IN THE DAYS
OF
SRI WICKRAMARAJASINGHA

LAST KING OF KANDY

Traditionary material about men and matters of the last phase of Sinhala Rule narrated in story form.

By

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FOREWORD

I HAVE been encouraged by two intellectuals of the island to put traditionary lore collected by me to writing. One, whose interest in them made me start this attempt, was intimate enough to ask whenever we met how I was progressing. Pressed for an excuse once, I said readers might not accept data that contradict accepted history.

"Nobody asked them to", was the reply, "we write what we have learnt."

In that spirit I have written the foregoing pages.

To give a little rest to Professor G. P. Malalasekera who had rushed up to Kandy that day to address a March 2nd Meeting, I related to the audience the story of Konnappu Bandara's fight against Rajasingha at Balana — how the Devas gave Rajasingha the wound that killed him, and why the victorious men named their leader Wimaladharma instead of taking a name from the brave nomenclature of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. When the professor got up to speak, my story came in for some remarks. He declared that I would be a public enemy of the Sinhala race if I kept these stories to myself till they went with me to the grave. I said I had kept notes that would preserve them whatever happened to me. He came to see. As he turned the pages of the books I have kept he exclaimed "Treasures!" From one of his learning, it was rich reward for my labours. The professor, however, brought me to earth immediately. He said "It is only the man who has kept the notes that can read them correctly." He is of opinion the material should go out both in English and in Sinhalese.

I had started writing on Mr. N. E. Weerasooria's advice. Keeping strictly within my notes and the knowledge I had gathered of the customs of the times, made the work much more difficult than I had anticipated. It took up much time. I owe it to Mr. Weerasooria's continued interest as well as to Dr. Malalasekera's caustic remarks that I continued the work.

My thanks to the Department of National Museums for permitting the reproduction of old drawings, to Mr. T. Morey for the pains taken to photograph these, and to Mr. B. N. Jayawardena for his suggestion to include a map of Senkadagala.

To the Memory of my father and his friends from whom I gathered the material here presented in story form.

Note on Terminology

Sinhalese words which help clarity have been used; they will as a rule be found in italics. A glossary at the end is meant for those who may need the help. I have used 'ay' as in 'lay' for the possessive case of Sinhala names as I felt this easier to the average reader than the use of diacritical marks.

that lived here not so very long ago." He bade me write them in a book. 'Wise men', he said, 'of future times will value them.' What comes to the reader in this book is material from the notes I began then. More than one wise man of modern times has seen and valued them.

These stories must, however, not be confused with the stock-in-trade of the village story-teller. Though as a rule illiterate, he was a professional who practised an art of his own. When a recalcitrant old patient had to be kept in good humour, or a mischievous boy confined to his sick room, the village story teller was summoned. His stock consisted of stories of fairies demons and now and again a Jataka Tale. His art is not extinct. In parts where modern ways have not yet penetrated the village story-teller may still be found. He enjoyed a licence to make his stories suit the listener — it was necessary for his job. This was a thing the repository of the historical story spurned. His culture did not tolerate any alteration of what he had heard. It was due to his reverence of the old times. I have seen old gentlemen reproving younger men for taking liberties with traditional material in an attempt to improve the story. Even questions that arose from what they related they were not prepared to treat lightly. When a question was pressed the invariable answer was "මම ඒක ගැන අහල නෑ." When writing these papers I often took my difficulties to T. B. Keppetipola Basnayaka Nilamay, who was justly reputed for his knowledge of traditionary lore. Many a time I had to be content with a "මම ඕක ගැන අහල නෑ නෙවෑ." He said it on a tone that meant he was surprised he had not heard anything on that point. But ofcourse it was not open for him to guess what the answer should be. It was indeed disconcerting. But this unwillingness on the part of men who have preserved for us traditionary material, to add anything of their own to complete a story gives it the ring of sterling worth, a quality that makes one regret the amount of traditionary lore that has been lost. There is evidence to show that the most unlikely story preserved has had some truth in it. Here is a myth that might serve as an example.

According to tradition the Natha Devala of Kandy was built on the site of an ancient tree under whose roots an albino hare lived. Senkanda, a wandering hermit, saw a pack of jackals pursue the curious looking animal to its burrow. But the jackals

could not get to the tree. Some mysterious power appeared to stop them a few feet away. They raced round the tree but could not get at the hare. The albino then jumped out and the jackals fled. However unusual the story, round the dome of the Natha Devala run a ring of jackals carved on stone; though the dog as an unclean animal would not be allowed near a devala. The temple was the most important devala in Kandy, yet had no permanent *Ran-awuda* to be taken in the perehera till one was made lately. My mother, who was the grand daughter of the sole hereditary *kapurala* of the temple till 1900, remembered how the *Ran-awuda* which had a hare made of gold as its centre piece was handed to a gold-smith for repairs, and never returned.

I once asked my ancient sources of information how they had come to know all they spoke about. Such a roll of Ralas, Muhandirums, and Mudiyansays descended on me that the question was never repeated. In view of opinions now gaining ground touching the Ehelepola story two names in my notes are of value.

Doragamuway Rajapaksa Wickramasingha Mudiyansaelage Ukkurala was a favourite Piharala of Sri Wickrama. He was in the palace when the king started on his last retreat; and followed him to his hiding place. My father brought up by him was twenty years when the gentleman full of years yet able bodied, died in his sleep. His details of what happened on the day the Ehelepola children were slain would leave no doubt of the cruel act. The other has to be taken as an eye witness. He was the son of the Maha Mudiyansay of Sri Wickrama's *Etulkattala*. An R. M. under the British, in his legal documents he gives his name as Uduwala Karunatilaka Rajapaksa Mudiyansay. The king liked the father for his exemplary loyalty, and kept the son with him as a page in the palace. He was by the king on the palace balcony while Sri Wickrama ordered the execution of the children who had been brought to a part of the Devasanghinda opposite. This person died suddenly in 1906, then a hundred and six years of age. Till the end of his days he used to *walk* down from Uduwala to our home in Katukele (Kandy). The object of his visits was to worship the Danta Dhatu. Twice a day he would go to the temple for worship, and stay long at Kandy that he might go as many times as he desired. His story of the Ehelepola executions come to me from my parents. But I quite remember how he used to conclude narrating the sorrows of Ehelepola Kumarihamy to my

mother with the words, "මයෙ අම්මා දෙවෙයන්වහන්සෙ ඉතොම අනතරා තෙ..." To one accustomed to the way old people of those days talked, the words convey a feeling of utter surprise and consternation, a feeling that explains why his subjects did not defend Sri Wickrama, in 1815, even showered insults upon him. Ehelepola in his sad verses of farewell to Lanka before his end in exile gives what he understands as the reasons for the king's cruel behaviour. One of these is the use of liquor Sri Wickrama had obtained from a foreign source. Apart from the execution of the children it is clear from the opinions expressed by chieftains who presided at a trial for child murder soon after 1815, that the severest punishment a female could be sentenced to under the Sinhala laws was lashes with a rattan. Sri Wickrama was perhaps the only ruler that outraged the laws of the country in that fashion. It would appear that after the rebellion of 1817 the facts of the Ehelepola executions were used by the British as propaganda against the possibility of Kandyan help to a pretender to the throne.

The traditionary stories of the Kandyan grand-sire go back to the days of Konnappu Bandara, at times to the days of Ganga Siri Pura. The brave tales of Rajasingha of Hanguranketa, who wandered incognito, are in a class by themselves. There are many of these, and they lose nothing by comparison with European hero tales. Stories of kings and great men prior to Kirti Sri Rajasingha lack detail.

The stories retold here are of events during the reign of the last king of Kandy. They were naturally better preserved than older ones at the time I heard them. Yet some were by no means complete. Today they are practically forgotten. In writing them connected stories have been retold as one story. The aim has been to place before the reader a story as complete as it can be told by a study of the variations of that story, without letting imagination play any part in the work. Customs and ways of the times necessary to understand an event has been described as the story proceeds. A friendly critic says that the oaths are at times jarring, and the dialogue short of what might be expected. The oaths if rendered in Sinhalese will not jar in the ears of those accustomed to the dialect still obtaining in the villages Up-country. Both oaths and the dialogue are translations from the stories I have heard.

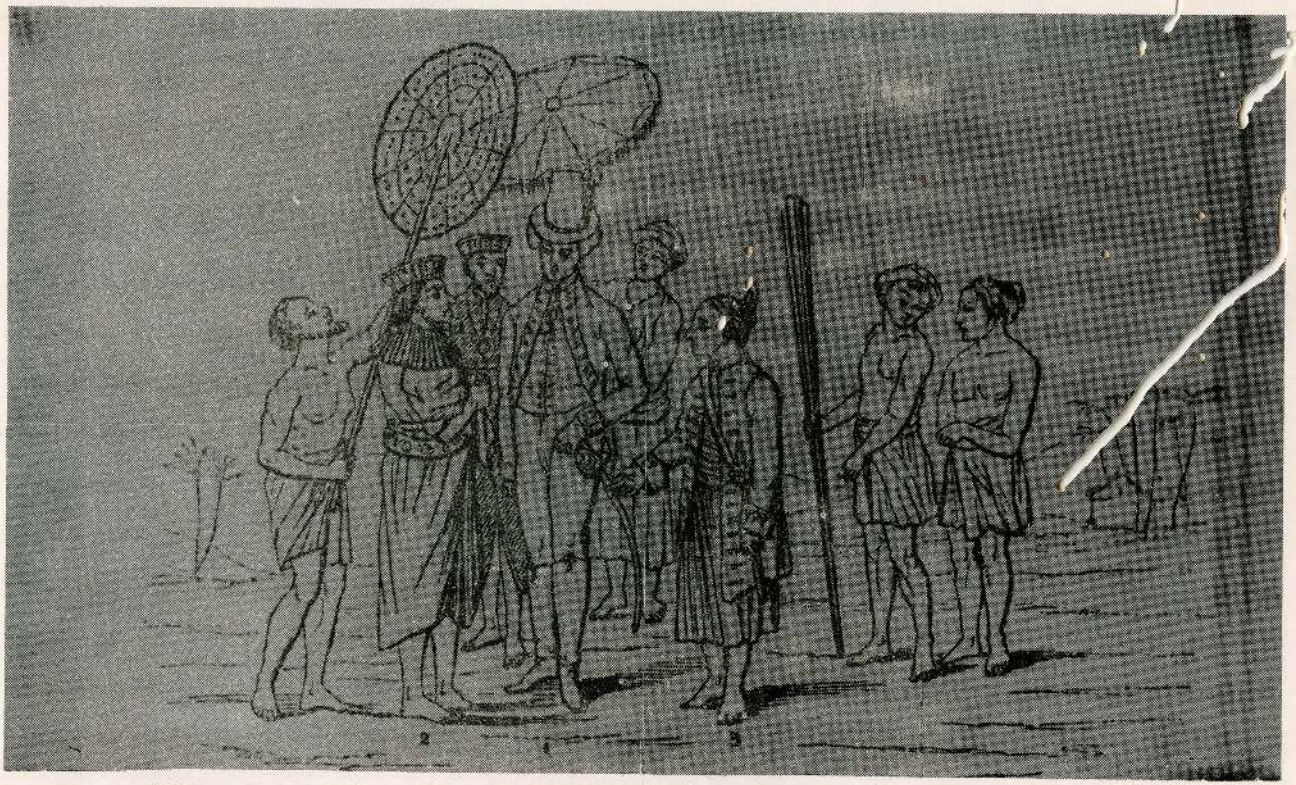
A word about the names in the stories. I have never been interested in genealogies. The names are those of the men that lived at the time. The use of Sinhalese words became unavoidable. A glossary and notes have been added to help the reader.

P. DOLAPIHILLA

Weliketiya Walawwa,
Peradeniya.

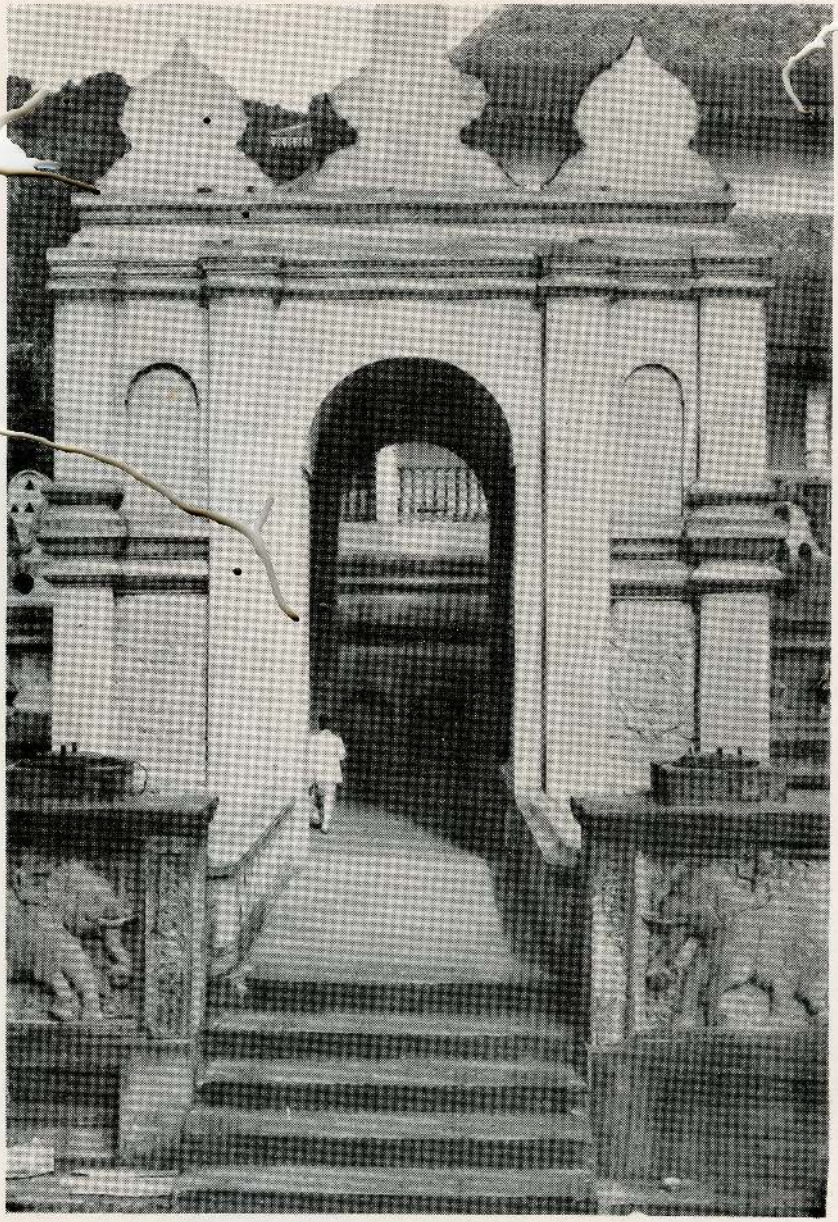
Portrait of Sri Wickrama from an oil painting at the Kandy museum.

(By courtesy of the National Museums Department).



Pilimatalawwa Adigar and General McDowal meet on the border of their territories.

(*From an old drawing by one present*).



Main Entrance to the Palace of Senkadagala.

(*A culvert spans the moat where the draw-bridge was*).

The Dakina Mandapa—Audience Room of the Palace.
(*By courtesy of the Department of National Museums*).

Pilimatalwwa Adigar, the King Maker.

THE Mahaveli hemmed in by hills at Gannoruwa sweeps in a wide semi-circle round the plain of Peradeniya adding to its charm. Here tradition places the home of an Andra princess on whose head Brahma had carved a destiny in which romance and tragedy intermingled.

She was of surpassing beauty. Her husband had died while she was still young. Few in the country of her adoption had known him. He had fallen ill on his way from Madura, escorting a princess to the court of Senkadagala. Widowed on the journey the princess could not turn back. As a kinswoman of royalty she received court protection; and later, a home at Peradeniya on the plain that Alagakonar[1] had once chosen for the first city he built. Here she strove to live a becoming life with what help she received from court. By and by a comely face proved more helpful than princely blood. Her good looks brought to her feet a young nobleman, the chief member of a great family. With his friendship the princess found that if she was ever in want, she was not in want for long.

The widow's aristocratic friend often travelled to the King's city. Chieftains attending court had their walawwas in the city. They remained there for weeks till given leave to go to the districts placed under them. The young aristocrat too had his city residence, but his ancestral manor in Yatinuwera was less than seven miles from the capital. Except during festival seasons he found it convenient to travel to court from home. He had halted one day near the home of the Andra lady—it was half way between the capital and his home—by accident, almost. Fate had made

him thirsty that day. He had halted his palanquin soon as he had got across the ferry at Gannoruwa; and walked to the well kept premises, where the Andra lady lived, for a drink of water. The young widow had brought the water in a silver *kendiya*, herself. Her ways appeared to be as charming as her face was beautiful. It occurred to him that Peradeniya would be a good halt for his palanquin bearers to rest their limbs a little. In time it became convenient for him to spend a night at the attractive lady's residence, both on his way to the capital, as well as on the return journey.

Years passed. The friendship between the aristocrat and the Andra lady grew. The former rose in the king's service till he was universally regarded one of the powerful chieftains in the court of Kirti Sri Rajasingha. The lady, her son and the chieftain, when he happened to be at Peradeniya, felt much like a happy family. In the boy there grew a great attachment to his mother's aristocratic friend.

Though still in his early teens, the son showed signs of singular resolution. From dawn to noon he toiled on the land round his home and turned its flat face to a garden of flowers and vegetables. What his mother wanted for the kitchen she found in the boy's garden. The lad liked *tampala* most. They gave quick results; and he liked their colour — red.

On his way back from the capital his mother's friend at times came arrayed in chieftain clothes. The glamour of his court dress, the respectful bearing of his *mohottala*, himself in formal clothes, the awe he inspired in his numerous retinue, and the chieftain's haughty mien — these captured the lad's imagination. Peremptory in his commands to servant and retainer, the boy observed he treated his mother in quite a different way. The aristocrat became the boy's hero. It was the great man's way to sit out on clear nights, his sword by his side. The boy liked nothing more than to be allowed to sit by him, till the latter turned in for rest.

One day the boy's hero had arrived towards evening. They went out, the chieftain and the lad, whilst the lady was busy in the kitchen; for in those days an honoured guest was not served meals cooked by a servant[2]. A waxing moon shone down on the garden. The nobleman, as was his want, sat in the deep shade of a banana bush. He had undressed and washed his face from a *kendiya* the lady herself had brought him. At his waist however, hung his sword, and by him was his little friend trying to draw the

older one into conversation. The boy was not getting any more encouragement than a - 'Hm'. or a 'Ha' He persisted, too young to guess that his companion's thoughts were far away—in the city of Senkadagala, where, with the reins of government in the hesitant hands of a foreign dynasty, court life had become an unending chain of intrigue.

Something the boy in his innocent attempts said made the chieftain start. The young one, however, did not, could not, discern the amazement on his hero's countenance. He felt extremely glad when the chieftain spoke. He nestled closer.

"Didst say someone came to the house?"

"Yes, *Atta*, a man in trousers — not last night, but the night before. Mother did not put out the lamp. She lit the tall lamp too, the one that is burning in the house today, after dinner. So I lay awake. I saw."

"Go to! Art growing to be a liar?"

"No *Atta*, upon my mother, by the Four Devas, it is true. For I did see."

The boy's anxiety to convince redoubled by the remark he was lying, the chieftain allowed him to talk on dropping a word now and again to encourage.

"Didst see a dream?"

"Not a dream! A man, a good beautiful man. He had no *tuppotti* over his trousers as *Atta* wears; his trousers were baggy; and he wore a coat—it reached up to that." The boy touched his thigh half way down to the knee. "He had no hat like *Atta's;* he wore a *hispaiya*."

"Did he come into the house?"

"Yes. Mother had left the door open, and when he entered she knelt and folded her palms to him."

"Then you slept and dreamt another dream?" The chieftain wanted to know all.

"I did not sleep. Mother shut the door and went in after him. I heard a horse neigh; and I stole out. There was a beautiful horse tethered to yonder tree, with saddle-cloth and all[3], and the saddle-cloth was worked with gold braid!"

"Then?"

"Then I went in to sleep."

"What did the man do in the morning? You go to your garden soon as it is dawn, don't you?"

"I did not see him in the morning, *Atta*. That *is* the truth."

"You fill your stomach with *tampala*, and cannot sleep sound. Leafy vegetables should not be eaten at dinner. They bring unpleasant dreams. Do not narrate all this to others; they will think thou art a liar."

The chieftain however was much perturbed.

"No, *Atta*," the boy swore, "upon my mother, I saw: it is the truth."

"Alright then," said the chieftain, "was the moon clear when you stole out like a thief?"

"Yes, like a thief I came out. It was the second *yāma*, and the moon hung high above yonder hill, as bright as it is now."

"Now, can you remember the colour of the horse?"

"White, milk white," said the boy at once. "A fine tall horse with a long bushy tail. Its mane shone like silver in places. It looked beautiful. I walked round it, and it looked at me."

"Hm—m!" The listener began to cough incredulous. For quite a few minutes he was lost in thought. The lad was piqued. Then the man said railing.

"When your horseman comes again can you cut him down with a sword? We might then be sure of the story."

"Give me a sword, *Atta*, and I will cut him down."

"If thou art man enough to weild a sword I shall give thee mine."

He drew his blade from the scabbard. Eagerly the boy handled it. He had often asked to see it and gazed at the gold and silver work on its blade and the gems set in its carved handle. He stepped into the light and was turning the blade admiringly when the other said.

"Let me see whether you can cut with it; a sword is not for looking at."

The lad waved the blade. He had never thought a sword could be so light. To handle that very weapon even by stealth, he had longed. He ran forward sword arm raised, and brought the blade down on a bannana tree. No second effort was needed. The boy was astonished to see the trunk completely severed. He gazed at the blade wondering, then turned towards the chieftain.

"Did I cut right, *Atta?*"

"If you attack with as much dash when you go for a foe, you will do for a fighter. You can weild a sword. Whether your courage would not fail when you face a man has, however, to be seen."

"I am not afraid of that man; not a bit. May I keep this sword to cut him when he comes again?", the boy asked, though he felt certain he would not get the chieftain's sword.

"Keep it safe. I want to see what you can do with it."

The boy was overjoyed at what he thought was his *Atta's* love for him. The chieftain walked to the tree the lad had pointed out. A horse had been there—for quite some time too. From the lad's details he could guess the identity of the horseman. While he planned for the future, and wondered whether the lad would have the courage to do what he promised, the boy triumphed in his new possession.

At length they retired for the night. Kannesamy, the lad, slept happy, the gorgeous sword under his pillow. Pilimatalawwa nilamay, the chieftain, lay awake, his thoughts a medley of treason and intrigue. Next morning walking towards his palanquin Pilimatalawwa asked.

"And how will you cut him? He is somewhat bigger than you from your description."

"I shall hide in yon plantain bush; and whilst the man is busy securing his horse to the tree, rush from behind and cut him, as I cut the plantain trunk last night."

"If you prove to be brave there will be a reward for you. I do not want other men interloping here. If this man continues his visits, your mother shant have me any more."

Fear of losing his hero added to the lad's innate love of mischief. He could not realise the nature of the exploit entrusted to him. The prospect of shedding blood, however, did not deter him. The colour red *tampala* gave to rice pleased him. He loved his *Atta* and loved too the weapon he had been allowed to keep. The boy hid it away from his mother's gaze, and anxiously waited for the hour when he would have the opportunity to prove the truth of his story, and win the promised reward. He would ask for that sword; he did want that very sword.

Kannesamy listened every night for the horseman's approach, listened till he could keep his eyes open no longer. One day, at the hour they retired for the night he saw his mother fill the tall brass lamp with oil. She lighted every wick the lamp would take[4]. Kannesamy knew it was to welcome the beautiful looking horseman. Armed with his weapon he stepped out unseen.

In a clump of banana trees he waited. The horseman emerged into the moon light. The white horse, the beautiful mane, the

rich saddle and the rider's dress—it was his man! The horseman had jumped off the saddle and was securing his animal to the tree when Kannesamy darted out. The unsuspecting rider fell mortally wounded. The lad's triumph and the lady's consternation, what she asked of her son, or how she attempted to revive her wounded friend—these tradition has not cared to preserve. In despair she sent a messenger to the only man she could appeal for help. Pilimatalawwa nilamay's palanquin was at her door even as her own messenger returned. He patted Kannesamy on the head, and told his mother there was no need to take so much alarm at what one's fate carved by Maha Brahma on each man's head had decreed. What must be must be. Then he prepared to deal with the horseman's corpse.

The main road from the capital led to the river at Getamba ferry. Here a small road branched off to Peradeniya. It passed under the huge Bo-tree near the Diyakepum-tota[5]. A branch of this giant stretched so low over the path that a horseman could not pass under with ease. A rider had to stoop almost horizontal on his mount, or be thrown off.

Here they laid the horseman's body. The white steed was led a mile down the river bank and released. Pilimatalawwa returned to the distract princess and whispered everything was in order. He spoke a few words to his men. These in silence returned to their accustomed shelter, to bide there till called. Then he spoke to Kannesamy who was sulking in a corner unable to understand.

In the first flush of his triumph the lad had pictured himself astride the white horse in that gold decorated saddle the gorgeous sword at his waist, carved scabbard and all. His mother's lamentation and her words "My king! My king!" had raised in him doubts about the wisdom of his act. Yet he could not guess what consequences might follow.

"Sirrah," the chieftain spoke to Kannesamy "thou art the most egregious fool in the land! Knowest thy life is forfeit if the truth gets abroad? The thirty two tortures! May be they will get the tusker to gore thee and pull thy body to pieces—limb from limb. Yet art thou a brave lad."

Then he spoke reassuringly to the frightened youth; "I like courage. I shall protect thee, never fear. Not a word of what thou hast done or seen to a soul; nay, not even to thy mother or me. Swear."

His voice unsteady with fright, Kannesamy swore by all the

Devas and the Sun and the Moon never to speak one word about his adventure. The chieftain patted him.

"Thou hast obeyed. Obedience is a good and noble quality. I like obedient men. You are fit to command an army. I will raise you to be a leader. Fear not. Go and wash the blood off that weapon; it is yours. You shall have more reward presently."

The lad now cared little about what reward was to come to him. The chieftain's words brought him relief. So they went to bed, the lad thankful to be ordered to sleep, and the chieftain full of self congratulation. His words, however, failed to check the the lady's tears. Next morning Pilimatalawwa rose at his usual hour. After a leisurely breakfast he ordered a retainer to bring more news about a dead body some rustics were alleged to have seen on the road near Getamba. The obsequious retainer hurried away as if he had had nothing to do with any dead body during the night, nor knew anything about one till his master spoke. He returned with a rustic he had found at Getamba ferry. Pilimatalawwa listened to the peasant's story and asked a few questions that betrayed little interest in what the man spoke. It was a comely person, the man said, clad in trousers and a long coat of rich red satin. The body lay face upward. One could see no injury on the corpse, but it had bled much. Katupurullay men had come from Udaperadeniya, and rushed messengers to the Maha Adigaram Nilamay. For the dead person had the appearance of a distinguished individual. Many thought he might be a relative of the king.

In the Palace of Senkadagala consternation gripped the Etulkattalay aristocrats. Every morning during the *aluyam-duray*, when the devas came for worship[6], the monarch went to the Dalada Mandapa to kneel before the relic and recite the five precepts. The Mahamudiyansay waiting dressed to attend on him, wondered why the prince was late, an unusual thing with him. As the first rays of morning gilded temple and palace pinnacle he guessed his master was ill. A visit to the sleeping chambers gave no results—the king was not in bed. When a messenger to the Queen's quarter returned without news of him, the Mahamudiyansay walked about in feelings near alarm. Dukganna Ralas, men that watched the monarch's sleeping apartments through the livelong night, when questioned, were able to throw little light on the mystery. Only one of them had seen the monarch after he had retired to rest.

The king had walked out of the apartment he guarded, and, as he thought, gone towards another of the several bed chambers the prince usually changed into during a night. That was about the middle of the second *yama*. None of the other *dugganna-ralas* had seen the king enter the apartment he guarded. The beds in these rooms showed that they had not been slept in. Had he gone back to the *Anthahpura*, his harem? When it transpired he had not been there either, the Mahamudiyansay could no longer conceal his fears. He despatched a secret message to the chief adigar, and began looking into every nook and corner of the palace buildings, dignity of office forgotten in his anxiety about a master he loved. Royalty's breakfast hour was immediately after sunrise. The meal was on the table; and aristocrats that had to attend stood round. Soon the entire *etulkattalay* were guessing what it all meant.

Hurrying up in response to the Mahamudiyansay's unusual message the chief Adigar found a number of *katupurullay* men at the main gate. Their leader knelt to him. He condescended to listen, impatient, however, to proceed to the palace. Then with open eyed amazement he ordered the man to repeat what he had said. He commanded every one of his little band to bide where he stood till further orders. As he turned to walk to the palace a band of peasants from Katugastota brought up a white horse. The men had found it straying near the Katugastota ferry neighing and restive. From its colour they had guessed it was from the Mahawasala stables. It had come along without trouble.

The adigar recognised the animal. The gold ornamented appointments and the richly saddle on its back spoke ugly things to the minister. Soon as he had met the Mahamudiyansay, he ordered the Koonam-maduwa to send up the king's conveyance. In a few minutes the king's palanquin followed by two other conveyances were seen speeding along the road to Getamba. Palanquin bearer and pikeman stepped faster than they ever did before.

In a couple of hours the cavalcade returned, making less speed this time, but in perfect order. The occupants of the palanquins alighted[7] at the Koraha Wahalkada and followed the Koonama, it was obvious in some disorder and great excitement. The Mahamudiyansay was in tears. It was king Kirti Sri's invariable custom to alight at the draw-bridge. That day the Koonama was borne through the arched portal up the steps and past the large courtyard till it disappeared amongst the buildings. Soon

the city folk heard of the unusual proceedings and asked themselves what it meant.

Those that came out to see beheld a number of heralds marching down the palace steps in single file, each solemnly carriyng a bent cane veiled with white muslin. It was the symbol of a royal emissary's sacred office. Past the outer gate they broke up to go in different directions, each bearing a message to a district of the Rata Hata commanding its chieftain to start for the capital immediately bringing with him the *radala* of his district. The reason for the order none could inquire; nor was the herald expected to know. And indeed, on that day he did not. More messengers came out, these bearing summons to the Dissawa divisions farther away from the capital.

In the city a rumour spread that the king had fallen from his horse and hurt himself. That explained how the royal mount—none save the monarch rode a white horse—happened to be astray at Katugastota. Temple drums throbbed but the musicians of the palace appeared to have a holiday; the king was in pain, perhaps. When however his brother's palanquin was seen coming down from Uduwala, where he at times resided, guarded by Atapattuway soldiers, with a couple of chieftains on horse back in the rear of the cavalcade, knowing men said the monarch must be hopelessly ill. Those that went in and out of the palace were able to learn nothing more. If any knew they dared not talk. All that could be ascertained was that the king had fallen whilst out riding and was ill. His brother knew no more; nor was he permitted to go to the ailing monarch.

One after another the chiefs of the seven central districts reported at the Koraha Wahalkada. Each was asked to conduct his party to a certain part of the palace. The two adigars received each party separately. They were told in confidence that the monarch having fallen from his horse was seriously ill, that it would be wise and proper to be prepared for any eventuality. They had been sent for to ascertain *their* choice of a successor, should it become necessary to find one.

There was surprise and much sorrow; for King Kirti Sri Rajasingha's love of religion had won him the affection of his subjects. The king was an accomplished horseman. They thought it was their misfortune that such an accident should have occured, and asked whether he would not get well. The adigars calmed their fears, said there was no reason for alarm, yet it was wise to be agreed

about a successor. The summoned men said the maha nilamay would know best which of the princes had qualities necessary to make a benign ruler and would protect the Sasana. The king loved his brother a great deal and had bestowed on him the title of *Yuwaraja*. The adigars replied that if they wished to have the king's brother as successor, they, the adigars, would give their consent; but that it should be understood the choice was theirs and the adigars should not be held responsible for any faults of the prince, later. When each one of the parties coming in from the Rata Hata[8] had been interviewed in this fashion, the adigars ordered all present including the dissawas who happened to be in the capital, to assemble in the great courtyard where the Dalada Mandapa rose.

In Kandy it is vulgar to say great men die. The acceptable word for death varies according to the individual's status. In the case of ruling princes they are said to 'Depart to heaven'. No occupant of the throne of Singhalay, however, was expected to make the journey till important affairs of state were settled, specially in respect of his successor who alone, according to custom, could order a departed monarch's obsequies.

When the chief pontiffs of the capital had joined the assembly the adigars formally declared it had become essential to choose a successor to King Kirti Sri Rajasingha. Anyone who wished to meet the prince about whose suitability they were in agreement had the right to be conducted to him before the final election. The prince was housed in an obscure part of the palace under a strong guard of Atapattuway soldiers. When the formal business of election was over the adigars repaired to what was upto that moment a virtual prison, and informed the new king that his subjects and nobles waited to pay homage. Realising that his brother was dead the prince burst into tears. There were dutiful words of condolence and humble courtly advice.

In spite of his entreaty however, they could not let him go to see his dead brother yet. He was led to a previously prepared bath where the Diyawadana Nilamay of the Palace bathed him in *hadun-kiri-pen*, and the Saluwadana Nilamay dressed him in regal robes. Then they led him to where the Dalada reposed for the first act of a Sinhala monarch, obeisance to the Tooth Relic and a recital of the *Tun-sarana* and five precepts of the buddhist lay life.

Only after this ceremony was the king elect permitted to go to his brother's dead body. While he gave vent to his sorrow, conches blared, magul-bera throbbed and guns boomed to announce the beginning of another reign. The chief minister now prayed for leave to announce to the populace the late king's departure to heaven. A few *ammunams* of paddy was placed in a heap on the esplanade close to the outer entrance to palace grounds. Around it six men of the Gahala caste stood and began their mournful funeral drums. It was the new monarch's announcement of his predecessor's departure from life and his pending funeral. The people saw black turbaned *Kangara*[9]officers troop out of the palace to bring the sad news to the distant districts. The city populace gathered at the Koraha Wahalkada and wept. For good King Kirti Sri was looked upon as a bodhisatva.

Immediately after worship at the Dalada shrine the new king laid aside his regal dress for less formal clothes. In place of the golden hat he wore a *his-paiya* and round it a large black kerchief in the fashion of a turban. In this dress he came on the palace balcony for his first appearance in public. Chieftains and people waiting on the esplanade knelt in homage. The prince bade them rise. Then he addressed himself to the first secular business of his reign. Although the ministers had requisitioned sandal logs and every other material necessary to cremate the dead king, it was custom to await royal command to begin work. The king alone may order the obsequies of a king. With unfeigned tears the prince on the balcony asked the chieftains and people to go into mourning and prepare for the last rites in honour of the departed monarch. The assembly went on their knees again. Then they went away, chieftains to change to their black *soman tuppotti*, and the people to take their part in the work a king's cremation involved.

They were few indeed amongst the populace that had not found a piece of black[10] cloth to show his sorrow. By noble acts had king Kirti Sri won the love of his subjects. In his rule he strictly adhered to the *Dasa Raja Dharma*, went even further in his generosity and mercy. Criminals that former monarchs condemned to cruel tortures and execution he mercifully sentenced to imprisonment. Those that might have been imprisoned he let off with lashes. No man was allowed to beg for food; all destitute were fed at the king's expense. Those that went about scantily dressed, because they did not possess clothes, were given

cloth from the royal treasury. The paddy tax of five pelas from every house he had discontinued altogether. Even the wealthy had cause to be thankful. Much of a wealthy man's possessions in gold and money came to the treasury at his death as *marala*. King Kirti Sri reduced the *marala*- duty[11] to reasonable limits that the children of the dead might not complain 'The king has taken from us riches our parents accumulated for us'. And when great men were found guilty of treason, however much it soured his temper, he let them go with a warning and advice that made many an enemy his friend.

With the assistance of the saint Saranakara he revived the Sasana. Monks had forgotten the ways of the Buddha and degenerated to a yellow clothed community that lived in viharas for the love of their possessions. They did not believe in mendicancy, but had numerous servants and lived indolent lives. He sent rich presents to the ruler of Siam and obtained pious theros to re-establish the rite of ordination in Lanka. He encouraged youths of noble family to enter the priesthood. He established pirivenas and provided these with comforts necessary for pious monks that the Dharma may not be lost. For the Dhanta Dhatu he built a new storied palace and dedicated fertile fields and vast acres that ceremonies in its honour may not lack in any detail. To the Esala Perehera which was a festival of the Devas, he added a golden howdah on the back of a lordly tusker, and ordered that relics of the Thatagata be borne in the annual Perehera[12] with all honours a monarch was entitled to.

Like a bodhisatva he denied himself pleasures that caused pain to any living thing. Men bound by the *Polumas-rajakariya* had to supply meat from the chase for the king's table. He supressed the service that no animal might be deprived of life for his pleasure. The *Kurullam Maduwa* and *Kukkan Maduwa*, institutions of the palace that kept falcons and dogs for hunting purposes, he abolished. Hundreds of servicemen who had to bring fresh flowers daily for the use of royalty were ordered to take their supplies to the Dalada Mandira. On every full moon day he joined in the ceremonies of the Tooth Relic temple in person. Hundreds of prisoners went home at every Wesak festival praying devas to bless the king for the gift of freedom.

News of his death spread by *Kangara* officers fell on the country like the death of a much loved parent. Thousands flocked to the capital. But they could no more behold the godly form

they loved to look upon as it passed astride a white charger at the annual Esala festival. Instead, they looked through tears at a painted coffin hollowed out of a tree trunk brought out to a Koonama profusely decorated with festoons of coloured cloth. Officials that attended on the king during life, carried *mutukuda*, *chamara* and other insignia of kingship on caparisoned elephants. Dissawas, and Ratemahatmayas in mourning clothes each with the flag and figthing men representing his district marched in the procession. Everyone of consequence in the state followed the hearse — except the new king. Guns boomed and funeral drums throbbed, but above their noise rose the wailing of a grateful populace.

In the Adahana Maluwa, within a pyre made of sweet smelling wood they placed the coffin. When the *pansakula* ceremony was over a kinsman of the departed prince walked to the pyre a ceremonial axe in hand. He knelt lowly to the coffin. Then rising, with a single blow of his axe split open the coffin lid. Then he walked away without a look behind. Two other kinsmen of royalty fired the pyre. When the flames joined to a single blaze the chieftains went to the palace to report; and the king bade them bathe and purify themselves.

For ten days *Kangara* men fed the fire with sweet smelling wood, while an Atapattuway regiment mounted guard. Relays of drummers continued their funeral music without a moment's break. On the eleventh day ministers and chieftains repaired to the fire with *hadun-kiri-pen*, sprayed it on the ashes and collected a few calcined bones into a new earthen vessel made for the occasion. This was handed to a man completely covered with a black cloth astride a decorated tusker. No part of him was visible except his feet and the end of a scabbard at his waist. Guardsmen and drummers at the pyre formed into a procession round the lone elephant, with the chieftains in the rear. Along Nagaha Weediya and across the Mahayaya fields it proceeded to the Mahaveli at Katugastota. On the river at a decorated spot lay moored a ceremonial canoe. Leaving his mount the black shrouded figure stepped to the canoe. He had to be helped; for he continued completely covered in his black cloth.

The canoe had no oarsmen. A couple of swimmers pushed it across the water till they brought it mid-stream. Then abandoning it to the current they swam speedily back. The canoe floated down with the shrouded figure standing with sword now unsheathed.

A kodituwakku was fired on the bank; and at the signal the shrouded man hit the vessel he carried with his weapon, scattering its contents on the water. Then he splashed in himself. As the black figure sank the drums ceased — they had throbbed without a second's break from the time they had begun round the heap of paddy at the palace gates. The obsequies were over.

The man in the river came up on the opposite bank minus his black covering. The tusker he rode was led to him; it became his property. Neither the animal nor its owner, however, could cross the Mahaveli again for life. The chieftains turned back to report that the 'Remains of King Kirti Sri Rajasingha who had departed to heaven had been accorded all honour custom ordained to a departed monarch'.

The new monarch Rajadhi Rajasingha had never wanted to be king. Basking in the warmth of a brother's love he had been happy to devote all his time to the pursuit of learning under the scholar Moratota Maha Thero. He never forgot the strange circumstances in which he had lost his brother; and blamed those in authority for not having given him a chance to speak to that brother in his last moments. The adigars had turned a deaf ear to all his requests. Indeed none had been permitted to look at the corpse before it was bathed and dressed for the coffin. The king was in great pain—so they said—and did not want to be disturbed. Those who knew the truth about how the late king came by his death were very few indeed. These dared not talk. Rajadhi Rajasingha did not find much pleasure in the transaction of state business. He was content to let the ministers and dissawas carry on the government so long as they did not act contrary to the laws of the land he had, at the accession, taken his oath before the Devas to uphold. Much of his time he devoted to religion and the arts. He treated his subjects as his brother had done — with forbearance and love. When however he visited the Provinces, which he rarely did, he took care to have a strong escort.

After years of good government Rajadhi fell ill. Not many even of the Etulkattalay knew about the progress of his last illness. They understood he was getting better. During the years Pilimatalawwa had risen to great power. The king did what he could to win over the difficult courtier with appeasement; and in that way to keep him from treasonous intrigue. The adigar on his part had not been slow to seize every opportunity that offered to gain more power. Towards the end of Rajadhi's reign he had

got himself appointed to quite a number of high posts which gave him as much influence in the country as over the Etulkattalay aristocrats. Few of the nobles loved him. Everyone feared him. To please him was to have a friend that would not hesitate to weild influence on one's behalf. To oppose him was to have a dangerous enemy.

During the king's last illness Pilimatalawwa appeared to grow more anxious every day. Solicitude for the royal patient's rest made him order that none should go to the sick chamber without his permission unless the king himself wished to see a particular individual. In effect this kept everyone save himself and a few palace officials out.

One morning Pilimatalawwa Adigar sent the king's heralds to summon the *radala* of the Rata Hata, the seven districts close to the capital. The men were not sent out at the same moment but at intervals of an hour or two. Those going to Udunuwara and Yatinuwara were the first to be despatched, though these were closest to the capital. In these two districts lived the largest number of distinguished families. The guard at the Koraha Wahalkada had orders that not more than one party was to be given admittance at a time. The men of Udunuwara were the first to arrive. A lekam awaiting them at the gate conducted them to a small hall in the palace where they were told the adigar, who was with the ailing monarch, would come to them. After some delay the great man entered and in strict confidence said that he was not satisfied with the royal patient's progress. At all events he will be too weak for some considerable time, to attend to state business. A ruler's first duty, that of protecting the Sasana for the good of the world, was the noblest endeavour for man or deva. It was not proper that the selection of an individual for such an office should take place midst tears and wailing. Not that the king's illness was beyond hope. He had submitted to the monarch the propriety of appointing a *Yuwaraja* who at a future time might be acceptable to the country as ruler. The king had welcomed the idea saying, 'It is well; the *radala* will profit by my counsel in the discharge of a duty as difficult as it is sacred'. The prince they chose that day would be titled *Yuwaraja*. The present ruler was himself appointed *Yuwaraja* first. Only, the good king Kirti Sri Rajasingha had not consulted the Rata Hata on that occassion. The adigar thought that act, though well meant, was not correct. But it had turned out well.

That day he had summoned them to find whom they would like to have as a *Yuwaraja* for the country.

Talking he casually introduced the name of prince Kannesamy. It would be good to know something of their likely choice. His mother was a princess of Andra lineage, and the monarch had assured him that he had royal blood in his veins. Prince Kannesamy's mother and the king were closely connected—even kings were human, and had their funny ways. They had to respect the word of an enthroned monarch.

The Udunuwara radala were in a quandry. As men speaking for the premier division of the kingdom it was their duty to give the country the correct lead. They had hād no knowledge of the king's illness. The arrangement to choose a *Yuwaraja* was a surprise too. There was prince Muttusamy, the Queen's brother; everyone talked of him as the most likely successor. The country always accepted what the Adigars adviced in the election of a king. The Udunuwara *radala*, however, wished to be told why prince Muttusamy was considered unsuitable. There was not the least doubt about the prince's lineage, was there?

The Adigaram Nilamay said he had not the least objection to the individual; though of course if a suitable person of Sinhala *wangsa* could be found he would consider it a blessing sent by the devas. He however, would make no secret of his unwillingness to help perpetuate a rule of succession altogether foreign to the customs of Singhalay. It might have suited Andra intrigues to uphold the claims of a queen's brother to the throne; so that through him they might grab fertile land round the capital. But never before in their ancient history had the Andra way of succession been accepted or even known. The ministers of King Narendrasingha had done great wrong in first accepting such an innovation. Nothing fettered their right to chose whom they liked to have as ruler. If there was a Sinhala individual who would rule over them justly and maintain their laws, they were free, according to the law, to raise him to the throne. Illustrious blood was sought only because a monarch was accorded respect due to a deva. However, he hastened to add, the duty of the ministers was to see the wishes of the Rata Hata people and the Dissawas in office carried out. He confessed he had one insurmountable difficulty. The king — he prayed the Devas should give him long life to continue his benevolent rule — was not one to be swayed from the path of duty by his love for a Queen. He had no good opinion of prince Muttusamy,

who he considered headstrong and had undesirable ways. The glory of the Sasana and safety of private life and property demanded another kind of prince as ruler. He continued, as if changing his mind in an endeavour to be fair,

"It is best you hear what the Mahawasala thinks of the matter from the *Sri-muka* itself. Then you shall be free to do as you like. I will leave no room for any one to say that the people of Singhalay listened to my advice and placed the wrong man on the throne, if by any unforseen karma he whom you raise to power transgresses the rules of benevolent kingship."

With deep concern over the monarch's illness the adigar conducted the Udunuwara party towards the palace proper. Few outside the Etulkattalay were permitted in this block of buildings north of the great courtyard. Softly they stepped. Pilimatalawwa placed them a little removed from the royal sick chamber. Through a gorgeous door-way they could see the gold and sandal wood couch on which the king reposed. The rich appointments of a place they were seeing for the first time naturally attracted. They saw an aristocrat in attendance come and kneel by the bed, obviously in response to an order. Saying 'So be it Deveyanwahansa', he rose and walked to another part of the room. Few noticed that the bed spread on the king's couch swept to the floor almost. In the door-way of the chamber Pilimatalawwa sank on his knees, and joining his palms above his head said;

"Lord that will be a Buddha for a five thousand year cycle, your *balugetta* has conducted to your feet as desired the *radala* of Udunuwara that they may hear from the *Sri-muka* what counsel it may please the Mahawasala to give touching the election of a *Yuwaraja* to assist in the government of the kingdom. Deign to speak one word out of your divine wisdom and love for your subjects, that may help in the discharge of this great responsibility so as would assure the future of the Sasana and the prosperity of the kingdom."

The sick monarch appeared to wait for breath; he was without doubt weak and in pain. They thought he made an effort to move but remained as he was, facing the farther side of the chamber. Then they heard him, the laboured syllables strangely hoarse and a little mute. In the silence around they could clearly make out he words;

".....Prince Kannesamy is suitable. .....Will respect the *Dasa Raja Dharma* .....protect the Sasana ..... prosperity of the people."

Effort to speak more failed, in a feint groan. The adigar as if to stop further speech, hastened to express their gratitude. He prayed the great Devas protecting the Sasana should bestow health and long life on the Mahawasala. Then he begged leave to withdraw. Silently and with heavy hearts the party walked out. There must be some weighty reason why the king did not speak of his chief Queen's brother, they whispered. Even in his weak state the noble ruler was thinking only of the Sasana and the prosperity of his subjects. The Devas should restore him to health. One of them remembered that prince Muttusamy had once been accused of some misdemeanour unworthy of his status. Out in the great courtyard the adigar addressed them.

He reminded them of their great responsibility to religion and country. The safety of everyone's life depended on a ruler's conduct. It was also their special obligation as representatives of the premier district to give the rest a lead.

By ancient custom the people of the Rata Hata, Kanda-Uda-Pas-Rata of an earlier period, elected the ruler for all Singhalay. The right vested in the people of the area. It was however the *radala* summoned from lists in the Heen Lekam Miti rolls that exercised the right. These were heads of families raised each to lead his section of the community because of their unswerving loyalty and distinguished service in war. With the *radala* were associated high chieftains administering the dissawas or provinces. The kingdom bowed to the ruler they chose. Chieftains as a class felt that Andra intrigues had robbed them of their right to choose whom they liked to be their ruler. They said that king Narendrasingha's ministers had committed an act of egregious folly in accepting as monarch a Madura prince because he was the brother of a queen. From that day power was gradually passing into Andra hands and the capital was getting crowded almost, with an unwanted foreign horde.

When a Ran-doli was wanted for the monarch it was to Madura that envoys went in quest. A princess expected to be queen had to enter the king's palace before her puberty. Hasards of travel over sea and across forest country made a large retinue essential for the safety of a tender girl. Besides a train of ladies in waiting and their idle husbands, a brother or two, perhaps a crafty uncle

and a strong posse of fighting men accompanied the princess. Nayaker aristocrats accustomed to intrigue captained the party. It was court etiquette to extend an invitation to the party to stay in the country whither they had brought a queen. The Nayakers did not seem to realise that the invitation was never meant to be accepted. Every time a princess was brought a host of people that should have returned after the nuptials stayed back in the capital. The increase of their numbers was not felt as long as the king was of Sinhala descent. With an Andra on the throne the leading Nayakers worked with remarkable success to extend their influence and grab land which they observed to be very fertile. In the country this move was resisted; and not many Andras lived far from the capital. But as the years passed aristocrats found that when they were summoned to the capital to elect a successor to the throne they assembled merely to register their acceptance of a foreigner to the throne of Sinhalay, instead of choosing a prince they liked. Three several times had this happened. People in the country where a large number of the *radala* lived were already forgetting their right to choose unfettered a prince suited to rule the land.

At the time of Rajadhi's rule the vast majority had begun to look upon prince Muttusamy as heir to the throne, for no other reason than his connection to Rajadhi's queen. Aristocrats who looked to the future saw in the kind of succession the Andras were cajoling the people to believe in, a threat to Sinhala custom as well as Sinhala power. The queens came always from Madura: an Indian would always be on the throne. A swelling Indian population, the gradual replacement of the Atapattuway regiments that guarded the king's person with Indian soldiery, and the ease with which Nayaker men obtained land grants in the most fertile areas round the capital — these added up to bitter discontent. Men whose private rights had been interfered with, to bestow on Indian applicants land these had set their hearts on, spoke in terms by no means flattering to the foreigners. Nobleman and lady talked of a time when they knelt only to princes of Sinhala blood. Pilimatalawwa saw it was time to strike at the rapidly growing power of the foreigners.

His ideal was a Singala monarch to rule over Sinhalay. If there was agreement amongst the aristocrats about his own suitability to sit on the throne he would restore a Sinhlala ruler in himself. Sinhala princes who had in the olden days roamed about the country

in disguise to see for themselves how administrators discharged the trust reposed on them, had not been averse to a little romance now and again. Sons resulting from such incidents applied to the king and drew their maintenance from the king's treasury or *Bandagaraya*. They were therefore known as Bandarās, and marrying into illustrious families begot children who were said to belong to the *Bandara Waliya*. When the Sinhala royal line had disappeared, and a foreign one had the throne, men of the *Bandara Waliya* boasted they had far better blood than the princes that ruled. With their pride, however, they shared a failing. Not one would consent to let another rise a step higher than he. Pilimatalawwa convinced that no Sinhala aristocrat could ascend the throne without the use of force—perhaps as help from the British in Colombo — was content to bide his time. It was as formidable a task to remove a dynasty that had won popularity with the common people. The glamorous religious revival of King Kirti Sri Rajasingha, as well as his benignant rule, was still fresh in the memory of the land. To gain his end peacefully he convinced the aristocratic class that the custom of choosing a queen's brother to ascend the throne amounted to making the kingdom over to Andra rule for ever, and should no longer be permitted. The privilege of unfettered election as of old must be restored. He had an Andra prince in view who was no brother of a queen. Princely blood, majestic looks and pliant ways—he would make a ruler that would listen to advice. The chieftains knew he was right. He took pains to convince the priests about the suitability of his candidate. He doubted whether such reasons alone would convince the country *radala*. He was bending his energies to win their approval by other means. He would place his man on the throne; then, when things were more favourable, restore the Sinhala line by winning the throne for himself.

As *radala* parties from the other districts arrived they were ushered in and remained for some time with the men from Udunuwara—till the adigar, as he told them, could get away from the bedside of the ailing monarch to come to them. The new comers heard of the weighty business the Udunuwara *radala* had been summoned to help in. When the adigar came out they were taken one or two parties at a time, to listen to the advice the king had to give. They heard the same laboured voice as the Udunuwara *radala* had, and came away persuaded the king's opinion was

correct. Who knew better than the monarch what qualities a *Yuwaraja* should possess.

The adigar assembled the country *radala* and the chieftains in the court-yard by the Hall of Audience built by the sick king's orders. Pilimatalawwa spoke to them of the great responsibility they had come together to discharge. He had not spoken many words when a palace official came running from the Wedehitina Maligawa and whispered something in the adigar's ear. Excusing himself the adigar went away with the messenger, his manner betraying great agitation. When he came back after a space Pilimatalawwa carried his hat in his hand[13] and the assembly realised the worst had happened. He said sadly,

"The sun that was Rajadhi Rajasingha has set leaving Senkadagala Siriwardanapura in darkness. Our noble monarch was a *kalpavruksha* that the people of Sinhalay had been blessed with by virtue of their past merits. No pains were spared in the treatment of his illness. Notwithstanding all our efforts death has triumphed. Even when battling with *Mara* you saw how he was only too willing to give thought to the affairs of the kingdom, and advise us as to who he considered best to assist in the government of the land. Our duty now is to choose a ruler worthy of succeeding the bodhisatva who has left us this day plunging us all in a sea of sorrow."

The sad news appeared to have spread outside the palace already. Pilimatalawway Maha Nilamay was explaining to the assembly their duty in the selection of a successor, not a *Yuwaraja* as originally intended, when they heard a disturbance. A numerous body of Nayaker men with prince Muttusamy amongst them had entered the Palace. As royalty's kinsmen they had found little difficulty in gaining entrance. They demanded Muttusamy be declared successor to the throne. Some of them said if the Queen's brother was not good enough there were others there of the pure Andra line.

The Maha Adigar, however, was not to be deviated from the strict order of customary proceedure. No man he said need imagine he had the right to dictate. Prince Muttusamy had a claim to be considered. The choice lay with the *radala* of the Rata Hata. They will choose whom they liked. As a candidate for kingship he bade Muttusamy to retire to an apartment not far from the Queen's quarter . As the prince meekly obeyed, a strong Atapattuway posse was ordered to guard his room. Pilimatalawwa spoke to the captain who went in command of the men. To the

proud Nayaker men he had advice that bore a hidden meaning.

If they had entered the palace weighed with sorrow over the monarch's death, they should remember that the body vacated by the departed king had to be made ready to receive the last honours custom ordained. They could therefore not enter the Wedehitina Mandapa. The selection of a successor was the duty of the *radala* who were assembled there to discharge that duty. If they were peacefully minded it was their duty to depart with the assurance that prince Muttusamy was there as a candidate. If they had any intention of staying back to disturb the sacred duty of that assembly, it was not his but the duty of the Maduway regiments to clear palace grounds of intruders. These men well knew Pilimatalawwa. They knew full well how the Maduway men hated them. At the moment there was no king to whom they might complain if roughly handled. With muttered oaths and vows of vengeance, a display that had its effect on the country *radala*, royalty's kinsmen filed out of the palace.

There were tears in the Maha Adigar's eyes as he returned to his work. What a man said the chieftains to themselves. They knew of the adigar what the country *radala* did not. They were however as much in the dark as the former in one respect. King Rajadhi Rajasingha had breathed his last the previous night, long hours before the Udunuwara *radala* had strained their ears to catch the laboured syllables that came from under the royal couch on which the monarch's cold corpse lay.

How did the end come so suddenly, those in the assembly softly inquired. The monarch had been ailing for some time, the adigar said, and fortunate ones had a way of departing this life without protracted pain. Drying his cheeks he proceeded to business. To the country *radala* who at sight of the adigar's tears let their own flow, the drawled syllables their ears had caught as they knelt before the sick chamber sounded like a call from Sakra himself to protect the Sasana. The few chieftains who might have stood for Muttusamy now found it was of no use opposing the large body of those who had come from the districts. Pilimatalawwa had his way. Prince Kannesamy was declared elected to succeed King Rajadhi Rajasingha. The Maha Adigar now led the whole assembly to an apartment where the prince had been placed with the usual guard for his honour. They bathed him in the king's bath and dressed him in regal robes. Then they went with him to the Dalada Mandapa for the religious

ceremony a prince had to go through before the country acclaimed him its king. From the Dalada temple he was conducted to the balcony of the palace to receive the homage of his subjects and discharge a ruler's first secular duty, to order the funeral of his predecessor.

Peals of triumphant conches, the booming of kodituwakku guns and the notes of magul-bera greeted the new king as he came on the balcony. The sound awakened prince Muttusamy from his dreams. He demanded to know the cause. The numerous guard and the distinguished commander placed over them the prince had taken to be an earnest of the honour a minister anxious to retain power in his hands wished to give the future ruler. When told another had been raised to the throne he had felt so sure was his, the numerous guard round his chamber appeared to be there to keep him prisoner. He now feared for his life, and asked the captain for advice. The officer said it was his duty to keep him there until ordered. But his men were attracted by what passed below the ramparts, and there was the forest of Udawatta immediately behind. Before evening grew to dusk prince Muttusamy, who everyone expected would be king, was in full flight—to get beyond the reach of Pilimatalawway Adigar.

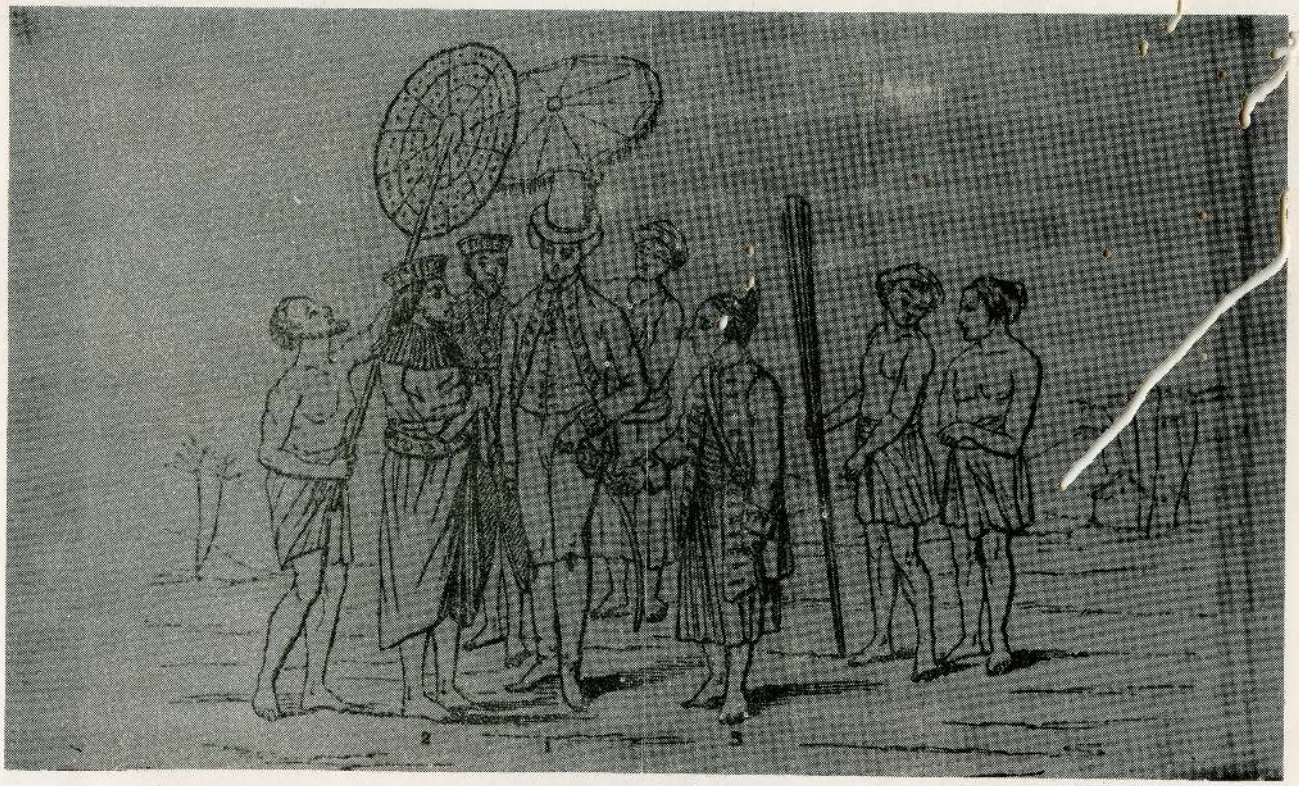
Years later, when the events of that fateful day were discussed in court circles, everyone agreed that the shrewdest bit of Pilimatalawway Adigar's strategy was the way he made prince Muttusamy flee the country. Prince Kannesamy received the sword of state as Sri Wicramarajasingha, while Pilimatalawway Maha Adigar ruled the kingdom—for a time.

A Girl Sacrificed to Bahirawa

THE hours of noontide rest appeared to freeze all life within the Palace of Senkadagala Nuwara. From early dawn, the time devas came down to worship the Tooth Relic of the Thathagata, when the monarch too went to begin his day with obeisance to the Danta Dhatu, drums throbbed and temple minstrels sang to the accompaninment of cymbal, *udekki* and *pavaheru*. Musicians of of the Wahala Kavikara Maduwa struck up a couple of hours after sunrise. Etulkattalay officials in tuppotti and round hat flitted through the corridors. Noblemen, their gay coloured costumes glittering with gold, began to come in; and Atapattuway appuhamies drew up their guards before the Hall of Audience. Chank bugles and the impressive notes of a *magul-bera* heralded the opening of court, as the king entered and sat on his golden throne — 'Like a deva presiding over a magnificent *vimana*', sang poets that had witnessed the scene.

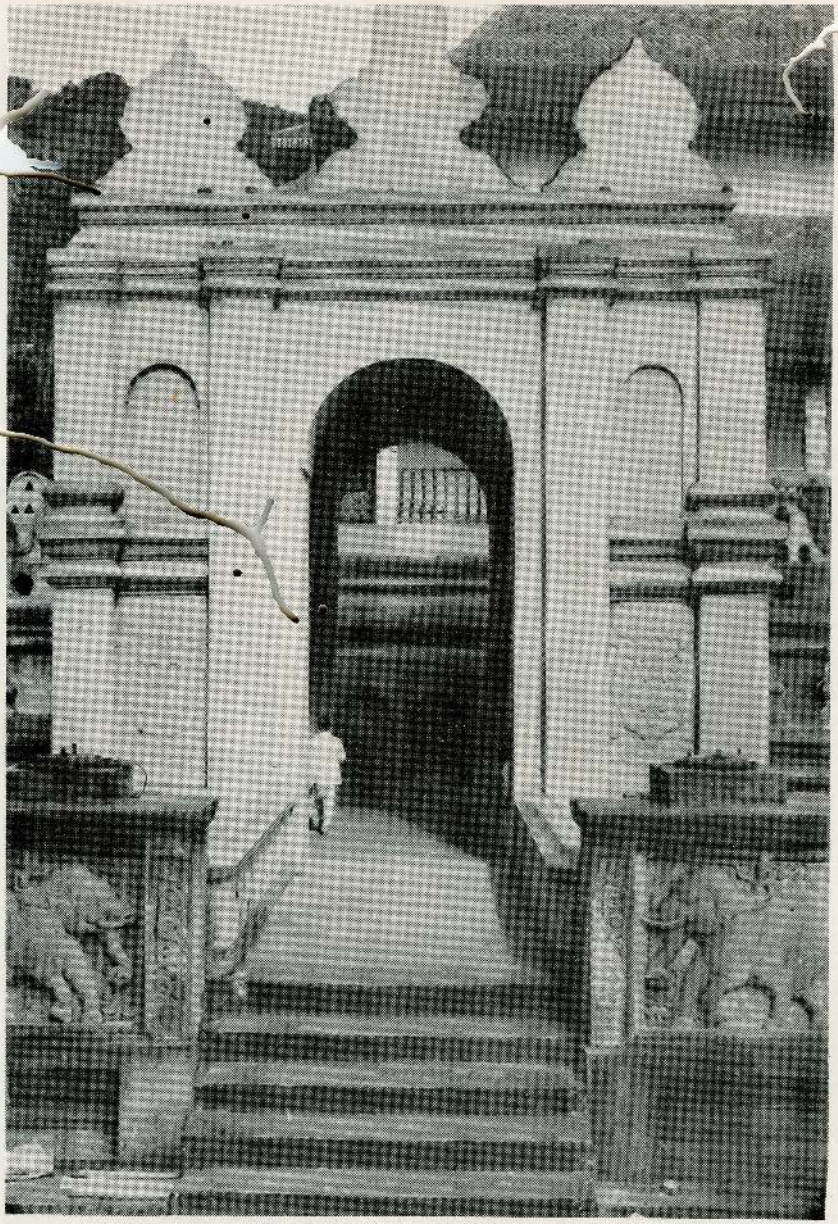
By midday the animated scene suddenly changed. Ceremonies in the Dalada shrine — one of the central buildings of the Palace[1] — had to close before the sun attained it's noon. Their termination was the signal for court to adjourn. Minister and courtier departed to reassemble after dusk. The minstrels were not wanted again till nightfall. The king had his siesta: and a silence strange in contrast to the bustle of the morning descended on palace precincts.

The white sanded courtyards looked deserted — their only sign of life two figures standing by a small vault perched almost on the rampart bounding the western courtyard. One of these carried, slung across his shoulder, a chank bugle elaborately mounted in silver. The other was dressed for courier service. But the



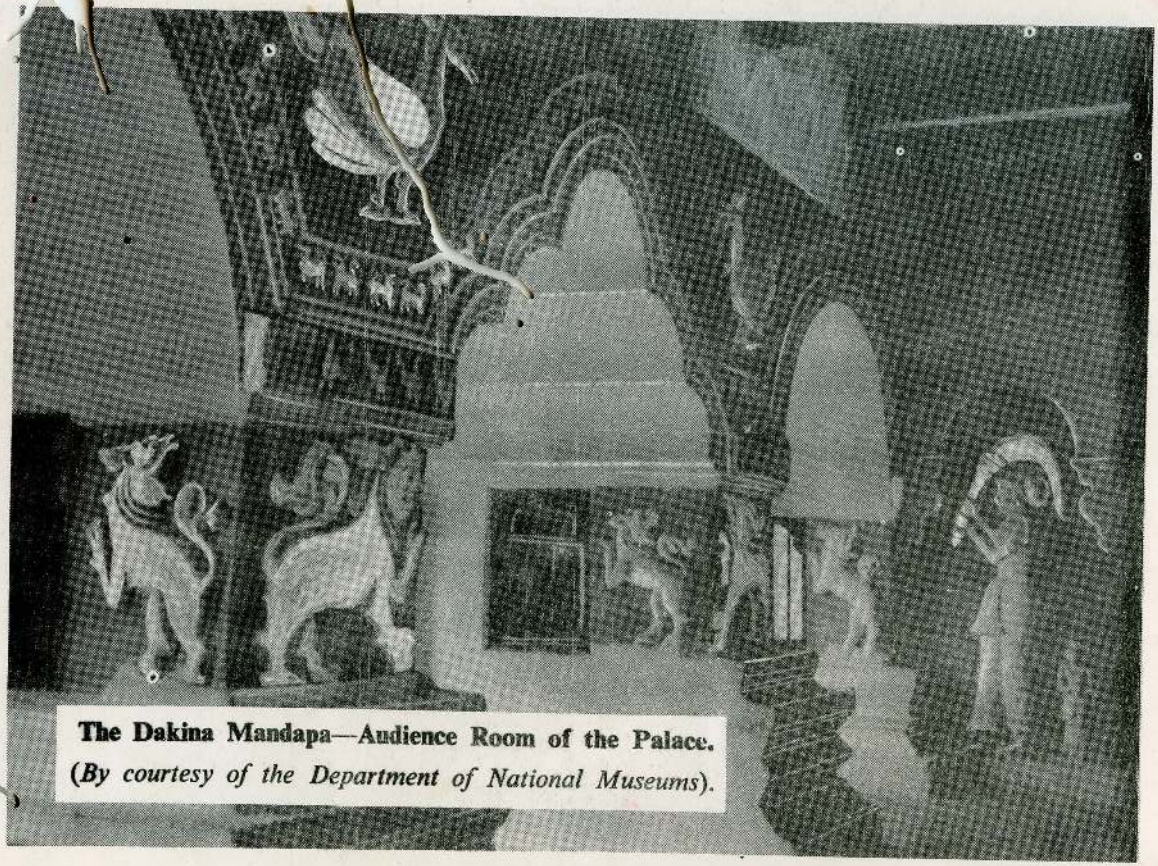
Pilimatalawwa Adigar and General McDowal meet on the border of their territories.

(*From an old drawing by one present*).



Main Entrance to the Palace of Senkadagala.

(*A culvert spans the moat where the draw-bridge was*).



The Dakina Mandapa—Audience Room of the Palace.
(*By courtesy of the Department of National Museums*).

bugle hung silent and the courier stood so still, that one mistook the pair for *doratupala* statues.

Sri Wickramarajasingha's palace proper — its ground floor walls alone remain — hugged the mountain by which it was sited.

From the Dakina Mandapa at its northern end the buildings swept in a wide segment to the Nanumura-Gay[2] that rose from the waters of the lake. The chain of buildings and the battlements to their west enclosed a wide area. Here rose the Dalada Mandapa and the Magul Maduwa dividing this ground into a number of courtyards. At the entrance to the largest of these, giving the gate the name Koraha Wahalkada, stood the guarded vault placed there to house the palace clepsydra, as well as to allow the sentinel on duty a command over the draw-bridge that led into the arched portal on the moat below, and the giant stairs giving access over the ramparts.

Within the vault, before a cistern half full of water, sat the pensive master of the court horologe. He watched a graduated silver bowl[3] that floated in his cistern. The water spurted into the cup through a tiny aperture at the bottom rising over the markings made to indicate minutes. The moment it filled and sank the official floated another in its place. Then he took up style and ola to record the passing of one more *peya* of the sixty the Singhala day is divided into. The sentinels by his door had to announce by bugle, or communicate the time of day by message, as and when the Koraha Wahalkada Muhandiram commanded.

Kandyan custom ordained that work in any important matter should start when the position of the planets was auspicious for the particular kind of business. Court astrologers fixed the *peya* and *vinadi*. It was the responsibility of the Koraha Wahalkada Muhandiram to warn when the moment approached.

For the twentysecond time since the rising of the sun had the hour-bowl gone down that day when an attendant ran out of the water-clock vault. He made first towards the queens' apartments, and then sped back to pass out of the main gate. The deserted courtyards now sprang to life. A posse of men-at-arms followed the messenger, and took their stand by the horologe vault. Officials hurried across the court-yards. An important looking functionary followed by subordinates in round hat and tuppotti, one of them carrying a bunch of giant keys on his shoulder, appeared on the verandah of the Maha Aramudala, the king's treasure house. They unlocked a massive door and disappeared into its dark interior.

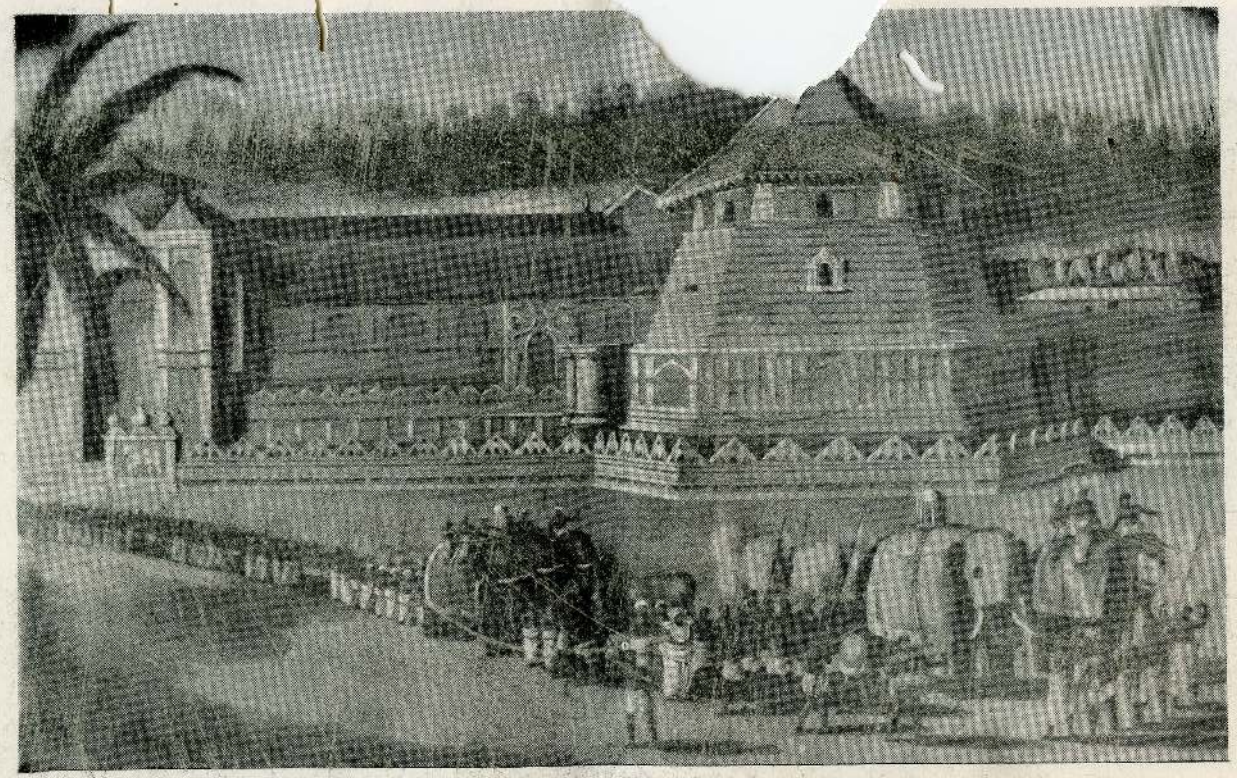
Washermen brought milk-white cloth and spread them to cover the floor of a portico attached to the treasure house.

This porch, a square structure of the Kandyan pavilion type, abutted on the courtyard that separated the Magul-maduwa from the Maha Aramudala. That day it was decorated. Small pennons of black and turkey-red *laakka* (Dutch cloth) waving along the eaves stood out against the white muslin hung to form a temporary ceiling. Bands of red and white calico spiralled up the wooden pillars; and between them arched *relipalan*, each composed of a thousand small frills of coloured cloth. The sides of the elevated floor were hidden by festoons of young coconut leaf. The porch presented the appearance of a large *magul-poruwa*. Indeed, a *magul-poruwa* it was intended that day to be; only, the bridegroom would not be there. For he was not human.

From the queens' apartments now emerged a number of women. Five of them to judge from the fashion of their clothes, were ladies of noble birth. Washermen laid white *pavaa* for them to step on, while serving women followed bearing silver vessels containing luxuries requiste for a lady's toilet—scented oil and sandal paste, *cocum* bark, and jasmine buds strung together into delicate wreaths.

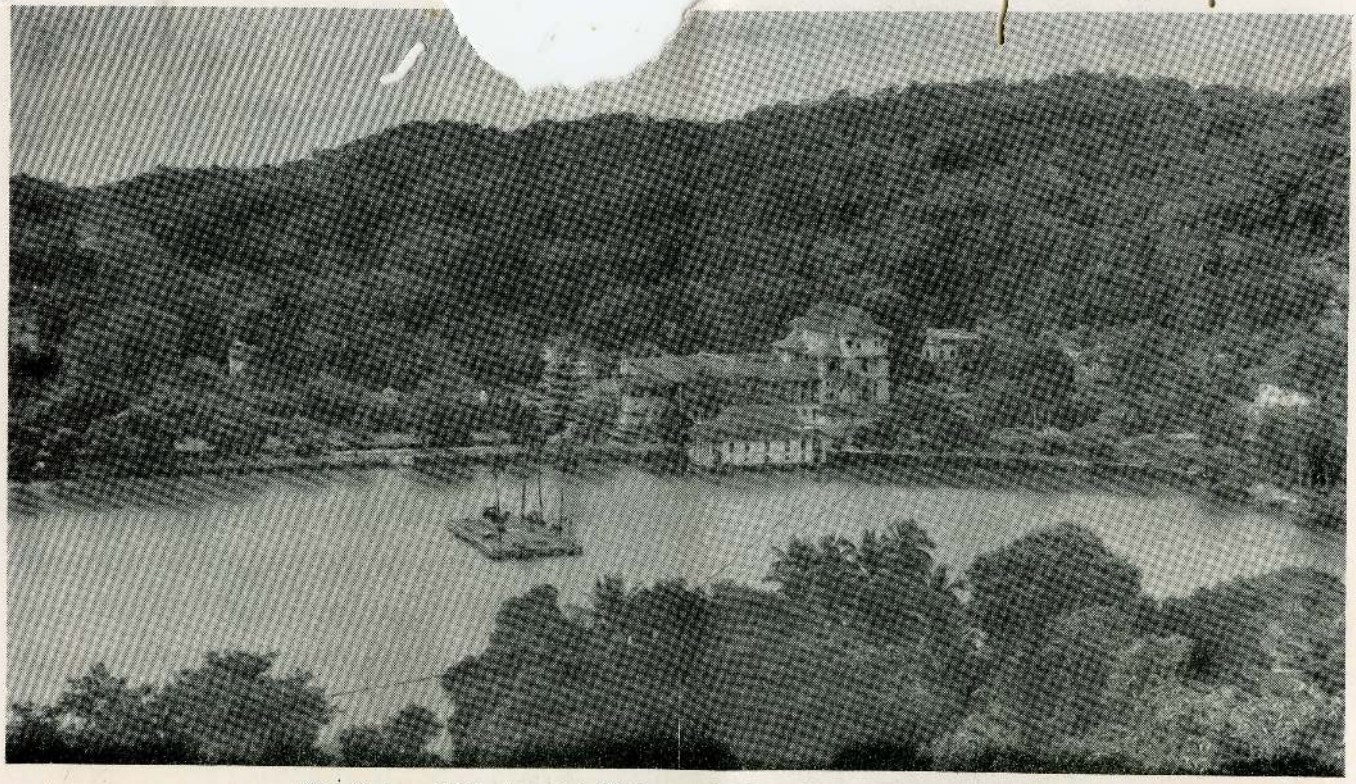
The central figure of the party was a young woman whom a middle aged dame led by the hand. Not far advanced in her teens, of fair height and beautiful complexion, many who saw her thought she looked like a *manel* fresh from the water. She hung her head and stepped listlessly on the pavada like one resigned to a doom to which her companions led her. Tears coursed down her cheeks, and her face was pale with fear.

