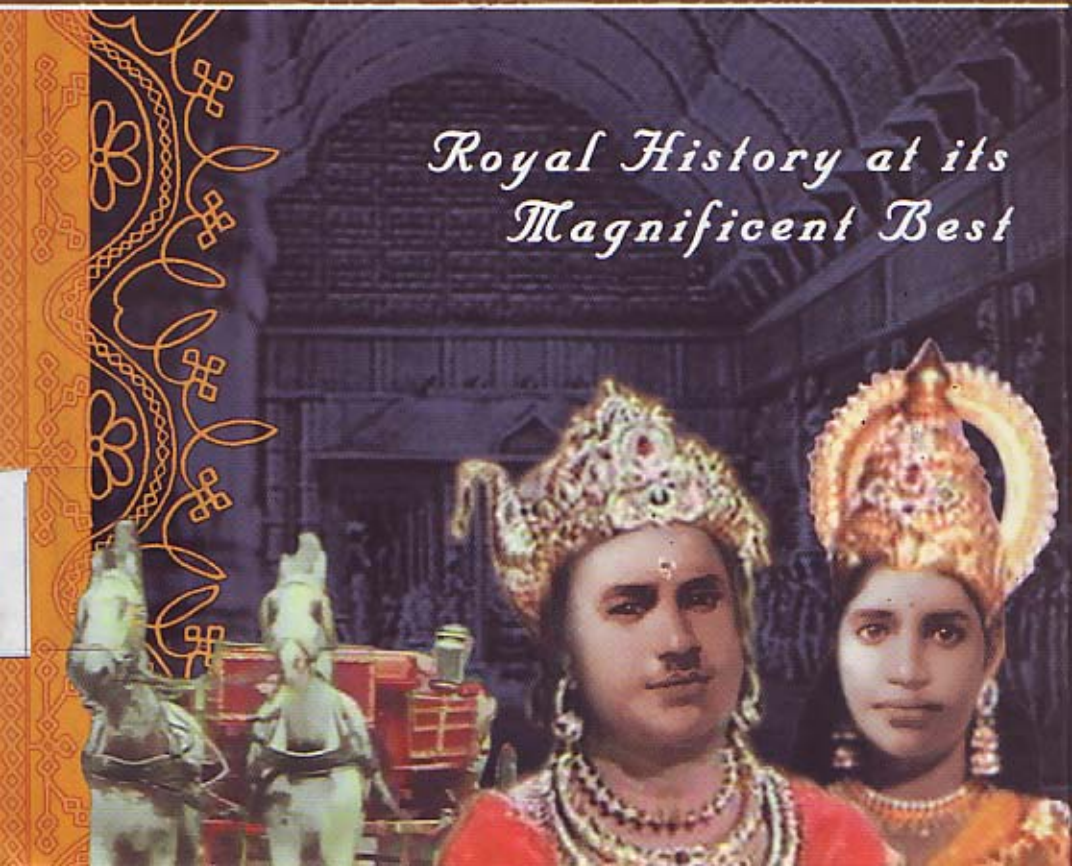




Dr K. Kunarasa

# THE JAFFNA DYNASTY

VIJAYAKALINGAN TO NARASINGHAN



*Royal History at its  
Magnificent Best*





# The Jaffna Dynasty

---

---

VIJAYAKALINGAN  
*to* NARASINGHAN

---

---

Dr K. Kuraśa BA Hons. (Cey.), MA, PhD, SLAS

*Published by*  
**DYNASTY OF JAFFNA KINGS' HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
19, 4/6, Milagiriya Avenue  
Colombo-4  
Sri Lanka



## The Jaffna Dynasty (Yaalpana Arasa Paramparai)

First Edition: February 2003  
© Dynasty of Jaffna Kings' Historical Society

*Author:* Dr K. Kunarasa, BA Hons. (Cey.), MA, PhD, SLAS

*Printed by*  
Economy Express Printing & Graphics Sdn. Bhd.  
6 & 8 Jalan Perdagangan 3  
Taman Universiti Industrial Park  
81300 Skudai, Johor Bahru  
Malaysia

*Mail Order*  
Email: nachii@starhub.net.sg  
Fax (Singapore): (0065) 64548941









All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

The copyright owner hereby apologizes for any misspelt names of places or persons. You are invited to write in and the errors will be corrected in the next edition.

ISBN: 955-8455-00-8



## Contents

Preface .....	iv
 Northern Sri Lanka: Kingdom & People of Antiquity .....	01
 Kings of Northern Kingdom .....	19
 Singhai Nagar Kingdom .....	46
 Jaffna Dynasty: Vijayakalingan .....	56
 Sankili Segarajasekaran & Paranirupasinghan .....	73
 Paranirupasinghan & his Descendants .....	86
 Vijayathevendra Mudali .....	94
 Eliyathamby to Narasinghan .....	100
References .....	116
The Jaffna Dynasty (Family Tree).....	D1
Photos of Jaffna & Eliyathamby's Family .....	P1
Map of Jaffna .....	M1



## Preface

'The Jaffna Dynasty: Vijayakalingan to Narasinghan' is an intriguing research which sprouted on fascinating grounds. *What happened to the descendants of the rulers of Jaffna? Have they assimilated with the people of the world? or Has the Royal Family become completely extinct?* Baffled for years by these questions, I earnestly searched for indisputable answers. As the period of Singhai Pararajasekaran offered the clearest insight into the history of the Jaffna Kings, I began the invaluable task of tracing the family roots of his children borne by his three wives. It is well known to the people of Jaffna that King Pararajasekaran had a son named Paranirupasinghan. History has it that Paranirupasinghan's son, Pararajasingha Mudali had distributed the villages that he had inherited from his father amongst his eight children. He had given his daughter the village of Mathagal, and his sons the seven villages of Kallyankadu, Araly, Mallagam, Achchuveli, Udupidy, Sandiliypay and Kachchai. Inferring that Paranirupasinghan's descendants live in these seven villages to date, I began to gather information from the village elders.

At this point in time, I received a telephone call from Singapore. "My name is Narasinghan," said the caller. "I am a descendant of Vijayathevendra Mudali who is a direct descendant of Paranirupasinghan. Presently, my relatives live in Malaysia, Singapore, Araly, Tholpuram and Mathagal."

"Are your ancestors from Araly?" I queried as Pararajasingha Mudali had given the village of Araly to his fourth son Vijayathevendra Mudali.

"Yes, my grandfather Nannithamby was from Araly," Mr Narasinghan promptly affirmed. "We still name our children after the names, or derivatives of the names, of our ancestors. If you desire, I can send you the documents in my possession. You can also contact my sister Pooma Devi and her husband, attorney Nadarajah who live in Tholpuram; my eldest sister Thanga Devi in Araly, and my elder brother



Athigarasinghan in Mathagal. They can furnish you with further details. And when you are satisfactorily assured of our lineage, may I request that you write a book on our Royal Family of Jaffna. I also invite you to come and meet up with my relatives in Singapore and Malaysia." Although I hesitated initially, I was overwhelmed with joy that the information I sought to unearth was spontaneously coming my way. I consented to write a book on the condition that my researches proved Mr Narasinghan's claims to be true.

Various documents were examined. Hundreds of people, especially the elders, were interviewed. Pleased with the findings, I went to Malaysia and Singapore. I examined the documents in Mr Narasinghan's possession, and interviewed the persons who claimed to be descendants of Paranirupasinghan. There was ample corroboration in what these people said. I was truly astonished that they had treasured and preserved their knowledge of the genealogy of their family for over six hundred years! They clearly recall and record their ancestry in all funeral orations.

I am indeed very happy to have discovered a hereditary root of Paranirupasinghan, the consequence of which is this book. I express my gratitude to Mr Narasinghan for encouraging me to write this book and for coming forward to publish it. I also sincerely thank Mr & Mrs Nadarajah and the venerable lady Thanga Devi who greatly assisted me in my research; my special gratitude to Mr Giridharan, son of Mr & Mrs Nadarajah. My heartfelt thanks to all the relatives of Mr Narasinghan for their cooperation during interviews and assistance in examining documents.

**With Respect**

Dr K. Kunarasa  
*Regional Commissioner (NEPC)*  
*Jaffna District*



## Northern Sri Lanka: Kingdom & People of Antiquity

The Kingdom of Northern Sri Lanka was historically known as the Kingdom of Jaffna (Yaalpanam). It is not clear when this Kingdom was first established. Modern historians, lamenting that our ancestors had written on perishable palmyrah leaves and not on copper plates, claim that literary works cannot be accepted as facts unless they are substantiated by stone inscriptions and other archaeological evidence<sup>(1)</sup>. Nevertheless, the literary works of *Kailayamaalai*, *Vaiyaapaadal* and *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai* are considered to be the three principal sources of Jaffna History. Based on these primary books and other related stone inscriptions, copper plates and archaeological evidence, several books and articles have been published from time to time. Such works include *Yaalpana Vaipava Kaumuthi* (K. Velupillai - 1918), *Yaalpana Vaipava Vimarsanam* (Rev. Father Gnanapragasar - 1928), *Yaalpana Charithiram* (Daniel S. John - 1930), *Yaalpana Charithiram* (A. Muthuthamby Pillai - 1933), *Yaalpana Charithiram* (C. Rasanayagam - 1933), *Tamils and Ceylon* (C. S. Navaratnam - 1958), 'The Northern Kingdom' (S. Nadesan - 1960), *Yaalpana Irachiyathin Thotram* (K. Indrapala - 1972), *The Kingdom of Jaffna* (S. Pathmanathan - 1978), *Yaalpana Thamizharasar Varalaarum Kaalamum* (P. Jeganathan - 1987), *Yaalpana Irachiyam* (C. K. Sittampalam - 1994), *Poonakari Tholliyalaiyukal* (P. Pushparatnam), and *Tholliyalum Yaalpana Thamizhar Panpaattuthonmayum* (S. Krishnarasa - 1998).

