Mahasen had a brother named Jettatissa. There are no historical records about the mother of king Mahasen.

King Mahasen made a great contribution to develop the irrigation system of Sri Lanka. He constructed sixteen tanks and one main canal. There are a few large tanks that belong to his irrigation activities. Minneriya tank is a major one among them. Its bund is of one and a quarter miles in length. It is 4,670 acres large. In ancient time it was known as 'Minihira Wewa'. The tank then known as 'Wallurawapi' is called 'Hurulu Wewa' today. 'Kanadara Wewa' in Mihintale was also constructed by him. In ancient time

it was known as 'Khanu Wewa'.

King Mahasen built several temples. 'Jethawanaramaya' in Anuradhapura is a major one among them. It is believed that the 'Pati' (belt) relic of the Lord Buddha has been deposited in the 'Jethawana Dageba' built by him. Minneriya Viharaya, Gokanna Viharaya, Ekapilla Viharaya, and Dasengala Viharaya, are religious places built by the king. In addition to the construction, he renovated some temples in various parts of the country. He offered robes to the monks. He ruled the country for 27 years.

Since the king rendered a great service for the benefit of the people, he was much respected by his subjects. He was considered to be a god because he constructed tanks as large as oceans.

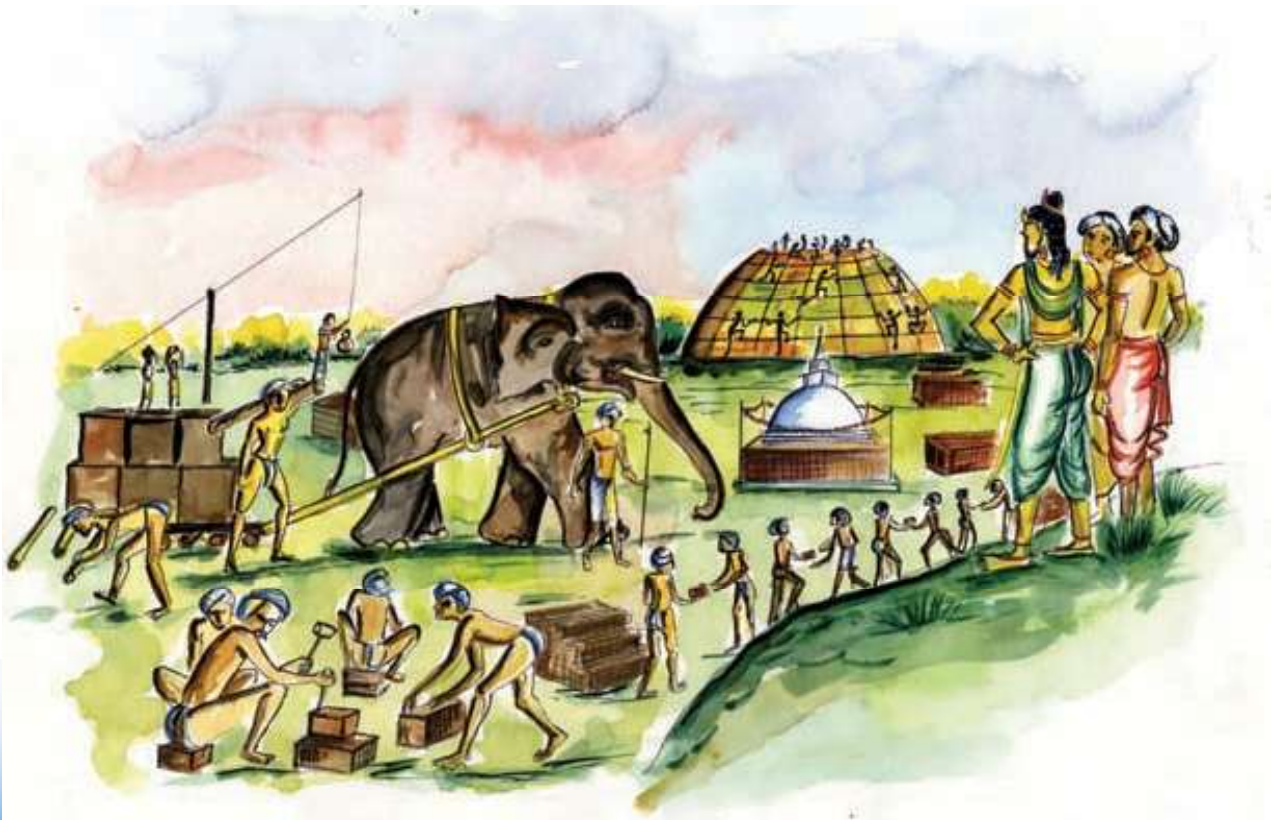
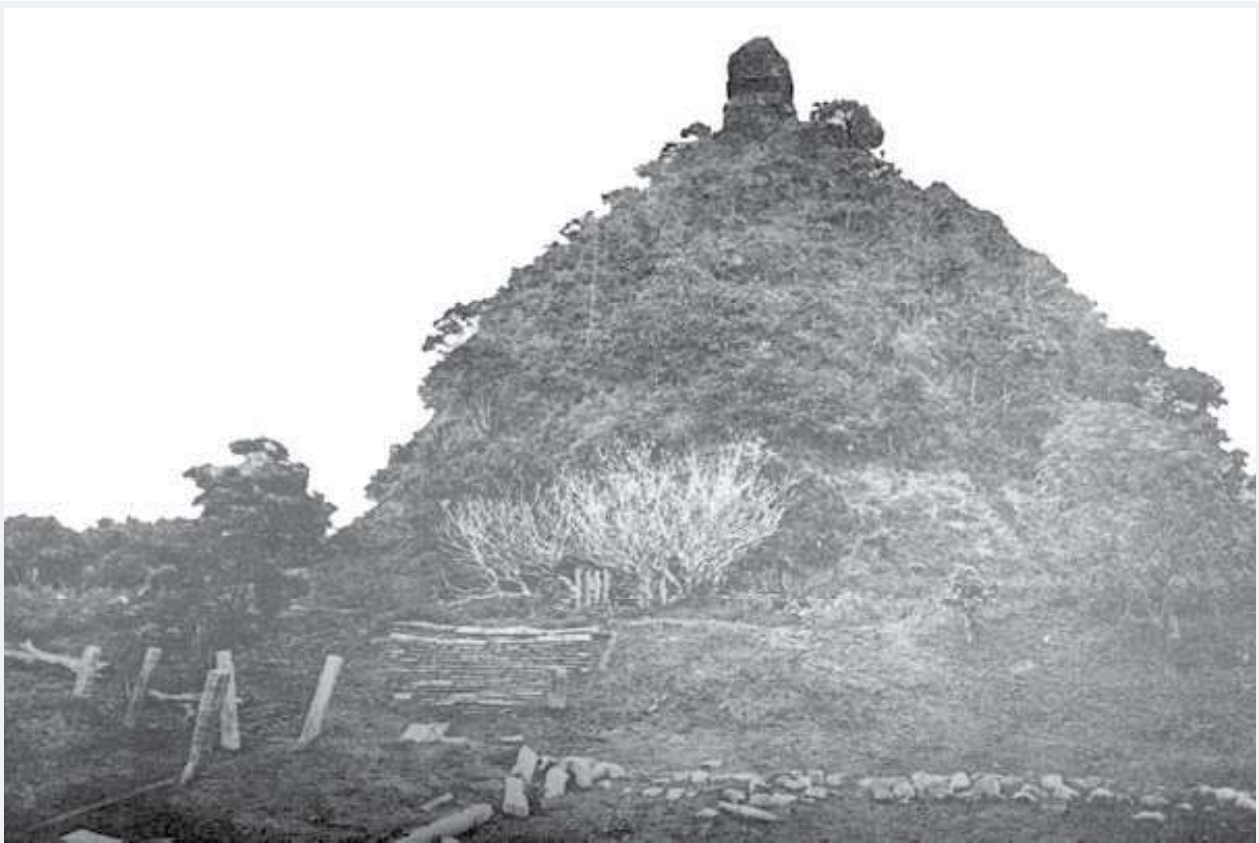


Fig. 5.8 King Mahasen constructed the Jethawana Stupa in Anuradhapura.