The ladies conducted her to a solitary seat in the centre of the decorated porch. They had bathed her in perfumed water in the Queen's quarter of the palace, and dressed her in a richly *hela*. They now dried her long tresses and gathered them into a knot round which they set a wreath of jasmines. The treasury officials brought out a tray piled with silver and gold jewelry. The ladies selected what suited the maid best — gem set *thodu* and *pullimal* for her ears, and a neck-girdle all red with rubies; necklaces of gold and coral, seven in number, some with pendants of great value; and bangles, three for each hand. For her fingers there were rings set with emeralds and rubies. With these the ladies proceeded to adorn the maid, while the attendants clasped tinkling silver anklets round her feet. But the object of these attentions was not in the least grateful. She did not bestow one glance on the costly



A Dalada Perehera during the early days of the British accession.

(From an old drawing, by courtesy of the Department of National Museums).



The Lake of Kandy, Sri Wickrama's beautiful addition to his capital.

ornaments, but continued to weep.

"See what priceless jewelry the Maha Wasala is bestowing on you. Decked in these you shall return home tomorrow morning", said one of the ladies. The words, however, choked in the speaker's throat.

"Any girl will be delirious with joy at the sight of such beautiful things", added a treasury official.

"When you get home adorned in all these silver and gold and gems, every girl in the village would wish she had been selected for today's ceremony. You should be grateful to His Majesty", said another.

The ladies and their attendants said what they could to reassure the maid; but, as they started back leaving the girl in the porch more than one turned aside to dry a tear.

More officials and a few courtiers walked across the courtyard. Every one of them stopped to look at the maid, and said she was beautiful, indeed. They felt sad to think of the ordeal and almost certain death the girl will have to face. Few approved of what was afoot. 'Is it necessary that the life sacrificed should be an innocent girl? Would not the blood of a criminal sentenced to execution suffice?' they asked. But each went about his appointed task, everyone playing his part in a business that was hateful. However, one there was that did not share the feelings of the many. This was Dunuvila Gajanayaka Nilamay, by the king's special orders master of ceremonies for the occassion. His face reflected satisfaction.

Dunuvila had started life as the landless claimant of a manor forfeit to the crown. Its former lord whilst serving as Master of the King's State Tusker, had caused the death of his charge when the animal was in must. Angered by the harsh treatment of his *magul eta*, its prince had deprived the offending nobleman of place and estate. A third of the fief had already been dedicated to a temple, perhaps to help the dead animal's soul to a better rebirth. The new claimant had therefore, only what was left to strive for. Even so he received little recognition and less encouragement from those whose good-will mattered.

Dunuvila was a gifted poet. He made up his mind to sing his way into the estate he claimed. A poem in praise of Pilamatalawwa won him that powerful Adikaram Nilamay's patronage. With the latter's influence the young poet won back not only what remained of the Dunuvila demesne, but also a place in court.

By dint of service he rose rapidly in the state. As astute as he was ambitious he displayed such zealous loyalty that he was soon a favourite with Sri Wickrama Rajasingha. The prince even deigned to look into the young courtier's matrimonial aspirations. He meant to marry well, and desired the hand of an only heir of the illustrious Nickawella family. The monarch expressed a wish to Nickawellay Rala that he might accept the king's trusted servant as son-in-law.

Nickawellay Ralahamy, however, had his own views of propriety. To him, proud of an ancient lineage, the Dunuvila title was no older than the restoration of its estate to the new lord. He humbly thanked the king; said the girl's life was the monarch's as was the life of everyone of his subjects. She was fortunate indeed, that the Maha Wasala should take an interest in her future. But the girl's life belonged to her mother as well. The nobleman prayed that he be granted time to carry the good news to the mother and obtain her formal consent.

His lady who had awaited the return of her lord from the capital where he had been summoned, not without anxiety, was disturbed to see his retainers swing home an empty palanquin. Nickawella had alighted to do the last lapse of the journey on foot. It was some time before she saw him approach. He turned and walked back, sat on a stone near the *kadulla*, and appeared lost in thought. At length he stood up, came towards the walawwa, but turned about and went back to his stone and his thinking. Greatly alarmed at this unusual behaviour the lady hastened to her lord, and kneeling affectionately to him asked,

"What danger threatens us my lord, is it a *raja-udahasa*? Have I not the right to know what troubles you?"

"Danger?", he replied. "Well, in a way. But it is you that will have to decide how this is going to end. Choose between these two, whichever you like, my lady — property without boast of blood, or pride of lineage without the king's lands and favour.[4]"

The kumarihamy wasted no time in thought.

"Of what use to us is the king's lands if we have to lose our illustrious lineage?"

"You have decided: so be it. Prepare to depart from this manor. The Nickawella gama is no longer ours."

King Sri Wickrama Rajasingha waited to bestow great gifts on the day of his favourite's nuptials. But he heard from Nicka-

wellay Rala no more.

The disappointed suitor wreaked his vengeance by subtly persuading the monarch that Nickawella might have treated a wish from the ruler of the land with more decorum. The Nickawella estate[5] was declared a *gabadagama*, like a manor escheat to the throne by extinction of the family legally entitled to hold it. Soon it became known that the proud man had bestowed his daughter on a nephew, Owila Banda, a man almost unknown in court circles. The authority of the throne could pursue Nickawella no further. As if to console his favourite, and also to make Nickawella regret his act, the king promoted his courtier in the royal service; till, at the time of our story, Dunuvila was Gajanayka Nilamay, Grand Master of the Monarch's ceremonial mount — the only man in the state, besides royalty, that might bestride a tusker within the limits of the capital.

The Gajanayaka Nilamay, however, was still a bachelor. A man of his gifts could scarcely be indifferent to such beauty as the maid in the decorated porch possessed. His orders sent officers scurrying about their jobs. His gaze dwelt approvingly on the lone figure in the pavillion. It struck him that her natural charms would stand out more glamourous without the silver and gold round her neck. In his mind was the self congratulation of a connoisseur that had selected well. Reluctantly he turned to go when fate seemed to throw another heap of feminine beauty across his path.

When the noble dames had done with the revolting business of preparing one of their sex for a demon's sacrifice, they started back the way they had come. As they had reached the first line of buildings, the youngest in the party missed her *kawaniya*. It was her figure hurrying back to the porch that now held Dunuvila's appraising eye.

The *osoriya* was absent in a noble woman's court dress. The *hela* was wrapped round to leave a large frill called the *neriya* flowing behind. Intended to hide the hips it also took out folds that must otherwise gather round and mar the grace of a narrow waist. The close fitting jacket left part of the neck and shoulders open. The *mante* attached to the collar did not hide the lines of the bosom. A white shawl decorated all over with gold was used to meet the demands of oriental modesty. Passed round a little below shoulder level, it was gathered into a loose fan shaped knot in the wearer's left hand so as to leave much of the necklaces

uncovered. On less formal occasions this shawl or *kawaniya* was wrapped to pass under the armpits and its ends allowed to flow down over either forearm. However worn it considerably restricted the freedom of one's hands. The ladies had laid aside their *kawani* in the pavilion when attending on the maid. The young woman, whose approach for the moment arrested the poet courtier's progress, had forgotten to take hers when leaving. Her head erect, her fair face glowing with excitement, her bare arms slender waist and shapely body set to advantage by the absence of a *kawaniya*, and a quick step helping to make a graceful figure truly attractive — no poet could have grudged the homage of admiration to such beauty. 'A poem in flesh and blood', thought the Gajanayaka Nilamay, 'if I could draw a word picture of this bewitching damsel, I shall have sung a true description of Ratee, the Goddess of Love'.

But as the figure drew near, recognition turned his admiring gaze to a scowl. 'Owila vixen, haughty niece of that swell headed idiot Nickawella', he said to himself. 'Presumptuous bastard', scornfully the lady's lips moved though they uttered no sound, 'whose schemes have sent my uncle to voluntary exile'. The lady made no effort to conceal her hatred. The adept courtier, however, turned away lest his face betray what passed in his mind. With half an eye he saw the object of his hatred mount the steps of the pavilion. He turned round wondering what had brought the young woman back.

The lady took up her *kawaniya*, cast a glance at the maid, then throwing the shawl back where it had lain, began to rearrange the girl's many necklaces. The nilamay saw her lips move, and suspecting that the *kawaniya* was an excuse waved to the waiting men-at-arms who hastened towards their appointed post round the decorated porch. The lady had her own way of handling the situation. She pushed the girl's necklaces back, and with quick fingers undid the jacket front till the wearer's bosom was almost bare. The Gajanayaka Nilamay knew he had to retreat, but the poet in him would linger for a moment. In that moment the most unexpected of things happened. With a peremptory gesture of her hand the lady ordered the advancing men-at-arms away. They fell back in confusion. The nilamay too walked across the courtyard. He tried to look disdainful, but was raging to think that the Owila lady's imperious gesture might be understood to have meant for him as well. The amused faces of a bunch of minor

officials waiting for his orders, did nothing to improve his temper. He asked himself why he had not left 'That vixen' alone. But how could anyone expect a youthful woman of rank, new to court too, to be so contumacious of authority.

He walked out to the esplanade where preparations for the sacrificial procession proceeded. In his heart was registering a vow of revenge. He wondered how many were in the plot; for a plot against him there appeared to be. He knew that the Wadanathuwakku Nilamay bore him no love; for more than once the king's partiality to him had prevented the other from winning higher office. But how could his young wife dare to lend a hand in intrigue. That day the poet had reckoned should be one of the happiest in his life. The wave of a vain woman's hand had all but shattered that happiness. Whatever he had done to rise in the world he had thus far been loyal to his king, and kept clear of court intrigues. The policy had won him royalty's love, and success in increasing measure. He now realised that so simple a code of conduct could not help to keep the high place he had attained. Recollection of the king reminded the courtier how his royal master had left every detail connected with the sacrifice to him. The monarch would come out on the balcony to view the procession. He had so worked upon the prince's fears with ancient legend and current misfortune that any incompleteness in the sacrificial procession would vex him, perhaps even displease him. So he went about his task; and those in charge of different items of the days doings felt the full weight of the Gajanayaka Nilamay's disappointment.

After the courtier's discomfiture no one disturbed the two young women in the decorated pavilion. Since morning when it had dawned upon her that moans and tears notwithstanding, she was destined to be offered as a බිලි (*billa*), the maid had taken little interest in what passed around her. Yet in her despair she felt relieved to have some human being near her. She did not mind the strange behaviour of the lady. Modesty, however, made the hands rise involuntarily to cover her bosom. The lady readjusted the jacket; and whilst her tender fingers appeared to be busy, spoke in a low voice, reproving but kindly;

"Weeping like mother's breast fed baby! Do you want someone to sing you a lullaby? You fool, more danger threatens you tonight than yet you know. Are you so silly that you do not realise sobbing will not move hard hearts that are

making preparations to take you to the demon's hill?"

Words so different from the blandishments poured into her ears from the time she was taken before the king to be told that, as the most beautiful virgin in Singhalay she had been chosen to be offered to Bahirawa — their harsh tone had a ring of truth. They awakened the poor maid from a torpor that was settling on her. Was it a goddess sent by all-seeing Sakra to point a way out of her peril, she wondered.

"Will you bear sons that would tremble to hear the battle bray, or swoon to see the swords of their elders clash with those of the enemy that come to destroy our land and the Sasana? Do not be a disgrace to womankind. You will be bound with a length of cloth to a tree on a hill at the end of one of the streets of the city. The hill is within the city gates. Hundreds of hearts will be praying to the devas to keep you safe till the morn, and the devas will hear that prayer, as they have done before. Must a little loneliness till tomorrow morning kill you? When from the coast invasions come; and all our men march away to give battle to the foe, we women take to the forests[6] to bide there till the enemy has been driven away. How often have you spent weeks and months in that way. Yet to those same mountains no woman would go at other times. Then we think our fathers, brothers and husbands, the gold of our homes, risk their lives in the battle field; we women that are like copper by their side, the jungle is good enough for us to pray for and await their return. There is the Lord Buddha and the all seeing devas to protect innocent ones from unmerited danger. If the span your karma has allotted to you is at an end, nothing can keep you alive whereever you may be. If not, will the devas not safeguard you during the thirty peya you will be left on that hill? For shame face it bravely."

It was the ungarbled truth spoken, it seemed, by one who really wished to help. The question rose to her lips, 'Is there no way of escape?' But the lady gave her no time to speak. She went on speaking rapidly in her low voice.

"I had to undo your jacket — there was nothing wrong with it — that I may speak to you alone." Her voice dropped lower.

"I came to give you a message from my nilamay: he commands the Kings's musketeer regiment, and his soldiers will be

guarding the hill to which they will take you. He says there is no need for you to be afraid. Answer me, speak low. Do you know a young man called Tikirala of Walpola? He was a soldier in the Wadanathuwakku Hamudawa, and has been ordered not to come within the limits of the city for a year?"

At the mention of that name the girl's eyes opened wide. Raising them to meet the lady's gaze she answered hesitatingly, as if apprehensive of some greater danger still to come.

"I.....know."

"Who is this Tikirala to you Ram Menika?" the lady asked, her voice changing to one of kindness, and it seemed, of understanding. Indeed, she appeared to know the answer.

"He is my mother's elder brother's son. I have no big brothers and he is like a son in our house."

In spite of her plight a blush suffused the girl's features as she spoke of the youth who, from the day she could understand things, she knew was to be her husband. The lady saw, and angry blood rose to her cheeks as she exclaimed;

"Ah, ha! That is what my nilamay guessed. First he tried to get the young man out of the way by execution; and now his *nana* must.....Deiyo saaki! Listen," the lady whispered speaking earnestly, "the man who has brought you to this pass is a powerful chieftain. I shall tell my nilamay that Tikirala is your cousin. As the guard that will watch the hill will be from the musketeer regiment, my nilamay too might be out the full thirty *peya* of the night. The devas will protect you from unmerited harm. Not your life, but your honour is in danger. The man that has brought you to this pass will himself come to your rescue; that will be merely to taste of the pleasures your body can yield. Remember, none can protect a woman's chastity save herself. If the devas will not protect your life it will be because your time is up. It is better then to die than let any villain sully your honour. Death at the hands of the demon is preferable to life as a dishonoured woman. Do you hear?"

A score of questions rose to the girl's lips. In her confusion and fright, she could not find words for one. She looked up and nodded, bewildered, terrified. She watched the lady take up her *kawaniya* and wrap it round deliberately saying, "Don't be afraid.

Die if you have to. Let no wicked man sully your honour." Then she walked briskly away.

"What was wrong with that girl's dress?" demanded the eldest dame in the group she had kept waiting.

"The jacket was far too large a size for her, aunt; one sleeve hung lower than the other. I tried to adjust it, and had to rearrange the necklaces too."

"You chose that jacket for her, didn't you?"

"I chose the most beautiful of the lot. You asked me to get one that had gems set on its sleeves."

"This is not home. You cannot behave here as you choose. Art mad to meddle in what does not concern you?"

"The Queen never blames me: to you everything I do is wrong."

"I saw how you waved away the Gajanayaka Nilamay", the aunt continued. "It's he that is in command of the Bahirawa Dola, not you. He is liked by the King. The Queen may be kind, but her love will not help if the king is set against your husband. It is his safety you risk, you fool."

"I can go where my uncle....."

"Shut up minx; who taught thee to bandy words with thy elders?"

Casting a look behind to see whether she had been overheard the lady walked quickly away. Not in the least repentant, but with bowed head the niece followed. As they disappeared amongst the buildings the men-at-arms came to their post. Round the maid's porch their broad *patistana* spears glanced in the sun now hanging over the horizon of Bahirawa-kanda. In tuppotti and round hats they formed an imposing guard of honour to Bahirawa's bride. But the bride hardly looked at them. Her head drooped and she appeared to notice little of what passed around.

Presently there appeared on the courtyard a woman past the middle age of life. She walked stooping, the fingers of her left hand trailing on the ground.[7] Her right hand supported a large embroidered betel bag dangling from a shoulder. Her simple dress, a white waist cloth, that hung a span above the ankles, and a striped *osoriya* worn as a separate piece, showed she was of the attendant caste. She was fair; and her broad shoulders and almost bare back contrasted with the red and black of the large betel pouch.

In the pavilion she drew out a parcel of areca flower from her bag, and walking round from pillar to pillar three times placed a flower raceme at each of the four corners. A fifth she placed at the maid's feet—it was a charm to make the human sacrifice go to her ordeal with composure. Then she sank on her knees and folded her hands in salutation. Failing to draw the girl's attention, she sat on the floor by her and proceeded to prepare a choice chew of betel from her pouch. The girl returned her look, but would not accept the chew.

"Why should you be unhappy and listless, my goddess?" the woman asked. "You look like a queen in all the costly clothes and jewels. Indeed, they are worth a tusker's ransom; and they will all be yours. And a goddess you will be before the day is over. Have you not heard of Henakanda Biso[8], the princess her brother, the king at that time, offered to Kataragama Deva that his armies may be victorious in war? The deva made her rich and powerful, and she lived for many years travelling all over the kingdom as she pleased, and causing beautiful temples to be built where it pleased her. You find that goddess's temples in many parts of Udunuwara. They are beautiful to look at. Bahirawa Deviyo is a brother of Kataragama Deva. You must please him. What spirit can resist such loveliness as you do possess? He will make you wealthy, ever so rich; for it is he, all say, that keeps all the gold hidden in ancient cave and treasure-trove. Look pleasant my goddess; I am come to accompany you as your *hewa-woman*."

The maid heard; but all that she cared to understand was the fact that the woman would accompany her. For a moment her gaze turned on the speaker; then she was listless again. A change had come upon her from the time the young noblewoman had aked her to defy death, but fight for her honour. She sobbed no more: her cheeks were not wet. Her thoughts were far away, in Walpola, her home in Tumpane, with Tikirala, the soldier lad, who a couple of months back had the misfortune to be discontinued from the Musketeer Regiment in which he had for some time rendered rajakariya. The monarch had punished him with an order that exiled him from the capital for a whole year. The sentence was a blot to any soldier; yet none knew, not even his commander, what offence had displeased the king. Had her, Ram Menika's, selection as the sacrificial life any connection with

Tikirala's disgrace? What had he done to merit the enmity of the great man who, she felt now certain, hated them both? Would Tikirala be permitted to live in peace once her death had appeased...? Or would the chieftain whose enmity must be the result of some past karma — for in this life they had done no wrong — would that enmity pursue Tikirala too to a horrible end? When she was dead and her body stripped of all that finery left in the jungle to be devoured by jackal and crow, would Tikirala have another wife? A wife he will have to take: and mothers there were in the village who would love to have him as son-in-law. Would Tikirala love another as he had often sung he loved her? Of one thing she was certain; in no girl will he find as dutiful a wife as she was determined to be.

A thousand such thoughts crowded into her mind. Through the confused emotions they raised, there was present a constant trepidation at the approach of an ordeal her imagination could not picture. Yet the frightening image of demon and deva faded. In their place she pictured herself resisting a human being in a fight desperate enough, but by no means an unpleasant alternative to a spirit's embrace. Men died in the wars their strong bodies, as she had often heard, mutilated by gun and sabre. She would die fighting for her chastity. The stern words of the friendly noblewoman gave purpose to the last short hours of an innocent life. Ram Menika said to herself over and over again she would die faithful to the lad whose bride her father had meant her to be. How she could resist a seducer, she did not worry to imagine but resist she would, and die in the attempt. Whatever the pain, such a death would yet be welcome if only she could be certain that Tikirala would learn how she remained chaste and died.

The train of thought brought recollections of hours spent with Tikirala. When back after a term of rajakariya he spent all his time at her home, helping in field and haena. At meals he would rail pleasantly at supposed unpalatableness of dishes prepared by her; but would become silent and grave the instant her father came on the scene. When they met on the haena he would sing verses in praise of her beauty till she asked him not to utter lies. The elder man often inquired how Tikirala's mother was doing; and the lad would take the hint and go to work on his widowed mother's lands. But he would never be away long.

Of late her father had been anxious to celebrate their nuptials. An important looking individual followed by a couple of attendants

had called one day. He was received with respect and treated with marked hospitality. But he went away obviously displeased. Soon after his departure there was much talk between her parents. It developed to a quarrel; and she discovered it was all over her future.

The visitor she learnt, had brought a proposal of marriage. A Chieftain, the visitor's master, had seen her and desired to have her for himself. There were promises that from the day she went to his walawwa her parents would be more prosperous, and the future of the whole family fortunate. But her father told her mother,

"I promised to your brother, this girl shall be his son's bride. It was but a few days old then: something in her මවිලා කොමල් had pleased him. My brother-in-law is no more; but nothing you say can make me break the word I gave him."

Her mother grew cross. A chieftain so great, so rich — he was the Kodituwakku Nilamay of Tumpane[9] and descended of an ancient aristocratic line. Such a connection would raise them in the esteem of all Tumpane. He would be able to get Tikirala promoted in the King's service. And as for a bride for her brother's boy, were there not growing girl's in the house. It would be madness to throw away such opportunity. Indeed it would amount to preventing her from enjoying a happy life the merits of a past good karma was placing in her way.

Her father had turned a deaf ear to all such talk; and she had loved him all the more from that moment. A few days later her father had said 'The nuptials of the boy and girl should not be any longer delayed'. But the very next noon Tikirala returned from the capital, and with tears in his eyes told them of the king's order exiling him from the capital for a whole year. Her mother began talking again of the Kodituwakku Nilamay and suggested the latter might help to get Tikirala reinstated. But the father sternly asked her to mind the house; it was not human to add straw to a flaming fire. And her mother had given her more work to do that day.

She, Ram Menika, never carried tales. But on that occasion she had secretly told Tikirala what talk there had been. Tikirala swore to keep it to himself; but the very next morning he walked into the kitchen where her mother sat cooking, and a scene followed. Ram Menika remembered every word that was said.

"Aunt.....", began Tikirala and burst into tears.

"You have shed enough tears over it, son. The year will soon pass, and you will be summoned for rajakariya. The king has not denied you use of the *paraveni* land, has he?"

"I do not care about the King's land or the King's service. Why should you be unkind? Am I not your brother's son?"

"Unkind to you, my son? What talk is this? Unkind to my brother's son whom I have loved more than the children born of my womb? Has your uncle said anything to hurt your feelings?"

"If he did I could understand. It is you that has forgotten I am your elder brother's son, that you should love me ever so much more than uncle does."

The words had flowed through hot tears. Her mother was surprised. She looked displeased; but in a minute began to laugh.

"By my mother, this girl is very bad. She has been carrying tales, hasn't she? Much good she will do to a husband when she takes one. Let us give the minx to the man whom her *rabbada* shell has deceived, son. And we shall get him to intercede on your behalf, and get you reinstated in your regiment. She is not the only daughter I have."

"If that is your wish, bid me leave your house and forget you ever had a brother. You shall never see me again whether I live or perish."

"Ah! I see. It must be your ඉරනම්. Be of good cheer my son. You shall have Ranni and none else. But call that minx here. She needs a lesson in what to say to her man. This is a dangerous pastime — carrying tales and making others quarrel. Certain, she is eaves dropping this moment." And her mother had not spoken of the nilamay after that day.

The maid lived over again such happy moments of her life, in the company of her lad. He was hers. The noble lady would learn how she dies, faithful to Tikirala. She would send for him and tell him. The thought brought comfort. Then her mind pictured the might have been if an evil karma had not overtaken her — a peaceful home, and little sons like Tikirala with a brave father to care for them. The blast of a conch woke her from the reverie; and the attendant touched her hand saying,

"Let us be going, my goddess."

The maid rose and moved mechanically by the side of the woman towards the great esplanade where a procession had formed.

To the maid the attendant was leading her to a place where her love to Tikirala was to be put to the test. The latter said to herself, 'She is possessed.' Bahirawa deviyo has accepted the *dola* offered by our monarch'.

Whilst the Gajanayaka Nilamay cursed 'That Owila slattern' and every single individual connected to her, while Ram Menika lived again the happiest moments of an innocent life, the demon, for whose appeasement the king had sanctioned a human sacrifice, haunted the monarch's dreams.

The Esala moon was far on its wane. The annual festival of the gods at the conclusion of which devas send down rains as an earnest of their blessings, had not brought a drop of water to the parched fields. During Wesak, the month of heavy rains, there had been little more than passing showers. Poson was completely dry. At the end of the Esala Perehera, before chieftains and headmen of the dissawas left the capital, the king had reminded them of the importance of attending to all irrigation work for maha cultivation soon as wet weather should set in. *Kapuralas*, on orders from court, prayed to the devas in their temples to save the land from calamity. But no sign of rain could be seen. Anxious husbandmen ploughing their fields to be in time for the *maha* season watched how a merciless sun sucked up what moisture there was in the furrows. Many blamed it on the ill luck of the monarch; all feared for the future. Failure of *maha* cultivation meant a lack of food grains, an opportunity the white ruler of Colombo always seized to invade a troubled country, lay waste villages, and ruin the capital with pillage and fire. It was to save the kingdom from greater scarcity and sorrow that the king had sanctioned a Bahirawa *dola*. For Bahirawa it was that caused water scarcity, and inspired bloodshed. A single human life was no great price, if its sacrifice would avert famine, pestilence and war.

Weighed with worry Sri Wickramarajasingha had retired for his siesta to a room in the upper story of the palace. It was a chamber built to resemble a *divya vimana*. On the walls, moulded in the plaster and painted with care, walked attendants bearing royal insignia, *chamara sesath* and *mutukuda*. The king's couch was built of rare red sandal and plates of gold. By it on a silver tripod stood a gem-set betel tray. Over the bed suspended from a frescoed ceiling hung a white canopy decorated with jasmine and *manel* flowers. At the door of the apartment, dressed in chieftain's clothes, stood its caretaker, the proud aristocrat who

discharged the *siri-yahan painday*. In spite of the beauty around, inspite of the cooling fragrance of fresh flowers, the royal head tossed restive on its silken pillow.

Up into the darkness of the king's dreams floated the cone shaped image of a mountain. On its summit was a man made pond. It was raining and the pond filled fast. More rain clouds rose over the hill; and in their midst the king could see blue-lotus coloured rain gods. By each sat a beautiful nymph. They wore golden coronets and richly ornaments that glistened in spite of the gloom. They sang as their cloud chariots rode on the storm; and their songs were of fertile fields and rushing brooks, of choking barns and well fed cattle, of happy homes and sturdy swains fit and ready at any time to lay by the ploughshare and gird on the sword.

So heavy the clouds and so bountiful their gift that soon the pond overflowed. Its clear water leapt down the slopes to join a brimming river. Every slope was verdant as an emerald. Around and beyond stretched waving haen and smiling paddy.

And now the rain ceased; but the sky grew darker. Vague forms could be discerned moving at the foot of the mountain. There were many of these on one side, and on the other a large lonely form. The many were clearly a herd of elephants feeding on the lush vegetation. What was the lone monster on the opposite side? It appeared to grow as through the darkness it took shape. It was now three, four, many times the size of the largest animal in the herd. It had a tail like an elephant's but no trunk, and moved only on its hind legs. The face strangely resembled that of a human, but monstrous in its aspect. The nose and mouth looked like a stubby snout, and the chinless lower jaw hung like the jaw of an infuriated elephant.[10]

From its side of the hill the monster appeared to scent the herd. It raised its stooping body, as it later appeared, to be seen rather than to see. Its inflamed eyes seemed to start from their sockets, and the mighty jaws opened terrifying to behold. The elphants saw. They turned and crashed through the bush faster than elephants in a herd ever do.

Their flight seemed to please the monster. It turned from their direction, and going on all fours began to labour up the mountain till it climbed to the summit. Its size notwithstanding, it moved with ease on the narrow bund of the pond, walking round

and round looking down malevolently at the water. Then it bent forward to drink. And what a drink there was!

With the first touch of its snout the pond ceased to overflow. Each pull seemed to draw up a third of its content. Its lips soon touched the bottom, and the mud of the pond bed cracked as if it had been dry for months. The monster did not raise its head: in some mysterious way it appeared to draw up all the water there was in the soil. For now even the river ran low; and by and by, where it had rolled, appeared boulders and white sands. The verdant vegetation turned sere. Haen-yayas were green no more. The young paddy drooped, and the soft mud that nourished them cracked and caked.

When at length the monster raised its head there was desolation every where. It sat on the bund with its feet in the dust that had been the pond bed, and gazed round pleased with the results of its drink. Then it broke into malevolent laughter that convulsed its body, and brought out freckles of sun-bright gold all over it. The violent laughter seemed to melt the hideous colossus; and now it was a man, and by his side there was a large dog. On the man's head was a golden coronet. His only apparel, a white waist cloth, was held by a band that flowed in large tassels on either side. The man's body was shapely. But for all the beauty of form, he carried in his right hand an executioner's sword, and in his left a silver cup; and the rim of that cup was stained red. It was Bahirawa, asking for the only drink he relished, fresh human blood!

The monarch sat bolt upright on his bed. His forehead was damp with a perspiration. His noble eyes opened wide as he gazed out through the lacquer balustrade of the only window in the wall. There before him rose the mountain of his dream, Bahirawa-kanda, the curse of Senkadagala Siriwardanapura Nuwara. Long before the month of *Nikini*, many a time should the rains have filled to overflowing the pond on its summit. According to how often seasonal rains filled the *ahas pokuna*, as it was known, wise men at court were able to forecast the agricutural productivity of the kingdom that year. But there had been no rains for months, and the king knew the pond bed was even at that moment dust. Dunuvila nilamay counselled that to the annual bonfires and *dola* to Bahirawa be added a human sacrifice, a maid of spotless purity, the most beautiful in the land. The king had consented, and as on a previous occasion charged Dunu-

vila himself with the duty of selecting a maid and offering her to the demon in the most suitable manner. Even at that moment preparations were being completed to conduct a beautiful maid to the demon's hill with all ceremony. That the demon should still threaten drought devastation and war angered the monarch.

Before the aristocratic chamberlain at the door could kneel to receive his orders for the evening, Sri Wickramarajasingha was raging like a caged lion. His body shook. The gold ornamented sandals lay by the bed forgotten. He paced the room, his excited step on the boarded floor producing more noise than it was becoming for royal feet to make. He shook a clenched first at the mountain, and burst into unkingly language;

"Vile demon that delights in human blood! Dog that has received nothing cleaner than a dog for *vahana*, how long will you plague this city with thy presence! Every time a man of noble lineage is convicted of a crime I have ordered his execution at the foot of thy accursed hill; though the shedding of blood within the gates of the city is a polution. Former kings gave you two bonfires and a few sweets and a little animal blood once a year. I have caused greater honour to be rendered to you. Yet is the land visited by drought, and the crops my people labour for denied to them. Yet art thou not pleased; and treason flourishes and war and famine threatens the land. Know vile spirit that Uva Mohottala's[11] line is not extinct. His *sastra* is not forgotten. I shall command his descendants to harry you with their powerful charms. I shall get them to make thee a bond slave; and in place of honour and *dola*, I shall make you appear in the flesh and draw water the live long day to irrigate the paddy fields thy droughts have ruined. I will do worse. I will get a thousand *kattandiyo* to torment thee till thou dost divulge every treasure trove in thy care, till my subjects laugh at the sound of thy name."

In the grip of his anger Sri Wickramarajasingha forgot he was a king. In Kandy, from the moment he was raised to the throne and received from the gods the ruler's Sword of Justice, a monarch was supposed to possess divine attributes. The noblest in the land addressed him as 'Deveyanwahansa'. He received treatment accorded to a deity; and the people looked for grace and decorum in everything he said and did. The aristocrat in attendance was scandalised at his master's unbridled choler. He was at a loss what to do. When, however, the king's knot of hair came loose, the chamberlain sank on his knees, and in an alarmed

whisper drew his attention to the fact. Like a tusker checked by the mahout's hook the prince turned; and without a word followed the chamberlain to the palace bath.

Men that claimed noble blood were waiting in the bath to help in the monarch's ablutions. Vessels of silver and gold held the water and unguents for his use. Groomed in satin and heavy gold ornaments the king came out on the *pattiruppuwa*[12] overlooking the Swarnakalayna Weediya to take his formal part in the Bahirawa dola.

He appeared serene, but his mind still dwelt on the disturbing dream. In whichever direction he looked, his eyes rested on an object that reminded him of thwarted ambition. The beautiful lake whose construction had been opposed first because the land was a fertile paddy patch, and then because, as the minister's contended, the people were not liable to rajakariya on works of mere beauty. When these objections had been overcome, and stubborn *radala* leaders that spread disaffection executed on the bed of the lake then in the course of construction, the priests of Malwatta Monastery gave trouble. They were drawn from the aristocracy, but were more powerful in that they could not be brought to justice as easily as the latter. They refused to give up any land from monastery property whatever was offered in exchange. Where he had expected the lake to look its best the monastery grounds bulged in an ugly segment into the waters. And there right opposite stood the ramparts of a palace he had intended should be the most gorgeous ever in Singhalay — a bitter reminder of frustrated plans. The threat of war was not so unpleasant, for in war the whole country was behind him; though, when once he developed plans to end wars by driving the Engreesi from Colombo, his generals had refused to lead their men outside the confines of his kingdom.

A roll of war drums announced the procession. The Gajanayaka Nilamay's flag and a band of drummers emerged from behind the southern wall of the Palace Square, and immediately behind, the Gajanayaka Nilamay himself. The *netti-mala* of his mount was in keeping with the chieftain's ceremonial clothes; but the *eth-hetta* was poor in contrast. Here is a dutiful man, the king thought, whose ways are not characterised by the vanity of his class. He bestrides an elephant when he might have a tusker and has an unostentatious covering for his mount because he has

to go past the palace. As he approached Dunuvila dismounted, and folding his palms to the monarch said;

"Lord that will be a Buddha for a five thousand year cycle, may your beneficent rule last long as the sun and the moon travel in their courses. Grant your *balugetta* permission to conduct this sacrifice to Bahirawa, that he may send rain to nourish the crops your subjects labour for, and avert war that ruins the country and its royal city."

The king smiled; and the Maha Mudiyansay standing by him said aloud;

"Dunuvila Gajanayaka Nilamay is commanded to conduct the *dola* in such manner as would appease Bahirawa. The Gajanayaka Nilamay has leave to proceed."

The loyal Dunuvila bowed low, his palms still folded. He ordered the now silent drums to announce the command and as the procession moved went a few fathoms on foot before he got on his mount again. Slow, by his order, the procession proceeded that the monarch may inspect each detail.

Five caparisoned elephants formed the body of the perehera. They were large animals, but not one was a tusker, as the spirit being honoured was only a demon. After every elephant went a few *atora* attendants each bearing a *hemakada* under whose vari coloured flounces was food prepared for the *dola*. In relays between the elephants marched a large number of nekathi men. They wore white cloths, red waist bands and red turbans. Across their bare shoulders were strings of large glass beads and *rudraksha* seed. A few wore hideous masks, and performed weird dances to the throb of *yak-bera*. The tail end of the procession looked pleasant. Here troupes of *pantheru* dancers sang before the maid. Ceremonial torches were borne in front of her, though still it was day, and by her walked the woman with the large betel wallet. The sixteen *patistana* bearers brought up the rear. With dignified step the human sacrifice walked, halting when the procession slowed, and stepping forward again when her attendant touched her arm. It struck the king as strange.

Ram Menika's weeping when she had been produced before him, had moved the king. Sadly had he sanctioned the sacrifice. He had expected to see the maid carried in a palanquin, wailing and struggling. But the palanquin was borne, behind empty; and the girl stepped like a queen, fearlessly it appeared. And the king wondered, 'Has the demon been pleased with the sacrifice

selected for him this time?' The jasmines round Ram Menika's hair had begun to blow. Her comely face and graceful neck, her heaving bosom and shapely form—it was beauty that deserved a better fate. The king did not wait long on the balcony. He turned to his Maha Mudaliya, Master of the Royal Household, and in an unsteady voice gave an order that the music of the Kavikara Maduwa and the performance of the different Illangam be dispensed with. It meant an unusually austere night in the palace. For not even during war was the kavikara maduwa of monarch or noble commander silenced in palace or camp in the early hours of the night. With an oath in his heart the Maha Mudiyansay moved away enraged that scheming courtiers should make his prince unhappy.

In perfect order its chief conducted the procession down the Swarna Kalyana Veediya. More and more of the populace gathered to follow. Noble dame and peasant woman pitied the plight of the handsome maid; and in their hearts cursed the monarch as she passed. Many an eye was dim with tears; and from every heart went forth a prayer to the Satara-waran Devas, to the twelve lesser deities, to Kalukumara and Dedimunda whose temples stood on the Devasanghinda, imploring their protection for the innocent young victim—till next morning. Unaware of the resentment of his subjects, the king consoled himself with the thought that what he had ordered was the only way to save the country from drought, famine and war. As the procession reached the foot of the demon's hill, Dunuvila nilamay's retainers saw to it that none save those who had a part to play in the rite went a step further. They halted a little to leave the elephants behind and light a number of torches. The procession then proceeded in single file followed by the sad eyes left below.

On Bahirawakanda, a little below the summit, where a giant rukattana tree raised its scanty crown up towards the stars, were more red turbaned men. These had been preparing the spot for the ceremony of dedicating the maid to the demon. Between the *ahas-pokuna* and the giant tree they had arranged a number of bali rafts in a semi-circle. Assembled with pink coloured banana trunks, each baliya was divided into a number of small squares over which arched quaintly cut decorations of tender coconut leaf. Within the squares they were placing flowers, aromatic oils, yams and other requisites, five varieties of each, to show the deity the high honour they were giving him. In each square

was a small *gotta* for each of the viands the *atora* men were bringing in their ceremonial pingoes. Every raft had a few new clay oil lamps ready with oil and wicks. Each *baliya* had also a cup made of betel leaf which Bahirawa himself might fill, if he chose to make such use of the bride the king was dedicating to him.

When the maid came up they stood her by the giant tree. Four middle aged men of faultless stature took their stand near the *bali* rafts; and in solemn tones chanted *soloka* inviting Bahirawa to the *mangalaya*. They ordered the red turbaned men who hastened to light a bonfire that had been gathered on the farther side of the summit. With flaming torches they signalled to the Naga Vimana mountain[13] across the Bogambara lake; and another bonfire burst into flames there.

The clay oil lamps in the *bali* were now set alight; and the nekathi men, some wearing masks, sang rythmic songs in praise of Bahirawa, and danced round each bali raft. Each dancer carried a small torch in his left hand, and with the other dashed handfuls of powdered resin on its flame producing sudden bursts of waving fire now rising skyward, now spreading on the ground, till it looked the men were dancing in an inferno. Then they intoned more *soloka* requesting Bahirawa, great and powerful, to accept the monarch's excellent gifts and save the land from drought, famine and bloodshed.

Night had advanced when the ceremony terminated. Those that had danced and chanted trouped past the Gajanayake Nilamay each saluting him with folded palms before he started down the hill. The chieftain walked to the tree and, sadly it appeared, ordered the maid be bound to it. A long web of white cloth folded to form a stout band was passed twice round the waist of the unresisting maid. The female attendant then passed the ends to an official who gathered them to a knot on the other side of the enormous trunk. Her hands too were tied together; and the few who were left walked away leaving Ram Menika midst a blaze of light.

The maid had seen a *bali* ceremony in her home at least once every year, performed to bring her father health and prosperity. There was therefore nothing quite new to her in the weird performance. Indeed, in her state she could not follow what was being said and done around her. She had stood dazed, consoled that there was one of her sex by her. The thought that at all events the woman will remain there with her had brought some little comfort. As the gorgeously attired form of the chieftain

faded in the darkness, instinctively her eyes sought her friend. She was not there! Ram Menika burst into frantic wails. The Gajanayaka Nilamay turned back, it appeared with great concern.

"Do not weep Ram Menika," he said, "there is really no need for alarm. Listen—you shall be in no danger from fright or loneliness during the night. I promise you I shall send you home to your parents tomorrow morning."

The poor girl scarcely heard. She struggled till she realised that struggling tightened the imprisoning band. Efforts to tear it disclosed the existence of a chain within the folds. The ominous boom of a *hekanda* now rent the stillness of the night. To the city it proclaimed the king's curfew, that none may step out of his house, or open his door till morn. To Ram Menika its threatening notes seemed to herald the demon's approach. She called to her mother, and called to the great devas to save her.

As the curfew sound died away, a man crouching in the bush at the foot of the mountain on the Borawewa[14] side took a look round. He adjusted his turban and muttered a 'Namo Buddhaya' preparatory to emerging from his hiding place. The meadowy slope round the rukattana tree to which the maid was chained ended abruptly in a bank that dropped sheer to the waters of the Borawewa, a small lake below. From its farther side one could clearly see what passed on the hill. Here the man had concealed himself what time the city folk were thronging to witness the procession. He had watched the ceremony on the hill, and at its end, followed the glitter of a chieftain's dress. When it moved away from the glare and disappeared in the darkness preceeded by the faint light of a brass torch, he knew it was the Gajanayaka Nilamay. He would ofcourse be the last to leave the spot. The coast is clear for me, he thought. He had secret orders to bring the maid away from the hill soon as he could effect the rescue.

'Namo Buddhaya', he said again as he put his right foot forward on the risky errand. Hardly had it touched ground when the long drawn howl of a lonely jackal swelled in the air. The yell of a single jackal is always ominous: the way it howled that day distinctly boded calamity. He had a wife and children, and poor relatives too who could ill-afford to lose him. He was brave and had fared well on more than one battle field. But prudence prompted that he should abandon the adventure and avoid possible arrest. But he served a master that loved him. That master

eagerly awaited the accomplishment of his task. With great circumspection he peered around a second time.

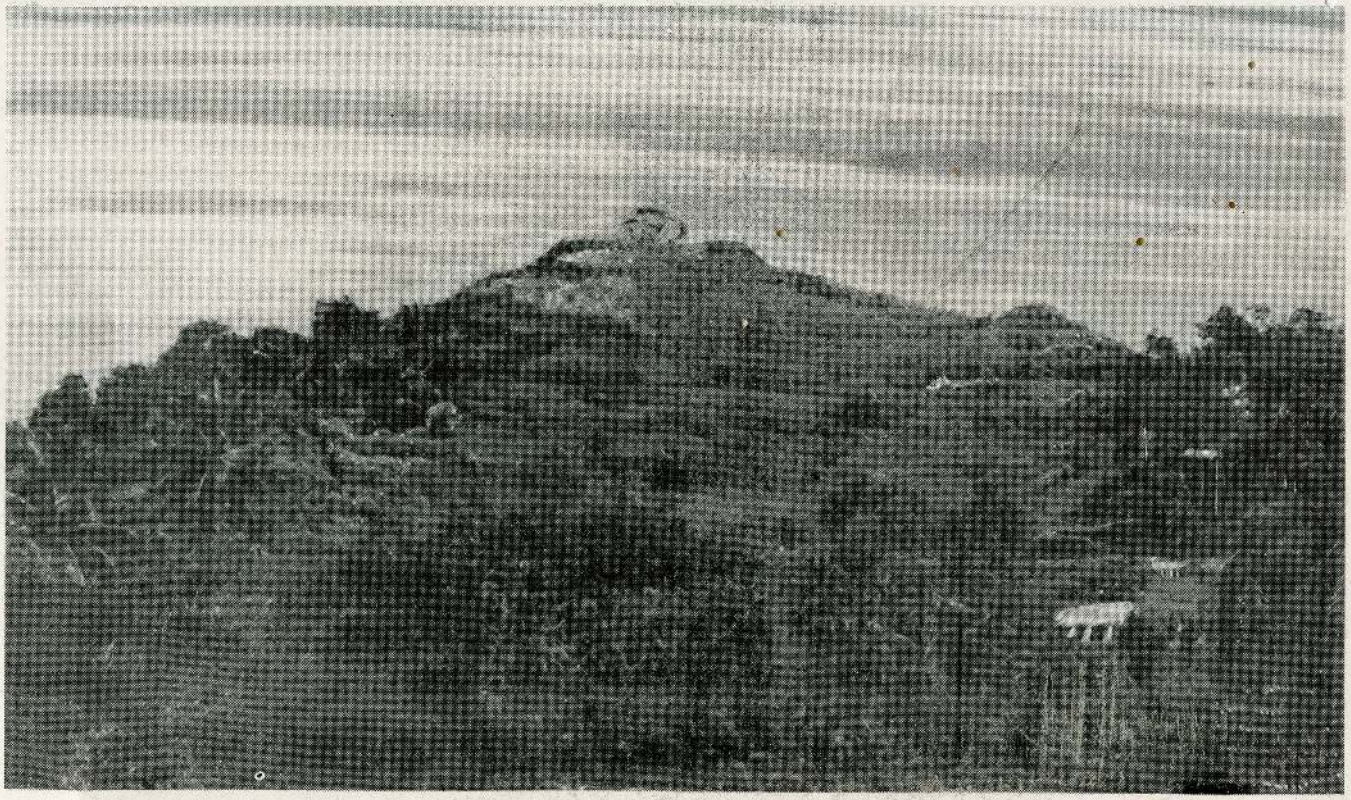
Nothing moved. He splashed a stone into the water. Anyone within hearing would be attracted. Still there was sign of neither man nor beast. He would accomplish his task with expedition. With a few Namo-buddhayas and a fervent prayer to the gods for protection, he cautiously stepped out and peered in the darkness. Safe! But what was that on the mountain? An uncomfortable chill stole down his spine. He felt his limbs palsied. He watched rooted to the spot: though his mind said all he could do was to turn and run home.

Upon the summit, silhouetted against the bonfire's blaze, moved a human shaped figure large enough to be a giant. On its head it appeared to have an egg shaped crown. The broad shoulders were bare. Below the waist it wore a cloth. As the shadow darted hither and thither the tassels of its waist band flapped in the flames. Yet were they not scorched! In one hand it carried what looked like an unusually long sword, and in the other a large round object, a monster cup perhaps!

The would be rescuer looked on awe-struck, terrified. The chill in the spine had spread all over, and his limbs shook uncontrolable. He felt a cold sweat too. He began a religious stanza for self protection; but could not get beyond the first two words, which he kept repeating. Neither could he take his eyes off the mountain top. There the figure appeared to dance about a space. Then it stopped short and turned, as he thought, towards the city. It raised its sword arm and plunged forward, its size increasing as it fell, and its form spreading into the darkness. A piercing scream told him that the girl too had seen the apparition. Or was it towards her it had gone? Bahirawa had come to accept the sacrificial life! Perhaps he liked the maid offered him that day better than the one given him on a previous occasion.

The man felt certain the maid was already in the demon's embrace. Had not the gods warned him through that lonely jackal, his blood too might have gone into Bahirawa's cup. Some time passed before his limbs would obey. He now remembered his *gatha* charm, though by degrees; and muttered it over and over again.

With its repetition he felt he was regaining self possession. His attempts to run failed. He remembered his laird was waiting. His head throbbed. With a doggedness born of love to a kind



Bahirawa Kanda, the demon's hill on which a beautiful maid was offered as sacrifice.

master the man staggered homewards, moving right along the streets, too scared to remember the king's curfew.

Few dared to disobey the curfew. The nekathi people from their homes on the Naga Vimana hill, able to peep out without being detected, had seen the aparition. The rest of the inhabitants of Senkadagalapura had gone to bed with heavy hearts. They prayed to every beneficent deva to share in all the merits they had ever earned and extend divine protection to the maid on the mountain. People of all ranks wondered how the king could make up his mind to let a weak girl face such an ordeal. Noble dames asked when before in Singhalay such pain had been inflicted on females. Their lords muttered unmentionable oaths. Mothers of comely daughters shuddered to think of the future. Upon the king they laid the blame. The few knowing ones, however, called the monarch a fool not to know whose advice to take and whose to reject. The laird of Dunuvila rested happy that once again he had won royal approbation.

The street doors of his walawwa were shut and barred in obedience to the curfew. But the nobleman was up. He had partaken of his dinner in the gorgeous clothes worn for the procession and waited in them as if he expected an exalted guest. By his wish the better part of the rice and viands served up for him in his silver plate was still where he had dined.[15]

"To leave the rice on his own silver thetiya, as if he had a kumarihamy to eat off it," muttered a middle aged female who was putting things away for the night.

"Send the vidane straight to me as soon as he comes," the laird said.

"Ehei," Heen Amma rejoined, then speaking lower, "His nilamay's errands will lead the vidane to a nice place before he is much older."

Heen Amma was the vidane's wife. From girlhood she had served the laird's mother as a handmaid. She claimed kinship to her mistress, and with the decline of Dunuvila fortunes had had her claims allowed. Adversity, if anything, made her more attached to her lady; and when the latter died leaving her son a landless orphan, Heen Amma and her husband befriended the scion. On his elevation to place and fortune the laird showed his gratitude. He entrusted his wealth and home to their management.

It was close on midnight when the vidane tottered in through a secret door at the back of the walawwa. He walked like one

in a malaria fit; and once within, fell on the floor frothing at the mouth. Heen Amma found his body warm with a fever. He would not or could not speak coherently, but asked for water. All that he said was that he be taken before his lord. When that was done he knelt at the door of the room panting. Tears ran down his face. To every query, and the nilamay had a number of them, there appeared to be but one word the man could articulate; and that word was Bahirawa.

"Bahirawa! You big blockhead! Your orders were not to hold communion with Bahirawa, but to fetch the young woman hither. To take fright at the name of a spirit, be he the demon Mahasona himself! I never thought a Singhala man could prove such a dolt — at your time of life. All my wealth, all my affairs have I trusted into your hands. On a day like this I am let down. Give this big ass woman's clothing", the laird cried in anger. "You shall see how this same Bahirawa fares with me."

The Gajanayaka Nilamay cursed and swore. He cast aside his gorgeous clothes. and slipped on a lighter dress. Coloured pantaloons and a close fitting doublet such as great ones wear when going into battle. Over the doublet he wrapped a broad waist band into which he stuck two daggers. Then he girded on his sword, and pulled down a soldier's *his-paiya* to his ears, gathering its long flaps under the chin.

"Open the postern door", he commanded, "I go out that way. You shall see," he cast a withering glance at the kneeling vidane, "who comes out victor, Bahirawa or I."

But before he proceeded to the secret exit, he had to pass the only door of the room in which he raged. Right across it knelt the vidane, now weeping like a chastised child; and by his side stood Heen Amma.

"And where is your lordship going?" she asked, humbly it appeared, but in a tone that said, 'Indeed you shall not'.

"To the hill of Bahirawa, you cow brained woman, " he almost shouted in her face, "to try and find this demon your idiot of a husband has run away from. A man of this big buffalo's age to take fright at the sight of a spook! I wanted that lass for her beauty. She shall not die miserably on that hill because my retainers are cowards. She shall not remain bound there a *peya* longer. My servants can't do my bidding! I must even go about my errands myself. Move out of that door *bolang* woman."

But Heen Amma stood as firmly fixed, where she was, as the door posts. She spoke words of reason in a voice that showed her master had a servant who knew when to disobey. She refused to understand the haste the laird was in to get going on his mission of rescue. She reminded him of the love with which she and the vidane had befriended him when he was alone in the world, when nothing could be expected in return for one's services to him, when noble relatives and friends in high place deigned not to cast one glance in his direction. 'What is this great mission *Apay-hamuduruwo* feels bound to achieve', she asked, 'this task he must place above duty and obedience to the Maha Wasala?— to indulge a carnal fancy deceived by the *rabbada* exterior of a pot of flesh and filth, that must some day rot and stink like the carrion of any dead crow? And if a fair lass is wanted, is there only one of them, only this one in the wide world? What girl could His Lordship not command that he should risk all to indulge a disgraceful appetite?'

> "May the Satara Waram Deviyo that reigns over the world witness this madness!" she exclaimed. "Is this the man to be deterred from carrying out your wish for fear of a ghost? Have you forgotten so soon how time and again he has risked his life on your errands? Beware, my lord, there is danger on that hill tonight! The last sacrifice offered to Bahirawa is not dead. She may have told tales that your enemies would be delighted to place before the Maha Wasala. If the demon my man saw is only a pretender, then may be, there is a party that has planned to attract you to the mountain. And if you do return with the girl, her presence in the walawwa will be evidence enough to set the monarch against you. *Rajakaruna* melts like the mist at sunrise when *rajaudahas* approaches. Titles and wealth do not dull the sword of the king's executioners."

She moved not an inch. It was not the servant but the foster mother in her that obstructed the laird. The picture of Nickawellay Rala's neice and the maid, alone in the decorated porch, flashed before him. It occurred to him that the king's favourite regiment, the Wadana-tuwakku Musketeers, had been ordered to guard the approaches to the mountain on its farther slope. And its commander was the husband of Nickawellay Rala's neice.

"You foolish woman", the laird cried pacing the room like a trapped leopard, "do you tell me that I should sleep safe here whilst that poor girl perishes of fright on the mountain?"

He stormed. He cursed the vidane and those responsible for the vidane's birth. But he realised the vidane's wife spoke sense; and cursed himself too for not having read aright what he plainly saw that noon. Throwing away his sword the laird demanded of Heen Amma, 'What in the world she wanted him to do?'

"The first great need in this walawwa," said the inexorable Heen Amma, "is a good kumarihamy. As for that unfortunate sinner on the hill, I shall send my nephew, Siyatu, to ascertain what is happening, and, if possible, to bring her away. I am certain no harm will befall her, save a little fright. Women swoon in the evening and wake to life again in the morning, quite fit to continue atoning for the sins that made us take birth as women."

When told of the master's command Siyatu leapt up from his sleepy mat. He wore his cloth high and took the dagger and waist band the aunt brought him. To the amulets on his person were added those his uncle and aunt wore.

"Son", said the latter, as she rubbed pirit oil on his forehead and arms, "be cautious how you act. If any of the king's men see you, leave the girl to her fate and look to your own safety. For, whatever happens, we cannot divulge the name of the walawwa. The devas will protect you and send you safe back to me."

"*Anichchay*, *kudamma*, there are few that can run in the dark with me. If this *mala-ilawwa* is still alive, I will bring her, never fear."

A brave lad was Siyatu. He felt proud to be sent on the dangerous errand. Nothing save the demon shall stop me, he muttered to himself, as he disappeared into the night.

It was the tenth day of a waning moon. The Bahirawa *dola*, a rite opposed to Buddhist teachings, had been fixed on a day that was not holy. From the Dunuwila Walawwa to the foot of the mountain there was but a short street to cross. But it led through the quarter where the king's *navandanno* artisans resided. So Siyatu made a detour to get to the hill past the Asgiriya monastery, where even if detected, he might pass for a vihara attendant. Silently, yet, with remarkable speed, he made his way so that anybody disturbed might have little time to recognise a human form.

Past the monastery he crossed to the western slope of the hill, then through the *haen-yayas* of Dodanwala village he directed his foot steps to a patch of forest he knew, from where he could command a view of the slope on which the Bahirawa *dola* was offered. Though on a lower level, he was not far from the bonfire now. Warily he clambered up a large tree to reconnoitre. He now felt more nervous than he had expected. Something in him said he would see what he did not want to — Bahirawa with the maid as his bride.

On the summit the bonfire blazed away. Below he saw the *bali* rafts near the rukattana tree. A couple of oil lamps still flickered in them. That light was sufficient for Siyatu. Neither by the tree, nor any where close to it could he discern the female form his keen eyes searched. Something stirred. It emerged from the darkness of the thicket to the light — a large four footed animal, far too large for a jackal. Behind it came another, smaller than the first. Straight towards the *bali* rafts they went, and appeared to scrutinise them deliberately. He remembered that demons could assume the shape of animals at will. Siyatu felt for his amulets; and he muttered a *mantram*. When he could think coherently again the young man was still running and tumbling across the *haenas*, back the way he had climbed, with a sickening feeling that his legs would not carry him fast.

A torpor born of utter despair was settling on Ram Menika when she saw a black image silhouetted against the bonfire, whence she felt it had emerged. It appeared to dance; then it leaped into space and flew down upon her making every thing around grow dark. A frantic scream, a desperate effort to get free, to run. Ram Menika knew nought of what passed for some time after.

When she awoke she was lying on her back. The giant tree, the imprisoning band, and the illuminated *bali* — where were they? She had been dreaming of home, of her mother busy in the kitchen, calling to her to mind the paddy out in the sun. She felt her body ache, and turned on what she thought was her pillow. Then a hand caressed the hair back from her forehead; and a low voice said,

"My Ranni, speak to me, *amma*."

With returning consciousness she took in her surroundings. Smoky flames of the bonfire rising skyward behind the summit; stars twinkling above; dark forms of jungle trees around. She was not in her home. She felt for the necklaces:

there were none. But that satin jacket with its *mante* was not her's. She was on the hill. A few large drops of rain on her face; and she gradually realised that her head rested on somebody's lap, somebody who was bending down on her, whose hands rubbed away the cold drops falling on her face.

The words of the kind lady came to her mind. Her greater danger was not the demon but a chieftain who wanted her for his own ends. And here was the wicked man come to bring her dishonour? She thought of Tikirala. She would run, run into the flames, or jump down the steep bank, below which she had noticed the waters of a lake. Though weak and exhausted, that courage providence gives to virtue in the defence of its honour, brought life back to numbed limbs. She leapt to her feet. Softly but firmly strong hands pulled her down. Frenzied efforts to get free proved of little avail. In the midst of her struggles, however, she knew the voice that remonstrated.

"Ranni, why *amma* do you attempt to run? Are you going mad, *nena*?"

There was sadness and alarm in that somehow soothing voice. There was no threat, nor unkindness to stiffen resistence.

"In the name of the gods tell me who you are", she cried falling on the ground exhausted. "Kill me, but do not do me harm, I worship you."

She burst into tears and folded her hands in entreaty.

"My *amma*", spoke the manly voice in alarm, "you have fallen on my sword. Lie still till I remove it. It has been ground as sharp as sword could be."

She did know that voice. He lifted her and made her sit up. He placed the sword a little apart.

"Tell me who you are, in the name of the Satarawaran gods", she again entreated.

"Ranni, you cannot recognise me? Yes, I cannot see your features clearly myself. See whether the sword has cut you. I carried you away from the glare lest some one see me. Your body was limp — I thought you were dying. Listen, *nena*, you have heard this verse before?"

Softly he sang. With the first line Ram Menika knew the voice as well as the verse; foi she had heard it many a time. It compared her hair to a peacock's spreading plume, her face to the waxing moon. Her teeth was a string of glistening pearls; golden swanlings were her breasts. Her eyes were wish conferring gems;

her lips deceived the bees. The singer swore an attachment long as he sailed the seas of *sangsaro*. Who but Tikirala would so exaggerate her charms; who else risk life itself to come to her in her peril. But it was all so difficult to understand — her presence on the hill with a male as sole companion, Tikirala within the gates of Senkadagala in defiance of the king's order, her lover's life in danger on account of her, and she herself assigned as a sacrifice to a demon.

Notwithstanding all her fears Ram Menika knew that with Tikirala there, she was safe. But in her heart now welled a sentiment stronger than self love, the anxiety of true woman for the safety of her male. Through her tears she abruptly turned on her lad and demanded;

"And why have *you* come ?"

"Because *you* came away without taking leave of me *nena*", the lad replied railing in the first joy of realising that his fears about Ram Menika being possessed by the demon she had been given to, were groundless.

"You disobeyed *raja-ana*."

"Ah ! I should have been in the city before, but mother insisted I should work to save you, and not to please myself. She said you would be in no real danger till left alone on this hill. She told me when to start, and how to act, that I may save you and put myself in no great danger. From the time I wanted to start for the capital she took advice with *egoda-uncle*. He must be in our house still."

Ram Menika fell forward, and hiding her face in Tikirala's lap gave way to her emotions. The lad attempted to calm her; but his voice too choked. When at length he was able to speak he said,

"There is no need to fear any more, *nena*. Am I not with you ? If death comes we shall both die and be reborn in the same country and live together. Now tell me all that happened from the time you were brought away."

"Did you see ?" she cried shivering.

"See what ?"

"Bahirawa deviyo? He came !"

With her face still hidden she attempted to tell him her experience. A black figure, sword in hand, coming out of the fire, turning everything into blackness.....Her body trembled as

she spoke, between sobs. Tikirala though brave felt a chill creep within him. Concealing his fears as best he could he asked,

"And what happened then?"

"I screamed in terror, and do not know what happened after."

"It was when I dashed down towards the tree that you screamed Ranni. I was a fool to have come between the fire and the city. But I had been advised to look for you tied to a stake on the bed of the *pokuna*. When I did not see you there, I feared the worst. I rushed about to find you. If not for the bali I could not have found you so soon. When I did, I sprang down the pond bund, and you must have seen my form against the fire behind the pond. I carried my sword unsheathed in case some one had been set to watch lest you got free."

He soothed her fears. Taking a silver *bera* that hung from a cord round his neck he rubbed on her forehead and hair *pirit* oil his mother had given him. There was sanctified thread round the handle of the dagger at his waist. This he tied round her neck solemnly reciting a stanza that invoked the devas to protect the wearer in the name of the Buddha who attained onmiscience under the sacred bodhi tree.

"My mother knew you would want the sanctified oil and thread, and she charged me to take special care of them."

Obeying Tikirala the girl sat up. She felt the sanctified oil restored some of her strength. She suffered her lover to draw her close to him, an intimacy he had never attempted before. Her feelings that could not find expression in words flowed out in silent tears. The lad felt an urge to join; but fought his tears back. As the girl's pent up feelings melted away she realised her lover's bare shoulder and arm were wet with brine. Instinctively her hand rose for the *osoriya*. Not finding it, she attempted to tear a piece off her waist cloth. Tikirala restrained her lest the king's men try to find how the cloth got torn. Ram Menika obeyed. But she found another substitute. Undoing her large knot of hair she dried the wet shoulder with her tresses. A rain drop fell on the back of her hand. She looked up at the sky: then her hand went to Tikirala's face. His cheeks were wet. Huddled close to each other, feeling alone in a sea of danger and torment, their tears mingled to seal a bond that had begun with the beginning of the girl's life. They wondered what sin in births past had brought them such sorrow. The girl yearned to get away, now fearing her

lover might fall into the hands of the king's men. To her the king was a power that inflicted pain without remorse. The youth turned over in his mind a wise mother's advice. She had said Ram Menika must not be brought away from the hill till taken to the monarch by his officers. He well knew how soon *katupurullay* men would find her, wherever she hid, should she be missing from the hill at sunrise. He had to leave her; but his heart said he should not leave her alone. The girl asked,

"Have you not done wrong to cross the river and come into the city? You brought that sword not to battle with Bahirawa Deviyo, but with the king's men, didn't you? If they find you the king will punish you. Then who will care for aunt? You must have left her in tears."

"No, not my mother!" the lad for the moment forgot present sorrow in his pride of a brave mother. "Look, what she gave me." He groped about and produced a long sword and a small palm leaf box such as lone travellers use to carry food in for the journey. He brandished the weapon till it glanced.

"You know this sword, not curved like our ones, but straight and silver bright? Father had taken it from an Engreesi captain in battle. He had asked mother to give it to me whenever I should be summoned to the wars. Mother got uncle to sharpen it, and gave it to me saying, I know what father would have done had I been in that *ebitti's* place. You will want a good sword."

"Was she not unwilling to let you come for me?"

"Oh, she wept as you women always do, but...."

"I have seen men weep too — sometimes," she said feeling his cheeks.

"No, men don't, though tears may flow. Look what mother gave me. She made oil cakes and sweet meat, and packed them in this box herself. She was certain you would not have touched any food."

"She must be cursing me, and well she might, for the danger my evil karma has driven her only son into. She always says you are as dear to her as her two eyes."

"Not a bit", the lad exclaimed proudly. "She is not like that fool of an aunt. When I knelt to take leave, she invoked the great devas to share in all the merit she had done from girlhood, and prayed they should protect and restore both you and me to her. She said that in war men faced equals in

strength and power, but that my task was to win back your life from the hands of a spirit far more powerful than kings and commanders. She told me I must act wisely and with extreme caution, which if I could not do, I might as well stay at home with the women and weep. I was warned to follow the advice given by those that knew, to cross the river after dusk and leave the mountain ere the crow's first caw. She had seen quite auspicious dreams and was certain the end of events will not be sorrowful to any one of us, mother, me or you."

"What did my mother say?"

"The silly *ilawwa*. She hasn't got up from her mat ever since you were taken. She curses your good looks because they were the cause of your being chosen for the sacrifice; and still thinks you should have been given to that Kodituwakku Nilamay. Really, do you like the *deega*?"

"There is no *kodituwakku* I need," the girl retorted, hurt.

"But my aunt is quite enamoured of him, you know? Shall we give aunt to him?"

"If father hears of what you are talking.... ?"

"He wont. Whatever you threaten, you will not sneak against me", he said, then added sadly.

"Uncle has been in Mahanuwara from the time he came with you."

"Then he does not know you were coming to this mountain?"

"Even if he had been at home, you think I should have told him? Who asks for permission that one is certain not to get?"

"Yes, you were coming to save me", she said simply, "or you would not have done what you know father does not approve of."

She began to sob again when Tikirala spoke in a suddenly altered tone.

"Now stop that; there is no time for tears any more. We are not in our *haena* but in the abode of a powerful deity, to whom you have been given as *dola* and in whose power I have placed myself by trying to deprive him of what is his. We must pray for his forgiveness and aid. We have to go to that spot to pray. I waited till your tears were dry, and the lamps in the *bali* went out. There are not many burning on them now. Hasten, dry your tears."

Ram Menika demurred. She did not want to go anywhere near the rukattana tree.

"We are not at a game of *olinda*, Ranni. We are in the power of a deva to whom our lives are like the *kekuna* nuts you throw up and catch on the back of your palm. Through his mercy alone shall we be able to leave this mountain. He is of divine origin, and a brother of Kataragama Deviyo to whom we all pray for aid. We will make a *bara*; and, as I have been told, he will spare our lives. Without his *pihita* we shall be wretched people indeed, even if we manage to get away from this place today. Do not stand; do as I do. We must not be seen."

He put his sword in its scabbard and went on all fours. The girl obeyed. She knew it was useless to refuse when Tikirala spoke in that tone. Like two quadrupeds they crept towards the tree. The lad knelt before the largest *baliya*, with Ram Menika by his side. It had no other light than two clay oil lamps. The glow of the bonfire did not fall on where they knelt. Tikirala placed his sword unsheathed in the *baliya*. Then, asking his companion to do as he did, placed the back of his right palm on the open palm of the left and began to pray.

"Bahirawa deva, condescend to look down upon your supplicants, and hear my prayer. I dedicate to you my father's sword with which he has drawn blood in battle that must have pleased you. In your dread presence I make this *bara*. With this blade I will draw blood from both white warrior and black in the very next war to be waged in Singhalay; and that blood, oh deva! will be my libation to you. How can, oh noble deva, the blood of an impure thing like a woman be acceptable to you? I vow to you blood of brave soldiers in battle; and in earnest of fulfilment offer to you this day blood from my own *panchaskanda*."

Praying he had made a slit on his right forearm with the dagger from his waist. He now stretched that arm over the *baliya;* and the fresh blood filled and overflowed a betel *gotta* of which there were a few in it. The girl had kept her eyes down, fear of the demon revived by what her lover spoke. She raised her head when Tikirala stretched out his hand, and a wail escaped from her at sight of the blood that dripped from his arm, splashing red on the white coconut leaf decorations. The youth sternly reminded her of what they were doing. Bewildered, shocked, she meekly returned to her

attitude of prayer, sobbing like a child, while Tikirala continued his supplication in a steady voice.

He implored Bahirawa to accept his vow, and begged the deva to spare his cousin's valueless life. Should he fail to give the libation of human blood he promised, he would come back to that hill and give his own life in atonement.

Ram Menika felt her deliverance but a dismal relief. She almost wished her lover had not come for her. Tikirala bowed low towards the summit before he took back his sword; and after returning it to its scabbard, he bowed again as if he had received it from the demon. Then he started talking in a way that showed he was mightily pleased. He even permitted his sweetheart to tear a piece off the tassel of his waist band to serve as a bandage for his hand and said it was not an injury to worry about. Then either of them moved a few yards backwards on all fours, and returned to the sheltered spot where lay the box of oil cakes and the necklaces the lad had relieved Ram Menika of when he thought she was dying.

The lad found it difficult to persuade his cousin that all would go well with them from the morrow, indeed, from that moment. The latter felt all she could do in return for his love, was to please him. But notwithstanding her efforts tears kept flowing, and her sobs were difficult to suppress. To save her life Tikirala had placed their whole future in the demon's power. The thought frightened. Yet the touch of her lover's hand brought comfort. She rubbed her tears away, and took the oil cakes he gave.

"Mother made them for you, but said I might have a few on the journey," he laughed, his mouth almost too full for speech. "I did not feel hungry on the way. But now that Bahirawa Deviyo has deigned to listen to my prayer, and you are restored to me, I can eat a boxful of cakes. Did you see how those flames shot up and sent a shower of sparks towards the *baliya* when the *gotta* overflowed with my offering? We have the deva's *pihita*."

The young man held her close to him, and with the free hand held sweets for the girl. When he found she was not eating he was unfeignedly surprised.

"Why, they taste fine. Take this one. No, you shall eat, or upon my mother, I will not eat a bit more."

Biting off half of a cake he held the other half to her so that Ram Menika could not refuse. She ate it, and felt it tasted sweeter than cakes usually do. He made her eat more giving them partly tasted. Somehow that restored their spirits. Seated together, his strong arm round her, and her aching head on his shoulder, the knowledge that to her mate there was nothing in the world more dear than herself drowned past and future sorrows in present happiness.

A waning moon peeped over the horizon. The girl bent and scanned the man's features as if to clear some doubt. The latter laughed,

"See whether it is the Kodituwakku Nilamay."

"I wish that man should have made those vows and not you", the girl sighed.

Tikirala told her it was not proper to talk about them.

"Come what may, I keep my vows", he said looking up towards the bonfire.

He knew it was only a few hours more to dawn. They talked of home, and what passed after she had been brought away from Walpola.

"Uncle will blame me for not heeding the king's order. Will he also blame me for saving you from death? Aunt says you would never have been in this danger had you been given to the Kodituwakku Nilamay. But that man would have spent the night in considering where to get a more handsome mistress, than coming hither and facing danger. I will tell that to aunt some day were she my father's sister seven times over."

Ram Menika told him of the beautiful lady in the palace who asked about Tikirala, and warned that a powerful chieftain might attempt to carry her away.

"That is why I tried to run from you."

"Kataragama Deiyo saakki !" the youth exclaimed greatly surprised.

He was silent for some time as though struck dumb; then said,

"How nice if he should come to fetch you, while I am here."

"He would cut you down".

"Not he. He would learn the length of my Engreesi sword. His blood should pour out in libation to the deva; and there would be no necessity for a vow."

From the time Ram Menika recognised her lover the thought uppermost in her mind was to flee the mountain. But she left it to him how and when to lead her away. Talk of the friendly noblewoman, and Tikirala's fierce words raised fresh fears. 'What if some one came at that moment', she thought.

"Let us go away", she said in trepidation. "We have prayed to the deity. There is nothing to linger here for. Why should we tarry where there is danger?"

"Do not be afraid: Bahirawa Deviyo will protect us. We may not go; for you must remain at that tree till the palace officials come to look for you and the costly ornaments given you from the *aramudala*. It is the tenth day of *awa*. That dark hill you see just below the moon — the king's palace is at its foot. It is about seven *peya* more to dawn. The beautiful lady who spoke to you is our commander's wife. She is sure to send for you. They say she is kind as a goddess, and extremely fortunate too. She must have been told something by our nilamay or she would not know to speak about me. He liked me very much. When after the king's order I knelt to take leave; he said, I lose another good lad. He was quite angry."

It did not please Ram Menika to learn that she must be chained to the tree so that palace officials may not suspect anybody had interfered.

"I must get back to the king's service to keep my vows", he said.

"Be brave for one short *peya*; I will not leave you till it is quite light."

He explained what she should do. The king's officials would come at sunrise, and take her to the palace gates; perhaps before the monarch himself. If questioned she ought to say that she recited religious *gatha* the live long night, and felt the devas extended their protection to her. They would hand her over to her father; and Tikirala would await them at the ferry on the other side of the river. He assured her there was nothing to fear.

"I shall not leave yonder jungle till sunrise, so that I can see you. There is no danger now Ranni, the hour is long past when anyone will dare climb the mountain in defiance of the curfew. It will be certain execution to be found doing so."

'But he has done it', thought Ram Menika. Fear for the lover's safety did what arguments couldn't — made her brave

enough to urge Tikirala to leave her. When remonstrances failed, she used the *maya* native to her sex.

"I heard the crow. Do go and cross the river before it is day. If you love aunt and me you will not tarry here any longer. What is there in this world that can make aunt happy, if you fall into the hands of the king's soldiers? She and I will be left defenceless in an unkind world. Indeed I might as well die; for they will point at me the finger of scorn and say, 'That hussy sent her young man to the executioner's sword'. How loving it was for aunt to have let you come to me! That deed alone will bring her the blessing of seeing the Maithree Buddha. Will you forget her happiness depends entirely on you and me? And what shall I be to her but a hateful sight if you come to any harm today? I shall deserve her curses for the rest of my life. Is that not the morning star over the horizon? You are like that star to me; without you my life would be misery. It is nearing time when the stem can be distinguished from its leaf. Do be gone that I may not be a widow before I have given you brave sons like you."

She put her palms on his face, then folded them to him lest he dismiss her fears with a laugh. Her cheeks were wet once more. They crawled on their hands and knees to the tree. Ram Menika picked up the band heavy with its hidden chain; and passing it round her body pushed the ends to her lover's hands. He silently knotted it on the other side of the tree. She took the necklaces from Tikirala's hands, and threw them round her neck muttering '*Nedakin, nedakin*', while the lad looked at the jewels interested.

"Now go, my *deiya*", she implored, folding her palms again, "Go to save me from the curse of being called a wretch that caused her goodman's end."

"It is the sacred hour when Devas descend to worship the Dalada Hamuduruwo," he said. "No evil spirit has *waran* to be about at this time. You will soon hear temple drums proclaim the hour. I go because you wish it; but shall be within call till it is sunrise almost. There is nothing to fear now."

He felt for his dagger and saw that the sword was in its place. Then placing his face on the girl's for a moment, he picked up the empty cake box, and rushed stooping to the nearest bush with

the speed of a fleeing rabbit. From bush to bush he sped till he gained a patch of jungle on the summit.

Relief of having persuaded the lover to go, and anxiety on his account did not leave Ram Menika much time for unpleasant imaginings. As the stars began to pale a booming of drums came from all directions. She guessed it was the *Aluyan-duray* in vihara and devala. A mist rose making her feel lonely; but she offered *ping* to the devas for sending it. Tikirala will have cover to descend to the river and cross over to safety. She yearned for company, but prayed to the gods to delay the approach of palace officials.

When the mist rose she beheld many a golden pinnacle of temple, palace and dagoba shining under the first rays of the sun. Like lines on a vast *nerenchi* board the straight streets of the city intersected forming a large number of squares. In the squares she could make out large houses. She wondered where the friendly lady might be. The girl was seeing Mahanuwara for the first time. Its streets and numerous lakes surprised her. At length she heard voices approach. A man in a red turban headed the single file procession. He advanced cautiously; for he was one who had peeped out of his house on the Nagavimana mountain and seen a sword armed shadow dance before the bonfire. He halted a couple of fathoms from Ram Menika, and uttered some mystic words that asked whether the figure at the tree was human or a demoness. He repeated his sounds a second time, when a bearded official in hat and tuppotti stepped forward, and pushing the man to a side said,

"Get away, keep thy demon language for thy home. Art blind? It is broad day!"

He came to her and patted her on the head; then gazed at her frightened face. There was emotion in his voice as he said,

"My daughter, you have done much *ping* in your last birth. The devas have protected you during the night. Happy are we that you are safe; happy everyone in the city will be at your deliverance. And I do know our king will be happy to hear you are safe."

He went round the tree to undo the knot. An obsequious subordinate hastened to help. When the knot had come off he removed the band from the maid's waist and threw it to the red-turbaned one saying,

"Take thy web of cloth and return the chain purified to the *aramudala.*"

Then he took Ram Menika by the hand and led her down the hill as if she were his own daughter.

From the time Tikirala had gone away she had wondered how the king's officials would treat her, whether fate had more sorrows in store. The kindness of the old official was more than she had hoped for. All she desired was to go home, to her parents, to Tikirala. At the foot of the hill, where the street began, she saw her father waiting, his face altered to her thinking. When told who it was, the official drew back to let Ram Menika kneel to him.

"Ralay, there is no need to worry any more", the official spoke comfortingly to the latter. "Come with me. You should be at the palace gate when I bring her out. Your daughter is a very fortunate girl. The king may reward her. Is there anything you wish to say, in case I get a chance to speak."

With obvious triumph he led the girl up the street. On the way he learnt how Tikirala's dismissal from his regiment had put off the girl's nuptials. A crowd gathered round them. Gladsome faces smiled to her on every side. Men and women cried '*Penchita deviyannay pihitai.* (May the devas protect the lass). Noble dames looked on pleased. There was chatter and noise behind. But the noise dropped to a hum, and the crowd fell back as they approached a gate guarded by men at arms. Of the party that went to the mountain, the old official and a couple of subordinates alone were admitted. The former had to explain before the father was admitted to the great esplanade; here he too had to halt.

Across the esplanade Ram Menika was led to an arched portal that had monster wooden doors, and thence up a stone staircase to a wide courtyard flanked by buildings the like of which she had never before seen. Leading her to a building whose walls and doors were all beautifully painted, the official said,

"Daughter, this is the Wedehitina Mandapa where the noble Dalada Hamuduruwo reposes. Some sin in a past birth made you undergo sorrow and pain last night. You must have also accumulated much *ping* to have the chance of coming so close to this shrine: for only princes and great ones are permitted here. Kneel by this moonstone and

worship till I return. This is the palace; you must not make noise."