The Kingdom in Northern Sri Lanka came to be called the Jaffna Kingdom only in the mid-13th Century. How then was it called earlier? To have named the Tamil-ruled Northern Sri Lanka as Jaffna was an

---

1. Indrapala, K. 1970. 'Yaalpana Irachiyam Thondriya Kaalamum Chulnilayum' in *Ilankathir*. Peradeniya. p. 13





erroneous documentation of history. Rev. Father Gnanapragasar claims that it was incorrect to have referred to the ruler of Northern Sri Lanka as the King of Jaffna<sup>(2)</sup>. Indrapala too upholds that the early Northern Kingdom could never have been called Jaffna<sup>(3)</sup>. If a line is drawn from Mannar to Trincomalee, to the north of this line lay the vast Kingdom of Jaffna. It encompassed Valikamam, Thenmaraachi, Vadamarachi, Pachchilai Palli, the Vanni area and other areas<sup>(4)</sup>. The Jaffna Kingdom had, at times, extended up to Gampola<sup>(5)</sup> and to the Jayawardena Fort<sup>(6)</sup>. As such, what was the ancient name of the Kingdom of Northern Sri Lanka? It had been variously known as Naganadu, Uttaradesam, Singhai Nadu (Singhai Nagar), Manavai (Manatri), Eelam, and Tamil Pattinam.

The vast area to the north of Sri Lanka had been called Nagadipa or Nagathivu, whilst the rest of Northern Sri Lanka was called Uttarata or Uttaradesam. Although Nagathivu was a part of Uttaradesam<sup>(7)</sup>, it was separated from the mainland by sea and was thus aptly called an island (thivu). During ancient times, vessels entered the Bay of Bengal through the Elephant Pass/Jaffna Lagoon<sup>(8)</sup>. Over the course of time, the entrance at Chundikulam became blocked by sand, and Nagathivu was later renamed as the Jaffna Peninsula. To date, the Jaffna Peninsula remains connected to the mainland by the Chundikulam sand bar.

Nagathivu had been so-called because in the early days, it was inhabited by a group of Dravidians known as Nagas. The Nagas had also lived in mainland Uttaradesam. If a curved line is drawn from the

2. Gnanapragasar. 1928. *Yaalpana Vaipava Vimarsanam*. Achchveli, Nallur.
3. Indrapala, K. op cit, p. 41
4. Ibid.
5. Kottagama stone inscription (Tamil version)
6. Sittampalam, C. K. (ed.) 1992. *Yaalpana Irachiyam*. Thirunelveli: University of Jaffna. p. 52-53
7. Kunarasa, K. 1987. *Nallai Nagar Nool*. Jaffna: Poopalasingham Puthakasalai Publication. p. 3
8. Rasanayagam, C. 1933. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Vanaarpanai: Sri Shanmuganatha Press.



falls of Kadambanathi (Aruviyaru) to Kokarnam (Trincomalee), to the north of this curve was Uttaradesam. Here the ancient Nagas resided in Mahathirtham (Manthai), Kudiraimalai (Puttalam), Kurunthai (Mullaithivu), Pallavankam (Padaviya) and Kokarnam (Trincomalee). Besides these places, there were forest villages (Aranyagamas) scattered throughout Uttaradesam. Nagathivu and Uttaradesam were jointly called Eelamandalam. Kadiramalai in Nagathivu, and Mahathirtham and Kudiraimalai in Uttaradesam had prevailed as the important settlements of the Nagas<sup>(9)</sup>.

Ancient Sri Lanka had been geographically demarcated into the two Northern and Southern areas of Nagadipa or Nagathivu and Thambapanni or Thamiraparni, respectively. Nagadipa was the area to the north of Kadambanathi (Aruviyaru), Nagapokkana and Thirikoodam. It encompassed places such as the Jaffna Peninsula and its neighbouring islands of Mannar, Vavuniya and Mullaithivu<sup>(10)</sup>. Thamiraparni was the area that lay south of a curved line drawn from Kadambanathi to the delta tributary of Mahavali Ganga.

Researches indicate that Nagadipa, the territory of the Nagas, had either reduced or expanded from time to time. It had thus been denoted as Nainathivu at times, and referred to as the entire Jaffna Peninsula during other periods. Nevertheless, it seems most appropriate to accept that in the ancient times, Northern Sri Lanka was known as Nagadipa.

Geiger observes that the present Northern Sri Lanka was historically known as Nagadipa<sup>(11)</sup>. Similarly, Selkman claims that the entire area north of Mahavillachchi (Madavaachi) was called Nagadipa.

9. Kunarasa, K. 1986. 'Yaalpana Irachiyathin Kathai' in *Vidhya*, Urumpirai Hindu College Pavlavizha Malar.
10. Kunarasa, K. 1991. 'Kudiyetrangalal Elanthupoona Thamizh Pradesangal' in *Muthamizh Vizha Malar*. Jaffna. p. 130-131
11. Geiger, W. 1960. *Culture in Medieval Times*. Heigz Bechert (ed.), p. 108



Parker too concludes that Northern Sri Lanka was ancient Nagadipa<sup>(12)</sup>. Among its many references to Nagadipa, the Sinhalese historical epic of *Mahavamsa* states that Lord Buddha had, for a second time, come to Nagadipa to settle a dispute between two Naga kings<sup>(13)</sup>. The fact that Northern Sri Lanka was called Nagadipa is further reinforced by the inscriptions on the gold plate discovered at Vallipuram, which indicates that whilst King Vasabha (67-111 AD) ruled from Anuradhapuram, Nagadipa was ruled by his minister Isikiriyan<sup>(14)</sup>.

In 483 BC, Sri Lanka, the abode of the Dravidians, accommodated a new race. The King of Lada in Gujerat, India, had exiled his son Sinhala Vijayan and his 700 comrades, whom he considered useless to the country, by setting them on sail in a wooden ship<sup>(15)</sup>. They landed in Thampirarni, the area between Konanathi (Kaalaoya) and Kadambanathi (Aruviyaru). Historical reports proclaim that with the advent of Sinhala Vijayan began the prolific settlement of the Sinhalese in Southern Sri Lanka. These reports, however, fail to state that when Vijayan and his companions landed on the southern shores of Sri Lanka, the island was already inhabited by two groups of civilized people who persevered their ancient way of life<sup>(16)</sup>.

Parker, in his book *Ancient Ceylon*, narrates that the Sinhalese who arrived as enemies found Southern Sri Lanka to be inhabited by rather civilized people<sup>(17)</sup>. These inhabitants, historically referred to as the Yakkas, appear to have had a well-organized government. They also seem to have had at least two urbanized cities. Even epics like the *Ramayana* affirm that Sri Lanka was inhabited by a civilized group of

---

12. Parker, H. 1909. *Ancient Ceylon*. London. p. 14

13. Geiger, W. (ed.) 1950. *Mahavamsa* (English translation). Colombo. Chapter I, lines 46-47. p. 6

14. Paranavithana, S. 'Vallipuram Gold Plate Inscription of the Reign of Vasabha' in *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. IV, No. 29 (1934-1942). p. 237

15. Geiger, W. (ed.) op cit, Chapter VI, lines 39-47. p. 53-54

16. Kunarasa, K. op cit, p. 129

17. Parker, H. op cit.



people. Nevertheless, as Ranasingha<sup>(18)</sup> specifies, it was due to internal disputes that the Sinhalese were able to easily bring the Yakkas under their rule. From the *Mahavamsa*, we are able to gather that the Yakkas as well as the Nagas had resided in ancient Sri Lanka.

There is ample evidence to verify that the Nagas had settled down in Sri Lanka during ancient times. As noted earlier, the *Mahavamsa* states that when Gautama Buddha came to Sri Lanka for a second time, he settled a dispute between two Naga rulers. Mahodharan, the king of Nagathivu (Nagadipa) and his son-in-law Kulodharan, the king of Kandamadanam had engaged in war over a gem-set throne, but Lord Buddha managed to pacify them. Both kings were so impressed by the preachings of The Buddha that they offered him the disputed throne<sup>(19)</sup>. The dispute between these two Naga kings is expounded in the reputed epic of *Manimekalai*<sup>(20)</sup> too. The *Mahavamsa* also speaks of a Naga kingdom in Kalyani, which lay outside Nagadipa on the banks of the present Kelaniya River, as well as its ruler Maniakkiyan who had converted to Buddhism<sup>(21)</sup>. These references to Nagadipa in the *Mahavamsa* make apparent that the Nagas were the early inhabitants of ancient Sri Lanka.

