

The Administrative Officers who engaged with the monetary transactions in Ancient Sri Lanka.

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Abstract- It is impossible for the king to control the economy of the country alone; therefore he needed a supportive staff for it. The administrative officers who helped the king in the monetary transactions can be identified from the Brāhmī inscriptions, chronicles as well as from the *Vinaya* commentaries, in Sri Lanka. Some of the administrative officers who have helped the king in the monetary transactions are discussed here.

Index Terms- monetary transactions, vamsa, inscriptions, trade, administrative, officers

I. TREASURER

The treasurers are named as “badakarika” in the Brāhmī inscriptions. Nearly seventeen Brāhmī inscriptions have been found bearing the term “badakarika” and “badagarika”. These terms are hitherto interpreted as treasurer < Skt. bhāndāgarika (*EZ* 1933. vol. i: 145).

The Tōravamayilāva inscription in the North Western Province mentions a chief mercenary soldier, called Śumana (*EZ* 1984. vol. vii. no. 10: 55). The Bambaragastalāva cave in the Eastern Province mentions mercenary soldiers, called Nagakula; and Gotimita (*EZ* 1984. vol. vii. no. 11: 55-56). The Koravakgala cave inscription in the Southern Province, speaks of a mercenary soldier of the great king Pita. “Pita- Mahārajaha” has been identified by S. Paranavithāna, as the king Vattagāmaniabhaya who ruled in 103 and 89-77 B.C.E. (*EZ* 1984. vol. vii. no. 55: 75; *IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 621: 47).

The two Mihintale cave inscriptions in the Northern Central Province shed light of a mercenary soldier, called “Parumaka Sēna” (*EZ* 1984. vol. vii. no. 59. 60: 77-78). The Nuvarakanda inscription speaks of a treasurer, called Anurādha (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 916: 71). The Tōrava Mayilāva inscription mentions of an officer in charge of the store house of goods (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 1035: 81). The Rāgala Vihāra inscription speaks of a minister “Aha” the treasurer (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 1192: 95). As mentioned in the *Hiri Sūtra Varnanā* in the *Suttanipātattha kathā* (*paramatthajōthikā*) there were treasurers in the families too (2008: 332).

The “kōsa” means treasury (*Dīgha. Att* 2008: 270). There were three types of treasury, according to the *Kāma Sūtra Nirdēsa Varnanā* in *Mahāniddēsattakathā* and the *Kūtaḍanta Sūtra Varnana* in the *Dīghanikāyatthakatha* (*Sumangala vilāsini*) They are:

1. Treasury for Money

2. Treasury for grain
3. Treasury for cloths (*Nid. Att* 2008: 17; *Dīgha. Att* 2008: 270).

Further, it reveals the reasons for the destruction of money in the treasury (*Nid. Att* 2008: 35). As mentioned in the *Guhattha Sūtra Nirdēsa Varnanā* in *Mahāniddēsattakathā*, the king’s jewelery have been protected by a treasurer. The tag has been tied in each jewelery, mentioning its’ name. When the king ordered to bring a jewelery the treasurer has to enter the treasury with the alighted lamp and read the tags and bring the jewelries which the king need (*Nid. Att* 2008: 197). This shows that there was a separate treasurer who protected the king’s jewelries apart from the treasurer of money, treasurer of grain and that of treasurer of cloths.

According to the *Dhammuddesavāra kathā* in *Dhammasnganippakarana atthakathā* (*Atthasālinī*), the treasurer of the king has to protect the ten gems and bless the king each morning and the evening. Further, it is mentioned that the treasurer of the *Sakvithi raja* has to report the amount of the elephants, horses, chariots, soldiers, as well as the amount of the raw gold, dens of gold and also the properties which king possesses, each morning and evening (*Dham. Att* 2008: 172). There was a separate treasury for the elephants, the horses and the chariots (*Dīgha. Att* 2008: 270).

According to the *Tinsaka Varnnā* in the *Vinayattakathā* (*Samantapāsādikā*), the robes have been kept in a separate treasury (*Vin. Att* 2004: 196). The monks also have been appointed as treasurers in the temples (*Vina. Att* 2009: 337). The Chinese monk Fah-Hian who visited the Sri Lanka on 5th C.E. gives a clear idea of treasury belonged to the monks. “Their king once enters the treasury, and going round it for the purpose of inspection, he saw there this *mani* gem. On beholding it, a covetous feeling sprang up in his heart, and he desired to take it away with him. For three days this thought afflicted him, but then he came to his right mind. He directly reported to the assembly of the priests, and bowing down his head, he repented for his former wicked purpose, and addressing them, said, “Would that you make a rule from this time, forth and forever, no account to allow the king to enter your treasury to look (at the jewels,) except he is a member of fraternity and of forty years of age” (S. Beal 1993: 154). He further mentions that the treasury of this congregation of priests contains numerous gems and a *mani* Jewel of inestimable value (S. Beal 1993: 154).

The term 'deruvan dekamtān' occurs most frequently in inscriptions, but it does not occur in any literary work (R. A. L. H. Gunawardana 1979: 187). The word "kamtān" carries the connotation of an "office" or "officials". S. Paranavithāna (*E. Z* 1933. vol. iii: 143) has made the plausible suggestion that "deruvana", may refer to "two treasuries". The two treasury establishments were known in both state and temple administration of South India (R. A. L. H. Gunawardana 1979: 187).