Ram Menika mumbled all the devotional stanzas she knew. The painted walls, stone pillars, their carved capitals and the frescoed ceiling filled the girl with wonder. A number of priests clad in orange coloured robes wearing broad yellow sashes over their robes came out of the temple. Behind them emerged many men in round hats and tuppotti. They stopped to speak to her escort; and when told she was the maid offered to Bahirawa the previous night, looked long at her. The priests spoke disapprovingly of what had taken place. The chief amongst them exclaimed in a low but quite audible voice,

"Deiyo Saaki ! Deiyo Saaki ! Ye devas, how long will you look on till the monarch consents to acts that bring disgrace to the Sasana and his rule?" [16]

Presently the party walked down to the lake. The priests stepped into a boat and were rowed away, while their followers came back and disappeared amongst the buildings. The old official returned looking pleased. He said that she was to be taken to the Dakina Mandapa. Seeing her countenance fall he smiled,

"Do not be alarmed, child. Your sins you have atoned for."

He instructed her how to make obeisance, and the way to address the prince. When he was satisfied she understood he led her across the courtyard, along painted corridors and up steps again to a magnificent hall. The king sat under a white canopy; and on one side stood a few gorgeously dressed courtiers. Ram Menika knelt where she had been placed, and bent forward till her forehead touched the floor. Then she raised her body, and still kneeling folded her palms. The monarch looked long at her; and smiling encouragingly asked,

"Child, were you not frightened ?"

"Deveyanwahansa, that will be a Buddha for a five thousand year cycle", said Ram Menika repeating the words the old official had just taught her, "there was great fear in me. But I prayed for protection to the Satara Waran Deviyo and the Thunuruwan."

The words choked and her eyes filled with tears. Sri Wickramarajasingha, easily moved by another's sorrow, waited till she could speak again.

"Did any apparition move around you during the night?"

"I felt extremely lonely, but by the aid of Tunuruwan no spirit tried to harm me."

The prince appeared to be wrapt in thought. He scanned the girl's tear stained face; then his eyes wandered towards the large door through which he could see the demon's mountain. When at length he took his eyes away from it they searched for some one amongst the company. Courtiers who knew their prince's ways thought the Gajanayaka Nilamay had done well to keep away that morning. With a sigh he ordered that the maid be given *Samakkattu*, and spoke to an important looking functionary. The latter came close to Ram Menika and whispered to the kneeling girl,

"The Maha Wasala grants you a boon. Pray for anything you desire."

Ram Menika had merely to ask for means to live above want. The monarch intended to give her a large extent of high and low lands. Timidly she began,

"Deveyanwahansa that will be a Buddha, grant me permission to go to my parents." Then, in spite of her diffidence she blurted what was uppermost in her heart, "And to Tikirala, who has been forbidden to enter Senkadagala Nuwara. He has done no wrong. He is very loyal to the Maha Wasala."

Courtiers looked at each other amazed: royal condesension, it seemed, made the girl grow impudent. The prince, however, was seeking to make amends. There kneeling before him was an innocent lass not shrewd enough to seize riches placed within her grasp, yet so certain about somebody's loyalty to the Maha Wasala, that she dared to speak about it unasked. But who was this loyal Tikirala? The prince wanted to know. The puzzled look on his face gave Ram Menika's friend the opportunity he had been looking for. He went on his knees, and submitted the case of the soldier lad dismissed from the Wadanatuwakku guard six months back.

"Summon him to court", the prince commanded, glad that there was a way to reward Ram Menika. Then in a voice that betrayed regret and disappointment he added,

"Never again, long as the Sun and Moon shine on mankind, shall human life be sacrificed to demon or spirit in the kingdom of Singhalay."

The Execution of Sooriyagoda Thero

LADIES who resented Sri Wickramarajasingha's treatment of one of their sex would appear to have been the first to complain about the foolish acts of the new monarch. During the preceeding reign there was no person at court more popular with them than Rajadhi's queen. The scholarly Rajadhi Rajasingha had had his consort taught the Sinhala language and the religion of the country she had come to live in. Not long after her elevation as queen the princess conversed so freely in Sinhalese that her ladies forgot she was from another land. Simple in her ways, prepared to trust everyone, and always consenting to place their prayers before her lord, even in matters where the king did not know how he might intervene, she won their affection. The king realised his consort's popularity helped to curb treasonous tendencies amongst his difficult courtiers. For ladies of Senkadagala, though retiring in their ways, were able to influence their males when they chose to do so. The king encouraged his consort. Urged by her once he deigned to speak to one of his dissawas about the impropriety of having a mistress below his class[1]. When Rajadhi died the princess found there were many friends to share her sorrow. Ladies that had waited on her showed no signs of giving her up for the more glamorous business of courting the friendship of the new Ran-doli. Their attachment, however, was regarded with envy by the new king.

It was the duty of the reigning monarch to see that the dowager of his predecessor lived in state. Rajadhi's widow had a suitable building set apart for her in the palace. Custom gave her the right to have a retinue of her own. The princess led a quiet life

doing nothing that might displease Sri Wickrama's queen. The lady was religious and liked to emulate her lord in the *danas* he had given to the priesthood in the beautiful Hall of Audience built by his order[2]. Her friends were always with her during these occasions. She had been a widow hardly a year when she began to feel the pinch of poverty.

Sri Wickrama almost from the day fate had rocketed him to an eminence far beyond his wildest dreams, began to be jealous about the throne. He felt that prince Muttusamy, the brother of the dowager, should have taken his place amongst the chieftains when he first came out on the palace balcony to receive the homage of the aristocrats. Instead, he had disappeared, whilst all Sinhalay rejoiced over the accession of a prince whose wonderful good fortune was going to bring prosperity to the world. Sri Wickrama had no experience of court life: he believed every word of the flowery language of his courtiers to be literally true. He asked whither the prince had fled. Even Pilimatalawway Maha Nilamay for whose ability he had the utmost respect, did not know. Then came news that the new king's supporters had expected. Muttusamy and a few of his kinsmen who had given trouble on the day the *radala* had gathered to choose a ruler for the country, were in Colombo, doing all they can to persuade the British that he was the rightful heir to the throne. Close on the heels of this intelligence came more disturbing news. The wretched prince had found a new way of convincing the British that he will be grateful for their help. He would rule Sinhalay as a vassal of the British if they would give him a sufficiently large army to seize the throne. Sri Wickrama made up his mind that, should Muttusamy be ever taken within his kingdom, he should languish in jail all his life; or if he attempted to escape, be beheaded. But the prince was far away. His sister was Sri Wickrama's dependant. The sister he had no doubt would side with her brother. Her great popularity might be used to disaffect her friends towards him. That thought made him regard the unfortunate princess with suspicion.

He said a dowager had no need of a large retinue. Her former kindness made courtiers speak for her. They said a dead monarch's queen should be treated like the king's own mother, and maintained in state. What was sent as supplies to the dowager's establishment had to be sanctioned by the monarch. Sri Wickrama found an ingenious way of attacking the popularity of the former queen. He ordered an etulakattalay official to progressively cut down her

supplies. The princess had now to be content with giving alms to a lesser number of priests. This number had to be further reduced as supplies progressively dwindled. Then her ladies one after another took leave to go home for a few days, but never returned. Supplies grew still meagre and her servants found they had to be very careful with them.

Noblewomen visiting their former queen asked their lords what it all meant. The latter thought it unkingly of Sri Wickrama to deny the princess the supplies she wanted for her establishment. But how could they talk to the monarch about the matter often. Anger made the ladies bold. They begged the queen to speak to her lord about it. Did it not reflect on a king's honour? But the queen did not; perhaps she did not dare. These ladies found the queen sending all she could spare from her own larder to the dowager. And what she did send she sent so that the king might not know about it.

Whilst the dowager's friends fumed, and their lords spat on the king's unbecoming behaviour, Rajadhi's queen bore her troubles with princely grace. 'The merit I have accumulated in my past births has waned, and the results of my bad karma are come on me. What is the use of blaming my bad karma on anyone else?' she said. Poverty, she thought, had no sting to one that had to bear the curse of widowhood and childlessness together. Adversity appeared to make her think more of religion. She would invite a priest for *bana* as often as she could get one to come. And she would sit with her serving women to listen to the dharma. Priests were pleased to find she had the intelligence to grasp what they preached, even when they selected the more abstruse doctrines of the Buddha's Law for the sermon. Ability to understand the dharma is the greatest blessing of mundane existence. This ability she possessed. And priests who once came to preach felt it a duty to help her realise the desire to know more and more of the dharma. Questions she placed before the day's preacher were at times such as needed much learning to explain. One priest the princess liked to listen to was Sooriyagoda Anunayaka of the Malwatta Monastery. His expounding of the dharma was lucid. She invited him often; and the learned thero, anxious to help her, spent two or three *peya* at a time when he came to preach.

As the months rolled away the princess with a heavy heart realised her alms giving could not be continued. From almost the start of her life in Lanka she had taken delight in the practice.

She invited less and less priests. The time came when there was not enough to feed the servants adequately. Yet it would be ingratitude she felt not to offer a bowl of rice to a priest that took pains to help one along the path to Nirvana. How her household was denied the wherewithal to run it comfortably had by now become common knowledge. Priests became shy of her invitations; although it was only a couple of priests she now asked. Their supposed inability to come to her abode for alms the princess attributed to a past evil karma. So she pressed her invitation, and when a priest did consent to come, went without a lunch or two herself that she might have sufficient for alms without letting the few servants left her suffer.

When she found that priests who gladly came for preaching asked her as a rule to put off her *dana* to a future date on one pretext or another, her piety hit on another way of giving. At the end of the preaching, instead of inviting the preacher for alms the next morning, she would take off one of her costly jewels and place it as an offering at the preacher's feet. When told that a *buddha-putra* may not accept gold and gems as offerings, she would cite instances how during the life of the Tatagatha exceptions were made. At times she would burst into tears saying there was no other way open to her to weaken her *tanha*. At this time Sooriyagoda Anunayaka thero happened to be the priest she invited for preaching. He would ask his *ebittaya* to pick up the jewel at his feet; then go away pleased the princess so far profitted from his preaching that she was shedding the dross of *tanha*. One day it was a *kundalabarana* from her ear, on another a gem set *kondapetta* from the hair. So great was the effect the dharma produced on her, that once she undid her knot of hair and extracting thence a black *semara* tail placed it at Sooriyagoda thero's feet. Taken aback the priest said,

> "Princess, where is the sense of making such an offering to a *buddha-putra*?"

And the dowager replied,

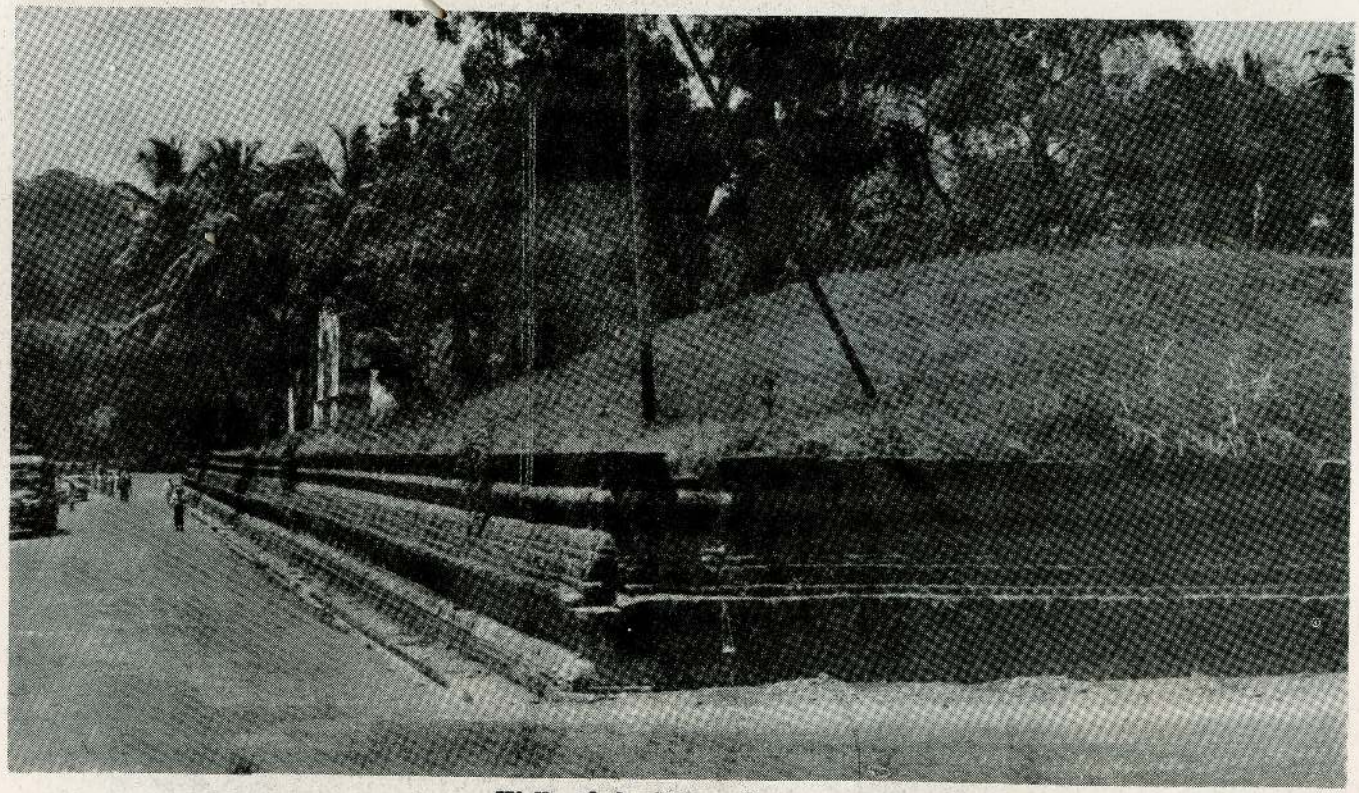
> "Sire, it is a priceless possession,[3] a treasure that my king obtained for me from the Himalaya forests of Dambadiva. That it is of no use to a *buddha-putra* I well know. But deign to accept it that the merit of giving it may make me fortunate enough to have again the company of my enlightened king."

The priest felt sorry for the lady. To refuse it would be to make her think more of her prince, and spend days of remorse. He asked his acolyte to pick it up, and started back for his monastery surprised at the effect his sermons had on the princess. Her mind, though it could not altogether forget her great loss, was certainly advanced along the Eightfold Path. He said to himself 'The most pleasing fruit of monkhood is a conviction that one's efforts have set an individual unerringly on the way out of Sangsaro.' He made up his mind to do all he could to help the pious princess along till he felt certain she had reached a stage of sanctity from which one does not turn back to blind desire for mundane things again.

They were few who knew that every individual going to the Palle Wahala,[4] the quarter of the palace set apart for the dowager, was being watched. Sri Wickrama wished to have information even about the subjects of the sermons preached to the dowager. As the lady's mind craved for more knowledge of the doctrines, Sooriyagoda thero spent more time elucidating discourses of the Tathagata which it was by no means easy for lay folk to completely grasp. A wicked tongue out to win favour with the new king got busy. It asked why a priest should stay long hours in an abode whose inmates were all females — there was a thing called propriety. And wherefore was this partiality on the part of the princess to a certain priest? Had she been misled? Or might it be something of a far more serious nature. The mischief maker was heaping straw on a flame.

It was the business of the Mahanayaka thero of either monastery in the capital, to see that his priests maintained discipline. Casually, it seemed, the king one day questioned the pontiff of Malwatta Vihara about his priests. Were they all pious individuals, diligent about their *seela*, and the study of the Tripitaka? The senior priests, like the anunayakas? Were there any that should be ordered to give up the yellow robe and go back to mind field and haena ? The Mahanayaka replied that with the monarch's munificence he was able to see the priests in the monastery well provided with the four requirements necessary for the priestly life. Discipline was strictly maintained and the younger bikkhus made to devote sufficient time to the study of the dharma. The anunayakas, selected for their learning and exemplary conduct, were diligent in their work. Sooriyadoga Anunayaka, himself a pupil

Temple of Natha Deva, the future Buddha, where kings of Sinhalay received the golden sword that gave them the right to rule.



Walls of the Palace Square.

On these Sri Wickrama planned to build the palace of his dreams.

of the holy man at whose feet the Sangaraja Welivita Saranankara had studied, spent all his time in teaching, study and meditation.

Sri Wickrama had not been more than a couple of years on the throne. The new king was easily pleased. Courtiers did curious things to please him. A chieftain one day brought a *rankiriya* flower of extraordinary beauty. Rankiriya blossoms add a spicy flavour to a chew of betel. The flower brought to court was a curious freak. It had a large number of pannicles which arched out symetrically. As the king admired it the courtier said that the bush had given it birth to sweeten a monarch's chew, therefore was this flower so much more beautiful than the ordinary type. The pink and gold shades in the blossoms and their shape, each opening in a twin bloom — the king looked at it pleased. But he could not use any part of it for a chew. A king may not take anything in the way of food or drink that was not placed before him by those responsible for his safety. He sent for the Maha Mudiyansay and asked that the *rankiriya* flower be taken to his *Randoli* consort.

The Queen and her ladies spent quite some time admiring its colour and shape. Then she suggested betel all round with a flower in each chew. One of the older ladies warned that twin fruits used as food give the eater twin babies. Twin flowers were certain to have the same effect. But the flower was too good to be cast away. So the queen sent it to the dowager who on that morning was preparing alms for her much respected preacher, Sooriyagoda thero. She thought herself fortunate to receive such a gift that day, for the *rankiriya* could be put to great use. When the thero had finished his meal and was about to have his chew of betel she offered the flower to him on her knees, even as a devotee would place flowers before the image of an arahant. The bikkhu accepted the offering with greater pleasure than he had the costly jewels often placed at his feet. He took one blossom with his chew and thrust the raceme into his betel bag. After the usual sermon that follows alms he walked away to the monastery.

A herald at the door disturbed the thero's noon-day rest. There were orders from the monarch to take the thero's betel bag, as found, to the palace. The thero pointed to where it lay. The herald took it up and went his way. He came back with an officer to make a search of the temple. Before evening Sooriyagoda Anunayaka thero was under arrest. The king's mind had been poisoned against the pious priest. What the Mahanayaka had

said in reply to him about the work in the Malwatta monastery had calmed him for a space. The king was always thinking of Prince Muttusamy's activities in British Colombo. Indeed in the early years of his reign he had no other worry; for he left state and Sasana to minister and priest. The slandering tongue that had begun working against Sooriyagoda thero, for some reason of his own, had found it easy by connecting the Anunayaka's name with the intrigues of Prince Muttusamy to tickle the royal cobra till it spread its hood.

Next morning the monk was in the Hall of Audience, not where the Sangha sit, but where aristocrats brought for trial had to stand. Minister and courtier wondered what accusation there could be against a priest of Sooriyagoda Anunayaka thero's virtue. Many remembered how the king had been partial to the Sooriyagoda priests. Soon as he became king Sri Wickrama had built a Jalatilaka Mandapa on an island at Getambe ferry as a pleasure haunt for himself and his queen. A flood had made it unsteady. The king it was expected would order its removal to one of the lakes in the city, probably Bogambara. He however gifted it to the Sooriyagoda Vihara; and its ornate pillars[5] were used in a reconstruction of that temple.

No living thing received so much respect in Sinhalay as a holy man clad in saffron robes. Sooriyagoda thero was known to be learned and pious as well. The king himself had held him in great respect. Why should such a priest be dragged to trial like a criminal. They asked the Mahanayaka Theros. "Is it not the king's ministers who should know?" the theros retorted. Beneath the accustomed calm of the high-priests there was keen resentment. Courtier's asked the unfortunate priest. He thought there probably was some mistake. And a whisper started that Sri Wickrama's arrest of the priest without consulting the Mahanayaka Thero was high-handed. The whisper went round the Hall of audience that morning. By evening everyone in the city had whispered it in a friend's ear. Before long it spread farther afield; and Sri Wickrama's arbitrary ways as the years passed gave that whisper wings. Towards the end of his reign it was still a whisper, but one that told the Sinhala peasant, ever ready to take up arms in defence of the motherland and religion, there was little use shedding blood for such a king.

A peal of conches silenced the assembly. Curtains round the throne swung aside, and there sat Sri Wickrama on his lion throne,

minus the smile that usually lit up his countenance during the early years of his reign. Courtiers sank on their knees to hail him. It was routine for the monarch to inquire about the health of the chief pontiffs. That morning his words sounded strained. A lekam in charge of cases that came before the king was commanded to perform his rajakariya. What he said astonished every one in the assembly.

The accused had been trusted by the Maha Wasala. He had been invited to preach at the palace and permitted to come to palace precints at any time of the day. He had made use of the privilege to deceive a female of the royal family, and carry away from the palace gold and gems which he hoarded in the Malwatta Monastery where such articles should not have a place. He had misbehaved with that female forgetting the respect due to the Maha Wasala, and the dignity of the yellow robe. He had intrigued to entice the lady away from the king's guardianship so that with her aid he might set afoot a *peraliya* to help the traitor Muttusamy, the lady's brother, who was with the British in Colombo trying to persuade a foreign power to invade Sinhalay and wage war against the Maha Wasala. By such disgraceful acts the accused had committed treason against the country and its monarch.

Priest as well as minister felt the trial would prove abortive. What evidence could there be to substantiate allegations of that nature against a truly pious bikkhu ? The lekam produced a betel bag and took out of it a *rankiriya* flower. Many in the assembly had seen that identical flower the previous morning. When the priest explained how it had come to his betel bag the lekam placed before him a number of costly jewels as are worn by royal ladies — *kundalabarana*, *kondapethi*, *nalalpati*, necklaces and gold bangles. A high official of the Atapattuwa asked to state how he discovered them said he had found the articles in a box in the kitchen of Sooriyagoda Anunayaka thero's pansala. The king glanced accusingly at the Mahanayaka thero; then asked how ornaments worn by princesses came to be in the possession of a bikkhu.

The innocent anunayaka spoke the truth. He requested that his *ebittaya* be questioned as to why he kept those articles in the kitchen box. No priest may touch precious metal or gem, far less be in possession of articles of dress made of them for female adornment. He had not for a moment forgotten his precepts or violated them in any way. They were inappropriate

offerings the dowager queen insisted on his acceptance after *bana* preaching. She took no refusal; and he had asked his *ebittaya* to pick them up. The acolyte alone would be able to say why he had kept them where they had been found.

The boy however was not sent for. Instead the thero was asked to explain why he had in his pansala a black *semara* tail if he had no intention of having a mistress of his own. The black *semara* tail Rajadhi Rajasingha's queen had placed at the priest's feet one day was produced: it had lain with the jewels. Courtiers now wondered what it all meant. The thero stated the dowager princess and his *ebittaya* would explain how it came to be there. He begged the king to summon his acolyte or send a minister to ascertain the truth from the dowager herself, protesting he had not so much as touched any one of the articles or known that they were being kept in his pansala. The official who found them had taken them from a box meant for provisions. The king, however, was not inclined to listen. He demanded how often he came to preach to the dowager in a week. When told he came about three or four times in a week, he turned to the Mahanayaka Theros and inquired how many times the princess had invited them to her abode. The king knew they had never come there after the days when she used to give alms to a large number of priests at a time.

How was his correspondence with the traitor Muttusamy carried on? What were his promises to the British? How many communications from prince Muttusamy to his sister had passed through him? Was the thero in correspondence with the British direct or through Muttusamy? These and many more questions of the same purport the king asked. The bikkhu protested he knew nothing of prince Muttusamy's whereabouts. He protested he was loyal to the throne. But he protested in vain. Courtiers who wondered how the priest had come to be in possession of such precious jewels still felt disappointed that the witnesses he named were not questioned. It was clear Sri Wickrama had made up his mind as to the accused monk's guilt even before he had set eyes on the priest that morning. He addressed Sooriyagoda thero in language fit to upbraid a traitor caught in the act. Then turning towards the Mahanayaka theros he said he would order the accused to be beheaded.

There were a few who now entertained doubts about the bikkhu's piety; but there was none save the king and one other,

who felt Sri Wickrama had the right to order a priest's execution. That other was himself a bikkhu. He belonged to the Warakawa temple. He was not one usually seen at court. Indeed few knew how or why he was there that day. He sat a little removed from the Mahanayaka theros, as priests of lower grade generally do when they happen to be at court.

The pontiff of Malwatta said he had something to say. The king turned towards where the thero sat like one turning to meet a foe. Said the pontiff,

"Maharaja, never in the kingdom of Sinhalay, never since the days of the wicked monarch Rajasingha of Sitawaka who began his career as a patricide, has a *budda-putra* in the yellow robes sanctified by the Thathagatha been sentenced to execution. It is not becoming for a prince whose rule is guided by the *Dasa Raja Dharma* even to threaten such an outrage. The great devas that protect this land and the sasana will resent it. Kelanitissa, king of prosperous Kalyani, once ordered a thero to be cruelly treated. He was a pious ruler. He had, as was his custom, invited a number of priests for a *dana*. Amongst the sangha an imposter clad in yellow robes had entered the palace that day. The man's object was to deliver a secret letter to the Queen from the king's brother, her paramour. The letter fell into the king's hands. Its contents filled the king with rage. He ordered the imposter as well as the chief thero to be put to a cruel death. The devas resented that act of injustice. As retribution they made the sea devour half his pleasant kingdom. Had the king inquired into the imposter's act with patience, he would have known the thero was innocent.

It is the duty of the Sangha in this instance to advise the Maha Wasala to make exhaustive inquiry into the complaint. Maharaja, by the customs of Sinhalay, no bikkhu in the yellow robe may be subjected to torture of any kind."

Sri Wickrama took the wise words as a challenge to his regal authority. His face reflected anger. He was determined to punish the priest; but was obviously at a loss how to proceed. Ministers felt thankful the Mahanayaka had interfered. The king glared like a lion denied his prey. Then to everybody's surprise the priest from Warakawa temple spoke words that encouraged the now hesitant lion.

He said it was the ruler's duty to pass appropriate sentence on every subject found guilty of a crime. Where the ruler was convinced a bikkhu in robes was guilty, there was provision in ancient usage to carry out the sentence without disrespect to the sasana. The condemned monk should be formally disrobed, and the order of the throne carried out thereafter. The convict paying the penalty of his crime would then be a lay subject of the king, not a *buddha-putra*.

But who was to carry out the disrobing? The Mahanayaka Theros were not prepared to expel from the brotherhood any individual except as directed in the Vinaya Laws laid down by the Buddha and his principal disciples. For such action the offending priest would have to be found guilty by a Sangha Sabha,[6] and ordered by such a body as not deserving of continuing a member of the order. He said there were rules in the vinaya which did not permit of being lightly passed over.

With every word the pontiff spoke the king's anger appeared to rise. The thero was making an earnest effort to save the king from a horrid act, an act that was bound to blemish his honour as a ruler. He had expected king Kelanitissa's story would make Sri Wickrama desist from the sacrilegious order he intended. During the early years of his reign he listened to minister and priest and never overlooked priestly counsel. His intractable attitude surprised. Many thought the Warakawa priest responsible for the change in the monarch that day. As the Mahanayaka theros made greater endeavour to save the pious *anunayaka* from an undeserved end, and the king from a disgraceful act, Warakawa bikkhu's evil counsel came a second time to the king's aid. He said that the crime alleged being one which the Maha Wasala alone could appropriately consider, the accused might be disrobed if the monarch declared him guilty and ordered the convict's disrobing.

And the Maha Wasala did declare the Anunayaka Thero guilty and ordered that he be disrobed by Warakawa *sthavira* then and there. Poor Sooriyagoda thero was led to the grounds of the *wel-bodhi*[7] and there deprived of his robes while tears streamed down his cheeks. Then they brought him back before Sri Wickrama who ordered that he be beheaded at the *Kumara-ruppa* in the manner befitting his birth.

The selection of a candidate for election to the throne was in the hands of the great chieftains of the land who always consul-

ted the wishes of the Mahanayaka Thero of Malwatta. Pilimatalawwa Adigar had taken pains to persuade the Mahanayaka Thero that Kannasamy, if elected, would respect their every wish. The pontiff now asked the adigar. 'Is this the man the adigar assured would protect the Sasana, as he would his own life?' Far and wide the news spread:- 'King Sri Wickramarajasingha has ordered a pious priest to be beheaded in his robes.' *The Kumara-ruppa* an ancient champak tree, stood at the foot of Bahirawa Kanda not far from Bogambara lake. For quite a few days after the execution inhabitants of the city as well as the neighbouring villages flocked there to see the body of the thero decapitated by the king's orders. His guilt or otherwise they cared not to discuss. 'The king had ordered a pious bhikku's execution'. That was the news that brought them to the capital; and they went home to tell relative and friend that the news was true, and describe how the two parts of the priest's body lay under the Champak tree, a jaw with all its teeth in either part.[8]

And the people whispered 'Truly a heartless king; the priest they say was very pious. King Kirti Sri Rajasingha was a bodhisatva. He re-established the Sangha and provided the brotherhood with all that was needed to make their holy life easy and pleasant. His brother Rajadhi Rajasingha built a magnificent hall and gave alms in it to hundreds of the priesthood every full moon day. After day comes darkness. This monarch orders the execution of priests. The Sasana cannot flourish'.

That whisper spread through the country. Old men discussed the unkingly act. But it remained a whisper. Many years after, when hundreds of executions made his subjects look upon Sri Wickrama as a monster, pious Sooriyagoda Thero's death was remembered to add up the king's cruel acts to a total that made him not worthy of the support peasant armies of Sinhalay gave their monarchs when the might of an invading army had to be met.

Lankatilaka

Ganitaya

THE weathered ramparts of Kandy, called the Palace Square, appear at first sight to have been meant for the Bodhi and temples situated within them. They were however constructed for quite another purpose; and tell a story of grand building schemes that failed because the royal architect took no heed of the sentiments of a war weary nation. Before the British period these walls formed two completed squares.[1] A third of the same pattern had been planned, all three to form a quadrangle with wide passages separating the three squares. On the squares Sri Wickramarajasingha intended to raise the palace of his dreams But the monarch reckoned without his host.

Elected to the throne at a time of life when one loves to wield power, he was kept in check by a minister he feared. Customary laws, whose interpretation was a jealously guarded preserve of the nobles, fettered despotic sway. In the way of regal pomp and splendour he was denied nothing: for Sinhala culture gathered pomp and ceremony round the throne to make its occupant believe he was a *nara-deva*. The monarch's gifts naturally sought expression in the building of a proud capital.

Everything Sri Wickrama attempted was in the grand manner. Where warrior kings had been content to follow the Esala Perehera astride a white charger, Sri Wickrama built himself a chariot of red sandal, its roof adorned with twelve finials of the purest gold representing the Dolaha Deviyo who, he thought, should protect him. And when the populace that raised cries of *Saadhu* as the relic casket came up, also cried *Saadhu* at sight of his gorgeous

chariot, he said to himself, 'Surely the country approves of everything I do'. He had little insight of the soul of Sinhalay.

Men of medieval Sinhalay loved princely clothes, costly jewels and picturesque festivals. The ornate swords and damaskeened daggers of her warriors look more like jewels than murderous weapons. Gems and precious metals were lavished on their shrines. In the ornamenting of a single temple door they would use up wealth sufficient to construct a pretentious house. Yet they did not take any trouble to build a beautiful capital. The reason for this neglect is one of the sadest stories in the history of Lanka.

Senkadagala Siriwardanapura, so Kandy was then known, is easily one of the most war swept capitals of the world. Her commanders at first met invading forces in the narrow passes that led to the heart of Sinhalay. Necessity to beat back large invading armies without much loss of life to their own men made them develop a strange strategy. They enticed the enemy to the mountain strongholds. Villages the invader would march through were evacuated. The simple bridges on the road were renovated. An unsuspecting enemy rushed to occupy the capital before the mountain clans had time to muster for war. Kandy fell an easy prize. The foe never realised that he was followed. When detachments sent out to collect provisions did not return; and such of his scouts as were able to get back reported of valleys swarming with armed bands, alarm took the place of premature triumph. He hastened to regain the road and found that *porokara* parties had blocked each path with giant trees. The only way open led to the king's main army now waiting for the spoiler of their motherland. And the victors sang:—

නිල වණී රාජසිංහ නිරිඳුගෙ බල නොදන මෙවි ට
රාලට ජන නුවන මදිව ඇවිත් වැදුනෙ මහනුවර ට
ගාලට වන් ගෙරින් ලෙසට අල්ලා බැටදී වට කො ට
වාලට දුනි සිය සෙනගට ගෙනයන්නට රටින් රට ට[2]

(Unaware of the might of King Rajasingha, the foolish general rushed into Kandy. The enemy was surrounded and thrashed like cattle in a pen, and the prisoners were given to his fighters as slaves.)

Repeated invasions added to the prowess of the Sinhalese as a fighting race; but everytime European led armies climbed

the hills, Kandy was left a heap of ruins. A Sinhalese city had to possess besides viharas and shrines in honour of the Buddha, a number of devalas dedicated to the principal devas. Wealth and loving labour was unstintingly given to these structures. Silver and ivory adorning doors and altars, golden pinnacles of their numerous roofs, and treasures the temples had received as offerings added to the invader's booty; while elegant pillars, pekada capitals, carved architraves and frescoed ceilings went up in flames. With the ashes rolled what fire could not consume—rock pillar and stone stairs, makara toranas and *doratupala* statues till nothing of the city was left. Poets have sung of what they beheld:—

විහිදී ගන කෝවි ල්
සහ පන්ති මාලිගාව ල්
දළඳ ගෙය විපු ල්
සමග වනසා ගසා ගිනි දැ ල්[3]

"Streets and storied palaces, temples of the gods and the beautiful shrine of the Tooth were all destroyed by the enemy's fire."

More eloquent than their songs foundations of former palace buildings, the litter of ruins round the Natha Devala, the haphazard arrangement of carved stones by those that time and again rebuilt the Dalada Mandapa, and rock pillars and hundreds of cannon balls that lie buried under every foot of the Dalada temple tell the story of European vandalism in Kandy.

When the invader had been routed and teeming war captives set to work, some to rebuild villages and others to labour in the chenas and irrigation canals, the craftsmen of the nation hung up sword and shield for more congenial work. Mason and carpenter, wood carver and metal smith, lac worker and fresco artist, they came from every district to the capital to rebuild her shrines. Besides these, men women and youth flocked in such numbers determined to have a share of the meritorious work, that labour of war captives was looked upon with disdain. Again they built the temples of their faith, again raised a palace for the king. In triumphant festival they brought back the Tooth Relic and the *Rang-awuda* to the new temples. Then peasant and chieftain returned home wondering how long the white-men would let the result of their loving labour last. Assured were they that the angry devas would deliver spoilers to their fate; but the invader was certain to come again and lay waste the king's city.

That thought did not make the Kandyan an enthusiastic architect. Temples were essential for the glory of religion. The labour spent on them brought thousandfold reward in a hereafter. Building beautiful edifices for other purposes was considered certain waste. But king Sri Wickramarajasingha thought otherwise.

Fear of invasions did not damp Sri Wickramarajasingha's ardour for building. Perhaps, as later events proved, he hoped to carry war to the enemy's confines. He pushed his plans soon as they were conceived without consulting ministers, without pausing to consider whether they were undertakings for which men could be pressed to rajakariya. When in response to a call for labour on the Kandy lake chiefs of Sat Korala protested that according to custom men not resident in *gabadagam* were not liable to rajakariya on works of mere beauty beyond the limits of their principality, the king had them charged for treason. A hundred *radala* leaders, it is said, were impaled on the bed of the lake. If he did take counsel it was with his chief architect, Devendra Mulachariya. This man he loved not as a master loves his servant, but as one close friend loves another. He gave him special permission to use a minor chieftain's dress on formal occasions, a privilege Devendra does not appear to have liked. But the gifted Mulachariya confined his advice to the plans and their execution. It was not for him, he said, to make submissions on the propriety or otherwise of the king's projects. He was an architect not a minister. Those of the courtiers, especially the younger men, whom Sri Wickrama had raised to power might have helped him. But the prince had his moods, and courtiers wished to avoid displeasure. Few knew what was afoot till, by royal command, work on these walls had progressed appreciably.

The land in front of the Palace had always remained a rolling meadow. This ground was held sacred. For here were situated the temples of the devas and here flourished Senkanda's Bodhi round which the city had sprung up. At the centre of the meadow close to the sacred tree rose the fane of Natha, the buddha to be. By its side was the shrine of his dread minister, Kalukumara. In a line with them but a little removed stood the temple of Pattini, who sent plagues and infectious diseases to the wicked and the forsworn. Facing them built upon the hill, were the shrines of

Vishnu, God of Life, and Dedimunda whom to this day none dare displease.

All these temples face the Bodhi, and the ground round which they stand was known as Devasanghinda — ground hallowed by the presence of the gods. To this spot during the Esala Festival the pereheras of the four devalas came ere they formed into a single procession to parade the streets and bring divine protection to the kingdom ruled from the city. Here people assembled in their thousands to pray for health and prosperity and receive the sandal *tilaka* as an earnest of divine favour. Great men accused of treason were brought to this spot for trial before the gods. Here every prince elected to the throne of Sinhalay took his oath in the temple of Natha to abide by the ancient laws of the land; and received from Natha Deva his royal nomenclature and the Sword of State that gave him the right to rule. Unfortunate Sri Wickrama planned to take up the entire Devasanghinda for his projected palace. The men that had placed him on the throne wondered whether he had lost his wits.

Devendra, his chief architect, was still busy with the details of his plans when urgent summons to rajakariya brought people to the city. Peasants from one korala laboured for a period till relieved by levies from another. Scores of tuskers transported stones whilst hundreds of men laboured to excavate, to carry away earth, and build the walls. Each party had to provide its own food. Every day the king came out to see how the work progressed. When opportunity occurred he gave orders calculated to please and encourage the workers. Tradition has preserved one such instance for its humour.

A pair removing unwanted earth were observed quarrelling. A middle aged man filled the basket which a youth of giant build carried away. The latter was gesticulating wildly, while the man having filled the basket with a reasonable load was wanting to lift it on to the youth's head. The younger worker at length snatched the mamotty from the other's hand, stamped on the basket, added as much more as it already contained and lifting it to his head unaided carried it away. Returning he threw the basket down in dudgeon.

A herald was sent to investigate. The pair were father and son. The latter was dissatisfied with the load he was expected to carry. He wished to carry as much as would help finish the job allotted to them before noon, so that he might have his noonday

siesta. For the father the basket was as much as he could with difficulty lift on to his tall son's head.

The men were told the king wished to speak to them. As they turned and made obeisance a courtier said aloud,

"The Maha Wasala is pleased at your zeal. It is ordered that the young man be given an *uday*."

Now an *uday* was a pair of trousers as chieftains wear under the *tuppotti*. But *uda* stood for what was above, that is the sky. The king had observed that the giant's dress was a pair of shorts[5] past the stage when it could have covered his body adequately. He expected the youth to be delighted with a pair of full length trousers, and perhaps wished to see what he would look like in them. The father who was grateful that the king had noticed them, and hoped it might lead to better things, attempted to pull his son down and make him prostrate himself by way of thanks. But the son resisted. Nature appeared to have been bountiful to him in respect of stature and strength alone. By *uday* the giant had understood a portion of the sky. Still standing the youth folded his hands and roared in a voice twenty times louder than the courtier's,

"Deveyanwahansa, of what use is an *uday* to me who owns not a bit of ground from which I may look at it!"

The youth's unconscious wit brought laughter. It was ordered that he receive a land grant in his native village.

The work was pushed on. One mound of excavated earth rose above the top terrace of the Bodhi close by. Men showed reluctance to climb it. Groups of masons were busy at the walls. They were taking shape. Amongst the older workmen, however, dissatisfaction was apparent. They had learnt what the walls were for.

'Why should the king make us labour at such vast structures', they said, 'knowing the result of our sweat will ultimately be a heap of ruins! Paddy has to be harvested, and jungle felled and burnt down for chenas before the rains come. When the next war starts we shall have to send our families to the safety of the forests, and be away fighting for months. How will the mothers and little ones fare if we do not lay by sufficient store of grain against troublous times?'

Priests blamed the ministers. Nobles met in secret conclave, and swore against those that had placed a silly prince on the throne. Not one was consulted, and none could advice. Courtiers knelt

before the throne and folded their palms to him. The king expected their minds to be as servile. The people groaned, courtiers plotted assassinations. All unconscious Sri Wickrama pushed his work. But when his spies, men of Andra blood, reported discontent in every district that had already supplied labour the prince was amazed.

He new that priest and nobleman could never be pleased. But the people, he felt, should love him. They had reason to. By his command a bell-of-justice had been set up right in front of the palace that any man with a grievance might appeal to him direct. He had made it impossible for the chieftains to suppress any such complaint, and seen to it that exemplary punishment descended on oppressors. What cause was there for discontent, he wondered; and made up his mind to investigate.

Sinhalese princes, when they wished to gather information first hand, went amongst their people in disguise[6], at times spending weeks in the country and living as *navathen-karayo* in their homes. The Andra dynasty never employed the expedient. They were satisfied with what could be gathered eavesdropping along the streets of the capital. Custom sanctioned a curfew whenever the monarch thought it essential for the welfare of the city. People rarely knew why the *hekanday*, a drum that gave an unpleasant warning rumble, sounded on a certain evening. But when it throbbed for the third time every door within the four gates of the city had to be barred. Nor might anyone be seen in the streets till early next dawn.

Chosing a waning moon, Sri Wickrama ordered a week's curfew, and one night stepped out into the darkness of the streets. Here and there through the chinks of a door he saw a streak of light: the curfew was five days old and many took it easy. He stopped to listen by the abodes of the great officers of state. Not a murmur came. Elsewhere the lullaby of a mother trying to soothe a restive babe or the voice of a wife urging the goodman to have another help of rice was all the royal ears could catch. He was beginning to doubt the existence of any discontent. As he walked down to the lower streets sounds of conversation fell on his ears. Eagerly he stepped close to the house hoping now to hear words that would contradict the reports of his spies.

Those conversing were men who had been summoned for labour at the new walls. To judge from their laughter the men were folk not accustomed to life in the capital. They were laughing

in the midst of an argument about their work. There were more voices presently, one of them the voice of an older man. A lad's voice said,

"The walls look beautiful now, don't they? Our turn is about to end. I want a new piece of cloth to offer to Dalada Hamuduruwo before I go home. My brother-in-law has come to the temple for duty. With him I followed a big nilamay to the very door of the Dalada Medura. Oh, the beauty of the temple! I must have done much *ping* in a former birth to have had a chance of seeing it."

"Your *ping* wont hold long if you are caught interloping where you are not expected to go", replied another. "The walls have to rise only a couple of feet more, but are very beautiful already. My shoulders chafe; every stone lifted on to my shoulder seems to be of the heavier kind. That is what I have deserved by my past karma. I am not sorry that I had to come for rajakariya. I wish I could build a small wall like this round the Bodhi in our village."

"Beautiful", drawled the voice of the older man, "beauty does not last, my boy."

Someone enjoyed the snub the would be mason got. But the latter was not content to accept the old cynic's view of art. He said,

"But we are building a *padma* parapet[7] to make the temple of Natha Deva beautiful. When he comes as Maitree Buddha it is his Sasana that will lead us to Nirvana. His shrine the king wants to make as gorgeous as possible. We gain much merit by labour in such an endeavour."

There was a general argument about merit accruing from labour in the building of temples. The village youths did not appear to feel the curfew was a restraint on talk. Anyway their conversation was quite audible. The mason drawled,

"These boys will neither sleep nor let me get some rest."

"Building work seems to tire uncle", said the would be mason, "more than climbing kitul palms at home. Teach me uncle and I shall take your place when we have to come again for a spell of rajakariya."

"I wish I could make you a mason ere the dawn, that you may take my place and sweat away at building palaces that in a couple of years the white invaders will raze to the ground. When the war is over only a heap of ashes will remain."

More than one eager voice asked whether it was a palace that was being built. The youth who had seen the Dalada temple said,

"Indeed, I wondered why if the walls are meant to make the Natha devala beautiful, they should rise above its compound."

For a space none spoke. The youths appeared to wait for the mason to enlighten them. But he had obviously dropped off to sleep. The nephew was however too clever for him. He disturbed the old one's pretended slumber, and blamed him for being unkind.

"Upon my mother", said the mason, "you do deserve to be exiled to Laggala for disturbing one of the king's masons; I shall not be able to work tomorrow if I do not get some rest."

"To Laggala I shall go uncle, if that pleases you; but first tell us what you are labouring so hard to build."

"Ay, for you to chatter and get me into trouble with those that direct the work?"

The nephew now took a mighty oath. By the *Satarawaram Deviyo*, by the Triple Gems, and by the mother that, bore him he would not speak a word about what the uncle would tell him that day to any living man. At his bidding two or three other voices swore to keep the secret, though not in the same exhaustive fashion. Reluctantly it appeared, the mason spoke.

"Well", said he in a voice hardly audible, "I shall tell you; but take care everyone, not a word of this to any man. The walls will form two large squares. Another square has been pegged out as you must have observed. Within these will be built a grand palace. There will be storied buildings, and different *mandapas* for the different needs of a palace. They are going to be buildings of great beauty. So you will all be able to come and labour at them as the turn of our korala comes round."

"Grand", exclaimed the nephew. Other voices joined his, all approving the idea of a gorgeous palace. The king was feeling happy he came out that night.

"I told you", the nephew went on, "it is better having a young king than an old one. I shall work all my life for the king, content with a holiday during the sowing and reaping seasons."

In his joy the nephew was becoming too loud and the mason said,

"Will one of you give that ass a dig to send him to sleep till the morn. See how he keeps his vow of secrecy now. I wish

my sister brought forth a *kolomba* instead of him. One might have used it as a seat."

"No, uncle I wont", the nephew hastened to reassure the older one. "Who will teach me to be a *gal-waduwa* that I may do beautiful work at the king's palaces if I get you into trouble! But what will be done with the two devalas round which the walls are being built? Queens may not live close to the temple of a deva?"

"Females are not permitted to live near a devala. Besides, if the palaces are going to be many storied the upper floors will be much higher than the *asana* of the gods. That will not be proper. Perhaps the king will build new shrines for the gods in some other part of the city. Though, "he added reflectively, "the devas themselves may not like removal of their shrines from Devasanghinda."

"But our king will cause far more beautiful shrines to be built for the gods, perhaps like those you say you saw in Anuradhapura. The city will look like a city of the gods, wont it?"

The last question was answered with an enthusiastic 'Ay' by someone. In spite of himself the king was pleased. The mason spoke again and he listened.

"Yes you fool, but how long will this beauty last? The great and good king Kirti Sri Rajasingha, when he began to rebuild Maha Nuwara once, planned a pilgrimage to the ancient city of Anuradhapura, where a hundred mighty princes had ruled. He took many men with him who knew the building art that they may see and learn. The jungle that covers the many temples of the city had been cleared for the king to see. What splendid temples and palaces there had been! Thousands of stone pillars, innumerable stones with life like elephants and lions carved on them, and dagobas so large, you cannot imagine how large — all, a vast jungle with ruins everywhere. The king and the Sangha Raja Hamuduruwo that accompanied him, shed tears to see the devastation. The Ten Giants of great King Dutugemunu had built many of the temples. Other monarchs had built the rest. But the Tamils that came to conquer the city had ruined every edifice in it. And this city our god-like monarch is building will meet with a like fate. Thousands will have to labour to complete this palace. But how long will it last! When the beef eating white-men come hither with their armies, they will pillage all they can carry and set the city on fire. Heaps of ashes and a litter of stones will be all that will remain."

"But, uncle, do we all sleep till the white-men march up from their territory to this city? We should meet the enemy ere he approaches Maha Nuwara, and make short work of him", the nephew rejoined with spirit.

"Boys will talk. But by the time the king's messengers have delivered his summons to all the chiefs, and they have had time to assemble all the strong men and brave of Matale, Dambulla and Sat-korala, of Uva, Tunkinda and Welassa the white-men will be in the city. That has happened before and will assuredly happen again. The sanctity of Dalada Hamuduruwo and the good fortune of our monarchs ultimately enable us to rout the foe. But the city is then in ruins. At all events know you not that the easier way to deal with the enemy is to let him come into the city! Once here they slaughter cattle, for they eat their meat, and even kill babes and mothers big with child. These acts draw upon them the wrath of the gods; and our work becomes easy. The king orders the white-men to be massacred, and distributes their followers as slaves to those that have fought best. All life is sorrow; and these things will always happen till we reach nirvana. Pray to the devas that they may bless the King and prevent wars in his Kingdom."

The mason carried away by his feelings sang a melancholy folk song describing the atrocious conduct of invaders.

දරුවන් මවගෙ දෙතනේ කිරි උර ද්දී
කඩුවෙන් කපා මරමින් උන් අඩ ද්දී
ඉරමින් මවගෙ කුස තුල ලේ පෙරෙ ද්දී
පිටතින් තුලට ගැසුවය පන තියෙ ද්දී

'They plucked babes suckling at the breast and cut them while they cried; then slit the mother's bleeding trunk and stuck the babe inside 'the mother before she died.'

The youths burst into wrathful imprecations. The nephew appeared to be a brave fellow. He exclaimed,

"I tell you what; we must gather in our thousands, all the able bodied men in the land, and march under our king. We must mow down every white-man and reduce to ashes the city of their inhuman ruler."

"A good thing if it can be done", the mason said sleepily. "Their king lives beyond the seas; but his General and Maha Dissawa rule in Colombo. From there they come to wage war bringing monster cannon their king sends them. Do not forget every one of you, not a word of what I have said to any mortal

man; or it may be that my carcase shall rot headless on the sands of Lewella."

The note on which the mason concluded silenced the impetuous nephew. He and his friends continued to talk but in whispers. The king thought he must have the nephew in his service. He felt keenly disappointed. Yet he knew it was all too true. He was pleased to learn that the youths admired him, and would march under him against the English of Colombo. The mason interested him as a builder who had visited Anuradhapura, though he could not like him.

With mixed feelings Sri Wickrama turned his footsteps towards the palace. A little boy who had been allowed to step out for a call of nature saw the cloaked figure of the king and cried '*billah*.' In his worried state of mind he ordered the *atapattuwe appuhamy* attending to mark the house and have the father punished for disobeying the curfew.

The thought that his labours must in a few years become a heap of ashes embittered the king's mind. For himself Sri Wickrama had resolved that no enemy should approach his capital. But that too would be in the decision of the Dissawas directing war operations. For a number of days he did not go out to see the progress of the walls. Officials of the *etul-kattala* knew; but his ministers wondered. At length he confided in one whom he trusted. What worried him was not any difficulty to keep the invader out of Kandy, but the discontent amongst his subjects that he was wasting their energy in erecting palaces that could not last.

The courtier offered advice. It was by no means too late to consult the ministers. Why should they thwart such a project! Their approval won, the building project would become the nation's task. The adigars would know how to convince the people; and the work would be taken up with pleasure. But the prince knew too much to imagine that the adigars could be persuaded. To them the capital was, during war, a trap to get the invader into for leisurely disposal. If the city was burnt down, it did not take much time to rebuild their homes, which according to the sumptuary laws of Sinhalay had to be built with rough timber and roofed with thatch. There, however, was no way now to avoid consulting them. So he summoned his council—the Officers of State and the Mahanayaka Theros of Malwatta and Asgiriya—and told them of his plan.

Sinhalay should have a stately capital. The palace buildings were unsatisfactory. It was not becoming that the Palle Wahalas should be behind the Dalada Mandapa. Still the palace of the ruler of Sinhalay had to be in close proximity to the Tooth Relic temple. So he had thought of a plan to rearrange the buildings. A beautiful new shrine for Natha Divya Raja should be built where the temple of the Maitree Bodhisatva ought to be, on a level and in a line with the Dalada Mandapa. A spot near the temple of the god of war would be a more suitable situation for the shrine of Pattini. The fane of Maha Vishnu might remain on its site. Such an arrangement would so place the temples that their pereheras at the Esala Festival could set out from the respective temples at the same auspicious moment and join up with ease. On the sites vacated by the two temples would be built a palace far more propitious for the ruler of Sinhalay than the present abode, which really was a hastily built structure standing on successive ruins, the result of vandal invasions. The project will make Senkadagala Siriwardanapura a dignified city more worthy of being the capital of the kingdom.

The king looked round. Instead of smiles of approval with which court usually received words from the throne, he saw the few councillors ragarding each other with unfeigned astonishment. They seemed to be in no hurry to talk that day. When invited the Mahanayaka Thera of Malwatta, by virtue of his place in the council, was the first to be obliged to express his views.

"Maha Raja, the devas that protect the Sasana and your throne will give you long life and glory for your intention to build magnificent shrines in their honour. The capital of a great monarch ought to be as beautiful as his kingdom can afford to make it. It is proper that the Palle Wahala should not stand so close to the Dalada Mandapa. It is also proper that the fane of the Maitree Divya Raja adjoin the Dalada temple. But there is a matter the Sangha would wish to submit to you. The fane of Natha has been built where it stands for weighty reasons. Its removal to another site must be considered with utmost care, lest hasty action disapproved by the deva himself, draw his displeasure on the kingdom. The wishes of the deva will have to be consulted. Good intentions make an act noble; bad intentions make an act sinful. As the object of the Maha Wasala is to give greater honour to the

Devas we do not doubt the Devas will find a way of communicating their wishes to Your Majesty."

That meant 'No' as plainly as courtier ever put it. The prince turned to his adigars wondering whether there was any chance of getting one word on his side. Saluting with folded palms as was the custom when a layman wishes to address the throne the Maha Adigaram Nilamay in measured accents spoke;

"Deveyanwahansa that will be a buddha in ages to come, your *balugetta* as well as all your subjects are happy under your benign rule, as the guests of a wedding house. It will be to us a privilege to labour in the construction of a palace that should rival in splendour Alakamanda, where Vaisrawana dwells. Since in the rearrangement of the buildings it is also found necessary to move the shrine of Nata Deva, it is the duty of your servant to submit the reasons that made wise men of old erect the temple where it stands."

He then related how Senkadagala Siriwardanapura—victorious city of Senkanda's rock—was founded. The Brahamin Senkanda in his wanderings decided to bide some time in the cave that has come to be named after him. He was surprised to find, not far from his new hermitage, groves of orange in the forest, and clear springs everywhere. He saw strange happenings. Battles between hunting animals and their natural prey ended contrary to all expectation. A hare pursued by a pack of jackals turned suddenly on its hunters and put the fierce pack to flight. A common toad routed a giant ratsnake that sought to devour it. Unusual things happened; and the hermit felt convinced that the valley was the home of a powerful spirit who could interfere in mundane affairs at will. It was clearly a Deva that loved all beings. For he protected the weak from its enemy without inflicting pain on the latter; his compassion saved the hunted, whilst the vanquished hunters went away unharmed. Senkanda felt it his duty to report what he had found to the ruler of the land. But before he could go to Ganga-Siri-Pura, the capital, he found the monarch and his court come to meet him. He was conducting them to the burrow of the victorious hare when the miracle he had seen was enacted again. That same hare made the king's hound retreat!

King and courtier were filled with wonder at what more Senkanda had to relate; and the good king Wickramabahu decided to found a city in this valley for his capital.

His astrologers, after exhaustive investigation and with divine guidance, declared that a giant tree stump in whose roots the bold hare had its burrow was an abode of Natha[9], the Maitree Bodhisatva. The spot where the fearless toad lived, they said, would bring certain victory to a king ruling from a palace built on the site. King Wickramabahu began building a city here. The death of his mother obliged him to give up the undertaking. But before he went back to Ganga Siri Pura he caused a rock pillar to be erected on each of the auspicious sites his wise men had selected for the main buildings of the intended city.

"Deveyanwahansa" the minister continued, "when vicissitudes of war brought heaping misfortunes on the people of this country, its wise men recollected the prophecy of Senkanda, a city where right would ever triumph over might whatever the dangers she had to face. This city was then built; and the sites King Wickramabahu set apart was each used for the purpose it was selected. On the spot where the toad vanquished its enemy stands your Majesty's Palace; while where the victorious hare had its burrow, where those wise men of old were inspired to decide was the vimana of Natha, stands the fane built for that great deity, from whom the monarchs of this land receive the Sword of Justice and with it the right to rule.

"The prophecy of Senkanda has come true. Repeated invasions like the never resting waves of the ocean sweep over this kingdom. Formidable armies march hither bringing massacre, fire and famine. Our *kodituwakku* are matched by guns many times their calibre; and as against the gun powder we produce our enemies bring supplies collected in lands beyond the sea. And the whitemen bring our own good black people to show them our secret mountain passes, and help them in the fight. Still Sinhalay has not bowed to a conqueror. To prove whence our never failing good fortune in the defence of Religion and Country behold how nobly stands the dome of Maitree Divya Raja amidst a litter of ruins, in spite of the efforts of enemy captains to destroy it. Madness and a wretched end overtook the Dutch General who succeeded in laying low its *ambarage* with his monster mines.

"Therefore, if the Maha Wasala decide that the shrine of Natha Deva and the abode of the kings of this country should be moved from the auspicious sites where by divine direction they were placed by the first builders of the city, other sites equally

auspicious should be selected for them by the wisest of astrologers. For on where they may be built depends not only the prosperity of this city, but also the safety of the Sasana, the Monarch and the Kingdom."

His colleagues and the two chief priests were much pleased at the stand the adigar made. Sri Wickrama had listened intent. But those who thought he would give up his ill-advised plan were mistaken.

Building a gorgeous capital had become an obsession with him. He now realised the mistake of selecting the site of Natha Devala for the future palace. But he was obstinate in disposition. He had found a loop hole in the minister's speech; and he manoeuvred to make the best of it. He said he would follow the wishes of the Sangha and the ministers in the matter, and appointed a day for selecting an astrologer to advise him.

Priest and minister sent secret word of what was happening at court to the famous astrologers of the land. When the day arrived for selecting men to investigate, they were amazed to find the king rejecting every name placed before him. They were men whose wisdom had come to the country's aid on many a difficult occasion, men whose patriotism had been proved in study as well as on battle field. A young courtier whose voice was rarely heard in Court mentioned the name of an unknown man. The adigars turned on him disapprovingly. But before any discussion could take place the king gave his assent. This astrologer happened to be a man in his early twenties lately granted the title Lankatilakay Ganitaya, not for any signal achievement, but because of his priestly *guru's* influence at court.

The king's object was to get a man outside the *radala* ranks. Every caste except those considered untouchable, had its own *radala*[10] chiefs, leaders of families whose patriotism and loyalty were beyond question. From these families were drawn men needed to work the machinery of government. In war they rallied the respective caste to the flag of their *dissawa;* in peace they worked as a united class that withstood any attempt of the throne to misuse the regal authority. They were the repository of the Customary Laws and claimed the right to interprete them. To Sri Wickramarajasinha their unity and power were becoming irksome. Lankatilakay Ganitaya had neither family nor fame. He still had to win his spurs; and there was every reason why he should please royalty.

Courtiers had expected a panel of the most noted astrologers to be commissioned. Sri Wickrama resentful of the power that, as he thought, impeded every project he planned, would not pause to consider what troubled the *radala* ranks that day. An ardent worshipper of Vishnu, the God of Life[11], he failed to appreciate the fact that next to the Buddha, Natha was the most respected in Sinhalay. He was the Buddha-to-be for whose aid everyone prayed in his endeavour to attain Nirvana. In a matter affecting the deva's tabernacle Sri Wickrama was appointing an unknown man as sole arbiter. The king's choice was at the moment with his books, happily unware of the greatness thrust on him, and the risks his commission involved.

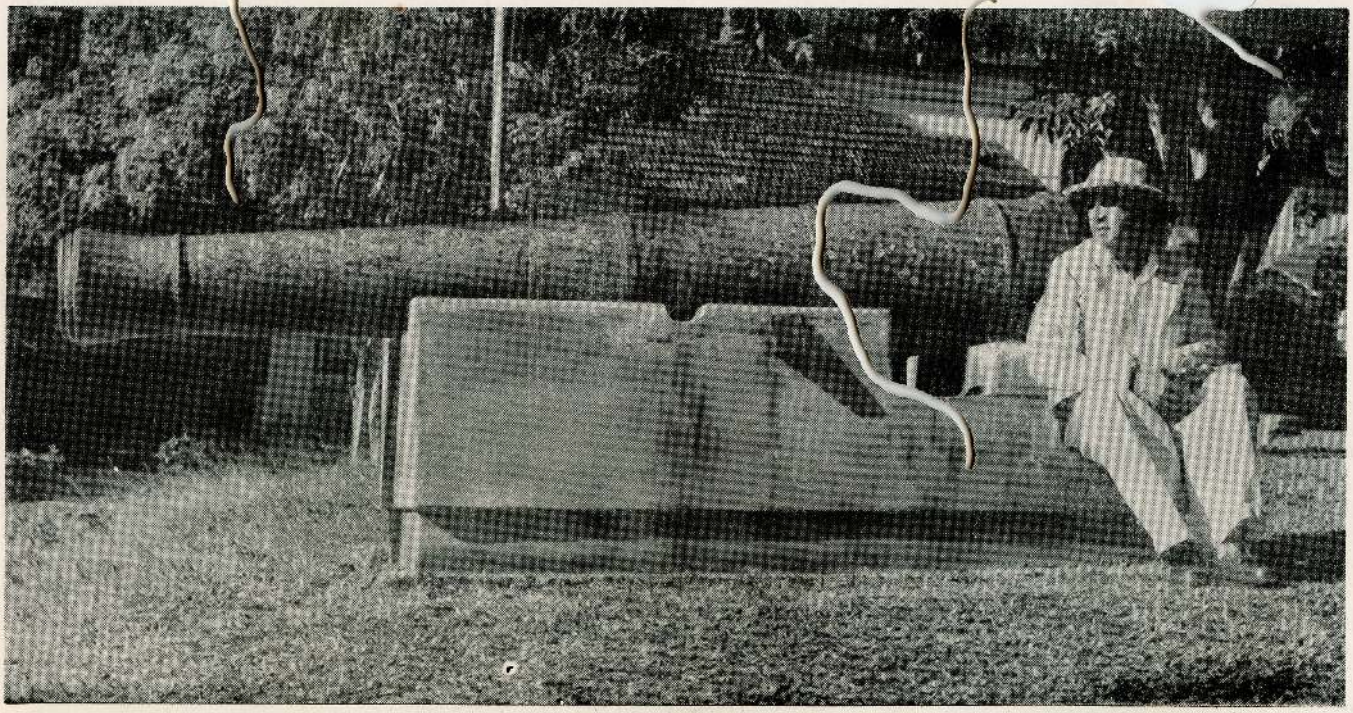
Astrology as a learned art attracted gifted men of the best classes, and the cleverest of these were appointed court astrologers. There was, however, a branch of the art considered a preserve of the *Nekathi* caste. Selection of sites—a site that suited a temple would not be proper for a dwelling house—the moment at which building operations should start, door frames kept in position, roof timbers placed, and occupation begun, as also the varying ceremonies ordained for each occasion, was the business of the *nekathi* men. They spent time in the study of their art. When court recognised one as clever he was appointed a *ganitaya*. Amongst the cleverest of these at the time of our story, was Siku-rajapathi of Kotmale. Sri Wickrama in overlooking them all and appointing one outside the nekathi fold gave his nobles a rude shock. Courtiers wondered whether the man had been already won over. They asked each other what type of individual this man was whom the king had hoisted on them. Not more than a couple of them knew anything about him. And all that these knew was that Lankatilakay Bandu Ganitaya was an inexperienced man in his early twenties who owed his title to the influence at court of his benefactor Siri Nivasa Maha Thera, the incumbent of Lankatilaka Vihara.

The son of a poor Bathgam soldier who had fallen in battle, Bandu had been brought from his native village Makadawara by a pupil of Kobbekaduwe Rajaguru Sri Nivasa Thera as a gift to his *Guru*. As the pupil priest knelt to his master the thera asked,

"And who is this little boy following you?"

"Sire his looks made me bring him to you. He will make a good servant."

Earthworks of Fort McDowal which Major Davy attempted to defend against Sri Wickrama's chieftains.



A British gun.

Portuguese, Dutch and British cannon mark fields from which invading armies retreated.

The ancient temple of Lankatilaka.

(*Its domed top has fallen and a tiled roof protects the structure*).

"Beauty does not make a good servant", the guru said.

"His complexion and features show he is fortunate by birth. Such a boy should make a suitable attendant for a great person. Therefore have I brought him."

"We shall put him as a help in the kitchen. If he pleases the *multen-rala* his fortune will be assured. The boy does not appear to have had much nourishment."

That was the introduction Bandu had had to the temple of Lankatilaka. His only relatives in the world were a destitute mother and an infant brother. Even the piece of cloth round his waist had been found by the pupil priest. The thera's steward liked the beautiful boy from the start. His pale looks soon gave place to a ruddy complexion. When the thera asked whether the boy liked work the multen-rala said,

"Sire, he likes what is left over in your alms bowl."

Though cheerful and obedient in disposition the little fellow showed a dislike to the business of washing pots and pans. When missing in the kitchen he would be found following the priest where he went, at times into apartments servants were not permitted to enter. When night came and the thera retired for meditation, Bandu would be found seated in a corner of the room as if anxious to be at hand. But before the evening had advanced into night his little form lay stretched on the floor, till the priest ordered that it be rolled on to a mat.

The *multen-rala* and his friends chastised Bandu for not keeping out of the way. Obedient in other things he appeared to be incorrigible in his habit of following the thera. The latter not a little surprised at the boy's attachment ordered that he be left alone. Within a few weeks of his introduction to the vihara Bandu had won a place in the thera's heart.

By royal edict the temple of Lankatilaka passes from guru to pupil in the '*Nathi sisya paramparawa*'[12]. That is, only such pupil succeeds to the incumbency as is connected to his *guru* by blood. It was a condition enforced in many an old temple of the Kandyan Kingdom in order that such individuals alone might be called on to administer their endowments as were not attracted to the robes by mere love of riches, and could uphold the dignity of the Sangha and command obedience of temple tenants by virtue of family connections. The time came when Sri Nivasa Thera had to find a pupil to train as his successor.

He brought to the vihara two nephews whose horoscopes indicated not only cleverness in the acquisition of knowledge but also good fortune to attain positions of honour and influence in the State. Change from a happy home to a dreary vihara is not calculated to make a boy take kindly to the monastic life. So Bandu was given to the new-comers as a play fellow who might make them interested in their new surroundings.

To the little servant his new role was a triumph. Hereditary servitors of the temple laughed to see how Bandu conducted himself in what he called his rajakariya. He succeeded where an older one might have failed, keeping his little masters, both about the same age as himself, interested and in good spirits. Together they roamed through fertile fields and gardens surrounding the Lankatilaka rock, Bandu often getting temple tenants to do little things for them that pleased the two boys. Far they rambled. The white dome[13] of the temple surmounted by its golden pinnacle was always in the scene. There they knew the thera's genial welcome awaited their return. The boys soon began to look upon the temple as their home and Sri Nivasa Maha Thera as the only person in the world that mattered.

When his nephews appeared to be settling down to their new life the priest made preparations for their first lessons. A room was decorated and fruits and sweets of all kinds made ready — offerings to Gana Deviyo and Kataragama whom a Sinhalese boy invokes for aid in acquiring wisdom and skill. An auspicious day and hour had been selected. On the eve of the ceremony the two nephews made a singular request. They had come to know from servitors who had begun to fool Bandu that the ceremony was meant for them alone. They wanted Bandu to be included. The priest was prepared to do anything to please them. So the two *bandaras* and their servant read the alphabet together.

They articulated letters from an ola and reproduced their forms on the *welilella*, a sand spread board that served as a slate. The nephews tired of the lesson early and dragged Bandu away for the day's ramble. As the boys progressed beyond elementary work it became apparent that the servant boy was the only one interested in his lessons. Indeed the backwardness of the nephews was causing some concern.

A young priest was asked to help. After a few days of earnest endeavour he had to complain that his two charges would not obey. They had told him that they disliked finding sounds for

lines scrawled on dead palm leaves. The thera had to reprimand the boys, who, instead of getting help the pupil zealously offered, told the helper they would have nothing to do with him thereafter. Indeed they insulted and even threatened him.

Sri Nivasa thero was in a quandry. To use the rod would be to make the temple a place of torture: the boys would begin to yearn for home. He let things take their own course, and was not a little surprised to find the boys doing better in their work. Trying to find how this improvment came he was shown the three lads round a lamp in a deserted room. On either side of Bandu sat a *bandara;* the former helping either boy to read the *soloka* due at next day's lessons. That lamp was seen to burn every evening.

Sri Nivasa thera pretended not to know. At lessons he encouraged Bandu to get his difficulties explained. Next day his nephews read the script and recited the *solokas* as well as the bright servant boy; for every evening after games and rambles Bandu persuaded his companions to come with him to that lonely room. They did not guess how their unpolished lamp happened to be supplied with fresh wicks every day.

So they grew up till it was time for the nephews to don the saffron robes. Their instruction thence had to include knowledge not of much use in lay life. The thera had by then begun to look upon the humble lad as one he was bound to see well off in life. So Bandu began lessons in Sanskrit and astrology. When it was found that, though yet in his teens, the astrologer under whom he was placed had little more to teach him and considered his pupil already a clever exponent of the art, the Maha thera invited to Lankatilaka Sikurajapathi of Kotmale reputed at the time to be the astrological sage of Lanka.

He requested Sikurajapathi to help Bandu in the more abstruse calculations of astrology. But the wise man refused. He was as proud of his learning as he was of the ancestor who according to tradition had won the name Sikurajapathi by fortelling once the exact time at which a gem falling from the planet Sikura (Venus) was due to touch the earth at a spot in Kotmale. The ruling prince had given him a grant of land and the title Sikurajapathi Ganitaya to continue in his line. That great astrologer's descendant saw no reason why he should divulge secret lore handed down by his ancestors to any outside his family, even outside his caste.

The wise one made no secret of his feelings. Sri Nivasa thera, however, was able to persuade the astrologer to be generous to a

promising youth destined by some past *karma* to attain heights of learning that would bring honour to those from whom he received instruction.

At the start Sikurajapathi wished merely to please the priest. But as Bandu's genius and application became apparent, love of learning, notwithstanding caste prejudice, made this prince of astrologers unfold his store of ancient learning. When the time came for him to depart the Ganitaya gave a spontaneous blessing to the youth he had once despised. To his host he said,

"Sire, this lad has gifts that will make him a pundit."

Learned brahamins wandering hither from Dambadiva often came to Lankatilaka attracted by the fame of its Maha Thera's erudition. When the priest found that his visitor was learned in such arts as would help Bandu he invited him to make a short stay; and Bandu made full use of the opportunity. So early in his twenties the poor *bathgam* boy from Makadawara was as learned a man as Sri Nivasa and his savant friends could make of a gifted studious lad.

When summons to appear before the monarch reached him great was Bandu's joy. He had never expected to be so fortunate. The thera was pleased too at what he thought was his pupil's opportunity to win royal favour so early in life. The priest did not know that Bandu was to be entrusted with the sole responsibility of deciding on the future of the Temple of Natha Deva.

From Lankatilaka to the capital is a distance of but three leagues. Bandu Ganitaya was at the palace gates early in the forenoon next day. Accustomed to hear that men summoned to the Palace had to linger for days ere they were called in, Bandu gave his name and reason for appearance to the *atapattuwe* guards at the gate, and settled down to wait. It surprised him when in a short hour's time a stately official came to the gate, and asking for 'Bandu Ganitaya of Lankatilaka', beckoned to him. He followed — across the great esplanade, up stone stairs, along the edge of a built up moat from which towered high walls, and up again a narrow flight of carved stone steps. He was presently in a gorgeously painted porch. Through an ivory inlaid door-way he saw a beautifully decorated room. It was hung with curtains of silk and brocade; and where they could be seen the walls were painted. Here on an ivory built chair sat the monarch. He fell on his knees and

placed his forehead on the floor in obeisance. A courtier standing at a respectable distance from the seated figure spoke in a voice that was not loud but sounded important.

Bandu Ganitaya had been sent for to be entrusted with a commission of importance. A new palace was to be built within the parapet walls that he could see opposite. The shrine of Natha Deva it had become necessary to move from where it stood. A site should be found for it close to the Dalada Mandapa where it was proper that the fane of the Maitree Bodhisatva should stand. It was the intention of the Maha Wasala to make the new shrine a gorgeous edifice. For the palace to be raised on the vacated site, measurements suitable for it, the direction it might face, how many stories it might have and other details necessary for its prosperity and '*siriyawa*' had to be worked out. The Ganita would also report on the propitiousness of the sites and what ceremonies might have to be performed to avert any evil inherent in them.

The king looked kindly at Bandu, and as if in a dream the young astrologer, still on his knees, bent forward till his turban touched the paving. He was asked how much time it would take, and Bandu prayed for a week. Then he was led away to the grounds of Natha devala where he was to have his lodgings. An officer was assigned to conduct him to any part of the palace precincts. He had no leave to walk outside the main gate till his commission had been discharged.

Inexperienced Bandu felt flattered. As he set about his task one courtier after another came to him — all men of the *etul-kattalay*. By evening on the following day the *ganita* knew what they imagined he would do. Bandu did not realise that his visitors were at pains to influence his decisions. He started with a determination that he will maintain the honour of his great *guru*, that none shall discover the least error in his findings. He inspected probable sites with utmost care. On the direction in which the land sloped, the shape of its mounds and the kind of vegetation natural to it depended its suitability for a particular purpose. His noble visitors — they came too often — told him it was their prince's invariable custom to promote men he liked to high place. They asked him to choose the best spot available near the Dalada shrine for the new devala; for the king was anxious to erect a grand new temple to Natha Deva. Respectfully he listened. When they let him resume work he remembered nothing but his art and the olas to which he referred now and again.

These visitors reported how Bandu went about his job. When the *ganita* appeared troubled the king knew about it. He heard how on the fourth day of his week the man requested Natha Deva's *kapurala* to pray that he receive divine guidance in his difficult task. Bandu seemed to be going over his calculations afresh, and spent his nights in the temple porch. The young astrologer was not conscious of keen eyes that watched, lest priest or minister attempt to win him over. On the evening of the seventh day Bandu looked quite pleased with himself. The news brought a smile to the king's countenance. There were moments when, determined though he was about a magnificent palace, propriety of making room for it at the expense of a shrine universally honoured was beginning to worry Sri Wickrama.

On the appointed day spies saw the ganita up betimes. From his ablutions he went to Natha's shrine and kneeling breathed a prayer. The morning meal he ate with a relish he had not betrayed through the week. Then he put on his dress, wrapped his turban with utmost care and walked to the gate on the palace moat. His milk-white waist-cloth that reached to the knees glowed whiter in contrast to a wide red band that held it. A glossy black beard, short but not scanty, and a silver streaked turban set off features not common to his class. Great men in court dress now walked across the esplanade, each followed by retainers who hastened back to the main gate soon as their master entered within the arched gateway. Two aged priests were borne to the *sandakadapahana* each in a palanquin, and either proceeded up the steps attended by a couple of younger priests. More courtiers came, some in small groups. Bandu folded his palms to every one of them; and most of them, he thought, stared unkindly. Another palanquin appeared on the esplanade. It was painted. At its nearer approach he recognised its eight stalwart bearers, servitors of his guru. Soon as the priest emerged, Bandu, overjoyed at his luck, fell on his knees and placed his palms on the priest's feet in affectionate worship. But as the thera blessed and uttered his name the usually deep voice seemed to choke. The ganita looked up and saw a troubled expression on the saintly face. Turning, the priest mounted the steps. He bowed low to the Dalada Mandapa as everyone had done before turning up the stone stairs to the left. A figure, that had waited unseen to report any talk between the astrologer and priest or courtier, stole away behind the cloud parapet bounding the moat. Bandu trying to guess what troubled his saintly

teacher started at the sound of his name called by a voice above the arched portal. He took up the books he had placed on a ledge of the wall and hastened to obey. The source of the voice stood on the top landing of the giant stairs up which courtier and priest had disappeared. As the ganita walked up the herald cried;

"The noble Maha Wasala resplendent with all glory commands the attendance of Lankatilakay Ganitaya."[14]

He followed the herald across a wide courtyard covered with milk-white sand to a many pillared gold pinnacled structure. He had passed it when inspecting for sites, but was seeing its interior for the first time. It looked stately without the curtains that hung round it then. Groups of richly attired courtiers moved within. They all looked in his direction—with displeasure it seemed. Some even glared. Their lips moved in conversation. He did not guess that the talk was all about him.

"Behold the ass the king has chosen for this momentous matter. The traitor has been specially chosen for the betrayal. Why has Sikurajapathi Ganitaya not been summoned? This Wadiga King must do everything on his own," said one.

"For love of royal favour this rascal will help our hare-brained monarch to move the Natha shrine from where it has stood since the founding of the city. It will spell calamity for the land;" said another.

"What is to happen to the Bodhi?" asked a third: "and this is the idiot who, Pilimatalawway Maha Nilamay assured us, would consult our wishes and study our welfare in all that he did. Swords that slay foreign invaders will have other work;" said a third ominously.

But Bandu read in their looks little more than the disapproval of haughty nobles outraged by the favour the prince extended to a man of his lowly state in summoning him to a chamber where only the proudest in the land had a right to enter. An important looking functionary at the entrance with a finger directed the astrologer to a spot by a pillar. Bandu took his olas in his right hand and walked stooping to his place, the tip of his left middle finger touching the floor as he went, mindful of the company in which he found himself. He sat on the paving, and demurely looked around.

He guessed he was in the Magul Maduwa where important state business was transacted, where chieftains who administered the country came to report on the progress of their districts and

receive approbation or censure for their work. Few outside the ruling families of the land could hope to be admitted to such a place. He was struck by the grandeur of the chamber, as well as the gay spectacle of the aristocratic assembly; and he felt full of gratitude for the prince that had deigned to summon him there. Was it an earnest of future favour and patronage ?

His student's eye noted the arrangement of the tall elegant pillars supporting the roof, sixteen columns in each row and four rows, two on each flank, forming a colonade on either side of the main hall. It was a happy use of the auspicious numbers sixteen and sixty four. Every column was a master carver's work. Beautiful *pekada* capitals turned down carefully carved flower designs on the chamber. A short wall that skirted the entire structure had gorgeously coloured animals moulded in the plaster. It was not more than waist high, and appeared to be so arranged as to permit those in the courtyards to have a view of what passed in the chamber. On the outer courtyard he saw assembling men of the Atapattuwe Hamudawa and the monarch's Malay mercenaries in their respective ceremonial attire.

The pillars at the head of the hall were much more ornately carved. They were spanned by *relipalan* arches frilled with painstaking care. Curtains of turkey cloth picked with gold screened this part of the hall from view. Above the curtained enclosure Bandu could see a white *viyana* that had the sun and moon emblazoned on it in gold. To the right of the red curtains the two Mahanayaka theros and the priest of Lankatilaka had chairs. On the opposite side seated on richly carpets, were the king's ministers.

The chamber did not want light; but down the central aisle burnt brass *pan lamps* suspended from the architraves. Here and there a chieftain stepped out of a colonade to walk up the hall to where the ministers sat; and the gold work on his hat, velvet jacket and tuppotti glinted under the light of the lamps. Bandu witnessing a scene at court for the first time looked on fascinated.

