

The efforts made by the rulers of Dambadeniya to safeguard and protect the sacred Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha

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Abstract

The accession of Dambadeniya as the capital city is the first transition of royalty from the Rajarata in the North to the South West. The succession of weak rulers except for Vijayabahu I and Parakramabahu the Great contributed to the down fall of the Polonnaruwa Kingdom. Taking advantage of the situation, Magha from Kalinga invaded the island and his invasion ushered in fear and destruction. Under these trying circumstances, in order to safeguard the sacred Tooth Relic from Magha the Bhikkus acted with resourceful intelligence and concealed the same underground and crossed over to Chola and Pandya territory. The sacred Tooth Relic was transferred to Sri Lanka from the province of Kalinga in the 4th Century A.D. during the reign of Kitsirimegawanna. The king spent an enormous amount of funds and conducted a procession carrying the Tooth Relic to Abayagiri Vihara annually. Similarly rulers of Dambadeniya followed the same mission. Vijayabahu III was able to unify the disintegrated provinces as one unit under his rule. He selected Dambadeniya in the Mayarata as his capital city. King Vijayabahu succeeded in consolidating Mayarata after a strenuous attempt and freed the country from the aggressor Magha. The king recalled the virtuous monks who have left the country and resuscitated Buddhism with their help, He unraveled the place where the sacred Tooth Relic was hidden. As Dambadeniya was not a suitable location for the Tooth Relic, it was kept in a fortified location at Beligala. He selected his elder son Prakramabahu as his successor and the prince was entrusted with the noble task of looking after the sacred Tooth Relic. With the commencement of the Polonnaruwa kingdom, the Tooth Relic played a significant role and to assume kingship the possession of the Relic was mandatory.

Introduction

The accession of Dambadeniya as the seat of royalty inaugurated a novel transformation in the kingship of Ceylon. It is also the first and foremost transition of royalty from the Rajarata in the North to the South West. The Aryan migrants who migrated into this country in the 6th century B.C, skillfully utilizing the water ways established their primeval settlements in the Dry Zone (Mv., vii, p.43-46). An advanced state of this enterprise was the selection of Anuradhapura as the capital (Mv., x, p. 76-77). Anuradhapura, the first kingdom of Sri Lanka was the only kingdom that had survived for the longest period. Vijayabahu I, the greatest ruler that saved the nation from Chola exploitation assumed kingship in 1070 A.D. making Polonnaruwa as the capital city (Cv., lix, p.9 -10). It continued as the royal capital for two centuries. The rulers of the North who had been accustomed to the scarcity of water succeeded in harnessing the available supply of water to overcome the dire necessity and build up a hydraulic civilization in the Rajarata (Cv., lxxviii, p.7-59)

The succession of weak rulers and the incursion of South Indian invaders resulted in the downfall of the kingdom. In Polonnaruwa, except for a few valiant rulers like Vijayabahu I and Parakramabahu the Great who safeguarded the nation, the weak rulers who ascended the throne contributed to its downfall. In this commotion the chief ministers and commanders-in-chief assumed power over and above the rulers. There prevailed a dispute at this time over the throne between Kalinga and Pandya clans. This enigma which engrossed into the political arena for a long time contributes to the down fall of the Polonnaruwa Kingdom (Cv., lxxx, p.1-53). This situation gained momentum with the arrival of Magha as an invader from the Kalinga, a state in South India.

Magha invaded Sri Lanka with an army of about 24,000 soldiers, assassinated the king Parakrama Pandya and grabbed the kingdom (Cv., lxxx, p.71-73). His invasion ushered in fear and destruction. The utter destruction and the calamity unleashed on the natives of Sri Lanka by Magha and his soldiers are depicted in *Culavamsa* thus.

“But since in consequence of the enormously accumulated, various evil deeds of the dwellers in Sri Lanka, Devatas who were everywhere entrusted with the protection of Lanka, failed to carry out this protection, there landed a man who held a false creed, whose heart rejoiced in bad statesmanship, who was a forest fire for the burning down of bushes in the forest of the good, that is of generosity and like who was a sun whose action closed the rows of night lotus flowers that is the good doctrine and a moon for destroying the grace of the groups of the day lotus. (Cv., lxxx, p.54-61).