In fact, it can be maintained that the Nagas had continued to preserve their ancient culture even when they embraced Buddhism, and had, during the days of The Buddha, occupied not only Northern Sri Lanka but also spread southwest up to Kelaniya<sup>(22)</sup>. Presently available literature on the history of Sri Lanka and an ancient map of the country (by Ptolemy) establish beyond doubt that Naga settlements were found in various parts of Sri Lanka, notably in Devinuwara, Nagarkovil and

---

18. Ranasingha, A. G. 1951. *Census Report of 1946*. Colombo. p. 4

19. Geiger, W. (ed.) op cit, Chapter I, lines 46-62. p. 6-7

20. *Manimekalai*. 1956. Madras: Swaminatha Iyar Publication. Section 8, lines 52-53.

21. Geiger, W. (ed.) op cit, Chapter I, lines 63-64. p. 7

22. Thanapakiam, G. 1988. *Ilankaiyil Tholliyalaiyukalum Dravida Kalacharamum*. Batticaloa. p. 26





Thirukovil Nanigiri, as well as Nagaduma, Manipallavam known as Nainathivu, Mahavillachchi called Madavaachi, Jambukolam known as Kankesanturai and the Vallipuram area in the east, and Kurunthankulam, the Mihintale area, Nagasadukkam, Kadiramalai known as Kantarodai, Kariyalai-Nagapaduvan, and Mahathirham (Manthai)<sup>(23)</sup>. Each of these ancient settlements had been ruled as a patriarchal kingdom<sup>(24)</sup>.

It can also be inferred from the available literature that the Nagas were serpent (Naga) worshippers<sup>(25)</sup>. Snake worship had, in fact, been in existence since the Indus Valley civilization. Even today, the Hindus in Sri Lanka practise Naga worship.

Fahien, a traveller of the 5th Century BC, notes that the early inhabitants of Sri Lanka were supernatural fairies and serpent-like beings who traded with different countries<sup>(26)</sup>. But, to have had engaged in trade, the ancient Nagas ought to have been a civilized group.

Sinhalese historians have deliberately refrained from accepting the Nagas as human beings<sup>(27)</sup>. Mendis asserts that the *Mahavamsa* does not depict the Yakkas and Nagas as humans. Likewise, Paranavithana claims that the *Mahavamsa* and *Manimekalai* do not portray the Nagas as human beings<sup>(28)</sup>. Such writers look upon the Nagas as ridiculous incarnations. Nonetheless, it is an accepted fact that the Yakkas and Nagas were the original, civilized inhabitants of Sri Lanka<sup>(29)</sup>. Perhaps, to emphasize that it was only after the arrival of Sinhala Vijayan in Sri Lanka that the country first saw human settlements, had the

23. Kunarasa, K. op cit, p. 131

24. Navaratnam, C. S. 1958. *Tamils and Ceylon*. Jaffna.

25. Gunasingham, S. 1973. *Koneswaram*. Peradeniya. p. 44

26. Legge/Fa-Hieris. 1886. *Record of Buddhist Kingdom*. Oxford. p. 101-103

27. Mendis, G. C. 1946. *The Early History of Ceylon*. Culcatta. p. 8

28. Paranavithana, S. 1961. 'The Ariya Kingdom in North Ceylon' in *JRASCB*, Vol. VII, Part II. p. 181-182

29. Gunasingham. S. op cit, p. 48



Sinhalese historians falsely denied the earlier inhabitants of Sri Lanka human status.

Ancient monuments recovered from various excavations have proven that long before the arrival of Sinhala Vijayan, the Dravidians lived in Sri Lanka with their own kind of culture. The present Sinhalese and Tamil-speaking people in Sri Lanka are thus descendants of the Dravidians. The cultural conflict between these two linguistic groups, seems to have begun only after the advent of Buddhism in mid-3rd Century BC. The ancestors of the Sinhalese and Tamils appear to have spoken more than one Dravidian language, inclusive of Tamil and 'Elu', the parent language of Sinhala. With the arrival of Buddhism, the 'Elu' language had mixed with the holy Buddhist language cum vernacular Sanskrit dialect (Prakrit) of Pali, the result of which was the Sinhala language<sup>(30)</sup>.

The Dravidians, pressurized by the Aryans who had invaded North India, migrated to Sri Lanka. It appears that large numbers of Dravidians had settled down in Nagathivu. Whilst new Sinhalese settlements were being established in Southern Sri Lanka following the arrival of Sinhala Vijayan at Thamiraparni, the Dravidian settlements in Northern Sri Lanka also increased<sup>(31)</sup>. However, Sir Paul Pieris is of the view that long before the birth of Vijayan, more and more Dravidian settlements had been set up in Northern Sri Lanka. As only a stretch of thirty miles of sea separated Northern Sri Lanka from India, many had sailed across and settled down in Northern Sri Lanka<sup>(32)</sup>.

The following factors provide invaluable evidence to the claim that the early inhabitants of Sri Lanka, namely the Yakkas and Nagas, were Dravidians:

30. Sittampalam, C. K. 1991. 'Thamizh Makkalin Parambariya Pradesam' in *Muthamizh Vizha Malar*. Jaffna. p. 163

31. Kunarasa, K. op cit, p. 130

32. Kunarasa, K. 1987. *Nallai Nagar Nool*. Jaffna: Poopalasingham, Puthakasalai Publication.



1. Burial Signs
2. Ancient Brahmi Inscriptions
3. Ancient Ways of Worship

The credit of having established these determinants goes to the third generation historians and archaeologists of Sri Lanka<sup>(33)</sup>.

The skeletal remains of a primitive man excavated at Balangoda, like those of the Nyandathal Man, validate that human beings lived in Sri Lanka thousands of years ago<sup>(34)</sup>.

### 1.1 Burial Signs

Archaeologists have ascertained that the culture of the early inhabitants of Sri Lanka was that of the Old Stone Age. The Old Stone Age was, perhaps, so-called because the primitive races used large stones to bury their dead. Although some primitive people did not leave behind any indication on their burial grounds, others had created burial signs such as mausoleums, tombs, stone tablets and headstones. Such monuments have been discovered by Parker during his excavations in the Tissa Maharama area in the 19th Century<sup>(35)</sup>. Yet another manner of burying the dead, especially the rulers, in large pots or urns, together with the things they had used, has been proven to be a burial custom practised only by the Dravidians thousands of years ago<sup>(36)</sup>.

33. Regarded as the third generation historians are Prof C. K. Sittampalam, Dr S. Gunasingham, Dr P. Ragupathy, Mr P. Pushparatnam, Mrs G. Thanapakiam, Mr S. Krishnarasa and Mr S. Sathiaseelan who, in boldly putting forward their individual views, have created a new outlook on the history of Ceylon, especially on aspects relating to the Tamils. The noteworthy second generation historians include Prof K. Indrapala, Prof S. Pathmanathan, Mr V. Sivasamy, Velanai Pandit P. Jeganathan, Prof K. Kanapathipillai and Mr C. S. Navaratnam. Amongst the first generation historians are Rev. Father Gnanapragasar, Mudaliyar C. Rasanayagam, Mr Daniel S. John and Mr A. Muthuthamby Pillai.

34. Kunarasa, K. op cit, p. 130

35. Sittampalam C. K. op cit, p. 162

36. Kunarasa, K. op cit, p. 130



Ancient Tamil literary works indicate that the burial urns found in Adichcha Nallur on the southern bank of the Thamiraparni River in the Thirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu, related to the Dravidian burial custom. Such burial urns have also been excavated in Pomparippu situated in the old Thambapanni area in the Puttalam District of Sri Lanka<sup>(37)</sup>.

During the early period of the last century, a burial-urn cemetery was discovered in Pomparippu, and excavations were carried out in 1970. This cemetery was found to be very similar to that unearthed at Adichcha Nallur in Tamil Nadu. Excavations were also made in Anuradhapuram in 1969, in Kantarodai in 1970, and in Manthai in 1980. These excavations affirm that the Old Stone Age culture had prevailed in the areas that were later colonized by Vijayan and his comrades<sup>(38)</sup>. Archaeologically, Sittampalam advances that the Old Stone Age culture that appears to have existed in Manthai, situated opposite to Adichcha Nallur, and in Pomparippu, situated opposite to Arikkamedu, were so identical that these two areas can be considered to have been parts of the same region. Burial urns discovered in other areas -- such as Anaikoddai, Paranthan, Imbankaduwa, Pathiagampola, Kalmanai, Kittulkal, Kuruwitta and Patha Thombalanna -- indicate that Dravidian settlements had been widely diffused in ancient Sri Lanka. On 31 May 1985, I too had excavated a burial urn at Kunchuparanthan<sup>(39)</sup>.

All the aforesaid excavations ascertain the early widespread dominance of the Dravidian civilization in Sri Lanka.

37. Paranavithana, S. 1956. 'Archaeological Investigations Near Pomparippu' in *Ceylon Today*, 5 (II), Nov 1956.

38. Sittampalam, C. K. op cit, p. 163

39. Kunarasa, K. 1985. 'Kunchuparanthan Mudhumakkal Thaali' in *Eelanadu* weekly magazine (9.6.1985). Jaffna.

- 1988. 'Kilinochchiyin Kathai' in *Kanthan Karunai* (Kandaswamy Kovil Mahakumbabisheka Malar). Kilinochchi. p. 46



## 1.2 Ancient Brahmi Inscriptions

Although there are conflicting views in South Asia as to when writing was first used, there is sufficient evidence to show that by the 3rd Century BC, a script named Brahmi had been widely used in Sri Lanka during the reign of King Asoka. Historians have referred to this script as Asoka Brahmi or Northern Brahmi. During the same period, a similar script known as Tamil Brahmi or Dravidi<sup>(40)</sup> had been used in Tamil Nadu. However, this South Indian script had unique letters that were not found in Asoka Brahmi.