Presently lights appeared and shadows moved behind the red curtains. He heard the long drawn peal of a conch and an answering roll of drums. Simultaneously the curtains — there seemed to be a number of them — swung aside, strains of the Kavikara Maduwa came from somewhere behind; and Bandu beheld the most gorgeous sight his eyes had ever feasted on, King Sri Wickramarajasingha on his golden throne.

The *Sinhasana* stood on a low stage; and on either side of this stage stood a silver *pana* lamp. In the glow of their numerous oil fed wicks the burnished gold of the throne shimmered brighter than their little flames. Unlike the richly coloured dresses of the courtiers the king's clothes were mostly white. So was the pearl-tasseled *mutukuday* held over the prince by a scion of the clan that carried it by hereditary right. The monarch's *toppi-haluwa*, cobra hood shaped hand ornaments, necklaces, cluster rings, his girdle and the sword that hung from it, were all of gold set with brightly coloured gems that glittered as he moved. The sight reminded Bandu of a scene in Tusita heaven he had read in the books.

Soon as the last curtain swung out, the priests chanted a valedictory stanza. Then the ministers hailed their royal master kneeling to him with palms folded, wishing him prosperity long as the sun and moon light the world. The chieftains standing on either side of the hall sank on their knees and put their palms together. The music of the Kavikara Maduwa ceased, and the minstrels sang a solemn verse calling on the devas to send long life and glory to 'Siri Wicum Nara Devata'. As they concluded the king turned to the priests and inquired about their health. When they had replied, the business of Court began.

An adigar rose and called out the name of a distant district; and its Dissawa and subordinate chieftains came before the throne. As each small group lined up and paid obeisance, the minister mentioned their names and offices. The Dissawa then proceeded to submit a report of the conditions in his area — of the adequacy or otherwise of crops, paddy and chena, of irrigation work he and his subordinates had put through, laying special stress on new undertakings and their success, of how many *amunams* more of paddy had been aswedumised by their initiative. Whether famine threatened the area on account of monsoon failure, and how the chieftains proposed to meet the threat, or how it had already been overcome. The collection and bringing in to the treasury of the revenue from *Gabadagam*, the celebration of Deva festivals, so that with divine aid the people might be free from contagious diseases and be blessed with bountiful crops, and the efforts of the priests to minister to the religious needs of the king's subjects — all these had to be reported on. The Dissawa had also to mention any cases of treason, murder, or arson, and say how many such delinquents had been brought to the capital; for it was the king's business to deal with

such cases. The Rate-Ralas and Lekams had to submit, for inclusion in the court *lekam-miti*, olas recording the paddy in the *gabadagam* barns, the tithes collected on produce so liable, and lands become *mala-palu* or *nila-palu*. In the case of the latter the chieftains suggested names of men worthy of being granted the service tenure holdings rendered vacant.

The Dissawa submitted separate olas recording the number of *kodituwakku* and muskets in his charge, with particulars as to trained men available for war and the amount of saltpetre he had caused to be collected and brought to the capital. He described with particular care the state of the nitre caves in his province; and to that part of his report prince and minister gave attentive ear. If the area was one situated on the confines of the kingdom, the adigar questioned both dissawa and subordinate on the state of the *kadawatu*, and the disposition of the 'good black inhabitants' immediately beyond them. When the report ended the chieftain concluded with words meaning that by virtue of the king's merit in past births the country was blessed with health and plenty and under his benign rule the people were happy as guests at a wedding.

The chief adigar then submitted to the throne that by the death of one of his loyal dissawas the post he held had fallen vacant, and that he had summoned the Rate Ralas and the more important headmen of the province before the throne. He formally called to them to stand out. As they filed out of a colonade and went on their knees before the throne, he said that he had a certain individual whom he would submit to the Maha Wasala as suitable to carry out the responsibilities of the post, and that they were free to express their opinion whether the individual was acceptable to them. He then gave the name of the candidate and described in what ways he had proved his loyalty to the throne.

Now the Rate Ralas and headmen summoned from that province well knew that the appointment had been finally decided on. They were merely expected to receive the news. So with an eye to smooth work in the future they expressed their joy at the appointment of one so well suited to administer their province and lead them to war against the country's enemies. They concluded that whoever the Maha Wasala in its divine wisdom appointed to lead them was acceptable to them and the people of their loyal province.

The adigar formally announced the appointment; and the new Dissawa stepped before the throne. He already wore a dissawa's head-dress. As he knelt the adigar said that the appointment had been bestowed on him in consideration of his loyalty to the Maha Wasala. Kneeling the new chieftain received from royal hands the flag of his province. The adigar then handed to him the *lekam-miti*[15] of the division. After submitting to the throne his resolve to serve loyally and fight the king's enemies he retired to a side followed by those whom he would in future lead.

All this while none appeared to take notice of the astrologer by his pillar. Yet everyone's thoughts were about his findings. The adigars knew their prince was impatient to dispose of state work and listen to the ganita. From the confident looks of the *etulkattalay* men they guessed the king was going to have his way, and wondered to what troubles it would plunge the kingdom. Many a chieftain wished he had known a month ago, Bandu was going to be the king's tool. He should never have lived to speak the words. All unconscious of these sentiments the young astrologer followed what was said and done with great interest. He did not know that many a family weilding power in the realm had discussed plans for rebellion should the prince act on his advice. His heart whispered the king would be pleased to hear the truths he had discovered, truths of vital importance to the monarch and his capital. 'May be, he will reward me' thought the ganita. 'I shall raise him above all other astrologers' thought the occupant of the throne.

At length the chief adigar said,

"Deveyanwahansa, I have summoned to your presence the Ganita of Lankatilaka, that he may himself report on the important commission entrusted to him."

The minister signed to the man. Bandu stood up and advancing a few steps prostrated himself ere he was quite in front of the throne. Without rising he deftly gathered his body to the kneeling position; his head and shoulders sloped forward, his hands, stretching gracefully out, were folded. The monarch spoke a few words to the adigar, and the latter asked,

"Has Lankatilakay ganitaya completed the investigations ordered by the Maha Wasala ?"

"Lord that will be a Buddha for a five thousand year cycle, Deva whose presence in this land is a reward for the past merits of its inhabitants, greatest amongst mighty monarchs

that reign in Dambadiva, your dog has done everything astrological sastras ordain to discover the suitability or unsuitability of the sites indicated by the noble Maha Wasala."

Chieftains and courtiers in the hall listened indignant. The king was pleased. He spoke to the adigar who put the question the throne directed;

"What spot near the Dalada Mandapa has the ganita found to be propitious for a new fane for the Maitree Bodisatva ?"

"There are no sites round the area noble enough for a temple for Natha Divya Raja, the future Buddha."

That discovery did not please. In that case, thought the king, Natha Devala shall have to be moved to some other quarter of the capital. He regretted not having asked the man to select a site for the devala anywhere within the four gates of the city. The man's forthright answers, however, fell short of courtly language. Astrologers accustomed to court always left the door open for discussion. This man appeared to be blunt; was he stupid too?

The Mahanayaka Thero of Malwatta looked at Bandu interested. He did not appear to have been bought over. Aristocrats in the lower part of the chamber forgot court discipline and stole up the colonades the better to follow the findings of the man, who had thus far earned nothing but dour looks and curses from them. Once directed it was the custom for the chief minister to proceed with the business. That day the adigar seemed to hesitate. He felt the prince would want to frame each question himself, and found he had guessed right. The king gave the next question and the minister passed it on as it had fallen.

"Can any great harm befall the land if a temple of great grandeur be built for Natha Deva elsewhere, and the present site of that temple appropriated for building a new palace for the Maha Wasala?"

Inexperinced Bandu was taken unawares. He had the answer; had worked over and over again to check his findings on that point. But the form in which the question was worded perplexed him. Did the monarch want to build his palace on the spot whether it was auspicious or not ? But Bandu's duty was clear—to submit what his art disclosed, nay more, to save the king from an injudicious step in a matter of the greatest importance to the throne and the kingdom. He hesitated for a moment; then indicating that he made his submission with a loyal subject's fear to offend, said;

"*Baya bouy*. The spot where Natha Divya Raja's *vimana* stands is not suitable for any purpose except the building of a shrine for a Buddha or a Buddha-to-be."

The Maha-mudiyanse was astounded. Etul-kattalay officials stared from their places behind the throne. They had assured their royal master that young Bandu was loyal, and would prove helpful in every way. Rebelliously inclined noblemen in the colonades whispered in each other's ear. They looked to see how 'This Andra man' took defeat. Bandu, little suspecting the effect of his words, lowered his hands, unloosed the olas he had brought, and folded his palms again to wait for the inevitable command to adduce reasons and cite authority in support of his conclusions. What he beheld, however, quite unnerved him.

The smile that had made him liken the monarch to a heavenly being was no longer there. Every lineament of Sri Wickrama's face reflected wrath. Bandu wondered : where had he erred ? Instinct prompted there was much more than royal displeasure in store for him. Humbly he looked up at the throne as one who said, 'Your slave has done nothing to displease; it is the truth I have spoken'. The monarch's flaming orbs told those that knew that the youthful astrologer's days were numbered.

Hearts that once cursed Bandu now pulsed another beat — 'Assassinate the vain Andra if he refuse to bide by the brave astrologer's finding'. The large ivory handled fan of Rajaguru Siri Nivasa Thera quivered in his grasp. It was the adigar's duty, many felt to give Bandu a chance to explain. But the adept courtier knew better than to come between a lion and its prey. The High Priests too would not speak. In a towering passion Sri Wickramarajasingha chafed, unable to decide what he should do next.

A man in his twenties, given golden opportunity to win royal favour, outside the Nekathi fold yet entrusted with responsible astrological work, to cross his path at the instigation of haughty aristocrat and conceited priest — so ran the monarch's thoughts. The palace of his dreams to be abandoned after completion of its ramparts. That wasn't all. There was no other place to site a palace. For it was the custom of Sinhalay that the ruler's abode should, except when exigencies of war demanded otherwise, be in close proximity to the Danta Dhatu. And the temple of that relic no authority might remove. Even when invading forces razed its shrine to the ground, it had to be reconstructed exactly

where it had stood.[16] Wounded pride no less than desperate disappointment swayed the king. Minister and priest expected the royal beast to roar presently — order arrest and later trial of its victim. Sri Wickrama gazed long at the figure kneeling before him. He could detect no treachery in its eyes, nor see any trace on its brow of the sweat that betrays the traitor. He turned suddenly to the minister, and his lips moved scornfully. The adigar spoke,

> "Does Lankatilakay Ganita assert before the Maha Wasala that those who founded Senkadagala Siriwardanapura placed this palace where it stands without ascertaining it to be a spot noble enough for any great purpose?"
>
> "Dread Lord, I know not. My knowledge is like a drop in the vast ocean of wisdom ancient sages possessed. On the sites available towards the north of the Dalada Medura I observed ....."

But the king did not want to know what the ganita had observed. In the grip of his choler Sri Wickrama forgot that the ruler of Sinhalay was considered a *Nara-deva*, a being possessing godly attributes, though human in form. The next question fell direct from the throne. The words lacked dignity, and the voice betrayed emotions not by any means divine.

> "If a monarch rules according to the *Dasa-rajadharma*, what objections are there to his living in a palace on the noblest of sites the world can afford? According to thy sastras what can happen if I build my palace on the Natha Devala site? Speak true; thou shall say thy reasons."

The last few words were thundered in accents far too loud for a royal council chamber. Aristocratic courtiers looked on with disgust. Those accustomed to Sri Wickrama's ways however, knew there was but one answer the astrologer might make if he would live a week more. The king's manner struck the ganita dumb. Feelings ran high amongst the audience too. And a silence born of indignation pervaded the hall.

The king glared down from his throne. Bandu did not avoid that glance: but his peril appeared to daze the man. Something seemed to weigh his head down, irresistibly. It drooped till little of it save the top of a silver streaked turban could be seen from the throne, till the ganita's short black beard pressed back on his fair naked breast. Priest and minister began to fear that threat of

royal vengeance would make the man turn and play into the monarch's hands. Palace officials thought Bandu was learning wisdom a bit late. It mollified the prince to see the impudent astrologer distraught with alarm. He was certain to equivocate now; and perhaps remember that there were ways of evading evil inherent in the worst of sites. Those crowding the colonades looked on the kneeling figure with admiration. 'Here is a Sinhala man with a Sinhala breast', was the thought in their minds. 'Let Lankatilakay Ganita go to his death like a hero; he has taught the Andra idiot that Devas stand above kings'.

Bandu's thoughts were far away from raging monarch and defiant chieftain. They were in beautiful Lankatilaka, home of his happy boyhood, with the poor mother he had brought from Makadawara to a cottage on the temple domains. He thought of the noble companions to whose attachment he owed his education. One figure dominated the pictures that flashed across his brain, that of his saintly benefactor who had taught him to love learning for its own sake. Threat of royal resentment brought to his mind the burden of his caste[17], the perilous task of defending forts that guarded approaches to the heart of Sinhalay. On such duty had his father fallen....for religion, country and king.

It seemed a long time before Bandu moved. He lifted his head slowly, reluctantly. Humbly his eyes turned up to the throne, and again encountered the royal gaze. He rose on his knees, and his folded palms went high above his head. Then in a voice sad but unfaltering came an answer to the monarch's straight question.

"Fire in the capital. Famine in the country. Calamity and extinction of the ruling dynasty."

Words of fearful import uttered in hoarse sad accents, they dinned in every ear like thunder crashing in a cloudless sky. Not a face in that audience but reflected dismay, not a warrior heart but felt a faster beat. All eyes turned from the kneeling figure to the throne. On it Sri Wickramarajasingha's kingly form was seen to shudder slightly.

For a moment the monarch's eyes flashed. There at his feet he saw the ganita, his head again bowed, the nape of his long bare neck arched as if ready to shed the weight it carried. Few expected the prince would be able to restrain his temper. The Maha Nayaka Thero attempted to catch the royal eye. At none would he look. One word he uttered with obvious effort to the Maha Mudiyansay.

The latter leapt to his feet and attendants scurried to the red curtains. Two dames were hustled within the screening red cloth. Each carried a small oil lamp for the Alatti ceremony[18]. But they did not appear to be permitted sufficient time for its proper performance, that day. Steps were heard hurrying towards the northern wing of the palace. The king had left, court had been abruptly, unceremoniously dismissed, in a fashion unknown before. Excitement rose high in the hall. The audience lingered in groups of trusted friends and relatives to discuss what had passed. And many a war worn chieftain swore 'The king shall not touch it, the abode of Natha Deva shall remain where it stands.'

The two Maha Nayaka Theros whispered to the adigar that it would be best to send away Lankatilakay Ganita with all speed. But the young ganita himself was in no hurry. When advised he said simply;

> "My lords, born to riches, name and fame, how often are your precious lives risked on the battle field to save the Sasana from destruction and bring happiness to Sinhalay? I spoke but the truth according to my humble knowledge of the *sastras*. If sorrow overtakes me, not any ire of the Maha Wasala, but some evil karma of my past existence alone will be to blame."

Before leaving the capital he repaired to the temple of Natha, and to the deity, whose ancient shrine his adherence to truth had saved, he breathed this prayer:—

> "Maitree Bodhisatva who gave your worshipper strength to discharge my duty, grant great Deva my humble prayer. Guide, oh all compassionate one, our monarch along the path of righteous sovereigns, that his rule may bring prosperity to the land and glory to the Sasana and himself."

The Engreesi Hatana[1]

EUROPEAN led armies from Colombo for conquest of Sinhalay had to march across the ancient province of Satara Korala. Their objective was always the pass of Balana through which the mountain stronghold of Sinhalay had to be reached. The province became the cockpit of Portugese wars. Their commanders gave no quarter, knew no chivalry. The people of Satara Korala, who had to stay the advance of these invasions, got accustomed to a reckless kind of warfare. In time the province became famous for fearless fighters. Her men marched in the van of Sinhala armies; and the king in appointing a dissawa for the division had to select a chieftain of undoubted courage. On his ability rested the defence of the fort of Balana that stood sentinel over the vital pass. King Sri Wickrama with his love of beautiful buildings, was anxious that no foe should reach the capital. He counted on the courage of Satara Korala to keep invaders below the pass, till the peasant armies of the kingdom could be assembled to take them on there.

Soon as he heard the English were assembling forces in Colombo he sent special instructions to the Dissawa of Satara Korala and an *Ira-Handa* flag[2] for the fortress. It was the king's standard—the province because of its prowess in war, had been given the privilege to fly it. Soldiers on the mountain were charged to be diligent. The look out watch—Balana means look out—were to be warned of the importance of their duty. The beacon on the twin peak was to flare up immediately the enemy was sighted.

Men in the fortress felt proud to see the flag sent by the Maha Wasala wave over their stronghold. Those on look out duty scanned the western horizon with unremitting care. The buglar strutted about, a conch strung across his shoulder. On a twin hill top a number of men squatted by a pile of dry logs arranged for a giant beacon. They had flint and steel to strike a flame, and

readily combustible stuff to make the pile of logs flare up soon as the buglar gave the signal.

On two other hill tops between Balana and the capital there were beacons ready. Men round a pile of logs on Diyakelinawala mountain watched for the smoke cloud on Balana, and others on Gannoruwa hill waited for a similar signal on Diyakelinawala. Many a chieftain travelling to Senkadagala peeped out of his palanquin for signs of the beacon on Gannoruwa. They were hurrying in response to a *serapanivida* from the capital. A *serapanivida* — urgent summons — came only when there was a threat of immediate war. Indeed such summons signified the enemy was already within Sinhala territory. They were puzzled why, if war had broken out, the beacon on Gannoruwa should not be burning.

In his palace king Sri Wickrama fretted. He was waiting for his chieftains to assemble. The enemy was employing tactics altogether new. Their armies were marching north over the plains of Sat Korala, the North Western Province of today. A couple of commanders who had set out with what forces were available at the moment, had sent reports of rapid enemy movements northwards. Unlike the Portugese and the Dutch the new foe appeared to carry with him most of his food supplies. In his army were elephants carts and caravan oxen loaded to capacity. These and their wheeled cannon, the last though extremely cumbersome pieces, went forward without much trouble over the flat plains.

When the monarch came to the assembly the first man given leave to speak was the chief of the court astrologers. Everyone was anxious to hear him. Folding his palms to the throne he said that he had been at a disadvantage having to base his calculations on the probable time enemy forces had set out from their territory. But the exact minute at which they set foot on the soil of Sinhalay was known. A great part of the day, on which the enemy it was reported had set out from Colombo, was full of malefic influences. Basing his calculations on these data he could confidently forecast the enemy was doomed to fail in his attempts. He explained the astral aspects and assured the king of complete victory. There, however, would be a period of sorrow for the country till the enemy could be finally driven out.

He had hardly finished when messengers from the war front were announced. The king ordered them to be brought in. A couple of them were from the commanders in the field. They brought further information of large enemy forces. These appeared to be

making for the forts that guarded Galagedera pass. The king's commanders awaited orders to engage the enemy. Both king and minister, however, knew that they had not the men for such a step. The other messengers, not taken much note of thus far, were from chieftains administering provinces north of Dambulla. The olas they submitted brought much more disturbing news. An English army marching from the direction of Trincomalee had entered Sinhalay territory. Its general declared to everyone that he was coming to make war on behalf of the prince who was rightful king of Sinhalay. The English would make him king. It was the duty of the Sinhala people to fight on the side of the rightful heir to the throne. Prince Muttusamy was in the army. He spoke to every Sinhala man that went to him, and promised them rewards and positions of honour when the war should be over.

King Sri Wickrama roared like 'A lion out hunting for elephants'. He cried;

> "Muttusamy is a traitor. For this shameless treachery I shall have him executed the moment he sets foot in the capital."

There were some in that assembly who whispered 'Prince Muttusamy will have to be taken first'.

It was the first occasion Sri Wickrama was called on to face a crisis. 'Two armies should march forward to rout the invaders immediately' he shouted. But assembling an army was not as easy a matter as he imagined. The brave peasants of Sinhalay had to be summoned from villages scattered over her territories. They had to be given time to report in distant Senkadagala each man bringing with him sufficient food to last during a reasonable campaign[3]. The first step in such an emergency was to see that no danger threatened the Danta Dhatu and the priesthood. The Dalada had to be sent to a place of retreat beyond the slightest possibility of being captured. The priests would then leave with their priceless books, and the king evacuate the capital to prepare for war and entice the enemy within the valley of Senkadagala. It was not without some difficulty that the two Maha Nayaka Theros prevailed on the king to view things with a calm mind. They said;

> "Traitors there will be as long as the world lasts. Wars have to be directed with wisdom. It is the general with the gift of patience that comes out victor in the fight. The

necessity of the moment is to defeat enemy attempts to capture the Danta Dhatu and destroy the Sasana. Whoever marches forth to give battle to the enemy, it is the monarch's sacred duty to provide for the safety of the Tatagatha's Dalada. And the king himself should go with his court to a place from where the war may be directed; till the enemy has been routed and the Sasana saved from destruction."

Sri Wickrama calmed down. His love for the sacred relic was great. His anger over Muttusamy's treachery gave place, though for a time, to the universal anxiety over the safety of the Dalada. He asked the pontiffs what steps he should take and prompted by them spoke the words usual on such an occasion;

"Let him, who has the courage to safeguard the Tatagata's Danta Dhatu, till the enemy has been routed and the Sasana made safe again, step forth."

Every courtier in the assembly irrespective of age or experience moved from his place. Each was eager to shoulder the responsibility, though some well knew they had not a chance of being selected. For care of the Tooth Relic during troublous times was not merely a way to fame and royal favour, but the noblest, most meritorious duty known in Sinhalay. One whom the Maha Nayaka Theros considered most fit was granted the commission. The fortunate man went on his knees, happy and grateful, and the monarch placed in his hands the golden keys of the Dalada caskets.

The pontiffs then named able bodied bikkhus from either monastery to go with the Relic and see to the performance of its *theveya* in its refuge. The new guardian was free to choose whither he should take it; but the king desired him to go to Hanguranketa as a first move. Pilimatalawway Maha Adigar then began giving orders necessary for the evacuation of the capital. Sri Wickrama from the time he ascended the throne, permitted his minister Pilimatalawway to manage all state business in hand — he had such trust in him. That day, however, he interrupted him, and often asked for reasons. When the evacuation of his magazines — the king had built up large stores of gunpowder in the capital — came to be considered Sri Wickrama gave orders himself whither he wanted the powder removed. At the end of the day's work he took everyone by surprise. He asked whether there was anyone in that assembly who would let filthy beef eating English or the traitor Muttusamy have *navaten* in his walawwa. He said, 'A roof that once gives shelter to such folk is not good enough for any man

that loves his country. Destroy the Wedehitina Maligawa and every walawwa in the city. Let the English instal Muttusamy king in the huts on the Naga Wimana[4]. Even that is far too good for such a knave'. Then he told his courtiers to assemble at the palace of Hanguranketa and cried in a voice of thunder that the war will be carried on from there till the English were taught a lesson never to invade Sinhalay again and the traitor Muttusamy dealt with as he deserved.

Evacuation work had started the moment orders were made — in Senkadagala evacuation of the capital was by no means a rare occurrence. Court astrologers had fixed a propitious hour for the retreat. A line of tuskers was led into the Paragaha Maluwa and loads of temple treasures strung across their backs. At their head was a caparisoned animal and astride it the new guardian of the Dalada in his state costume. A cannon went off; and from every corner of the city rose a tremendous cry of *saadu*. It was the *nekata* fixed by the astrologers. Priests waiting for the signal took the Dalada out of its inner sanctuary. At the same moment the king stepped out of the palace building in which he resided. He then walked to the relic shrine to honour it before its journey. When he had worshipped, the Maha Nayaka of Malwatta brought the relic in its innermost casket to the chieftain on the caparisoned tusker; and the cavalcade started off. After the tuskers went a number of palanquins in which travelled priests appointed for the service of the Danta Dhatu for the duration of the war. At the heels of this procession went another — tuskers bearing away the Ran-Awuda of the devala temples.

Days before the king's decision every big home in the capital had made ready to leave the city. Additional palanquins from their country manors, stalwart men to bear them and armed retainers devoted to their masters — these had been standing by for any emergency. It was the custom of Senkadagala that no man should leave the city on such an occasion till the Dalada had set out. Women folk too honoured the rule. Now they brought their little ones to the waiting palanquins, and glided in themselves. From each home emerged a couple or more of such conveyances borne on willing shoulders. Female servants walked by them carrying things wanted on the journey. Such males of the house as were not already out on war duty rode on horse back immediately after the palanquins. Armed retainers and a couple of elephants loaded to capacity with the more valuable movables of the house-

hold brought up the rear. The streets were full. The processions left the city in directions considered safe from approaching enemy forces.

With the ladies of the house went every female, maid, servant, and slave. Bands of men left behind to carry away less valuable goods to places of safety loaded them leisurely on oxen accustomed to caravan work. They had instructions not to start till night had advanced lest they render the narrow roads difficult for the palanquins. War was in the air. They threw pots and pans on the floor saying that was how they would deal with the heads of their opponents in the battles that were to come. The articles were anyway not wanted. For no one would use a cooking vessel once touched by a beef-eater.

Every department of the palace hummed with activity. Two processions of palanquins had gone out, one bearing away the queens and the other the ladies of the *antahpura*, the former more heavily escorted than the latter. It would have been usual for the king to have travelled with his queens; but Sri Wickrama still paced the courtyard of his palace. By it rose the large storied building of the Maha Aramudala, the king's treasure house. There officials and their men sweated away packing for despatch regalia and heaps of priceless treasure. *Sattambi* officials recorded the articles that went into each package, the destination to which it would go, and names of those that would go in charge. Many an elephant caravan left palace precincts as each was loaded. By evening some of these were coming in for fresh loads. The king, however, did not cast one glance in the direction of the treasure house. He paced fretfully, his sword by his side.

Most of the *etulkattalay* personnel had left to prepare the palace at Hanguranketa for the king's reception. The Maha Mudiyansay and a couple of his subordinates remained behind to go with their prince. On the Devasanghinda was a considerable force of Atapattuway and Maduway men to escort royalty. At the sanadakadapahana, by the draw-bridge, the Gajanayaka Nilamay had the king's tusker ready. Yet the king showed no desire to leave. What worried him? He had given special orders that all *lekam-miti* should be kept ready for use at Hanguranketa. He had inquired about this order and the despatch of large stocks of muskets and jingals his armoury contained. His magazines he had entrusted to a number of young courtiers, in whom he reposed great trust. Much of the powder was already on its

way out, and young appuhamies brought him reports every time their elephants went away. It was evening. His mount kept in the sun from noon was getting restive. Still the king paced up and down. As the sun began to sink behind the hills the Maha Mudiyansay aproached his prince and folded his palms. He humbly reminded it was time to start on the journey; there was no need for delaying longer. The king said;

"Yes. But there is an important rajakariya to be done ere we start. Get sixty men."

When the men stood before him he pointed to a large heap of torches on the Devasanghinda. It was being added to — torches to light the king's tusker on its way. He asked every man to carry a lighted torch, a few to set fire to the Wedehitina Mandapa, that part of the palace the ruler resided in, and the rest to fire every walawwa in the city. From the top of the stone stairs, under the Makara Torana of the now empty Dalada shrine, he watched the homes of his courtiers go up in flames. Fire leapt up in places of the palace roof. He said that the Dalada Mandapa and the Hall of Audience should not be destroyed. Then he came down the steps a grim smile on his face. Sight of fire made the tusker unruly almost. But as the monarch approached the mighty animal sank on his knees. The king leapt up to his seat, light as a warrior going into battle, not a prince fleeing before the foe. At a signal from the Maha Mudiyansay conches blew. Atapattuway and Maduway levies fell into their places. The tusker conscious of its office reared its trunk and headed the cavalcade on its way in the direction of Hewaheta.

Those still in the city praised the king for that act of destruction. They said 'The enemy will defile the temples. When we surround them, and their general finds his proud army is caught like cattle in a pen, then will he try to escape and going away, leave every building in ashes. Let us burn the city ourselves. Our king is wise'. They spread the fire without thought of personal safety, now helping the flames to roofs that stood apart, now running forward to turn back caravan oxen that took fright as the flames roared. When their animals filed out much of the city was ashes. Their caravans picked their way from village to village in an attempt to avoid the roads, broadcasting the news as they went of how their noble monarch fired the capital that the enemy mignt have no vantage in the war.

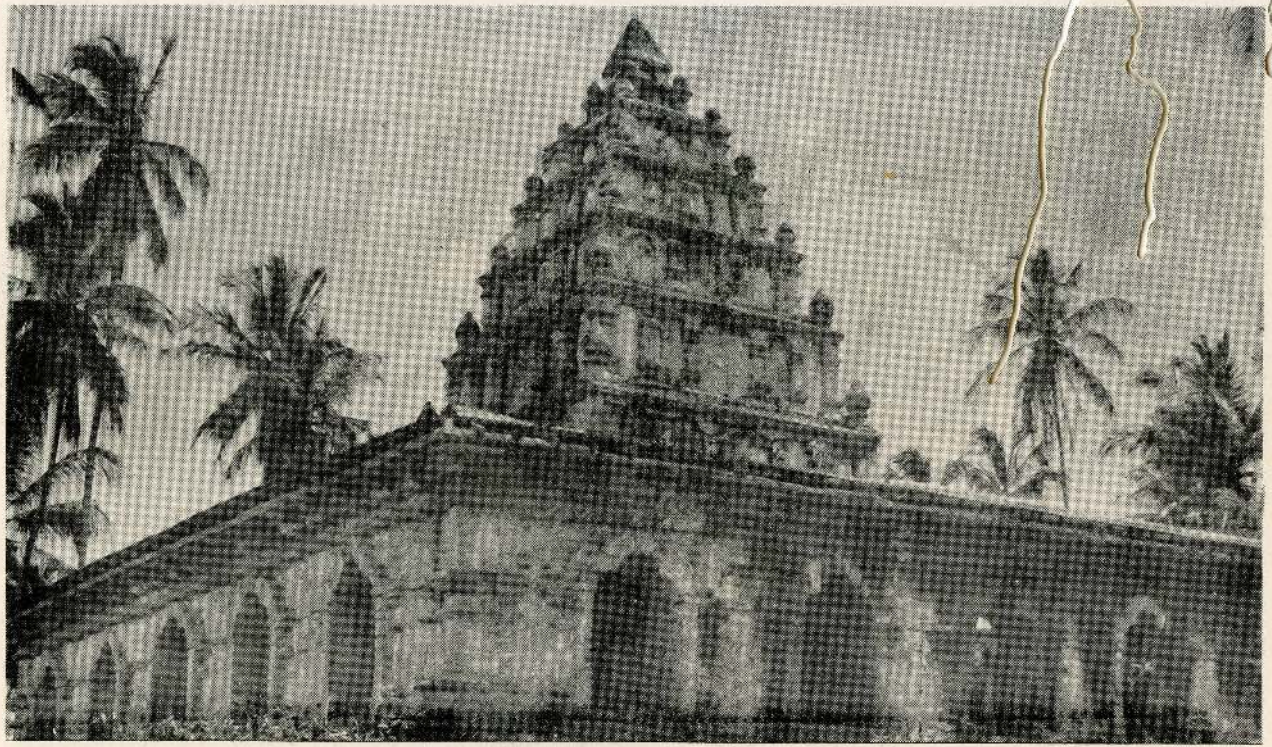
Next day king Sri Wickrama was in Hanguranketa, miles east of Senkadagala. Inhabitants in villages round the abandoned capital followed the example of the city population. They sought safety with relatives far in the hinterland. Those that had no friends there took refuge in forest terrain; for the enemy was known to inflict inhuman tortures on women and children. Each party carried the barest necessities of life. Only one adult male went with a party. The rest dug large holes near the home they were abandoning, and prepared them to receive the paddy they were obliged to leave behind. Then they too left the home to join the district flag.

Soon, talk everywhere was of the war. Men in distant provinces took down sword and buckler to be ready when the call to arms should come; while women prepared as large hampers of food materials as their men could carry. Mothers blessed their sons; and young wives knelt to their lords as they stepped out to lend the might of each district in the fight to save the Sasana and motherland. Tears had to be restrained, and sad words avoided, lest the setting out be inauspicious. Chieftain and scribe checked from the latest *lekam-miti* to see every house had sent its men; while everywhere Sudaliya and Maruwaliya captains sweated away training large bands of youngmen to be skilful fighters.

To Hanguranketa came report after report of enemy success. Forts along their march fell. The news alarmed many of his courtiers. Sri Wickrama devoted his days to religion. He said, 'Wait. You shall see how I deal with the English, in good time'. He built a gorgeous bana-maduwa and gave alms and got pious priests to preach the religion. The Dalada had been housed in Medapitiya not far from Hanguranketa. Here he went daily for worship; and made rich offerings.

Meanwhile the enemy advanced, and occupied the capital. It would be natural for the enemy to follow the king to his retreat. Sri Wickrama always counting on the efficiency of younger blood had a number of appuhamies to cover his retreat. They were given a small force to harry an enemy that came in sight, and asked to report soon as more men joined their force.

The young leaders were to watch the approach to the high hills of Hewaheta. The road lay across a wide valley which the Mahaveli divided into two almost equal areas. In the centre of the valley of Wagolla was the ford, in full view of the hills around.



The stone structure Meegastennay Appuhamy was not permitted to complete.

(*The roof in the picture is a* 20*th century expedient*).

The detachment had a large amount of gun powder in their charge. In the confusion of retreat the powder was being conveyed to different places in the hinterland beyond Hanguranketa. With great ardour Sri Wickrama had got it together : he meant to use it now. The inactivity circumstances forced on the young appuhamies, and the availability of gunpowder in quantity gave them a novel idea. 'Let us burn some of the white men with their own weapon', a captain said. His friends listened.

The white-men would not march more than ten miles during a morning. They would halt to rest till the sun became less warm. They could command a view of the vicinity from Wagolla ferry. There was water too and the place would be excellent for a halt. A number of *kitul* trunks placed on the meadow near the ford, their hearts packed with gunpowder should be so arranged as to make them tempting as seats. If fired when men were seated on them many would go the way they should.

"But who would fire the powder ?" a companion asked.

They put their heads together to solve the difficulty. Under each trunk would be a hole large enough for a man to squat in. In each hole will hang a fuse. At a signal every man would fire his fuse. Hurriedly they began work. *Kitul* trees were felled, eighteen for luck. Their pith was removed and the insides dried with torch flames. They were then packed with gunpowder, and the ends were sealed with wooden plugs and clay. By each trunk was a hole; and every hole was provided with a trap door camouflaged with grass and a hidden tunnel for air as is provided in mock burials carried out to appease the corpse eating demon, Mahasona. In each hole the appuhamies expected to hide a man who would fire the fuse at an arranged signal.

The trunks were of fair girth and cut long enough for a score or more men to sit comfortably on. They guessed their trap would take in quite a good number of the whitemen. The palm pith was taken across the river; and the dug out soil sent down stream. All traces of work on the meadow was swept or washed out. Then the young captains called for volunteers brave enough to take their places in the holes : it meant certain death. The response surprised. Indeed there were few amongst their men who were not eager to shoulder the task. Many even claimed a right to be selected by virtue of previous war service. These latter, though fit and able, were men past middle age. The younger

ones tried to dissuade them. When their attempts failed they objected to any one of the older lot being selected for the task.

Said the younger men, 'This is no job for men of forty and fifty years. In risky enterprises of the nature preference must always be given to younger men'. Said the older ones 'Nay, it is. This is a job for men who have seen life and are nearing the grave, not for those beginning to live and will be of future use to the world'. The younger lot replied, 'You have fought for Sasana and motherland. You must enjoy the happiness such service deserves. Leave exploits of danger to men in the heyday of life'. Said the older ones, 'Indeed we have, but cannot hope to do so much longer. You younger folk have to take our places and continue the fight for Sasana and race. This is not the last war that would come to Sinhalay. The young must live to fight, the country cannot afford to lose one of them. Those that must go soon, let them go fighting to protect the Sasana'.

The younger men had other things to say : the older ones refused to be argued down. The appuhamies were in a quandry. They said, 'Surely we are not going to haggle till the enemy discovers our plan. We shall have nine out of the younger men and an equal number out of the rest. That ought to satisfy all', they ruled.

There were rebellious tongues, specially amongst the younger men. But the larger number were satisfied; and these silenced the rest. The captains called on the men to fall into two age groups. Either group was then counted and two bundles of sticks gathered. One bundle contained as many sticks as there were men in the older group, the other as many as there were men in the second group. The captains themselves notched nine sticks from each bundle. The sticks were then burried in the sands of the river so that the notched ends could not be seen. Each man pulled out a stick from the bundle meant for his group. Those that drew the notched sticks were selected for the holes. Each of the eighteen was then asked to choose his own helper who would bring to him a coconut shell full of live coals when the time to go in arrived, and also place the trap-door in position.

The eighteen men squatted in their holes : their helpers tended a heap of embers a respectable distance down the bank. All waited for things to happen. But the foe showed no signs of walking into the trap. More men were counted off for scout duty. They brought reports of great activity in the city. There however were no signs of parties marching out. The disappointed

captains cursed lustily : the younger men suggested a night attack on a camp to bring away as many fire-arms as they could. But the older soldiers cautioned restraint. Haste never brought victory. Besides the rajakariya entrusted to them by the king was to ambush an enemy on the march to Hanguranketa. The enemy had not gone away. They will have to send out parties to obtain food material at any rate.

One morning scouts on the hills came tearing down. A party, a fairly numerous one, was on the march. A band of coloured lascars led. Then came some mounted whitemen, officers without a doubt. Behind them were compaines of white soldiers followed by more coloured men carrying baggage. The news, almost too good, took one of the captains up the hill to reconnoitre, while every one below got ready. In a few minutes the eighteen men were ready in their holes, and their friends were busy picking live coals out of a fire that was not old enough for it. Then they extinguished its flames. The young captains rushed their small force across the river into the bush on a hill not far away, and themselves disappeared amongst shrubs at its base. Of their followers they ordered five men to stay back — in the stream.

Troops coming down the road found the vicinity deserted. Looking around they saw some men in the river, bathers obviously. The water reached well above their middle. An officer clapped and waved to them; and an orderly shouted there was rich reward for one who would say where that road led, and at what spot the river might be forded without difficulty. There were four men in mid-stream. These looked at each other. They appeared pleased and quite willing to parley. Then a cry came from behind.

In shallow water close to the opposite bank was a bather differently clad. The figure wore a cloth upto the armpits. It was a female. Her beardless face was handsome and her hair much longer than her companions'. She looked up at the troops for a moment : then screaming '*Apay Appoh* ! *Suddoh* !'[5] gathered her clothes and was away tumbling along the path as she ran. That scream made her male companions change their minds. They ran after her picking up their clothes as they came to the bank. In the shrub an appuhamy told his friend, 'Indeed, you chose well. Kira can act the part of a woman very well'.

The mounted officers halted their men. A party of coloured lascars were ordered to the stream. Cautiously they waded in. The officers watched to find how deep the water was; while their

men settled down to rest — on the conveniently placed *kitul* trunks and on the meadow around, talking and laughing merrily.

A conch blared from the shrub in which the appuhamies were. A jingal answered that peal from the hill immediately above. The officers scanned the scene wondering. They caught sight of a whiff of smoke curl up on the hill. Then there was an explosion behind them. Before they could turn to look, more followed in quick succession. There were yells of rage from their men. The peaceful meadow was belching out flames and clouds of suffocating smoke. The officers could hardly restrain their horses. Buglars blew to warn another company approaching. They were the van of a force marching to find the king. A huzza on the hill where the jingal had gone off attracted. A few hundred armed men were rushing down. Before the English could recover from the surprise they were upon them. Many of the white men died and most of the coloured mercenaries captured. But few were able to return. What of the men in the eighteen holes ? Everyone of them had died, their friends solemnly said 'To save the Sasana from the white men.'

In his retreat the king devoted all his time to religion. Those who did not know he was racking his brain for a plan to save the country said he was a funny monarch. 'Men amass wealth to give their daughters in marriage, physicians study their art to help the ailing back to health, and a country has a ruler to save it from its foes' — the king pondered on this saying of the wise men of old. Chieftains in the Provinces were getting the fighting men together; and arms were being turned out in increasing number by the king's smiths. While these preparations went forward Sri Wickrama decided to make a peaceful approach to the enemy. Speaking at court he told Meegastennay Dissawa,

> "Go to the enemy. Ask him why he has marched into our capital. Bring me his reply."

The chieftain set out with a company of soldiers from his own dissawa. When he was at the gravet of the capital the English General and his captains came out to meet him. They asked what the object of his visit was. Said the Chieftain,

> "Thus says our noble monarch. You and we have been friends. What cause is there we should be enemies ? Why have you marched into my kingdom and occupied the capital ?"

And the General replied,

"Chieftain, tell the king he must cede to us half of his kingdom. We shall then leave your city with all despatch and go away your friends. But if he would not accede to our request, why, we shall then stay on and conquer the whole kingdom."

At these proud words of the General, Meegastennay Dissawa held his sides and laughed. Aloud he laughed, then replied,

"Indeed, you might stay on and conquer the whole country."

He left the city and hastening to Hanguranketa humbly reported every detail of his mission. The king flared up with anger. He cried,

"The knave ! Does he dare utter such arrogant words ?"

He summoned his chieftains men of proved patriotism and learned in the laws of mankind. To them he said,

"The English are determined to conquer this country. Tell me what steps I should take to meet the threat."

Like the moon serene amongst attendant stars he sat awaiting their counsel. But the chieftains were not agreed. Some respectfully said that their duty was to carry out the king's orders. Whatever the throne resolved on that they would put into execution with all the power at their command. Others there were who pretended they knew better. These said,

"Men of the Low-Country, if these have come with the enemy, are accomplished in the arts of war. We have heard of the enemy's strength, and do not think we shall be able to defeat them. Therefore let us give them what they demand, make friends of them and be happy".[6]

The king listened to all that they had to say, then full nobly spoke his mind.

"In this land of Lanka, many are the king's that have ruled before, and many the enemies that opposed them. Tell me which prince consented to share his kingdom with the enemy. That tradition I will not break. Good chieftains, never again shall you with such advice bring disgrace on my name. Wherefore do I sit on the throne of far famed Lanka if for fear of war with these English I should take to my heels ?"

So saying he ordered the despatch of olas summoning fighting units from every province of Sinhalay. And when they responded

to his call he gave their leaders land grants and posts of honour winning thereby the love of all his subjects.

Giving Meegastennay many a sannas grant he appointed him Dissawa of Sat Korala and sent him to his province with orders to destroy each enemy post there. Lewkay Dissawa was sent to Satara Korala with similar orders. Keppetipola went as Dissawa of Matalay and Kahanda was placed in command of Sabaragamuwa. Then he appointed chieftains to carry on the war in districts immediately round the enemy occupied capital.

Courtly Palipana was sent to Udapalata, Matmagoda, Padikari Mudali, to lead the men of Udunuwara, and brave Moladanda as chief of Yatinuwara. Dorenegama, Commander of the horse and elephant corps had Harispattuwa, Madugalla was given the command of the Atapattuway forces and placed over Dumbara, while the Javanese regiments and the fearless Maduway Guard were entrusted to war loving Dehigama. Wettewa who desired the Kavisi Mercenaries was given that command. Millawa accepting the commission of Maha Lekam said 'War, my Lord, is the sport I like best'. Mullegama called on to be Dissawa of Walapanay and commander of the Sepoys cried, 'My Lord, here's Mullegama, your humble servant; to me this war is no task to worry about'. Galagoda made chieftain of Hewaheta was prepared to undertake the entire responsibility of the fight; while Ehelepola made Dissawa of Uva said, 'It were a pity to kill Englishmen. I shall bind them and roll them to roast in the sun'.

To these chieftains the king said,

"Go, take your places round the capital. Await orders for the assault. I shall come at the head of my forces without much delay."

The king then ordered his forces be drawn up for the march.[7] In the van were elephants of mighty stature, beasts trained to enter battle with the fury of thunder. Tusk to tusk these stood like rows of looming rain clouds. Next came the horse, swift footed animals whose restless nature made their lines appear to toss like the ocean wave. War chariots rumbled forward after the horse. Then came foot-soldiers, rank upon rank of archers, spearmen, gunners, and musketeers in endless succession. The General Araway[8] and many another chieftain were in command Brave Pusellay was there at the head of his experinced fighters and bands of skilled workmen.

Dressed in white, astride his ceremonial tusker, King Sri Wickrama took his place at the head of this army. His gem set regalia glistened[9] and he looked like Sakra in his glory. On either hand poets sang valedictory praises. Minstrels made music and females danced. *Davul*, *maddala*, *mihigu*, and *tammettam* throbbed; chanks, *sinnam*, *kombu* and *soranay* by the hundred blared and guns boomed[10]. With all the pomp of kingship Sri Wickrama set out. The roar of his march resounded like the swell of a sea that had burst its bounds and was rolling over the land. At Uduwela the king called a halt.

Next morning at the hour called Vijaya he started again. Advancing to a spot not far from Senkadagala, at an auspicious *nekata* he turned in the direction of the enemy and shot the first gun of the battle. Then a thousand answering reports thundered; and his chieftains began to storm in from their posts around the city. The king's drummers proclaimed his order :-

"Attack. Give the enemy no time. Destroy them, and free the country."

Sankili, captain of the Javanese mercenaries, pushed up to the Maha Maluwa and began an attack on the enemy in front. Upon Udawatta hill, behind their stronghold, the English had put up fortifications. Climbing to the position through forest Madugalla burst into their fort. He slew so many, the blood flowed in a stream; and all baggage in the fort became booty. Chieftains marching in were now in the heart of the city. Ehelepola advanced to Kumaruppa, Wettawa to the moat of lakes. Millawa was on the grounds of Malwatta Monastery and Galagoda on Tingolewela close to him. Madugalla fought on Wewelpitiya. Palipana's long lance went into many an enemy bosom at Kotugodella and Moladanda had heaps of English slain on Wadugodapitiya. Matmagoda fought on Bogambara and Dorenegama in Mahaiyawa. Their attacks thinned enemy numbers.

The king now ordered that the attack be pressed. Musket and bow, spear and javelin, sword and mace — in riotus sport these did execution. The English fell in the streets every where. They cut them, they bound them, they drove them from post to post. Some asked the English why they ever came as they took away their flags and drums. Others secured rich booty—elephants and horses, oxen and buffaloes. Men fond of battle took delight in cutting off enemy heads while their friends went in search of dresses and money boxes, and rolled out barrels of arrack and rum.

At length the enemy began to fall back. The Sinhalas pursued. A large enemy force laid down their arms and turning in the direction where the king was, raised their hands to indicate surrender. Some forces, however, broke away and were making an attempt to escape. The monarch ordered that those submitting be taken into protection whilst those resisting be massacred. Like deer that had been scared by the sight of a leopard the English fled followed by the Sinhalas. Many fell by the way. On the road across Wagolla[11] green the rest were surrounded. That the English may learn a lesson never again to invade another's land these were maced even as farmers club thieving cattle that have broken into a fenced patch of paddy.

Not one was allowed to escape. Prince Muttusamy and Galibilisamy — these with a few followers had turned traitor to their country and gone over to the English — were taken captive, and led bound to Uduwela. The king questioned them why they had acted in such disgraceful fashion; then gave them over to his army for execution. English pride was humbled that day. The streets of Senkadagala and the meadow at Wagolla became English graveyards; and their blood coloured the sands of the Mahaveli. The English still held the forts they had taken. The king sent chieftains with his victorious army to them. Gongawala and Dambadeniya were soon recaptured.

The war was now over. Everywhere men sang the praises of the victorious king. Even as Rajasingha destroyed the Portugese so Sri Wickrama taught the English never to invade Sinhalay again, they sang. But Senkadagala was in ruins. The king got wisemen to plan the city on lines calculated to bring prosperity to her. He obtained clever builders from all over Lanka for the work. Captives of the war sweated away to rebuild the capital. Soon it was beautiful once more with moat and rampart, gate-way and carved step, storied palaces and gold spired temples.

Dehigama Nilamay Captures the King

IT WAS an open secret amongst the aristocrats of Sri Wickramarajasingha's court that Pilimatalawway Dissawa's brains were in the keeping of his mohottala. The former was a son of the great adigar who placed Sri Wickrama on the throne. The father was not in office during the time of our story. Dismissed from high place because the king felt he had helped the British during their war against Sinhalay, the adigar was in disgrace. Yet the son was a favourite. The latter in his mid twenties, was not known for learning or wisdom either. During his cadet period in the Appuhamy Maduwa he had won no laurels. Hasty and rash in action, his friends thought he might make a dashing soldier, little more. But with his first appointment he had shown remarkable ability as an administrator. He proved worthy of responsible place and won the king's praise every time. Colleagues and kinsmen who attributed his success to his mohottala agreed the latter was a clever man.

The mohottala took pains to follow every activity of young Pilimatalawway. He was anxious his young master should do nothing to lose royal favour that had already been won. Indeed it might be said with truth that the man's one aim in life was the future greatness of his chieftain.

A mohottala's duties were many. He was his master's chief scribe, secretary and aid-de-camp. He was in charge of the dissawa's judicial work, and was also the executive officer when he decreed punishment. A mohottala had therefore to live within easy reach of the walawwa. Young Pilimatalawway sent for his man soon as he felt a task he was engaged in required thought. The mohottala was equal to the occasion. He would ask for

time when he felt the task was an important one, turn the question in his mind, view it from every possible angle, then say;

> "My Lord it is thus and thus. If you proceed this way the work can be accomplished; but results may not be entirely to our advantage. If you take the other course the king will be pleased. It is, however, not for me to say which course Your Lordship should adopt. Above all our aim should be to please the king. Your Lordship will know best which course to follow."

Full well the mohottala knew which course His Lordship would then follow. He took care not to tread on his master's pride — that made easy the task of managing him. Situations did arise when the chieftain proved intractable, even perverse. But in the end the secretary succeeded in making the master do what he thought proper. Results were gratifying. The king complimented the chieftain for praiseworthy work. He promoted him from post to post. Two or three years after his first appointment Pilimatalawway was a dissawa. He was too young for such responsibility; but the king felt sure he would not fail.

Sri Wickrama himself had had no experience of court life before he was king. To those that had objected to have him on the throne Pilimatalawway adigar had said 'Kannesamy is docile, will consult us in every thing he does, will, at all events, prove restrainable'. It was the prince's good fortune that, during the first years of his reign, he left everything in the hands of his benefactor. He enjoyed the pomp and glory of kingship, carefree and happy. He lost the good-will of his court whenever he tried to act by himself, as in the case of his treatment of the dowager queen of Rajadhi Rajasingha. But many thought the king's childish behaviour there could not be viewed apart from the natural enmity of a monarch to a rival who he imagined plotted to oust him from the throne. The determination Sri Wickrama showed in fighting the first British invasion, and the signal victory that followed won much praise. His attempt soon after to rule without Pilimatalawway adigar failed. It robbed him of the glory his courage had won.

As long as his benefactor was at the helm the adigar would say,

"The Maha Wasala in its divine wisdom commands thus;"

and rule the land as he pleased. Sri Wickrama sat on the throne dreaming dreams of architectural piles that should make his capital

beautiful. When the able minister was dismissed and another, who feared to take liberties with the prince, appointed in his place, the new adigar waited for orders. His duty was to see royal commands carried out by the proper authority. At times the king gave orders contrary to what he had said before. There was friction. Courtiers asked 'Is he fit to sit on the throne?' Even the few who were for Sri Wickrama were disheartened at the way he gave impulsive orders making no endeavour to correct himself by experience. When angered he appeared to forget the responsibility of kingship. Noblemen forgot the reverence their forbears had to the throne. If an irksome order was received with surprise, the king imagined the chieftain was disrespectful. Every order, however, was carried out promptly and fully notwithstanding obvious resentment. Sri Wickrama grew confident of his authority. He mistook traditionary discipline for fear of his power. He began to decree extreme punishment as a measure to awe the aristocracy to obedience. Warrior chieftains accustomed to hazzards of recurring wars were not deterred. Their religion viewed death not as an end but as another beginning. The king was determined to bend the aristocracy to his will. The latter knelt to him; but treated his powers of life and death with contempt. A gulf opened. A habit the monarch was acquiring did nothing to bridge the chasm. This was drink — the use of intoxicants was looked on in Sinhalay as base and degrading. Sri Wickrama sat on his throne all unaware of universal discontent.

Court had been going on for hours one day. Self seeking men had vied one with another to pander to the monarch's vanity, speaking praises they did not feel. Court dismissed, the king had walked towards the Wedehitina Mandapa[1] with the adigar behind him. Noblemen in knots chatted in the hall and the courtyards. The older ones were waiting for the adigar. They looked grave and talked in whispers keeping to traditional palace etiquette; but were really laughing over some silly behaviour of the king that day. There were younger men anxious to get to their homes. These cursed the king's Javanese guard for the time they took to leave the grounds. They always waited till the Javanese, considered loathesome as beef-eaters, had passed out of the palace esplanade.

Presently courtiers began to walk down in parties of threes and fours each party halting a little opposite the Dalada Mandapa to fold their palms in obeisance. Then they crossed over the

draw bridge to the esplanade. A young courtier as he bowed before the shrine noticed a folded ola on the pavement. It was a letter complete with carefully cut seal. In those days a letter was not an object to be lightly treated.

The Sinhalese wrote on carefully prepared palm leaf. The message was inscribed on one side of a long strip. It was then folded to something less than a span. One end was wound round the middle to a knot of many folds, which, cut to a pattern, opened out into four clusters resembling the petals of a flower. Each cluster had as many petals as the folds the writer deliberately cut; and the number of petals in each cluster indicated what relation the sender had or desired to have to the addressee[2]. The flower seal once tampered with could not be restored to its original shape. His obeisance over, the youth looked carefully at the object before him and exclaimed;

"Ye gods ! Its from a friend, isn't it ? Look the flower has two rows of petals. Could someone have dropped it ?"

"A deliberate mistake it seems," said his friend picking up the letter, "the addressee is here."

He handed it to Pilimatalawway who was one of the group. Little outside war and high position interested Pilimatalawway. The look on his face said, 'What the.....has any body to write to me about?' He turned it like a soldier who, looking for an enemy in ambush, has tumbled on a clue. His gaze searched the ramparts for a moment. Then he opened the seal with care. He read, but could not understand. He thought of his mohottala, that sea of wisdom. Said one of his companions,

"That letter does not speak of war!"

"How do you know that?" asked the addressee turning on him.

"Because your face does not reflect satisfaction," the other laughed.

"To have left a letter addressed to me in this fashion is taking liberties with me. It purports to be from a friend; but I cannot find his name either."

With that Pilimatalawway thrust the ola into his pocket. The puzzled look on his face did not escape his friends.

It was, however, not correct to be inquisitive. They walked down to their palanquins chatting gaily about the day's doings. Pilimatalawway pretended to listen, and his companions pretended

they were not at all interested in that letter. Though not yet in the prime of life, the young noblemen had already mastered the courtly art of dissimulation.

Pilimatalawway asked for his mohottala even as he stepped into his walawwa. The latter had taken up a goblet of water to prepare for his midday meal. He set it down and hastened to his master, promising to come back for his lunch. There must be something quite urgent, he told his wife. Pilimatalawway dismissed the servant who was helping him to undress, and handed the ola to the mohottala. The latter offered to take the servant's place—it needed another's help to take off the court dress of a Kandyan chieftain. The dissawa said;

"I can undress alone. You try to read that."

The wise one looked at the address, then read the contents. He counted the number of petals in the now torn flower seal, and read the contents again. He looked up to speak, but scrutinised the ola again, and read the contents a third time. His eyes opened wide; his jaw fell. To his amazement the chieftain burst into laughter. The young dissawa had never seen his man so flustered.

"My Lord, whoever sent this, he is no friend to us. Your Lordship has not told me from whom it came."

"The sender's name? Isn't that what has to be found?"

"He has not written his name on the ola."

"What is there to find if that ass had the sense to do it."

"If Your Lordship would tell me how it was delivered and what sort of man the messenger was."

"No person delivered it. It lay on the pavement near the stone stairs leading down from the Dalada Mandapa."

The secretary looked flabergasted. He said,

"Then someone placed it there who saw you coming down."

"Ay. It could not have walked to where it lay, by itself."

"Did Your Lordship try to find whether anyone was watching?"

"There was little sense in betraying that I was excited over the letter?"

"That was wise, My Lord. This letter says there will be a rebellion."

"How? It does not say there is any intention to assassinate the king? Read it."

Reading, "What we thought would be a true blue lotus of noble nature, gives an increasingly repellant stench every day. It has changed colour, and now stings like a nettle.

For the good of the Sasana and the prosperity of the mother-land it has to be removed from the water we drink. A true blue lotus should take its place."

"The blue lotus, My Lord is the king, and the water we drink the country, The writer....."

"Hm.....hm!" the dissawa drawled. He now knew what all that jargon meant.

But that 'Hm. hm.' did not reassure the secretary. The smile that accompanied it was not a smile of understanding merely. It plainly said 'Well, that is not so bad, anyhow'. The mohottala spoke with gravity. There was a note of remonstrance in his words.

"My Lord, if this comes to the knowledge of the king it means a *raja-udahasa*!"

"Will the mohottala find the correct meaning of that queer language, so we may know what exactly has to be done. It is time for meals, isn't it?"

A complacent smile in place of the knitted brows when he pulled the letter from his pocket, and an airy demeanour that became evident soon as he appeared to understand whom the term blue lotus denoted—the meaning of these signs filled the mohottala with dismay. '*Deiyo saaki*,' he said to himself, 'is it for this I have been labouring for years!' Through his mind flashed an ugly picture of a young chieftain led before the throne to stand his trial for treason against the Maha Wasala. In a humble voice he said it would help greatly in unravelling the mysterious meaning of the letter if he could know the chieftain's movements that morning. The mohottala's object was to know whether his master had already been to a treasonous rendezvous. When told he had come straight home from court, the secretary hurried home feeling all was not lost.

To the ruling class of Senkadagala reverence of the throne was not the same thing as loyalty to its occupant. They fell on their knees before the monarch, folded their palms and said they were '*Balugetto*' (dog slaves) of the Maha Wasala. By Maha Wasala they appear to have meant kingship as an institution, not the prince that ruled. For directly they felt the ruler was neglecting religion, or showed a tendency to overlook customary laws and traditional usage, they got busy thinking of a better man to take his place. Freely their blood flowed in the country's wars; but

it was never for prince or dynasty. The Sasana and motherland dominated thought. Sasana was the Dhanta Dhatu and the devas that protected the holy treasure and brought them prosperity and health in mundane life, motherland their way of life and national pride. It was to help protect these they elected a monarch. They raised whom they liked to the throne; and that they may respect him without degrading themselves declared their king was descended of the Solar race. They surrounded him with fabulous riches, and made his life a ritual. His orders were obeyed without question, and his every wish gratified. But soon as his ways displeased they found little difficulty in agreeing he should make room for a better ruler.

To remove a king did not mean a civil war by any means. The country was entirely in the hands of the *radala*, a body of leaders that included heads of almost every caste. The radala followed where the aristocracy or mudaliperuwa led. For they, more than the king, were concerned in the defence of the motherland. This was specially so during the Andra kings. In war the monarch was powerless without them—he had no army of his own. In peace the king's authority depended on the discipline a warrior race was accustomed to. When the ruling class felt a king they had placed in power abused his authority, they imagined it their peculiar duty to pull him down themselves, and make the coast clear for the formal election to the throne of the next man they had set their hearts on. This end they strove to achieve quietly, that is by assassination.

The profound homage aristocrats and people paid to the monarch was a part of Sinhala culture. It was the way ancients had adopted to keep in check the tyrannical powers an oriental ruler wielded. He received respect accorded to the gods that he might remember he should emulate the devas in every respect. Like Natha, the Maithree Bodisatva, he was supposed to be one desiring Buddhahood, and was addressed as 'Buduwanta' (may you be a buddha). Therefore like a bodhisatva he was expected to subdue the '*pancha-klesha*', the five impure states of mind; and be above giving way to the *Satara Agati*,—lust, anger, fear and ignorance, that tempt a monarch to acts of injustice and cruelty. He had to cultivate the *Satara Sangraha*, attributes of noble rulers of old, and be guided by the Dasa Raja Dharma in his goverment. It was such virtue that made a king a Deva in human form, and made him deserve respect due to a godly being. Sri Wickrama

did not, perhaps could not, appreciate what kingship connoted to his subjects.

As he got accustomed to have his will obeyed promptly and completely, even on occasions his ministers resented his orders, he evinced a tendency to overlook the moral code that limited tyrannical power. Aristocrats felt his behaviour savoured of conceit, also a love of revenge which they reckoned very unkingly. He mistook the traditional discipline of a people accustomed to be led into battle, for servile obedience to regal authority. If an irksome order was received without enthusiasm he took it for disloyalty; and remembered. Good king Kirti Sri and his brother Rajadhi had disarmed aristocratic pride with tolerance, and treasonous intent with appeasement. Sri Wickrama, as he became accustomed to the throne, used other methods. He sought to awe the aristocracy with exemplary punishment. Not long after the first English invasion it dawned on those near to him that nothing could restrain Sri Wickrama once he felt angered. Patriots feared for the future. A few resolved to free the land of his, as they thought, stupid presence. Whether they intended to take his life once they had made him a captive it is not known. The ola to Pilimatalawway Dissawa was an effort to win him over to such a plan. When the dissawa could guess the true import of the anonymous epistle, he was for throwing in his lot with the conspirators. It proved to be Sri Wickrama's good fortune on the occasion that he could not find the meaning of the message without his mohottala's help.

The mohottala realised which way his master's mind was influenced. He, however, was for taking him along a different path. He felt there was little time to lose. The lunch can wait, he told his wife. He opened his *pettagama* and took out his precious astrological olas. He wanted to find the probable time the conspirators would put their plot into execution, to find why the epistle had been put in his master's way on that day—it was near the new moon. With style and ola he studied the movement of the stars while his wife wondered what it was all about. When he stood up he had solved every riddle of the mysterious letter, and more.

The relative position of heavenly bodies that month boded ill for ruling princes and statesmen wielding power. The night of the new moon, some hours of the second yama and the entirety of the third were fraught with great danger. The aspect indicated harm,

perhaps death, not by illness but by the treachery of subordinate or friend. If the ominous days could be tided over a period of prosperity and greater power would follow. Reverently the secretary put his books back in the box, ate a little of his now cold lunch, and walked to the walawwa. He humbly placed before the chieftain his reading of the stars. The days before and during the new moon were bad for all men in general, and specially for kings and great personages like dissawas and ministers. The king might come to harm; but it was more likely his enemies, if they were men of eminence, would come to sorrow. If the monarch would tide over the short evil period, then greater power and prosperity would be his in the near future. He thought, as the stars were aspected, the safest course was to take the king's side. That way would lead to promotion and happiness. But ofcourse it was not for him to direct. His Lordship would know what course to follow.

The dissawa smiled in a way that did not please his faithful secretary. That day he appeared to have made up his mind which course he would follow even before the alternatives were made lucid by the wise one. Thoroughly alarmed the mohottala began to speak—of the great love king Sri Wickrama had for the dissawa, of the king's love for the Dalada, of his noble qualities as a ruler etc, etc. In his dilemma the secretary forgot how keenly Pilimatalawway resented voluble talk. The latter did not hide displeasure: the mohottala would not give in. Bored the chieftain cried,

> "Talk, talk, talk! The amount of talk one had to listen to at court this morning! Will the mohottala say what exactly has to be done in this matter. Talk, talk!"

Not long after, Pilimatalawway dissawa was at the Koraha Wahalkada, waiting for a herald who had hurried to the palace to report his presence. Except when the monarch held court special permission was necessary to be admitted to palace grounds. The young chieftain was a favourite with the king. Word came that he was to present himself at the Dakina Mandapa. He had not to wait long when the king entered attended by the Maha Mudiyansay and a few youths of the Appuhamy Maduwa. Pilimatalawway hailed him with folded palms. Then taking from his waist the dagger he wore placed it in its scabbard at the royal feet[3]—what he had to say was for royalty's ears alone. The prince walked to an

adjoining apartment the chieftain following. It was a chamber set apart for secret consultation between adigars and the king. The door, however, was left open that those in the Dakina Mandapa might see though they could not hear. The dissawa placed the ola he had received in the king's hands.

Sri Wickrama pondered quite a few minutes over the contents of that letter. Then he turned pale—he understood the riddle language as Pilimatalawway's secretary had predicted. Both were silent for a space. The king was angry. Controlling himself he began to question the chieftain. Pilimatalawway remembering what his secretary had humbly suggested, spoke only of what he knew. The king tried to get information that would help identify the conspirators. He asked how Pilimatalawway knew the time they would act; and was disappointed when told of his mohottala's astrological calculations. Sri Wickrama said,

> "I have treated you like a brother. In the future I expect to place much more power in your hands. You are loyal: I have made no mistake in the trust I reposed. Tell me what you will do in this matter."

The monarch's spontaneous trust did more than the mohottala's clever arguments. Pilimatalawway answered simply;

> "Deveyanwahansa, my sword and shield shall be for you long as these hands can wield them.

Sri Wickrama could get no further consolation from his favourite. He did not guess how the dissawa had narrowly escaped falling into the treasonous camp that noon. But he knew the young chieftain was a man of few words, that he meant what he said. They came back to the Dakina Mandapa, and continued talking on many matters, without a word about the conspiracy. Today their second conversation would be called a smoke screen. Then it was court etiquette. When Pilimatalawway begged for leave to depart the king bade him take back the ornate dagger that still lay on the carpet.

After prince Muttusamy had been sent to his death the king had dismissed from his mind fear of assassination. Here was a serious threat. He inquired of his Maha Mudiyansay in what strength the Maduway men on the hill behind the palace and the atapattuway guard by the moat in front were posted for night duty, without giving any clue as to what worried him. Cereminial that hedged a Sinhala monarch's life gave little

opportunity for one to catch the king alone specially during night. He wondered how a traitor could reach him. Sri Wickrama was no coward. 'I will surprise him too, and make a lesson of him to the rest', the prince said to himself.

In the palace of Senkadagala not many hours of the night were considered sacred to sleep. Gay activities custom provided for a monarch's diversion filled half the night, more if the prince felt so inclined. There was no revelry. The programme consisted of entertainment that brought to court the best talent of the country in poesy song and dance. It pleased royalty, also helped men devoted to the arts to win recognition and fame. Dinner time was soon after the last ceremonies in the Dalada Mandapa which officiating priests left at dusk. The king had his meals by himself, then retired to the Kavikara Maduwa (Hall of Poets) where an assembly of clever poets received him with a paean of praise. It was an institution distinct from the Kavikara Maduwa of the palace musicians.

Every chieftain had a *kavikara-maduwa* in his country manor. Local bards came there to sing of their chieftain's achievements in war and peace. The cleverest of these backed by aristocratic influence came before the monarch to win royal approbation, then the best way to fame. Each poet recited his composition in turn, his right hand raised to shoulder level, its thumb with a softly tinkling *vengayam-mudda* on it keeping time to the rythm of his verse. Then he placed the ola on which the words were inscribed at the monarch's feet. The Kavikara Maduway Muhandiram Nilamay took it up and read the script to the king who asked the bard for explanation where he wanted, or a courtier what he thought of the composition. It was a triumph for the poet if the king ordered the ola to be handed over to the court minstrels. That meant the verses would be taken into the repertory from which palace musicians sang. Work that was thought very good came in for reward. The best won a *patabendi* name, court's highest award, for its composer.

While bards sang, muhandiram nilamays of the different *ilangam* kept each his dancer companies ready. The Wahala Ilangama and Naitoon Ilangama, (female dancers) respectively, were institutions each counting a few hundred performers meant for royal relaxation. Besides these, there was an *ilangama* into which came artistes skilled in *udekki*, *pantheru*, *naiyandi*, and *raban*

dancing from all over the kingdom. They were accomplished men eager for laurels in their respective arts. The Ilangamay Muhandiram Nilamay ordered the time for each company of artistes. The king watched the performance of these outsiders with a critic's eye; and a courtier standing by conveyed to them what royalty thought of the good or weak points of their art. Where dancing impressed the muhandiram was ordered to keep the company back in the city, and arrange a competition with a corresponding group of the Wahala Ilangama.

Near midnight the king went for the Pitchamal Ilangama in his *anthahpura*, harem. He entered the building alone, for no male eyes except the monarch's might see what passed. Dressed to display their charms and bedecked with jasmine chaplets, ladies of the harem danced. The music was soft and the air fragrant with rubbed sandal the ladies used in their toilet. They sang songs set to the *raga-udara*, *rathi-ranga*, and *alessang* wannam, their words appropriate to the time and place. Royalty watched, then joined in the dance himself with a flute or other musical instrument in his hands, presenting the picture of a *divyaraja* amongst his nymphs. The dancer that attracted most the king chose for the night.

It was generally close on the third *yama* Sri Wickrama would leave the harem for the Maha Sethapenagay, royalty's sleeping chambers. After Pilimatalawway's disturbing intelligence he kept longer hours. He sat interested in every item the muhandirams thought fit to bring before him. Going late to the *anthahpura* he lingered there till the small hours of the morning. The Maha Mudiyansay thought his prince was not having enough rest.

One day there was an abrupt change. Each *ilangama* was dismissed after a brief item. He went to the harem, but did not remain there more than a *peya*. Hours before midnight the train of torch bearers and pikemen were seen moving towards the Maha Sethapenagay quarter. Palace dignitaries who had lain down to steal a little sleep started up astonished. Was there ever such an eccentric monarch! However, it was plain the king wanted sleep. Had he not been sleeping late for quite a number of nights!

The Maha Sethapenagay where kings retired for the night was not a single bedroom nor a building under one roof. There were seven separate apartments, each furnished for a bed chamber. The rooms were without windows. Each had but a single door;

and the seven doors were so arranged that no one standing away from the buildings could see more than one of them at a time. At each stood a chair made by assembling four bent *eraminiya* branches. Its seat was of plaited rattan. The moment royalty retired for sleep a *dukganna* rala sat on each chair; and in his hands he held upright a drawn sword.

The sleeping chambers were sited for security. Contiguous with the buildings where the queens resided, they abutted on the large central courtyard. Behind rose the steep side of Udawatta hill. Detachments of the Maduway regiments had their watch posts on the heights. By the ramparts across the moat bounding palace grounds in front, soldiers of the Atapattuway guard were on sentry duty. It was impossible for any individual to penetrate through the barriers. An additional safeguard was the Appuhamy Maduwa a number of young men whose resting hall opened out on the same courtyard. These were scions of noble family in attendance at court as cadets for future service. Royal favour was their object: they would risk limb and life to win it. Even as Sri Wickrama left the *anthahpura* that night he could hear a band of them singing softly, a privilege not permitted to anyone else within palace limits.

The king wondered whether it would be possible for a few evilly disposed knaves to spread disaffection amongst so large a number of faithful men. His spies, Andra as well as Sinhala, could not discover any indication of a treasonous move. Perhaps the conspiracy had already failed for lack of support. At all events the number of traitors could not be large. People loved him; and those that did not feared the kind of punishment traitors got. Pilimatalawway, the ex-adigar, the only man Sri Wickrama feared, could not be one of the conspirators: for if he were the son would not have brought information. Indeed the king had all but dismissed the possibility of an attempt on his life, persuaded himself that both he and the young dissawa had read the riddles of that ola wrong, when he dreamt a strange dream. It had disturbed his siesta that noon. That dream meant there was danger to his life. But did it?

It was a prince sorely troubled in mind that walked in the direction of the sleeping chambers. He stepped on a circular stone where monarchs stand for the solemn Sethapenagay ceremony. Torch bearers and pikemen drew up on either side. A few fathoms down the lane of men on an oblong stone lay a number

of scabbardless swords. Their sharp blades glinted under the torches. Sri Wickrama at times looked to see they were well ground. That night he wondered whether he would have to match his weapon against one of them before it was day again.

He might have set a company of mercenary troops to guard the sethapenagay area, although such a step would have been considered an innovation. Guarding the palace was a privilege reserved to the Atapattuway and Maduway levies. Sri Wickrama, however, was resolved never to let his proud nobles imagine he was a coward. He had abounding confidence in his ability to overpower any man. The sword at his side that night was a blade himself had selected—for serious work. But how many traitors would he have to face. The dream also indicated he would come out unharmed at the end. That had encouraged his resolve to fight in his own defence. He would show the traitors he was a warrior.

The king was known to be quite friendly towards Dehigama, at this time Maha Sethapenagay Nilamay. When, however, the unhappy events of that night came to be discussed in later days those present remembered how the king's hand had rested on his sword as Dehigama conducted the Dukganna ceremony. The Sethapenagay Nilamay called,

"Dukganna ralas, to your rajakariya."

Seven men of large stature stepped into the lane of torches. Night magnified their build. They were men who had won praise for courage on the field of battle. Everyone of the seven came from a family known for unswerving loyalty. Each in turn took up a sword from the blades on the oblong stone and walked to the monarch carrying it level on his open palms. Sinking on his knees he placed the sword softly at the monarch's feet; then swore a mighty oath. By the Sun and the Moon, by Water and Fire, by the mother that bore him and his ofspring at home each swore calling on the Satarawaran Devas, Natha, the Maithree bodhisatva, and Mahikantawa, the earth goddess, and the dread Dedimunda, Kalukumara and Aiyanayaka, that no enemy be he small or great, animal or man, shall come near the king as long as he taking that oath had life. The king followed every word of each man's oath that night. When the seven men had done he assigned to each a door. From that moment till morning the king's safety was in their care.

The train of attendants given leave dispersed, torch bearers to their quarters and men at arms under their captain to watch posts beyond the palace moat. Sri Wickrama walked to a door and pushing it open peered within as if he expected to discover a thief there. A triple wicked hanging lamp fed by its large oil container lighted the room. With half an eye the sentinel at the door saw the king bend as if to look under the bed. Then he shut the door behind him. It was an amazed *dukganna-rala* that attempted to guess the reason for this strange behaviour. Had the king lost faith in him. There was none in all the service more loyal than he. If indeed he was so unfortunate as to have incurred the slightest displeasure, so thought the man, it would be well if he was relieved of his responsible service. His free hand went to a pouch hanging by his side for a chew of betel that might help solve the riddle. Before he could finish the chew he heard the wooden door bolts grate again. The shutters opened slowly; and the king stepped out, sword in hand! He cast a glance at the *dukganna-rala*, then looking right and left as if to make sure there was no enemy about, walked out and disappeared round a corner.

From room to room the unhappy king walked that night like a man in search of an elusive thief. Near midnight he found himself in an apartment not far removed from the toe of Udawatta hill. A distressed mind no less than apprehension of an unknown foe robbed him of sleep. He thought once more of his Maha Mudiyansay's report that men round the palace at night were diligent in their sentry duties. There was no reason to distrust the Maha Mudiyansay. The king had himself looked out of a night and seen men of the Atapattuway guard sit awake round watch fires, their weapons by them. There were moments when he felt convinced no real danger threatened. Notwithstanding all reasoning, his thoughts went back to the dream he dreamt that noon. What did it mean?

The thought that he might be attacked by a number of men was by no means pleasant. Once more he counted the obstacles an enemy attempting to reach him would have to pass before they reached the *dukganna ralas*. Then came a thought that unnerved the king. Could the *dukganna* men themselves be in league with traitors? Sri Wickrama felt the edge of his sword to make sure it was battle worthy. He wondered what work that night had in store for it. He yearned for cheerful day. 'I will not sheathe this sword till sunlight', he said to himself.

Placing the sword by his side the king went over his dismal thoughts for perhaps the hundredth time that day. Fatigue closed his eyes in sleep. When he woke again it was with a feeling that his bed rocked. Strong hands appeared to heave it from under in an attempt to throw him down, without doubt to have him at a disadvantage. The king leapt to the floor, fell off almost. But he retained possession of the sword. Raising it he stood to defence—to cut down the traitor. Hiding under the bed? He saw no one there. Had the villian beat a sudden retreat—afraid to face on equal terms. But the stout wooden bolts were in their square formation, securely locked. Then came a thought that thoroughly alarmed. Was the intruder a man who by the power of mantrams could remain invisible at will? In his excitement he cried;

"Who is there, sirrah? Speak."

And there came a reply, in a deep distant sounding voice, quite unlike a man's.

"Maha Raja, this is no time for the comfort of sleep. The enemy approaches. Delay not. Leave this place. And when the danger is past do not forget him who helps you this day."

The voice dropped. It sounded more distant and almost inaudible as it seemed to say;

"I.....am.....Bahirawa."

The king rushed to the door, then on a sudden impulse turned back. Upon the bed he threw two pillows lengthwise, and pulled his unused coverlet on them. Then he moved the bolts so excitedly that he startled the sentinel outside. The *dukganna rala* felt the door open; but for quite a few minutes he could see only a verticle streak of light. The shutter then swung back by slow degrees. It stopped half open, and against the light stood the king's familiar form—with a difference. The king at times emerged from a room carrying his sword unsheathed. That day he stood in the doorway with his sword arm raised, just like a man on the point of slashing at a foe. The sentry thought the king had his gaze fixed on him. Presently he moved shutting the door behind him. He took a quick step forward, and looking carefully round walked with hesitant step up a passage that led to the Wedehitina Manadapa.

The *dukganna rala's* free hand dipped into the betel bag at his side, for a chew to stimulate thought. Before it could bring out a couple of betel leaves and some areca quarters the king's

figure came out of the darkness again. This time he was walking in the opposite direction, not slow but briskly, his weapon still ready for a blow. Amazed, alarmed the man looked on. It was in his room the king had rested last. What had happened to disturb him. He had heard the king speak in his sleep: it was a common occurrence. He felt in some vague way responsible. Past him the king walked, but not towards another chamber. Loyalty prompted him to follow. Discipline kept him on his *eraminiya* chair which no *dukganna* sentry might leave until commanded by the king in person. He thought of his oath, and decided to listen, that he might rush forward the moment he should be wanted.

Darkness reigned around. Accustomed to move from one chamber to another by night the king had little difficulty in picking his way notwithstanding a confused mind. Against the white walls, each beside his door, he saw his *dukganna* men, like sedant statues, gaze on the passage in front swords pointing unerringly zenith-wards. Suspicion about their loyalty he dismissed from his mind. He had no doubt there was an enemy about. But his *dukganna* men were loyal. Any treachery on their part it would be easy to detect. Their commander, Dehigama Sethapenagay Nilamay was one of his most trusted courtiers. Dehigama and his seven ralas, men of giant build, were a formidable band for any interlopers to tackle. Besides the ralas Dehigama would have a handful of fighting men in his guard room. Who were these traitors that planned to enter palace grounds and brave their swords? The train of thouht suggested an enemy lying in wait in a lane like courtyard that divided the sleeping chambers from the Wedehitina Mandapa. In the Wedehitina Mandapa slept Etulkattalay men, quite a large number, and their chief. There naturally a monarch would retreat if alarmed—as he was doing that moment. In his wrought up state love of battle gave place to a more sober mind. He would not be caught in a trap.