It is evident from the version in the *Culavamsa* that one aspect of Magha's destruction was the annihilation of Buddhism. Thereby Buddhism had to encounter from an Idabel distraction force. The destruction caused by him and his people is stated as follows in the *Culavamsa*:

“They wrecked the image houses, destroyed many cetiyas, ravaged the viharas and maltreated the lay brethren. They flogged the children, tormented the five (groups of the) comrades of the order and made the people carry burdens. The beautiful, vast, proud cetiyas like the Ratanavali (cetiya) and others which embodied as it were, the glory of former pious kings, they destroyed by overthrowing them and allowing alas, many of the bodily relics, their souls as it were, to disappear. Thus the Damila warriors in imitation of the warriors of Mara, destroyed in the evil of their nature, the laity and the order. Hereupon they completely invested Pulatbhinagara and captured Parakrama, that man of great might and velour, they put out the Monarch's eyes and plundered all his treasures, pearls, jewels and so forth (Cv., lxxx, p. 65 – 79)”. In accordance with his anti – Buddhist contention, he subjected the Buddhist clergy to physical torture. He forcibly took over the possession of the residential quarters of the monks and opened those religious buildings and residential quarters for his solders. He confiscated the properties donated by the virtuous donors dedicated to the religious adherents. In this predicament the Bhikkhus migrated to other divisions of this country namely Ruhuna and Maya, and as a last resort left for Chola and Pandya regions in South India. The deprivation of honourable living facilities enjoyed by the Sri Lankan

clergy as their birthright from the 3rd century B.C. caused by him had been the most sinful and degraded action of Magha.

Under these trying circumstances in order to safeguard the sacred Tooth Relic from Magha the contemporary Bhikkhus acted with resourceful intelligence. The Bhikkhus headed by venerable Vacissara removed the sacred Tooth Relic with scrupulous care and concealed the same underground and crossed over to Chola and Pandya territory (Cv., lxxxii, p.17-27). The sacred Tooth Relic was transferred to Sri Lanka from Dantapura in the province of Kalinga in South India, in the 4th century A.D. during the reign of Kithsirimegawanna. The sacred Tooth Relic was bought by Hemamala and Dantha Kumara (Cv., xxxvii, p.92). The news of bringing of Dalada to Sri Lanka is mentioned in texts *Datavamsa*. Further to that Guhasiva, the ruler of the state of Kalinga in India. Kiradara, the son-in-law of Padu, the king of Pataliputra waged war against Guhasiva to instruct his daughter Hemamala and son-in-law Dantha to emigrate to Sri Lanka with the Relic in case he is going to lose in the battle. On seeing signs of losing the battle Guhasiva's daughter, Hemamala and Prince Dantha immigrated to Sri Lanka taking with them the sacred Tooth Relic (*Datavamsa*, p.297-340). Subsequently the sacred Tooth Relic was placed in a gem studded casket and enshrined in *Dammachakka Vihara* built by king *Devanampiyathissa* (Cv., xxxvii, p. 93-94). According to *Dalada Siritha* it is evident that king *Kitsirimegawanna* built a new chamber for the Tooth Relic (*Datavamsa*, p.374-375). In spite of any discrepancy, it is confirmed that the sacred Tooth Relic was enshrined in a separate Chamber. King *Kitsirimegawanna* spent an enormous amount of funds and conducted a procession carrying the Dalada to *Abayagiri Vihara* annually and enacted a law that this annual event be continued (Cv.,xxxvii, p.95-97).

