

## **Ruwanweli Mahaseya: The Greatest Representation of King Elara, King Duttagamini's War**

S. Ranasinghe<sup>1\*</sup>

Ruwanwelimahaseya is known as the best creation in the history of Sri Lankan pagoda construction. This, which is venerated with a lot of piety, was also called Swarnamali Mahachethiya, Hemamali, Swarnamali, Ruwanmali, Rathnamali, Rathnawaluka, Suwannamali, Hemawaluka, Rathanawaluka and Rathanamali. This pagoda, unlike the first biggest pagoda Thuparama, Mirisawetiya, Abayagiriya, and Jethawanaramaya, was not reconstructed. It is 120 cubits in height. This pagoda which contains Lord Buddha's paribogika (relics of objects used by Buddha), uddesika (remembrance relics), and sharirika (body relics), is venerated by Buddhists with a lot of respect. When reviewing the discourses related to Ruwanweliseya, we can see how it deals with diverse religious and cultural aspects. This pagoda which was constructed in the 2nd century, silently exhibits the skills and spirituality of the ancient Sri Lankan craftsmen. The main intention of this research is to analyze the nature of this great king's social service as depicted by this pagoda. Also the researcher attempts to analyze if this is a mere artistic creation or an epitome of the ancient artists' spirituality. The scholars attempt to emphasize that the respect people have towards the incomparable emperor Duttagamini is one reason why this pagoda is outstanding among the others. One who looks at this creation from a perspective based on power and authority may consider this as an outcome of a mere political and religious mission. Scholars reveal various interpretations about the construction of Ruwanweliseya. However, they have not taken the time, space, and structure of the pagoda into consideration. The information gathered by the field researchers who conducted research about Ruwanweliseya will be analyzed in the study. Also literary and archeological sources would be comparatively analyzed. Thus, the main target is to conduct a historical and archeological study on the impact of this pagoda on people's spiritual and moral reformation. The information gathered by the field researchers who conducted research about Ruwanweliseya will be analyzed in the study. Also literary and archeological sources would be comparatively analyzed. Thus, the main target is to conduct a historical and archeological study on the impact of this pagoda on people's spiritual and moral reformation.

**Keywords:** *Ruwanwelimahaseya, Spirituality, Duttagamini, Elara, War*

---

<sup>1</sup> Rajarata University, Sri Lanka \*shyamiuni\_stas@yahoo.com