

DEVANAMPIYA-TISSA AND BUDDHISM IN SRI LANKA

King Tissa

King Pandukabhaya had only one son named Mutasiva, who became the father of ten sons and two daughters. The second of these sons was Tissa, also known as Devanampiya-Tissa, and he was the first Buddhist King of Sri Lanka.

The introduction of Buddhism

Tissa was a great friend of King Asoka in India. King Asoka, who was a recent convert to Buddhism, sent his son, Mahinda, to Sri Lanka to preach the teachings of Lord Buddha to his friend. Mahinda preached to Tissa and his subjects, and soon they all converted to Buddhism.

Mahinda's sister, Sangamitta, arrived in Sri Lanka a short time afterward. With her, she brought a branch from the Bo-tree under which Lord Buddha gained enlightenment. This was planted in the Maha Meha Vanam (Maha Meha Garden) in Anuradhapura.

Some time after, Tissa built Thuparama, which was the first dagoba in Sri Lanka, and Isurumuniya, a rock temple.

Tanks and agriculture

King Tissa built the Tissa Wewa tank, which was used to water the paddy fields and also to provide Anuradhapura with water.