Immediately behind the palace of Senkadagala rose the Udawatta mountain. The thick jungle that covered its slope was allowed to stand as a security measure. Along its top was a wide lane cleared of vegetation. Here brave Maduway soldiers had their watch posts guarding the palace rear. The bank along the hill too was kept clear to keep denizens of the forest out of palace precincts. Long before the king emerged from his last room

sword in hand, down this cleared bank slipped an armed man all unsuspected by the Sethapenagay Nilamay or his men.

What time Sri Wickrama began changing from one sleeping apartment to another, resolving on conquest of treachery, but really in a torment of fear and suspicion that some sinful karma brought on him, two strangely clad men stepped out of a wealthy home in the city. Their object was to seek the monarch that night. Both had close fitting caps men use in war to protect their long hair from straggling bush and bramble. One wore a waist cloth that barely covered the knees: the other was clad in trousers and jacket, in the way chieftains dress when going into battle. The waist-cloth had a small *manna* knife in his waist band. His companion wore dagger and sword, both weapons of richly workmanship. They started at an auspicious moment as if their errand were one that mattered, but stole up the street like men who feared detection. The pair carried no light though it was a dark night. They bent their steps towards Udawatta hill.

On the mountain the waist-cloth wearer appeared to assume control. He turned up a path that led to the summit cutting stray brambels to make progress easier for the better dressed one, who followed silently. A short halt on the summit to have a look round, perhaps for breath as well. The two then started down the opposite slope looking for a jungle track the leader had been investigating quite a few times that week. It ran parallel, this narrow track, to the mountain top, was more a road of forest inhabitants than a path made by human feet. Nevertheless they followed it as if the waist-cloth was quite familiar with the track. Below they heard the Mahaveli roll over a rocky bed. Ahead in the near distance glowed the watch-fires of sentries guarding the king's palace in its rear. Brave men these Maduway guardsmen were reputed to be. Nothing ever escaped their vigilance. In the direction of their fires the path appeared to lead, a ceiling of forest creepers adding to the difficulties of the adventurous pair. Stooping they walked, making slow progress, till they came to a point directly below the line of watch posts. The waist-cloth breathed a prayer asking the devas to help them in their endeavour. This time he turned towards the watch-fires. After a few steps either went on all fours, and stole up, halting after every short advance, like animals approching a quarry they were not sure about. The leader was manoeuvring to reach the top between two of the watch-fires, at a spot he knew. There a couple of

boulders stood across the cleared lane. They planned to cross the hill top making use of the stones as cover.

At the jungle's brink the men froze. "*Deviyannay pihitai*", the waist-cloth muttered in a final prayer. Then he whispered a few words in his companion's ear: not a willing ear it seemed, however. The trousered one was expected to crawl past the boulders, silent as a civet cat, then steal zigzag down the forest. To these anxious instructions he muttered back,

> "Ay, well; I go alone from here, don't I, untrammelled with company? Now look!"

And the waist-cloth invoked the protection of all the devas as he saw the other flit, light of foot, past the boulders, into the bush opposite and duck there not like a thief, but making all the noise he could. Presently the leader heard a dry stick snap noisily, and with much alarm beheld sentry men look in the direction. They picked up their weapons. Men from either post came up carrying flaming torches, not to the boulders, but a little away where the noise had started and was still heard intermittently. While the waist-cloth looked on anxious, trembling almost for the safety of his companion whom he had warned time and again to make no noise whatever, the soldiers waved their torches that they may flare up brighter, and examined the jungle below. The noisy brush started afresh. It moved now in one direction then in another. A soldier threw a stone and the noise maker charged down, turned as if to come at them, then took a course parallel to the line of watch posts. After running some distance it suddenly stopped by a rock under which the sentrymen knew there was a fair sized cave.

What was it, the soldiers asked. A leopard would not make so much noise. There was no way a wild buffaloe could get to that mountain. A buffaloe besides would be much larger and would head straight along. Most of them thought it was a wild boar, an animal that would not emerge from the bush even if it went down to the forest brink below. Satisfied it was by no means a wild buffaloe they walked leisurely to their posts, and rested their spears and swords round the fires. Not many minutes after, the noise maker was coming out on the cleared bank adjoining palace grounds, creeping on his stomach, legs first. It was Pilimatalawway dissawa the soldiers had taken for a wild boar.

The duellist's art in Sinhalay depended much on one's proper use of the great toes[4]. Pilimatalawway's great toes served their owner so well that no *dukganna* man heard him climb down to the yard round the sleeping chambers. The first object his eyes could make out as he stepped down was a banana bush. Soldier ingenuity sent him straight amongst its stalwart trunks for cover.

The dissawa's secretary had not been content with merely keeping his master clear of the conspiracy. He wanted to make use of the opportunity it afforded to raise him a few rungs in the king's favour. Efforts to learn more of the treasonous move proved futile. The number of conspirators appeared to be few; and the few kept their secret well. But there was a valuable clue in the ola. Everything pointed to the new moon night as the time fixed for the mischief. The king would not retire till midnight for rest. Between that and dawn the conspirators would get busy. If the dissawa could be within reach of the sethapenagay area he should be able to go to the monarch's assistance at his hour of danger. His master could be depended upon to acquit himself gloriously when it came to a question of fighting. Nothing could please the king more. The mohottala made up his mind to take the risk. He knew his master, and knew which part of the exploit he should lay stress on, that he might fall in with the plan.

In ideal cover, Pilimatalawway wondered how his secretary divined that bush stood just where he should have to step down—there was no other vegetation below the cleared bank. It gave him a place of vantage whence unseen, he could see what went forward in that part of the palace. The adventure was after his heart. Triumph over a couple of assassins would crown it with glory. His sword hand itched for a fight. 'The way to glory has to be carved with the sword. No other chieftain has a mohottala like mine', he congratulated himself. That opinion about the secretary, however, was destined to be short lived.

As his eyes got accustomed to the darkness the dissawa took a look round. On either side of his bush rose storied buildings, one the Maha Aramudala and the other the residence of the queens. Before him sprawled the sleeping chambers and beyond them the looming mass of the Audience Hall. Nothing moved.

He saw the white walls of the sethapenagay chambers, the long eaves above them and the gold spires of their roofs now black against a star spangled sky. Here and there a ray of light struggled

out under an eave. By degrees he could make out the forms of two *dukganna* sentries on their chairs; but the doors they guarded did not face towards him. He had come to keep the word he gave to a king, who his secretary thought had shown him special favour. But how was he to rescue a man he could not set eyes on. He might take the risk of disturbing a *dukganna rala*, and wake the king. Behind which door the king slept he could not guess; how could one? Neither could he expect the king to come to him. That fool of a mohottala should have known! The latter now had a few unprintable adjectives prefixed to his name. 'Let the king come out or not, the main thing is to fight the enemy', Pilimatalawway told himself; 'a soldier in ambush must know to wait'. Long *peyas* passed. His eyes searched the dark corners of the court-yards before him. They were cover a stealthy foe was certain to take advantage of. He must be caught. The dissawa did not, however, try to think out whose enemy he wanted to fight. In his inmost heart he himself was not for the king.

A sudden light!—in a passage. It was dark again. It came like a faint shimmer of lightning midst dark silent clouds. Those two sentries? There they sat as if nothing had happened. It puzzled him. Presently his ears caught a sound. A foot fall! One man only—coming in the direction of the hill. His followers must undoubtedly be close by—ordered to wait for developments perhaps. A figure emerging out of the darkness! A lone figure, sword in hand!

Pilimatalawway braced himself for the fight. If the leader could be felled first, his following would not give much work. He stepped clear of the plantain trees and drew his sword—to wait. For the figure walked straight towards him. It stopped short all at once; was stone still for a minute. Then it spoke, shouted almost;

"Who art thou?"

It was the voice of an excited man. But he recognised it. He had known it long, known it from boyhood. The figure too, though he could see it in outline only, was familiar. He sheathed his sword hastily, and sank on his knees to greet.

"Deveyanwahansa, I have been here for over three *peyas*, thinking how to find you."

The instant it occurred to Sri Wickrama a cunning foe might be waiting for him between the Wedehitina Mandapa and the chambers Dehigama Nilamay's men guarded, he had turned about.

Vaguely he thought of his brave Maduway sentries on the mountain. He could see the glow of their watch fires. He did not pause to consider how he might pass the jungle between him and their fires. Fate turned his steps towards the hill.

As he walked briskly the king heard something stir in the vegetation. A phantom! Bahirawa who had warned him? It floated to view. A man! And the man drew a sword! The brush of its unsheathing told Sri Wickrama he was surrounded. Flight was futile. Instinctively he stopped. A sudden realisation of his desperate situation seemed to daze him. In a minute he recovered. Should he raise an alarm? Spurning such a cowardly act, he challenged.

The greeting that came in reply to his challenge astonished as much as the phantom's appearance. He knew that voice, and that unpolished mode of address which he had at times resented. As a boy he had often heard that voice cry '*May Demala*',[5] in anger, when its owner, younger than he, lost at games. He came to Kannesamy's[6] home with his father and tarried till the latter returned from the capital. Kannesamy and the boy would play and quarrel the live long day; while the king's mother would prepare delicacies for the young visitor. The king felt as certain of Pilimatalawway's love as of his identity. A chieftain in whom he had placed great trust, come to his aid! A friend of his boyhood to help at an hour of danger! Too full for words Sri Wickrama went to the man he had mistaken for an enemy, staggered forward almost, and placed his free hand on the latter's shoulder.

Without a word Pilimatalawway led the king to the bush he had left. He was glad he found the man he had come to rescue, but was not a little disappointed it was not the enemy he had made ready for. Weak after hours of tormenting suspense the king leaned heavily on the dissawa's shoulder. Neither spoke. The latter felt he had made a mistake in thinking his friend had grown inordinately proud after his election as king. His thoughts went back to the enemy, miserable cowards to prove so irritatingly late! Or had the mohottala reckoned things wrong, a thing he had never done before? Instinct had made him lead the king into cover.

In the bush once more he began to feel he was in ambush for the elusive foe. With Pilimatalawway fine rules did not matter. But with the king standing close by, there was a difference.

It was a strict rule that no one might draw sword or dagger, level gun or spear, either in the king's presence or within palace limits, without the king commanding him by name to do so. It was an irksome rule. How could one defend the king himself, for instance, thought the dissawa. Yet anyone disregarding the rule laid himself open to a charge of high-treason. He also remembered his mohottala saying no weapon should be drawn unless its use was unavoidable to save the king from imminent danger. Without wasting time on thought the dissawa said;

"Deveyanwahansa, I have done wrong in taking my sword from its scabbard within palace limits. I was waiting for an enemy. What may I do if one approaches now?"

Without a moment's hesitation Sri Wickrama replied,

"You have my permission. Draw when you want. Do not wait for my command."

Simple trust flowing from a heart that racked with despair suddenly finds comfort in the company of courage and loyalty, it stung deep into Pilimatalawway's not too loyal heart. The dissawa was conscious he did not deserve his king's unqualified faith.

From the moment he understood the riddles of the *ola* purporting to come from a friend, he felt more in sympathy with the conspirators than with the king. Doing what his secretary advised, as was his custom, he had taken the letter to the king. Courtier like he gave the monarch a promise he had to, at the moment. He rarely broke his word, but regretted he had made a promise that might have to be revised. The adventure his mohottala planned pleased him: it would be a truly interesting enterprise. Its success and failure worried the mohottala. The principal actor was content to search for a couple of enemies, who could be made to feel the prowess of his sword, and keep the monarch safe till the morn. The dissawa's loyalty went no further. The king's spontaneous trust in him however, brought about a profound change. He wanted now to meet the king's enemies more than ever before, but the safety of the king who trusted his life itself into his hands, had to be given first place. When rushing about in the jungle like an animal to deceive the watch posts he had come to a recumbent rock. The king would be safe there whilst he waited for the king's enemies. He wanted to face them unhindered by royalty's presence. Thinking without the aid of his secretary's deliberate brains he acted even as he thought. He

told Sri Wickrama they should go to the rock shelter. The dissawa would come back for the traitors.

"Wait a little", said the king speaking like one lad in hiding to his companion. "I once ordered the removal of this bush. The Maha Mudiyansay wished to keep it that he might have plantain leaf fresh from the branch for the *ran-manday*. Reluctantly I consented. It was Maha Vishnu, the god I worship, that made me consent. What excellent cover it gives. No one will see us here. If they do, such as we are, either of us can take on two at a time, and cut them down. We must at any rate know who these wicked men are. Once I see them we shall go wherever you suggest. God Maha Vishnu will discover these traitors to me."

Pilimatalawway had his doubts about the king being able to take on one at a time. There was nothing he could do, however, save obey. He saw the prospect of a hearty fight recede. Sri Wickrama started at every sound that came from the jungle above them. To him each rustle was an enemy footstep. The dissawa trained from boyhood to be a soldier, knew the spurt of a hare from the scurry of a polecat. Sri Wickrama shared the popular belief that Pilimatalawway dissawa had poor brains. As they watched side by side that night he had reason to change his mind. Calm and collected, confident about his own knowledge, the chieftain inspired the king with strength and courage.

They had watched nearly a *peya* when the dissawa whispered;

"Listen, that sound is not an animal. It sounds like a man's footfall. Not one man, not two, more. Look, that light; it came and went. Not a torch either. The footsteps too have ceased. The men have halted."

The king saw the light come and go but could not hear footsteps. A second time the dissawa whispered 'Listen'. In a couple of minutes the faint light appeared—and faded as before. The king could hear footsteps clearly now. In his excitement he said, they must be about twenty in number. Angrily he muttered;

"The villains open the sleeping chambers. It is the light from the rooms falling into the passage that we see. When the door closes again, the light fades."

Presently a large built man emerged round a corner. Behind him came six others. The latter moved as if they were keeping together to pounce on their victim, all at the same moment. Their giant leader walked a few paces in advance turning back every few

steps, as if to make sure his men came on. The king strained his sight to see what arms they carried. It was strange that men bent on treacherous intent should have no weapons in their hands. They were now in a passage, part of which could be seen from the bañana bush. The six men halted. Their leader walked boldly to the *dukganna rala*. Would the sentry cut him? No! The interloper bent forward as if in speech with the seated figure. It was the sentry at the door the king left last. Who was this traitor? How had he won the *dukganna* men to his villany? A streak of light! The door had been opened a little. Then in the stillness of the night they clearly heard it suddenly shut again. The light disappeared. The tall man stood at the door and laughed;

"Caught the *maha eka* this time."

He called; and the six followers went to him. Then the door flew open. Light from the room fell full on the leader's face and dress. They could see the ornate scabbard at his side. In that instant both king and Pilimatalawway recognised the tall man. He rushed in with his followers, and banged the door shut. The king cried;

"*Deiyo saaki! Deiyo saaki!* Traitor, villain, dog! I gave him everything he ever asked."

Sri Wickrama shook in his rage. He forgot he was in ambush. It dawned on Pilimatalawway that taking care of a childish king would be far more difficult than fighting seven men. He would dearly love a rub; but its results, as far as the king was concerned, was unpredictable. The door opened almost immediately, and the men trooped out, one after another. The leader stepped to the court-yard, turned back again, and ordering his men to shut the still open door, disappeared up the passage. No one still had a weapon in his hand. Traitors hunting their king unarmed! What did that mean? The king could not understand.

The light came and went once more. Pilimatalawway knew there was not a minute to waste. In his mind there was in progress a contest between himself and his traitor kinsman—for a prize. And that prize was the safety of the prince there by his side. He touched Sri Wickrama's hand; and the latter followed murmuring sadly, 'Which is friend, which foe, who can tell!' They had to clear the bare bank below the jungle quickly, lest some one should see. They clambered like two giant monitors. The king proved a bad soldier. He slipped at almost every step. Patiently and with consummate skill the dissawa managed to take the nervous

monarch up. He once threw his weight on a stone in the bank dislodging it. He escaped the fall. But the stone came down with a thud; and a sentry was seen to gaze long in their direction. As they won into the bush and rested for breath, the seven traitors came back to the court-yard. The leader turned slowly round as if he expected to catch some one hiding in the shadows. Then the figures sped across the open space, past the Dalada Mandapa towards the Nanumuragay. Did the wretch imagine he was hiding in the water, the king wondered.

Pilimatalawway expected them to come back. He hastened the monarch into the jungle. His mind was for following the gang; but the king would be quite helpless without him. He would take the prince to the rock shelter first. Thorny growth obstructed their progress on every side. They caught the monarch's clothes at each step. Attempts to cut them with his sword proved useless. At length the chieftain knelt and much against the monarch's will, took him on his shoulder. He stepped where the bush was low. For a couple of minutes they made progress. But the bush did not seem inclined to be helpful.

They were now in a lantana patch reaching above the man-horse's head. It appeared too wide to go round. Not far loomed the rock which was their objective. The load did not tax the bearer's strength over much. Pilimatalawway also wished to get back to palace grounds, at least to follow the movements of the treacherous gang. Holding the king with one hand he began to cut a way through the bramble with his sword.

The king had to put both hands round the head of his man-horse to keep steady. His hold brought off the chieftain's *his-paiya*. Presently the uncovered hair caught in the tangled jungle growth. Hair has a curious way of sticking to the prickly lantana branch. The chieftain was soon in trouble. He sheathed the sword and raised the freed hand to extricate his hair. Sri Wickrama tried to help. In a few minutes they got the tresses into such a mess that their owner could not lower himself to place the king on his feet. The latter slipped down. He drew his blade; and saying

> "No disgrace shall attach to hair worn short when it has been cut with mine own hands,"

cut Pilimatalawway's hair at shoulder level. They gained the shelter and tried to look down on palace grounds. In their new position two could defend themselves against twenty. The jungle around did not allow much of a view on the palace. The king was

not without a fear that the gang might try to seek him there. In the rock shelter they waited with drawn swords, Pilimatalawway silent, his thoughts about the hair he had lost, the prince trying to reassure he would see to it that no disgrace came to him by his having to wear hair short. For in Sinhalay, besides those that belonged to the lowly castes of Palee and Olee, only unfortunates serving in slavery wore their hair short.[6] It was a badge of servitude.

At early dawn next morning the Maha Mudiyansay in command of Sri Wickrama's palace was getting ready to attend the monarch to the Dalada shrine, whither it was his custom to go during the Aluyanduray ceremony, when he was told that a band of Maduway men had a *sera-panividaya* for him from the king. The aristocrat looked up from his dressing, astonished. The king liked him much and communicated his desires personally. Why a messenger that day, and a *sera-panivida?* And how did Maduway men get to the king without his being informed of their entry to the palace at that time of the day? Wrapping a hasty tuppottti over his trousers he came out to an officer and men who appeared to have been running. The leader folded his hands and said;

> "Our noble king commands Your Lordship to see that every individual on duty during the night at the Maha Setapenagay bide where he is, and not move one step till he has leave to depart from the Maha Wasala."

The bearer of the strange order appeared to be in some excitement too. The Maha Mudiyansay could not understand. Maha Sethapenagay was the only department of the palace that did not come directly under his command. Guessing the cause of surprise the officer added the king was in a cave on the hill.

"In a cave ? Did you say in a cave ?"

The officer was as eager to explain as the Maha Mudiyansay to know.

> "So he is, My Lord, under the big rock one could see on the hill behind the palace. There is no one in attendance either save Pilimatalawway disa-hamuduruwo. His Majesty's dress appears to be torn in places, and His Lordship has his long hair cut short. Pardon, My Lord, something untoward seems to have taken place."

The Maha could not grasp what. He rushed to the sethapenagay quarter and asked for Dehigama nilamay. When he

found the buildings deserted except for the seven Dukganna ralas on their chairs he was well nigh mad with rage. He spoke the king's command aloud, then began to rave and threaten. The man at the door Sri Wickrama had last walked out of wished to speak, and when the mudiyansay was quiet enough to listen related what he knew.

"And why did you not tell me all this till now ?"

"My Lord, I had no permission to leave my seat. I would have hailed the first individual I saw to send word. But no one passed this way though it is near sunlight."

And there he still sat body erect and sword upright determined to be correct in his duty. A messenger was despatched to say the king's palanquin be sent immediately to the rock on the hill, whither the sentries on the mountain were clearing a way through the jungle. The Maha with a number of Etulkattalay dignitaries climbed from palace grounds clearing a path as they proceeded up the hill.

As the trusted chamberlain sank on his knees to hail, tears rolled down the king's cheeks. He would not wait for the palanquin, but came down with the palace party. At the Maha's urgent request he tried to partake of some food, but could not eat. After ordering the arrest of Dehigama Nilamay the king began to question the *dukganna ralas*. The man who had spoken to the chamberlain was the first to be taken up.

He had seen the king pass him walking towards the hill, and a figure step out of nowhere, as it were, to meet him. When he heard the king challenge he had stood up to go to his royal master's aid; but seeing the strange figure kneel and hail loyally resumed his seat — to run forward the moment he should be wanted. About a *peya* later his commander had appeared accompanied by some attendants and asked whether an evil looking man had been seen prowling about. Without waiting for an answer Dehigama nilamay had pushed a shutter back and peeped into the room he guarded, then held the door fast exclaiming 'I have caught the big one'. He called to his attendants and went in, but came out in a few minutes. He gazed round the courtyard a couple of minutes then went away. The *dukganna rala* had seen the king and the strange figure come out of the banana bush and steal up the bank into the jungle. Presently Dehigama nilamay was back and asked him whether he had seen the king. The *dukganna rala* realised

the monarch had left palace grounds suspecting treachery. So he said without violating his oath;

'After going out the king did not wait to be seen'.

Asked by his chief whether that was absolutely the truth he had said, සත්‍යක ඇත්ත.7

His chief and the attendants had then left in the direction of the lake and were seen no more.

The king looked severely at the man and said,

"You have been lying to your commander, and also swearing your lie was the truth. It is a serious offence for any man. What made you behave so ?"

Undaunted the man replied;

"At the moment I could think of no other way to serve the Maha Wasala and keep the king from harm. I did not lie, but hid the truth. Neither did my word cause loss to any man, nor was it intended to hurt anyone. Therefore I have not violated the precept to utter no lie. The devas must have prompted me. If a lie should become unavoidable in a good cause, that lie is not a lie."

Sri Wickrama did not like the way the *dukganna rala* stood up to his question, but realised the man's presence of mind had saved a nasty situation. His colleagues were not able to add much to the story. Their chief had come, asked about a strange man seen prowling amongst the buildings, looked into the rooms, and passed on with his followers. Each had thought he was looking for a suspected interloper, a very unusual occurrence, however. The seven men were handed over to the katupurullay to await trial. Dehigama nilamay was missing.

Next to the palace Dehigama Walawwa in Swarna Kalyana Veediya was the most stately mansion in the capital. Sumptuary laws prohibited grandeur in the construction of buildings other than temple or palace. The Dehigama home had been made an exception in recognition of victories its warrior chieftains had won for the country. There was nothing in the world Dehigama Walawwa lacked. Fertile *nindagam* in every part of the kingdom, manors and barns choking full with the seven grains, retainers and slaves, elephants and horses, silver, gems and gold — wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. For all these Dehigama kumarihamy sat on a stone step of the court-yard that morning more wretched

than the meanest slave in her service. Her lord, so kind and courteous always, had left precipitately a few *peya* before dawn refusing to say a word about some calamity that appeared to have descended unexpectedly on their house.

He had come from the palace at an unusual hour, laid aside his court attire, put on work-a-day clothes wearing them in eccentric fashion, and left without refreshment or talk of return. Horses, palanquins, retinues and attendants, these always stood ready in the Dehigama Walawwa. That night its chieftain had disappeared into the darkness unattended and unarmed. For a brief moment he had paused in the gorgeously carved entrance, his gaze turned towards the palace buildings, and muttered:

> "This comes of listening to traitors' counsel. They will still be safe. My head must parch in the *keppetiya* bush. Some sin in a past birth made me their tool. I have disgraced the name of my ancestors !"

The lady had observed a sudden change in her chieftain's ideas. Proud of high office he used to speak of the monarch and his duties at the Sethapenagay in dignified language. Of late his talk had been different. He would say 'Imagine my going in state to mount guard where a Demala snores'. 'Prostrating before a Demala man we degrade the blood of noble ancestors'. When the lady attempted a word of caution he would retort, 'This is men's business. It is not to our credit things continue in this state'. Then he would speak of friends who had noble ideas and were worthy of being hearkened to.

The vidanay in charge of the walawwa, sad to see his mistress in tears, presently found cause for greater anxiety. A mace bearer stood at the street entrance, his numerous following forming a cordon round the walawwa. He raised his silver headed cane with both hands and demanded in the king's name that Dehigama Sethapenagay Nilamay accompany him to the palace forthwith.[8] Bewildered, the vidanay who had seen his master depart unceremoniously, approached the mistress. With folded hands and unsteady voice he conveyed to her what the mace bearer said. The lady hurried to the entrance to learn what it all was. It was an officer moved by her tears that narrated what little he knew : for an officer charged with the execution of a warrant from a Sinhala monarch was not permitted to talk about reasons for court orders. Dehigama kumarihamy joined her hands on her head and wept

as if the world was coming to an end. Her lord had attempted to murder the king in his sleep !

When the officer realised that the object of his search was out with a few hours start, he despatched one of his men to report and hurried in pursuit. The aristocrat might go from one manor to another making his trail difficult. Or would he avoid his estates altogether that no one may know where to look for him ?

By sunrise Dehigama nilamay had put a couple of leagues between the capital and himself. For two days he was in headlong flight, resting when he did so in unfrequented places, and eating what food his servant chanced to obtain. Many a manor of relative and friend did he pass, but would not call for rest or refreshment. Weary and footsore, his clothes damp with perspiration and soiled with dust, even men who had followed him to battle and loved him for his valour failed to recognise the great chieftain in the wretched looking wayfarer.

He had come almost to border territory, where the king's officers would not care to venture. His servant — he had brought the son of an old attendant — had taken great pains to obtain food without divulging his identity. With uneven curly black tufts for a beard and a raw way of speech, no one could take the lad for a chieftain's attendant. He had got over the trouble of questions asked at respectable homes where he went to request for food by drawing on his imagination. The aristocrat realised that without the boy he could not have journeyed so far in two days. Seated by the way, wondering what the next objective of his flight should be, he asked the lad to stretch his limbs on the sward for a space. The servant replied;

"It would be good if Nilamay Hamuduruwo has a little sleep before we start again. I can watch and at the same time rest my limbs leaning on this stone."

"Watch ?" said Dehigama, "When men in high office watch they may not mix rest with duty. What wouldst thou do if whilst I slept, someone should lay hands on me and take me captive ?"

"Captive ?" growled the lad, "Who is there that will approach your Lordship ?"

"If men do approach with such intent, and I be fast asleep what wilt thou do ?"

The rustic brain wasted not a moment in thought. The lad said,

"In that case My Lord, there shall be three down with myself for a fourth by the time you awake to handle the situation."

And the youth felt at his waist for the handle of a rough but quite serviceable poniard, its scabbard of nothing more than areca bark. A thrust of its blade could not have hurt the aristocrat half as keen as did those few brave words.

"Well, rest a little. We shall not linger long here."

Dehigama deliberately gathered a chew. The servant lad stretched his limbs on the bare ground behind him and was in a moment fast asleep. The aristocrat's thoughts flew back to Senkadagala. Whither and why ? Dehigama asked himself. He was far from the capital, far enough to feel safe. At his waist was enough gold to keep him from want for a long time. He could aswedumise a yaya of paddy, open up chenas, colonise a stretch of land and live in tolerable comfort. Heroes that fled royal displeasure had done so before. Yet in his mind he felt oppressed, indeed, indescribably wretched.

Born with the four blessings of mundane life— Life as a human being, life during a Buddha cycle, in possession of health and wealth, and the greatest blessings of all, with a mind that could comprehend the Dharma — he had led a life free from sin and full of usefulness to the Sasana and the land. Why should such a life suddenly descend to the dregs of misery ? He had eluded arrest. Yet was his mind a torment. Was it the result of some past karma, or punishment for sins here ? The servant snored. Born humble and poor he was still far happier than he. The lad had not the least doubt where his loyalty lay — he would kill any man that attempted to hurt his master. The boy was noble and brave. How had he upheld the honour of his illustrious name ?

Sri Wickrama had been kind to him, had never given him cause for displeasure. He remembered how, when he had made a request for the coveted appointment of Diyawadana Nilamay to the Dalada the king had said,

"The Sethapenagay Nilamay's wish shall be fulfilled soon as the place falls vacant."

The king considered him a kinsman, and in private treated him as such. How had he repaid ? The unlettered servant lad thought it his duty to lay his life down in the defence of his master. He, instructed in the dharma, and with the honour of a noble name to uphold, he had attempted to capture his royal master and deliver him bound and gagged to evil men who conspired to end

his rule. He had allowed them to persuade him it was degrading to kneel before a *dravida* prince, cowardice to sleep in comfort while the wrong man continued to sit on the throne of Sinhalay. Evil counsel, notwithstanding the universal respect in which the counsellor was regarded. What more degrading than treachery against the man he was in honour bound to protect, what greater cowardice than to flee and let innocent subordinates pay the price of his disloyalty ? Why had he not remembered his duty, his oath by every thing sacred, to safeguard the king's life during the resting hours of that night ? What might not have happened had he found the king during his hunt for him, and the latter drawn in his own defence. The end would have been fatal for the prince; and to the ignominy of treachery would have been added sacrilege. He would have committed a sin as grave as the murder of a parent. How had he erred so egregiously ? Even as he rested the seven *dukganna ralas*, who knew nothing of what he had intended, were doubtless being tried and condemned to death. He would be responsible for *their* deaths too.

"That shall not be," cried Dehigama starting up; "I will not have their lives added to my crime. I shall atone for my folly myself. Ignominy of a traitor's execution ! Yes. But my next existence in sangsaro shall be free from the burden of this sin."

Gently he woke the servant lad. He asked him to follow leisurely if his feet were sore. They were going back the way they had come, back to Senkadagala. The lad's eyes opened wide. On the road Dehigama had had to tell him they were fleeing from a *rajaudahasa*. In a voice full of alarm the servant asked,

"My Lord, is that a good thing to do ?"

"If it is one's fate to die where is the use of running away ? Death is merely the passing from one *panchaskanda* to another. It is even like a change of clothes. Those that have not committed any sin get better clothes than they had before."

Doggedly the lad followed. His master walked even faster than during the outward journey. On the fifth morning after the palace incident a weary looking figure dressed like an ordinary man of good family stood at the Koraha Wahalkada. It wished to be taken to the monarch.

Court etiquette ordained a certain form of dress for each rung of officialdom. Chieftains wore trousers frilled at the ankle and over it, a number of tuppoti or wide lengths of cloth, one over the other held by an embroidered waist-band. A muslin shirt and rich jacket buttoned at the collar but open below covered the shoulders. The head dress, which could never be laid aside in the king's presence except to signify mourning, was a hat four or six cornered according to rank, surmounted by a branching finial of precious metal. Gold ornaments were permitted to members of families that at some stage of their history had received a token piece of the metal for distinguished service in the defence of Sasana and country. The trousers were absent in the dress of lesser officials. The tuppotti they wore reached almost down to the ankle. One end of the outer tuppotti folded to from a broad waist band rose well above the navel giving the wearer an erect figure and soldier like look. There was no jacket or shirt in this mode of dress. The hat was round, and carried no finial on the almost flat top. Any colour was permitted. But no male assumed a fully white ensemble, which was reserved for the monarch alone.

The individual seeking admission at the Wahalkada wore a *soman* tuppotti without trousers. But he had a shirt and jacket to cover the upper part of his body. His hat though round was of costly make. He looked a man of noble family who was outside the pale of officialdom. It took the guards at the gate quite a few minutes to recognise the missing Sethapenagay Nilamay in the stranger. Those that loved him felt sorry he had not made good his escape. Not that they were disloyal; but Dehigama was so liked. When a herald came down in response to the usual message from the gate, he was accompanied by men-at-arms. The herald said;

"Dehigama *perali* mudiyansay is summoned to the king's presence."

The Sethapenagay nilamay stepped midst the guard with a sigh — it was the first time he had heard the Dehigama name coupled with the word *perali.*

After the eventful night Sri Wickrama did not retire to the sethapenagay chambers for rest. He slept in the main palace buildings and kept to his apartment almost till sunrise. It was quite early when Dehigama's appearance at the Koraha Wahalkada was reported. The Maha Mudiyansay had to bring the news to

the king, no one else being permitted to go where he slept. Dehigama was therefore detained in the great court-yard awaiting the king's pleasure. After over a *peya* the hapless nobleman was marched along the battlements of the moat towards the Dakina Mandapa. Many were they that left their work a while to have a look at the prisoner, and many who wished to hear what he would say to the king in explanation of his conduct. For they thought the strange behaviour of one suspected to have attempted to assassinate the monarch with no sword in his hand, at the time he went in search of his royal victim, had some meaning. A few argued Dehigama had behaved that way that in the event of failure he might be able to plead he was merely going on his rounds and, suspecting the presence of an interloper, had taken his attendants with him.

With half a score of youths from the Appuhamy Maduwa standing behind his chair the king sat. Upon the carpet at his feet was the faithful Maha Mudiyansay. The men-at-arms halted at the door, and the Maha bade their charge enter. Dehigama entered and sank on his knees before he came to the edge of the carpet. He hailed the king in a low but steady voice, wishing him 'Health and prosperity long as the sun and moon should travel in the skies'. The king expected his prisoner to fall on the floor and beg for pardon, to throw himself on the king's mercy. There was one individual in that room who guessed the prisoner did not have any intention to humiliate himself. The Sethapenagay nilamay had surrendered himself not in the dress his high place entitled him to, but in clothes any man of good family might wear irrespective of the king's service. The Maha Mudiyansay thought it meant that Dehigama gave up all claim to continue in office, that he admitted guilt. The prisoner rose with composure, and deliberately folded his hands, not above his head as a man pleading for forgiveness might do, but at chin level. There was not a sound in the chamber, every one intent on following what the prisoner would say. Dehigama disappointed all from the king down. He uttered not a syllable.

The king could not understand. Had fright robbed the aristocrat of speech? Sri Wickrama's angry countenance relaxed. He was puzzled. At every stage Dehigama's behaviour appeared strange. Attempting to assassinate his king without a sword in his hand, flight from the capital in a way that baffled pursuit by katupurullay men who knew their job, then presenting himself

before the Koraha Wahalkada as if he came down from nowhere, eluding an all out hunt for him in every district of the kingdom. And there he stood silent as a *kapa* post after the loyal hail he had just spoken, which the king had taken was a kind of introduction to what he came prepared to say. Was the man gone mad? The king waited.

The report of Dehigama's sudden appearance had taken Sri Wickrama by surprise. His resolve to subject the offender to unprecedented punishment as an example to his class had weakened as a result of a prayer brought to him by the queen. To a king bewildered how a man of Dehigama's loyalty and known integrity could so suddenly change, the queen's story spoke much. The missing sethapenagay nilamay's kumarihamy had come to her and wept long and bitter with her forehead on the queen's feet till they were washed in brine. No man she protested had been more loyal to the Maha Wasala than her husband. But of late mischievous men had begun to influence his mind. They had taken pains to convince him he disgraced the blood of warrior forbears by continuing abjectly loyal to the throne when most others wanted to have another king, a better one, as they had made him imagine. She told the queen what the misled Sethapenagay nilamay had muttered as he set out on his flight. She had sworn through her tears that, whatever happened, she would place the names of those that had led her lord into evil before the king and before the devas soon as she should know who they were. All that Dehigama kumarihamy prayed for was her unfortunate husband's life. The king might confiscate everything they possessed, and send them into distant exile in addition. Her husband was nothing more than a foolish tool in the hands of very wicked traitors. He was a victim in the hands of men who, taking care of themselves, made a cat's paw of him in an endeavour that would have involved capital punishment. The queen shed tears herself as faltering with fear of displeasure, she yet pressed the friendly noblewoman's prayer. She had gone away with a promise that held out some hope for her unfortunate friend.

In the heat of his anger Sri Wickrama had decided on punishment of a truly deterrent type, his adigars refraining from any advice on that head. Delay in apprehending the accused had given time for thought. The queen's story had filled his mind with alarm. It kept him guessing who Dehigama's evil associates might be. A man so attached to the king as Dehigama had been —

none save men whom the accused respected very much could have led him so far astray. Could they be men who sat in his Council of State ? He had told the queen that the Sethapenagay nilamay should disclose all details of the conspiracy to show he deserved mercy after what he had done. When Dehigama's appearance was reported the king looked forward to hear all that he wished to about the diabolical conspiracy to murder him in his sleep. He had expected to give orders for the arrest of quite a few traitors before the day was much advanced. But there before him stood the man who should disclose their names to save himself from the executioner's sword, gone completely dumb. In his dilemma the king said;

"Dehigama *peraliya* has leave to speak. Who are the wicked men that induced a hitherto loyal man to act in such disgraceful fashion ?"

Slow and measured fell the accused aristocrat's answer,

"Lord that will be a buddha, Your Majesty bestowed on me the Maha Sethapenagay *nilaya* because of the *karunawa* it was my good fortune to enjoy. It was my duty to risk my life in guarding the Maha Wasala during sleep. Instead, I took advantage of the trust reposed in me to attempt a vile act, disgracing myself and the name I bear. I acted the part of a dog that in a fit of madness bites the hand feeding it. Those assisting in the Dukganna service knew naught of my sinful intent. May our noble monarch live long ! Your *balugetta* does not crave for mercy; he deserves none. Of what use is such a life like mine to the world or to myself? May the devas protect you, and punish your enemies."

A prisoner whose life was forfeit spurning royal clemency placed within his reach ! — Sri Wickrama felt disappointed, and angry. It is treason thrice vicious not to disclose the names of men planning treachery even at that moment when one has been shown a way to pardon, he thought. Standing from his seat without ceremony the king turned to the Maha Mudiyansay and said;

"Dehigama *peraliya* shall be tried for high-treason."

Then he left the chamber abruptly, as was his way when displeased. It was outside the Maha Mudiyansay's province to arrange for a trial. Sri Wickrama when his mind was ruffled cared little about the strict order of things. The appuhamies followed after the monarch, themselves disappointed at not having witnessed anything interesting. Besides the guard outside the gorgeous doorway

there were only the prisoner and the Maha Mudiyansay left in the Dakina Mandapa. The latter made an attempt to persuade the fallen Sethapenagay nilamay to be reasonable. The king had loved Dehigama much; yet had he consented to do what wicked friends prompted. The king still felt for him. Was it not every ones duty to help bring traitors to justice even though one may have been in their camp by misfortune. Was it a fault to speak the truth ? He would be in some measure atoning for his most ill-advised behaviour. Why had he ever given ear to wicked tongues against a monarch who had shown him such *karunawa* ? In the interest of religion and country traitors must be brought to trial, more so when they happen to be men who have the cunning to set the king's most loyal officials against him. Was the king not kind to have consented to see him after what had passed ?

The prisoner replied,

"I have sinned — it is a shameful sin. I swear to you before the devas that I did not intend to shed one drop of blood. I acted against the king, indeed. My intention was not to harm his person but to keep him captive till the morning, when I was told a better prince liked by all the courtiers will be ready to take his place; and the unwanted one will be peacefully provided for. Maha Brahma carved one part of the lines of fate on my head; the other is the work of his wife's accursed hand.[9] I have outlived the first part. I do not wish to live through the second. I wish to be reborn with the four great blessings of mundane existence. To cause sorrow and death to others will only lengthen my own journey through sangsaro. The king's enemies, as I have realised, will be quite as powerless against him as they have been this time. He is a very fortunate monarch. It was my fortune too, that I failed in the disgraceful thing I had consented like a fool to attempt. I shall pass away wishing the monarch well with my last breath."

He would not speak more. His friend felt bitter. Dehigama was one in a thousand. The true conspirators had robbed the king of a noble minded servant, whose false sense of honour was going to deprive the country of a great soldier too. Sadly the Maha gazed at his friend who spoke,

"Let the Maha Mudiyansay do his duty. Rajakariya knows neither friend nor foe."

Disappointed the other replied;

"Ralay, this is very silly indeed. You do not allow a friend to do that which he should, and in this case, can. It is no virtue to throw away a good *atma* one has obtained by past good karma for another that is still to come. There are many ways in which one could atone for a wrong act. Think, there will be time."

Prisoners awaiting trial were given over to the Katupurullay department. Anxious to wash his hands of an unpleasant business the Maha sent word to Pilimatalawway adigar that an important matter awaited his attention. The latter's spies had already reported Dehigama's appearance at the Koraha Wahalkada. When told at the palace how the Sethapenagay nilamay had conducted himself he feigned surprise, and hurried to the king to consult his wishes. Back in the Dakina Mandapa he ordered the guard a few fathoms away, then spoke to the prisoner. To those peeping around — and there were many Etulkattalay men unnecessarily busy round the Dakina Mandapa that morning — it appeared Dehigama did not want to speak to the adigar, or answer his questions. He kept his face turned away; and it was obvious spoke not a word. He was handed over to a Katupurullay officer who respectfully conducted the nobleman towards the prison house. The adigar asked for the *lekam* in charge of the king's judicial work to instruct him about the trial.

He had persuaded the monarch to defer the trial, perhaps to have time for careful preparation. It was to be taken up on a day when chieftains from the provinces were due to assemble in the Hall of Audience on state business. Sri Wickrama wished to make an example of each guilty aristocrat to his class. To the distract Dehigama kumarihamy the postponement gave time to send for her influential kinsmen.

They came in state glad to have an opportunity of being useful to one who had never refused help when they had asked for help, specially at court. As the trial date approached every big home in the city was full of guests. Their retinues, palanquin bearers and attendants, men of sturdy manhood as a rule, moved about the streets in such numbers that the king's Andra relatives did not feel pleased. When the visitors learnt what Dehigama was suspected of and what he had spoken to the king on the day of his surrender, there was despair in every heart. What hope could there be when the king himself was the chief eye witness for the prosecution ? Many thought Dehigama's only chance was to

own guilt and throw himself on the king's mercy. There were a few who did not expect results from such a course. These thought a defence had to be put up.

Men accused of treason were brought to trial before the throne. Such a trial was called a Maha Naduwa. The chief adigar generally filled the role of prosecutor. Sentences awarded varied from long exile to impalement or decapitation. An accused was therefore allowed a right to have a chieftain of experience for the conducting of his defence. Dehigama's friends solicited the help of two or three wise ones. They consented though hesitantly; and their names were communicated to the accused that he might choose whom he considered most suited. They then approached adigar Pilimatalawway.

The great man thought the case a very grave one. Said he, 'There however are circumstances that a wise man could make good use of in conducting the defence. The king had seen the accused running about with a few attendants behind him. Nevertheless he had carried no weapon of any kind in his hand. Neither were his followers armed. There never is an assassin that goes about his wicked job without an unsheathed blade for the fell deed of assassination. Dehigama, the *dukganna ralas* say, asked each of them about a strange figure prowling round the buildings. Some one might have been there, a phantom perhaps. It was clearly the Sethapenagay nilamay's duty to look for the interloper, and have him seized. He looked in the rooms, and for that purpose pushed the doors open. Where was the offence in that ? The chamber in which the king slept would be secured from within; it would not give to a push. Dehigama's greatest difficulty would be to get over what he himself is reported to have said soon after his surrender. He will have to plead his words were inspired by fear. He will also have to explain why, if innocent, he fled from the capital. A wise man could make use of his surrender to explain his flight. A guilty one fleeing from justice never turns back.'

After virtually inventing a defence for the accused the adigar told the king it was his fear that Dehigama was labouring under a sudden derangement of the brain. Perhaps it had already passed away. But he did not behave normally, was certainly not the courtly gentleman he used to be. That made Sri Wickrama think. Dehigama's behaviour since the evening of the trouble had indeed been strange. Perhaps that also explained the change the accused

man's lady had observed. Sri Wickrama's anger softened a little. But the thought of a band of conspirators operating behind the scenes could not be dismissed.

Whilst the king kept guessing and Dehigama supporters speculated about chances of the defence Pilimatalawway had discussed; the adigar sent a secret message to the Maha Nayaka Theros of Malwatta and Asgiriya that Dehigama as Diyawadana Nilamay being their associate in the service of the Dhanta Dhatu, they had every right to intercede on his behalf. Quite a number of powerful families in the central districts looked upon Dehigama as their leader. In the interests of peaceful government some one should endeavour to restrain the king from what anger might dictate. No one was more qualified for such a move than the two high pontiffs. Nor did Dehigama's behaviour, though strange, altogether show he had any intention to harm the person of the monarch.

In capital offences the king was sole arbiter. Yet when the accused happened to be a man of high rank chieftains reputed to know the ancient laws of the land were associated with him as judges. Whom royalty liked were summoned for the purpose; and such summons went forth from the king's judicial department. Good king Kirti Sri had given the practice the force of custom. If the accused could be got off with a sentence of exile however long, there would be time enough to get the monarch to relent. They tried to guess whom the king would have to help him. None appeared to know; neither the adigars nor the *lekam*. On the morning of the trial their identity was still any body's guess. Some predicted the king would carry on unaided. Property of a man sentenced to death for high treason was at the disposal of the throne. Dehigama's wealth was probably one reason for Sri Wickrama's desire to be sole arbitrator.

King Rajadhi Rajasingha's elegant structure, the many pillared Audience Hall, was never so full of aristocratic company as it was on the day of the Dehigama trial. Sri Wickrama had permitted the adigars to grant any man of *mudali-peruwa* permission to be present. Every one was in his place long before conches heralded the king's approach. Sri Wickrama's mercenary troops were drawn up on the esplanade. His Malabar guard occupied the courtyard in front of the judicial chamber. Not a few smiled contemptuously as they passed them. That day there were more palanquin bearers in the city than the king's men could overpower.

Lights appeared behind the curtains separating the throne from the assembly. Conches blared a second time, the Kavikara Maduwa struck up, and the curtains swung aside disclosing Sri Wickrama on his golden lion throne. The high priests on seats not far from the throne recited a valedictory stanza. Laymen in the hall sank on their knees and folded their hands while the adigar hailed the monarch in the usual manner. The king made his customary inquiry about the priests and the welfare of their viharas. When they had replied that with the king's generous care they were well and the Sasana flourished, Sri Wickrama told his minister to take up the trial. Strains of the Kavikara Maduwa ceased and the adigar stepping to the door said;

"Our noble *dewiswamin-wahansa* summons Dehigama *perali* mudiyansay to his trial for treason against the Mahawasala."

From an early hour the accused nobleman was detained by his guard at the portal leading to the palace draw-bridge. His dress was the same as on the day of his surrender. Friends had expected to find him worn with anxiety and dejected in demeanour. Calm and collected he stood, a pace in advance of his guard. He avoided the gaze of those that passed up to the palace. These whispered there was no surrender on his countenance; his look was one familiar to many who had seen him getting ready to lead his men into battle. Perhaps he felt confident of his defence. They wondered what his chances would be if the king did not have others associated with him at the trial.

'An Atapattuway officer hurried to the ramparts and repeated the adigar's words aloud. The prisoner came up—the guard behind him—his step was more firm than prisoner's step ever was. His countenance betrayed no fear. Dehigama approached the throne closer than accused were permitted to, and hailed the monarch with unfeigned fervour. Sri Wickrama gazed deep into the prisoner's eyes. No treachery, he thought, could return his searching gaze. Dehigama looked up at him like one who had asked for a boon, and waited confident he was going to have his wish. Perhaps the wish on that particular occasion was death.

Sri Wickrama turned away puzzled. He thought of what the adigar had suggested, but there was nothing in the accused that betrayed a deranged mind. From the day of his accession he had slept in the sethapenagay chambers guarded by Dehigama, care free. The restless unhappy nights he now spent were in

strange contrast to those happy years. He remembered how coming out of one room to walk to another he would often meet the sethapenagay nilamay going on his rounds. The villains that had robbed him of so loyal a servant must have caught Dehigama at a time the stars in his horoscope were changhing into malevolent positions. Who were these wicked men? The prisoner must be made to divulge their names. If he persisted in his foolish attitude? Then a traitor's end for him, and more condign punishment for his friends soon after.

With a look of unmistakable sadness the king turned towards the two priests. Across the ramparts he saw the domed temple of Natha, god of justice, from whom kings received the sword that gave them the right to rule Sinhalay. The assembly watched, silent. Sri Wickrama was never troubled with misgivings when there was a trial for treason. That day, however, he looked agitated. Those that were for the accused felt his case would not have presented much difficulty had the sethapenagay nilamay's folly been not seen by the king himself. The latter spoke a few words, and his minister said;

"The Mahawasala has decided that the Maha Nayaka theros of the two viharas assist at the trial. Has the accused any reason to think they would not be fair by him?"

It was indeed a strange choice! From the nature of their precepts, priests could not utter a word that might cause pain to any living thing. Priests had never before been asked to take active part in judicial proceedings. Sri Wickrama had eccentric ways. Dehigama's kinsmen, however, thanked the devas for that choice. When the prisoner replied his words appeared to be addressed to the questioner rather than to court.

"In my prosperous days every one was my good friend. As I am at this moment, no one could wish me worse."

Many felt the words were full of meaning. But the king did not notice. He turned to his *lekam* who from an ola in his hands read the charge against the prisoner. The adigar told Dehigama he might name whom he chose should help him in the defence. In a defiant voice came the reply;

"I need no one's help to speak the truth about my wretched stupidity."

Dehigama supporters were astounded. All their anxious moves would now be of no use. Dehigama was throwing away

his life! He continued speaking, the adigar doing nothing to disturb. He swore by everything sacred—by the sun and the moon, and by each great deva—that it was never his intention to hurt the king's person. He had outlived the years of his good luck. The merit he had accumulated in the past had waned; and the time had arrived when he had to undergo punishment for an evil karma. Nothing else could have made him forget the responsibility of his office, and the love he had received from a kind master. For his offence there could be no other name than treason. He humbly begged the king's pardon. He deserved no mercy, and asked for none. With his dying breath he would pray for prosperity and long life for the Mahawasala. The king was silent for a few minutes. Then he said;

"It is the duty of Dehigama mudaliya, to disclose the names of those that prevailed on him to act as he has done."

Hope revived in the hearts of Dehigama supporters. Sri Wickrama was addressing him as if he had never been considered a traitor. Not a few expected to hear the prisoner divulge the names of fellow conspirators. With courtier dignity Dehigama folded his hands to the throne; and in the steady voice familiar to colleague and king replied;

"Lord that will be a buddha in ages to come, Your *balugetta* has never in his present *atma* done anything save what his own will dictated. I have been misled, but what act I committed is my own. I have served the Mahawasala faithfully because I loved to serve the Sasana, my country and the king. Retribution for a past sin made me forget sacred duty. I acted like a beast. Should I seek to hide my guilt under pretence I was influenced, I shall be disgracing further the blood of my forbears."

He again called the Devas to witness he had not meant to harm the king's person. Sri Wickrama plied him with many another question. His prisoner answered simply, but spoke of himself only. At the end of his questioning the king found he was no wiser. He turned to the priests and said that the accused as sethapenagay nilamay had the safety of the ruler's life in his hands. For such a man to have turned traitor, and sought to harm, where it was his duty to protect, was a crime of the gravest degree. He deserved all the tortures custom permitted. A sentence of execution by the sword would be light punishment. Did the theros wish to say anything?

What could the priests say! The king, however, was not asking them to approve the sentence. Nor had the accused left them any room to speak lightly of his offence. Yet the pontiffs appeared pleased. They conferred while the audience waited breathless. Then the Maha Nayaka of Malwatu Vihara addressed the monarch,

"Maharaja, disciples of the Thatagata, may not approve of any act or word meant to cause pain. The unfortunate mudiyansay at your feet has owned guilt. The truthfulness of his pleading and the loyalty of his services in the past, which we know about, makes us believe his statement, that there was in him no intention to hurt the king. Just monarchs punish not to inflict pain but because punishment is unavoidable in the maintenance of good government. Yet your predecessor, the great king Kirti Sri Rajasingha, made many a traitor love him by returning love for treachery. Even though this accused may deserve death for his offence there is a circumstance that would make the infliction of such a punishment in his case not proper. The Mahawasala appointed him Diyawadana Nilamay to the Danta Dhatu. From the moment of his appointment to that office his head and hands could not be used for any impure task.[10] It was a dedication of a subject's life by his king to the service of the Thatagata's Dhanta Dhatu. An order that would end his life, it will be apparent, amounts to taking back that which the Mahawasala has dedicated to the Relic. Maharaja, there are many other ways of punishment less easy to bear than death. The accused has deserved severe punishment; of that there is not the least doubt. But let not the noble Maḥa-wasala take back what was once given by the Mahawasala to the service of the Sasana."

A silence followed these words. The king hesitant in the day's proceedings from the moment he had caught the fervid ring in Dehigama's hail, appeared lost in thought. Sri Wickrama prided in his love of the Dalada and his devotion to religion. Right before him rose the fane of the relic, where at the hour that devas came to worship he himself daily knelt in obeisance. And he remembered how every morning as he walked to the shrine, Dehigama stood on its steps in the dress of his office, not his courtier at the moment, but the servant of the Dhanta Dhatu.

There was not a murmur in the audience. The king, as a rule, was respectful of what the Maha Nayaka theros advised. But that day they were coming between the lion and his prey. What was worse, the prisoner had wounded royal vanity by saying he did not ask for mercy. When the king began to speak again there was still no indication which way his thoughts inclined. He asked;

"Did the *peraliya* pull at the *kaipudi* loops on the door of a sleeping chamber and hold the door fast with intent to keep its occupant captive?"

Dehigama answered,

"Deveyanwahansa, not your *balugetta*, but these wretched hands committed that sinful offence. And truly they deserve to be reduced to ashes over live flames before their owner loses his life. He should not have permitted them to behave in that manner."

"Did the *peraliya* say the words 'I have caught the big chap' as he held the door shut?"

Dehigama supporters were losing patience. He was spoiling a situation quite advantageous to him. What he said now confirmed the fears of those that thought an irresistible karma was driving him to a horrid end. He said;

"My tongue did utter those sacrilegious words; and full well does it deserve to be taken out of the mouth in which it formed the sounds."

The king turned to the priests and expressed his approval of what they had said. He would be guided by their words. Then turning to the accused he passed sentence. No punishment short of a death sentence was adequate for one convicted of high-treason. The Mahawasala therefore gave no sentence on that count. For attempting to take captive the ruler of the land the *kaipudi* loops the prisoner had pulled at would be taken from the door, made red hot in fire and placed on his palms till the metal burned into the flesh. That the *peraliya* might not utter profane words of the Mahawasala again a finger's breadth of his tongue would be cut off, and the piece of flesh given to the dogs. Dehigama was dismissed from the service of the king as well as of the Dhanta Dhatu.

A humiliating ceremony followed a high official's dismissal for disgraceful conduct. His expulsion and its cause were read

aloud. He was then ordered to surrender his hat to an attendant. Bare headed he walked away, a disgrace to family and clan. No male, except men of the untouchable castes—and these were very few—went about with uncovered head. Sri Wickrama sparing his former favourite's life, yet wished to make an example of him to the large assembly present. He told the adigar to send the prisoner out in the customary manner. The adigar, however, was in a quandary. For Dehigama wore a hat he had a right to use irrespective of the king's service.

When giving himself up to justice, that is a traitor's death, Dehigama had resolved to die without leaving a blot on the family name. He had laid aside the four cornered hat of rank for a round brimmed hat that any man of the goigama caste could wear. The change had escaped the king preoccupied with the trial.

Dehigama should have had the hat proper to his office when brought before the throne. For a man of his status to be asked to surrender the round hat he wore would be an insult to his caste. The adigar, himself jealous of class honour, whispered his king that the prisoner would have to assume his official head dress before the ceremony of expulsion could be carried out. Sri Wickrama turned away dissatisfied and commanded the prisoner be taken to the Devasanghinda, so that the rest of the sentence be carried out immediately.

Less unpleasant business was then taken up. The adigar called the dukganna rala who, with remarkable presence of mind, had spoken the truth without betraying where the king had taken refuge on the night of the conspiracy. He was given the *patabendi* name Sahatika-etta, which meant he kept his oath. With it were granted a few ammunams of paddy field and all the land that shed its water into them. The adigar read an ola which was meant to record the king's gift. When he handed it over he called the receipient by his new name. The *dukganna rala* knelt before the throne the ola in his hands. Then he stepped back full proud of the name he had won for his family.

The next individual to be summoned was the Sannas Mohottala, a high official responsible for the records of land grants made by the throne. In his hands was a copper plate, and behind him walked the court *Hangidiya*.[11] The latter carried a small ornate work-bench. On it were a few tools and a piece of thinly beaten gold. The mohotala knelt ceremoniously and held his copper plate to the king. Sri Wickrama with his right index finger

touched the left end of the narrow sheet where were engraven in the metal a small circle and within it the letter ශ්, the sovereign's signature. The Hangidiya received it and there in the king's presence, placed a thin sheet of gold where the royal finger had touched. With leather and mallet he pressed it. When he had done, on the copper sheet stood the king's signature in gold. The mohottala now handed it to the adigar who read the contents aloud.

It was a land sannasa granting the fertile nindagama of Deliwala to Pilimatalawway Dissawa and his descendants for as long as the sun and moon should shine on mankind, as reward for the loving loyalty the dissawa had shown to the monarch. Sri Wickrama spoke of Pilimatalawwa's great act. He told them how he had with his own hands cut the chieftain's hair, and commanded that he should wear his *deli-walla* short as a mark of the royal favour that will always be his. The village of Deliwala was granted to him that his descendants might remember how their ancestor's *deli-walla* was cropped by the sri-hasta.

Meanwhile on the Devasanghinda not far away Dehigama stood his ordeal. Bravely he held out his open hands till the red hot metal of the fat *kaipudi* sizzled into the flesh. Then, while kinsmen dropped cooling medicated oil into the now paralysed palms he stuck his tongue out till a bit of its end was cut away.

Sri Wickrama was astonished to hear how his former sethapenagay nilamay had gone through the ordeal. When information reached him that soon as his tongue healed the first stammer he articulated were words praying for long life and prosperity to the king, he sent for the nobleman. The latter came—in the dress he had assumed for his surrender. His speech was now difficult to follow, yet not quite unintelligible. Sri Wickrama spoke to him kindly, and tried to extract details of the conspirators who had influenced Dehigama. The identity of the band remained a baffling secret. Dehigama[12] stammered his life was the Mahawasala's to order. The names of the men whose advice had brought him calamity, however, he never disclosed.

The Trial and Execution of Pilimatalawway Adigar

IN the Kandyan country one rarely mixed more than a single curry with a mouthful of rice. A poor man began his meal with a *melluma*. Two or three curries in turn followed till he finished with the *hodda* or gravy. This number did not satisfy the wealthy. The monarch, expected to eat thirty two mouthfuls at least, had thirtytwo curries[1] served to him. In an aristocratic home about half that was considered to be the appropriate number. Female ingenuity had devised a way out of the drugery of cooking so many dishes. Ladies exchanged viands with relative or close friend in the neighbourhood in a manner that multiplied the number of curries served for the head of the family.

In a home some of the viands cooked were prepared far in excess of the needs. Portions of the excess were sent as a gift to homes from which a return of the courtesy was acceptable. The gift had to be sent up in respectable fashion, also in the hands of a servant of unquestionable trustworthiness. Such a servant walked out of Molligoda walawwa one morning, a silver dish full of viands on his head. The dish was covered with a freshly laundered piece of white muslin. He had orders to return without delay.

He reached his destination, the home of Pilimatalawway Maha Nilamay. With half an eye he saw that cooking there had not yet made much progress that day. The man was something of a wit—he was part time jester to his master, and was popular at the houses where he was known. Placing the dish he had brought before the lady of the walawwa, he asked with a show of dutiful fear, whether the dish will take long to be emptied. The man ofcourse meant to be ready for its return journey. The lady bade

him get out and wait till he was wanted. He retreated to a large compound behind the walawwa to wait. What met his eye there tickled his wit so far, that for the time he forgot he was expected to return without delay.

A servant he well knew was busy in an attempt to clean up the compound. He had by him an ekel broom and a large basket. He was trying to clear the place of a large number of *patkola*—plantain leaf used to eat rice out of. They littered the ground, and much rice and cooked food lay strewn about. The basket and ekel broom would have expedited the job. The man had a countenance sad enough for a parent's funeral. Instead of gathering the mess into the basket he was using a forked stick with which he scattered them forward, and cursed as the wind blew them away from the path along which he expected to clear them. That job wont be over till well into the night, the wit said to himself. He could not guess how such a large number of *patkola* came to be there, either. He said,

> "Upon the mother that bore me into the world, this walawwa need lack nothing. What a good servant is here! One couldn't find your equal in the Rata Hata[2]. The Maha Nilamay hamuduruwo is indeed fortunate. Other nilamays would envy him the possession of so excellent a man."

The object of this sally looked up. He did like to have someone to talk to; but in his state of mind he spoke words not quite pleasant. He said,

> "You ass. Indeed, one might envy not your master but you—getting the best to fill that paunch of yours—all for a few words of folly that make Molligoda Hamuduruwo laugh. Why that *budukanda* will laugh at any child's prattle. See me sweating away alone? Since dawn!"

> "So, I was right. Wasn't I? Where are the rest of your company that I have seen stuffing yourselves to bursting day in day out?"

> "That exactly is the trouble you idiot. A curse on your buffoonery. When did you have the brains to wait till you were told a thing?"

> "Then say what you want to say, that I may learn from your wisdom."

To stop his listener's fooling the tired servant began to talk. He was of a taciturn disposition, a youth that avoided company and spent his time in the jungle singing *pel-kavi* and gathering dry firewood for the kitchen. His master had counted on this aversion

to gossip. The servant, proud in his way, did not relish the job in hand. To drown his chagrin, he poured out all he had on his mind.

All but a couple of the servants in the walawwa—he and an old woman—had been sent out a day back, the women to gather *pang* leaf for the plaiting of mats needed to dry paddy, and the men to assist at a paddy harvest on a distant estate. For the work that had to be done the previous night—and some work there had been—servants had come from another *nindagama*, one far away. These in turn had been given leave to go, and had left soon as it was light that morning. Unaccustomed to work in a city walawwa they had left things in a mess. The men who ate off the *patkola*, too were funny fellows. They had left their *patkola* full of rice, almost on the doorstep. He and the old woman were all that remained to do the work.

"And you, good boy, are clearing the patkola off which the departing servants feasted?"

The Molligoda servant burst into laughter. The other fumed. For no one touched a banana leaf off which another had eaten. The disconcerted youth growled,

"You son of a..... Stay till I have said. Art such a fool? Your mother might have done better to bring forth into the world a *kolomba*. It might have been of use to some one to sit on, or throw about at least."

As if hit by the retort the wit meekly replied,

"Alright, say your say then before I am called, will you."

Said the other haughtily,

"I am not the man to carry *patkola* used by any mothre's son, least by those filthy beef-eaters."

"So I thought; that is, before today. What is this heap you are pushing forward? His Lordship did not use so many leaves last night on his silver plate?"

"There was a *temma* in the walawwa last night—over a hundred came. Cant you guess that? How can the inmates of one walawwa use such a heap of *patkola*?"

The part jester appeared to see light. He said,

"Oh! Really? You take hours to say a thing. Had your blasted father taught you better how to say a thing you would have said that at once, and avoided unpleasant talk too. But what was the *temma*[3] for? There was no threshing of paddy in the walawwa premises? What was the work that brought so many men?"

The other replied,

"Work enough they did! Ate, ate and ate from near midnight, when they came in the dark like thieves, for more than two peyas—all the choice food that was there. And what do you think they ate most?"

"What?"

"Game. Deer and stag and fowl! The filthy meat eaters! Think you I shall touch one of those *patkola*—not if I have to be beheaded for it. Nor will anyone ask me to do it, not the *Walawway hamuduruwo*. Cheh!" the man spat on the banana leaves before him.

The jester's curiosity was now roused. The time for dinner was evening—just after dusk. What was this *temma* at midnight, with no paddy threshing to keep people awake; and so many men? Who were these men that could eat so such meat? He kept his friend talking. The latter his temper soured by the kind of work he was obliged to do, clearing *patkola* used by men whom he considered below his blood, disburdened his mind. He had had sufficient time to pour out the whole story when the lady called; and the jester obsequiously rushed in. He was given his dish—full again—and with it departed bidding his friend an unusually warm adieu. Indeed he even promised to come back for a chat—perhaps after the midday meal. And the *patkola* hater went about his job, confident he had made an impression on that talkative jester of the Molligoda Walawwa; but wholly unconscious of the fact he had undone a master he loved.

Back at home the jester placed his burden in the hands of a servant of the kitchen, and went in search of his rather indulgent master. He whispered a witty word to attract the latter; but the adigar did not want to hear. He was dictating a letter to his mohottala who sat styling it on a palm leaf. The wit was near bursting with his news: he thought he had made a discovery. When he had been seen peeping in the room for the third time, his master thought the man was about mad. For letters that took orders to high administrative officers in the provinces were regarded strictly confidential. He sent his scribe away, and called to the man. Before the master could question, however, the man's tongue got loose,

"*Hamudurunay*, there has been a *temma* last night at Pilimatalawway Maha Walawwa."

"Hm!" The adigar directed a wary look at the man.

"And My Lord, it was at the darkest hour of midnight, and

the people came to the walawwa in the dark, without even a fire-brand to light their way. There were over two hundred of them!"

"Hm!" again in a dissatisfied voice.

"My Lord, in each man's *patkola* the Maha Nilamay hamuduruwo placed three pieces of gold!"

"Hm?" said the master again. But the shrewd jester knew the third hm meant something quite different from its forerunners; although his master had taken care not to betray the disturbance the words caused in his mind. The man had rattled his story out fast lest he should not be given the time to speak. He now knew his master would want to know all. So he took a deep breath and waited.

"So?" said Molligoda now wanting to hear.

The man continued his story adding what improvements he thought might make it more attractive. The adigar's eyes were wide with wonder. Presently he began to pace the room listening; and the servant proceeded with his story mightily pleased at his success.

The *temma* at the Maha Walawwa was a big affair. The heap of *patkola* was that high—the man showed with his hand. The diners had come in at midnight like a crowd of bandits, and were immediately served in the long spare *maduwa* of the walawwa. Molligoda knew that *maduwa*; it could easily accomodate a couple of hundred men. Besides rice the food was mostly meat—fowl and deer, and stag. There were heaps of sweet meats too, and as the men began eating Pilimatalawway Maha Nilamay went round dropping three *masuran* in every *patkola*. When the meal was over the Maha Nilamay spoke to one of the men for some time. He appeared to be the leader of the gang. That man then spoke to the rest in a language no one could understand. They looked like the Javanese soldiers that resided at Katukele[4]. The man who spoke stood before the Maha Nilamay and raising his hand said a few words. Each of the gang, in turn, took his place, and appeared to repeat what he had said. Then they took their leave, and in a body disappeared into the night without any light, just as they had come.

"What more do you know about this?" Molligoda asked his manner becoming unusually grave. The man thought for a minute, then began to speak again when his master's changing expression alarmed him. Looking sternly at the servant Molligoda said;

"Not a word save what thou hast heard, dost hear?"

The man had got his thoughts together to say more, much more—to make the story interesting to his master. He now took fright and stammered;

"Then.....then....in the morning, all the servants were asked to go to their home village."

The adigar asked a few questions threatening to thrash his servant should he be found to have lied. Then he put on his court dress and walked in the direction of the Koraha Wahalkada, and past it to the palace. In a few hours the esplanade immediately within the Koraha Wahalkada and the grounds within the walls called the Palace Square were crowded. There were men from a number of Katupurullay villages, and the Maduway regiment whose responsibility it was to guard the palace and be in training to meet any emergency. The Wadanatuwakku guard under its Lekam were on the ramparts; within the battlements were the king's Wadiga soldiers. Hundreds of Atapattuway men who had received urgent summons to report at the palace were hastening to the capital. All these hated the king's Javanese soldiers with a will, and were in high glee to see a large number of them led across the esplanade in chains. More guards flanked them as they were taken over the draw bridge up the steps towards the Maha Aramudala grounds.

Before dusk a band of Katupurullay men headed by a lekam, an *eda-wewela* covered with white muslin in his hands, walked towards Pilimatalawway walawwa. They halted where they may be seen from the main entrance. Soon as the Maha Nilamay came in sight the lekam raised his token of authority and said;

"This is the command of the noble Maha Wasala. Pilimatalawway Maha Nilamay Hamuduruwo is to proceed forthwith to answer to a charge of treason against the Maha Wasala."

The Maha Nilamay turned on him, his brows knit, his mien saying, 'Who art thou boy that dares?' His duty done, the lekam handed the mace to an assistant. Then adjusting his hat, in proof of the respect he felt towards the Maha Nilamay, approached him and sank on his knees. Joining his palms he stated his mission once more and, overstepping the bounds of his commission, answered every question he was asked, truthfully. Pilimatalawway went into the house; and in a few minutes emerged in court dress. He walked down the road, even as he did when going to court on foot at times, during the days of his power. The lekam and his

men, who felt as great a respect for him as for the king himself, followed at a respectful distance. He passed the Koraha Wahalkada, a smile on his face. The soldiers on the esplanade joined their palms as he went by.

At dusk a *haykanday* sounded warning all men to keep within doors. Maduway and Atapattuway men guarded every quarter of the city till morning. Special officers were sent to guard the hill behind the palace. Pilimatalawway Walawwa, where the chieftain was permitted to return after he had gone to the king, was closely guarded too. That night the king slept little. The sword was at his side. Molligoda who was in command of all men under arms, spent the night with the king. Most of the time they were conferring how the ex-adigar should be brought to trial, and how the trial itself should be conducted. The king it is said did not appear to be clear in what he spoke that long dreary night. Every sound made him start. Every officer who brought reports from different guard posts as if a war was on, was questioned by the king too.

In cases of high treason—the accused was invariably a member of a distinguished family—trial took place in the Hall of Audience. The king sat on his throne with all his insignia of regal office behind it. Maha Nayaka theros when present, had chairs covered with white muslin a little removed from the dais on which the throne stood. Ministers and courtiers sat on carpets in the two colonades. In front of the throne on either hand stood the accused and the lekam in charge of judicial work. On the day of Pilimatalawway Maha Nilamay's trial the king ordered the inquiry should take place on the Devasanghinda. Some thought it was autocratic interference with established custom. When the trial concluded, however, they said the king had acted wisely. He was really out to find a way of getting some one else to shoulder the responsibility of sending the accused aristocrat to execution.

Pilimatalawway was the king's benefactor, the one man to whom he owed all his greatness. Perhaps he knew he was his father also. In the beginning of his reign, indeed for quite a long time, he had allowed Pilimatalawway to carry on the government as he pleased. He had nothing to regret about the adigar's rule. When however treasonous intrigues with the British came to light he took away the powers the Maha Adigar had. Pilimatalawway's later activities made a trial for treason unavoidable. In a trial before the throne he was found guilty. Sri Wickrama believed in capital punishment as a cure for the spread of treason. But he would not decree the

nobleman to execution. To the amazement of his court he freely pardoned Pilimatalawway depriving him of all office. He now realised Pilimatalawway was a danger to his kingship, and even life.

Exile could never tame a man of the ex-adigar's ways. There was no alternative therefore but to decree him to execution. The king found a plan to achieve that end without shouldering the responsibility for the nobleman's death himself. He counted on the intense dislike the aristocratic class had for intrigues with the British in Colombo. The king decided Pilimatalawway should be charged before a court formed of a number of chieftains belonging to families famous for their patriotism and courage in war.

He appointed seven chieftains of whose loyalty he had not the least doubt to form a panel of judges. As a precedent he cited the court that had sat in judgement when King Narendrasingha was charged for violating the custom of the land; though that case was in no way like the one he had in hand. Sri Wickrama did not mind fine detail. He ordered the court to assemble at a spot on the Devasanghinda[5]. Next morning when everything was ready he walked out of the palace to attend the trial.

The judges were accomodated on ornate stools, the chairs of aristocratic homes those days. The king was complainant, and sat on one side on a seat covered with cloth of gold. Pilimatalawway stood opposite. Sri Wickrama who had already got accustomed to a way of consulting his ministers, then doing exactly as he wished, behaved in quite another fashion that day. He told the judges that the responsibility of the trial was entirely theirs. He was complainant; and would, in the presence of the devas whose shrines stood around the spot, place such evidence before them as was available. Then he proceeded to state his complaint.

He had treated Pilimatalawway Maha Nilamay with respect one might show to a parent. Whenever he wished to have an appointment, it was bestowed on him for the asking. He was consulted in all important matters, and his advice as a rule hearkened to. Yet he was disloyal and often worked against him, the lawful ruler of the land. Brought to trial for high-treason before him on a previous occasion, he had been proved guilty. But he had pardoned the Maha Nilamay in the hope he would be grateful for granting him his life. The offence before the judges that day was a very grave one. He had conspired to make the king's Javanese body-guard help him to capture the person of the mon-

arch. They had been requested to carry out his orders not the commands of the king's ministers. It was a move to organise a *peraliya* in the land; so that the Maha Nilamay might make use of his friendship with the English Dissawa of Colombo to bring in an invading army for the conquest of Sinhalay. The Maha Nilamay would then occupy the throne as a shameless vassal of the beef-eating[6] English Dissawa.

The judges that day knew only too well what Pilimatalawway's intrigues with Colombo were. In the courts of Sinhalay a witness took his oath at the end of his evidence. The king, when he had done, invoked the great gods Natha and Vishnu, and solemnly swore that what he had stated that day before the judges in regard to the complaint preferred against Pilimatalawway Maha Nilamay was the absolute truth. A lekam then led in witnesses for the complaint, one after another.

The Malay Muhandiram, captain of the Malay regiment, said he could not but obey Pilimatalawway Maha Nilamay who had once been his commander. Ordered to do so he took his men to the walawwa by night. He spoke of the rich dinner there at midnight the day before. Each of his men was given three pieces of gold with his food: he got six. The gold was distributed by the Maha Nilamay himself. Witness had thought distributing gold to be customary at a feed given by great men. They were asked to take an oath that they would carry out the Maha Nilamay's orders. After receiving such kind treatment they could not refuse; and they gladly took the oath. They had not the least suspicion that they would be asked to do anything disloyal to the monarch whose servants they were. He and his men never meant to be treacherous to the Maha Wasala.

This evidence was corroborated by what the Javanese officers coming after him said. Then was led in the lad that had resented the business of clearing *patkola* used by the beef-eating Javanese. He was well in a tremor when dragged before the judges. In the presence of the monarch the youth appeared to be frightened out of his wits. He joined his palms and bowed his head very low—to the king, then to his master, then to the king again. He would not speak, could not. The king, however, elicited what he knew by a number of questions; and the answers came out every time in a wail. But he blurted out enough to do his loved master great damage. When dismissed he slunk away walking side ways as if he feared for his life.

The accused listened undismayed, serne. Asked whether he had anything to say in defence he told the judges the king had not succeeded in making out a case against him. No one denied that there had been a *temma* in his walawwa. But where was the evidence of treasonous practice? If he had intended anything it did not have as its object the causing of any hurt to the monarch's person. There was no question of intrigue with the English. Could a feed given to a few friendly Javanese soldiers bring the English Dissawa of Colombo and his army to Senkadagala?

It was he and none else that had persuaded the Radala of the Rata Hata to place prince Kannesamy on the throne. His object had been to raise to kingship a prince uninfluenced by foreign men or foreign methods, to have a king who would respect the ancient laws of Sinhalay, and give every man accused of an offence fair and full trial. That must remain the aim of every *radala* who has to bear the heavy responsibility of electing a prince to fill the regal office. And it is they that are cursed when the individual placed in power misgoverns. Richly in that case they deserved the curses of the people. The king's rule, he stated, did not honour the maxims of the *Dasa Raja Dharma*. The monarch was to blame in the first instance. But the real responsibility fell on his ministers and advisers. Incompetent men who by devious ways capture office for personal advancement were a danger. Those who would counsel kings must know their business. Ministers must remember their first duty was not to please royalty; but to make his subjects feel satisfied with the monarch's rule. The king's government pleased neither the *radala* nor the people. The regal tusker had his noble tusks sullied because his mahouts were fools. His object was to give the king better ministers, that his rule may bring contentment and prosperity, not to minister and courtier alone, but to the thousands of his subjects in every corner of the kingdom. He had planned to give the tusker on the throne mahouts who knew well how to make it care for its bright tusks. Was that an offence? If it was, he was guilty indeed. But if the end of the plan was to make the nation happy as guests at a wedding, and love the ruler for the prosperity the government brought them, then his endeavour deserved the praise of every man, and the gratitude of the monarch. They were guilty of treason who, placed in power because by some chance the ruler had taken a fancy to them, looked rather to pleasing the king, than to make his subjects love the monarch. Loftily he concluded that he did not want witnesses, nor felt there was any need for

answering questions. Then he looked round with a smile that said, 'Those silly questions in your heads; you might keep them for some one else, not me'. Thoughts went back to the time when Pilimatalawwa was at the height of his career. That was the way he managed state business, concluding a subject even before the throne had time to express its wish.

A silence fell on the assembly. Some of the judges were kinsmen of the accused. These had looked forward to question the Maha Nilamay closely then on his own plea—and they knew he could make out a good defence—to recommend him for mercy. The king on his part had expected an appeal for pardon. He was determined to elicit all the information he could, specially the names of Pilimatalawway's associates in the conspiracy. The king however knew his former adigar rarely took anyone into his confidence. But he would try to know all before saying that he pardoned. The manner in which the accused refused to let them proceed upset either plan. It was sometime before Sri Wickrama broke the brooding silence. He bade the judges discharge their duty little guessing there was a surprise for him.

Giving the only verdict they reasonably could—guilty of treason—the judges said that just as they had not the power to pardon a guilty man, they had no right to order the taking of another subject's life. That had to be left to the Devas and the *nara-deva* on the throne. Fate seemed to decree that Sri Wickrama himself should give the word to end a life that had placed him on the throne.

