

Revelation of Conservation of Vegetation through Mihintale Slab Inscription in the 10th Century A.D

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L. Thilini Tharushi De Silva^{1(*)}

¹*Department of Sinhala and Mass Communication, University of Sri Jayawardenapura, Sri Lanka*

(*)E.mail: lttharushi92@gmail.com

Environmentalists currently view deforestation as a severe problem in the making that threatens all life forms on the planet; including humans. The loss of vegetation is experienced, as consequences of deforestation, industrialization, political ideology and acknowledgement of westernization attitudes, growing population, lucrative timber trade etc. The forest cover has now been reduced down to 27% in Sri Lanka. It is known that deforestation leads to undesirable outcomes such as drought and torrential rain pouring within short time. These are agrarian economy, adversely. The research problem of this study is to find out whether there would have been foresight anticipation of our ancient kings who reigned even a millennium ago, for protecting vegetation. The doctrine of Buddhism as well as Hinduism promoted conservation of trees and encouraged to adore them. The concept of protection of environment had been engraved on stones by several kings, the most trustworthy information of ancient times. Among them, the inscription erected by King Mahinda the fourth (952 - 972 A.D.) warned directly that not to cut vegetation namely තලපත්‍ර - Talipot Palm (*Corypha umbraculifera*) and මි ගස් - honey or butter trees (*Bassia longifolia*) growing in the premises of a monastery at Mihintale. The methodology of this research is based on primary and secondary sources. Epigraphia Zelanica has been used as primary source. It can be concluded that our kings would have had foresight perspective of protecting vegetation to avoid the imbalance of environment.

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