A review of giving of tulābāra dāna by kings of ancient Lanka

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Abstract

The means of the donation of equivalent fraction (tulābāra dāna) is, to donate wealth to the people to match the weight of a person. In brief, it is a donation of wealth, equal to one's weight measured by a weighing scale. The kings became popular owing to this practice. The donations were done in various ways. Among them the tulābāra dāna was a special kind of giving. The objective of this research is to evaluate the donations made by the rulers who lived in Anurādhapura and Polonnaruwa kingdoms. (6 B.C.-1215 A. C.)

In India too, records show the showering of wealth according to weight of a person. This is evident from the Jātaka stories. It is mentioned that they have donated wealth, equal to the weight of their animals, too. Furthermore in this research I expect to identify the items which were given as tulābāra dāna. Even though it was done by the King personally, later it facilitated welfare for the people. As the methodology of this research I have studied part II of Mahāwamsa and Epigraphy as primary sources.

The method of donation was changed after the kingdom of Anurādhapura. King Nissankamalla was a great practitioner of this art of giving. The existence of the above practice cannot be seen after the Polonnaruwa Period. The tulābāra dāna was practiced in a ceremonial way, according to ancient rituals.

Keywords: tulābāra dāna, Welfare, King Niśānākamalla, Weighing Scale