For a moment the king looked disapprovingly at the judges. Then his eyes wandered to the shrine of Maha Vishnu. On the hill opposite it rose, roof above roof as it had been planned by the man he was about to sentence. Maha Vishnu was the deity Sri Wickrama respected most. He remembered the chaste flight of stone steps his benefactor had built immediately in front of the central shrine. He had done the work to please *his* king. Would the deva like the builder of his shrine, condemned to death? For once Sri Wickrama appeared to think that to order execution was not the best way. He turned towards the accused and bade him listen. He repeated the story of his former friendly bearing towards the Maha Nilamay. To no man in the kingdom had he shown more favour. Then he recounted the many occasions Pilimatalawway had worked against him, and spoke about his share in the conspiracy with the English to place Muttusamy on the throne. He had often overlooked and once when brought to trial had

pardoned his treason. He asked the accused what he would do if he had been the Maha Adigar that day, and another stood where he did. Then he said in a voice that had little trace of anger;

"The Maha Wasala will grant a pardon once more. Let the Maha Nilamay, here before the Devas, take his oath he will never again raise a finger against my government."

The judges felt relieved. So did Molligoda and his colleagues who stood ranged behind the monarch. Let the great man's life be spared. Pilimatalawway had been standing in his place not dejected and unhappy as an accused would have been, but with a look of disdain on his face. His figure erect, his countenance unclouded, his deportment dignified as if he was the chief of the panel of judges. He paid no more heed to the judges than he did to the witnesses led before them. As the king spoke he turned courteously in his direction. Then he replied with dignity;

"Deveyanwahansa, I planned not to hurt the king, but to rescue the land from misgovernment. To take an oath that I shall not work for the good of the country would scarcely be in keeping with a status like mine."

At that the king turned away. The extreme anger to which he was at times prone was evident in his face. Even Molligoda Adigar, whose information to the king was the first act in the trial drama, appeared dismayed. Presently the king spoke, slow but determined;

"Pilimatalawway Maha Nilamay, found conspiring against the Maha Wasala, has been declared guilty of treason. He shall be beheaded at the *kumara-hapuwa*."[7]

The king in a voice that seemed to choke ordered the sabre of execution to be issued from the armoury. Then without a word he walked away leaving further unpleasant work in the hands of the adigar, Molligoda, who in a hushed voice spoke the usual orders. Almost immediately the maha nilamay was conducted to the *kumara-hapuwa*, where executions of nobles took place. The ex-adigar asked for the sabre; and when the executioner offered it on his knees, carefully felt its edge. Unmoved he said.

"Good."

Then he did a difficult sword exercise, and smiling said;

"I possess the skill to make such use of this blade, that in a few minutes the king's officers shall all be prostrate on the ground. But *I* know to respect law and order."

He gave back the sabre. Then facing in the direction of the Dalada shrine,[8] a building he himself had constructed for King

Kirti Sri, he recited the *Tun Sarana* and his precepts. Turning to the executioner he said;

"Now, do thou thy duty, sirrah! See thou cut with the first blow."

The executioner kneeling placed the head on the breast of the prostrate body, and folded his palms to it. Then they took up the head again and placed it on the fork of a tree, beyond the reach of any foraging quadruped. The king had told his officers, that he would go to see that head.

Thus the powerful adigar who placed Kannesamy on the throne passed away. The common people mourned his death. To them he had been a tower of strength, a great chieftain to whom they never appealed in vain. Amongst higher circles, where Pilimatalawwa had had enemies, feelings were not unmixed. There were many who disliked the chieftain for his ambition to be ruler over Sinhalay, with vassalage to Britain as a start. But all knowing men realised that the only man who could have brought Sri Wickrama to respect the *Dasa Raja Dharma* had passed away. The king's friends exclaimed.

"*Deiyo saaki*, the king is now a patricide! Nothing good will come of his rule to the kingdom hereafter."

Meegastennay Adigar—His Career and Death

HARVESTING on a kurakkan *haena* is a pleasant sight. Women dressed in clean though plain clothes—there is no mud on a haena—foregather a couple of hours after sunrise. Their headgear, lengths of bright hued cloth worn so as to protect the neck and back from the sun, add colour to the scene. Merry laughter and lively songs swell through the vale as they progress up the hill gathering the fist shaped cobs with their small scythes; while noisy youngsters run and tumble to carry the corn to the husbandman's watch hut.

In medieval Sinhalay when every hill within reach of a village was a *haen yaya* that gave its inhabitants all the food grains they needed, a kurakkan harvest attracted no spectators. Yet the people of Pata-Dumbara were streaming out of their cottages one morning to gaze in wonder at a kurakkan patch across the Mahaveli where reaping had started. The growth was luxuriant; a score of reapers would not have been too many. Only a few however were at work. These wore spotless white muslin. Gold jewelry that weighed their necks and arms glinted in the sun. Behind each stood a well dressed attendant, more gaily dressed than they, to receive the cobs they cut. The reapers sang sweetly but low, as if they were unaccustomed to *haena* singing. Not far from them under an open thatch that had the unusual dignity of a viyana sat the husbandman. The reapers were queens and ladies of the palace, and the husbandman king Sri Wickramarajasingha. He had sown the *haena* with his own hands; and now enjoyed its harvesting by his queens and their noble friends. He had no body-guard, nothing glamorous around him. By him was a single companion, Arawwawala Maha Nilamay. Both had clothes and headwear suitable for a *haena*, the king wearing white clothes as befitted royalty.

Sri Wickrama ate his lunch in his haena hut that noon. By his order there was neither ceremony nor rich viands. His queens

placed before him *roti*, *thalapa* and *helapa* they themselves had cooked. The king ate with relish, and pressed his companion to have more.

Whilst the royal *goiya* enjoyed his rustic meal, scandalised aristocrats in the Palace muttered, 'The poorest rustic eats his *roti* within the walls of his cottage. If the king desires lowly food he can have it at the palace, and eat it off his gold *manday* as befits his exalted rank. To forget that he is a nara-deva and behave in the fashion of a homeless.....!'

"Upon my mother", exclaimed the Batthana Nilamay, "I have not heard of such a prince before! Monarchs have a Batthana Nilamay attending at meals even on the battle field. The king might as well let me stay at home. I might devote the time to my paddy fields."

King Sri Wickrama worried little about what his punctilious nobles thought. His boyhood was one of daily work in a garden round his widowed mother's home. He remembered how Pilimatalawway Maha Adigar, his mother's frequent guest, spoke of Andra blood as less illustrious than Sinhala aristocracy. Courtiers sank on their knees before him: he knew how amongst themselves they spoke dispargingly of all the Andra people, royalty not excepted. They contemptuously called them Wadigas. Full well he knew how at least some of them could see an Andra ruler slaughtered without moving a hair. Men like Arawwawala, of simple ways, as loyal at heart as every courtier was in speech, were rare amongst them. Sri Wickrama had as a lad, often watched Arawwawala cross the Mahaveli river at Gannoruwa, wading to make work easy for his palanquin bearers. His retinue appeared to serve him with love, quite in contrast to the awed bearing of Pilimatalawwa's servants. Not long after his accession he had taken a liking to Arawwawala. He made no secret of his friendship. He often consulted him and respected his opinion. As he gathered experience he decided that Arrawwawala was the most honest amongst his courtiers.

Elevation to the throne had not made the king spurn the strenuous life he had been accustomed to. Perhaps to rest from the cares of government he thought of a *haena* for the monarch. In putting the idea into practice, he refused merely to watch others at work. He selected for his *haena* a hill slope close to the palace. When work began he took a hand in the cultivation himself. The fruit of his labour pleased. He could think of none other than Arawwawala who would spontaneously share his joy. Averse

to court intrigues and glamorous appointments, religious to a fault, Arawwawala had encouraged the king in his simple pastime. He was not one of the faction then in power. His honest ways made him a poor politician. Those directing the affairs of the government at the time regared the work on Sri Wickrama's *haena* with jealousy. They had expected the *haena* would keep the king from fanciful projects, which in execution was a waste of rajakariya labour involving unpopularity for the ministers that were expected to advise the monarch. They had not foreseen cultivation of the *haena* would cement friendship with one outside their faction. They now feared for their power. Unable to do anything else in the matter, they blamed Arawwawala for encouraging the king to behave like a rustic. They wondered how Sri Wickrama could so far forget his godly status as to eat *kurahang roti* on a *haena*. There was even greater surprise in store. One morning as court was assembling they were told that the Maha Mudiyansay had orders to serve King and Court with a kurahang lunch that noon.

Custom it was for minister and chieftain to be served with lunch when urgent conference kept court assembled for long hours. This usually happened when an unforseen invasion kept court assembled to plan defence measures. The only other occasion when courtiers had a meal at court was at the Alusal Festival. It was the harvest festival. The king's fields at Gurudeniya were the first in the land to be harvested. The new rice was brought to the capital in gay procession on the back of caparisoned elephants. The monarch with his own hands gave portions of the new rice first to be used for *dana* to the Danta Dhatu, then for *multen* at the four devalas. After the rice had been offered in the temples king and court had a festive lunch of the new crop. The meal was served made up into parcels wrapped in fresh plantain leaf, and was called *gotu-bath*. Each parcel containing an individual's portion was handed to a courtier by the Maha Mudiyansay on behalf of the monarch: and each courtier received it with both hands. Sri Wickrama expected his court to receive a kurakkan lunch with as much respect, because he himself had sown the grain and his queens had gathered the crop.

Many thought the king was forgetting respect due from the throne to the nobility. He might disgrace himself but had no right to treat them as if they were menial servants. All agreed the kurakkan lunch was an insult whether intended or not. Once in the palace no one might go away without leave. Piha-rala's,

men of lineage who took pride of being incharge of the monarch's food, found themselves kneading a kind of flour the ladies in their manors looked upon with disdain. Proud chieftains were waiting for a ceremonial lunch dressed of grain that in their homes was victuals for lesser servant and slave.

Barring war in the defence of religion and motherland, to the Kandyan there was no more noble endeavour than aswedumising, the converting of land to paddy field. To this day sowing, reaping and threshing of paddy are occasions for ceremonial observances. The greatest in the land stepped into the mud of his paddy plot. Noble dames did not think it undignified to work in the field cultivated for the use of the walawwa. They had the paddy grain carved on their gold ornaments[1]. But when it came to the cultivation of kurakkan there was a difference. If the wealthy cultivated the humble grain, the work was carried out by their slaves. A landlord sent one of the family to supervise the measuring of his *anda* share of a paddy harvest. To collect the *othu* of a kurakkan haena it was only a servant that was sent. Kurakkan was the food of the poor man. Even in his cottage the grain was not wanted during festivity. Sri Wickrama carried away by his enthusiasm, failed to realise that kurakkan from a *haena* cultivated by a monarch was still only kurakkan to his conservative nobles.

The king was on his throne when the Maha Mudiyansay came in followed by a few subordinates bearing large trays of *gotu-bath*. 'Not *gotu-bath* but *gotu-kurahang*, someone said in an audible whisper. Courtiers lined up on either side of the hall. Each received his parcel with feigned respect. Not a few found it difficult to disguise their chagrin. Yet everything went smoothly, and the king looked happy. Palace washerman stood ready to lay *piruwata*[29] on the carpets for the king's guests. Etulkattalay officials were bringing in the king's silver table and gold plate. Suddenly something appeared to have gone amiss. Half the load of the trays had been handed out. Almost at the farther end of the hall the Maha Mudiyansay stood as if deprived of the power of movement. He held out a parcel. The courtier for whom it was meant did not seem to be accepting it. The Maha Mudiyansay muttered something. The other replied aloud,

"Is Your Lordship gone blind that you cannot see my difficulty ?"

The speaker had his hands behind, as far across the back as either hand could go. To all appearances he was making frantic efforts to bring them forward. His shoulders strained and his body twisted with the effort. A hand moved a little, then jerked back where it had been. After a few puzzled minutes the king asked,

"Is Rammalaka Nilamay in the throes of a malady?"

At that the erstwhile stubborn hands came forward. He raised them above his head and folded them to the throne as he spoke.

"Deiyo Buduwanta, your servant cannot understand what has gone wrong with these two hands of mine. As obedient in war to bring down the enemies of the Maha Wasala, as in peace to make paddy fields productive, they refuse to obey today. It would appear they object to let kurahang *roti* feed the stomach from where their strength is derived."

There had been a sullen murmur in the hall from the moment distribution of *gotu-bath* began. That murmur died down, and everyone looked in the direction of the throne. Its occupant, taken by surprise, was making a brave attempt to conceal displeasure. The king asked,

"Has Rammalaka Nilamay never tasted kurahang?"

"Dread lord, never since the day your *balugetta* knew the taste of rice has my mother been obliged to dress such food in her kitchen. Nor does she permit her children to touch what slaves cook."

The thrust went home; for prince Kannesamy's boyhood days had not by any means been a life of plenty. What Rammalaka did and said pleased the assembly. Many felt they could now partake of the kurahang lunch without humiliation. Rammalaka showed no signs of accepting his parcel. Sri Wickrama had heard how a Rammalaka Nilamay had once managed to humiliate a monarch[2] who had violated custom by giving a *nekathi* man a garment to cover the upper part of his body. He directed the adigar to order that the refused gotu-bath be laid aside and the rest distributed.

The king was not likely to forget Rammalaka's pride. Many felt sorry they too had not refused the *gotu-bath*. His gay demeanour gone, Sri Wickrama followed how the meal was being accepted; whilst Rammalaka looked on as if he had lost his lunch.

The king's guests did no more than taste the kurahang preparations in the parcels. Nor was the king able to do justice to

his lunch. The servitors who trooped in to remove the plantain leaves that served for plates had to bear away almost all the kurahang cooked in the palace that morning. The kurahang lunch became the topic of talk everywhere in the capital. No aristocrat had a good word for Pilimatalawway ex-adigar who, they said, had hoisted an ass over them. Arawwawala they agreed was an unscrupulous man, to have helped to bring down the honour of their class. They spoke of the king as a fatherless waif, as incapable of maintaining royal dignity as of treating his nobles with decorum. His favour to the Wadigas, the increase of late of the number of such foreigners, the way fertile land these wadigas set their hearts on were taken from paraveni owners to be bestowed on them, and the autocratic way the king imposed his will without respect to custom or those entitled to interprete the law — these the aristocrats discussed in language that brought them to the brink of treason. Meegastennay alone was silent. The situation appeared to fill him with anxiety.

King Sri Wickrama hearkened to his Andra kinsmen to a far greater degree than did his predecessor. The ruling class that had expected him to break away from Andra influence altogether now hated the Andras all the more. They treated them with contempt and even called them *para-demalu* to their faces. They laughed at their ways and took good care to exclude them from any part in the celebration of the national festivals. It was known the Andras reported the treatment they had to put up with to the king. But the king was helpless. His court now thought the kurahang lunch was meant to humiliate them in return. No Sinhala prince on the throne had ever thought of offering lowly food to the nobility. Rammalaka's faction thought it was Arawwawala's duty to have dissuaded the king from his plan. He could have at least warned them of what was afoot. An incident two days after the haena lunch lent colour to what Rammalaka took pains to make his faction believe.

Meegastennay Adigar and Rammalaka happened to be the last to walk out of the Hall of Audience that day. As they crossed the palace court-yard towards the cloud patterned[3] ramparts they espied a man in chieftains' clothes coming towards the Koraha Wahalkada. He was attended by two or three retainers. At the gate the Atapattuway guard made way for him to enter the esplanade. Said Rammalaka,

"Strange man that, to seek admission to the palace at this time of the day!"

It was noon. Court had gone on from morning. The king would have his lunch and retire for his siesta. Perhaps the courtier, — no ordinary individual would have been allowed to pass the gate in that fashion — was coming to serve a turn in Etulkattalay raja-kariya. Even then it was an odd hour to enter palace grounds. Meegastennay laughed softly.

"Who else but Arrawwawala gura!" said the adigar. "His calculations could not get him a less suitable hour. Or it may be that the planetary aspects of this noon are so favourable to himself, that he would not miss the advantage even at the risk of disturbing the monarch's noonday rest. So profound is his reliance on astral influences. And what is more, he gets away with it too. Know you not that the king has given him permission to see him at any moment of the day between sunrise and sunset?"

They met on the esplanade; and Meegastennay said,

"Arawwawala Maha Nilamay's stars are on the ascendant. Very soon the Maha Wasala will be entrusting greater responsibility in the kingdom to Your Lordship."

"I am happy the Maha Adikaram Nilamay feels I have Maha Wasala *karunawa*," replied Arawwawala; "my humble life has always been devoted to serve our noble monarch."

"The Maha Wasala has no reason to doubt the Maha Nilamay's loyalty. Was not the Maha Nilamay in attendance when the noble Maha Wasala sat to an ambrosial repast of kurahang talapa!"

Rammalaka had done nothing to disguise the sting in his words. Turning to go on his way Arawwawala said;

"My Lord, even kurahang *talapa* may taste ambrosial when prepared and served by noble queens."

"*Ehenang*!" rasped Rammalaka, "kurahang is fine food: slaves thrive on it. Look here *ralay*," the speaker rubbed his right forearm with his left index finger, "in here runs *rang-molok* not *kurahang-molok*."

Meegastennay smiled at his friend's pun on his own name. He had said that the blood in his veins were gold, not stuff gained from lowly food like kurahang *talapa*. Arawwawala walked away without further talk. As his figure disappeared within the palace ramparts, Rammalaka who had not taken his gaze off him exploded;

"Let him go and say that to the *maha demala* — the kurahang eating slave. To disgrace his blood in this fashion. Why could he not let the *demala* swallow his *talapa* alone? He pretended an attack of *jalasanniya*[4] once, when he had summons to appear for justice. Why could he not do so this time. He brings disgrace on his class. By the devas..."

And Rammalaka's hand sought the dagger at his waist.

"Arawwawala has his faults," said the adigar, "but he does not carry tales. Pride of lineage seems to be his great failing. He does not care for high office either. Know you why he swallowed your insults and hurried away? You nearly made him miss the moment at which he wants the king to set eyes on him today. He must have given weeks of labour to calculate the time to the minute. That is his road to royal favour; neither valour nor statecraft."

Meegastennay Adigar laughed; but it was not care free laughter. Rammalaka grunted. His thoughts went back to a pet scheme that had failed because of Arawwawala's persistent good luck.

Rammalaka and his friends, determined that Arawwawala should by no chance capture the post of chief adigar, had decided on direct action. Knowing the nobleman's invariable habit of starting for the palace at an auspicious moment they had guessed when he would set out on a certain day that he had to attend court. They hired three assassins on promise of rich reward. They were villains accustomed to deeds of rapine and blood, men who would have committed murder were it for the clothes their victims wore. They were sworn to secrecy. A few minutes before they went into hiding they were shown Arawwawala's party and told who was to be the object of their attack. The leader of the gang had looked for only a moment at the palanquin bearers.

"By the devas no," he gasped as if he had been asked to jump into hell fire. "My Lord, we will hew down any one or any number but not Arawwawala *hamuduruwo*. Arawwawala *hamuduruwo* is no ordinary being; he is a bodhisatva."

The assassin's mates had joined him with one accord. Greater reward and threats, neither moved them. And the plot came to nothing. Meegastennay as if he divined his friends thoughts said;

"With this silly monarch's wild ways nobody's stars can keep him safe for long. You will find him all unexpectedly turn

against his friend one fine day. That will be the time to manoeuvre his fall. And when he does fall, he will not rise again; you can leave that part of the endeavour to the king."

There were many at court who attributed Arawwawala's luck to an uncanny power he had of finding astrologically auspicious moments at which one might go to a sworn enemy and be received with love and granted what he sought. This ability they thought would some day be used to seize power in the government. Meegastennay, though he could not forget how a few silly words that fell from Arawwawala, then an Appuhamy in King Kirti Sri Rajasingha's train, had all but undone him, had without doubt ruined what might have been the grandest achievement of his life, still had no reason to fear for his place in the state. He had risen so high, and his services as an ambassador to the English rulers on the sea board were so indispensable to the king that there was not the least probability of the king withdrawing the confidence he enjoyed. He knew Arawwawala's faults as well as good points so completely, that he was content to leave him alone. Not so his faction.

Meegastennay Maha Nilamay's climb to eminence is the story of an extremely fortunate individual who had nothing but his brains and courage to back him. He had started as a courageous lad in a rajakariya levy sent to Senkadagala by orders of the Dissawa of Matale. King Kirti Sri had gone on pilgrimage to Anuradhapura accompanied by the pious priest Weliwita Saranankara....What he saw there had filled the good king with wonder. He had shed tears to see the ruin and desolation in a place that would have been a gorgeous spectacle when the work of Anuradhapura's great builders still stood. The stones of ruined temples inspired king Kirti Sri to have stone work in his own structures. Saranankara Maha Thera had said in reply to his admiration, 'These Maha Raja are achievements that become a monarch much more than regalia made of gold and gems'. He had made up his mind to have solid stone work in the temple he was at that time building in Senkadagala for the Danta Dhatu. His stone masons had been ordered to quarry granite slabs for a large Makara Torana, to take the place of a torana that had been pulled down during the Dutch invasion. The stones had been quarried on a spot near Lewella, close to the capital. The road thence to the city was up a slope; and transporting the large stones was becoming difficult. The largest stone, a giant slab meant for the arch of

the *torana*, it was reported could, not be moved. It had been brought to Buwelikada hill. On the slope no amount of man power seemed to make any impression on the ponderous slab. Elephants were finding the task of hauling the ropes up the hill difficult. While they tugged at the ropes rajakariya labour gangs were set to push the slab from below. Often the ponderous granite slipped back on its rollers endangering the lives of men working below. Larger levies were set to work; but the stone was still there. Nayaker advisers — they always thought Sinhala chieftains obstructed good work Andra princes ordered — had suggested a royal visit to the scene of activity assuring it would bring about a change in the enthusiasm rajakariya levies displayed.

Labour levies at work on the day the king had decided to visit had been sent from Asgiri Korala by orders of the Dissawa of Matale. They were told the monarch was coming to see them at their work. They sweated away to make the stone reasonable — in vain. When the royal party arrived the stone was where it had been in the morning, two *peya* before. King Kirti Sri walked round the stone, and by his order a courtier explained to the workers what the stone was meant for. They would all, the men were told, be sharing in the merit the Maha Wasala would earn by the great deed. The king then moved away to watch. Mahouts proded their animals to pick up the hauling ropes. Every man that could find room put his hands or a lever to the stone. An old man mounted it and gave the 'vali' cry. The men cried back and the ponderous slab rocked on the log rollers. Then came frantic yells as the crowd tried to stop it from slipping down hill. After a little rest they swarmed round the granite giant once more. Once more the stone masons instructed the men. When the stone did move forward it also threatened to glide back.

The king looked at his courtiers, but none spoke. He was rebuilding the Dalada shrine an invader had left in ashes. Pilimatalawwa, an able architect,[5] was even then completing the inner sanctuary he had undertaken to build. The Makara Torana for which the stone was wanted was for a showy entrance in front of it. Lost between enthusiasm for the new temple and anxiety for the safety of so many lives, king Kirti Sri stood thinking, when a figure that walked out of the crowd caught his eye. It came straight towards the royal party. Half way the man halted, dried his face, and adjusted his turban[6] with great care. Then walking up he sank on his knees and folded his palms. Kirti Sri looked at the fine

parts of the lad; he did not seem to be past his teens. Strong arms, a well proportioned body and a fortunate face—the king admired his looks. The sweat still streamed down a bare breast. He began to speak; and a courtier stepped forward to order him back. But the king raised a hand, and the youth went on. The stone could be made to move up, he said. There was little order and every effort, therefore, failed. Should the noble Maha Wasala deign to let so insignificant an individual as he direct work for the day, he felt the stone could be moved forward even a little. There was enough men for the purpose.

'Impudence', whispered a courtier. The stone masons knew their work; and middle aged men commanded each korala levy. Courtiers expected the giddy lad to be ordered back to his party. The monarch, however, was pleased. He asked the adigar to grant what authority the young man sought. Lowly the youth saluted before he rose. The monarch followed his movements as he got back to the stone. Courtiers in the king's party expected pandemonium to result from any attempt of the youth to command the levies, or control the korala leaders. Many of these leaders were wondering what the silly lad was upto.

The day's levies had come from more than one district. Each korala levy was commanded by a middle-aged aristocrat of the party. Each band was jealous of the precedence of its korala, and would take orders from no one outside his korala. Nor would a dissawa think of placing an outsider at the head of a levy, however able such a commander might be. Would these men obey a raw youth just because he had the king's permission to order things. The bold lad, however, appeared to have no misgivings about his task. He walked to the crowd that appeared amused at the importance he was assumming. Leaping on the stone he turned round folding his palms in the eight directions, as if it were. He begged that everyone come to work that day should pardon the impudence of a boy in addressing them on work. He had submitted to the Maha Wasala that if they were permitted to get about the job as they pleased some progress could be made; and the noble Maha Wasala had granted that prayer. They would now make an attempt to move that stubborn stone slab in the way they thought correct, without any direction from the stone masons. Was it not a privilege he asked to be permitted to take a share in so noble a merit as the building of a shrine for the Dalada Wahansa. He continued,

"Let our hands and shoulders bleed and break — let not this piece of granite bring shame on the Sinhala name. Would our grandfathers and great-grand-fathers — would they have walked away from this spot saying a stone slab, however large, had beaten them. Shall we fail? Are we not their blood ? Relatives, should this bit of earth refuse to move when a Sinhala band, as we are, say it must ? Are we to go home today empty handed, or be able to tell the mothers that made these hands and feet strong that we have brought them *ping* ?"[7]

The older eyebrows had knit, and many a face reflected scorn, when the youth began to speak. The courtiers thought he had messed the job for that day. But the way he spoke his appeal piqued the men. Coming down the lad sought the leader of each party, knelt to him, and folded his palms as if to a parent. *Mama* or *Atta* he addressed the older ones, and told them the work was now free from interference from the stone masons and in their sole direction. The stone masons had perhaps pretended they alone knew how the stone should be handled. The news called forth merry remarks that made the *gal-waduwo* walk away from the stone. To young men of his own age he said 'Brothers, shall we take defeat from this *pasketay* ? Are we to return to our villages beaten?' The lad took his own time. But as he completed his round, the sour dour looks of the men seemed to disappear. Whence was he, the korala leaders wished to know. Those that had come from the lad's district told them what appeared to please. They were satisfied the presumptuous lad was of good family. 'A fortunate boy', they said. Each party was satisfied he had respected them in folding his palms to their leader. There was apparent an enthusiasm absent before. The younger ones became noisy. The words went round, 'Let us give the stone a Sinhala push'.

The monarch heard little of this talk, but wished the lad would make an effort. He had hoped his visit would help to get the slab forward a couple of fathoms at least. If it could be brought to the top of Buwelikada hill, the gradual slope from that point to the Paragaha Maluwa[8] would make work easy. As each leader began to arrange his men the king watched interested. The youth had not left the mahouts out: the king saw them making the knots on the ropes larger to give each animal a better hold. Eager hands now carried roller logs forward to be ready to receive the stone soon as it began to move. Lever timbers were examined and weak ones discarded. Men who had no room round the stone,

their leaders placed where they could rush to the assistance of such as may need help. Korala differences had been dropped; everyone gave ear to the older men that got busy. The noise increased; yet there was much more order, and an animated demeanour rare in rajakariya levies. The king's party, however, had lost sight of the lad. All the organising seemed to be in the hands of the korala leaders. Still expecting the youth to assume the authority he had been granted, they thought he would come on the stone to give the signal for work. When however the 'Vali'[9] cry came, it was from the gray beard who had been giving it during the morning. The youth was amongst the men of his korala, a lever in his hands.

"Ho — oi — ya", cried the gray beard.

"Ho—o—oi—ya", responded the crowd.

Then some one yelled 'Api — Sinhalayo'. More than a couple of hundred throats took up that cry. Voices grew hoarse as the stone stirred. It moved: and the men around it seemed to melt into a mass of struggling boisterous humanity. The mahouts urged their animals with word and prod — no rope slackened. Men rushed to the levers of those in difficulty. As the granite mass showed a willingness to move forward the cry 'Api-Sinhalayo' grew to a tremendous roar. It resounded like the battle cry of a victorious band in pursuit of a routed enemy. Those in front did not let the stone kiss the ground, those on the flanks and behind did not let it rest. Slow but sure it now moved while the cry 'Api-Sinhalayo' rent the air. King Kirti Sri Rajasingha's face fell. It seemed to tell him he was a foreigner there. The presence of royalty was forgotten; and the king left the spot in some haste.

That proud yell swelled through the valley for quite some time, punctuated with shouts of triumph the hills reverberated. Then it suddenly ceased. Had the stone defied the levies again ? A herald brought unexpected news. The stone was at the top of the Buwelikada hill. The men lay on the meadow exhausted; while a few youngsters were performing a mock *yaga* to the stone. Some time later the cry Sinhalayo was heard again.

Having achieved so much it would have been usual for the levies to rest till dismissed. But that day they appeared determined to finish the job. Their pride of race had been roused; and success made the men forget fatigue. As the stone neared palace limits the hallooing became less boisterous. For all that the note of racial pride was there, a note that reminded the monarch in his Palace

of Sinhala aristocrats that knelt humbly before the throne, yet treated royalty's kinsmen with scant respect, at times even with open contempt. Long before evening the ponderous stone was in the Paragaha Maluwa where stone carvers expected to take it over.

For king Kirti Sri Rajasingha, however, it was a day of troubled thought. Successive bands, each larger than its forerunner had failed to bring up the stone. The greatest progress on any day had not exceeded a fathom — often it had been less. It was reported the stone slipped on the slope. Yet no determined effort appeared to have been made to get over that difficulty; and no man had been injured in an attempt to stop its slipping. The levies that day were not doing any better in the morning. The cry 'Api Sinhalayo' had transformed the levies into a mass of frenzied activity. His presence was forgotten as they yelled those words to the deaf stone. They had not only pushed it up the most difficult part of its road, but also insisted in finishing the job. And the time it had taken them to achieve this end ! The way pride of race had made quarrelsome Sinhala clans forget traditionary differences angered royalty's kinsmen. Kirti Sri Rajasingha of the Andra dynasty felt kingship over the Sinhalese a greatness attended with danger. It is said, from that day his bearing towards chieftain and peasant was more kindly than ever before.

Whatever his thoughts the monarch had to remember the strange lad whose plan had achieved a task that had been considered impossible. Long before evening the levies were on the meadow below the palace ramparts waiting for leave to depart. Andra intelligence officers told the king how they stood as one crowd, not in separate district groups as would have been usual. Everyone appeared to treat the youth with respect, some young men expressing their wish to have him as captain for Asgiri Korala when war should come to the land next. The lad whom they praised, however, said that the day's success was due to thier common effort. He said, 'I undertook a task that was well nigh hopeless. I nearly incurred royal displeasure which might have cost me my life. You, my relatives, have saved me'.

Before the levies were dismissed the hero was summoned to audience. The adigar, as was the custom, asked what his village was and details about his family. He was from Meegastenna, of a family that had given the country an able chieftain once. How

had he come to be included in the rajakariya levies? He had heard of the gorgeous temple that the Maha Wasala was building for the Danta Dhatu, and was anxious to have a share of the great merit. So when the men set out he had joined them of his own accord. The king looked long at the lad. The Sannas-Mohottala stood stile and ola in hand to note what land grant might be ordered. What the king said surprised. There was no reward. The youth was to be attached to the *Appuhamy Maduwa*, an assemblage of youngmen from illustrious families serving as cadets for the king's service. *Nayakers* who had whispered that the lad seemed to be of a dangerous type felt glad he would be kept where his ways might be closely followed.

Rarely if ever was one outside the great families of the *Rata Hata*[10] admitted to the *Appuhamy Maduwa*. The young aristocrats treated the new entrant with reserve. But modest ways and amiable manners soon broke down jealousy and pride. A suspicion that the youth would receive marked royal favour was soon forgotten; for the king appeared to forget him.

Long months passed. One day the king commanded Meegastennay Appuhamy to find what kind of man it was that the soldiers on guard at the Koraha Wahalkada reported was behaving in extraordinary fashion there, refusing to go away when ordered. Aged and hunchbacked, this man had appeared as if from nowhere. He strutted up and down proudly, the hunch notwithstanding, and spat contemptuously in the direction of the white coloured wave-ramparts of the Palace, uttering disparaging remarks about the monarch. As an individual of great age the guard did not know how to handle the situation. Meegastennay politely inquired whether '*atta*' would like to be conducted to the presence of the 'Noble ruler of Sinhalay'. The ancient one turned on him, his hunch straightening even as he did so. For quite a few minutes he stared at the speaker, then spoke in a voice almost arrogant;

> "Young man, a kind deed in a past birth has brought you to this city. You fetched a pan of blazing fire to an arahant shivering of cold in a cave during rain. That act saved the arahant much discomfort. The merit brings you your reward in the present birth. You will rise to the highest position a courtier can. You....may....go."

Not a little dismayed Meegastennay hurried back to the king. He said that the intruder did not appear to be a mortal. He earnestly submitted that the royal order imprisoning the priests of Malwatta Monastery in their convocation hall that morning might

have some connection with the mysterious old man's appearance before the palace. Meegastennay's anxiety the king interpreted as the love of a dutiful servant. He had gone by appointment that morning to the monastery to settle a dispute: and rank treason unfolding before his eyes had provoked his order. A herald was sent with orders to release the priests and bring Welivita Saranakara thero to the palace. Requested by the monarch, the priest went to the old man still at the Koraha Wahalkada. The old one's manner changed. He bowed low to the pious thero. He bade him not be disheartened by the misguided order of the king, but to stick to his noble endeavour of re-establishing the Sasana. Then he walked a few paces down the street, and was seen no more. City folk said the gray beard was Sakra[11] himself come to right a great wrong. The monarch was bewildered, and tried to make amends to the priesthood. Humble Meegastennay was overjoyed to find the king command his services often after this event.

About this time King Kirti Sri had ordered his *mulacharyo* to plan a temple all of stone. A model of the intended structure had a pyramid shaped dome in the centre. Experienced courtiers shook their heads. The *mulacharyo* said it was the monarch's own idea, not theirs. A vault of that size all of granite was bound to present insurmountable difficulty in construction.

When an enterprise was dangerous or difficult the throne did not command an individual by its authority. The work was discussed at court and a call for volunteers fell in the form of a challenge, 'Let him who has the courage to shoulder the responsibility come forward'. Love of royal favour made so many stand out that selecting an individual became difficult. On the day King Kirti Sri wanted an architect for his new edifice the art of temple building appeared to have lost its appeal. Those that came before the throne were not many; and the few did not include any of the experienced chieftains. The audience looked at the model placed before the throne and then at the volunteers. 'The stone rolling expert of Asgiri Korala is there', a whisper went round. The courtiers were amused though no look betrayed their sentiments. They knew that these volunteers had expected clever men to be amongst them, one of whom the king would naturally select. The king looked disappointed. After much thought he communicated his decision to the adigar who said,

"The Maha Wasala entrusts the great undertaking to Meegastennay Appuhamy, whose loyalty and fervour in the cause of religion has been commendable. His ability to make granite

blocks obedient will help in the present undertaking. Success will bring him royal favour in increasing measure."

There were aristocrats who felt humiliated that an insignificant new man had risen above them. But no one felt sorry he had not undertaken the responsibility himself.

King Kirti Sri Rajasingha had rebuilt a two storied fane for the Dalada Mandapa and in adorning it lavished all the precious things that could have gone into the work. The temple looked like a Divya Vimana. He wanted another shrine for the Tooth Relic—to house it when war threatened, and the capital became unsafe. To understand this anxiety of Sinhalay monarchs for the safety of the Dalada and the great honour they showed it one has to look into its history.

Lanka was rarely one kingdom. In the fourteenth century A.D. there were three seats of power, Jaffna in the north, Kanda Uda Pasrata in the mountain zone, and Kotte on the western seaboard. Kotte fought to reduce her neighbours to vassalage. In the wars the Danta Dhatu became a prize of conquest. Victorious Kotte had it enshrined in her capital. To Kotte came the Portuguese with their fire-arms. Its princes partitioned the territory; and in the resulting quarrels, one of them sought Portuguese aid for his heir. That heir, Dharmapala, embraced the faith of his powerful ally. His nobles followed his example.

Disappointment and anxiety fell to the lot of the priesthood of Kotte. Hiripitiye, the Diyawadana Nilamay of its Dalada Temple, dreamt a dream. A deva appeared and spoke a few strange words. The words were construed to mean that he should leave Kotte with the Tooth Relic. He and a priest called Galauda thera, stole the Dalada from its caskets and brought it away to Sitawaka, where, however, they were not happy for long. The heir to the throne of Sitawaka murdered his father. The priests said his crime could not be expiated; and he began to persecute them and do all he could to destroy Buddhism. Hiripitiye fled again. The apostate king of Sitawaka had conquered the mountain realm. Hiripitiye had to travers the eastern slopes of Lanka's mountain country and take refuge in the forests where the Veddhas dwelt. Here he spent anxious years with a handful of pious priests that gathered round his holy treasure.

Leading men of the Sinhala race now met to consider how they could restore the national religion to its proper place. From Denuwara, Dumabara, Gampola, Harispattuwa and Tumpanay, from Hewaheta, Walapanay, Kotmalay and the Dissawas of Uva,

Matale, Satara Korala and Sat Korala, from Wanniya and Anuradhapura—from these districts they gathered to a meeting in the devastated capital of Ganga Siri Pura.[12] They declared King Rajasingha a demon not fit to sit on the throne. They chose as their ruler Sundara Bandara, a man of Bandara Waliya.[13] But fate was not on their side. The king of Sitawaka had Sundara Bandara treacherously done to death. Then he set out with his powerful army to search for the dead chieftain's son. The priests of Hanguranketa had the lad sent to the Portuguese in Kotte. For this act Rajasingha slaughtered a hundred and twenty monks, fifteen pairs at each of the four gates of Hanguranketa. And he placed Saivite Brahamin governors over the mountain land, who adopted every diabolical method they could invent to stamp out Buddhism. Religion was at its lowest ebb when years later, the lad whom the priests of Hanguranketa sent away to safety returned to his native mountains. Konnapu Bandara during the years had wondered far, and become a brave fighter. He challenged Rajasingha undaunted by the latter's threat to 'Send him where his father had gone'. I will fight till you pay for that murder,[14]K onnappu Bandara replied. Rajasingha at the head of an army thousands strong was routed at the pass of Balana, and the happy victors made Konnappu king as Wimala Dharma; for they wished he should protect the Dharma of the Tatagatha as ancient rulers had done.

To Hiripitiye Nilamay in his forest exile news of Wimala Dharma's victory was a response from the great devas to whom he had been praying. He brought the Dalada to the vicinity of Wimala Dharma's capital. The king hastened to meet the noble custodian of the treasure, and brought it to Senkadagala with all the pomp and circumstance the Tooth Relic received from pious monarchs. Wimala Dharma had it enshrined in the monarch's citadel. From that day, in the Kingdom of Sinhalay that Wimala Dharma's indefatigable efforts built, it became the custom to house the Dalada in the ruler's palace. A monarch's first duty in peace was its honour, and in war its safety. His subjects considered themselves guardians of the Dalada, and champions of the Sasana. Threats of the Portuguese to destroy the Relic they thus honoured added fuel to this zeal. When war did come it was not to fight for the king that they took up arms, but to protect the Danta Dhatu and the Sasana.

Never ending wars left little time for the practice of religion. Rajasingha's persecution had destroyed the priesthood. The temples were occupied by a yellow clothed community that enjoyed

the produce of temple lands and kept the shrine rooms clean. When wars came they were not averse to lay aside the yellow clothes and gird on the sword lest religion meet with the same fate it had once before. In the kind of life the peasant inhabitants led, agriculture punctuated with war, deified heroes to whom they prayed for aid, and demons of sickness and death that had to be appeased with sacrifices became the real religion of the people. Over all of them they placed beneficent devas like Dedimunda, a protector himself of the Buddha's Sasana, Kataragama, the god of war, Vishnu the Protector, and Natha, the buddha to be.

Invading armies marched up from the west. At the distant approach of the invader a chain of bonfires carried the warning to Senkadagala.[15] Preparations were immediately set afoot to evacuate the Dalada. If the enemy could not be beaten before he won the passes, the Relic was carried away. News of its removal to the hinterland was received with tears and indignation. Custom ordained that every household should send an able bodied man to join the district flag. News of the Relic's retreat, however, brought many more round the battle flags of the Dissawas. But one man in each family stayed behind to look to the safety of the women and little ones. Mothers blessed their sons, and young wives knelt to their lords as they set out to fight for the safety of the Danta Dhatu and the Sasana; for 'What use was there of life itself if the Dalada fell into the hands of the enemy?'

And when the invader was defeated celebrations took the form of a trumphal return of the Dalada to Senkadagala. Brilliant courts and gorgeous pereheras were the rule in the Kandyan capital. Yet the most gorgeous spectacle in medieval Sinhalay was a Dalada *pooja* following a victory. In a magnificent perehera they brought the Relic and behind it the *Ran-awuda*[16] of the devas from their retreat. From the adigars down to petty korala officers, every one in his festive clothes marched in the procession. The flag[17] of each district had its place of honour, each escorted by companies representing its fighting forces. Richly caparisoned tuskers bore the temple treasures. Great priests walked in front of the tusker that bore the Relic, and behind it accoutred in regal dress, astride a white charger[18] came the monarch. Queens and great ladies of the land, their gold gems glittering in the sun, walked immediately behind the king. All the best minstrels drummers and dancers were there, not in obedience to a command but claiming a right to share in the merit by virtue of blood shed in the

defence of the Sasana. Gay throngs folded their palms as the Dalada passed; and cries of *saadu* filled the vales.

Round the shrine built for the Relic rose pandals as beautiful as the decorators art could make them. Within *relipalan*, large elephant tusks and *viyan* of gold cloth made the place a bit of heaven. Noblemen and their dames crowded the place. Everyone carried flowers or other choice offerings for the *pooja*. The wealthy dedicated to the Dalada fields; and their dames placed before it jewels from their hair and necks. Royalty gave extensive lands, and at times carried away by enthusiasm, declared the whole kingdom dedicated. For the happiness of those that had fallen in battle and for the hereafter of those that made offerings, there was no greater *pinkama* than to share in the Dalada *pooja* on the day of the Relic's return. But midst the triumph and happiness the monarch placed the relic casket on its silver altar with a tear in his eye: and his warrior chieftains looked sour and angry.[19]

Sinhala culture ordained the best and the most beautiful for ceremonial connected with the Danta Dhatu. Kings when they had to uncover the gem encrusted caskets in which it reposed came — had to come — in their regalia. To this day the Maha Nayaka Theros of Malwatta and Asgiriya cover their fingers with perfumed silk when they have to touch it. Chieftains, when custom requires their attendance round it, have to come arrayed in their ceremonial dress. The costliest jewels of princess and lady were not too good when they went to kneel before the Dalada. Peasant and country woman kept to the custom in their own way: and so one and all taught their children to do. For the ancients had said 'Wherefore rich raiment and jewels if not worn to render homage to the Danta Dhatu'. Yet the *gaman-maligawa* to which they brought the Relic back, was a hastily built structure of rough timber and thatch. Here they had to keep the holy treasure till there was time to carve pillar and pekada to raise once again a becoming abode for it on the ashes of its former shrine. King and nobles felt humiliated to have to house the greatest treasure of their land, the object of all their veneration, in nothing better than a temporary thatch.

'This shall not be' said King Kirti Sri one day. 'Wars will come to Sinhalay as often as has been the case. The Danta Dhatu should have a suitable abode till the Dalada Mandapa can be raised again after the ravages of an invasion. My *mulacharyo* shall build me a shrine that fire cannot destroy nor enemy easily demolish. Build it on a site removed from Senkadagala Nuwara where an enemy will have no reason to penetrate'.

The commission that Meegastennay Appuhamy had received was the construction of such an edifice. The mulacharyo turning out the model had found it difficult to please the king. He would have neither pillar nor pekada, architrave nor ceiling executed of timber. Wooden windows and door frames he ruled out. A solitary door to the shrine room was the only wood-work in the plan. When the model was completed it impressed. The building was simple in conception. A square of massive oriental arches enclosing a spacious courtyard, at the centre of which rose a sanctuary its roof built of vaulted stone. For all its simplicity those experienced in building work knew the construction will present formidable problems. Meegastennay enthusiastic over the first great task entrusted to him, followed every syllable that fell from the throne.

The temple was to be built in Kundasala, an old capital a few miles distant from Senkadagala, in a district whither foreign invaders rarely ventured. The square of arches was to be carried out in ponderous blocks that would make any attempt to dismantle the structure dangerous to those engaged in such work. Walls of the central room were to be of stone strong enough to carry a vault of stone slabs as large as the construction would permit. For a ceiling and frescoes of the inner walls the granite would receive a carefully finished plaster.

The king spoke enthusiastically of the plan. Courtiers jealous of Meegastennay's commission now felt glad they were out of it. Let him pray to great Sakra from tonight to mollify the king's heart when he finds the masonry crash in a heap of inextricable stone slabs just before the roof is complete — thus courtiers spoke amongst themselves convinced the plan would be a failure; and bring Meegastennay royal displeasure. But the young *appuhamy's* ardour did not appear to be damped. He bowed undaunted — like an architect overjoyed at a task after his own heart. And when court was over he was seen walking away happy.

Meegastennay moved to a temporary cottage on the site. Every time heralds were sent for information they brought reports which satisfied the king. The architect appeared to spare neither himself nor the *gal-waduwo* he commanded. The *mulacharyo* ordered to help him had little rest. Officials of the treasury under commands to send him supplies asked whether the young man had gone mad. The king visited him at intervals. The progress pleased and filled courtiers in the king's train with envy. Many were they that said 'The Asgiri Koralay stone rolling lad's future

was bright'. But the more knowing ones replied 'Wait till he gets half way through the stone vault'.

At length the square of arches was complete — as massive as the monarch had desired. Work on the central shrine room was in progress. The king went to inspect when told the construction of the vault had started. He examined the stone slabs that lay about; and asked how the builder proposed to raise them to position. Meegastennay had expected the query, and was ready with his answer. Submitting his plan he went on to describe what he expected to have carved on the outer facing of the first row of stones. His royal master made no secret of his satisfaction. Turning to a young nobleman in his train he asked,

"That would make the vault beautiful when viewed from this side, would it not ?"

"*Deiyo buduwanta*, the stone roof will look beautiful, but....."

The speaker, Arrawwawala Appuhamy, hesitated as if he had said more than he had wished to. The king looked at him, and he had to explain. The young man now spoke in obvious confusion,

"But I should like to place the flowers I offer from here — with the aid of a long pole."

"Why ?" The king demanded puzzled. He knew the youth was not one who spoke to hear himself.

"Dread lord," came a hesitant reply "fear of being crushed under large blocks of stone is hardly the state of mind for a worshipper placing flowers at the feet of the Buddha."

Those few silly words, uttered without thought by a youth for whose family the king had the greatest esteem — they were disastrous in the effect they produced on the king's mind. No one guessed how the words made Kirti Sri thoughtful, or that he attached any importance to them. He walked over the grounds as usual, and left the spot after a few words of encouragement to the architect. Three days later Meegastennay was recalled; none knew why. The adigar was asked to order the men working at the Kundasala site be disbanded. So ended what might have come down as Meegastennay's greatest achievement — had it not been for Arrawwawala's childish words.

The monarch however was kind to the discomfited architect. Indeed, he appeared to share his balked feelings; but said nothing about the undertaking. Meegastennay now found himself in continual attendance on the king. He was charged with missions not usually entrusted to men of his rung in the service. At times the king deigned to speak to him in the midst of discussions where

adigars and dissawas alone had a right to express opinions. One day they were considering the effects of very poor harvests in the country that season. The king asked Pilimatalawway Dissawa,

"How for instance, has the failure of crops affected the dissawa's poor relatives ?"

"*Deiyo buduwanta*", Pilimatalawwa replied, "your *balugetta* has no relatives that may correctly be described as poor."

The words though courtly betrayed deep resentment. Kirti Sri smiled tolerantly. Meegastennay happened to be in attendance awaiting the king's pleasure. Turning to him the monarch asked,

"Has Meegastennay Appuhamy any poor relatives ?"

"Lord that will be a buddha, of men that earn their living by pingo service alone there are about eighty individuals amongst my relatives. Ours is a poor family."

"I have many poor relatives myself," the king said reflectively.

Discussion about the unexpected failure of the harvests continued, the king forgetting the proud words of his dissawa. Meegastennay's simple ways were winning a warm corner in the king's heart. The *appuhamy* found promotion coming to him in rapid succession. He had neither family nor influence to back him. He served his royal benefactor with singular loyalty. With prosperity came a marriage to one of the highest families in the land. By the time Kirti Sri Rajasingha's brother was elected to the throne the stone rolling lad from Asgiri korala had blossomed to an aristocrat at the court of Senkadagala.

King Rajadhi Rajasingha took up the Sword of State[20] under strange circumstances. The nation disliked having foreign princes on the throne; but king Kirti Sri Rajasingha's great zeal in the re-establishment of the Sasana and his spectacular Dalada *pooja* had won him the hearts of the Sinhalese. Rajadhi, whom his predecessor had raised to the position of Yuwaraja, had been suddenly summoned from his residence at Uduwala to the bedside of the king. Before he reached the palace he was told the king was dead. He was elected ruler, a greatness he did not appear to have cared for, and went through the funeral ceremonies of his brother like one in a dream. When he guessed that the story of his brother having met with fatal injuries as the result of a fall from his horse — he was an excellent horseman — was not the whole truth, he began to ask himself whom out of his powerful servants he might trust. He realised it was dangerous to displease the powerful and crafty Pilimatalawwa. To appease him he granted every thing the aristocrat prayed for. As if to balance

that power he promoted the man of whom his brother had always spoken well about. He found in Meegastennay an honest counsellor and an able administrator. As a commander of the Atapattuwa responsible for the safety of the king's person, Meegastennay won Rajadhi's love. He promoted him to be Dissawa of Sat Korala, a place given to men who were brave enough to meet a sudden threat of war. Soon his work as a diplomat in the embassies to Colombo won admiration. Towards the end of Rajadhi's reign Meegastennay was one of the great men of Sinhalay.

Sri Wickrama during the early years of his ill-fated reign, left all state work in the hands of his benefactor, Pilimatalawwa. He expected ministers liked by Rajadhi would side with the dowager queen's brother, and looked on men like Meegastennay and Lewke with suspicion. As he gained experience he realised they had been trusted because they were trustworthy. As he began to dislike Pilimatalawwa Adigar he consulted Meegastennay in most matters. He began to address him as *mama* and confided to him even secret desires of the flesh.[21] The time came when Sri Wickrama could think of none else so trustworthy amongst the more experienced courtiers, and raised him to the position of Maha Adigar.

Pilimatalawwa had fallen and Meegastennay now filled the highest position in the government. The faction that had followed Pilimatalawwa found it politic to hail the new adigar as their chief. They had not the least doubt that Sri Wickrama, who had dropped his benefactor was not likely to place his trust in another for long. Other favourites of the king might work their way up. At the moment Arawwawala Maha Nilamay had the king's ear. They remembered how once with a few words Arawwawala had nearly ruined Meegastennay's career. He could do so again. Arawwawala was rarely available for conversation; and no one could guess what was in his mind. His share in the king's *haena* and the part they imagined he played in the kurahang lunch at court did not augur well for their influence. Many wished they had like Rammalaka, refused to touch that meal. Bitterness and jealousy made Arawwawala the most hated man. Meegastennay counselled patience, but counselled in vain.

Pusellay Nilamay, an etulkattalay courtier, had taught Sri Wickrama the use of intoxicants, first as a remedy for sleeplessness then as a means to drown worry — there was treason at home and a persistent threat of war from outside. Pusellay's duties in the palace kept him close to the king's person. He loved his

royal master and erred only to make the latter happy. Some say he brewed the liquor himself, others that he found little difficulty in obtaining spirits from the British in Colombo[22]. Not averse to drink himself, Pusellay did nothing to discourage his master from taking more than was good. Ministers at times found Sri Wickrama not able to think clearly.

The religion of Sinhalay forbade the use of intoxicants. Strong spirits were unknown. Addiction to drink Kandyans regarded as a vice that brought man down to the lowest levels of depravity. The devas they honoured partook of no Soma juice; for they were beings that expected to attain buddhahood some day. Pusellay was blamed for the king's violation of the fifth precept; yet no one dared to speak to the prince himself for fear of displeasure. The evil habit took a firm hold on the king. Minister and chieftain looked upon the king with contempt. They spoke of him as '*wal-raja*'. There were few who did not feel Sri Wickrama unfit to sit on the throne. To make him weak and to gain their personal ends as well, they acted dangerously, making use of his drunken state to remove from power the few props of his unsteady throne.

One man who made work for the powerful faction difficult was an uncle of the monarch. His advice made the king overlook the counsel of his ministers, often to such a degree, that the latter felt humiliated. The Andra prince had chosen picturesque Uduwela, a village on the Hantana range, for his residence. The place was not far removed from the capital, yet the uncle did not care to be a constant visitor at court. He came down only when pressing matters made his presence essential. Perhaps it was delay in responding to summons to attend court one day, perhaps it was a failure for such a message to have reached him, something of the nature made Sri Wickrama disapprove of his relative's ways. The king happened to be tipsy at the moment. Courtiers seized the opportunity. It was submitted that an uncle would always take liberties with a nephew even though the nephew was ruler. The king then heard an aside obviously spoken to justify his dissatisfaction with the uncle's behaviour. He had managed to catch the words. They were to the effect that the elder prince thought he could rule the kingdom better. A drunkard's imagination was allowed to do the rest. Sri Wickrama insisted on an inquiry then and there. Since the accused had already disregarded summons to come to court, no time was to be wasted sending another order. The man who was responsible for the aside was commanded

to divulge what he had heard. Very humbly he obeyed.

"What should be the sentence for such flagrant treason", the king demanded.

When the traitor was of high rank, it was submitted, it was customary to throw him down from the top of Alagalla rock. Someone dutifully said that the cliff close to which the accused prince had built his home was also a precipitous one, a fact the king well knew.

"This man is guilty of treason against the throne ! Throw him down the Uduwela cliff", the king cried.

Courtiers looked awed as Sri Wickrama gazed threateningly round. Everyone was, however, delighted. No time was lost in the execution of the order. The king's executioners and the officers under whose immediate supervision they worked were immediately despatched to Uduwela; and before the king had time to be thinking clearly again, his uncle's mangled body lay at the foot of the Uduwela cliff not far removed from where he had lived. In his sober hours Sri Wickrama did not clearly remember what orders he had made whilst drunk. This circumstance encouraged the influential faction at court in their pastime of using the powers of the throne to remove opponents from their path.

In Senkadagala a prince was a deva from the moment he picked up the Sword of State, that was made at an auspicious time suitable to his horoscope, and lay at the feet of Natha, the Maithree Bodhisatva, to whom for days the Kapurala prayed the king should be inspired to rule the land justly and use the sword with righteousness. Everyone addressed him as deveyanwahansa. Great chieftains, men of wealth and power fell on their knees in obeisance and called him a bodhisatva. This was the Sinhala way of keeping the ruler mindful that the powers of life and death kingship placed in his hands were not to be used lightly. A deva had none of the dross of mundane passions, and a bodhisatva was all benevolence and compassion. Such a being could not be harsh or cruel from any motives of self. Sri Wickrama did not appear to have the capacity to understand this sanctity attached to kingship. An untutored mind looked upon the veneration paid to the throne as awe of a king's power of life and death. He imagined himself a deva in fact, a being responsible to none for his actions. And when conscience pricked him for a foolish act he did all he could to pretend he had no regrets. In his inmost heart he dreaded the ridicule of his proud nobles; and was at pains to show he was infallible.

Weeks after the execution of his uncle did he realise his mistake. The folly of drink had robbed his throne of its surest prop, the only individual amongst his Andra kinsmen who could match his wits with those of his crafty courtiers. His chagrin when he realised how completely he had been fooled was bitter. But he took great care to keep it to himself. Everyone however felt he was on the look out to make some one pay for his uncle's death. To drown sorrow he followed Pusellay's advice.

It was some time after this incident that Meegastennay's faction was forced to speculate about their future. Everyone was indignant about the kurahang lunch. The party in power had also to think of the day Arawwawala might make up his mind to seize power and beg the monarch make him Maha Adigar. Meegastennay was certain Arawwawala did not care for power. But his supporters expected the latter to change when he felt the office was within his grasp. These men now resolved to start the peace loving Arawwawala along the road the king's uncle had gone. They waited for a day the king would be tipsy enough to react satisfactorily.

The opportunity was not long in coming. The king had clearly been taking much intoxicating liquor. He sat dazed whilst the Adigar transacted state business. There was not one query from the throne. At the end of work the customary question fell from the adigar, whether anyone had submissions to make. A courtier whose identity was never divulged in later days said that Arawwawala Maha Nilamay's continued absence from court was scant respect to the throne. Another said he had set his heart on making his *bana maduwa* the most beautiful ever in Sinhalay. That seemed to touch the king's vanity. A third asked in an aside whether it was not near treason to say ones work was better than what the noble Maha Wasala had constructed. 'He does not say that', came another voice, but his nephew, Dangamuwa, makes no secret of their ambition to beat the best the Maha Wasala has done in temple building'. 'Do they say they can build more beautiful than I?' the king asked. None answered. A timid voice asked why no one told the Maha Wasala that Arawwawala often had messegers coming to his walawwa from Colombo. The thing was done. To Sri Wickrama every man that entered his kingdom from the western coast was either a spy or an evil emissary from the rulers of Colombo. The king began to talk. He asked question after question. The answers given were cleverly worded to make the king ask more. The casual questioning

developed into an ex-parte trial; and the sentence fell in a thoroughly angered tone—capital punishment for both. Whether the judge was clear whom he meant by both, the complainants only knew. Meegastennay adigar was to all intents a spectator. He made no attempt either to have a formal trial or to give the accused time to appeal for mercy. The executioners were hastened to carry out the sentence outside the gravets of the city. They met uncle and nephew on their way to supervise work at the bana-maduwa. They were given the king's order at the ferry of Gannoruwa; and their blood stained the sands of the river.

Meegastennay was careful next morning. So was every courtier; for Sri Wickrama did things that no one could forsee. But the king did not seem to be aware of what had happened. Court went on as usual. Indeed it was some days before he missed his friend. He asked an official of the palace. In reply the man said Arawwawala nilamay had not been seen at his bana-maduwa for some days. The king then asked an Andra spy, in secret. He was observed to become moody. His way of staring at them inspired a feeling he had not done before amongst etulkattalay men—he was customarily graciousness itself to them. They blamed the jester—was it not his duty to draw his prince out when in a depressed mood? Where was the use of a jester in the palace if he could not bring a smile on a despondent king's face. They asked whether he kept his wits to gabble when his lies were not wanted. Bammannay Rala had his explanation. 'There must be an educated mind to frame pleasantries, at the same time fortunate ears to appreciate them. The one without the other was like fiddling to a deaf elephant'.

Courtiers thought the king's eyes looked like those of a hungry leopard watching to pounce on a prey. The guilty trembled for their safety. In the evenings poets in the Kavikara Maduwa wondered why a king that loved panegyrics kept away. Men of the Ilangam waited in their performing garbs late into the night but the king did not want them. Pusellay nilamay kept ready his remedy for sleeplessness. The king did not want him either. One day he asked about lands then owned by the Lankatilaka vihara. Meegastennay wondered how he had come to know that Arawwawala's lady had dedicated her husband's paddy lands to the temple before she left for her own village. Meegastennay gave the particulars without saying a word about Arawwawala or his kumarihamy. A couple of days later the king said he wished to go through the district of Harispattuwa. The adigar thought the king's murky mood was leaving him.

Had he not got over the sorrow of his uncle's death. Orders were given for everything to be in readiness for the king's journey next morning.

It was a bright day. The morning sun shone down on the royal cavalcade. Drummers in the van proceeded by *kasakara* whips singing their customary song [23] of punishment with the whip to those guilty of mean thefts. Then marched the king's flags and a band of muskets under the Wadana-thuwakku Lekam. Sudaliye swordsmen going through their *pela-pali* followed and immediately before the *koonama* came a posse of Malay mercenaries. On either flank of the gold spired palanquin walked men carrying *chamra*, *aw-athu*, *sesath* and *wadana-athu*. Behind the *koonama* marched turbaned Wadiga soldiers. The Atapattuway guard that in former times had had the honour of guarding royalty, brought up the rear followed by the king's tusker—in case the monarch should want it. State officials the king might wish to question during his progress, walked close to the palanquin.

Even as they started the king noticed there were more than the accustomed number of *aw-athu*. It was a warm season, yet he wished to be consulted when innovations became necessary. He said there was no need for them; and the sunshade bearers were ordered a few paces back. As the cavalcade proceeded along Nagaha Weediya the men bearing *aw-athu* quickened their pace till they came to their customary position alongside the royal conveyance. The sun was still low in the east. It was strange there were less sunshades to intercept its rays on that side than on his western flank. Here the *aw-athu* men carried their sunshades so that the discs overlapped each other forming a screen that cut off the view on that side. Suddenly something crashed on a sunshade disc with such force that a piece flew off. One of the bearers who caught sight of the object that crashed, the king's golden *holwela*, stood as if paralysed.

"Away with thy *aw-attha*," the king roared.

The palanquin bearers stopped with a jolt. Meegastennay ordered the now frightened sunshade men to the rear, cursing them in his heart for overdoing instructions. The palanquin moved again. In a few minutes the golden cane shot out of the conveyance and the king spoke.

"What is yonder building that has been white-washed?"

Sumptuary laws forbade the use of certain building materials according to the rank of those for whom the house was meant. Kitul rafters, for instance, could not be used in the construction

of any building save palace or temple, and lime as a whitewash was reserved for the better classes only. The rest had to be content with kaolin to whiten walls. Did the king wish to inspect the building on that head? The adigar replied that it was a preaching hall used by the priests of Asgiriya Monastery. The place was being renovated, and as work appeared to be still in progress a royal visit might be fixed for a future date. The king did not look at the speaker. Pointing his cane he said peremptorily;

"That way."

When the king expressed a wish it was the adigar that gave the necessary order. Palanquin men shaken by the earlier incident trembled when the order came from the monarch himself. They swung their load to Kanday Weediya, breaking away from the cavalcade. The minister ordered the procession to halt where it stood, and hastened after the king. Before he could come up with the *koonama* its occupant had alighted and was mounting the steps of the building. His hurried step told those that saw something unusual was happening. A couple of officials followed after the adigar.

The doors of the building were ajar; yet there was no life within. White washing of the outer walls had still to be completed. It was a spacious chamber well suited for a preaching hall. *Sittara* craftsmen had been at work on the interior walls and the ceiling. Their trestles and scaffoldings were evident, even mats the men had rested on. Two elegant *bana-asana* attracted attention. The work had been executed with care. The paint was still fresh on them. Many of the frescoes were excellent work, as if the *sittaru* had striven to please one they loved. Many more were in different stages of execution, a few still unsketched. For all the beauty they gave, there was a strange air of abandonment in the place. Vessels of oil-ground paint lay about, paint caking in the artists' cups. Brushes littered the floor round the trestles, their uncleaned bristles stiff. It looked as if some sudden catastrophe like the approach of a demon had scared the workers away. A few bats that hung from ceiling laths were the only inmates. The king was looking up at a finished fresco. Without taking his eyes away he spoke;

"Whose *pinkama* is this hall?"

From the way the palanquin men were ordered to turn to Kanday Weediya the adigar had guessed what was in the king's mind. Arawwawala's preaching hall now extensively rebuilt, had been there before; and the king had passed the building many a

time. Once when a number of powerful men provoked by Sri Wickrama's cruel punishments had intended to rise against the king he had restrained them. He had hoped that with experience Sri Wickrama would turn out to be a good ruler. But Sri Wickrama would not shed his wild ways. His stubborn disposition made the work of a minister barren of results. Drink made him unfit at court. The adigar regretted Arawwawala's death. Had the king not been altogether inebriate on the occasion the complaint against the dead man would never have been placed before him. Calm and collected he braced himself to face the storm. He answered,

"This *bana-maduwa* has been built for the priests of Asgiriya by Arawwawala Maha Nilamay."

"Command him to appear", the king said without taking his eyes off the frescoes.

The quiver in the king's voice did not escape the minister. Feigning surprise the latter submitted,

"My Lord, Arawwawala Maha Nilamay, in pursuance of an order of the noble Maha Wasala, was beheaded."

Sri Wickrama turned on his minister as turns a tusker in must on the mahout he erstwhile obeyed.

"And in pursuance of another order of the Maha Wasala was my uncle thrown down the Uduwela cliff?"

The king glared, his eyes red with rage. The *holwela* in his hand shook. The two officials—they had halted at the door—could hear his words, he spoke so loud. They feared for the adigar's life. Meegastennay stood serene, his accustomed dignity undisturbed. He looked a little amazed, yet too respectful to say so. He appeared to be waiting to submit the facts the moment they were demanded.

Sri Wickrama thought he had brought his quarry to bay. Its unassailable composure seemed to madden the royal beast. In a voice of thunder he stormed.

"Does the Maha Nilamay imagine the scimitar that hewed down Arawwawala has lost the keenness of its edge?"

With his reverence to the throne and a constant desire to assist his foolish prince in the work of good government, Meegastennay still refused to be treated like a slave. An untutored rowdy, not a ruler of men, the minister said to himself. His thoughts went back to the two godly princes he had served before. He looked Sri Wickrama in the face, his eyes narrowed with contempt. His voice as courtly and level as ever, he said;

"Deiyo buduwanta, no; nor has Madurapura gone up in flames."

Dumbfounded at those few words the king stared, his eyes opening wider than before. They gazed at each other. Silence reigned in the hall for quite a few minutes. Haughty Sri Wickrama had not dreamed the man lived who could dare defy him so completely. He had put down treason with a firm hand, sent to execution a hundred *radala* men once for daring to maintain that custom limited the authority of the throne to order rakajariya labour. Chieftains marched to execution, unbending and proud, yet silent. Sanctity of kingship, Sri Wickrama thought, robbed them of speech. Here was a minister, a man who never uttered an unbecoming word, casting rank treason in his face, telling him he might make room for another ruler.

Arawwawala was forgotten, at any rate, for the moment. If his face had reflected anger, it looked demoniac now. In his mind raged fierce thoughts; extreme passion robbed him of speech. He shook like a leaf in the wind. Without a thought about decorum he rushed down the steps, into his palanquin and ıoared,

"Go back."

Palanquin men shouldered their burden, but stood where they were undecided; for the procession was forming again for the journey out. They had never seen a monarch in such rage, and feared for themselves. His minister imperturbable and collected, came down the steps with a dignity that never seemed to desert him. He surveyed the cavalcade from where he stood, then stepping to the *koonama* prayed that the Maha Wasala signify its wish whether the journey to Sarasiyapattuwa be resumed.

"Back to the palace", royal thunder rolled within the palanquin. To the palace it was not more than half a mile. But the procession had to be rearranged. Meegastennay sent the officers awaiting his orders, about the business. The different sections of the cavalcade were ordered to their new positions. It seemed to take much time. When the officials reported, the adigar bade the palanquin men to move into their place. Then leisurely he commanded the cavalcade to start. Drums throbbed, whips cracked and Sudaliyay soldiers crossed swords without drawing blood—all in order—as if nothing unusual had happened. Meanwhile within his ivory and gold adorned conveyance the king frothed and fumed. Alarmed palanquin bearers stepped with care, lest a little jolt draw the monarch's anger on their heads. By the time they turned up

Swarna Kalyana Weediya those at the palace had received information that the king was returning in a towering rage.

There was an individual in the Etulkattalay everyone deliberately cold shouldered when the king was not in the palace. This was the king's jester. In Kandy the jester did not, like his counterpart in European courts, wear clownish dress. He wore tuppotti, jacket, and round hat. He was the most pampered of royalty's minions; and was called names for the privileges he enjoyed. That day the Maha Mudiyansay was in a panic: the jester was missing. Forgetting his place he joined in the search for the man and complimented the subordinate who had discovered him in a room where lay the breakfast Sri Wickrama had hardly touched that morning. The jester had resented being disturbed—the official had had to drag him bodily out. The Maha Mudiyansay said everything he could to please the man, told him it was only he that could save their lives that day. Bammannay Rala looked round at the rest important. Someone said,

"That fellow's jests please only one individual besides himself—his wife. Why waste precious time on an ass?"

"They do please such as have brains to understand. But my inner man must be satisfied first, then will wisdom flood out."

The Maha silenced the detractor, promised the jester all the nicest of things and said;

"Only do this for me my *appachchi*. Make the king smile, be it ever so faintly, as he enters the palace."

And Bammannay Rala stepped to the entrance like a hero marching to assured conquest.

The monarch's mind was a medley of cruel pictures. The barrel lined with spikes, a man inside bleeding as it rolled him to death. An impaled wretch dying slow on a kitul stake. The murderous tusker pulling a victim thrown to him, limb from limb. Alagalla's peak, a traitor hurtling down its height. The victims in his pictures were all from amongst his courtiers. Eight nervous bearers softly placed the palanquin down. What the king saw as he alighted was not by any means calculated to mend his temper.

On a terrace leading to the entrance of the palace an officer of the etulkattalay was doing a gay strut. He appeared to be completely oblivious of place and time. Those by the *koonama* felt relieved to see the king attracted away from them. The strange figure wore his round hat at an offending angle[24]. With his left hand he held his tuppotti tucked up—so far up that a whole leg from ankle to hip was bare. With the other hand he

gesticulated pompous and defiant. He stepped from north to south and gazed haughtily up at the Vishnu fane; then strutted back and looked in the direction of the city as who should say, 'Give me the man that dares to question my authority'. As the king mounted the steps he could hear him speak.

> "The king is in a temper! The king is raging angry! So! What? Let him rage! Execute! Kill! Not lengthen suffering life to linger in Sangsaro, at any rate! Kill? Hah! Not when he wants, anyway! But when *my* time's up. Then that will be that! Any d. . .d mother's son—that is all the harm he can do. And then? Can he also[25]. . . . . ?"

In the midst of this loud soliloquy, the jester—it was none else—leapt back with an exclamation having all but knocked against the king. Even as he did so his hands shot up to fold high above his head; and he fell prostrate, across the king's path. His round hat rolled away while with solemn words he hailed the monarch;

> "Buddahood for a five thousand year cycle, all prosperity and long life long as the sun and moon should light the world, to the noble Maha Wasala, the *Kapruka* that guards the sasana and protects the lives of subjects ever blessed with the boundless love . . . ."

"Out of the way, sirrah!" the king cried trying to be angry but laughing in spite of himself. The jester's emphasis on the protection of lives and the boundless love of royalty to subjects was too much even for one in Sri Wickrama's foaming rage. The man leapt up like a startled hare and covered his head with his hands; for he had done wrong to hail royalty bare headed.

Within the entrance the Maha Mudiyansay and his colleagues sank on their knees. The king passed, his lips pursed to keep laughter down. He retired to a resting chamber in an upper storey. The jester waited to be called, but waited in vain. He wished to go to his master. He had, indeed not he but his bastard tongue, slipped in one little syllable of his greeting. But he was not permitted. A jester might go to the king only when his presence was desired. Sri Wickrama was obviously angry that the man had made him laugh that day.

Everyone expected the *katupurullay* would have unpleasant orders before the day was older—to arrest and produce for trial a number of great men. But hours passed: the monarch kept to his chamber. Bammanay Rala claimed his reward, and had it given him in ample measure, said his detractors, because the king

had done little more than glance at the dishes placed before him.

Next morning the monarch asked for Pusellay. His manner betrayed no anger. He said,

"Pusellay, if a man responsible for the well being and beauty of a king's ceremonial mount, allows the tusker to bruise and disfigure its showy tusks what punishment would he deserve?"

The nilamay happy that the prince had deigned to consult him said,

"Deveyanwahansa, such carelessness would amount to grave negligence; for care of the *magul-eta* is a sacred duty. What care does mahout bestow on tusker who does not worry about that which is most essential for the looks of a royal mount! Such neglect might well merit everyone of the thirtytwo tortures, and death thereafter."

Said the prince;

"Pusellay nilamay is right. No torture is ordered in your case. Execution you have deserved. You more than any other person, are responsible for the death of two individuals that were most loyal to the Maha Wasala."

As the days passed the king recovered his spirits: but the realisation that his own word had sent Arrawwawala and his uncle to death left a wound that never healed. The Maha Adigar, he thought was wise to keep away from court. However, he soon felt the difference Meegastennay's absence made in the handling of state business. He inquired for him, and was told the minister had gone to his country home at Amunugama and was ill. When a week later he understood there was no improvement in his condition Sri Wickrama requested the Queen to send for the kumarihamy and ascertain the truth.

Meegastennay though well past middle-age had been fit and active, as daring on the field of battle as astute in council chamber. He had been, however, under treatment on and off, for a gouty complaint. Since he had last gone to the palace he had been selective about his food, asking for viands that he usually disliked. The kumarihamy related with tears how she found that the dishes she had prepared turned out to be such as her lord had learnt from his physicians would aggravate his illness. At the moment he was bedridden. Yet he refused both medicine and food, and would give no reason for his strange behaviour. A word from the monarch would save his servant's life.

Sri Wickrama was much perturbed. He had imagined the illness was feigned; and was glad the adigar had kept away till he was able to view things with equanimity again. He sent word that he would visit the minister. Rarely did monarch honour subject with formal visit. Yet that was not the first time Sri Wickrama was visiting the courtier in his home. The sick minister ordered his walawwa be made ready to receive the king. He recollected the circumstances that had made the king visit him last.

It had been raining a few days—not seasonal rains. Towards noon he had looked in the direction of the lake excavations. Not one of the king's councillors had liked the undertaking. For the intended lake would not help increase paddy cultivation. They felt sorry for the peasants forced to labour. The laws of Sinhalay did not make men liable for rajakariya on works of mere beauty. Something queer had attracted Meegastennay. On a bund a katupurullay man was covering a lad with *pandarel*. There were a few already so dressed. Meegastennay had sent his vidanay for information. What he reported had filled him with horror.

The boys had come from a village not far from the city. Unsettled weather had made the peasants hesitate in the work of harvesting. The Mahaveli was taking them unawares. In spate it was overflowing into paddy fields on flat land along the river. There was not a moment to lose. They were busy trying to save all they could of the crop. The peasants wanted their day of rajakariya put off; and lest their absence be construed as disobedience to orders each peasant had sent his son in his place.

Officers supervising construction work had understood. They had not considered the matter important enough to be reported higher, and permitted the boys to do what they could on the site. Unfortunately the king had noticed boys romping midst the labouring adults. He had queried how boys happened to be in rajakariya levies. When told, he had got angry. Without a thought about the difficulties of the peasants, he had ordered the men be punished through their boys. The latter were to be covered with dry *pandarel* and sent to their village with the leaves ablaze. To treat with cruelty peasants deserving sympathy, and risk innocent boys who would grow up to be brave men to fight the country's wars — the king's foolish order had made him indignant. In his anger he had cried 'There are Demala boys to spare'[26] for cruel treatment. He commanded the men carrying out the king's order to set them free. One of his *vidanays* had been sent to escort the youngsters to their village. At the moment he had forgotten everything save the

king's foolish order, and the inhuman nature of what was afoot. Pondering over his act at leisure he had realised his interfernce, however unavoidable, amounted to using the powers derived from the throne to countermand its orders. He had therefore decided to expiate his disloyal behaviour with his own death. Lying huddled face downward on the floor of his room, he had refused food or drink. The king when he heard, had looked upon what Meegastennay had done as high handed. Later however, he had begun to regret his own rashness. When, three days after the incident, the king had heard how Meegastennay was trying to expiate his act he had got alarmed about the life of his adigar, and with godly grace come to the walawwa to assure he had freely pardoned.

But the king's regard to him appeared to be undergoing a change. At the *bana-maduwa* he had thrown a threat of execution in his teeth. It was a threat he could not have put into words if his loyal services had not been altogether forgotten. His eminence in the country and his usefulness to the king deserved treatment far different. Sri Wickrama's demoniac expression and the way he shook unable to control himself made the future look ugly, indeed. With his addiction to the vice of intoxicants, and the way he decreed men of rank to death even without trial — the king was capable of any outrage.

The adigar's walawwa was whitewashed and hung with spotless *viyan*. Its porch was decorated as if a wedding was on. As the king stepped out of his palanquin the kumarihamy and her kinsmen sank on their knees to welcome him. She led the royal visitor to the sick chamber and with her own hands spread a gold embroidered cloth on the chair prepared for him. The adigar now too weak to rise, folded his hands. Though the sick man looked feeble the king saw on his tranquil countenance the same look of determination that had always been there. The king spoke kind words. A physician brought to the kumarihamy medicine in a silver cup. It was a last attempt — to avail of royalty's presence to make the sick minister take something that might save him. The king understood. He stretched a hand and the grateful lady offered it on her knees.

"*Mama*", the king said, "forget the past. It is quite useless to dwell upon what we may not set right now. You must live for the good you will be able to achieve in the future. Dangers beset the country. Your wisdom can solve these problems. Drink this and get well for work."

With both hands Meegastennay adigar received the cup. He drank a single mouthful; then deliberately placed the cup on a tripod by the bed. In the pleasant voice his royal master was accustomed to, calm and clear, the sick man spoke,

"Deveyanwahansa, never has a Meegastennay head rolled away from its trunk to parch under *keppetiya* bushes. The way I have decided upon for my journey out is the best."

King Sri Wickrama knew his minister too well to waste words in an attempt to alter a considered resolve. His mind appeared to be made up. He looked kindly at his minister for a minute; then rose to leave. A tear rolled down his cheek. He spoke to none. His mind appeared to be too full even to direct the officers standing by the palanquin as to whither its bearers should carry him. Silently they bore him in the direction of the capital. A gloom seemed to descend on the adigar's home. Everyone there knew that the king's attempt having failed, nothing in the world could make the Maha Nilamay alter his resolve.

Every morning the monarch asked for news of his minister. Full well he knew he had no one amongst his courtiers who could fill Meegastennay's place. Three days after his visit he made another attempt to save his adigar. He summoned Paranatala Anunayaka, a pontiff of the Malwatta Monastery. Paranatala thero was universally respected in Senkadagala for his piety as well as learning. The king requested him to tell the Maha Adigar that there was no need taking words expressed in anger, so much to heart. He valued the minister's service. He had pardoned him and would retain him in office. There were matters of state which Meegastennay's wisdom alone could satisfactorily deal with.

Paranatala thero found the Maha Nilamay very weak. Round his bed stood relatives summoned at the sick minister's request. His face lit up with a derisive smile as he listened to the message Paranatala thero had brought. He had been telling those present how he wished his wealth should be shared by them. To the priest he said,

"Tell the monarch I am grateful for his *karunawa*. My mind is made up. This way is best not only for the good of my name; but also for the honour of the Maha Wasala. I wish the king long life and prosperity."

Presently he lapsed into a swoon. Awakening, the great man spoke prophetic words,

"Far in the west I see a hornets' hive gather. It is a *Yak-debera*. Tell the monarch from me not to throw stones at it. Tell

him to treat Ehelepola *rala* with kindness, and exercise restraint in all his dealings with him."