To date, over 1500 Brahmi documents have been discovered in Sri Lanka. Most of these documents had been written in Prakrit expounding the Buddhist philosophy. It was the combination of this Buddhism-based Prakrit language known as Pali and the prevalent 'Elu' Dravidian language that later developed into the Sinhala language. The Brahmi documents unearthed in Tamil Nadu have also been thoroughly examined and compared with the Brahmi documents of Sri Lanka. The Tamil Brahmi script has been found to differ from the Northern Brahmi letters. Nevertheless, the South Indian script and the Sri Lankan script had many similar formations. Sinhalese scholars, such as E. P. Fernando, Sathamangala Karunaratna and Ariya Abeyasingha, who have examined both the scripts advocate that even before the introduction of the Buddhism-based Prakrit Northern Brahmi letters, the Tamil Brahmi letters had been used in Sri Lanka<sup>(41)</sup>.

The most ancient document discovered in Jaffna was the inscription on a broken piece of earthen pot found in Kantarodai. This inscription in Prakrit read as 'Pot of Thathaha'<sup>(42)</sup>. A stamped document, believed to belong to the 3rd or 4th Century AD, was also discovered at Kantarodai. The South Indian Brahmi inscription in a red stamp on this document

40. Mahadevan, I. 1916. *Corpus of The Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions*. Madras.

41. Pushparatnam, P. 1992. *Thamizheela Nooku*. Vol. 1, Part 2.

42. Indrapala, K. in *Sinthanai*, Issue III, Vol. 2. Jaffna: University of Jaffna. p.



read as 'Vishnu Puthisya / Vishnu Puthiyandaiya'<sup>(43)</sup>. Furthermore, a skeleton and a bronze seal were excavated at Anaikodai. The inscription on the seal read as 'Kovethan / Kovethan / Kovetham'<sup>(44)</sup>.

During a search at Kantarodai for more ancient monuments of the Tamil civilization, a few broken pieces of black-and-red earthenware were found. The black-and-red brim of a flat earthen pot was also recovered from a pit that had been dug on a sand hill in Kantarodai. The clear Brahmi inscription on this brim read as 'Kuni'. This script resembled the South Indian script used during the 1st and 2nd Century AD. Krishnarasa is of the opinion that these letters were the latter half of the Tamil word 'Pikkuni' (female Buddhist monk)<sup>(45)</sup>.

The Brahmi documents belonging to the 3rd Century BC onwards reveal that the royal administration of Sri Lanka was similar to that of South India. Words such as 'Aayi (Aaya)' and 'Veil (Vela)' found in these documents were used as titles of the kings of the minor kingdoms in ancient Sri Lanka. Over 40 stone inscriptions with these words have been found in Anuradhapuram, Kelaniya, Vavuniya, Periya Puliyalankulam, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Poonari. As the Brahmi letter 'il' was peculiar to the Tamil script, it can be concluded that from the 3rd Century BC, there were minor Tamil kingdoms to the north and south of Anuradhapuram<sup>(46)</sup>.

Words such as 'Parumaga (Parumagan / Perumagan)', 'Veil', 'Aayi' and 'Baratha' were also found in the Brahmi stone inscriptions that belonged to the Dravidian civilization some 2000 years before the 3rd Century BC<sup>(47)</sup>. Having examined these ancient Brahmi stone inscriptions, Sathamangala Karunaratna proclaims that the Tamil Brahmi

43. Indrapala, K. 1959. 'Yaalpanathu Sasanangal' in *Ilankathir*. Peradeniya. p. 25-34

44. Ragupathy, P. 1987. *Early Settlements in Jaffna - An Archaeological Survey*. Madras.

45. Krishnarasa, S. in *Veerakesari* weekly issue (11.4.1993).

46. Pushparatnam, P. op cit, p. 34

47. Sittampalam, C. K. in *Varalaaru* 9. p. 20



letters had been used in these inscriptions. The Asoka Brahmi letters were found to be used only in the stone inscriptions made during the 1st Century AD and thereafter. By highlighting the differences in the two Brahmi scripts, Sathamangala Karunaratna makes apparent the antiquity of the Tamil Brahmi<sup>(48)</sup>. He also specifies that words such as 'Eela', 'Thameda', and 'Thamela' had been used in the old Brahmi stone inscriptions of Eelam (one of the names by which the Kingdom of Northern Sri Lanka was called)<sup>(49)</sup>. The words 'Eela' and 'Eelaa' found on the broken pieces of earthenware recently discovered at Poonari thus clearly establish that the Dravidians were the early inhabitants of Sri Lanka<sup>(50)</sup>.

### 1.3 Ancient Ways of Worship

The early settlers in Sri Lanka were basically Nature worshippers; the Nagas, as mentioned earlier, specifically worshipped the serpent and the deity Siva. According to the *Mahavamsa*, before the introduction of Buddhism in the mid-3rd Century BC, the traditional worship of the Yakkas and Nagas included tree worship, Linga (a symbol of Siva) worship, and the religious beliefs of Jain and Brahmaniam<sup>(51)</sup>.

The religious names found in the Brahmi stone inscriptions testify that the ancient inhabitants were Hindus before the majority of them converted to Buddhism. The Hindu names in Brahmi inscriptions on the caves donated to the Buddhists further affirm that the monks were Hindus before they embraced Buddhism<sup>(52)</sup>. The evidence gathered

48. Thanapakiam, G. op cit, p. 36

49. Sittampalam, C. K. op cit, p. 164

50. Pushparatnam, P. 1991. 'Sanhakaala Eelam Thamizhar Pradesangalil Ondra?' in *Velicham* (Puratathi-Aipasi 1991). Jaffna. p. 14

51. Paranavithana, S. 1909. 'Pre-Buddhist Religious Beliefs in Ceylon' in *JRASCB*, Vol. XXXI, No. 82. p. 302-328

52. Sittampalam, C. K. in *Varalaaru* 7. p. 20



thus far also indicates that between the 6th and 3rd Century BC, Hinduism had been the religion of only a particular group of people<sup>(53)</sup>.

The early Buddhist shrines had been built in places where the Yakka worship had prevailed before. The *Mahavamsa* states that in the 4th Century AD, a shrine was constructed on the site where the Temple of Yaksha Kaalavelan had earlier existed. Paranavithana notes that Thuparama, the first Buddhist shrine, was erected on the ground where the Temple of Yaksha Maheshan had stood<sup>(54)</sup>. The term 'Yaksha worship' has been used in Pali works to refer to the worship of Nature and statues in ancient Sri Lanka.

Ferguson claims that the worship of the Yakkas and Nagas was the kind of worship practised by the Dravidians in India before the Aryan invasion<sup>(55)</sup>. Traces of Yakka worship have been found in the Indian subcontinent. Citing that the early Hindu statues were similar to the ancient Yakka statues, Kumaraswamy asserts that the worship of the Yakkas was the non-Aryan way of worship. It was from this Yaksha form of worship that statues of gods such as Siva, Umai, Kuberan, and the prayer method of worship had developed<sup>(56)</sup>. The Linga worship, found in the Hindu religion to date, was also part of Yaksha worship<sup>(57)</sup>. Paranavithana reports that early Brahmi stone inscriptions indicate that the worship of the sun, moon and stars were yet other aspects of Nature worship<sup>(58)</sup>.

The Naga worship of Siva was also well established in Sri Lanka before the advent of Buddhism. Sinhalese historical works reveal that a Siva-Linga temple had been built by Pandukabayan, one of the early

53. Gunasingham, S. op cit, p. 31

54. Sittampalam, C. K. 1983. 'Pandaiya Eelathu Yaksha, Naga Vazhipaadu' in *Sinthanai*, Issue III, Vol. 1. Jaffna: University of Jaffna. p. 124-125

55. Ferguson, J. T. 1873. *Tree and Serpent Worship in India*. London.

56. Kumaraswamy, A. K. 1971. *The Yakkas*. New Delhi.

57. Sittampalam, C. K. op cit, p. 123

58. Paranavithana, S. 1970. *Inscriptions of Ceylon*. Colombo.



Sinhalese ancestors. Ancient documents have also been noted to contain the names of many people which began with or ended in 'Siva'. In fact, 63 of the archaeological concordance of historical documents contained the word 'Siva'<sup>(59)</sup>.

It is apparent from the historical and archaeological researches on burial signs, ancient Brahmi inscriptions and ancient ways of worship that the early inhabitants and originators of civilization in Sri Lanka were the Dravidians.

#### 1.4 Were The Sinhalese Aryans?

Sinhalese historians have attempted to depict the Sinhalese as Aryans and Sinhala as one of the Aryan languages. But, the *Mahavamsa*, *Chulavamsa* and other related Sinhalese books do not portray the Sinhalese as Aryans. Just as these books refer to the Dravidians as Tamils, Pandiyas, Keralas, Cholas, Kannadas and Nayakas, they speak of the Sinhalese as Sikalas<sup>(60)</sup>. Based on the stories of Sinhala Vijayan and Pandukabayan expounded in the *Mahavamsa*, it can only be inferred that their arrivals were the precursors to the Sinhalese settlements and civilization in Sri Lanka. The claim that they were Aryans has not been substantiated. Nonetheless, much effort has been made to proclaim that the Sinhalese were Aryans based on the single fact that Buddhism had spread to Sri Lanka from North India.