Jethawana Stupa was built by king Mahasen. According to historical sources, the Stupa was of 400 feet in height after completion of its construction work. The diameter of the base of its nucleus was 370 feet. It was the biggest Stupa in Sri Lanka. It was also the biggest Stupa made out of bricks in the world. The historical sources say that the 'Pati (belt)' relic of the Lord Buddha has been deposited in this Stupa. Like in Abhayagiri temple, many monastery buildings were built in the 'Jethawana' temple.

Even today he is worshipped in the name of God of Minneriya, 'Minneri Deviyo'.

Some fanes (Devala) built on behalf of him can be seen in Polonnaruwa area.

King Mahasen strived hard to serve both his country and his subjects. Therefore, he is worshipped as a god. It sets a good example to you. You should carefully study the activities of such great kings who ruled our country and think of serving your country and its people when you become adults in the future. That is how you learn an important lesson from history.

Important Points

1. King Mahasen made a great service to the agriculture and irrigation system of this country.
2. Minneriya tank was constructed by King Mahasen. Its bund is one and a quarter miles in length. In ancient time it was known as 'Minihira Wewa'.
3. King Mahasen built the 'Jethawana Stupa' in Anuradhapura. It was the tallest building made of bricks in Asia.
4. King Mahasen is worshipped as 'God of Minneriya' even today.



Activity 17

Find information about King Mahasen under your teacher's instructions. Design a booklet.

5.7 King Dhathusena

King Dhathusena's father was a person named Datanama. King Dhathusena had a younger brother named Salathisbo. Six invaders including Pandu, Parinda, Khudda Parinda who came from South India had usurped power and were ruling Anuradhapura before King Dhathusena came into power. The country was liberated from the invaders by king Dhathusena. He belonged to the lineage (dynasty) of Maurya.

King Dhathusena's service to the country is mainly seen in his irrigational constructions. There are records in history books that he constructed eighteen large tanks and eighteen small tanks.

'Kala Wewa' in Anuradhapura was one of his great irrigational works. It is very useful to the people living in Anuradhapura. The canal called 'Yodha Ela' connecting 'Kala Wewa' and 'Tisa Wewa' in Anuradhapura was constructed by him. Its length is 54 miles. Its gradient is six inches per one mile. This canal is known as 'Jaya Ganga' too.

King Dhathusena made a great contribution to the development of Buddhism in the country. He built several Viharas (temples) as well as renovated the dilapidated ones. Mahawamsa says that he built eighteen temples. He constantly attended to the needs of monks.

The king reconstructed the 'Maha Pali' alms hall (Dana Salawa) to which the monks arrived in to have their meals.

