

VIJAYA: THE FIRST KING

Vijaya in India

Around 2500 years ago, the land of Lala in North India was ruled by a king named Sinhabahu and his wife (who was also his sister), Sinhavalli. They had many children, the eldest of whom was named Vijaya.

Vijaya was supposed to have been very clever and very strong, but he was also extremely mischievous and wilful. His father pardoned him many times for his unlawful acts, but finally, when Vijaya showed no signs of amendment, the King put him and 700 of his companions (who were as unruly as Vijaya himself) onto a boat and sent the boat adrift on the ocean.

For many days the boat sailed, before finally reaching the island which is known today as Sri Lanka.

Kuveni

Even before Vijaya landed in Lanka, the island was inhabited by tribes called the Yakkas and Nagas. Kuveni was a Yakka queen who initially tried to kill Vijaya and his followers. Failing to do so, she convinced him into accepting her as his queen.

Kuveni helped Vijaya defeat the Yakkas and become ruler of the entire island. Vijaya, however, was not happy with Kuveni (possibly because she was of the Yakka tribe, who were supposed to have been extremely ugly) and abandoned her and their two children. He then married a beautiful princess from Madura (India), who had arrived on the island by ship.

Kuveni was killed by the Yakkas for her betrayal and her two children escaped into the forest.

Vijaya and his new queen successfully reigned over Sri Lanka for 38 years, and brought the country to a state of prosperity.