This is further confirmed by the *Fa-Hian's* report. A Chinese's Bhikkhu named *Fa-Hian* visited Sri Lanka in the 5th century A.D. He had personally witnessed the Dalada procession. According to his description the chamber for the sacred Tooth Relic was situated in the city of *Anuradhapura* for the annual festival and the sacred Tooth Relic was ceremoniously brought to *Abayagirivihara*. There religious ceremonies are conducted for ninety (90) days continuously. It is kept

open for the devotees to venerate during the poyadays (Batagale, 2006, p. 96). The rulers of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa period strictly following the traditions of the ancient rulers venerated the Dalada. The golden change that linked together unbroken heritage of Buddhism had persisted. One significant symbol is the sacred Tooth Relic. The ancient rulers had safeguarded that trend even at the cost of life (Cv., xxxviii, p.70-72, xxxviii, p. 33, lix, p.45, p. lxxiv, p.107).

Similarly rulers of Dambadeniya followed the same mission. The protection to the sacred Tooth Relic is the foremost in the list. Some of the local rulers exercised authority in limited areas in Mayarata and Rohana when Magha held sway in Rajarata. The commander in chief, Suba who lived in Subapabbata, Adipada Bhuvanekabahu who lived in Govindapabbata and the chief Sankha who lived in Gangadronipabbata were great personalities who looked after the Buddhist religion and the people in their respective principalities (Cv., lxxxi, p.3-9). Vijayabahu III was able to unify these disintegrated regions as one unit under his rule. He selected Dambadeniya as the centre in Mayarata to establish his hegemony (Cv., lxxxi, p.10-16). *Culavamsa* depicts that king Vijayabahu descended from the royal clan that descended from the nobility who brought the sacred Bo-tree to Sri Lanka (Cv., lxxxi, p.10). Contrary to this concept *Pujavaliya* states that this king belongs to the royal clan descended from the king Sirisangabo who was accomplished with the virtues of a Bodisatta (an aspirant Buddha) and ruled in Anuradhapura (*Pujavaliya*, p.785). King Vijayabahu's father was Vijayamalla according to that text *Hattavanagallaviharavamsa* (Hv, -p.78). In the light of this information it is rather problematic to get an accurate picture of the situation of the king's clan. In addition to this situation, the king was also identified as Vijayabahu Vathimi (*Dalada Pujavali* p.64) and Nanbabara Kalanga Vijayabahu (Dambadeni Asna, 1997). However *Culavamsa* states that Vijayabahu III commenced his political career as a ruler of the Vanni (Cv., lxxxi, p.10-14). According to the investigations into the post of a Vanni ruler, it is implied as a leader who had ascended to power in a densely forested area (Liyanagamage-A, 1968, p.85). As the invader Magha who held sway in the north, one of the prominent opponents who prevented his violent aggression and kept him at bay was this king Vijayabahu III. Thus he had undergone immense tribulation.

Hence Vijayabahu III had consolidated his hegemony and assumed the kingship in Mayarata and selected Dambadeniya as his capital city. Dambadeniya is situated in the Kurunegala district, Dambadeniya Hatpathtuwa, in Udapola Western Korale. This king had his royal palace on an elevated plot of land. This rock is standing to a height of about 350-400 feet from the ground level and it has a circumference of about 1 and ½ a mile, this rock is identified as Maligagala at present. There are no remnants except for holes carved on the rock at different places indicating the presence of holes used for pillars when erecting buildings. This can be reached in two stages in the form of two levels to reach both stories and it is a tedious attempt. After climbing the mountain the first level ground must have been the ground level for the palace. There is the continuation of the elevation. After climbing the top one can look around for about a 2 mile distance.

King Vijayabahu who succeeded in consolidating Mayarata after a strenuous attempt freed the country from the aggressor Magha and he left no stone unturned to protect the citizens and to resuscitate Buddhism, the lifeline of the people (Cv., lxxxi, p.10 - 80). The king recalled the senior and virtuous monks who had left the country in disgust and resuscitated Buddhism. With their help he unraveled the place where the sacred Tooth Relic was hidden and brought it back to Dambadeniya in procession (Cv., lxxxi, p.19-30). But it was not a suitable place for the Tooth Relic as Dambadeniya has not regained stability due to Magha's invasion. The Beligala location was strongly fortified from all sides with security points. It is in the Otarapattu in Kegalle.