Pali literary works illustrate that long before the arrival of Vijayan and his 700 comrades in 483 BC, pure Aryans had visited Sri Lanka. For instance, Lord Rama had come to Sri Lanka to rescue his wife Sita who had been kidnapped by Ravana; Arjuna, one of the Pancha Pandavas, had come to Arippu on the western coast to abduct Alli; and

59.- Gunasingham, S. op cit, p. 27-31

- Thanapakiyam, G. 'Vanga Elavarasar Vijayanin Varalaarum, Ilankaiyil Sinhala Enamum'.

60. *Origins of The Art of Writing: Progress, Development & Mixture*. 1989. Batticaloa. p. 30



Lord Kanda had come to Kattaragama (Magama) to marry Valli<sup>(61)</sup>, a Yakka girl. None of these Pali works refer to Vijayan and his companions as Aryans. Only the Sinhalese historians Mendis and Paranavithana, as well as those who came after them, portray the Sinhalese as Aryans.

In fact, the story of Vijayan lacks archaeological evidence. Evidence obtained thus far only establishes that the ancestors of the Sinhalese did not come from North India, and that the originators of civilization in Sri Lanka came to Eelam from South India.

Ancient monuments of the Old Stone Age culture excavated in various parts of Sri Lanka do not bear any evidence to the claim that the Sinhalese ancestors and the development of civilization in Sri Lanka were connected to North India. Sittampalam states that a close study of the areas where Pali literary works claim the early Sinhalese settlements had taken place, indicates that what these works referred to as the settlements of Vijayan and his group were in fact Old Stone Age settlements. It was the ancient Dravidians from South India, and not immigrants from North India, who had settled down in Sri Lanka and imposed their own culture on the prevalent Old Stone Age culture. It is thus clear that the Pali works had wrongly referred to the primitives of Old Stone Age as the Nagas and Yakkas. This endorses the claim that the originators of civilization in Sri Lanka were the Dravidians<sup>(62)</sup>.

During the Old Stone Age, the Kingdom of Northern Sri Lanka saw the development of the 'Elu' and Tamil languages; the Yakkas spoke 'Elu' and the Nagas spoke Tamil. As the Sinhalese settled down in Sri Lanka and assimilated with the Yakkas, and embraced Buddhism introduced by some North Indian immigrants, over the course of time, their holy Pali language influenced the vernacular 'Elu' and gave rise to the present Sinhala language. Sittampalam observes that it was due to

61. Kunarasa, K. 1992. *Kuveni*. Jaffna: Tamil Thaaai Publication.

62. Sittampalam, C. K. op cit articles.



speaking Dravidian-Sinhalese departed from the original Tamil-Hindu culture<sup>(63)</sup>. During the same period of time, the Tamil-Hindu culture remained deep-rooted in the northern and eastern areas of Sri Lanka. Hence, Sri Lanka had become the abode of two linguistic groups.

As noted earlier, the Kingdom of Northern Sri Lanka had various ancient names. Of these, the name 'Singhai' is of special significance. Singhai Nagar is believed to have been the capital of the Northern Kingdom. The Ariya Chakravarthis (Emperors) who ruled Jaffna had been generally referred to as the rulers of Singhai Nagar. The many historical titles bestowed on these monarchs include 'Singhai Ariyan', 'Singhai Thankum Ariyar Koomaan' and 'Singhaiyenkoomaan'. The book entitled *Pararajasekaram* speaks of the "ever victorious Singhai Nadan Pararajasekaran". In the Kottagama stone inscription, the Jaffna King has been denoted as 'Singhai Nagar Ariyan'. These findings suggest that 'Singhai' or 'Singhai Nadu' was the name of a village in Northern Sri Lanka<sup>(64)</sup>.

Manavai, and its derivatives Manatri and Manatridal, had been amongst the other names of the Northern Kingdom of Sri Lanka. In *Segarajasekaramalai*, the Ariya Chakravarthis of Jaffna have been called 'Manavai Ariyavarodayan', 'Manavayorkoon Segarajasekaraman' and 'Manavai Thanthamaal'. Manavai, or Manatri, had also been the commonly used name of the Jaffna Peninsula. To date, it refers only to the western area of the Peninsula. Many historians are of the view that during the period of change, Manatri, which encodes the meaning of sand (manal) and village (oor), had been converted to the Sinhala name of 'Valigama' (Weligamam) encoding the same meaning, i.e. 'vali' meaning sand and 'gama' meaning village.

During the ancient days, the Northern Kingdom was also known to the Tamils as Eelam. In fact, the name had referred to the entire

63. Sittampalam, C. K. 1991. 'Thamizh Makkalin Parambariya Pradesam' in *Muthamizh Vizha Malar*. Jaffna. p. 42

64. Indrapala, K. op cit, p. 42



island of Sri Lanka<sup>(65)</sup>. The Northern Kingdom has been indicated as 'Eelam' in the stone inscriptions of Maravarman Sundarapandiyan I. Even the South Indian inscriptions of the Vijayanagar Empire refer to Jaffna as 'Eelam'<sup>(66)</sup>. As mentioned earlier, the pieces of earthenware excavated at Poonari had the Brahmi inscriptions of 'Eela' and 'Eelaa'<sup>(67)</sup>. This can be regarded as substantive evidence to prove that the Poonari area had been known as the Kingdom of Eelam.

Only after the 13th Century had the Northern Kingdom been called the Kingdom of Jaffna. It is in the Vijayanagar stone inscription of 1435 at Thirumanikuli that, for the very first time, the Kingdom of Northern Sri Lanka was found to be indicated as 'Yaalpanayan Pattinam' and the Kingdom of Southern Sri Lanka as 'Eelam'. The 15th Century Sinhalese works refer to the throne of the Ariya Chakravarthis as 'Yaapapaduna'. Nevertheless, it can be maintained that the Northern Kingdom of Sri Lanka had been ruled as smaller patriarchal kingdoms.

Unable to contest the strong Aryans who had invaded North India, the Dravidians from South India had migrated to Sri Lanka. Many of these Dravidian immigrants had settled down in Nagathivu<sup>(68)</sup>. Whilst new Sinhalese settlements were being established in Southern Sri Lanka following the fictitious arrival of Sinhala Vijayan, the Dravidian settlements in Northern Sri Lanka had also increased greatly. According to Sir Paul Pieris, numerous Dravidian settlements had been established in Northern Sri Lanka many centuries before Vijayan was born. As only a small stretch of thirty miles of sea separated Northern Sri Lanka from India, many had easily sailed across and settled down in Northern Sri Lanka<sup>(69)</sup>.

65. Gnanapragasar. op cit, p. 303

66. Indrapala, K. op cit, p. 44

67. Pushparatnam, P. 1993. *Vada Ilankaiyil Singhai Nagar*. Jaffna: Holy Father G. A. Francis Joseph Manivizhasabai Publication.

68. Indrapala, K. op cit, p. 45

69. Ibid. p. 46



That the Dravidian settlements were widely diffused in ancient Sri Lanka is made apparent by the ancient burial urns excavated in various parts of Sri Lanka. In 1955, a burial urn belonging to the Dravidian custom was unearthed at the Marichkudi Road in Puttalam. Similar burial urns have also been lately discovered at Anaikoddai and Kunchuparanthan in 1982 and 1984 respectively<sup>(70)</sup>. These afford positive proof to the claim that long before the arrival of Sinhala Vijayan, Dravidian culture and civilization had been firmly established in ancient Sri Lanka.

Excavated ancient monuments clearly affirm that from the 2nd Century BC, many settlements had been established at various areas in Jaffna. These monuments specifically reveal that the early settlers in the Kantarodai area were highly civilized people who had established contact with other countries, and had known how to use writing. Such civilized people ought to have had lived in the other parts of Jaffna as well. Each of these groups of early inhabitants had denoted the Northern Kingdom by various names. Though each group differed individually, it can be indisputably concluded that, collectively, these ancient inhabitants of Northern Sri Lanka were the Nagas who belonged to the Dravidian race.

---

70. Kunarasa, K. 1985. 'Kunchuparanthan Mudhumakkal Thaali' in *Eelanadu* weekly magazine (9.6.1985). Jaffna.



## Kings of The Northern Kingdom

Since the early days, Sri Lanka has been called by various names. 'Ilankapuri' and 'Eelam', the two names which referred to the entire island, have the honour of being still existent. In fact, the present permanent names of 'Lanka' and 'Ilankai' had been derived from Ilankapuri.

The very first mention of Ilankapuri has been traced to the Uttara Kandam, expounded in the *Ramayana*, where the celestial architect Visuvakarman is said to have constructed Ilankapuri for Kubera who later gave it to Ravana. The fact that Sri Lanka is still known as Ilankai illustrates the everlasting fame of the name Ilankapuri. With the arrival of the Westerners, this name has been modified to be pronounced as 'Zeilan', 'Sailan' and 'Ceylon'<sup>(1)</sup>.

