

A Study about the cognomens that were adopted by the kings during Anuradhapura Era

Professor Anurin Indika Diwakara

Department of Sinhala, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

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Abstract: During the Anuradhapura Era the King was the head of the state. When studying inscription stones enlisted in this regard, what is clearly visible is the fact that, a reign based on heritance has been functioning. The kingship was deserved by those who hail from the *Kshathriya* dynasty. The amateur prince becomes a proper king after the coronation ceremony. In the absence of such coronation, the prince is not considered as the king of the state. In *Mahavamsa Teeka*, this is discussed at length. The one who commanded the entire governance system was the King, thus since the inception, a governance based on dynastic line was existed in ancient Sri Lanka. (Journal of the Royal Artistic Society of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (1936, p.443.)

Corpus

Sri Lanka was so closely and intimately connected with India that every great change that took place in the main continent whether political, social, economic or religious influenced considerably the life of the people of Sri Lanka (Amaratunga G & Gunawardana N, 2019, Volume-3-issue6, 203-206). The king needs to be a secular, orderly person in his governance due to certain factors; those were to receive rain at apt time in favor of successful cultivation, to obtain prosperity and blessing for both citizens and the state, and for the smooth function of his governance with the help of citizens. Thus, given the stability of the reign and as a custom, the kings were given various honorary names/cognomens when enthroned. This was a custom which prevailed since the inception of the Anuradhapura Era. The fifth chapter of Mahavamsa has been dedicated to the emperor Asoka (Gunawardana N, 2019, IJSRP Volume 9, Issue 7, 230-235). "*Devanapiya*" is one such forefront cognomen. This has been first adopted by the King Asoka. Simply as the manner in which governance was established in Sri Lanka along with the introduction of Buddhism, these honorary Indian terms were also adopted by Sri Lankan Kings as well. The holy city of Anuradhapura was originally planned and laid out by Mahinda son of king Asoka. (Gunawardana N, 2019, IJSRP Volume 9, Issue 6, 634-638).

One of the influential kings in Ceylon named "*Tissa*" (B.C 250-210) was later known as "*Devanampiyatissa*". King Devanampiyatissa, became the king after his father's death (Gunawardana N, 2019, IJSRP Volume 9, Issue 7, 236-240). The inscription stones testified that these honorary terms was used by the kings for a period about three years during the Anurdhapura Era. (see. Amaravansha Himi, Kothmale., (1969). *Lakdiwa Sellipi*, (LS), *Epigraphia Zeylanica.*, (EZ.) Volume (Vol:1),, p.144., EZ., vol:III., p.154 EZ., vol: V. p.209).

Though it was used as an honorary term alluded to King *Devanampiyathissa*, later on the other kings were also used it as a cognomen. Even though, the usage of these honorary terms seceded during the first century, they have emerged again during the reign

of *King Upathissa* (A.D 517-518). Many scholars have taken into discourse about the usage of the honorary terms. (see Wimalakeerthi, Madayangoda., (1958) Part 2, *Epigraphs Compilation.*, Moratuwa., *D.G Dodangoda and Company. Page 45, EZ. Vol: 1, p.63*). However, the study about the epigraphs listed during A.D centuries shows the gradual secession of the term *devanapiya*.

During the *anno domini* (A.D) era, one of the pivotal honorary terms in use was ‘*Maha Raja*’, and the term *Raja* which had a lesser importance than the former was also in use. During the B.C era the term *Raja-Maha Raja* was in use overwhelmingly yet during *anno domini* (A.D) era the term *Maharaja* was hardly used. (*Ez. vol: V., p-209*). The term *raja* was particularly used by the minor rulers who ruled the other parts of the island. *Dathuvamsa* mentions about two such minor rulers who governed *Rohanaya*. (Ven Sri Kakusanda via Sri Sumedankara. (1930) *Dathuwanshaya. (ed): 52*). However, it is not evident that they maintained any relationship with the Anuradhapura royal family. Further, an epigraph enlisted in a cave in Mihinthalaaya speaks about a king called *DipaRaja* (*EZ. vol: V. p.209*). Though the name connotes the meaning as the king of the state, it also holds the allusion to the honorary term used by the prince who governed *Nagadeepaya* region in the Jaffna peninsula. (Pali text society. p.443) However, the study of epigraphs enlisted during the Anuradhapura era reveals that the honorary term *MahaRaja* existed in usage for a longer period while the term *raja* diminished quickly from colloquial.