There can be repercussions from Magha himself as he had earlier remained armed. Therefore the king selected a venue for the Tooth Relic, a place faraway from his strong hold at Beligala Mountain. The king constructed the chamber for the Relic on the top of a hill at Beligala. It is amply portrayed in *Culavamsa* "Now while the wise king day by day celebrated a great sacrificial ceremony for the Relics. He thought thus In order that if in future time another interregnum occurs no evil from alien enemies shall befall these Relics of the sage. I will carefully provide for them a still more inaccessible place, fast and sure". Thus pondering he had the Billasela (mountain) made fast on every side with walls. Gate towers and the like, that save

by the gods in the air, it could not be trodden by any human foes. And on the summit of the rock he built a superb temple for the Tooth Relic, ravishing as a divine palace descended from the world of the gods. Around this he laid out a park for taking an airing when passing the day or when passing strong the night therein, (Cv., lxxxii, p.31-36). This exemplifies the strong measures taken by the king to safeguard the Relic. Vijayabahu III's reign was a short one of only four years (1236 A.D – 1236, A.D) (Cv., lxxxii, p.79). The reason for this according to chronicles was the old age of the king. During this short period, he performed for the Relic several offerings to invoke the blessing to the general public. Culavamsa speaks about his religious services (Cv., lxxxii, p.41-64). According to that in order to refrain the Bhikkhus from incurring further difficulties, the king reconditioned most of the temples that were dilapidated and built new temples. Vijayasundararama in Dambadeniya was a temple built by him. He also commenced to rewrite the inestimable works on Buddhism which were destroyed by Magha. He not only provided the facilities to enhance the religious knowledge of the erudite Bhikkhus but also he established a "katikawata having reformed the rites and rituals pertaining to rules of discipline and religious orders like higher ordination ceremonies. The commendable service of arresting the erosion and declining of Buddhist precepts, rituals and fancies and the great service to the future of the Buddhist doctrine was enunciated by Vijayabahu III.

The king Vijayabahu III, selected his eldest son Parakramabahu as the successor to the throne. Vijayabahu III succeeded in accomplishing his son with all the qualifications for the kingship (Cv., lxxxii, p.66 – 76). The occasion when the King displayed the connection with the king, the sangha and the Tooth Relic was the coronation of his eldest son to succeed him. The king donated his son to the venerable Sangha headed by Venerable Sangharakkita Mahasami on this ceremony. After dedicating the prince to the Venerable Sangha and there after the Prince was entrusted with the noble task of looking after the venerable bhikkhus, the sacred Retain Tooth Relic and the citizens of Sri Lanka. Thereafter the king proclaimed the handing over of the Retain ToothRelic, the venerable Bikkhus and the citizens of Sri Lanka to the venerable Mahasami. It is thus mentioned in the *culavamsa*. This incident is portrayed in *Pujavaliya* as an incident "having taken

the elder prince” (Pujavaliya p.787) Pali text of Mahavamsa and Sinhala text of the Pujavaliya mentioned the same meaning of this event (Mv., lxxix, p.76-79). But Geiger’s translation of English medium *Mahavamsa* namely *Culavamsa* showed other meanings. Instead of the king, Geiger has translated it as Sangarakkihita Thero. Even if there is any discrepancy in this source materials, the Relic should be safeguarded at any cost. Similarly there is a coordinating responsibility between the king and the venerable sangha to protect the Relic.