Ancient Tamil literary works, stone inscriptions and coins testify that Sri Lanka had also been known as Eelam. Eelam has been mentioned in the literary work of *Pattinapaalai*<sup>(2)</sup>. The stone inscription of Thiruparankunram speaks of the work of a person called Eela Kudumbikan<sup>(3)</sup>. A later-day stone inscription of the Pandiyas too contains information about Eelam<sup>(4)</sup>. In a stone inscription excavated at Anuradhapuram, the coins of Eelam have been mentioned. Historians believe that these coins referred to the Kahavanu coins used by the Sinhalese Kings<sup>(5)</sup>. However, none of the primary historical sources of

- 
1. Thanapakiyam. G. 1988. *Ilankaiyil Tholliyalaiyukalum Dravida Kalacharamum*. Batticaloa. p. 54
  2. *Pattinapaalai*. p. 190-192
  3. Raman, K. V. 1967. *Tholliyalaiyukal*. Segar Publishing House.
  4. *ARE*. 1901. No. 128 of 1901, 5II VII, No. 778.
  5. Srisena, O. M. R. 1985. 'Our Gold Kahavanu Coins and Currency' in the Daily News, 5 April 1985.



Sri Lanka indicate that it had been called Eelam. It is only in the Brahmi inscription on the two pieces of earthenware discovered by Pushparatnam in Poonari that Eelam has been first cited. Although the first earthenware, which has a three-letter inscription, is badly broken, Pushparatnam asserts that the pronunciation of 'Eela' can be read off the first two letters. The second piece of earthenware has the clear inscription 'Eelaa'. Both these inscriptions can be considered to indicate the name Eelam<sup>(6)</sup>.

The word 'Eelam' encodes the meaning of metal bars or gold<sup>(7)</sup>. In explaining how the name came about, Rasanayagam states that as the incomplete language of 'Alu' spoken by the early Nagas and Yakkas became wrongly pronounced as 'Elu' by the later people, Sri Lanka came to be called 'Eelam' and 'Eelamandalam'. Rasanayagam claims that as the name Eelam underwent language alterations and adaptations, it became known as 'Seelam', 'Sehalam' and finally as 'Sinhalam'. He concludes that it was from the name Seelam that the Arabs have come to call Sri Lanka as 'Seelamdip' and 'Serendip', and the Westerners have derived the names 'Ceylang' and 'Ceylon'<sup>(8)</sup>. Sittampalam too observes that as the pronunciation of Eelam was changed and combined with the epithet 'Sri', it became the Pali word 'Sihala' and the Sanskrit word 'Simhala'<sup>(9)</sup>.

Ancient Sri Lanka, as stated in Chapter 1, was geographically demarcated into the two Northern and Southern areas of Nagadipa or Nagathivu and Thambapanni or Thamiraparni, respectively. Nagadipa was the area to the north of Kadambanathi (Aruviyaru), Nagapokkana

6. Pushparatnam, P. 1991. 'Sanhakaala Eelam Thamizhar Pradesangalil Ondra?' in *Velicham* (Puratathi-Aipasi 1991). Jaffna. p. 13-14
7. Tamil Dictionary. 1989. Madras: The Thirunelveli Saivasidhantha Publishing Society. p. 144
8. Rasanayagam, C. 1933. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Vanaarpanai: Sri Shanmuganatha Press. p. 11-12
9. Sittampalam, C. K. 1994. *Eela Thamizhar Varalaaru*. Chavakacheri: Hindu College. Vol. 1. p. 6



and Thirikoodam. It encompassed places such as the Jaffna Peninsula and its neighbouring islands of Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaithivu and Kilinochchi<sup>(10)</sup>. Thamiraparni was the area that lay south of a curved line drawn from Kadambanathi to the delta tributary of Mahavali Ganga.

Early writers from both the West and the East had documented Sri Lanka as 'Thamiraparni'. For apparent reasons, the name had been extended to refer to the whole island. When the Greek, Roman and Arabian traders, who were great sailors, entered the Indian Ocean, the wind and sea currents moved them towards the western coast of Thamiraparni between Kadambanathi (Aruviyaru) and the Kalyani River (Kalani Ganga). As these people became well acquainted with Thamiraparni, they used the same name to denote the entire island on their maps and books.

Ancient Greek scholars had pronounced Thamiraparni as 'Taprobane' and 'Taprabane'<sup>(11)</sup>. Erathosthenis and Claudius Ptolemy, the astronomy and geography experts of the 2nd Century BC, had indicated Sri Lanka on their maps as 'Taprobane' and 'Taprabane', respectively.

The Sinhalese historical epic of *Mahavamsa* refers to the Thamiraparni area as 'Thambapanna'<sup>(12)</sup>. Thambapanna seems to be the Pali pronunciation of the Sanskrit word Thamiraparni<sup>(13)</sup>. Many reasons have been advanced as to why Thamiraparni had been used to denote either Southern Sri Lanka or the entire island. Parker is of the view that since the Thammana River flows southeast of Sri Lanka, the

10. Kunarasa, K. 1991. 'Kudiyetrangalal Elanthupoonna Thamizh Pradesangal' in *Muthamizh Vizha Malar*. Jaffna. p. 130-131
11. Birch, T. W. 1967. *Maps: Topographical and Statistical*. Oxford University Press. p. 2
12. Geiger, W. 1950. *Mahavamsa* (English translation). Colombo. Chapter VI, line 47. p. 54
13. Thanapakiyam, G. op cit, p. 10





area had been called Thampanni<sup>(14)</sup>. There is also the belief that as Vijayan and his comrades sat placing their palms on the ground to rest, and found their palms to be stained by a copper-like (Thamira) colour, the area came to be called Thambapanni<sup>(15)</sup>.

Yet another acceptable reason as to why ancient Southern Sri Lanka was known as Thamiraparni relates to its connection with the area in the Thirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu where the Thamiraparni River flows. The river starts out at the mountains on the western coast of India and flows through the famous ancient area of Adichcha Nallur in Thirunelveli, into the Indian Ocean through the Gulf of Mannar. Konanathi (Kaalaoya) in Sri Lanka is situated directly east of the Thamiraparni River in India. Perhaps, this was why when the people of the Thirunelveli/Thamiraparni River area migrated to Sri Lanka for various reasons, they had established their settlements along the western coast of Sri Lanka. It was the area between Konanathi and Kadambanathi (Aruviyaru) that had been called Thamiraparni<sup>(16)</sup>. It is highly plausible that the Indian immigrants had named their new homeland after their motherland.

The research findings of the Sinhalese historian and archaeologist Paranavithana further verify that before the arrival of Vijayan, the pearl drivers from Thamiraparni in India had named the area adjoining the

14. Parker, H. 1887. 'Report on Archaeological Discoveries at Tissa Maharama' in *RAS*, Vol. VIII, No. 27.
15. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter VII, lines 41, 42 and 58.
16. Some historians specify that before Sri Lanka was separated as an island on its own, the Thamiraparni River flowed through Thirunelveli right into Sri Lanka, and hence, ancient people from the banks of the Thamiraparni River at the tip of India had migrated to Sri Lanka. But, Sri Lanka was separated from India during the Maeosin period when the human race had not originated on Earth yet. Thus, no human migration could not have taken place then. However, it has been geographically proven that Rameswaram and Thalaimannarai had been connected by a strip of land at the present Ramar Bridge. It was probably through this strip of land that people from Tamil Nadu had migrated to Sri Lanka.



shore of Kadambanathi as Thamiraparni<sup>(17)</sup>. -- The Gulf of Mannar had been famous for its ocean bed of pearls. Archaeologists have also established that the ancient burial urns found in Adichcha Nallur on the southern bank of the Thamiraparni River, and the urns excavated at Pomparippu in the Thamiraparni area are very similar<sup>(18)</sup>. Other archaeological findings at Pomparippu too confirm the cultural similarity between the Thamiraparni people of Pandiya Nadu and the Thambapanna people of Sri Lanka.

Moreover, substantive facts found in Sri Lankan historical works as well as Indian and Greek literature clearly affirm that before the 5th Century BC, Sri Lanka had been known to other countries by the name of Thamiraparni<sup>(19)</sup>.

In the ancient days, Thamiraparni had been occupied by the Yakkas just as the Nagas had inhabited Northern Sri Lanka. According to the *Mahavamsa*, The Buddha, who came to Sri Lanka nine months after his enlightenment, had appeared before the Yakkas assembled at the Garden of Mahanaga and cleansed them of all fears<sup>(20)</sup>. The *Mahavamsa* specifies that the Yakkas would assemble in the huge Garden of Mahanaga (Mahiyanganai) for ceremonies. During this period, the Yakkas had lived in large numbers in Sri Lanka, especially in the Thamiraparni area. The *Mahavamsa* also contains details of Vijayan's meeting with the Yakka queen Kuvani when he arrived in Sri Lanka. Though the Vijayan-Kuvani story is fictitious, it is indisputable that the Yakkas were already ruling Southern Sri Lanka when the Sinhalese ancestors arrived. The *Mahavamsa* portrays Siristhuvatthu as a famous city of the Yakkas<sup>(21)</sup>. The epic of *Ramayana*, Ptolemy's map and the Buddhist Jathaga stories indicate that besides Siristhuvatthu, Yakka

17. Nicholas, C. W. and Paranavithana, S. 1961. *A Concise History of Ceylon*. Ceylon University Press. p. 24
18. Paranavithana, S. 1956. 'Archaeological Investigations Near Pomparippu' in *Ceylon Today*, 5 (II), Nov 1956.
19. Thanapakiam, G. op cit, p. 11-13
20. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter I, lines 20-30. p. 3-4
21. Ibid. Chapter VI, line 32. p. 57



settlements had existed in Thirikoodam, Ilankapuri, Arithakiri, Yakkurakala, Lakkala, Nigumbilavanam, Thumaramakka, Vindanai, Mahiyanganai and Yakkure<sup>(22)</sup>. Yakka settlements are also believed to have been established at Pomparippu, Thamiraparni (city) and Kadirgamam. Iyakachchi in the North too can be regarded to have been a Yakka settlement<sup>(23)</sup>.

