

Measures taken by ancient kings to protect animals

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Here, protection means securing life safety of human being or animals. It is essential principle of the world we are living. Animals render a great help to human life. The state of the animals in a particular society depends on the attitudes and norms of the said society. When examining the human history it is evident that humans were successful in domesticating the animals such as goats, sheep, cows, elephants, and horses. These animals were connected with the social economical and cultural life of the ancient societies. The basic necessities of the human beings were fulfilled by animals. Hence, there was a well established correlation between humans and animals.

However, destroying animal life is also done by human activities. Therefore, protection of animals was a necessity even in the past. Because of this, a policy for protection of animals was a true challenge. Ancient rulers of Sri Lanka were successful in facing this challenge by implementing effective strategies to protect animals.

The object of this research is to examine the animal protection policy of ancient kings from the Anuradhapura kingdom.

The question raised by this research is that, what was the nature of the contribution made by the ancient kings in this regard. Primary and secondary sources were used for this research.

It is clear that disturbing animals or the unkindness towards birds, fish, cows and other animals were not only prevented but also protected eagerly by the kings. For an example, King Buddhadasa had treated a cobra and removed a boil in its body with surgery and later the cobra had presented a gem as a sign of gratitude to the king. Hence we can conclude that the Kings had done a great service towards protecting animals during the Anuradhapura Period.

Key words: *Animals, Protection, Anuradhapura period, Protection policy*