During the reign of king Parakramabahu II in the political and religious spheres, there were amicable settlements with the Relic which did not exist during any other period. There is a whole chapter in the *Culavamsa* entitled “The Exhibition of the miracle of the Tooth Relic”, it gives information about the Tooth Relic and the king (Cv., lxxxii, p.1 – 53). After ascending the throne the first action of the king was to bring the Tooth Relics from Beligala to Dambadeniya. Thus before waging war against Magha, one of the actions of the king was to bring the sacred Tooth Relics to Dambadeniya. To worship the sacred Tooth Relics at his wish he stationed it at the palace. He made an ornamental site and made three caskets with one inside the other in gold studded with gems (Cv., lxxxii, p.3-15). Thereafter the king made a ceremony in the city of the exposition of the sacred Tooth Relic and he held the Relic on his arm in the presence of the venerable Bhikkhus (Cv., lxxxii, p.17-40). There is a similar description in the *Pujavaliya*, too. (*Puja*: p.787-788) The king’s earnest wish was to succeed in expelling the Tamils and to bring about peace to Sri Lanka. The sacred Tooth Relic by granting that wish confirmed that the king would be successful (Cv., lxxxii, p. 41-45). The first obstacle to the king was to expel the invader the Magha. Magha had occupied Rajarata for 21 years. (By this time Parakramabahu II ascended the throne) And this time Magha’s claim to the throne may have been stable. He had the support of several fortresses and the backing of a formidable army. He had the support of fortresses situated in Pulattnipura (Polonnaruwa), Kotthasaragama (Kotasara), Gangatalaka (Gangatula), Kakalayagama (Karudavule), Padiratta (padi), Kurundi (Kururndu), Manamatta (Mannara), Pulaccerititha (Pulacceri), Valikagamatota (Valigamu), Gonarattha (Gona), Gonusurattha (Govusu), Madhupadapatittha (Mipatota), Sukaratuttha (Huratota) (*Culavamsa*, lxxiii, p.15-18) (Liyanagamage,

1968, p. 106). In addition to these *Pujavaliya* states of another place at Debarapatun (Pujavalaya, p.790). These were situated in the North West, North and North East of the coast (Liyanagamage, 1968:p.106). Thus, he held sway in the North of Rajarata. According to available information it is not a feasible task to expel Magha. It is imperative that Pararamabahu II should maintain the kingdom and also expel the enemy. In these circumstances the king should mobilize an indomitable army and act with confidence. Therefore, it can be surmised that the King at first worshiped the sacred Relics and built up self confidence in him, to get the support and confidence of the citizens under his care and the army at his command. Thus the faith and the devotion to the sacred Relic flourished in the king and the citizens. After this ceremony, he dedicated his crown and items of royalty to the sacred Tooth Relics. Thus he indicated that he dedicated his kingship to the sacred Tooth Relic. He repeated this ceremony for consecutive seven days (Cv., lxxxii, p.50-53). Thus his next venture was to expel the formidable enemy Magha. According to source material Parakramabahu II was able to expel the invader (Cv., lxxxiii, p.20-35) (Puja: p.790). Because of the discrepancy of the source material it is not possible to give an exact day to the termination of Magha's period of forcible occupation of Lanka. During the reign of Parakramabahu II an invader Chandrabahu from a region where no aggressor had so far crossed over to Lanka raided on two occasions. The account in *Culavamsa* identifies Chandrabahu in his first invasion as a campaigner and as a Java national who had claimed to be a Buddhist and his lineage to co Buddhists in Lanka. His identity had been further clarified by an inscription in the Sanskrit language discovered from a place known as Jaiya in the Malay peninsular (Liyanagamage, A. 1968, p.134,135). In this inscription he is introduced as Chandrabahu the leader of Tambralinga. The information there proves that he was a Buddhist. As a result of further investigation by the scholars his origin has been accredited to a region in the Malay peninsular or a place known as Ligor in Malaysia.

Moreover as the inhabitants of Tambralinga have been considered as people of "Javaka" Chandabahu's first invasion was in 1247 A.D. The king's son – in law Virabahu defeated Chandabahu under his leadership. *Culavamsa* depicts it thus "When the eleventh year of the reign of this king had arrived, a king of the Javakas