The Tamil rulers of Nagadipa (Northern Sri Lanka) had ruled Thamiraparni (Southern Sri Lanka) during certain periods in history. Likewise, the Sinhalese rulers of Southern Sri Lanka had also ruled Northern Sri Lanka from time to time. During these periods, Nagadipa and Thamiraparni consisted of minor kingdoms.

## 2.1 Arrival of Sinhala Vijayan

When Vijayan and his comrades arrived in 483 BC, they overpowered the Dravidian Yakkas in Southern Sri Lanka and established many of their own settlements. The Yakka queen of Thamiraparni, Kuveni had helped them to achieve this success. The *Mahavamsa* vividly describes how Vijayan and his companions arrived in Sri Lanka and established their settlements<sup>(24)</sup>.

A Princess of Bengal had left her palace and joined a group of traders who were proceeding to Magada. When they were passing through a jungle, a lion killed the traders and carried away the princess who later bore him the twins Singapaagu and Sigasivili. At the age of sixteen, Singapaagu killed his father and returned to Bengal and ascended the throne as a rightful heir. He took his sister as his wife and established a country called Singhapura. He became the father of thirty-two children born as sixteen pairs of twins. His eldest son was Vijayan and the second, Sumithan.

22. Thanapakiam, G. op cit, p. 245

23. Kunarasa, K. 1992. *Kuveni*. Jaffna: Tamil Thaaai Publication.

24. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter VI, lines 1-74 & Chapter VII, lines 1-28. p.51-



Vijayan was prone to evil misdeeds; he and his comrades caused the people of their Kingdom great difficulties. Angered by the atrocities of Vijayan, the people pleaded with the King to kill him. As the King's repeated warnings fell on deaf ears, Vijayan and his 700 companions were caught and, with half-shaven heads, were set on sail in a wooden boat. They landed on the shores of Thamiraparni in Sri Lanka<sup>(25)</sup>.

The claim that the Sinhalese lineage in Sri Lanka began with the arrival of Vijayan who was the direct descendant of a King born to a lion and a human Princess would indeed greatly dishonour the Sinhalese race has having originated from a beast. Although the story of Vijayan lacks archaeological evidence, historians have found this fictitious story to be based on the Buddhist Jathaga stories<sup>(26)</sup>. Hence, the arrival of Vijayan can be regarded as a precursor to the Sinhalese settlements and civilization in Sri Lanka.

Upon his arrival at Thamiraparni, Vijayan married its Yakka queen Kuveni. Their wedding ceremony took place in the city of Siristhuvattu. With the assistance of Kuveni, Vijayan and his comrades killed all the Yakka guests who came for the ceremony. Intoxicated by her love for Vijayan, Kuveni, a lady of Dravidian origin, had destroyed part of the Yakka people in Sri Lanka<sup>(27)</sup>.

After their genocide of the Yakkas, Vijayan's 700 comrades cum ministers each established a settlement and named it after himself. A settlement created in the close proximity to Malvatthuoya (Aruviyaru/Kadambanathi) by the minister Anuradha thus became known as Anuradhagama. To the north of Anuradhagama, near Kanatharaoya, a settlement was established by Upatissa and named Upatissagama. Close

25. Ibid. Chapter VII, line 42. p. 58

26. Mendis, G. C. 1965. 'The Vijayan Legend' in *Paranavithana Felicitation Volume*. Colombo. p. 263-279

27. These have been well expounded in the historical novel *Kuveni* by Dr Sengaiazhiyan K. Kunarasa, op cit.





to the mouth of Kaalaoya (Konanathi), the minister Uruvela formed a settlement and called it Uruvelagama. Likewise, the settlement of the minister Vijitha became known as Vijithagama<sup>(28)</sup>. However, ancient monuments recovered from various archaeological excavations have proven that the many areas where Vijayan's ministers were noted to have created their own settlements were in fact areas where earlier Yakka settlements had existed, areas where the Dravidians had sown the seeds of civilization in ancient Sri Lanka.

Nevertheless, Sinhala Vijayan can be viewed as the first known Sinhalese King of Sri Lanka. The *Mahavamsa* reports that before Vijayan ascended the throne, he had brought over and married a Princess from the Pandiya Kingdom in India. He had also brought over 700 ladies of Pandiya descent to be married to his comrades<sup>(29)</sup>. Even if Vijayan and his companions are considered to have come from North India, as the modern Sinhalese historians attempt to make believe, it ought to be recognized that the people who lived in Sri Lanka at the time of their arrival, as well as the people who were brought over after their arrival, were Dravidians. A closer look at the statement in the *Mahavamsa* that Vijayan and his 700 comrades married the Princess and 700 ladies brought over from the Pandiya Kingdom, and the claim in the Pali works that these men and women were the originators of civilization in Sri Lanka, reveals the significant role that the Tamils had played in the development of civilization in ancient Sri Lanka<sup>(30)</sup>.

## 2.2 Minor Naga Kingdoms

Southern Sri Lanka was easily lost to Vijayan because the Yakkas were already divided by internal enmity. But Vijayan and his comrades were never able to capture Nagadipa nor establish their settlements there. The *Mahavamsa* states that Vijayan ruled Southern Sri Lanka

28. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter VII, lines 43-45. p. 58

29. Ibid. lines 49-50. p. 59

30. Sittampalam, C. K. op cit, p. 5-6



from 483 BC to 445 BC. However, many minor kingdoms had existed in Sri Lanka before Vijayan's arrival as well as during his reign. This has been verified by the excavated burial urns and Brahmi stone inscriptions which, as discussed in Chapter 1, affirm the Old Stone Age culture of the Dravidians who had lived in Sri Lanka around 1000 BC. Words such as 'Parumaga (Parumagan / Perumagan)', 'Kamani', 'Aayi (Aaya)' and 'Veil (Vela)' found in the stone inscriptions are believed to have been the titles of the rulers of the minor kingdoms.

The *Mahavamsa* and other Pali works indicate Anuradhapuram as the center of government in ancient Sri Lanka. These works also talk about the minor kingdoms to the north and south of Anuradhapuram. For example, there was the Kingdom of Nagathivu (Nagadipa) in Northern Sri Lanka in the 6th Century BC<sup>(31)</sup>. Mahodharan and Kulodharan had been rulers in Nagathivu<sup>(32)</sup>. The significant minor kingdoms of Nagathivu had been Kokarnam (Trincomalee), Mahathitha (Manthai), Manipallavam (Nainathivu), Navalanthivu (Valikamam) and Kariyalai-Nagapaduvan.

Kokarnam, along with Thirikoodam, Ilankapuri and many others, were the earlier known names of Trincomalee. Mathotam in Mannar, better known as Manthai, was the port where Vijayan's Pandiya Queen and her 700 ladies had arrived. Pali works refer to Manthai as Mahathitha (Mahathirtham)<sup>(33)</sup>. Sittampalam believes that the word 'Mahathitha' meant great port<sup>(34)</sup>. Manipallavam, a place highly praised in the Tamil literary works<sup>(35)</sup>, appears to have been ruled by the Naga king Valaivannan. The present Valikamam area in the Jaffna Peninsula had

31. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter I, line 47. p. 6

32. Ibid. lines 48-51. p. 6

33. Ibid. Chapter VII, line 58. p. 60

34. Sittampalam, C. K. 1991. 'Thamizh Makkalin Parambariya Pradesam' in *Muthamizh Vizha Malar*. Jaffna. p. 162

35. *Manimekalai*. 1956. Madras: Swaminatha Iyar Publication. Section 9, line 21 & Section 11, lines 21-26.



been called Jambuthivu in ancient times. Jambuthivu had been known as Navalanthivu<sup>(36)</sup> in Tamil. It had been aptly called an island (thivu) as it had been surrounded by sea in the ancient days. It has been geologically proven that, over the course of time, a sand bank had developed to the east of Jaffna and thereby separated the Upparu and Thondamannaru rivers. This sand bank became the island known as Navalanthivu where the Port of Jambukola Pattinam, mentioned in the *Mahavamsa*, had functioned. Sangamitta Theri, the religious emissary who brought the Vellarasukilai (a sapling of the Bo-Tree) from King Asoka, had entered Sri Lanka through this port<sup>(37)</sup>. Recent archaeological evidence excavated in Poonari reveals that well-known ancient settlements had prevailed in the Kariyalai-Nagapaduvan, Nagapaduvanvillu and Kurunthankulam areas situated at the present Vanni area<sup>(38)</sup>. Hence, many minor kingdoms had existed in Nagathivu before and after the reign of Vijayan.