The honorary term *Gamani* is also a term adopted by majority of kings. However, there is a hullabaloo regarding this since it has been adopted by both kings and other heads at managerial level in governance. However, as testified by the epigraphs, the kings have adopted this term to connote a sense of honorary while other minor heads of state have adopted it as an official term associated with their duties. The study of the evolution and the expansion of this term *gamini* reveal many facts in this regard. (Gunawardana., R. Liyanagamage A., (1961)., *Anuradhapura Era* (A.E)., Kelaniya., Vidyalankara Press. p.53., Ven Vimalawansa, Baddegama., (1961) *Epigraphic Society.*, Colombo., Anula Press., p.99-100). At first it has been used in association with powers vested in administration yet later on it has been used to connote a sense of honorary, a sense of belongingness to a high strata of society and finally as a term of identification. The cave epigraphs reveal that many such cognomens have been used in association with *gamini*. (*EZ., vol: v. p.209*). As evident from the epigraphs, this title of honor has seceded from usage after the B.C era.

Mapurumu is another cognomen used by kings during the Anuradhapura reign, in Sanskrit *Mapurumu* connotes the meaning the greatest while it gives the same meaning in Pali language as well. This is an ancient term which has been gradually evolved over the time. (See. Diwakara., Anurin Indika., (2008) *Compilation of Scholarly Articles.(CSA)*, Colombo., Godage and Brothers. The term also has been in use as *Mapurmuka & Mapurumuka*. As the cognomen *Gamini*, the title of honor *Mapurmuka* has also been adopted by both kings in power and other heads in governance. Since this cognomen has been cited as *chula parumuka* in the Tissamaharama epigraph, it can be assumed that a clan associated with the cognomen *Maha Parumaka* had also been in existence. (p.202). the study of epigraphs reveals the different platforms in which this cognomen had been in use. (*EZ., vol: IV, pp. 144-249*). Some epigraphs testify that this has been used as a personal identification term/name of the kings concerned. (*EZ., vol: iii. P. 122*). Thus, *Mapurmuka* can be defined as a popular cognomen which had been in use during the Anuradhapura era.

Buddhadasa is another contemporary cognomen that can be noted during this era. *Budhadasa* (*Buddhadasa* in Pali) denotes the accomplice of Buddha. The kings such as *Sena, Mahasen*, has adopted this title as a cognomen. As per the *Culavamsa* one particular kings has adopted this as the personal name. (Giger, Wilhelm., (1952) *Chulavansha.*, (edited) Part I., London, Pali Books Company., p.37)

Toward the latter part of the Anuradhapura era, the cognomen *Sirisangabo* has been in use. As exemplified from the epigraphs, this title of honor has been used by coupling it along with the cognomen *Budhadasa* (*E Z.*, Vol: I. p.43). Even this cognomen *Sirisanabo* has also been adopted as a personal name by some of the kings. Subsequently, it has been used as a title of honor. The (*Aba, Apaya*) is another cognomen visible in the respective epigraph. The Thonigala epigraphs reveal how the aforementioned cognomen has been used in front of the term *Maharaja & Raja*. (*EZ.* vol: III. p.172). This cognomen has been in use as an integral part of the name itself linked with the titles *Maharaja and Raja* (*EZ.* vol: ii. p.177). *Abha Salamewan I* is another such name which has adopted the respective cognomen. (*EZ.*, vol: I. p. 182). Toward the latter part of the Anuradhapura period, many kings have enlisted the epigraphs only mentioning their cognomens in lieu of their personal names. Thus, this has resulted in creating a complex scenario in the exploration of the political nuances in the respective era (*EZ.* vol: 1.p. 24).

The term *pa* in *Rajapa* is another such cognomen. In Sanskrit, it denotes the meaning *Arya Pada*. In Pali, it is used in lieu of *Abhaya*. (*EZ.*, Vol: iii., p. 132). The term *Thiripali*, has been used as an adjective for the Mahanamayan, while the terms such as *Siri Niwasa, Siri Kudda* that can be found in *Samanthapasadikawa* and *Dammhapadatta Katha* are also considered as honorary titles. (*Sikawalnda Winisa., Introduction. p.ii*)

As the time goes by the notion about the governance/state became more overwhelming. The cognomens that were used during the initial years were left out and instead of that honorary titles such as *Maharad, Maharadthuma, Maharadunwahanse, Wathhimi, Wathhimiyanwahanse* were adopted. While the concept of state was getting wider in its scope, the terms such as *parapura, wanshaya*, were adopted instead of the honorary adjectives. Further, the titles were also coined based on the duties that were assigned to the respective persons. These titles have further evolved into terms such as *chathra wanshaya, surya wanshaya*. As per the epigraphs, the aforementioned titles stem from *Okkaka* dynasty. These titles are used in isolation or at times as *siri Bara kath kula koth* (*EZ.* vol: 1. p.31, 182, 241)

Conclusion

Thus, the study of cognomens used during the Anuradhapura era exemplifies several factors. It reflects that the kings have mainly enlisted these epigraphs stressing the fact that he (the kings) as the leader of the country, highlighting his eligibility to hold the thrown with the particular emphasis on his dynasty, bond with the citizens, inherent positive qualities, his secular and orderly administration of the nation, his fame, generous nature, kindness & combatting skills. Thus, the epigraphs have been enlisted highlighting the aforementioned characteristics and the stability of his reign and his aptness for the kingship.

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