According to the merit book, of king Dutugāmuṇu he had constructed hospitals in eighteen places in Sri Lanka and gave money to the physicians from the treasury (*Thū.v* 1994: 235). The king Dutugāmuṇu has appointed scholars for each village in Sri Lanka to propagate the doctrine of dhamma among the civilians, and the king himself has given their wages on the monthly basis. The king had given four nālī of ghee, jaggery made of sugar cane, sticks of sugar cane, bananas and jackfruits from the treasury monthly (*Thū.v* 1994: 235). As mentioned in the *Thūpavamsa* one may get an idea of items, kept in the treasury. According the above mentioned ghee, jaggery made of sugar cane, sticks of sugar cane, bananas and jackfruits were issued by the treasury. The king Dutugāmuṇu appointed a minister, called Sangha to protect his treasury (*Thū.v* 1994: 239).

The king Bhāthikābayatissa has gained the oil which is deposited in the treasury for the ceremony of the Mahāthupa (*Thū.v* 1994: 211). The king Sirisangabo (251-258 C.E.) had a treasurer, called Golubhā (*MV* 1967. 36: 91).

The king Sena I (833-853 C.E.) had faced with a attack from the Pandya Dēśa. Śrī Māra Śrī Wallabha invaded Sri Lanka. The *Mahāvamsa* mentions that having taken all the valuable properties, the king left the town and turned towards Malaya (*MV* 1950. 50: 20-21). Among this valuable property, he must have taken the money to the Malaya area. Furthermore, the *Mahāvamsa* mentions that Pandu king took away all the valuables in the treasure house of the king and plundered what there was to plunder in vihāra and the town (*MV* 1950. 50: 33-34).

II. REVENUE COLLECTORS

The Kandegamakanda inscription speaks of a revenue collector called *Maha aya* (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 289: 23) The Rajagala inscription has mentioned of the revenue officer of the great king Abhaya (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 429: 33). The Malvatta Brāhmī inscription giving the details of the revenue collector of Cittadevī (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 471: 36). The Situlpavuva Ekundara Vāva inscription, mentioning the revenue officer of king Tissa (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 647: 48). The Brāhmī Inscription which is come to us from the Tissamahārama speaks of a revenue officer (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 703: 53).

The *Kūṭadanta Sūtra Varnana* in the *Dīghanikāyatthakatha* (*Sumangala vilāsinī*) mentions an interesting story of a king. The king started to give food for the subjects in the five places of the city by spending five hundred thousand each day. Subjects are allowed to take food to their house. In the evening the king gave the cloths and garlands to the subjects. Finally the subjects thought we should give something to the king in return. They all got together and collected money from the villages and put them into carts and hand over it to the king (*Dīgha. Att* 2008: 276). This

shows that the king needs the revenue, to protect and to treat the people and from this action the country will become successful.

III. ACCOUNTANTS

The term "kanaka" (Pkt. *gaṇaka*) means "accountant". The term "gaṇaka" occurs in this sense in the Sinhala-Brāhmī inscriptions (*IC* 1970: xcv). In later Tamil inscriptions, "Kaṇakkāṇ" meant the 'accountant who maintained the accounts of the village or temple (I. Mahādēvan 2003: 123). As mentioned in the *Dīpavamsa*, the king Dēvanampiyatissa has sent his son Tissa, an accountant to Dhammāshoka (*DV* 1959. 11: 30). The Maha alagamuva inscription in Kalāgam-palāta in the Anurādhapura district mentions of an accountant (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 212: 17). The Miṇyūṅga Vēhera inscription in the Mānmunai Pattu of the Ampāra district speaks of a chief accountant (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 419: 32).

The names of two accounts have been mentioned in two inscriptions in Maṇḍagala in the Yāla Game Sanctuary in Māgam Pattu of the Hambantota district. An accountant, called Nuguya (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 576: 44) and the accountant called Rohaka (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 580: 44) can be identified from it. The Situlpavuva inscription in Māgam Pattu of the Hambantota district gives information of an accountant called Tissa, son of the accountant Tissa (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 619: 47). The Sīlavakanda inscription in the Māgam Pattu of the Hambantota district brings out of an accountant called Raki (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 673: 51). The Magul Maha Vihāra in the Yāla Game Sanctuary in Māgam Pattu of the Hambantota district also refers to an accountant (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 679: 51). The Vālaellugoda –Kanda inscription in the Buttala kōrale of the Monarāgala district stipulates of a cave belonging to an accountant called Tissa (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 729: 55). The Mullegama inscription of Demaḥ Hatpattu in the Puttalam district talks about an accountant (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 1070: 83). Alagarmalai Tamil Brahmi inscription no:5 in South India also speaks of "Kanaka" the son of Ataṇ, the accountant who lived in the 1st B.C.E. (I. Mahadevan 2003: 373).

IV. GRANARY-KEEPERS

The two inscriptions of the Maha alagamuva in Kalāgam-palāta in the Anurādhapura district mentions of a store keeper called Uttara (*IC* 1970. vol. i. no 214: 17; *EZ* 1984. vol. vii. no. 07: 54; *IC* 1970. vol. i. no. 226: 18). The other inscriptions belonged to this same place presented information of a granary-keeper called, Cala. (*EZ* 1984. vol. vii. no. 08: 55).

V. SUMMERY

It is impossible for the king to control the economy of the country alone; therefore he needed a supportive staff for it. The administrative officers who helped the king in the monetary transactions, during the early period of Anuradhapura can be revealed from the primary sources.

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