known by the name of Chandabahu landed with a terrible Javaka army under the treacherous pretext that they also were followers of the Buddha. All these wicked Javaka soldiers who invaded every landing place and who with their poisoned arrows, like terrible snakes, without ceasing harassed the people whomever they caught sight of lighting with floods of water (visit) a place destroyed by lighting with flames of fire, so Lanka which had been harassed by Magha and others was ravaged anew by the Javakas. Then the King sent forth his sister's son, the heroic prince Virabahu, with soldiers to fight the Javakas. The fearful Bahu, namely Virabahu, with his terrible appearance completely destroyed (the moonlight, namely) Chandabahu in the fields of heaven, namely in the battle. He placed his heroic Sinhala soldiers here and there and began to open fight with the Javaka warriors. The good Sinhala warriors, sure in aim, the archers, shattered in pieces with their sharply pointed arrows, in the battle the countless number of arrows whizzing against them with their poisoned tips which were shot swiftly one after the other by the Javaka soldiers from a machine. Going forth to the combat like Rama, Prince Virabahu slew numbers of Javakas, as Rama (slew) the Rakkhasas (Cv., lxxxiii, p.36 – 47). Though he was defeated in his first attempt he tried again during the period from 1258 A.D to 1262 A.D. In his second attempt he urged the king Parakramabahu to hand over to the sacred Tooth Relics and sacred Bowl. Failing in the event of his refusing to do that, he would readily conquer the entire country. It is said in *Culavamsa* thus.

“At that time the Lord of men Chandabahu, formerly beaten after hard fighting, having collected from the countries of the Pandus and Colas and elsewhere many Damila soldiers, representing a great force, landed with his Javaka army in Mahatittha. After the king had brought over to his side the Sinhala dwellings in Padi, Kurundi and other districts, he marched to Subhagiri. He set up there an armed camp and sent forth messengers with the message: “I shall take Tisihala. I shall not leave it to thee. Yield up to me therefore together with the Tooth Relics of the Sage, the Bowl Relic and the royal dominion. If thou wilt not, then fight,” (Cv., lxxxviii, p. 62 – 66). On this occasion the king's son in law Virabahu and his elder son Vijayabahu jointly defeated Chandabahu; confiscated all his belongings and exterminated his army. Chandabahu's invasions had been strenuous and

vigorous. The second attempt had been more organized than the first invasion. Parakramabahu II defeated the foreign invasions and brought Sri Lanka under one canopy (Cv.,lxxxviii, p. 83-121, lxxxix). If by chance the king failed in his noble duty to protect the nation the invader could have conquered the country and escaped with the sacred Tooth Relics as well. Then a certain period in history of Sri Lanka could have been the Chandabahu's period. In such circumstances the outcome could have been perilous and unforgivable.

Thus after political tranquility and stability the king engaged himself in the noble task of renovating the sacred cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. Thus he brought back the undermined splendor of the ancient cities. Then after replenishment of the cities according to the ancient rites and rituals the sacred Relic was ceremoniously placed in the ancient chamber at Polonnaruwa. This is adequately described in *Culavamsa* and *Pujavaliya*. The *Culavamsa* episode can be presented thus "Hereupon the king gather together a great highway from the town of Jambuddoni to splendid Pulatthinagara, five yojanas wide made level and throughout, always at a distance of half a yojana, he had a costly rest-house built, gracefully (adorned) with festive banners rows of bananas, triumphal arches and the like. Thereupon he placed the two relics of the great Seer, Tooth and Bowl, on a high chariot which was fair in its splendor as a heavenly chariot. With numerous groups of the bhikkhu community who, paying homage, encircled on every side the incomparable, splendid, festive chariot of the sacred relic as if they were the hosts of the Brahmas who surround the sacred chariot of Brahma, he set forth from the superb city, great Jambuddoni. The sacrificial festival which he arranged was beautified by the people entrusted with the various duties who letting unceasingly their cries of hail! Resound, went before or followed after and bore with them for the sacrificial festival umbrellas of gold and pearl, golden fly-whisks, inlaid with pearl, banners of gold and pearl, wreaths set with gold pearl, further golden and silver jars, fans of gold and silver, golden and silver vases, golden and silver shells, golden and silver bowls, golden and silver urns, golden and silver basins, golden and silver mirrors, golden and silver banana trees, tiny shells of gold and silver, golden and silver horses, golden and silver elephants, as well as countless silver and golden lamp – stands and the rest. The festival was surrounded by rows