Of things mundane he did not speak any more. By him sat a relative reading from an ola kept to record the numerous *pinkam* he had done[27]—of temples he had built or renovated, of his labours to preserve the Dharma that future generations may hear the Buddha's word, and his many efforts to have it preached to the present. Pleasantly he spoke of the events as each was read out. To the thero he said,

"For one like me death has no terrors. My heart desires no futher travel in *sangsaro*. I wish to be born as a deva and abide in that state till the advent of the Maithree Buddha, to hear his preaching, and lead a holy life in his sasana."

Then he turned to the sad faces around him, and continued,

"Do not weep. I am certain of my *prartana*. An hour before you bear my corpse hence a drizzle will come down. It will cease when this body has started on its journey to the pyre. That will tell you that I have gained through to the state I desire."

He paused for breath, and in low but clear accents recited the stanza:—

'ඉතෙවුතෝ හං වර ජම්බුදීපේ
හිමාලයේ හෙම මයම්හිකුටේ
කප්පායුකො දෙව පතිවහුත්වා
මෙත්තේය්‍ය නාථස්ස සුණොමි ධම්මං'[30]

With the last word he stopped breathing.

Next morning his closest male relative — he left no descendants — sought admission to the Palace. When permission came and the guard at the Koraha Wahalkada let him pass, he walked across the esplanade towards palace grounds. He wore no hat; his hair hung behind, loose. The tuppotti at his waist was a black *somana*. As his figure disappeared across the draw-bridge, soldiers at the gates he passed whispered, 'Meegastennay Maha Nilamay is no more. To serve under his banner was to be assured of victory. The Maha Wasala will not find another *senapathi* like him for a long time'[28].

The Trial of Paranatala Anunayaka Thero

PARANATALA sthavira, a priest of the Malwatta monastery, held that the saffron robes of the Thatagatha did not debar one from politics. During the Kandyan monarchy not everyone that wished it, could become a bikkhu. The intending novitiate's horoscope had to be examined: only very fortunate youths were considered suitable to don the yellow robe. He had to be of good family too. Many a temple passed from guru to pupil only if the latter was connected to his preceptor by ties of blood. The priesthood was therefore, a body of men drawn from the higher rungs of society. They invariably had kinsmen amongst court circles; and when a priest had a mind to take an interest in affairs of the state he had ready access to those that held the reins of government. Minister and chieftain welcomed priestly interest in matters of secular importance. Was not the chief concern of government the safety and progress of the sasana. Paranatala felt Lanka, the land chosen by the Thatagatha as the home of his teachings, was in danger of foreign domination.

From the time the Portuguese had landed in Colombo foreign generals backed by clever Sinhala captains from the coast, had marched up to the hill country with the object of stamping out the buddhist religion. The Engreesi, though friendly at the start, had proved to be no better than their Portuguese and Dutch predecessors. Rivers of blood had flowed in the defence of the Sasana and motherland. Rajasingha, the patricide of Sitawaka, had once succeeded in destroying the Sasana altogether. He had levelled each temple and dagoba to the ground, massacred the priests, and wantonly reduced their olas to ashes. When things appeared blackest the devas had in strange fashion[1] restored to their midst Sundara Bandara's warrior son to lead them. He defeated his father's murderer Rajasingha, built a glorious shrine for the Danta Dhatu,

and re-established the Sasana. Ruined temples had risen again[2], and religion flourished. With infinite endeavour had pious men searched for sacred olas hidden away in forest cave or buried underground by bikkhus fleeing from Rajasingha's persecution. Their fading contents had been copied again and the Dharma saved from oblivion. Three successive kings had followed in the footsteps of Wimaladharma, Sundara Bandara's son. When the Sasana appeared to be safe for future ages the Sinhalay had a ruler whose birth in the royal family of Lanka was doubtless due to some great sin of the Sinhala race.

This prince had after the death of his good father been elected to fill his place. They named him Narendrasingha. The silly monarch spent his days in voluptuous pleasure. Song and dance and his harem were all he cared for. He neglected religion, paid scant respect to the priesthood. During his last days he was responsible for an act that was treason against Lanka. He succumbed to the *maya* of a young queen, a Madura princess, and persuaded his ministers to accept her brother as his successor although he had a son by a Sinhala lady who might have carried on Lanka's royal dynasty.

The people resented this, but the rising failed. The Andra prince however, did not make a bad ruler. He listened to the advice of his ministers. But for all his good ways he was a foreigner. Nayakar aristocrats, men of his own race gathered round his throne. With a consort coming from Madura came more Nayakars including the father and uncle of the future queen. Their numbers strengthened the Nayakars who intrigued to continue the power that had come to them. They persuaded the ministers that the correct criterion by which a prince's blood should be judged was the lineage of his mother. For a child was in fact its mother's blood. A monarch had to be of purest origin: how could one fall on one's knees before him otherwise. Misled by such advice a second Andra prince was raised to the throne. Rajadhi Rajasingha was the third of the line. The right to elect whom they liked as ruler of Sinhalay had to all intents passed out of Sinhala hands[3].

With the perpetuation of the Andra dynasty a great danger raised its ugly head. The Nayakars encouraged large numbers of their folk to come over. These obtained land round the capital: they had their own ways of achieving that end. In time amongst the permanent population of Senkadagala a large section was Indian. Their numbers encouraged Andra princes to employ regiments of Indian mercenaries to guard the King's person, an honour the Ata-

pattuway Hamudawa had taken pride in before. The personnel of the administrative government alone remained unaffected. Nayakars feared they might be treated with little respect in the villages. The country remained conservative. The common man was jealous of the custom that aristocrats of their own dissawa should be appointed to exercise authority over them. But with kings like Kirti Sri and Rajadhi whose spectacular *pinkam* had captured the imagination of the people, it might not prove difficult for a prince to persuade the inhabitants of a district near the capital to accept a Nayakar kinsman as their chieftain. Once such a thing happened other districts would consent too; and Sinhalay would then be ruled by foreigners with a foreign monarch to direct them.

Knowing men felt it was a situation to worry about. In Paranatala sthavira throbbed a patriot's heart. Of those in power at the moment one man alone had the courage to say there was a problem to solve. The rest, with an eye to royal patronage, preferred to sit on the fence. This individual was Pilimatalawway Adigar. As Pallegampahay Adigar with a number of other offices in his hands he weilded great power. Rajadhi Rajasingha, the monarch at the time of our story, took care not to displease the great man even though he was known to hate the king's kinsmen. Pilimatalawway made no secret of his conviction that matriarchal succession had no place in the polity of Sinhalay. Electors of the Rata Hata he declared, had the right to choose whom they liked to the throne whether the individual was Andra or not, closely connected to his predecessor or a complete outsider to the ruling family. Paranatala placed himself at the adigar's side. Well read in the Dharma, careful of his *seela* and therefore popular he won adherents to Pilimatalawway's views. When Rajadhi departed to heaven, and prince Kannesamy was elected to the vacant throne instead of the popular heir Muttusamy, the Queen's brother, city folk whispered to one another 'Haven't they done it? the Pallegampahay Adigaram Nilamay and Paranatala *Unnansay*.'

The new king was grateful. Pilimatalawway adigar was permitted to exercise all the powers of the throne, the king retaining only the pomp and circumstance of regal office. Paranatala *sthavira*, triumphant that his work had restored to the nation the right to elect its ruler, received royalty's promise he should have what power he desired in the kingdom. The success of his patriotic endeavour was all the reward Paranatala wanted. No one imagined that an evil destiny awaited either of Sri Wickrama's staunch supporters. With the monarch's friendship however, came greater

popularity; and Paranatala was soon an Anunayaka Thero. But the monk asked no reward of the king. He went back to his monastic life, the study of the Dharma and the instruction of his pupils. Sri Wickrama waited for Paranatala to express his wish, and was not pleased no request came. The priest was not often seen at court either. Indeed he did not go there save when the monarch sent word he was wanted. The friendship between Sri Wickrama and Paranatala Thero remained formal.

Not long after his Kadukaralana Mangala[4] the king conceived the idea of enlarging a pond situated north east of the Malwatta Monastery to a large lake. It had served as a bathing pool for the king's cattle. Its water flowed down to irrigate a fertile stretch of paddy belonging to the palace. In the cultivation of this field monarchs that ruled from Senkadagala often took a hand. It was to make room for the lake. The king wished to make it a thing of beauty. He wanted the sheet of water to be as large as the valley would permit. His council could see no purpose in a lake that could not help aswedumise more land. As for the fields below the city, there were Bogambara and Borawewa that gave bountiful supplies of water. They said the comparatively high level of the site and the abrupt slope in which it ended towards its western end would make a very high embankment unavoidable. It was bound to present difficulties of construction. Sri Wickrama hesitated, but not for long. A couple of days later he said he would send for a man who had experience in embankment work from India. Pending his arrival the work was to be proceeded with. There appeared to be some one near the king encouraging him in his scheme secretly. Perhaps it was Pilimatalawway Maha Nilamay[5] himself, who wished to keep his prince busy otherwise, that he may rule the kingdom as he pleased.

Things went well for a time. Rajakariya levies summoned from districts around the capital responded. When an order for levies went to Sat Korala its dissawa hastened to the capital to report that his province would not obey. The people clamoured they were not obliged to render rajakariya labour in the construction of lakes not meant to increase paddy cultivation. It was sowing season too, and they had to make their fields ready for the seed. The headmen of the province were on the side of the people. The dissawa begged for orders from the Maha Wasala. Sri Wickrama impulsively declared he would inquire into the matter himself.

It was custom to bring such problems before the gathering of elders in the district. The dissawa submitted this, and the

adigar present said that was the usual procedure. They would know what exactly ancient custom was and clarify the position. But the king turned a deaf ear. He could not see why when some districts obeyed others should not. The inhabitants of Sat Korala, he felt, were out to cause trouble just as many of the chieftains had attempted to when told he wished to have a beautiful lake for the city. Was it a plan inspired by the chieftains to make the work he had set his heart on impossible ? For, if one district was permitted to get away with it every other district would take their example. The lake, work on which had started, would then have to be abandoned. The headmen of Sat Korala were summoned to the capital. Before the throne they argued their case, and maintained that except for war service they were not obliged to render rajakariya beyond the limits of their dissawa. Sri Wickrama faced with a problem that struck at the root of his plans to build a pretentious capital lost his temper. He declared the headmen were guilty of treason. The work for which they had been asked to furnish labour was as important for the country as war. Other districts had obeyed dutifully. The headmen had encouraged subjects of Sat Korala to disobey. It amounted to inciting the country to rebel against the Maha Wasala. He sentenced the headmen to death.

They were over a hundred in number. Priest and councillor hastened to the monarch, to advise, to urge justice must be tempered with mercy. The king argued he was altogether correct in the construction he put on their insubordination. He would not reconsider. Orders were given they should all be impaled at the same time. He wanted it to be deterrent punishment. Executions were usually carried out outside the city proper. But he said this execution might take place within the capital. A couple of days later the men died on *kitul* stakes placed in rows on the bed of the new lake. People were shocked at the sight. Some say the number of those executed on the occasion were nearer a hundred and fifty than hundred. In Sat Korala the news caused a rebellion. The king's captains failed to bring about order. The districts refused to have the Dissawa in office a day more. Sri Wickrama found he had to appoint a chieftain from the family the people named if he was to avoid war. At Malwatta monastery where the breeze carried the stench of rotting blood along lanes that the numerous *pansal* buildings flanked, the priests spoke disparagingly of the king. They said 'Paranatala Therunnansay's king has begun work. He is a wee bit different from monarchs

that ruled Sinhalay before. He will rule strictly according to the Dasa Raja Dharma, not the least doubt about it !'

The Mahanayaka Thero of Malwatta had stood for Muttusamy when during Rajadhi's illness Pilimatalawwa had secretly canvassed support for his protege. Paranatala had found it a task to convince the pontiff that it was necessary for the good of the country to keep out the Nayakkar candidate and elect an outsider. When the Mahanayaka was won over at last the credit had gone to Paranatala Thero. The pontiff now said what was happening was the result of placing an uneducated man in power. Had he not warned? There was no good word for Paranatala. He felt humiliated. Sri Wickrama was letting his supporters down badly.

A short time after there came to the monastery a herald who said he brought a message from royalty to the priesthood. The king proposed that in the rebuilding of the city the Pusparama Vihara[6], its Bodhi and Dagoba should be removed to higher ground and built on a magnificent scale on the hill side. The strip of ground on which these and a few more buildings of little importance stood the king wished to have for the lake under construction. Sri Wickrama wanted a graceful sweep of the bank on the monastery side, and a wider sheet of water where he expected the lake would look most beautiful.

The big priests met in conclave that evening to discuss the matter. There were a handful of bikkhus that hailed the proposal as they would anything the monarch said. These thought they could get the monarch to build a beautiful vihara and a larger dagoba on the hill side. There were, however, many who thought that the site on which the buildings stood was hallowed ground. They should on no account be tampered with. King Wickramabahu who first decided to found the city had fixed the site for them inspired by the devas to select that spot. He had arrived in the valley one evening to investigate why a certain brahamin had chosen a cave in the vicinity for his hermitage. Was he an evil one in disguise come to spread disaffection amongst the king's subjects and profit himself thereby ? The king decided to spend the night on the spot where the dagoba, bodhi and vihara were later built. He slept in his palanquin surrounded by his followers. At early dawn he was partly awake, still asleep, when a vision floated before him. A bodhi its beautifully shaped leaves shimmering in the first rays of the sun, and amongst the branches of the bodhi a deva that raised his hand and spoke. He said 'Maharaja this spot is hallowed. This is the place for a temple in honour

of the Thatagatha.' The king awoke and the vision was no more. He ordered a stone pillar to be placed where he slept in his palanquin that night. When in later years Senkadagala was founded the Pusparama Vihara, its Bodhi and Dagoba were built on the site marked by the good king.

The priests decided to send word to the monarch that it was not proper to remove the sacred edifices from where they stood. With that message they sent another prayer. Water coming down from the hills to the east, especially from Ampitiya, flowed past many a lay home. Such water the priesthood may not use for their ablutions. They understood that the lake might take up the well that gave bathing water to the monastery, and begged the men supervising the work be ordered to let the well alone.

Sri Wickrama saw that the priests far from acceding to his proposal had spoilt the plan of his lake. To leave the well where it was, would show an unshapely bulge of the bank into its waters. He was angry but helpless. He inquired what had passed at the monastery and learnt later of the firm stand Paranatala Thero had taken at an assembly held to consider his request. The priest had said no encroachment on hallowed ground should be permitted however pressing the need, and whoever the individual that made the demand. Sri Wickrama remembered.

Years rolled on. Those who had worked to keep prince Muttusamy out did not feel certain they had done fair by the country. Pilimatalawway adigar had been dismissed from office. Disappointed humiliated they hoped for the day when they would elect a king again. They were prepared to go as far as Siam to get a good ruler for the country when the moment should arrive. Meanwhile plots to assassinate Sri Wickrama failed badly. They ended in trials and executions of great personages who placed the good of the motherland above personal advancement. Sri Wickrama's trials however were so in name alone. His sentences were deterrent to a degree that made people call him a demon. For a time they awed the country to servile subjection. But treason merely went under ground. Even so there was one man who was not afraid to say the land was misgoverned. This was the leader Paranatala Thero respected. They met, the thero and Pilimatalawway, former adigar, to discuss political matters and the future of the country. Both felt they were in some degree to blame for the cruelties of the man they had worked hard to place in power. At length Pilimatalawway too was dragged to a trial for treason, and convicted. The king said he would spare Pilima-

talawway's life if he would take an oath never again to raise a hand against the king's government. But the patriot refused to take an oath that would rob him of freedom to work for the welfare of the motherland. He preferred death; and the king sentenced his benefactor to execution by the sword.

To Paranatala Anunayaka Thero Pilimatalawway's death was the end of all hope to save the country from the ruthless rule of its savage minded monarch. Left to bear alone the blame of having endeavoured to place a wicked prince on the throne, Paranatala spoke his mind. He had enemies amongst the priests. These whispered what he said in the king's ear. Seeing how it made the monarch angry they went a step further and said the thero was not at all careful about his priestly precepts, that he violated his vow of celibacy.

One morning Paranatala Thero's boy preparing a rice gruel breakfast for the priest heard someone clear his throat softly. He came out of the kitchen into the priest's room and opened its front door. In the mist there stood a well built brahamin, his large saffron turban, saffron robes and *rudraksha* beads vieing with a jet black beard to make an impressive picture. It was early dawn. The thero lay in bed. Ordered by him the servant asked,

"Brahamin, what brings you hither?"

"I have a *pena* to be solved," said the visitor, "Is the thero awake?"

The thero took up his *sembuwa* and hastened to the well. The servant bade the brahamin tarry awhile, and walked out of the back door and along the lane that separated the sleeping room from the kitchen.

The brahamin stood a couple of fathoms away from the front door. He could see the other door of the cell and, through it, the roofless narrow passage behind. He saw the thero step out and turn in the direction of the lake, and the servant follow him but turn the opposite way in the lane. A couple of minutes later a woman appeared coming along the way the servant had gone. She was dressed in modest but clean clothes. She fumbled with a mat in the cell, appeared to put it away hastily, under the thero's bed. Then she stepped out to the compound. Her hair was in disorder, and her cloth, it appeared, had been worn in haste. She stared at the brahamin a moment; then walked away as if his presence had alarmed. The thero came in presently and put on his formal robes. He asked,

"Good brahamin, say your *pena* that I might attempt to solve the problem that you have come to place before me."

The visitor looked straight at the thero. The latter thought he had seen that face before but could not remember where. The brahamin said in a tone that sounded discourteous.

"My *pena* has been answered already. I go."

He walked brusquely away, and disappeared into the mist that rose thick on the lake bund. The priest gazed wondering in the direction. Brahamins came often. Before sunrise in the morning was their time to have knotty problems of philosophy solved. But they tarried to talk the argument over, and as a rule partook of some food when invited. Invariably they were thankful for what they learnt. This brahamin — was he mad?

As the priest was settling down to his work some time after there came a herald attended by a number of katupurullay men. They had orders to take Paranatala Anunayaka Thero to the palace. News of their presence spread through the monastery. Priests gathered round the herald and asked why. But he knew no more than they. He did not like the summons entrusted to him, but had to carry out orders. The priests were surprised, alarmed; not a few angry at the way the monarch acted. They knew he did not respect custom or individuals, but he had hitherto left the priesthood alone. Was it a charge like that brought against Sooriyagoda Thero? There was no possibility of accusing Paranatala of misbehaviour. But there were few in the monastery that had not heard, at some time or other, Paranatala's caustic remarks when speaking of great men the monarch condemned to death. He had used very strong language indeed after the execution of his leader, Pilimatalawway Adigar.

The *anunayaka* put on his best robes and followed the officers. He was usually received in the Dakina Mandapa when the king sent for him. That day he was led to the Hall of Audience and given a place where accused chieftains stood till the king took up the trials. The priest racked his brain to guess what it was all about. He had never had a hand in a plot against the monarch. But he remembered what he had often spoken about the king's mock trials and harsh sentences. He had been moved to great anger when the man he respected most had been sentenced to execution. And that man who with himself had done most for Sri Wickrama, indeed if not for whom the king would never have had the chance to misrule the country — that great man had died

as if he did not mind making his exit in the least. That was courage worthy of emulation. Paranatala made up his mind to face the inevitable sentence fearlessly.

Court started. The adigar went through a few preliminaries. The two Mahanayaka Thero's had been asked, and were present. Courtiers who knew Paranatala Thero felt the priest's acrid tongue was responsible for his predicament. Once a favourite he had fallen foul of the monarch, because he could not mind his business. His matter was taken up, the first big business of the day. When the judicial Lekam stated what the thero was charged of, there was much relief amongst courtiers. They had feared for the accused priest's life. Paranatala Anunayaka Thero was accused of having had a mistress in the Malwatta monastery the previous night, and by that disgraceful act blemished the purity of the Sasana.

The resigned look on the priest's countenance vanished. He stared at the Lekam, then turned his gaze full on the monarch.

> "It is a base lie", he cried. "The Maha Wasala should order the men responsible for such calumny to prove the truth of the vile statement by the boiling oil ordeal.

Ordered by the king the Lekam[7] said that the prosecution depended on an only witness. That witness was the monarch who in the garb of a brahamin had stood that morning before the priest's door and seen his evil companion step out and walk away. Paranatala Thero was near bursting with indignation. He shouted,

> "It is a lie were it the thousand eyed Sakra that says he saw. I challenge whoever makes such a statement to swear to its truth before the Natha Deva, the Maithree Bodhisatva."

Who could disbelieve a simple statement of the kind made by the ruler of the land! Even if they did, could the king be expected to disbelieve what he saw? How could a woman come to be in a chief priest's cell within monastery limits? The angry thero continued talking loudly, while in the king's eye courtier's saw that fire gather which they well knew meant death. The priest swore he never even in thought violated his vow of celibacy. He called on the devas by their names to punish whoever invented the malicious calumny undoubtedly to pay off some other score.

The priest was not wise. He gained nothing by harsh language. The king appeared to tremble in a rage. The Maha Nayaka Thero of Malwatta asked the accused to act like a sensible individual; and Paranatala became silent. The king turned towards the high pontiffs and said,

"No evidence can controvert facts seen by the Maha Wasala. The punishment accused has deserved is death. He shall be beheaded."

The Maha Nayaka Thero of Malwatta had had the highest regard for his anunayaka. But what could he say when the monarch stated he himself had seen? His faith in the thero was somewhat shaken. Yet there was no doubt the king was exceeding his powers. He said,

"Maharaja, if the Maha Wasala saw a woman walk out of the accused priest's cell the evidence against him is strong indeed. Still it is necessary to ascertain why the woman was there — there possibly is some explanation. An accusation of this offence of *Magam Soliya*,[8] according to rules of the Vinaya, has to be inquired into by the brotherhood at a convocation, not merely for dealing suitably with the accused individual but also in the interests of the sangha as a body. Cases where bikkhus have been found guilty of violating their vows of celibacy are not unknown. In the Vinaya there are punishments decreed for such offences. The guilty one would be expelled from the brotherhood and some sort of disgrace attached to him to atone for his deception of the public that fed and clothed him. But it has never happended that a bikkhu for violating a precept has been deprived of his life. Such punishment would be altogether against the principles of the Buddha's doctrine. In Lanka no bikkhu has ever had his head cut off for not keeping to the path of purity he was bound to follow by his own choice."

Sri Wickrama turned towards the speaker and said,

"In that case the sentence may be altered. He might be shot."

A silence fell on the assembly. Courtiers waited to see what the Maha Nayaka would say. So did the angry monarch. But the thero did not speak a word more. His head drooped forward; and a tear fell on his lap. The king ordered that the accused be taken away. He would be executed at the kumara-hapuwa as men of his rank usually are.

"Nay," said Paranatala in a voice that was now calm and dignified, "the king has the power to take a subject's life, but has no right to imagine he himself is infallible. There are higher beings that see the truth whatever hides it; beings whose *pihita* matters far more than the favour of a monarch.

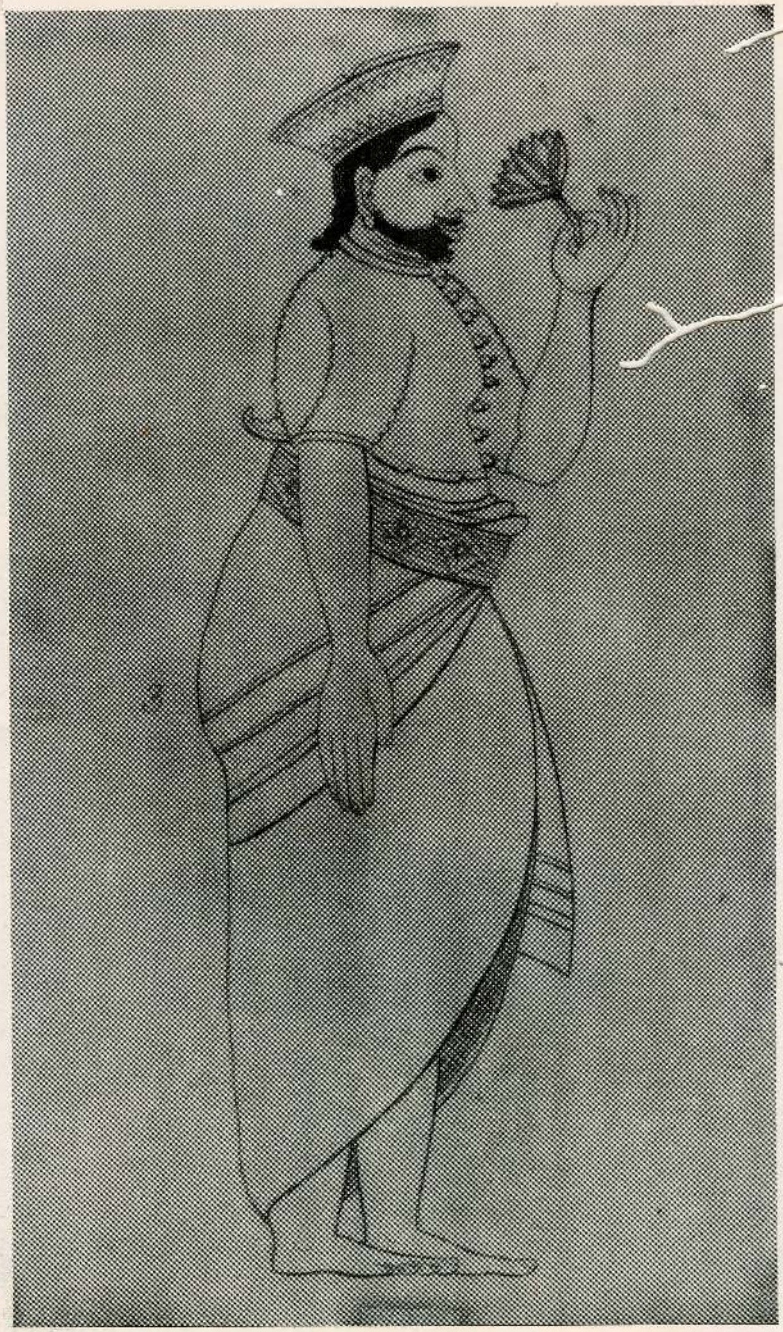
Before Natha Deva's seat of judgement every man must some day appear if he has not sinned enough to roast in hell-fire for the length of a *kalpa*. I as a priest of the Sasana claim the right to state my case to Maithree Bodhisatva at the Natha Devala."

Prone to hasty judgement, and during the closing years of his reign impatient of any opinion except his own Sri Wickrama still respected religion. His face fell. He had acted on information whispered by a priest he well knew had no love for the anunayaka. It was this priest's arrangement that he should go on the day and at the time he did to investigate. Might it not be that the woman had come to the monastery in the morning for the purpose of being seen by the king? It occured to him the woman had come into the priest's room by the back door, but to leave her scene of shame had used the front door though she knew a stranger of some importance stood on the compound. It was an unusual thing for a woman to do. But he dismissed the doubts. At the back of his mind rankled Paranatala Thero's stand against him when once he had asked the priest for a strip of ground for the lake. The anunayaka would not give whoever demanded! Remarks the priest was reported to have made every time a traitor was sentenced were even more disloyal. Treason caught fast, and had to be kept down with a firm hand. Men like Paranatala actively spread the disease. He and Pilimatalawwa had worked together. With his leader dead the disciple would wish to carry on the evil work. The king told himself the woman at the monastery had taken fright at sight of him and lost presence of mind. How could a woman be within monastery precincts anyway, if she had no encouragement—and walk across the room of an anunayaka. Paranatala was bad. He deserved death. It was no case for lenient treatment. He signified his decision to the adigar who ordered the priest might go to the Natha Devala on his way to the Kumara-hapuwa.

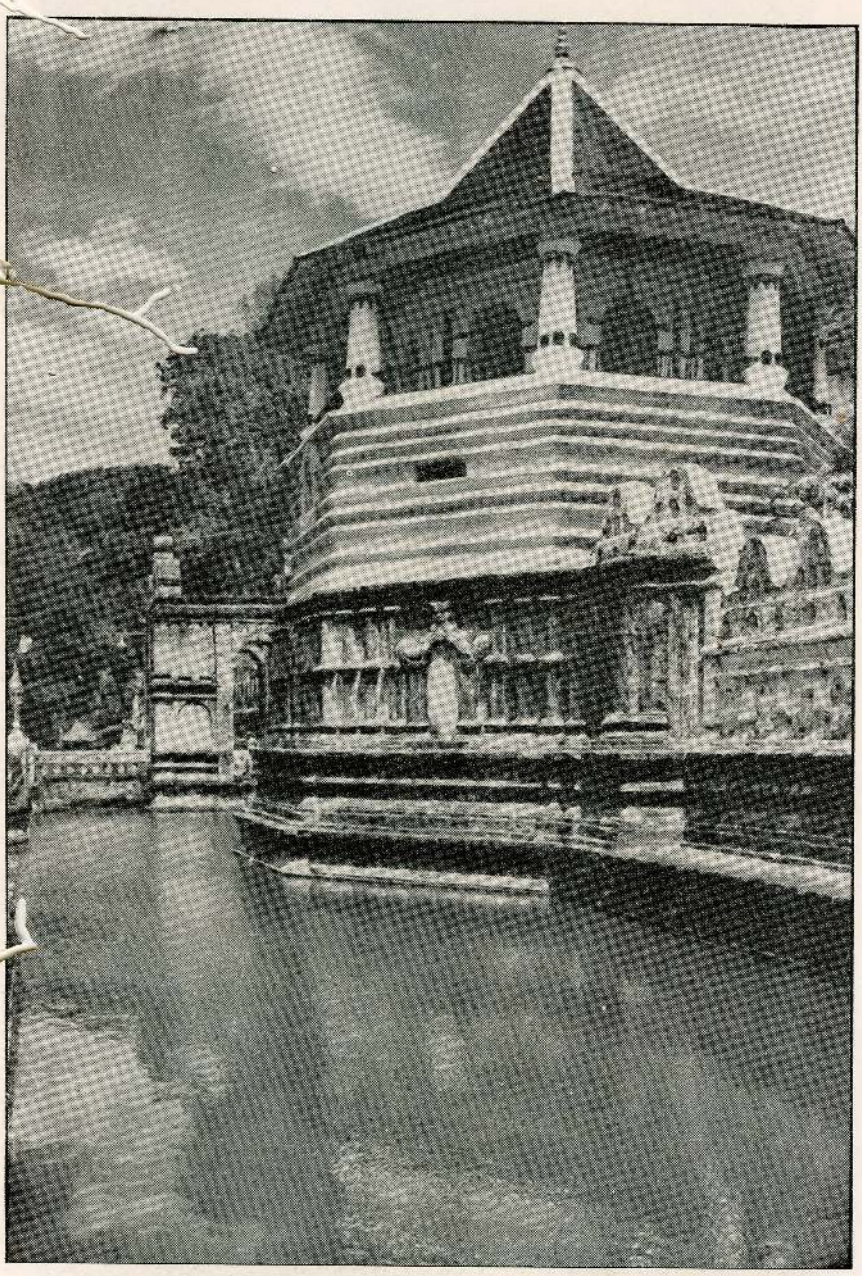
Paranatala did not wait to be told. He turned; and katupurullay officers followed. On the courtyard of the Audience Hall he faced towards the Dalada shrine, and on his knees recited his priestly precepts. Standing up he said defiantly,

"Now to state our case before a judge that can see much clearer than this fool of a king."

The door of the Natha shrine was opened at his request. He invoked the deva to turn his gaze on Lanka wherever he might be at the moment, to look on the carnage her silly ruler ordered in the name of justice. He called on the gods by name, Vishnu and



A mohottala in court dress—(*From an old drawing*).



The Octagon on which Sri Wickrama and British princes appeared before the people.

Saman charged by the Thatagata to protect his religion in Lanka, Kataragama, Devata-bandara, and dread Dedimunda, the Satara-waram devas, Dritarasta Virula, Virupaksa and Vaisravana, that guard the four directions, and the seven Devol devas that had the power to send plagues to the wicked and forsworn -- he asked them what they were doing while Sinhalay was drifting surely to ruin, and men that had the courage and ability to protect the Sasana from its foes, were being ruthlessly done to death. In an attempt to elect for the land a better ruler than it had before, they had inadvertently placed on the throne a man who had turned out to be a demon. Sooriyagoda Anunayaka, a singularly pious thero, had his head cut off — his fault an endeavour to explain the Dharma to the sister of the king's rival. Statesmen that had worked for the glory of the Sasana, warriors that had shed their life-blood in the defence of religion and motherland, every week, every day almost one or more of them was marched to execution. Justice had lost its meaning, mercy flowed not from the throne. In place of divine attributes a ruler should emulate, their drunkard king behaved like a demon that delighted in blood. Then he raised his voice and cried,

> "Deiyo-Saaki, deiyo-saaki, deiyo-saaki![9] Ye devas, how long will Ye look on while the noblest and most patriotic in the land are slaughtered by a ruler to whom the Dasa Raja Dharma, the Satara Agati, and the Satara Sangraha which princes must keep in mind every hour of their life, have no meaning. How long will you remain unconcerned while the country is denuded of courageous men who have the will to defend the motherland and uphold the Sasana? How could the Buddha's doctrine last its appointed five thousand years if devas remain idle and let a man addicted to base drink continue this carnage as he pleases?"

These words were heard in the Hall of Audience where court proceeded with the day's work. Courtiers looked at each other, then at the throne. The king looked pale, and beads of sweat were visible on his forehead. He had been giving directions to provincial chieftains that were present in court that day. He stopped speaking, and instructed the adigar to carry on the work. It was obvious he was listening. Paranatala's voice continued,

> "Are you grown so fond of the nymphs around you that you have no time for your work of mercy and care of religion? Soon, very soon, there will be none left in this land capable of leading its people to war, to drive away the enemy and

save religion from destruction. Intervene while there are men and religion exists; or your divine protection will be a mockery. Entering the sangha in my boyhood I have observed my precepts inviolate. Not for one moment have I violated my vows of celibacy in deed or word. I am now to lose my life because this king choses to say I have broken my precepts. You who can see the truth of my case with your divine eyes punish with all the severity they have deserved those that have sullied the good name of a pious bikkhu. To me death has no terrors. To those that have lied against me, perhaps to be revenged on me, they shall have to pay for the sin here and hereafter. My case I leave in the hands of the Devas."

Paranatala Thero stopped for breath. He had been speaking loud. Perhaps he wished his words should be heard by all, or was merely following the custom of *kapuralas* who speak the loudest they could when calling on the gods to punish wicked people. What he said was nothing new to those standing round. Yet they were amazed — the voice and manner in which he said it made them feel 'The devas must surely listen to his just prayer'. His manner changed and his voice was low when he spoke again. In earnest words he prayed,

"Natha Divya Raja, every day of my priestly life have I uttered the prayer that I be so fortunate as to be born when you will come into the world as Maithree Buddha, to become a bikkhu in your sasana and listen to the word that will bring me to Nirvana, the ultimate heaven we all yearn for. Look on me now and see how I die true to my precepts, a virtuous bikkhu that has followed the Path of the Buddhas with enthusiasm and diligence."

He stepped outside the door of the shrine; and taking off his outer robe folded it carefully. Laying it on the door sill he said he had never by thought word or deed sullied the Buddha's robes, and left his there for the deva to find whether what he said was true. There was a smile on his lips as he turned and faced those standing around. There stood two executioners dressed in red clothes, garish red flowers on the dresses and round their necks, and in their hands the murderous looking scimitars they used. They had been brought up by the officers who commanded them. They did not appear pleased to learn it was a priest's head that had to be cut off that day. They knelt and folded their palms. The priest said,

May you be healthy, happy and free from sorrow.[10] You have your rajakariya to perform. Come, let us go."

In his under robes — the main robe lay on the devala door sill — he started to the place of execution. He took a few betel leaves from a bag that hung from his shoulder. Some he gave to the two executioners following him. For himself he gathered a chew with care : then took out his *killotay* from the bag. After taking a little chunam with the spatule he spun the *killotay* round and round keeping time with it to this song he sang,

"සමත මතහා කුල මාතහා
තුරිත තුරහා සිත දජ තුහා
දුරිත දුරහා කුල සිරි රහා
මහිම හිමහා මහ වාළුක ගහා"

"A tusker in must descends to the rodiya caste;
Fleet of foot is the (trained) steed, noble like a flying flag the (disciplined) mind;
Nobility of blood is to shed all sin and be pure,
As water in Mahaveli's stream during the cold season."

City folk came by night to gaze on that inert body and fold their palms to it in a last farewell. They loved the thero and said what they thought of the king's sentence in whispers. Aristocrats who were shocked at the way Sri Wickrama took the law into his own hands. They were alarmed, at the turn events were taking. For long centuries their's had been the privilege of interpreting the law of the land. Granting Paranatala Anunayaka Thero was guilty of lewdness, there was no precedent that justified an execution. It was strictly the business of the priests to punish one of the Sangha for such an offence. Cases where bikkhus had been guilty in that way had occurred even during the Buddha's lifetime. Disgrace and expulsion from the brotherhood was their punishment. Not the act but the false mentality of the delinquent had been decreed as what made a bikkhu impure. Therefore when such an one repented and begged to be admitted to the sangha again he was not refused. He began his second priestly life as a *samanera*, forfeiting the precedence attained in his first monkhood. Sri Wickrama should have hearkened to the advice of the Maha Nayaka Thero. His act was tyranny of the highest degree, a base use of regal authority. For the country it portended no good.

They, specially the *radala*, discussed the king's conduct in secret. After the mass executions of the Sat Korala Headmen

there had not been many amongst the chieftain class who liked Sri Wickrama. If they praised him in public it was merely courtier tactics to win promotion. Victory when the British first attempted a conquest of Sinhalay won their admiration for the king. But his invasion of the Low Country. — the people were not obliged to render military rajakariya beyond the confines of Sinhalay — was very unpopular, and the execution of Leukay, Satara Koralay Dissawa, on his march back was resented by the people. Those who discussed Paranatala's execution remembered every cruel act of the king from the day of Leukay's death.[12] People began to say 'What good is there of such a ruler either to the Sasana or the country. Higher folk looked cautiously round before they spoke a word. For of them no one could guess whose turn was next.

An Accomplished Swordsman

KING Sri Wickrama Rajasingha loved the river. He built a *Jalatilaka Mandapa* on the Mahaveli at Getambe[1], and went there with his queens for pleasure. For strenuous sport in the water a stretch of the stream at Levella, where the Mahaveli glides past a rock bank clear and deep, was reserved for royalty's bathing. To this spot the king would often go with such courtiers as he trusted most. The place was under the special surveillance of an aristocrat. From the beginning almost of Sri Wickrama's reign Bibile Herat Mudiyansay was in charge of the spot.

One day from the rock at Bibile Tota—so the place is still known—the king looked down on the stream. A few courtiers, ready for the water themselves, watched. When they thought he was about to dive in the king turned. Beckoning to an official of the Palace Service he ordered him into the water. Sri Wickrama had seen a fly sit at ease on the current, the water eddying slightly round it. He could not understand. The man sent to investigate presently rushed back wide eyed with alarm. He stood a little away from the king, arms spread, as if he would stop Sri Wickrama from getting down to the stream. The king demanded,

"What is there?"

The man, however, would not, or could not speak. When he became articulate he stammered there was 'a device in the water set to kill'. He had found a number of *kitul*[2] stakes set firm in the river bed. They were of varying height and each ending in a sharp point. They were so arranged as to receive on their points a body leaping into the water from the king's stand. One stood a fraction of an inch above the flood. On this the fly had settled.

"Where is Bibile?" Sri Wickrama thundered.

Bibile[3] was not there; and was never found again. More trustworthy men were placed in charge of the spot. Yet, notwithstanding the king's enthusiasm for the river, he became too circumspect to derive much pleasure from the sport. He suspected even those he invited to the river. A courtier once whispered in his ear a venomous story about another.

At this time Ratwatte Dissawa was a favourite with the king. He had appointed the chieftain his Senapathi, chief commander of the king's forces. Ratwatte was a massively built man, accomplished in every soldier art. And he was proud of his accomplishments.

Ratwatte happened to be amongst the royal party at the river one morning. They were on their way back after a pleasant time. The king's large tusker led the cavalcade. Respectfully behind, astride tuskless elephants, every one a couple of spans shorter than the king's mount, came aristocrats invited to the river that day. A courtier immediately before Ratwatte fumbled in his betel-bag for a chew. Everyone of consequence carried an ornate betel bag with him. He discovered no areca had been put into his pouch that day, an oversight undoubtedly. They were passing through a grove of palms heavy with large bunches of golden nuts. But the animals the courtiers rode were not tall enough for a rider to reach the nuts. Neither was it correct to take an animal out of the line to get to a shorter tree. Turning back the aristocrat said;

"Could the war accomplishments of Ratwatte Senapathi help get an areca from one of these bunches? I find I have no areca for a chew."

Ratwatte might have got out a few pieces of areca from his pouch. But in the words his friend spoke was a veiled challenge. He replied,

"That is not possible unless I have the king's leave to leap a fathom up from my elephant[4]. But there are ways in which I can help, from my seat."

He ordered his mahout to throw a stone. As an areca fell Ratwatte's sword flashed in the noonday sun. What fell on the sward below were pieces of a nut cut lengthwise into three portions, just the size for a man's chew. His mahout was ordered to hand the pieces up to the gentleman waiting for areca. As he did so Ratwatte said,

"I have not disturbed the line of elephants for one moment."

That story went to the king—with a slight improvement. The

king was told that as the areca pieces were handed up Ratwatte had said, 'And that is how my sword shall cut on the day it has work to do'. Perhaps the knave wished merely to embellish his story. Perhaps he had a motive. However that may be, the words his Senapathi was reported to have uttered, Sri Wickrama thought had a deep meaning.

The period he had to be in attendance at court over, Ratwatte took leave of the king to go to his country seat. Back at home the first claim on his time were the paddy fields cultivated for the use of the manor. He finished his morning meal; and gathering a chew from the betel tray stepped out of the main door of the Walawwa. He was dressed for a day out in the fields—a couple of men had gone before to await him. In his hand was a *killotay* from which he was in the act of taking a little lime for the chew. Before he could lift the lime to his lips the curious caw of a crow attracted his ear. The dissawa looked up in dismay. The crow cawed the selfsame note once more.

"Calamity!" Ratwatte gasped.

Then raising his voice to be heard by his family he said,

"This crow sounds a message of ill-omen. Its caw means great danger in store for one of this house. Let every one heed the warning."

As he stepped down to the compound his eyes fell on a small group at the entrance to the fenced enclosure. One of the men carried a bent cane covered with a piece of white muslin. He raised it in either hand. A companion advanced a step and sinking on his knees folded his palms to the aristocrat. Ratwatte guessed something had gone wrong at court. Without betraying surprise he asked,

"What is your mission?"

The mace bearer replied,

"The noble Maha Wasala commands your Lordship's attendance forthwith."

The man's voice choked as he spoke the words. The dissawa did not turn in for formal clothing. He raised the lime on his finger tip to his lips, then secured the *killotay* in the cloth folds at his waist. He called neither for palanquin nor to retainer, but continued the step he had set on the compound. The mace bearer's party had expected to rest a little till the chieftain got ready and took leave of his family. They stepped back on either side of the path as he walked forward. Ratwatte said, 'Come on' and was away. The surprised men looked at each other amazed. There

was however, little time to lose; for the dissawa was already disappearing round a clump of trees.

Fast they travelled along the road to Senkadagala. The mace bearer expected to be questioned, and though he had no right to talk, was prepared to say all he knew. But the stalwart figure he followed, almost chased, would not cast one glance behind. In a few *peyas* they came in sight of the ferry at Katugastota.

They saw a small crowd on the nearer bank. The king's boatmen appeared to be busy bringing more to swell it. Ratwatte stopped instinctively. Such a large number of people crossing from the city to Katugastota at that time of the morning was not a usual sight. It was an hour when people went the other way. Going to the capital, where he was the chief, military commander, as a prisoner almost of the king's officers—the chieftain did not relish the idea of being seen in such a role. The crowd however, soon as they recognised the dissawa in the homely clad figure, rushed towards him.

The larger number of them were men serving as officers of the Atapattuwa and Maduway Guards. They greeted him with folded hands, silently—some with tears. The king's order to arrest his top general had got abroad. The men distract at the news had come to where they could greet him without drawing royal displeasure on themselves. If they had anything to say, sorrow at the prospect of losing a loved commander made them dumb. One however there was that spoke up.

He was a foreigner, this man, and had not rushed forward with the Sinhala men who always spurned the company of his race because they were beef eaters. He was almost the last man to greet Ratwatte. As he knelt he brusquely drew his sword from the scabbard, and placing it at the dissawa's feet boldly asked,

"What orders has my commander for me?"

Ratwatte appeared puzzled, but for a moment. Recovering he said,

"Sheath your weapon; get back home."

The man was in no haste to obey. He repeated his words, this time louder than before. There was an unmistakable note of impatience in his voice. He waited for a reply. When he had none, he said,

"If my commander has no orders for me, then hear what I say this day. Upon this bare blade I swear, my sword

shall never more cut a foreign foe that makes war on Senkadagala."

The Javanese soldier—it was the captain of king Sri Wickrama's Javanese mercenaries—returned the weapon on the ground to its sheath and stepped back.

The dissawa gazed in the direction of the city like a hunted stag that rears its head sensing which way safety lies! 'Let these people all get back to their homes', he said. There were many roads converging to the river at the ferry. Turning he walked rapidly along one that led away from the city. The mace-bearers party were alarmed. They felt for the chieftain; but were officers of the Maha Wasala whose dread commands, however unpleasant, had to be executed. So their fathers and grand fathers had done before them. Punishment for neglect of duty was not death but something far worse—a caste stigma for them and their descendants for all time. They did not know how to restrain their prisoner either. After him they hurried like a pack of hounds set after a giant stag whose hoofs they dared not get under.

The road ran parallel to the river from Harispattuwa to the important districts of Yatinuwara and Udunuwara. Ratwatte covered over a league as silent as on his journey to Katugastota. His pace did not slacken, he did not cast one glance on the men behind, till he reached Gannoruwa, the ferry where travellers from Yatinuwara and Udunuwara to the capital forded the Mahaveli. Here he halted and looked round undecided.

The mace bearer and his men asked each other what they should do. Bind him and lead him on to the capital—they had the power to do so? But they would not. Report to the Maha Wasala the fact that the dissawa made good his escape? That would mean loss of their lands and the *Gaththara* stigma for them and all their progeny. It would be better far to follow their prisoner and trust to fate. While the king's men wondered and Ratwatte hesitated, a party escorting a dignified looking palanquin[5] approached from the direction of Udunuwara.

The men laid the vehicle softly down on the bank, and ordered by their leader, stepped into the water to see whether it was not possible to take their load across without obliging its occupant to alight. As they waded into the stream, however, their master emerged from the palanquin. It was a handsome figure. He wore formal chieftain's clothes and stood up with dignity. Yet his face was pale and he looked round as if he did not see[6] what he

looked at clearly. Ratwatte took a few quick steps towards the figure and greeted;

"*Massinay*, whither bound?"

"To Maha Nuwara", the figure said with a sigh.

"Travelling at this time of the day?"

The other looked round as if he did not know what to say. Then said dejectedly;

"Do you not know *massina* the curse that has come on our country?"

After a pause he added in the same strain;

"I go in response to an order from the Maha Wasala. Who can say whether I shall be permitted to return to my quiet home again."

It was Mampitiya Wahala Bandara. Ratwatte though the younger of the two tried to reassure his companion. His efforts however, produced no results. A presentiment of death seemed to hang on Mampitiya. He spoke bitterly of his unswerving loyalty to the throne. Everything he did had however been looked upon with suspicion. Spies had been set to watch him, although he rarely stepped out of his house.

Mampitiya was a son of king Kirti Sri Rajasingha by his Yakada Doliya, a lady of the Mampitiya family.

When at his father's sudden death many a chieftain asked why the king's son should not be raised to the throne, he had been content to let his claims be passed over, because Kirti Sri had appointed his uncle to be Yuwa Raja. The latter ascended the throne as Rajadhi Rajasingha. Mampitiya had no reason to regret that decision; for that uncle treated him with great kindness. Indeed Rajadhi Rajasingha would have made him the greatest man in the kingdom. But Mampitiya was not ambitious. He liked a quiet life and after a short space of service in the king's government came to his manor at Mampitiya where he lived with his kumarihamy and two daughters.

The time came when a band of proud chieftains resolved that the Andra Dynasty should not hold sway in Senkadagala any longer. Rajadhi was a monarch who had noble ways, loved the Dhanta Dhatu and promoted religion. For all that he was a foreigner. They wanted a Sinhala prince to rule over Sinhalay. So they decided to dispose of the Andra ruler and place Mampitiya Wahala Bandara on the throne. The conspirators, however, reckoned without their host. Soon as Mampitiya was told of the plan he went to the king and placed before him all he knew

of the project. The conspiracy was supressed. Rajadhi was at a loss how to reward the amazing loyalty of his nephew. Land and gold[8] he possessed. So the king came to Mampitiya, and himself supervised the aswedumising of a paddy field. He named the field ඔටුනුකාව[9] (*Otunu—kaawa*) and presented it to Mampitiya as a mark of royal esteem.

When Rajadhi departed to heaven, and Sri Wickrama took his place, Mampitiya went to the new monarch and paid him due homage as a loyal subject. But Sri Wickrama had little faith in any man once considered good enough to be a candidate for kingship. Mampitiya's noble qualities and the deference with which people spoke of him irked. Chieftains had once plotted to place Mampitiya on the throne: they might do so again. As treason spread around him the Wahala Bandara was looked upon as a potent danger to the king's power. He had been told that though middle aged Mampitiya was living with a widowed sister of his. Such a union was incest except in the royal family when a monarch wished to have ofspring of pure royal descent. Incest? An idea occurred to Sri Wickrama that confirmed his worst fears. Mampitiya pretending to be a loyal subject all the time—was he trying to beget descendants that could claim pure royal lineage? That thought never left Sri Wickrama. When disturbing information was brought to him of treason in general, the foolish king made up his mind to liquidate the threat that the existence of a man like Mampitiya Wahala Bandara[10] might make possible.

After a short time of rest and conversation at Gannoruwa Ratwatte and Mampitiya crossed the river together. They proceeded towards the capital, Mampitiya in his palanquin, feeling too weak to walk, and Ratwatte Dissawa walking by its side. When the two prisoners were reported to be at the Koraha Wahalkada, orders came that the wahala bandara be detained in the prison house and Ratwatte brought in before the king.

What kind of trial the dissawa received it is not known: neither is it known whether he put up a defence. He was confronted with the story of the arecanut he cut in three and the words he was reported to have uttered on the occasion. He was asked what necessity there was to use a sword when all that was needed was an arecanut-cutter. It was a strict rule that none might draw a weapon either in the king's presence or within palace limits without royalty's express command. Ratwatte was told that he had committed an act of treason by unsheathing his blade whilst marching in the monarch's train. He was condemned to death on

the very day of his arrest. The sword of execution was brought out of the royal armoury—it had been kept ready—even as sentence was passed. As the chieftain stepped out of the Koraha Wahalkada the executioner's procession was already there—so completely had Sri Wickrama been convinced of his treason!

Two wada-bera throbbed; and the executioner and his mate dressed in turkey cloth with garlands of blood red flowers round their necks and arms, began a demoniac dance[11] usual to the occasion. Their victim guarded by the king's men would bring up the rear, as a rule sighing and in tears. That day there was a curious innovation.

Ratwatte grunted a command; and the men fell back. He walked in advance carrying his head high as he usually did when issuing commands to his officers. The drums throbbed for the king to hear; but the dancers stepped perfunctorily, a couple of fathoms behind the condemned man. At the Kumara-hapuwa he turned and spoke. There was no tremble in his voice, no quail in his eye.

"Look, sirrah, my neck is not like those you cut every day." He patted the nape of his neck — it was massive, fatter than the head it supported.

"Give me thy sword; is it sharp enough ?"

The man sank on his knees to offer the deadly looking weapon. Ratwatte felt the edge. He said,

"Not keen enough, this, for thy kind of work."

He thought for a moment. Then taking the *killotay* from his waist began to sharpen the blade deliberately. After much work he said smiling;

"Look, it is quite sharp now. See thou cut at one blow."

The *killotay* he handed to the executioner bidding the man to keep it as a memento. Facing in the direction of the Dalada shrine Ratwatte recited the *Tun-Sarana*. Then came the rough voice of command men were accustomed to;

"To thy rajakariya".

One blow of the blade separated the dissawa's head. It was custom for the executioner to arrange the corpse on the ground and take leave of it, specially when the victim was a man of rank — all executions that took place at the Kumara-hapuwa were of men that occupied high place. They straightened out the body and with both hands the executoner picked up the head and placed it on the now lifeless breast. He placed his palms on the ground

and his forehead between them moaning aloud that he had but discharged a rajakariya by past sinful karma he was born to. Back at home he called to his son, and handed the *killotay* to the lad saying it was the noblest treasure he had ever possessed. He directed that it be handed down in the family, descendants of which still treasure it and relate how it was given to their ancestor by the fearless dissawa.

What of Ratwatte's chance fellow traveller from Gannoruwa on the noon of the day of execution ? He was in prison. News of his arrest filled many with sorrow and disgust. Mampitiya's noble qualities and his refusal to be mixed up in any treasonous move, were only too well known. He was loved for his ways and the country loved him because his royal father had won the hearts of all men. The pontiffs of Malwatte and Asgiriya and many an aristocrat begged the king to set him free. They felt certain that the wahala bandara was not guilty of incest. Nor was he capable of any disloyalty to the throne. But such intercession only brought royal displeasure on the would be mediators. Each voice that spoke for Mampitiya magnified, in Sri Wickrama's eyes, the danger he could be to the throne. Those that strove to help the gentle prince unknowingly quickened his end. Mampitiya's arrest had been ordered on a charge of incest. He was condemned to death lest he commit treason at a future date.

The Senkadagala Tusker in Must

MANY a great man of Sinhalay had gone to an undeserved death. Some of these dissatisfied with Sri Wickramarajasingha's rule had conspired to remove him from the throne. Others connected to the conspirators by blood were suspected of complicity in treason. Many more heads had rolled into the blood smothered grass at Kumaruppa, because their names had been submitted to the king as potential traitors, at moments when Sri Wickrama happened to be under the influence of drink.

Sri Wickrama ruled over a people who universally regarded the use of intoxicants as degrading. The monarch's habitual violation of the fifth precept began to be talked about everywhere. Genial in talk and of religious ways he had taken great care to respect the laws of Sinhalay during the first years of his reign. Now he gave autocratic orders, demoniac sometimes; and drink seemed to be the only explanation. When displeased he would resemble a *rakusa*. Envy amongst the great families made unscrupulous men place complaints before him at moments he was unable to think clearly. Towards the end of his reign almost every ruling family of the kingdom had lost more than one of its leading members. Some mourned the death by execution of all their adult males. Not even the yellow robe could protect an individual from his anger. Indeed in Senkadagala no man's life was safe. Secretly, during sober moments, he inquired how each victim had faced execution. When told that they faced death with courage he raged like a caged tiger. Terror of death he expected would stamp out treason. Unjust and harsh punishment increased discontent; and Sri Wickrama thought the nation had not learnt its lesson.

The man whose influence had raised him to the throne was blamed for the misgovernment of the kingdom. His last bold bid to undo the blunder, to seize the king's person with the aid

of his own body guard, had miscarried : and Pilimatalawway Adigar had gone the way of so many others of the nobility. Decreeing death on his benefactor, and probably his father too, he told the officers who had to see the executioners carry out that decree that he wanted to see the condemned man's head, and would go to the scene of his death in the evening. Perhaps he had wished to make certain that the man whom he feared most had been removed from his path. But from the moment he had set eyes on that gory head — the executioners had placed it on the fork of a tree — Sri Wickrama became another man. Even when sober he appeared a sorely troubled individual. He spoke little. To the courtiers of the Etulkattala he was kind as usual. But when he held court to transact state business he was not kindly. Courtiers felt no man's life was safe, who had to deal with Sri Wickrama after that change.

The king's heartless punishments were in every man's mouth. A fire seemed to sear the land. Chieftains reported talking about the country being misgoverned were marched to death at the first opportunity he had. Conceiving an idea that loyalty was inherent to some districts and treason a characteristic of others, he ordered every man to the district of his birth. Many a man had to leave wife and children in obedience to that order. Muslims as a class he suspected—to him they were all born with a gift to be spies. And their love of money made them tools in the hands of the British. Hundreds of these ordered to leave the Pas Rata attempted to open villages in distant districts, many perishing in uninhabitable forest country.

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Folk-poem

'Everywhere in Lanka resentment spreads,
And some in Lanka rise in protest,
They devise ways to assassinate the king:
And plan to rebel against him.'

In this troublesome state Sri Wickrama looked for new administrators. He chose two men who were known to be firm friends. Both were brave men who had distinguished themselves in war. Ehelepola's share in the war with the English had pleased the king. While others reckoned the English clever fighters, Ehelepola treated their war prowess with contempt. Therefore he was

given the important Province of Sabaragamuwa to administer. Kandepola was sent to Nuwarakalavia, where too the English had territories and from which direction trouble had to be expected. To show how much trust he placed in them he bade the two chieftains set out from the capital in state. Either chiefs felt grateful and hoped to deserve the king's love; and either started his work with goodwill towards the people he was placed over.

Ehelepola had many friends in the Pas Rata, that part of the kingdom administered by the king and his Rate Mahatmayas. He came of ancient family and his friendship was valued. He wrote to his friends often. Every time there was a letter for Kandepola too. The vidanay who brought the Adigar's letters made his first halt in the home of Kandepola in the capital. From here he started next morning to journey to the other addresses. Some of the letters once fell into the hands of the king's spies. They obtained more of them by and by. They were full of treasonous news.

One said the Ralas of Sabaragamuwa were prepared to make the writer their ruler. Another said he was considering why he should not set up a kingdom of his own; he would make a better monarch than a Tamil man. A third said the Navandanna men of the district had begun work on a throne for his use. So on, the treason appearing more serious in successive letters. Sri Wickrama was beside himself with anger. He could not get sleep. During the day he relished no food. His spies asked to get more information of Kandepola's part in the conspiracy, brought unexpected news.

They had watched round Kandepola Walawwa one day. Ehelepola Adigar's Vidanay had delivered a letter to Kandepola Nilamay, had his dinner, and had gone to sleep in a *maduwa* attached to the house. It was the night of the servant's arrival in the capital. In the night they had seen Kandepola Nilamay stealthily take up the vidanay's bag, extract certain olas from it, and insert olas of his own whilst the man was fast asleep. Further investigation revealed that the epistles already in the king's possession had been deliberately put in the way of his spies. The writing on them too was clearly recognisable. A search of Kandepola's house yielded a couple of olas addressed to Ehelepola's friends as coming from the adigar; they were meant to continue the treasonous tale. Olas addressed to Kandepola, of which there were a number, contained no hint of the treason the letters from Ehelepola, that the spies had chanced on, disclosed.

It was a diabolical plan of Kandepola to put Ehelepola Adigar into trouble; and become Maha Adigaram Nilamay himself.

Soon as the king felt sure of Kandepola's guilt he wished to meet the chieftain. Kandepola dissawa had left for his province a couple of days earlier. Messengers were despatched to summon him for important consultations to the capital. The Atapattuway corps sent had instructions to say that the monarch had expressed his confidence in the loyalty of the dissawa.

'My day of glory is come', thought Kandepola Dissawa. He set out with all the pomp and circumstance allowed to a dissawa on ceremonial occasions. For he was convinced that he had won the monarch's love and was to receive *sammana* for his loyalty and good work at a time everyone was suspected of treasonous ways. Dreams of future greatness filled his mind. As he drew near the capital, however, a more numerous force of Maduway soldiery met him with an order that he was to be brought to the capital in chains. Soon as he was taken to the king a Lekam Nilamay confronted him with the letters and with the spies who had watched his home on the day he replaced Ehelepola's letters with forgeries. He did the only thing open for a guilty man, begged the king's pardon.

"I shall make an example of thee", the monarch exclaimed.

His order was as good as his word. The hands that wrote the forged letters incriminating a friend were to be cut. The eyes that helped pulled out of their sockets, and after a few sundry tortures the dissawa was to be bound hand and foot and sawn in two lengthwise. And the populace that saw said, 'Indeed it is a wicked thing for one friend to plan another's downfall'.

Ehelepola's name was honourably cleared. He came to the capital and received *sammana* from the Maha Wasala. Back in his province he continued his good work, making the land produce more paddy and chena grain; and his people were contented with the king's rule.

At this time Sri Wickrama wanted more money. He would suddenly resolve to increase an existing tax, at times impose a new one. Chieftains felt this was wrong; but no one dared to say so. Ehelepola received orders to levy a new tax from the *Bisogam* in his province. The adigar felt such a tax was altogether illegal. Even if accepted as within the king's powers the levy would be excessive considering the state of those that would have to pay. He did not think it a matter on which he should go to the monarch. So he despatched an ola submitting

his views. He stated that the tax would be considered oppressive by those that had to pay.

Sri Wickrama flared into a rage when the letter was read to him at court. Perhaps he was in an angry mood. Ehelepola, he said, cared more about his popularity than about carrying out the orders of the Maha Wasala. The contents of Kandepola's letters were remembered. Popular with the inhabitants, the backing of warlike Ralas, more suited to rule than a Wadiga man — these boasts from the old letters fit into the picture of a traitor that the adigar's dispatch about the taxes raised in the king's mind. Messengers were despatched in a *tadabala painday* commanding Ehelepola Adigar's presence at court.

The adigar realised it was dangerous to be within the king's reach when he was in such anger as to send an order like that to one of his status. To play for time he sent the messengers back with a letter that he was ill, and was expecting to submit his explanation soon as he could. The powerful ralas of Sabaragamuwa hearing of the adigar's trouble, and aware of the fact that royal displeasure had been incurred by Ehelepola's desire to be fair by the inhabitants of their province, rallied to assure him of their loyalty. They asked him to break away from the king and administer the dissawa on his own. 'If it becomes a matter of war we shall risk our all for you' they said. But even as they came one party after another to assure their chieftain of help, an armed force under the second adigar, Molligoda, was marching down to Sabaragamuwa with orders to bring Ehelepola Maha Nilamay to the capital. Ehelepola as he hesitatingly made preparations to resist, received an epistle. It said,

> "The tusker of Senkadagala is in must. It has grown violent, and has lost all fear of the *henduwa*. If any come within its reach results will be disastrous. Flight from the kingdom appears to be the wisest course."

The ola was not signed. Its seal was a friendly flower[1]; and the man who brought it Molligoda Adigar's Mohottala. Ehelepola guessed that the king had made up his mind to order his execution. He retreated to the boundary of Sinhalay so that he might give Molligoda the excuse he obviously wanted to give the king. He well knew that Molligoda too would be risking his popularity with Sri Wickrama if he returned without the prisoner. Both adigars were playing for time. With the king's altered ways neither was able to guess how it might all end. Ehelepola crossed the boundary. Molligoda returned to the capital to report

that the rebellion in Sabaragamuwa had subsided; but that Ehelepola Adigar had taken sanctuary on the British side of the boundary. He brought a few prisoners whom the king ordered to be executed as rebels.

The king always suspected chieftains who advocated friendship with the English. Here was a man to whom he had shown all the *karunawa* a king could, going over to an enemy in broad day. He felt certain Ehelepola meant to get English aid against him, to seize regal power for himself. He would be revenged on the traitor ! Though he had escaped, his wife and children were in his power. Messengers were hurried to tell Ehelepola Kumarihamy that the king desired to see her, and her children too.

The lady felt extremely happy. It was a great honour for a female to be summoned to the royal presence. And her nilamay's children, he wanted to see them too! She did not know that her husband had had to leave his province, and was in disfavour with the king. She dressed her boys in silken cloth and jackets, and gave either a gold *mala* and bangles. The dress of her daughter about four years of age, received much attention. Herself dressed in her best and adorned in costly jewelry — for to go in ones best dress was the way to honour the king — she set out on her journey from her country home where the message had reached her. She was attended by a retinue, some of them carrying *awatu* and *wadanaatu*. It was a sight the people in the villages she passed came out to see.

As the lady and her children drew near Senkadagala Nuwara a band of soldiers were waiting to meet her. They silently flanked the party, and instead of letting the lady proceed to the Palace, conducted them to the king's jail. She could not guess what it meant; and the jailor pretended not to know, either. All he could say was that court had so ordered. Next morning she was to be conducted to the king's presence. Ehelepola Kumarihamy was amazed. She could not yet guess the cruel fate in store for them.

Early next morning the party — there was another lady amongst them besides Ehelepola Kumarihamy — was led to the Devasanghinda, to a flat topped mound formed of earth excavated in the work of building what is now called the Palace Square. The mound rose level with palace grounds opposite. There were close by two executioners armed with their cruel looking sabres, and dressed in garlands of red flowers. People crowding the grounds of the Natha and Vishnu devalas wondered what the

executioners were for. They had been told by the king's men of the adigar's flight to the country governed by the English Governor. But they could not say what work there was for the sword of execution, even if the king wanted to be so cruel as to punish a lady of rank.

The king now appeared at the ornate entrance to the Dakina Mandapa. It was almost opposite where the lady stood, and within hearing range. The lady fell on her knees and folded her palms to the king. That king cried in a voice of thunder,

"Tell me where thy husband is. For the *karunawa* and honour I showed him, he has returned treachery."

She said with truth that she did not know. The king threatened death to all of them if she did not disclose his whereabouts. The lady, now alarmed, protested her children and she herself had not done any wrong to the Maha Wasala, and did not know what wrong her husband had done. Every time the king spoke louder, and threatened worse. Ehelepola Kumarihamy maintained she and her children were innocent and prayed that if punishment had been deserved it must descend on the person who was guilty and not on her children. She called on the Devas to witness[2] that she and her children had done no wrong. Though every word she spoke was humble and reasonable, the king's anger seemed to rise. In the voice of a *rakusa* he cried,

"Thou shalt see what I can do."

He ordered that four mortars be brought from the Hatara Weediya (the four principal streets of the city).

"Thy children shall be beheaded and thou shalt crush the heads in the mortars! Tell me where thy husband is."

His threats he spoke in a voice loud enough to be heard all over the place.

Trembling at the prospect of what threatened her children, the lady put her babe down and placing her palms and forehead on the sward prayed that the king treat them with mercy. How could her little children be held responsible for what they could not even understand ? But the cruel monarch would not give ear to her entreaties.

"Where are my executioners ?" he cried in his *rakusa* voice, "behead each child and place a head in each of the four mortars. I will exterminate all Ehelepola blood, I will see that not an *ehela* tree grows in my kingdom so that not a syllable of thy husband's accursed name shall be heard in my kingdom."

An executioner attempted to seize the eldest boy. He ran

behind the mother; and the man knew not what to do. For he could not by customary rules touch a female of rank. The younger child, nine year old Medduma Bandara, too young to know fear of a sword, laughed.

"Brother is afraid", he said, "I am not afraid of this man."

So saying he took a step towards the executioner. Before it had touched the ground he was taken by the hand and the sabre came down speckling the mother's face with the brave boy's blood. Round his mother the elder boy ran. The sabre bearer did not know what to do. But the king yelled his order from where he stood. And while the boy shrieked and the mother cried for mercy, his head rolled to the ground. The beautiful little girl's turn came next. The mother wept aloud; so did every woman in the crowd around. The little bodies convulsed in a pool of blood. There was hardly a man that did not dry a tear. Beside the king stood a page boy[3], a favourite of the king. He was the son of the Maha Mudaliya of Sri Wickrama's palace service. At sight of the decapitated bodies twitching in the blood a cry rose in his throat which the lad attempted to stifle with little success; and the king stared reprovingly down at him.

Red as a red hibiscus was the lady's face. Like a fire[4] glowed the king relentless. Three corpses at her feet, the unfortunate mother clasped the baby to her breast, giving it milk that was to be her last feed.

"Give up thy babe, or I shall ask the executioner to pluck it away from thy breast", the royal *rakusa* cried.

Before the mother could obey the executioner took it by a tiny leg, and hit off the head as if he was cutting the head of a fowl for flesh. Blood and milk came intermingling from its little throat. And now the cruel looking form yelled,

"Thou shalt crush each head in a mortar, if thou doest not, I will give thee to a low caste man[5] for wife."

She fell in a swoon. When she got up an officer standing by the executioners kindly said that it was better to obey than be disgraced; for the king would carry out his threat. Trembling she took each pestle put into her hand and droped it into a mortar. The crowd groaned. Women joined their hands above their heads and wept aloud. There were many men too who wept like children. Defiant in her sorrow the lady turned towards the cruel monarch, and in her loudest voice cried,

"Are the thousand eyes of Sakra gone blind that he cannot see the cruelties of this heartless monster ? Are the Satara

Waran Devas asleep in their heavens that a demon is allowed to commit outrages of this magnitude ? May the great devas witness this outrage done to me and my children and send down a thunderbolt to kill this *rakusa*. May Kataragama Deva help my husband to rid this land of th lowly monster."

King Sri Wickrama shook with rage. He yelled louder than before,

"Take them to the lake, Bogambara. Tie them hand and foot and hang a large stone on the neck of each. Drown them so that they may not float for a moment."

Both noble dames turned to go as if they wanted nothing better than death. The crowd followed, now weeping aloud. On the edge of the lake they hung a stone to each lady's neck; and they jumped in without waiting to be told. The merciful waters covered them; while the crowd raised a wail that was heard as far as the palace.

On every lip was now a curse on the king. They called on the devas to see justice done, to rid the land of a *rakusa* monarch giving him as much sorrow as he had inflicted on innocent children and virtuous dames. People did not dress food in their homes. That is how they mourn the death of a relative amongst the Sinhalese. Even in the palace where now and again the king repeated the threat that he will see all *ehela* trees destroyed, there was an uneasy feeling, a presentiment that a catastrophe was at hand.

Senkadagala Nuwara had been a peaceful city during the times of the last two monarchs whom the people now spoke of with reverence. Kirti Sri Rajasingha devoted his entire reign to the revival of religion except when invasion threatened. His brother Rajadhi Rajasinha did his best to continue the good work, giving alms to priests and encouraging meritorious acts. During neither reign had Bahirawa Kanda, Getambe and Lewella seen so many people lose their lives by execution. King Sri Wickramarajasinha seemed destined to thin the ranks of the aristocracy. But of all his harsh punishments the people resented most his treatment of Ehelepola Kumarihamy and her children. They were accustomed to tales of execution and torture, but had never heard of torture inflicted on ladies and little children. They spoke of the first execution of that day, the execution of Medduma Bandara who stepped forward fearless, with hot tears. A folk song remembers the ruthless act :-

[illegible]ගහ වීදියෙ තුන්මංහලේ දී
නාගලා බොදියෙ තුන්මංහලේ දී
සතර වරං දෙවි නඩු නැති දිනේ දී
ලදරු බන්ධාර මැරුවා එතන් දී

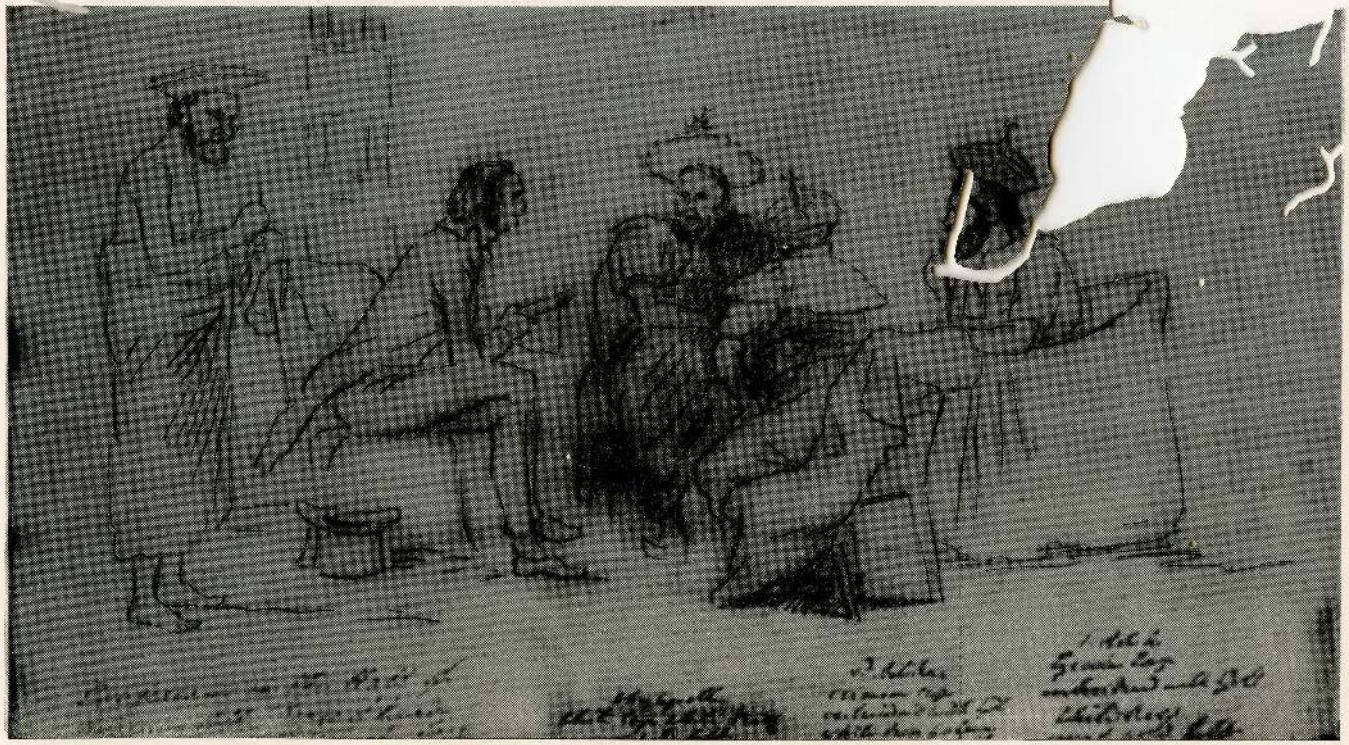
Folk-song

[illegible] three roads meet on the Bodhi Street,
[illegible] he Bo and Na trees stand together,
[illegible] the Four Gods had forgotten to administer Justice,
At that [illegible]pot they murdered the little Bandara.'

The Last Retreat

ON the day of the Ehelepola executions a pall of sorrow descended on Senkadagala Nuwara and the country immediately around. The populace when they heard of the adigar's flight beyond the reach of the king had cried '*deviyannay pihitai*'.[1] They had felt not a little pleased that the king's executioners will not have the chance to let still another great man's blood stain the slope of Bahirawa Kanda. When a couple of days later Katupurullay men spread the news that his lady and children will be brought to trial, and that the populace would be permitted to see the king dispense justice next morning, they had wondered what he would order. They crowded into the Devasanghinda and the grounds round the temple of Maha Vishnu. They saw what they had never expected to see, had never seen before or heard in story—four little bodies beautiful like wreathes of flowers convulsing in a pool of blood, and a ferocious executioner pick up the tender bleeding heads by their hair and drop each in a mortar; then the mother forced by a threat of disgrace to her feminine honour[2], to put a pestle in each mortar. Women in the crowd—they had come to see one of their sex brought to trial—wept aloud forgetting the king's presence. Neither was there a man, executioners and king excepted, that had a dry cheek. The crowd had followed the ladies to the banks of the lower lake. When their beautiful forms disappeared beneath the waters of Bogambara a cry rose to the Devas, a voice that subsided hours after, to spread in ever widenning ripples over a country where, soon after, the king's summons to rajakariya went calling all able bodied men to defend his throne. That summons few heeded.

Men and women in the city could not forget the horrid scene. They prayed the devas to send a thunderbolt down to strike a king that had the heart to order such cruelty. Sakra, the Satara



Sir John D'Oyly in conference with three chieftains—a mohottala keeps a record.

(*From an old drawing, by courtesy of the Department of National Museums*).

Waran Devas dread Dedimunda and Kalukumara—had they all gone blind? they asked. They repeated all the curses in the language upon the *rakusa* in the palace. In the homes of the common people no fire was kindled, no food dressed. They mourned as though the dead children were their own.

Smoke curled over the roofs of the wealthy—for the king's [illegible]. But few within them had a desire for food. The [illegible] universal. Many a courtier sat amazed in his home [illegible] going back to the letters he had received from Ene[illegible] Will the king learn that he too had received a few of Kandepola's forged olas. His unparalleled outrage filled their hearts with resentment; but they were at pains to show their loyalty to the offending prince in a hundred ways. While they hurried to court their tear eyed ladies sat in the homes cursing the king they were going to fawn upon. They had heard that the queen Rangammal[4] had implored her lord not to vent on women and innocent children anger that the adigar had caused. If her prayers had been brushed aside, what hope was there of justice if the king turned his attention to another of his nobles in the same fashion. Despair gripped the hearts of the aristocrats, a dread for the safety of their families. Everyone of them felt the only thing they could do was to send their families away from the capital; so that if there was danger coming they could flee outside the limits of Sinhalay. But it was custom that no courtier should take his family away from the capital without the king's permission. And to beg for leave in the state of affairs would be to raise suspicion. With Sri Wickrama guilt followed suspicion immediately after.

From the moment of the drowning, women of the humbler homes were found walking to the banks of Bogambara to gaze at the water. They were expecting the bodies to come up. Tears still flowed for the children and the ladies. Two days after the drowning a body was seen on the waters. There were officers whose duty it was to report unusual things at the palace gates. But the news about the body on the water they carried to Molligoda walawwa. The adigar came up and asked his mohottala to give the body burial. It was the corpse of Ehelepola Kumarihamy. Everyone that gathered wept at the sight. The king, however, heard nothing about it.

Sri Wickrama still raged that 'Not an ehela tree should grow on the soil of Sinhalay'. He asked for full reports on what Ehelepola adigar did during the end of his career in Sabaragamuwa,

and for lists of his friends and movables there. In his state of mind it was dangerous to deny him the kind of repor he wanted —information that Ehelepola adigar had tried to disaffect the leading people of the Sabaragamuwa Province. When however reports compiled to please him were submitted, he took steps that had not been forseen. He ordered all the headmen of cer areas to the capital. Some obeyed. Many were they t wisdom was more sagacious than obedience to ord waited in readiness to flee at the first sign of dang them did not wait either. Those that came were a ey had not seen that the others too obeyed orders. t many went back. Their heads lay on the sands of Lewell or Getamba. A katupurullay man who had been specially de uted to arrest an individual the king knew to be a disloyal he man returned to report that at his distant approach the wanted individual had crossed over to the other side of the boundary. The messenger was sentenced to death for neglect of duty.[5]

News now came that an army had set out from Colombo. Ehelepola and a number of Sabaragamuwa chieftains were reported to be with the general. The Sabaragamuwa chiefs had units of their customary fighters under them. Sri Wickrama summoned his dissawas and ordered they should prepare for war. He promised generous reward to all who will have sizable *tharam*[6] (තරම්) heaps.