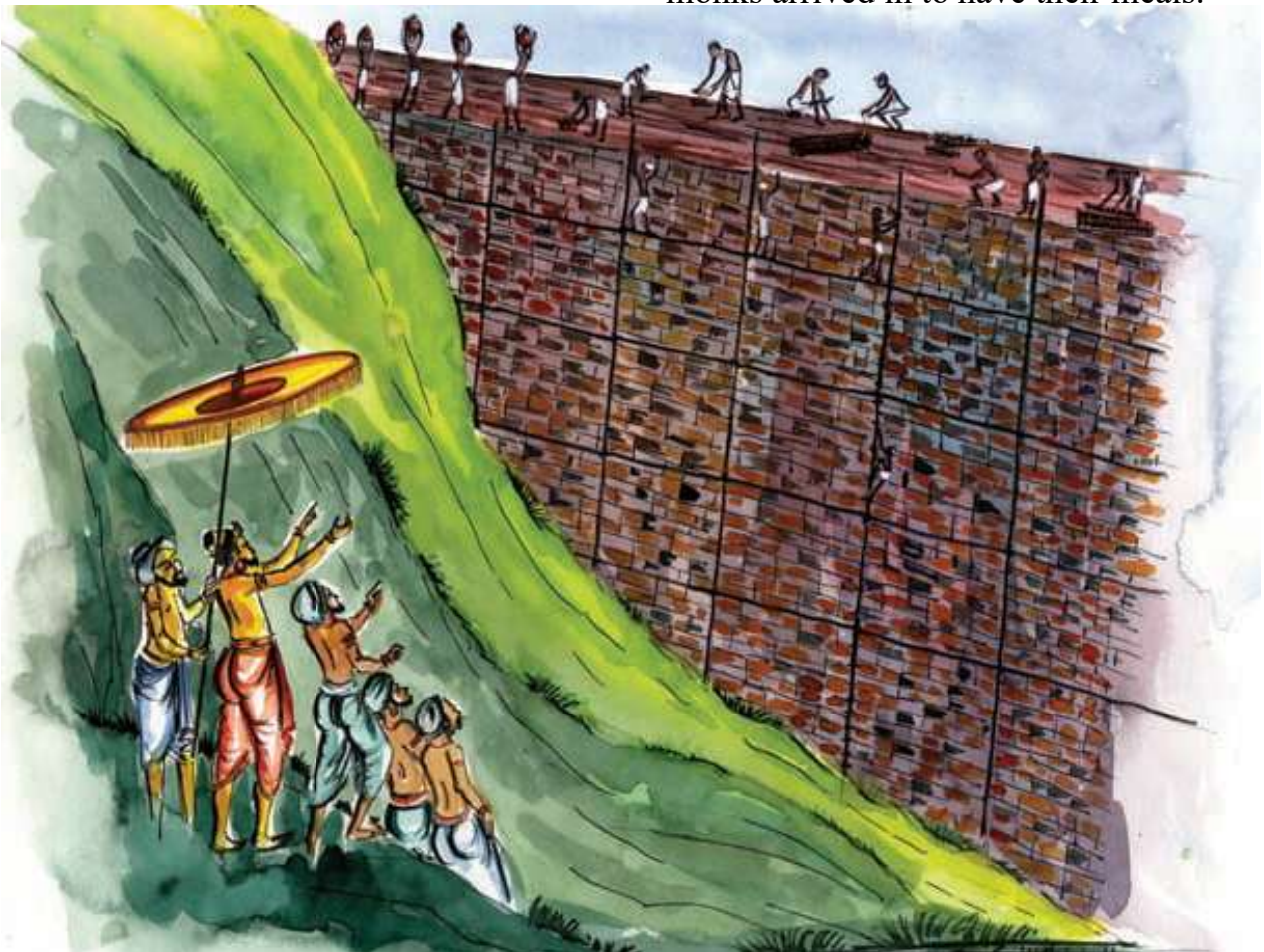


Fig. 5.9 King Dhathusena gave instructions to construct large tanks.

King Dhathusena ruled this country for eighteen years. He had two sons named 'Kashyapa' and 'Mugalan' and a daughter. Since most of the people were engaged in agriculture at the time, the king paid his attention to develop the irrigation system. The king performed in an exemplary way to serve for the benefit of the monks who acted to save this country. All of this information will help you to shape up your life.



Activity 18

1. Name the irrigation works constructed by King Dhathusena.
2. Write two names of temples built by him.

Important Points

1. King Dhathusena belonged to a dynasty called Maurya.
2. Irrigation works such as 'Kala Wewa' and 'Yodha Ela' were constructed by king Dhathusena. He constructed eighteen large tanks and eighteen small tanks.
3. He made a great contribution to the development of Buddhism.