of elephants excellent by the reason of the elephant ornaments by which they were overspread, by rows of steeds worth seeing for the abundance of every kind of equine ornament, by the ranks of heroic warriors who with diverse weapons in their hands and wearing warlike ornaments, played their war games, by the ranks of princes, nobles and councilors who wore festive clothing and flaunted manifold ornament. The glory (of the festival) was enhanced by the cries of people who thirsting for merit shouted O hail! O hail! O hail! The festival was surrounded by several rows of lay sisters and lay brethren who led pure lives and who in their zeal each for himself pressed forward bearing flowers and the like as offerings. Around it raged the uproar of sturdy palace servitors who were ever and again now here now there, well beaten in fun by other sturdy palace servitors as if they were people fighting out a mighty quarrel with one another. It was filled with the songs of paradise of the bards, who sang festive songs, making thereto on the five instruments fine music which spread abroad and charmed the hearers, also with the songs of the minstrels who again and again let their praises resound. In devotion there surrounded it the dancers and the actors who performed dances and sang songs delightful to see to hear. Thus performing by degrees in perfect order the high sacrifice, he was wont when in moving along the decorated road, he came to the previously erected rest-houses, to set up the relic in each of these, (he) performed each time a high festival, started again from each (rest-house), continued ever on his way and so brought by degrees the Relic of the Prince of the wise to the royal capital. Then after the king had turned the whole city into a single great place of festival – at a favorable moment when constellation, day and hour were auspicious, in the ancient, decorated Relic temple, fair as the palace of the king of the gods – most splendid of all temples – he solemnly and in careful manner placed the two Relics on a costly throne embellished by all manner of jewels (Cv., lxxxix, p.13 – 41, Puja p. 803-804). It is surmised that the sacred Tooth Relic was brought back again to Dambadeniya.

Another special veneration performed by Parakramabahu II was the erecting of a three storied special chamber for the Relic in Vijayasundararama at Dambadeniya. After erecting this chamber, there had been religious ceremonies continuously for seven days. Vijayasundarama was the center for Buddhist religious and educational

pursuits (Cv., lxxxix, p.52 – 53). The distance from the king's palace which was on to the Vajayasundararama had been only half a mile. The king having placed the sacred Tooth Relics in the close proximity of the palace may have transferred the same to the Vijayasundarama for the annual procession. During the Kandyan period this building was renovated to a two storied one. It is the present chamber for the Relic in the temple premises. Another place where the Dalada procession was held was the king's place of birth at Sriwardhanapura, where a temple was built comprising the normal features such as a Dagaba, chamber for Buddha's image and Bo tree (Cv., lxxxv, p.1 – 40). The king constructed a new road from Dambadeniya to Sriwardhanapura and decorating both sides, walked to Sriwardhanapura with the sacred Relic at the head of the procession. Thereafter he organized an exhibition of the sacred Tooth Relic for one week for the general public (Cv., lxxxv, p. 5 – 56). The king has donated one of his ministers Devapathiraja and his of children to the Tooth Relic the reason for this commendable action the king proclaimed thus in the *Culavamsa*. This noble action he performed in the presence of the Bhikkhus in the Tooth chamber. According to reliable sources this minister was holding in high esteem and quite faithful to the king. The king utilized his services in performing meritorious deeds. According to the record pertaining to the construction of Aluthnuwara Devale, the priority is given to Devapathiraja. The reason for the construction of this Devale (the shrine for god Upulvan at Aluthnuwara) is to commemorate Devapathiraja's going to Devinuwara Upulvan Devala in order to pray for relief from a physical affliction from which the king suffered (Jayatilaka, 1956, p.70). Moreover it was this minister himself who invited venerable Buddhaputtra to write *Pujavaliya* with a view to motivate the king to attain Buddha hood (Puja: p. 805). The information that he is an (ambitious) aspirant for Buddha hood which testifies to his nobility and honor.

By virtue of this noble object the king and the people have been relieved of several unfortunate difficulties and misfortunes. During the reign of this king when there was a prolonged drought, it was curtailed and people were solaced by holding a religious festival in honor of Dalada. The king assembled the bhikkhus and marched around the inner city in procession taking the Tooth Relic foremost and

chanting pirith with great religious fervor expecting rain (Cv., lxxxvii, p. 1-13). It rained along with that.