> "Ehelepola *peraliya*", he said "should be taken alive, to suffer each one of the thirtytwo tortures that he richly deserved. The false English should be given no quarter. They were a false nation."

There was no chieftain but felt a voice in his inmost heart say, 'Ehelepola *peraliya*? Why the king is the worst *peraliya* ever. His oath to the Maithree Bodhisatva when he took up the Sword of State, he has completely forgotten. Mercy and justice are ideas unknown in his government. He thinks we made him king to slaughter those who raised him from a cottage to the throne.'

In the country, where Maha Wasala summons to war rajakariya was being broadcast by beat of tomtom, news of the executions were received in a way different to the despair of the city populace. Wise old men said they had all along expected some calamity.

Not satisfied with the *pattirippuwa*, from which noble minded monarchs had been content to appear to their subjects, the king had built an octagon where the *multengay* of the Dalada Mandira had stood. It obscured the temple on its western side, the

direction from which the Devas came for worship[7]. Appearing in state on it the king arrogated to himself greater importance than he gave to the Danta Dhatu, forgetting that a monarch's first duty was to see the Tooth Relic given all the honour he can. By his mad behaviour he had incurred the anger of the Devas that protect Sinhalay. And they had sent him a madness by way of punishment. The children and ladies of Ehelepola Walawwa must have together committed some great sin in a past birth, and here they reaped the unfortunate results of their demerit. The king is going to be punished for his overweening pride in this birth itself. His subjects now spit on the name that they once respected. Such is the punishment for arrogance to the Danta Dhatu. No good will come to the kingdom till a better prince takes his place on the throne.

As the army with which Ehelepola Maha Nilamay came drew near the border more men led by minor headmen went over to his side. That news seemed to bring the monarch to a sense of his danger. He asked Molligoda Adigar to take the field. He wanted the enemy stopped in the low country below Balana. Molligoda marched down to Satara Korala at the head of his forces. His army was not small. It was captained by experienced men. Reports of his spies did not say that the opposing army was such as he could not deal with. But his heart was not in the fight. Every moment his thoughts strayed to Senkadagala where the royal tusker raged in must. The quality of mercy alone entitled a prince to sit on a throne. Sri Wickrama had no *karunawa* left in his heart. Molligoda felt his king was almost on the verge of madness. Or he could never have so completely forgotten the oaths that bound him to respect the Dasa Raja Dharma and the laws of the kingdom. Was the sword of Natha meant to slaughter little children?

Night in the camp of a Sinhala army was a time of relaxation, unless an ambush was in progress. From the General down everyone tried to make the time pass pleasantly that the enemy might make no mistake about their readiness to meet him. They gathered round fires to sing brave songs to the *udekki* and cymbals. When one man did better than another there was a huzza—loud enough for an enemy who was not too far away to hear. If the foe could be seen they cried challenges, specially to Sinhala mercenaries on the other side, asking them why they marched after white invaders, whether they were not descended of good black Sinhala parents. Molligoda Adigar from his kadjan hut in the

camp looked down on his army. The singing, the huzzas and the merriment were there, but in a minor key. Here and there men stood in silent knots. Intelligence-men told him that all the young men in the army gathered round whoever was a witness of the event, or pretended to have seen what had passed when Ehelepola Adigar's lady and children were brought before the king. The younger men did not seem to tire of listening to the story. They spoke more of the adigar that had been chased away, as they said, than of the adigar commanding the army. And they had also heard how some inhabitants on the Sinhala side of the *kadawatu* were going over to the wronged Maha Nilamay. Yet many of them were young men who had never set eyes on the ex-adigar.

A general's mohottala was his aide-de-camp. It was his duty to see that the morale of the forces was not spoilt. Molligoda's mohottala was asked to go amongst the men. Wherever he got the opportunity to speak on the subject he said that the king in punishing Ehelepola adigar's family had merely carried out the law. On all sides young men as well as middle aged soldiers asked him 'Are there such laws in the world?'

As the adigar looked on the army his mind troubled by what the men had begun to talk about, an *appuhamy* from a watch post afar stood before his hut. The adigar thought he had brought information of enemy movements by night. He bade him enter. Given permission to speak he took an ola from the folds of his cloth and offered it on open palms. The ola bore no address. Its flower seal had five rows of petals[8]; the letter was from a brother. The adigar's brother was in the camp. Why a letter, he thought. He quickly read the contents; then, in a voice that showed the matter was not of much importance, ordered the officer to get back to his post.

"Sir," said the officer speaking in a whisper "The messenger who brought the epistle is at my post."

Molligoda said he should be detained. The petty officer appeared to know that the letter was far more important than the adigar made him understand. The general sent for his mohottala. The consultation between the two was in secret and lasted for quite some time. Messengers went out to summon a few of the commanders to the hut. In their presence the mohottala took ola and stile and inscribed on it what Molligoda Adigar said. The epistle was sealed in the same fashion as the letter that had come in; and the mohottala himself disguised like a poor cultivator, walked into the night with the man who had brought in the first

letter. No one knew the contents of either the letter or the reply sent. In after years the contents of the two olas were quoted to show that even the king's general and dissawas commanding his forces had been quite estranged by the king's treatment of the children and lady of Ehelepola Adigar. Sri Wickramarajasingha had by his cruel ways forfeited the loyalty of his nobles.

Ola from Ehelepola:—

"ගු ණ වත් මොල්ලිගොඩ සොහොයුරු තුමනි සොඳ
බ ල වත් වරද කලෙ මට වඩිහ රජ තද
කරලන්ට ඉංග්‍රීසිහට මෙ සඳ
කොහොමක් ඉඩ දෙනු මැනවි නොකරමින් යුද"

Translation:—

'Dear brother Molligoda, kind and true,
Great wrong has the Wadiga king done to me:
To bring the English into the land at this moment
Help me somehow without waging war.'

And the reply the Mohottala carried said:—

"බලවත් සොහොයුරනි ඇහැලේපොලර යු තු
ඉඩ හැර මම ඉඳිමි ඔබ අදහසට සි තු
මෙ චිනර කල් පැවති අප ජාතියෙ දි මු තු
පුවතර නිදහසය ඉවරයි මෙයින් ම තු"

Translation:—

'Oh, powerful brother Ehelepola,
I shall make way to let you have your wish,
But the renowned freedom of our glorious race,
Maintained thus far, will be no more.'

The ex-adigar sent letters to chieftains and friends, those marching to join forces in the field and those assembling more men for the war, to say that he was not bringing the English on a war of conquest but to remove the unjust king that was on the throne. In a letter to the chieftains of Hewaheta he wrote that the English governor had taken an oath in his church[9] that he would set up a government of the Kandyans once the wicked king was dethroned.

Meanwhile, Molligoda was in a dangerous predicament. His family was in the capital at the king's mercy. That king had set a fair sized Wadiga mercenary force marching in his rear. They kept a distance between themselves and the adigar's army. His mohottala reported the main purpose of the force was to send the king reports as to what Molligoda was doing in the field—it was a regiment set to spy. These Indian mercenaries had been started by Sri Wickrama. It was gradually replacing the Atapattuwa and

Maduway soldiery, hereditary servicemen who made brave soldiers and prided in the honour of guarding the king during peace and of marching to the field during war. The mercenary force had swelled of late, and it was felt the king planned to have an army of his own. In the field from their position in the rear, officers of this force appeared to follow the movements of Molligoda's army without in any way attempting to play a part in the fight. Wadiga officers captained the force. If it grew into a large force there was no doubt the king would care even less about his chieftains and people than he had been doing of late.

After the ola from Ehelepola the two armies came more than once within firing range and there were firing duels. The Wadiga commander reported that the two armies were engaged, but no conclusive battle took place. He did not know the firing was not meant to kill. Molligoda every time retreated. This was what the adigar too reported. At length news came to the capital that Molligoda was withdrawing his army above Balana Pass.

In Senkadagala, after the army had marched out, everything was quiet. Sri Wickrama expected the invading army to be defeated before they gained the pass. The few chieftains left in the capital as well as those out in the field were living in fear for the safety of their families. Some had made up their minds to rebel the moment he showed signs of distrust. Retainers who knew how their ladies felt took care to keep the palanquins in the manors road-worthy, for flight.

The king knew not what the city populace talked of him. Every morning they rose with a curse on the tongue for Sri Wickrama. Every evening when they lit the usual oil lamp they invoked the devas[10] to strike down the *rakusa* that could order massacre of children and women. The only people who still had any regard for the king were the aristocrats of the Palace Service.

To them he had always been a kind master. Except in the case of Pusellay Nilamay whom he punished for giving him the drink habit, there is no instance of an Etulkattala man Sri Wickrama had been unkind to. With Uduwela, the Maha Mudaliya of the Palace he was so intimate that he treated his son as if he were his own child. Almost from his tenth year he was fond of the boy and asked the Mudaliya to get down his *kukka* when ever he happened to be absent from the palace. At lunch he would drop rice from his golden plate to the boy's palm and bid him eat. Often the king would join with the palace service men to

fool Bammanay Rala, the jester. He once even saved an Etulkattalay man from a charge of murder.

Imbulmalgedera Piharala had stolen out of the palace one night. No Etulkattalay man had the right to leave palace precincts during the term of his rajakariya. It was a rule strictly observed. The man returned late in the morning, indeed too late for his duty. The Maha Mudaliya placed him under arrest. When the king returned from the Dalada Mandapa the piharala ran forward and fell at his feet. He said he could not resist the call of sex, had gone to visit a paramour in Gelioya, seven miles away, and when surrounded by the woman's relatives, had cut down one of them lest he be late at the palace. Sri Wickrama sent him to the jail, but saved him from a murder charge. Later, when he wanted a man to go as Dissawa to the fever ridden province of Nuwarakalavia, he appointed the foolish piharala to the post. A custom according to which palace personnel could not be punished by the ordinary authorities he interpreted in such a way that entire families fell outside the jurisdiction of the chieftains. Men of the palace service returned the love he showed them tenfold. Though they could not say the execution of children and women was correct, they still spoke not a word against their royal master.

From the time he was told that whole families went over to Ehelepola the king's temper gave place to thought. News that his commanders in the field were falling back added to the chagrin. The jesters were asked to draw the prince out of his despondency. He always liked his jesters. At the moment there were two of them, Bammannay Rala and Bimba in the palace. Neither could bring a smile to the king's face.

Golahellay, Maha Gabada Nilamay, had been awaiting orders regarding the priceless things in his charge. Fearing the command might come too late he had begged for permission to send away the contents of the Maha Aramudala. Then orders came that the entire treasury be evacuated. Treasury chiefs, packers and Sattambi officials had been busy for a number of days. With the treasures went the *lekam-miti*. The work had hardly been completed when the fall of Balana was reported.

The king had never been known to act so slow. Palace aristocrats now feared he might linger in the capital too long. Sri Wickrama had not yet decided where he would hold court whilst the war lasted. When entreated to take steps he gave orders for the evacuation of the Danta Dhatu. Hastily priests and temple officials made preparations. When the usual question fell

'Who is the man that will shoulder the task?' but one man stepped forward. This was Imbulmalgedera, the foolish man whom the king had sent to the fever district of Nuwarakalaviа. The rest said they might be wanted at the battle front. What really made them stay was fear about their families. And Imbulmalgedera and the priests set out with the Dalada, the insignia of the Devalas following in their wake.

The evacuation of the Danta Dhatu was the customary signal for the big families to leave the capital. Ladies now rushed their children to the palanquins. Not a moment was wasted on the movables in their homes. Palanquin men stepped fleeter of foot than ever before, hurrying the ladies and the children of the houses to which they belonged away to safety. On the day he had decided to depart the king called Dowlagala Nilamay, whom he regarded his kinsman. Giving him the two princes of his elder Yakada Doliya in charge he said,

> "Care for these two princes of mine as you care for the apples of your eyes. It will not be thus with me always. When I am back you shall have rich reward."

Dowlagala touched the king's feet in acceptance of the charge, and hastened away with the two little ones lest someone learn of the task he had undertaken. The king asked the queens to travel ahead with a very few servants; as the time the astrologers had selected for him was at dusk. They were to await him in the vicinity of Medamaha Nuwara. At the auspicious moment he set out. There was no stately retreat. Perhaps he expected to move from place to place. He named only two or three of the palace personnel to go with him. This was a surprise since on a previous occasion the entire palace service had gone with him. The men he took with him were Doragamuway Piharala, Molegoda Piharala and Hewavissay Madappuli Rala. There were a couple of men to carry loads of clothing and a plain palanquin with four bearers. The party walked through Udawatta forest and crossed the river at *Wada-atta-padiya*[11] on foot. Then they turned in the direction of Medamaha Nuwara. It was after repeated requests that Sri Wickrama used the palanquin.

In a few hours they came up with the queen's party. One of the Ralas found a village home roomy enough to shelter them for the night. It was the home of a minor headman. The king decided to make a halt. Soon as the party was in the house the king wanted all save the Madappuli Rala and a couple of servants to leave. As Doragamuway Piharala fell on his knees the king

moved his right foot a little forward that he may touch it—the way a monarch shows great love to a subject at leave taking. The piharala touched the foot with forehead and palm. As he got up his eyes full of tears—a drop had fallen on the king's foot—Sri Wickrama said,

"You are weeping, arent you? It will not be quite like this with me for ever. I shall be back. You will then come to me."

To either piharala he gave gifts. Doragamuway received the queen's *theli-heppuwa* [12], two rings and three gold cups. Among Molegoda's gifts was an ivory comb set in gold.

They stepped out their cheeks wet, and walked in different directions as the king had ordered.

For how long the king tarried there it is not known. Late in the morning one day he heard unusual voices and sounds of footsteps round the house. He asked the Madappuli Rala to look out. The door was kept shut; the rala peeped out through an aperture in the wall where a *kitul* valley gutter conducted roof water out. The report of a shot was heard and the rala fell dead. Hewavissay Madappuli Rala closely resembled the king who had for that reason kept him back to help in his hiding. He was the last man to die for king Sri Wickrama.

The door was forced open and a few men entered without ceremony. The party was commanded by Ekneligoda Rala and Batupitiye Nilamay.

"This rogue, this murderer of women and children, bind him", Ekneligoda cried.

Batupitiya too spoke insulting words. The eldest queen from the door of a room asked,

"Is that my brother Batupitiya?"

"Yes you.....", quoth Batupitiya "It was so then, it is this way now".

So saying he snatched at the *mookuthi* ornament on her nose, and the jewel came to his hand; while the queen wept with pain.

"තොට මම දන්න ජීවට හත් දිවි", the king cried in anger.

The Vidanay ordered to bind the king came in with a few pieces of a creeper. Using them for rope he proceeded to bind the king's hands together. It pained him, and Sri Wickrama asked,

"Hast thou forgotten who I am?"

And the vidanay replied,

'තම්පලා වත් තේ
පාරෙන් උඩහ පැත් තේ
ටිගොල වෙල මත් තේ
සිටිය බව ඇයි මතක නැත් තේ'

Translation:—

On a tampala garden
Above the public road,
Then on the hill by Tingolay field,
You lived, I do remember.

The king never returned to his capital. The English Governor and his General were now in the king's palace. Wherever he went Ehelepola Nilamay was addressed as *Yuwa Rajjuruwanwahansay*. The people were told that the English Governor will go away and Ehelepola Maha Nilamay with the help of the Chieftains will rule the country; and there will be no change. Molligoda Maha Nilamay and other chiefs were always with the Governor. It was said that they were discussing about an agreement as to how the government of the country should be carried on. A document was drawn up that the government of the country will not be altered, and old customs and laws will be in force. Priests and the great chieftains were all consulted; and a day was fixed for the signing of the treaty. The priesthood, however, did not like the agreement because the English king was not a buddhist.

On the morning of the day that the agreement was to be signed Wariapola Anunayaka was in the then vacant Dalada Mandira. He was one of the priests who thought that after the king was sent away the English Governor too should leave. But the chifetains liked the English should remain; and the chieftains should rule in the name of the King of England. Wariyapola Anunayaka saw the English soldiers hoisting the flag of the English in the great courtyard of the palace. He ran to the spot and pulling down the flag that was going up put his foot on it and cried,

"You shall not hoist any flag here yet. Sign the document before you do anything of the kind."

And the English stopped the hoisting. At length Ehelepola Maha Nilamay and the other chieftains gathered in the Audience Hall. Many of the priests too came. Of the chieftains Galagoda, a commander of the King, did not come. The chiefs who were there signed the Treaty. Galagoda Senevi did not.

For ten days this brave commander refused to sign the document. The English Governor went every day to his walawwa, yet he refused.

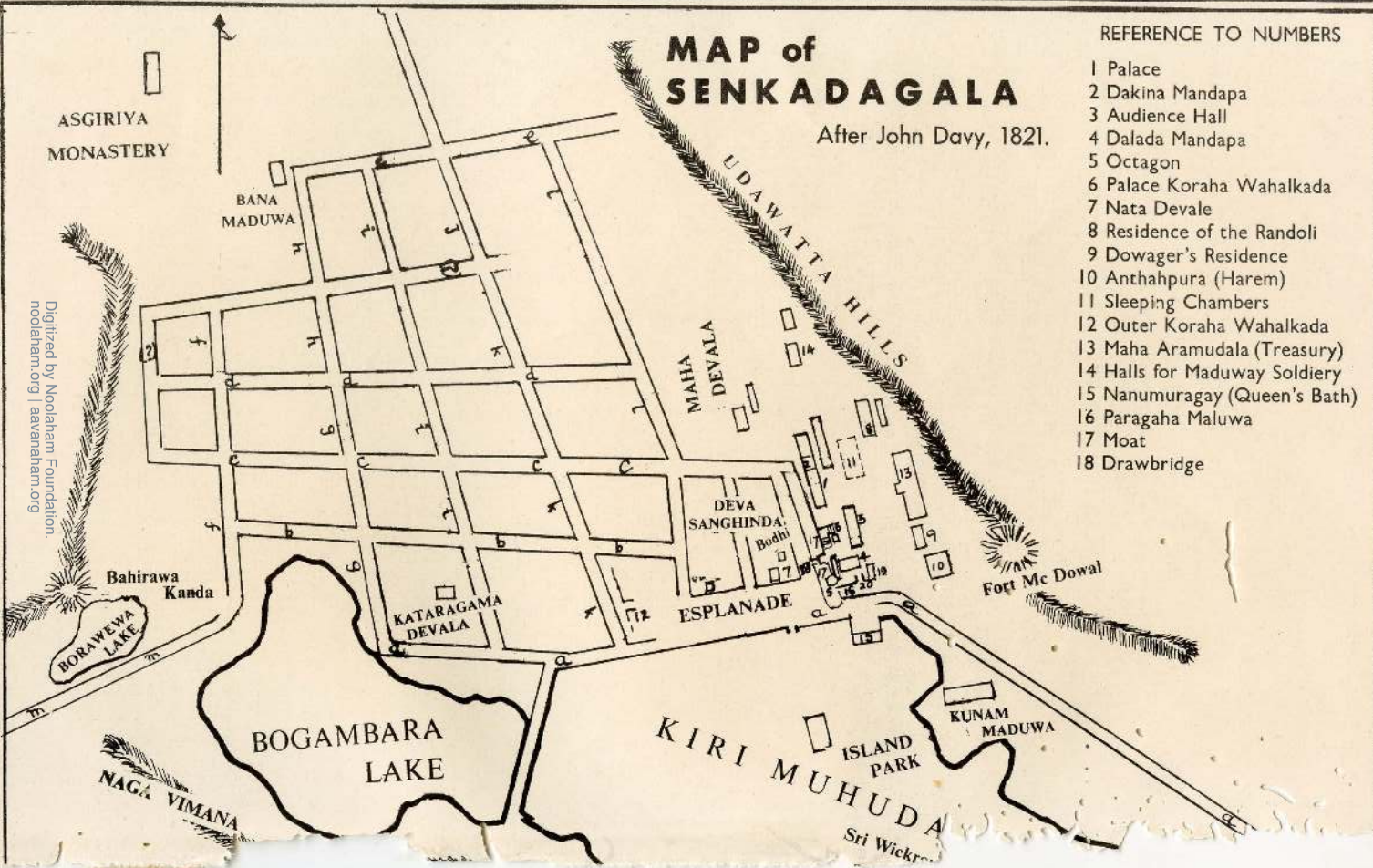
When the Governor took an oath that the English will not do anything to change the religion of the land or alter the ancient laws or government of Sinhalay he signed the treaty.[13]

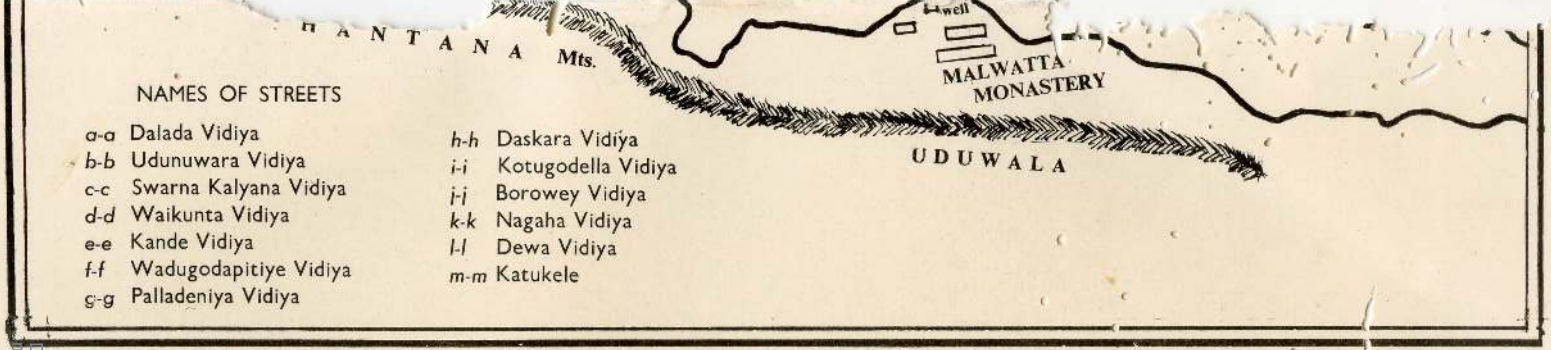
The priests of both Malwatta and Asgiriya had complained bitterly about the king's disrespect of the priesthood in that he ordered their execution without letting them decide things as the Vinaya ordained. Now they showed their dislike of the English. The Governor had summoned the chief priests of the country to the capital. After the signing of the treaty they sadly set out each towards his temple. One priest made a halt at the Sooriyagoda temple to resume the journey the next morning. He was speaking of the events in the capital with the priests of the place. They observed a line of ants carrying particles of food to their nest. There seemed to be great order in their work. There was one ant larger than the rest that did not have a load, but seemed to order the work of the rest. Perhaps he was their king. The priest with a sigh sang these verses:—

අනේ කුහුඹිය නේ
තොපටත් රජෙක් ඉන් නේ
මොකොදෑ කරන් නේ
අපේ කරුමේ අපට වන් නේ

රජෙක් ලැබුනෝ නි න්
එදා කිරිබත් කන්න න්
පෙරහැර කරන්න න්
සාදු නාදෙන් ගිගුම් දෙන්න න්

'Oh, ants,
You have a king of your own.
Alas what may we do,
Our sins must come upon us.
If we do get a king,
Then shall we eat festive milk-rice;
Then shall we celebrate the event in a Perehera,
And our cries of Saadhu shall rise loud
as the roll of thunder'.





NOTE

THE map is meant for readers taking more than a passing interest in the contents of this book. In compiling it traditional information too had to be availed of.

'An Account of The Interior of Ceylon' by John Davy (London, 1821) has a map of Kandy. It does not, however, give topographical names. Davy's details of the Palace are not exhaustive. In 1816 people bound by rajakariya refused to work at repairing palace buildings. Labourers from Colombo could not repair roofs made of the flat Kandyan tile; and monsoon rains were taking a heavy toll of the buildings. Davy perhaps saw no reason why tottering structures should be located. Sinhala names could not have interested him, either.

Of the Palace, buildings numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 and 15 are in preservation. The relative position of the Queen's residence to 1 and 2 is known. That the sleeping chambers (11) stood on the site of the present District Court building and the Maha Aramudala where the Kacceri has been built was well known amongst old gentlemen alive in the early 20th century. Rings that worked the drawbridge may still be seen; and the site tradition assigns to the Palace Koraha Wahalkada (6) is obviously correct. Kunam Maduwa guard rooms are still in existence. Subsidiary buildings like the royal bath, robing room and Ulpengay etc. have been left out. The palace buildings are not drawn to scale.

The entrance marked 20 on the Paragaha Maluwa is of interest. It was a solidly built archway about 20 feet in length high enough for an elephant with its rider to enter. It had massive wooden doors used by the temple authorities till the gate was demolished in 1933. Adjoining it was the temple kitchen which had a fine door of carved stone. Other structures that stood round the Dalada Mandapa till 1933 were barracks put up by the British for the soldiery that guarded the Tooth Relic, lest rebelious Kandyans should carry it away. In the city a couple of streets near Bahirawa Kanda disappeared to make room for garrison barracks. The other streets were renamed. Kandyans however preferred the old names, which were preserved to a late date. D'Oyly in his Diary (published 1917) uses some of the names. One street in doubt has not been named.

The base of the Dakina Mandapa has been lately uncovered and the moat restored. No excavations, however, have been undertaken. In building operations round the Dalada Mandapa interesting finds came up. A couple of feet beneath the courtyard west of the Audience Hall a stone built subterranean passage was uncovered. To the east of the Dalada Mandapa seven feet below the surface were thirteen monolith pillars, a well built with carved pillars of a remoter building, and hundreds of foreign cannon balls.

The hill top behind the Palace was called Fort Mc Dowal by British administrators of Kandy to whom the hill, as the resting place of many British notables of early British days, was sacred. British forces as they advanced in 1803 put up forts at Dambadeniya, Girihagama, Galagedera on the Colombo route, and a fort Mc Dowal 16 miles on the Trincomalee road. Perhaps the fort on this hill was meant to be a permanent one, and was as such, named after the general commanding the war.

NOTES

Pilimatalawwa Adigar, the King Maker

1. The remains of Alagakonar's city are found in the present Royal Botanical Gardens, Peradeniya on the eastern part of which Kannesamy's mother had her home. Sri Wickrama made it his Royal Park.
2. A lady cooked herself for her lord and children, a custom observed in the Kandyan districts till a very late time. Servants had a kitchen of their own.
3. In Sinhala times a horse's saddle was the bark of a tree prepared so that it did not slip on the animal's back. The stirrups were hard balls of hemp, held between the great toe and the next.
4. To light an oil lamp when a visitor came was a way of showing he was welcome.
5. This botree one still might see at Getambe, near the Diyakepum Tota where the last perehera of the Kandy Devalas come for the Diyakepum ceremony.
6. Devas are supposed to visit the Dalada shrine for worship early in the morning before sunrise, and on certain days of the week during the day. At this time the doors of the central shrine through which people go in are kept closed, while a smaller door that opens out towards the skies from the upper story and two doors in a line with it to the shrine room alone are kept open. The priests stand on a side till the time allotted for the devas to worship the relic is over.
7. On the use of palanquins by courtiers traditionary stories differ from D'Oyly's book. Stories say that a courtier may use his palanquin till he comes in sight of the Koraha Wahalkada.
8. The Rate Mahatmaya's districts round the capital were considered the premier area of the state. These were the divisions of the Kanda Uda Pas Rata of the Gampola period viz:—Siduruwana, Tumpane, Harispattuwa, Dumbara, Hewaheta, Kotmale, Bulatgama and Udapalata. The king was elected by the *radala* of this area. Probably the nongoigama *radala* too were consulted. All castes save three had *radalas*.
9. Kaangara Officers came in when there was work connected with the funeral of a king. One still comes across the family name Kaangara Mudiyanselage.
10. Black was the mourning colour of the Sinhalese. Black *soman* worn at funerals are still found. The box of rice sent by relatives to a bereaved house was covered not with white as usual, but a piece of black cloth, and old men of the early twentieth century found a black piece of cloth to wrap round the head on a sad occasion. No man may wear a full white dress during Sinhala times. It was the *mangala* colour of the monarch.
11. *Marala* was the death duty.
12. At a national Dalada *pooja* the king himself brought out the Tooth Relic for the populace to see and worship.
13. A sign of mourning. If a man comes to see one or enters a house carrying his head-wear in his hand he comes to communicate news of a bereavement.

A Girl Sacrificed to Bahirawa

1. The Dalada Mandapa, now the central shrine of the Dalada Maligawa, was a part of the ruler's palace. The random structures that stood round it till lately were additions during British times. The Audience Hall and the Dalada Mandapa stood on a large court-yard round which were different buildings of the palace.

2. This is now called the Queen's Bath. Its basement was a sort of swim bath which has been covered up. The waters of the lake came in through an arched door which may still be seen in the wall on the side of the lake, below water level.
3. This was a clock called the පැ තැටිය. (hour disc)
4. Said Nickawellay Rala. "ගම් ඕනෑද නම් ඕනෑද?"
The Lady replied, "නම් නැත්නං ගම් මොකටද?"
5. Nickawella from the time its owner left it remained a *gabadagama* till British times. When the road from Kandy to Trincomalee was constructed by Dullewe and Ratwatte for the British, they were asked what they wished to have as reward by the then Governor. Dullewe asked for the Nickawellay Gama and Ratwatte for the king's ceremonial tusker, it is said to stop it being misused. The residence of this Ratwatte is interesting for its very thick clay walls. It is now the property of Mr. T. B. Wegodapola. Not long after its completion the first important use the British made of the road was to bring Dullewe, then eighty years, a manacled prisoner along it to Kandy.
6. When an invading army came thousands of homes in the country through which they would march were vacated. Large holes were dug and dried with fire to receive the paddy in the barns—one still comes across these holes. One male takes the women and children to hiding in the forests. The other males pick up sword and buckler to join the army.
7. The way an individual of the lower classes showed respect to one of rank.
8. Henekanda Biso Bandara was a sister of a king of Ganga Siri Pura. The king offered her to Kataragama Deva, and she lived in the Embekka Devala as his spouse. Her bangles and necklace are carried as articles sacred to Kataragama Deva in the Gampola perehera. There are a number of temples built by her.
9. Dunuville filled the post at the time.
10. This description is after a drawing of the demon in an ola book entitled Bahirawa Astaka. Bahirawa when he appears in his godly form is a man sword in one hand and his cup in the other. With him is his wahana, a large dog.
11. A witch doctor famed in folklore who in an angry mood began his mantrams with intent to enslave Bahirawa for ever. The demon fell at the feet of king Rajasingha and begged the king to save him. The king after extracting certain promises stopped the attempt by summoning the magician immediately to court.
12. This is not the octagon overlooking the esplanade but a balcony that commanded a view of the street that stretches from what is left of the king's palace to the feet of Bahirawa Kanda.
13. The hill on which Wace's park has been built. The Kandy market, and a large area surrounding occupies the bed of Bogambara lake.
14. Borawewa was a small lake at the foot of Bahirawa Kanda. The present Wembley theatre stands where its bed was. A road skirting one side of the Wembley site is still known as Lake Road.
15. The silver plate (Thetiya) used by the master of a wealthy home was about twelve inches in diameter. A plate full of rice was placed before him curries being served in smaller vessels. He ate a portion of the rice. The rice left on the plate none but his lady may use. She used the same plate.
16. Sri Wickrama appears to have ordered two such sacrifices to the demon before. The maid offered to the demon on a previous occasion was Weligalle Dingiri Menika, whose family lived in the Daskara Vidiya in the capital.

The Execution of Sooriyagoda Thero

1. Meegastennay, then a dissawa, was intimate with a low caste woman. His lady could not stop him. She appealed to the queen who persuaded Rajadhi, much against his will, to speak to the dissawa.

2. The Audience Hall of Kandy was built by Devendra for Rajadhi.

ස කා	වසින් එක් දහස් සත්සිය වස සයි	න
ඩ කා	පුර විසේනිය ලත් රිකිය ගුරු දි	න
ල කා	සිම් රාජාදි රජසිහ රද අණ	න
සැකා	හැර මතුල් මඩුවට කාප සැදු සොඳි	න

3. The black *semara* was an animal of the Himalayas. Its beautiful tail was fancied, as an aid to make the knot of hair large. The tail of the white species was an insignia of royalty as *chamara*.
4. Palle-wahala or lower palace. One of the buildings of this wing is now used for the additional district court. It still has some of the finely carved pillars.
5. When floods spoilt the Jalatilaka Mandapa for the second time Sri Wickrama gifted its pillars to Sooriyagoda Vihara where they may still be seen in the vihara building.
6. A convocation of the chief priests.
7. The bodhi opposite the Natha Devala. Its branches have a sprawling habit of growth. Hence the name wel-bodhi.

   At execution men of good family were not cut at the neck, but at a line just below the ears.

Lankatilakay Ganitaya

1. Two of the squares had been completed before the Ganita was summoned.
2. Song from 'Sri Nama'.
3. Maha Hatana, an unpublished ola in the Colombo Museum.
4. Whilst digging the foundations for the new eastern wing of the Dalada Maligawa thirteen rock pillars and hundreds of cannon balls came up. Towards the lake, foundations had to be deeper and about the level of the lake was uncovered a well. A Kandyan pattern stone pillar of good workmanship had been used to top one wall of this well. The wall could not be disturbed lest the excavation had to go deeper.
5. *Saruwalay*—a baggy kind of shorts worn by the poor for work.
6. Rajasingha of Hanguranketa was often roaming the country in disguise.
7. Padma-kumuda is the lotus motif. *Padma* is the open lotus and *kumuda* the bud. The parapet is built to this pattern.
8. During the last reign the harem was housed in a building behind the Dalada shrine, the present museum building, which was called Palle Wahala because Rajadhi once resided in it.
9. The central piece of the Natha devala *Ran-awuda* was a golden hare. This was given by Wadugodapitiya Korala, the hereditary Kapurala till 1900, to a goldsmith for repairs and was not returned.
10. Leaders.
11. A fine flight of stone steps in the Vishnu Devala and some of the buildings was Sri Wickrama's work.
12. Law of succession to certain temples in Kandyan Law.
13. Lankatilaka had no tiled roof. Its roof was a dome. The saying—'වදින වදින හෙන ලංකාතිලකෙට' would show how the dome became impossible. The upper story has fallen; one climbing on the roof can still see a decorated arch of the upper story. The present roof is the work of Unambooway Dissawa who faced with the extinction of his line spent his wealth in temple reconstruction. A similar roof over the unbroken dome of Gadaladeniya is also his work.
14. 'නොසා ශ්‍රීන් විරාජමාන උතුම්වූ මහ වාසල'—adjectives placed before the term Maha Wasala in court talk.
15. Lekam Miti were the census reports of the times. One kind of lekam-miti gave a census of the land holdings of the district, the other lists of the heads of families. A dissawa soon as he was appointed to an area had to compile fresh lekam-miti as he finds the district.
16. The exact spot over which the Dalada casket rests is said to be a very auspicious spot where a never drying spring sprouts up. It was, when

first discovered by astrologers, the retreat of an albino tortoise—white was always the *mangala* colour. A well situated to the south of the shrine on the Paragaha Maluwa, to which an iron pipe of crude make opens out, is said to receive the waters of this spring.

17. Balana, Diyakelinawala and Gannoruwa were fortresses. In each village was maintained a heap of firewood to act as a bonfire when an invasion alarm had to be flashed to the capital. The villages in each locality are inhabited by Bathgama people. Their old men claimed that fighters of their caste died in defence of the forts till the king's armies could gather for the war.

18. There are two women servitors attached to the Dalada Maligawa called the Alatti Ammas. Their duty is to bear two small oil lamps to the door of the shrine room, and blow off the lights to avert the evil eye. This was a custom performed for the king, last thing every night, and after every time he held court, so that he may not suffer from bad effects of the evil eye.

The Engreesi Hatana

1. This is the title of a poem on the English war against Siñhalay. Much of the material in the story follows the poem.
2. Ira-Handa flag is the flag showing the sun and moon on it. It was the royal standard of Kandyan kings. The Satara Korala was allowed to fly it because of the bravery of its soldiers.
3. A man coming for war rajakariya had to bring food for a fortnight. If he had to stay longer, meals were supplied. Generally he had leave to go after that period. Another took his place.
4. On the Naga Vimana hill were the homes of a lowly caste.
5. The girl's alarmed cry means 'White men coming'.
6. These parts are from the poem.
7. The Engreesi Hatana of which these parts are a reproduction, gives one an idea of the kind of army Senkadagala had. It is not clear what forces besides the Atapattuwa and the Maduway companies made up the king's army. Perhaps the Sudaliya and Maruwaliya were a numerous force.
8. Araway and Pusellay had no administrative chieftainships.
9. In ancient warfare noise was employed to strike terror into an enemy's heart.
10. The king had golden armour to cover his body.
11. This is different from Wagolla earlier in the story. This Wagolla is close to Levella where one going from Kandy to Dumbara has to cross the river.

Dehigama Nilamay Captures the King

1. Literally 'Where the great one lives'. This term is used today for the central shrine of the Dalada Maligawa where the Relic reposes. In the days of the kings, the part where the king lived was not meant even for the queens, who had a *mandapa* attached to it but separate. In old deeds one comes across the term *Hitina* Walawwa', the building in which the great man lives.
2. An ola letter always had a seal formed by part of the ola on which it was written. Half of the ola is left blank. It is then folded in the shape of a neck-tie bow, with a knot of the blank half of the palm leaf round the middle. The leaf is passed round a few times, and the folds so formed cut, so that it opens out to a flower shape. The number of petal rows in the flower showed the recipient the relation of the writer to him, or what relation he wished to have. A *soloka* interprets what the number of rows signify:— one for enemy, two for friend, three for relative, four for honour, for a parent or brother five, six for a teacher and seven for the monarch.

එකාං ශසනෘ වයං මිත්‍රං, ත්‍රීනි බන්ධු චතු ප්‍රභු, පංච මාතා පිතා භ්‍රාතා, ෂට්ගුරුං, සප්ත භූපතිඃ

(*Ancient Soloka*)

3. An aristocrat who wished to speak to the king alone had to divest himself of all weapons.
4. The most difficult form of duelling was ඌරා ලිඳෙ අංගං. Either combatant was assigned a newly dug well or hole. At a signal either had to scale to the top and run to meet his adversary on the wide arena between the two wells and after that clash run back at the next signal. This continued till one was declared victor. The man whose great toes did not serve him well was at a disadvantage.
5. 'This Tamil' (boy).
6. The direst punishment given to a slave man or woman is to cut the hair short. It disgraced the individual.
7. සහතිසා ඇත්ත would mean 'Verily the truth'.
8. Men who brought summons from the king carried a bent headed mace as a sign of their authority. The head was of silver as in the staff adigars are given today. The man who brought summons lifts the mace with both hands to his forehead, and speaks the king's order.
9. The saying පින් කල අයගෙ ඉස කොටුවේ මහ බඹු
   පව් කල අයගෙ ඉස කොටුවේ බඹුගෙ අඹු

   Lines on ones head at birth are supposed to indicate an individual's luck or otherwise. Where the person is to be fortunate Maha Brahma carves the lines, if unfortunate his wife does it.
10. A man who holds the office of Kapurala, Basnayaka, or Diyawadana nilamay may not use his hands or shoulder for any activity that is considered unclean, for instance to carry a dead body. This inability of one to be of use at such an occasion is expressed by the term කර ඉහ තහනම.
11. A radala of the Navandanna caste.
12. Dehigama lived long into the British period. I met many who had known him well. Everyone agreed that though he would sadly tell the tale of his foolishness, as he called it, yet he never mentioned any other name connected with the conspiracy. Probably conspirators of the time made use of frightful oaths to keep secrecy.

The Trial And Execution of Pilimatalawway Adigar

1. For every day-time dana at the Dalada Maligawa thirtytwo curries have to be prepared.
2. Rata Hata are the administrative districts adjoining the capital of Senkadagala. This was the premier area of Sinhalay.
3. A feed given to a large number of men that gather for work or a festival like an annual perehera is called a *temma*.
4. A large area west of Bogambara lake was given to the Javanese soldiers to reside in. In the early part of the present century this area, Katukele, was mainly a Malay quarter, the Malay (Javanese) people still remembering how they came to live in the locality from Sinhala times.
5. The ground immediately in front of the palace. Round the spot rose the temples of Natha, Vishnu and Pattini. Hallowed by the presence of the temples it was called Devasanghinda.
6. Though people of medieval Kandy ate meat they considered beef eating a pollution that brought them down to the level of the *rodiyas*. This is the only caste that ate beef; they were not allowed to come near the houses of other castes. Beef eating by the British was the immediate cause of the rebellion of 1817. In British documents of the period they record how from their jungle retreats even the ordinary people shouted at British soldiers marching along the roads 'Beef eating slaves begone'.

7. A spot on the eastern slope of Bahirawa Kanda where stood an ancient champak tree. Here men of rank were brought to undergo sentence of death by the sword. The place was therefore called Kumara-hapuwa and Kuma-ruppa.
8. Pilimatalawwa constructed the central shrine of the Dalada Maligawa during the reign of king Kirti Sri Rajasingha. These verses from an ola in the Colombo Museum (not named) speaks of Pilimatalawwa's work:—

පිරි සඳ ලෙස නෙක් ඉසුරුනි සිරිලඬ
සිරිවඩ්දන පුර වර සිරි නා
නිරිඳු ද කිත්සිරි රජසිහ එපුරෙසි
රජ පැමිණිය ඒ සුරිඳු මෙ නා
සිරි තද නෙද යුතු ඒ නරනිඳුන්
වදහල පනතය ලෙස මතතද නා
සිරි විද සුරමොක් සිරි විදිනට කල
සිරි දුමන්දිර සිරි රඳ නා
පිලිම රැගෙන එම නිරිඳුන් පනතය
බඹ විමනක් බඳු නෙක රැවි නා
පිලිම තලව්වේ සෙනෙව් රඳුන් කල
දළඳ මන්දිර සුරසිරි නා
පිලිම සමග පෙනි දසත කරඹු වැඩ
පල්ලේ මාලය සහ සොඳි නා
පිලිම පේස පට කාවිව් සඳුන් හර
මිනිමුතු පුද කළ සිතු පෙම් නා

Meegastennay Adigar — His Career and Death

1. The paddy grain motif is carved on ornaments worn by females as a boast of wealth. Commonly the motif adorns bangles and throatlets.
2. King Narendrasingha was judged by a panel of aristocrats. He was accused of violating custom by giving to a man of non-goigama caste a dress that covered the upper part of the body. The judges sentenced him to carry sea sand from the gate to the courtyard of the Maha Vishnu temple of Kandy.
3. The wave like walls in front of the Dalada Maligawa and the old palace are called 'Cloud patterned'.
4. A violent diarrhoea attended with vomiting.
5. The central shrine of the present Dalada Maligawa was built by Pilimatalawwa, then a Dissawa.

(See note 8 to Trial and Execution of Pilimatalawwa for verses that mention this work.)

6. Orderly dress according to rank is the way to respect a great man one visits. The head-wear was an important part of ones dress. One goes without his head-wear to bring news of a close relative's death.
7. පින් — merit. When one goes on pilgrimage or for a religious act he is supposed to earn පින්. When he returns he asks all at home to share his පින්. (පින්දීම and පින් අනුමෝදන්වීම are amongst the ten meritorious deeds of Buddhism.)
8. The courtyard to the south of the Dalada Maligawa.
9. Vali is the cry given to enable a number of labourers to make an effort at the same moment.
10. Divisions that went to make the Kanda-Uda-Pas-Rata kingdom, when kings of the area ruled from Ganga Siri Pura. In later times the area was split up into seven districts, Viz:— Udunuwera and Yatinuwera Harispattuwa, Udapalata, Tumpanay, Dumbara, Bulatgama and Hewaheta. They were administered by Rate Mahatmayas and did not come under the dissawas. They were considered the premier area of Sinhalay, and great administrators were as a rule drawn from families of the area.

11. Sakra, king of the devas, sits on a throne of wool. When an act of great injustice takes place the wool grows warm to warn Sakra that such a thing is happening. On this occasion Sakra is supposed to have come to save the priests of Malwatta Monastery whom Kirti Sri imprisoned in their convocation hall — he went to settle a dispute amongst the priests and found a trap in the hall prepared to assassinate him. The belief dies hard. In 1957 the King of Nepal shot a deer in a game sanctury of Ceylon. The government to pacify the Buddhists, ordered that certain animals should not be hunted in the island. The deer whose death was the cause of the order, many believed, was Sakra come to see this order issued.

12. This is the story of Mandaran Pura Puwata, an ola M.S.S found in a Hevaheta temple.

13. Descent from the son of a king born to a female other than a queen.

14. The murder of Sundara Bandara by Rajasingha of Sitawaka. The Rajawaliya calls him Weerasundra Bandra.

15. The first bonfire to signal the alarm was on Balana hill. Balana means watching. When Balana gave the signal a bonfire on Diyakelinawala was fired and thence the signal was repeated by a bonfire on Gannoruwa hill, near Kandy.

16. The Hindus carry images of the devas in procession. The buddhists do not bring the images out. They carry the Insignia of the devas. To the buddhist looking on the deva image is not correct, probably a custom of Yakka times.

17. Flags were much honoured in Kandyan times. The gift given to Atipola Dissawa for building the fortress of Trincomalee was a flag.
When a dissawa received his appointment the flag of the division was handed to him by the king himself. In the Esala Festival the flag of each division was borne in state attended by representatives of its fighting forces. Soon after 1815, a letter signed by D'Oyly asked the chieftains not to attend the Esala Perehera.

18. None save the ruling monarch might ride on a pure white horse. No Male was permitted to wear a full white dress either — it was the colour of royalty; hence the white *mutukuday* or white umbrella held over the throne.

19. The Dalada was accorded all the honours given to a monarch. It was customary amongst Kandyans till very late to go dressed in their best when they went to see the Relic.

20. There was no crowning ceremony for a Kandyan King. A sword of gold was made at an auspicious hour to suit the horoscope of the prince elected to the throne. This was placed at the feet of Natha Deva in the Natha Devala for consecration. When the prince has picked it up and sworn before the Deva, that he will use it justly he is King. The Maha Hatana, an ola book of 435 verses gives an account of the Kadu Karalana Mangalla of the princes Maha Astana, Wijepala and Kumarasingha. There was no crown. What corresponds to the crown was called තොප්පි හළුව — head dress.

21. Almost facing the Koraha Wahalkada was Molligoda Walawwa. The king used to see a well built beautiful girl named Yahapathi there and told Meegastennay about it. Meegastennay looked into the matter and next morning sang this reply:—

පුරා තනා නිසරු දෙසි බැ විතර	ඇතී
නුරා කරන වයසක් පැමිණුනේ	නැතී
පුරා වයස දහනුකසට විතර	ඇතී
කොරහ වහල්කඩ බැඳි කොඩිය	යහපතී

Sri Wickrama also had a washer woman who was given a special house in Deiyannewela, whither he was carried in his palanquin when he wished.

22. In the palace vacated by Sri Wickrama were found bottles of brandy. No arrack was distilled in Kandy. I saw documents in the books of the

Board of Commissioners that ruled Kandy in 1815 to 1833 how they had to get arrack from Colombo...The Kandyans did not come for rajakariya. Labourers from Colombo had to be brought. These wanted arrack in the evening or would run away. So arrack had to be given them.

23. The kasaya (cracking whip) -- its use was an art. The king's kasakara-men cracked their whips to a song. Kandyans of the late 19th century practised the kasaya for exercise. The young were set to sing wannam songs and play the *udekkiya*, an older man cracked the whip in place of the thalam-pota (cymbals) to keep time.

24. To have the hat at a rakish angle was an insult to a higher official before whom one appeared.

25. The rest of the words of Bamannay Rala's soliloquy are unprintable.

26. In the story what Meegastennay said,
"ජම්බු දෙමල සොල්ලො."
sounds as if it included all Andras.

27. A pilgrimage, the building or repair of a temple, even a bana ceremony — these are noted in a book called the පිංපොත. Every individual kept one. During his last hours of life this was read to him so that the owner of the *pin-po'a* died thinking of his meritorious deeds.

28. Sri Wickrama was full of sorrow that day. A week later he confiscated the adigar's lands in Amunugama as king's property. The adigar had his country residence in Amunugama, where the king paid him his last visit. A variant of this story says Meegastennay was a fatherless boy brought up for some time by a rich Duraya.

29. The piruwata (freshly laundered white cloth) laid in front of those to whom a repast is given was a way of treating the guests with very great respect.

30. Translation:—

Departing here may I be born in noble Jambudweepa,
On a hill top of the Himalayas,
As a Deva to live thousands of years,
That I may listen to the preaching of the Maitree Buddha.

The Trial of Paranatala Anunayaka

1. He was brought by the Portuguese general De Souza who led an army to place Dona Catharina on the throne.
2. At Devenegala near Kadugannawa, a temple that Rajasingha destroyed and a dagoba Wimaladharma built stand side by side.
3. Pilimatalawwa in his intrigues with Governor North made this the reason for his desire to be king himself. See secret treaties between North and Pilimatalawwa.
4. The Maha Hatana (Ola of 435 verses in the Colombo Museum) describes the Kadukaralana Mangalla of three young kings. No crown is mentioned.
5. That he may govern the kingdom without interruption he encouraged the king to build the city.
6. This Vihara and Dagoba stand near the bodhi of Malwatta Monastery.
7. A witness so challenged has to swear before the gods that he is speaking the truth, then put his hands into a vessel of boiling oil. If the gods are on his side the oil wont scald his hands.
8. An allegation of intimacy with a female.
9. Even today the Sinhalese shudder to hear such curses.
10. The usual blessing of a buddhist priest.
11. The translation of Paranatala's verse is a free rendering.

12. Leukay Dissawa is remembered in a folksong :-

රන්කොඳි සේම පිරාලා පිට මැ ඒදෙ
පුන් සඳ සේම පායාලා රට මැ ඒදෙ
මාර සෙනග වට කරගත යම යු ඒදෙ
ලෙවුකෙ මැනිඳු අද තනියම වෙල මැ ඒදෙ

(*Folksong*)

An Accomplished Swordsman

1. A low rock mid-stream at Getambe is pointed out as the site of this Jalatilaka Mandapa or Water Pavilion. Floods twice spoilt the structure and it had to be dismantled.
2. A pointed stake or pike made of kitul timber was used to impale men found guilty of serious crime.
3. Bibile Wijekone Herat Mudiyansay is said to have fled and never found by the king's officers. Land in the vicinity of the bathing place till lately in the possession of parties claiming from him still bear his name.
4. Ability to leap up armed with sword and buckler was a necessary accomplishment for a soldier.
5. Mampitiya Bandara being of royal descent was permitted to travel in an ornate palanquin.
6. At this time Mampitiya was almost blind.
7. A king had one Randoli and one or more Yakada-doli. The chief queen was called the Ran-doli, the rest Yakada-doli. These were not the ladies of the harem. They lived in Randoli Maduwa, a palace meant for the queens. Mampitiya's mother, daughter of a Mampitiya Dissawa is known in traditionary story as Mampitiyay Dukganna Unnansay.
8. At the time of his arrest the bandara lived at Naranwala Walawwa, a village quite close to Mampitiya. Under a rock near this spot his gold and jewelry is said to lie hidden. No investigation is possible as the low cave where the treasure is alleged to be, is the home of the black hornet, which it is said infests places where gold is found.
9. This field is situated on the boundary of Hendeniya and Mampitiya. It is a small field and is still known by this name.
10. The name Bandara was given to an ofspring of the king from a lady outside the palace. Wahala Bandara was an ofspring born to a Yakada-doli.
11. In medieval Sinhalay punishment was meant to be deterrent. A man led to capital punishment was accompanied by a small procession consisting of a drummer (Wada-bera) and two fierce looking executioners dressed in red cloth and wreaths of red flowers, dancing sabre in hand.

The Senkadagala Tusker in Must

1. See note 2 to Dehigama Nilamay Captures the King.
2. This was a solemn way of declaring ones innocence because the devas could look into the hearts of men.
3. This boy was Karunatilaka Rajapaksa Loku Appuhamy, Rate Mahatmaya of Dambulla under the British. He died in 1906. Till the last hour of his life he was hail and hearty. See Foreword.
4. This is how a folk poem describes the lady and the king. It appears to have been written soon after the event.
5. The laws of Sinhalay did not permit such punishment except when man or woman is relegated to the village of the rodiya outcaste for eating beef or human flesh. What Ehelepola says in his farewell to Lanka perhaps explains Sri Wickrama's behaviour. These verses are said to have been brought by a follower who served him in his exile :-

කොලෙසුන්	පසුන් කල මුනිදුන් නෙවර	ක්ම
ව ඕ මි න්	යකුන් මැඩ ඔවුනට දී රැ	ක්ම
සතො සින්	දම් දෙසු සුරලොව වන ඉ	ක්ම
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The Last Retreat

1. In the context the term would mean 'Serve the king right'.
2. The king threatened to give her over to a Bathgama caste man if she did not obey and an official begged her to carry out the king's order, lest the king disgrace her.
3. When men who appeal to the devas find their prayers go without response they blame them in this way.
4. Variations say the queen begged him on her knees.
5. A widely known tale.
6. *Tharam* (තරම්) are heads cut off in battle. After a battle the heads of the white men are separated from the bodies and gathered into heaps. In the Sri Nama,
   "පරන්ගින් ඝිස් කපා ගන්නොරුවේ වෙලේ ගොඩකරවි තැන තැන"
7. After the harvests people bringing food prepared of the new rice to offer to the Dalada, a custom still observed, were permitted to walk across the esplanade and hand the alms to this *multen-gay*. When it was removed to a site behind the shrine to make room for the Octagon the common people were not able to give in their alms to the Relic temple, and they felt wronged.
8. See note No. 2 under Dehigama Captures the King.
9. A letter sent by Ehelepola to the chiefs of Hewaheta is found in Kadadora Vihara in Udahewaheta. Below is a translation of this letter :-

"In the Pura Dasawak day of the Month of Nawam (Jan-Feb), in the Sri Suddha Saka Raja Year 1737, (A.D. 1815).

"With pure loyal attachment to Sinhala Sovereignty and directed to all the great and loyal chiefs of the Maturata Korale this letter is written and herewith forwarded.

"Certain it is that all what I did for the protection of the Sinhala people have been given a cruelly wrong interpretation by my internal enemies and conveyed thus to the Maha Wasala. The loyalty of my motives and the purity of my actions all the Country knows.

"The Wadiga king himself fully aware of what all the country knows viz :- the loyalty of my motives and the purity of my actions, committed this great wrong. However, owing to the Wadiga Dynasty the Sinhala people are being destroyed in every way.

"When we hear of the cruelties committed by the wandering Wadugayas who have flocked to our country, we cannot bear the grief.

"Owing to these people the good intentions of the king have been obstructed. They cannot bear to see our progress.

"Daily the troubles of our people are increasing because the rule of the king though firm on us does not touch these people who are appropriating all our possessions.

"All that I have said and done to prevent these high handed actions and to govern the country well everyone will remember.

"All my actions have been foolishly and cruelly misrepresented to the king by one who is playing a double game to protect his own interests.

"All these misfortunes have come upon us because our own dynasty had ceased to exist.

"It is the duty of each one of us to act thoughtfully towards removing these misfortunes, at least for the future in a way to protect Sinhalay.

"I have come to know that in these Provinces under English rule these malpractices are comparatively less.

"Though English rule cannot be compared with the rule of our own kings yet I have found that their rule is more just than the rule of the Waduga kings.

"Therefore the time has ripened when we should accept the English king and exert ourselves to protect our interests.

"In the past similar misfortunes have happened to us. I shall do all things necessary to prevent any such misfortunes.

"The Governor swore to me before his god in his Church that within twentyfive years of our giving our throne to his king, he will create a free republican government (Sama Anduwa) in the Kandyan country and go back to their possessions on the sea board.

"As we cannot see a better course, at present, we should follow this instead of listening to the traitors of our nation.

"In conclusion my sincere friends, Puwakgolle, Saputenne, Meegaswatte, Yatiwelle, Bathgala, Darandekumbure, Pusellemankade, and Arawe should take these facts seriously to heart.

"Ever the same,

Ehelepola".

10. The custom of appealing to the Devas soon after lighting a lamp at evening is still in vogue amongst the Sinhalese.
11. *Pa-diya* is a place where the river can be easily crossed on foot.
12. This is the name used for a small box like container in which the black paste used for the *tilaka* dot on the forehead is kept.

GLOSSARY

A

Adi. lass.
Adigar. see adikaram Nilamay.
Adikaram Nilamay. minister. The king had two ministers. The chief minister was called Maha Adikaram Nilamay.
Ahas-pokuna. pond fed by rains only. On the summit of Bahirawa Kanda the bunds of this pond may still be seen.
Alatti. the ceremony of removing effects of the evil-eye. This is still carried out in the Dalada Maligawa. Two females each with a small oil lamp, move the lamps in traditional movements, then extinguish the flame with a finger. As the flame goes out so the effects of the evil-eye.
Alakamanda. The heavenly abode of Waisrawana, god of riches.
Alessang Wannama. a rythm meant to induce sleep.
Aluyam-duray. early morning service that concludes before sunrise.
Ambarage. vault roofed structure.
Amma. mother, darling.
Amme. alas, by my mother.
Ammunam. a grain measure equal to four bushels.
Anda. a half share of the crop.
Andra. Kings of Kandy as a rule got queens from Madura in Andra country. The brother of such a queen was once raised to the throne, and two other princess of the dynasty followed.
Anichchay. exclamation that means leave that to me.
Anthahapura. harem
Apay. our, stands also for the adjective 'my dear'.
Apachchi. father, also a term of endearment.
Appuhamy. son of an aristocrat, captain.
Appuhamy Maduwa. an institution attached to the palace where young noblemen came to get accustomed to serve the monarch.
Asana. pedestal, a deva's seat, see Vahana.
Astaka. valedictory stanza.
Atapattuwa, Atapattuway. soldiers meant as bodyguard to king or chief, a body of hereditary soldiers known for their traditionary valour.
Atma. life, soul.
Atora.Karayo. men set to prepare sacrificial dishes to a demon.
Atta. grandparent, respectful address by a child to an old one.
Awa. dark half of the moon-month.
Awu-atu. large fan shaped discs of palm leaf fixed to a staff for use as sunshade.

B

Bahirawa. a deity half deva half demon.
Baliya, pl, bali. raft like structure of pink plantain trunks divided into small squares in which are placed offerings of food and blood.
Balugetta. dog-slave, the term expresses humility.
Bandagaraya. king's treasury.
Bandara. scion of noble family.
Bandara Waliya. descent of royal blood.
Bara. vow.
Bana. sermon, preaching.
Bana Maduwa. preaching hall.
Bana Asana. preacher's seat (built to a certain pattern)
Bathgam. a caste that takes its name from paddy cultivation.
Bathgediya, pl bathgedi. cooked rice packed for a journey.
Baya-buoy. (I speak) with fear.
Bera. a small metal cylinder for charmed oil or script, worn as amulet.
Billa. sacrificial life.

Billah. ghost.
Bodhi. a tree sacred to the buddhists as that under which Gautama attained buddhahood.
Bolang. thou.
Buddha-putra. son of the buddha, buddhist priest.
Budukanda. extremely noble minded person.
Bisogam. villages that bring income to the queens.

C

Chamara. fan or whisk made of the Indian Yak's tail. It is an insignia of kingship.
Chena, pl chenas. highland sown with food grains.
Cocum. bark of Kocuma Zeylanica, used in the female toilet.

D

Dakina Mandapa. hall where one is admitted to meet the king. Sri Wickrama's Dakina Mandapa is still in existence.
Dalada Hamuduruwo. the noble Tooth Relic.
Dalada Medura, Dalada Mandira. Tooth Relic temple.
Danta Dhatu. The Tooth Relic.
Dasa Raja Dharma. ten attributes of a good king viz :- 1. Giving alms to religious men, 2. Observance of religious precepts, 3. Giving gifts to the deserving, 4. Rectitude, 5. Mercy, 6. Meditation, 7. Absence of hatred, 8. Refraining from the use of torture, 9. Patience, 10. Be opposed to none.
Davula, pl Davul. war drum.
Deega. marriage in which the bride is led to the husband's home.
Deiya. term of endearment.
Deiyo. a god, deva.
Deiyo-Saaki. may the devas witness — a curse.
Deiyo-Buduwanta. deva that will become a buddha. (the monarch is addresed thus in less formal talk)
Deliwalla. a great ones long hair. (short cropped hair was a sign of slavery)
Demala. a Tamil.
Demelichcho. a noisy bird (the seven brothers) said to be hostages brought by Gajabahu from South India.
Devala. the temple of a god or deva.
Deviyannay Pihitai. may the devas protect.
Deveyanwahansa. O Deva. (the way nobles addressed the monarch)
Dewiswaminwahansay. the king.
Dissa Hamuduruwo. His Excellency the Dissawa.
Dissawa. a large district, its governor.
Divya Raja. occupant of a heaven.
Divya Vimana. a heavenly abode.
Dola. offering to a demon.
Dolaha Deviyo. the lesser gods Viz:—Pitiye Bandara, Palle Badde Deviyo, Kalukumara, Devata Bandara, Kalu Bandara, Malaya Raja, Kirti Bandara, Devel, Gangay Bandara, Abimana, Kadawara. Gale Bandara, Hoonian Deviyo etc. etc.
Doratupala. figures of spirits set to guard either side of an entrance.
Dravida. Tamil, south Indian.
Dukganna Rala. One who does difficult work for the king.

E

Ebitti. little girl, term of endearment.
Ebittaya. priest's servant boy.
Edawewela. a cane with a bent head of silver carried as a mace by men bearing summons from the king.
Egoda. opposite hill or bank.

Ehei. respectful way of saying yes.
Ehela. a medicinal tree (Cassia Fistula).
Engeesi. the English.
Ereminiya-putuwa. a chair assembled with four bent branches of the shrub Zizyphus Napeca. It is the seat used by a dukganna rala guarding the king's bed chamber.
Esala. the fourth month of the Sinhala Year. The first month beginning on the 13th of April is Bak, then in order come Wesak, Poson, Esala, Nikini, Binara, Wap, Ill, Unduwap, Durutu, Navam, and Medin.
Ethetta. dress covering the back of an elephant.
Etulkattala, Etulkattalay. the palace service as distinct from the service administering the kingdom. Personnel of the Etulkattala enjoyed many privileges. For instance they did not come within the jurisdiction of administrative chieftains.

G

Gabadagama. land belonging to the king's treasury.
Gabada Nilamay. chief of the treasury.
Galwaduwa. stone craftsman.
Gama. a large holding usually a royal grant.
Gamwara. royal land grant.
Ganitaya. one who counts, that is one who computes astrological changes.
Gatha. religious stanzas.
Gatthara. to punish a man of good caste the king places the stigma of the gatthara class on him and his family. Thereafter no man may eat at his house or fold his palms to him. The punishment is for a mean act. If he does some brave act later that deserves recognition he is asked to bring provisions and cooked food for the king. When the pingo in which he brings these to the palace gates is accepted into the palace he reverts to his old status. Sinhalese of high caste dreaded the stigma.
Goiya. cultivator.
Gopuram. a vaulted structure.
Gotta. small vessel made of leaf.
Gura. contemptuous term for astrologer.

H

Hamudawa. army, large regiment.
Hamuduruwo. lord.
Hamuduruwanay. voc. of above.
Haen-yaya. a haena is from two to five acres, a number of connected haenas make a yaya.
Hekanda. one eyed drum that sounds a curfew.
Hela. a female's long waist cloth.
Helapa. a sweet baked of flour.
Hemakada. ceremonial pingo in which dressed food for king or temple is carried. It has several picturesque frills one above the other.
Henduwa. mahout's hook.
Hewa-woman. an attendant, a woman carrying a lady's betel bag.
Hispaiya. cap worn to protect the hair, specially in battle.
Hodda. a thin gravy.
Holwela. a light walking stick like mace made of gold, the king carried when going out.

I

Ilangama. pl Ilangam. institution of dancing performers.
Ilawwa. carrion, corpse, wretched thing.

J

Jalasanniya. a mild cholera due to indigestion.
Jalatilaka Mandapa. pavilion built on river or lake.

K

Kadawata, pl Kadawatu. frontier gate. They were formed of live thorny trees and creepers, the latter so arranged overhead that they can be let down to close the gate.
Kadulla. a stile, a gate leading to a homestead.
Kaipudi. carved or damascened door knobs from which chameleon patterned loops hang.
Kalpa. an era of 5000 years, in Hindu mythology fourhundred million years.
Kalpa-vruksha. a celestial tree which bears whatever one wishes to have.
Kandyan. English name for inhabitant of Sinhalay, derived from Candia by which name the Portuguese knew the hill country of Ceylon.
Kapa. a kalpa, a world era .see kalpa.
Kapruka. see Kalpa-vruksha.
Kapurala. lay priest of a deva (god).
Karma. ones good or sinful past which brings reward or punishment here
Karunawa. kindness amongst men, love of a king to his subjects.
Kavikara-maduwa. a band of minstrels.
Kendiya. a goblet with spout.
Keppetiya. a jungle shrub (croton laciferum) whose maturing leaves turn to red as if soaked in blood.
Killotay. ornamental chunam container. It has a chain with a spatula used to take out chunam for the betel chew.
Kitul. a palm which gives fair sized rafters. The toddy from the flower when fermented is an intoxicant.
Kodituwakku. small cannon a soldier may carry on his shoulder and set down on its three legs for firing.
Kodituwakku Nilamay. commander of a kodituwakku company.
Kolomba. a piece of thick timber cut to make a rough seat.
Kombu. wind instrument resembling a giant S, generally used when forces advance to battle.
Kondapetta, a hair ornament, generally round and about an inch and half in diameter.
Koonama. king's palanquin.
Koraha-wahalkada. gate whose guard room had a cistern of water for a water clock.
Korala. a sub-district, headman of such district.
Kudamma. mother's younger sister.
Kumarihamy. lady of the walawwa, an aristocrat's wife.
Kuma-ruppa. see kumara-hapuwa.
Kumara-hapuwa. an ancient champak tree on the slope of Bahirawa-kanda to which aristocrats were taken for execution.
Kundalabarana. a large kind of ear ornament.
Kukka. pup, word the king used for a boy.

L

Laggala. a malaria ridden district to which convicts were exiled.
Lakka. Dutch cloth, a stiff wollen stuff.
Lekam. secretary of a Department.
Lekam-miti. census reports.

M

Maddala. cymbals.
Maduwa. spacious hall or shed, generally an out-house.

Maduway-men. one of the two corps serving the king. They were hereditary servicemen whose occupation was war.
Magulbera. kind of drum, notes played on such drum on an auspicious occasion.
Magul-eta. king's ceremonial tusker.
Magul Maduwa. Hall of Audience where great things were transacted.
Magul-poruwa. a small stage or enclosure within which bride and bridegroom stand for the wedding ceremony.
Maha. great, principal paddy season.
Maha Aramudala. principal treasury.
Maha Brahma. creator, he marks ones destiny on a man's head at birth. When he deputes the work to his wife the man becomes unfortunate in life.
Maha Dissawa. a governor with military power.
Maha Eka. big fellow.
Maha Naduwa. high court, or trial for a crime like treason. It was presided over by the king, but when the king was complainant or accused he appointed a panel of nobles to take his place.
Maha Nilamay. great official.
Maha Nuwara. lit. the great city, the king's city. Kandy, the last capital, is still known by that name.
Mahasona. name of the corpse eating demon.
Maha Wasala. palace, a term equivalent to His Majesty.
Maitree Buddha. the buddha of the next buddha era.
Makara Torana. ornamental archway of a certain pattern, used in temple structure.
Mala. long chain necklace.
Mala-ilawwa. carrion, corpse, wretched thing.
Malapalu. land rendered vacant by the hereditary owners dying out.
Mama. mother's brother or father's brother-in-law, uncle.
Mandapa. building devoted to a certain purpose.
Manday (Ran-Manday). a plate, generally the king's golden plate.
Mandira. a building set apart for a certain purpose.
Manel. pink water lily.
Mangala. festive occasion, ceremonial.
Mangalaya. festival.
Manna. forester's knife with a straight blade.
Mante. wide frill attached to the collar of a jacket.
Mantram. charm, magic.
Mara, god of death.
Massina, Massinay. cousin, brother-in-law, term of endearment.
Masuran. gold coin about the fourth of a sovereign.
Maya. female art, innocent deception, female beauty.
Melluma. a dry curry of chopped leaf.
Mihigu. a kind of small drum.
Mohottala. secretary or aide-de-camp of a high official, one in charge of departmental work.
Molok. paste, soft food.
Mookutti. nose ornament.
Mudali-peruwa. mudliyar rank, descended of a mudali.
Mudiyansay. an aristocratic title.
Muhandirum. head of a department.
Mulachariya. head of the navandanno (artificer) class.
Multengay. kitchen of palace or temple.
Multenrala. chief cook.
Mutukuday. white silken parasol, an insignia of royalty held over the throne by one of noble family.

N

Nagavimana. name of a hill that rises behind Malwatta Monastery, the present Wace's Park.

Naiyandi. a branch of the dancer's art. The dancer carries no instrument, either hand is free for the dance.
Nalalpati. forehead ornament.
Nanumuragay. the building towards the south of the Dalada temple, rising from the waters of the lake. It was the bath used by the queens.
Naradeva. god in human form.
Natha Deva. the divine spirit that will come to the world as Maitree Buddha.
Nathi-Sisya-Paramparawa. priestly succession from teacher to a pupil connected to teacher by blood.
Navathen. temporary lodgings.
Navathenkaraya. one who takes a few days lodgings in a stranger's house.
Navandanno. men of the goldsmith caste.
Nayaker. aristocratic Andras.
Nedakin. curse meaning 'May I never see again'.
Nekatha. auspicious moment.
Nekathi. courtly name for the tom tom class.
Nena. female cousin, daughter of mother's brother or of father's sister.
Nerenchi. indoor game of pawn and board. The board has three squares one within the other along which the pawns are moved.
Neriya. a frill of the waist cloth contrived to hang behind in a way that hides the hip lines.
Nettimala. elephant's head-dress.
Nikini. month in the Sinhala calendar, see Esala.
Nilapalu. land rendered vacant by the occupier failing to perform the rajakariya due.
Nilaya. one who holds office, an office.
Nilamay. derived from nilaya, man of high rank.
Nindagama. extensive estate occupied by feudal tennants.

O

Ola. palm leaf prepared to write on. An epistle or book on palm leaf.
Olinda. an indoor game.
Osoriya. part of the hela thrown over the shoulder to cover the bosom and hang down behind.
Othu. landlord's share, in dry grain a nominal share not exceeding a single servant's load. In paddy othu is taken when the harvest is poor. Here an othu is twice the seed paddy used.

P

Padma. a lotus.
Painday. office, service, summons.
Pali, Oli, Gahala and Rodi are the outcastes of ancient Ceylon.
Palle Wahala. lower palace buildings where sub-king or a dowager lived.
Pana. brass lamp fed with nut oil. The hanging type carries its oil in a container placed higher than the wick.
Pang. thorny bulrush used for plaiting paddy mats.
Pancha-klesha. five impure states of mind.
Panchaskanda. man's mortal body formed of the five elements.
Pandarel. dry leaf of plantain bush.
Pansakula. cloth offered to priests at funeral.
Pantheru. musical instrument, a metal hoop with a few pairs of cymbals set in it.
Para-demalu. Tamil foreigners, a contemptuous term.
Paraveni. hereditarily owned.
Pasketay. piece of earth.
Patabendi. literally gold band tied to the head, such a band is given by the king as recognition of distinguished service, a name bestowed as an honour.
Patistana. ceremonial spears.
Patirippuwa. balcony on which the king comes to be seen by his subjects.

Patkola. piece of plantain leaf prepared to serve rice on.
Pattini. goddess of chastity.
Pavada. white muslin laid for an honoured one to step on.
Pekada. ornate capital of Kandyan pillar.
Pelkavi. songs sung on the haena.
Pena. problem, question.
Penchi. lass.
Perali, Peraliya. treason, traitor, rebel.
Pettagama. strong box.
Peya. the Sinhala hour, sixty peya go to make a day.
Pichchamal Ilamgama. ladies of the harem dancing dressed in sweet smelling flowers. No male other than the king may see the performance.
Piharala. aristocrat who cooked the king's food. He cooked for the king alone.
Pihita. protection of the devas, aid.
Pina, Ping. merit resulting from a good deed or religious act.
Pinkama. religious act.
Pirit. buddhist sutras chanted to help one out of sickness or fright. The oil sanctified at such chanting is also considered helpful.
Piruwata. freshly laundered cloth.
Pokuna. pond.
Polumas. meat.
Porokara. corps of axes, an important unit of a Sinhala army. At the battle of Gannoruwa this corps rendered the fire arms of the Portuguese useless.
Pooja. a religious act.
Prartana. wish for the future birth.

R

Rabana. one sided drum, tambour.
Rabbada. pink skin (colour of the ripe areca).
Radala. see rala.
Raga-Udara. song set to a sensual rythm.
Raja-ana. royal decree.
Rajakaruna. royal favour.
Rajakariya. king's service.
Raja-udahasa. royal displeasure.
Rakusa. a monster in human form.
Rala. abbreviation for ralahamy or radalahamy, an aristocrat, a radala was also a leader, each caste having its radala for the korala.
Ralay. voc. of rala.
Ran-Awuda. golden insignia of a deva.
Randoli. chief queen.
Rankeriya. a shrub whose blossom is used with betel, Alpenia Nutans.
Ran-Manday. golden plate.
Rata-Hata. the seven districts immediately round Senkadagala Nuwara, viz : Udunuwera, Yatinuwera, Harispattuwa, Dumbara, Hewaheta, Tumpanay, and Udapalata.
Rate Rala. chieftain of a small district.
Rathi Ranga. dance of Rathi goddess of beauty, a rythm.
Relipalan. an arch of varicoloured rosettes of frilled cloth.
Roti. pancake.
Rudraksha. seed of Elocarpus Serratus. Brahamins set the seed in gold and wear it round the neck.
Rukattana. a tall growing tree with a bulky trunk. Alstonia Scholaris.

S

Saadu. an expression of religious fervour (like amen).
Sahatika-etta. I swear it is the truth.
Samakkattu. gift of cloth a king gives to a female.
Sammana. a king's reward for good work.

Samanera. a buddhist priest before ordination.
Sandakada-pahana. lit. moon shaped stone, a carved stepping stone.
Sangsaro. the chain of successive rebirth.
Sangaraja. highest pontiff in the priesthood.
Sarasiyapattu. a dignified name of the district Harispattuwa.
Sasana. the buddhist church.
Sastra. branch of knowledge.
Satara Agati. the four causes of regal misrule viz:- lust. anger, fear and ignorance.
Satara Sangraha. four moral virtues of kingship, viz:- affability, love to promote welfare of others, giving of alms and loving others as ones self.
Satarawaram Devi. the four devas each regent of a cardinal region, viz:— Dhritarasta, Virula, Virupaksha and Vaisrawana.
Sattambi. official in charge of a department's records.
Seela. adherence to ones precepts.
Sembuwa. goblet usually of brass.
Serapanivida. a summons that has to be immediately obeyed.
Sinnam. flute.
Sinhasana. lion throne.
Siriyawa. beauty, benign looks.
Soloka. a stanza (of philosophical literature).
Soman, Somana. a cloth of printed material.
Soranewa. flute used with the drum.
Sri-hasta. the king's hand.

T

Tadabala-painday. urgent summons to a man who has displeased the king.
Talapa. flour cooked to a thick paste.
Tamettam. one eyed drums.
Tampala. a vegetable, the blood red amaranthus.
Tanha. desire for worldly things.
Tathagata. the teacher, a term applied to the buddha.
Temma. repast given to a number of workmen, soldiers etc.
Thera. a buddhist priest after ordination.
Thetiya. a metal plate.
Theveya. temple service.
Thodu. large earrings worn on the lobes.
Tilaka. dot of sandal paste on the forehead.
Toppi-haluwa. hat, crown. (an article of every day use unlike the crown in Europe)
Triple Gems. the buddhist TRINITY viz:—the Buddha, his Doctrines and the Priesthood.
Tuppotti. a cloth about three yards wide and ten yards long worn in Kandyan court dress.
Tun Sarana. the triple gems, of Buddhism.
Tunu-ruvan. the triple gems.

U

Udekkiya. a musical drum that gives varying notes as a band is pressed, used as an accompaniment to Kandyan Minstrel songs.
Ulpengay. bath.
Unnansay. an aristocrat, a priest, (e.g. Mampitiyay Dugganna Unnansay was a Yakada Doli that bore a child to Kirti Sri).

V

Vahana. a deva has an animal peculiar to himself, to ride on. (e.g. the vahana of Kataragama is the peacock and that of Bahirawa a large dog.)
Vaisrawana. god of riches.
Vali, cry at which a band of workmen act in unison.

Vengayam-mudda. a large tube ring that gives a tinkle when the thumb on which it is worn is jerked.
Vidanay, vidane. an officer that carries messages, head of a number of servants.
Vihara. a buddhist temple.
Vimana. abode of a divine spirit.
Vinadi. a minute.
Viyana. white cloth stretched like a ceiling.
Vinaya. laws governing the buddhist priesthood.

W

Wada-bera. drums beaten when a guilty man is taken to execution.
Wadana-athu. talipot branches prepared for an attendant to hold over a master during rain.
Wadana-tuwakku. muskets carried by the king's bodyguard.
Wal-raja. literally uncultured king, ruler not fit to occupy the throne.
Wangsa. high caste, dynasty.
Wedahitina-Mandapa. part of the Palace in which the ruler resides.
Wel-bodhi. the sacred tree in Kandy which has a sprawling way of growth.
Weli-lella. wooden board covered with a thin layer of sand on which pupils write as on a slate.

Y

Yaga. a ceremony of song and dance to cure a patient of illness due to a demon's, or other malefic, influence.
Yakada Doli. a king has one chief queen known as Randoli. Queens coming next in order are Yakada-doli. These reside in the Doli-Maduwa, not the harem.
Yak-bera. a tapering drum used in yaga dancing.
Yak-debera. hive of fierce hornets.
Yama. night is divided into three (sometimes four) yamas viz :- evening, midnight and early dawn.
Yuwa-Raja. sub-king.

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