

King Ellala

After Tissa's death

After Tissa died, several of his brothers ruled Sri Lanka in succession. They were not strong rulers, however, and some Sinhalese chiefs tried to take advantage of their weaknesses to become rulers. Finally, one of Tissa's brothers, Sooratissa, called upon two Tamil chiefs to help him subdue the Sinhalese chiefs. These two Tamil chiefs took over Sri Lanka and governed it for over two decades before being killed by the last of Tissa's brothers, Asela.

King Ellala

Asela had ruled for ten years when a prince of Chola (in India), named Ellala (sometimes spelled 'Elala'), came over to Sri Lanka, conquered Asela and became king. Ellala was said to have been a just man and a brave soldier. He reigned over Sri Lanka for forty four years.

Duttu-Gemunu

While Sri Lanka was ruled by King Ellala, parts of the island were ruled by various other kings. King Kavan-Tissa was one such king. He ruled Ruhuna with his queen Vihara Maha Devi. They had two sons, Gemunu and Tissa. Gemunu was the older of the two, and his main goal in life was to rule over the whole of Sri Lanka.

When Gemunu was about sixteen years old, he started forming an army to defeat Ellala. The army consisted of 11,110 soldiers, ten of whom were referred to as 'giants' due to their massive strength.

When he felt that his army was ready to do battle, Gemunu asked for his father's permission to go to war. Thrice he asked and thrice he was denied by his father, who feared that Gemunu might perish in the fight. Getting annoyed, Gemunu mocked at his father's cowardice and then ran away to Kotmale. He stayed in Kotmale until his father's death.

Because of this, Gemunu was thereafter referred to as Duttu-Gemunu, since he had been undutiful to his father.

Once Kavan-Tissa died, his second son performed the funeral rites and took his mother to Digavapi, where his own residence was. Upon hearing of this, Gemunu sent word to Tissa to send his mother back to Magama where Gemunu had taken possession of the throne. The request was refused and Gemunu invaded Digavapi to attack his brother. He was, however, defeated and forced to flee.

Later, Gemunu defeated his brother and went back to Magama. He forgave Tissa and reinstated him in his own province, Digavapi.

The defeat of King Ellala

Duttu-Gemunu and his army of 11,110 soldiers waged war against Ellala and, after a period of four months, recovered a region called Vijitha. Then, by feigning defeat, they entered the city of Anuradhapura. The two armies fought until Duttu-

Gemunu proposed that the war be decided by a single combat with Ellala. The challenge was accepted by King Ellala, and the fight began.

The war was won by Duttu-Gemunu (possibly because Gemunu was a young man and Ellala was in his sixties), but only after a long battle between the two. After the fight, Gemunu, recognizing the bravery and goodness of Ellala, erected a monument in the dead King's name and ordered that everybody should honour Ellala's grave.