Parakramabahu II selected his eldest son as the successor to his throne. At the same occasion one of the responsibilities he entrusted to his elder son was to give protection and sanctity to the noble Relic. Prince Vijayabahu readily accepted the responsibilities entrusted to him. In the event of handing over the responsibility of looking after the Relic the Prince bestowed his service to the Tooth Relic even before he became king. Prince Vijayabahu renovated the precincts of the Tooth Relic Chamber (Cv., lxxxvii, p.41-75). He employed competent workers for this. After this renovation he ordered that the same daily routine of veneration should be conducted for the Relic. Vijayabahu IV (Prince Vijayabahu) was successful in fulfilling most of his father's services to the nation. He was able to rule the country only for 2 years (Cv., lxxxx, p. 1). During that period he gave prominence to the Tooth Relic in all his actions and services. After him Prince Bhuvanekabahu ascended the throne. Due to the turbulent incidents of the kingdom, the capital had to be shifted to Yapahuwa and also transferred the Tooth Relic to Yapahuwa (Cv., lxxxx, p.34 -45).

With the commencement of the Polonnaruwa Kingdom the Tooth Relic played a significant political role. The Sinhala kings to assume kingship the possession of the Relic became mandatory. During the reign of Parakramabahu the importance of the possession became a formidable factor for kingship. To Parakramabahu the first who defeated the king Manabrana of Ruhuna (Southern Kingdom) but after Manabarana was defeated and after his demise his mother Sugala who hid herself having taken possession of the Relic therefore in order to establish his claim to the Southern kingdom, he had to wage a fierce war to secure the Relic from queen Sugala (Cv., lxxiv, lxxv, H.C.H.C., 1960, p.430).

This confrontation was mainly for the possession of the sacred Tooth. It is imperative that the claim to kingship is not statutory until the possession of the Tooth Relic is achieved. The king's declaration about the Relic is mentioned in *Culavamsa* before going to the battle field "My head adorned with a costly diadem sparkling with

the splendor of various precious stones, would only be consecrated by the longed for contact with the two sacred relic of the Great Master, the Tooth Relics and the Alms-bowl. Therefore must ye all, with the same end in view, with army and train and without in any way departing from the orders I give, conquer the hostile army and speedily send me the splendid Tooth Relic and the sacred Alms-bowl”(Cv., lxxiv, p.105-110). According to these occurrences it had been conventional that the possession of the Tooth is the only claim for the kingship.

During the period of Dambadeniya, the scared Tooth Relic attained the highest esteem in the religious and political sphere. During the invasion of Magha the Bhikkus hid the Relic in a safe place without allowing access for Magha to it. Similarly as soon as Vijayabahu III became the ruler of Mayarata he took steps to get the Relic to his personal protection. Thereby he consolidated his position as king in Mayarata. In the unsettled political atmosphere the king was successful in establishing his position among the people in the country with the grace of the Tooth Relic. King Parakramabahu II immediately after his assumption of duties as king conducted a festival for the Relic and took steps to safeguard both the Tooth Relic and kingship. Moreover, when Chandabahu invaded Sri Lanka he pretended to be a Buddhist and claimed that his waging war was to gain the Relic. He made this claim because there was an accredited place to the Relic.

Even after the coming of the Westerners like Portuguese, Dutch and the British there was an inseparable affiliation of the people to Buddhism. It is obvious that the rulers of Dambadeniya had a great faith and attachment to Buddhism and they did everything for the wellbeing of Buddhist institutions and for the protection of the Relic the binding force.

In 1815 A. D. when the Kandyan Convention was signed between the Sinhala king and the British Government, there was a clause that where the British Government took the responsibility to give Buddhism the pride of place and to respect and look after Buddhism. The Sinhala kings were able to take the sacred Tooth Relic to a safe place in Babaragala Viharaya during the British invasion of the kingdom.

The British Government convinced the Sangha that they would reinstate the Dalada in the same relic Chamber in Kandy on 29th April 1815 A.D. and solemnly agreed to protect the religion and allow performances of all the traditional rites and rituals.

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