Succeeding Vijayan (483-445 BC) to rule Southern Sri Lanka, inclusive of the Thampirarni area, were Panduvasudeva (444-414 BC), Abayan (414-394 BC), Pandukabayan (377-307 BC) and Mthusivan (307-247 BC)<sup>(39)</sup>. After them, the famous King Devanampiyatissan (247-207 BC) ascended the throne of Eelam.

### 2.3 Devanampiyatissan

The history of Eelam is said to commence with the reign of Devanampiyatissan. According to Pali texts, this King had been the first monarch to have ruled entire Sri Lanka, including the northern and eastern provinces, as a single Kingdom with Anuradhapuram as his capital. This unitary form of rule had continued until the end of the

36. Ibid. Section 25, lines 12-13 & Section 28, line 180.

37. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter XIX, line 23. p. 130

38. Pushparatnam, P. 1993. *Vada Ilankail Singhai Nagar*. Jaffna: Holy Father G. A. Francis Joseph Manivizhasabai Publication.

39. Geiger, W. op cit, Introduction. p. XXXVI



Anuradhapura Kingdom (10th Century AD). However, a close analysis of the Pali books reveals that since the beginning of Sri Lankan history, there had been many minor kingdoms throughout the country. Brahmi stone inscriptions bear testimony to this fact<sup>(40)</sup>.

It was during Devanampiyatissan's rule that Northern Sri Lanka had been known as Uttaradesam and Southern Sri Lanka as Dakkana Desam; Nagadipa had referred only to the Jaffna Peninsula. Although many minor kingdoms had existed in the North and South, it can be inferred that they had accepted the supremacy of the Anuradhapura King.

Devanampiyatissan's reign saw Buddhist missionaries from India. King Asoka's religious emissaries, such as Mahinda Therar who brought the Dharma Thoothu (message about the Dharma way of life) and Sangamitta Theri who brought the Vellarasukilai (a sapling of the Bo-Tree), had entered Sri Lanka through Uttaradesam. As already noted, Sangamitta Theri had come through Jambukola Pattinam<sup>(41)</sup>. Since those who came to meet the King of Anuradhapuram had passed through Northern Sri Lanka without any obstacles, it can be assumed that this area had been under the control of the King. It must have been due to such authority that King Devanampiyatissan had been able to build the Shamutha Pannai Shala Mandabam (hall) and the Jambukola Vihara (Buddhist shrine) in Jambukola Pattinam<sup>(42)</sup>.

During Devanampiyatissan's rule, the Kalyani (Kelaniya) kingdom in Southern Sri Lanka had been ruled by his brother Udiya, and places such as Chandanagamam in the Urogana (Kajaragamam) area had been under the rule of the Sathiriya kings<sup>(43)</sup>. Kajaragamam has been identified as Kadirgamam, and Chandanagamam as the Galoya area by

40. Sittampalam, C. K. op cit, p. 165

41. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter XIX, line 23. p. 30

42. Ibid. lines 26-27. p. 130

43. Ibid. lines 54-55. p. 132





Geiger and Sittampalam, respectively. Moreover, Brahmi stone inscriptions reveal that two minor kingdoms at Seruvila and Soma in eastern Sri Lanka had been ruled by Siva and Abaya, respectively<sup>(44)</sup>. It is highly plausible that these two places had been minor Tamil kingdoms.

Nevertheless, it is an accepted fact that Devanampiyatissan had prevailed as the supreme monarch of the whole of Sri Lanka. Furthermore, he has been praised in history as the King who had not only converted himself to Buddhism, but had also made his subjects embrace the new religion.

#### 2.4 Senan and Kuttikan

As Devanampiyatissan had been a powerful ruler, peace prevailed throughout Sri Lanka. Buddhism had thus been able to spread rapidly in the country as well as in Nagathivu (Jaffna Peninsula). The Buddhist symbols found at Kantarodai in the Jaffna Peninsula and in the Vallipuram area are clear indications that Tamil Buddhists had lived in Nagathivu. These include a piece of earthenware with the Brahmi inscription 'Thathaha Patha' (Pot of Thathaha)<sup>(45)</sup>, and another with the inscription 'Kuni' (female Buddhist monk) discovered in Kantarodai.

Minor Tamil kings appear to have paid tribute to and abided by the orders of King Devanampiyatissan. For instance, the Sathiriya kings of Kadirgamam and Chandanagamam had obeyed Devanampiyatissan's instructions and participated in the holy sapling planting ceremony. They had also planted the saplings in their own kingdoms<sup>(46)</sup>.

As already noted, Devanampiyatissan's brother, Udiya had captured the kingdom in the Kalyani area<sup>(47)</sup>. Another of

44. Sittampalam, C. K. op cit, p. 15

45. Paranavithana, S. 1970. *Early Brahmi Inscriptions*. Colombo.

46. Indrapala, K. 1970. 'Yaalpana Irachiyam Thondriya Kaalamum Chulnilayum' in *Ilankathir*. Peradeniya. p. 14

47. Gunawardena, P. A. L. H. 1982. 'An early place in the evolution of political institutions in ancient Sri Lanka' in *The Sri Lanka Journal of Arts, Humanities, Vol. VIII, No. 142*.



Devanampiyatissan's brother, Mahanagan had killed the Sathiriya rulers of Kajaragamam and Chandanagamam and had set up his rule there<sup>(48)</sup>. These events vouch for the expansion of Devanampiyatissan's dominance. Although Nagathivu had accepted the sovereignty of Devanampiyatissan, some Tamil rulers of Uttaradesam had resented this probably because of the King's arrogance and his unrelenting move to spread Buddhism in Uttaradesam whereby many people in Nagathivu had become Buddhists. These Tamil kings had accepted the overlordship of King Devanampiyatissan when he was a Hindu, but objected to it once he became a Buddhist. Senan and Kuttikan are two such noteworthy kings.

For many decades after the death of King Devanampiyatissan, his successors had much difficulty in ruling Northern Sri Lanka. As Devanampiyatissan had the military support of the Mayura King Asoka, the kings of Uttaradesam and the Urogana area had accepted the overlordship of the Anuradhapura King. But state of affairs changed after the death of the great monarch, especially since Devanampiyatissan had spent a considerable part of his wealth in spreading Buddhism and building Viharas, and had neglected to reinforce his military strength. The Tamil kings of Uttaradesam refused to obey the orders of the Sinhalese Kings of Anuradhapuram and even rebelled against them<sup>(49)</sup>.

Devanampiyatissan had ruled Sri Lanka from 247 BC to 207 BC. The Kings who had ascended the throne after him were Udiyan (207-197 BC), Mahasivan (197-187 BC) and Suratissan (187-177 BC). It was during Suratissan's rule that Senan and Kuttikan, the Tamil kings from Uttaradesam, had, for the first time in Sri Lankan history, waged war against Anuradhapuram. From where had these kings led their armies? A Tamil kingdom is believed to have flourished in the Poonari area in Uttaradesam<sup>(50)</sup>.

48. Paranavithana, S. (ed.) 1960. *History of Ceylon*. Colombo. Vol. 1, Part 1, Chapter III.

49. Ibid. Chapter IV. p. 144

50. This has been established in the many articles by the historian P. Pushparatnam.



The *Mahavamsa*, well known for twisting and hiding facts relating to the achievements of Tamil rulers, refers to these kings as aggressors, militants, Chola descendants<sup>(51)</sup>, and people who came from the neighbouring country. Based on these descriptions, historians proclaim that these warrior-kings had led their armies from Tamil Nadu. Pali works, ancient Tamil literature, South Indian and Sri Lankan Brahmi inscriptions, as well as archaeological evidence unearthed in Tamil Nadu affirm that strong trade and cultural relationship had prevailed between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka since prehistoric times. However, in the sources recounting history up to the 6th Century AD, there is no mention of any political relationship between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka or any military operations against Sri Lanka. Furthermore, there are hardly any similarities in the names of the Tamil rulers of Tamil Nadu and those of the Anuradhapura Kingdom. Hence, the question of whether the Tamil kings who attacked Anuradhapuram had come from Tamil Nadu or from another province in Sri Lanka warrants research.

According to Pali books, many minor kings of Southern Sri Lanka had later become the Kings of Anuradapuram<sup>(52)</sup>. It was probably in the same fashion that Senan, Kuttikan and Ellalan of the minor Tamil kingdoms in Northern Sri Lanka had ascended the throne of Anuradhapuram.

Brahmi documents recently found in the Poonari area indicate that this region had prevailed as a kingdom in Uttaradesam. The foremost expert in reading ancient documents, Airavaram Mahadevan from Tamil Nadu states that the Poonari Brahmi inscriptions reveal that a pattern of rule similar to that of the 3rd and 2nd Century BC Tamilvelar rule

- 
51. The *Mahavamsa* indicates the conquerors as Cholas, and never as Pandiyas, probably because the lady ancestors of the Sinhalese race were a Princess and 700 ladies from the Pandiya Kingdom.
52. Pushparatnam, P. 'Ilankaiyil Thamizh Mannarkalin Aatchi' (A paper presented during the memorial service of the late Mr N. Krishnananthan) in *Porulithal* 3. Jaffna. p. 4



had existed in Northern Sri Lanka<sup>(53)</sup>. The ruins of buildings discovered in Poonari also indicate that an ancient kingdom had existed in the area. Pushparatnam proclaims that this kingdom had been the precursor of the later kingdoms in Jaffna<sup>(54)</sup>. The two pieces of earthenware with the Brahmi inscriptions of 'Eela' and 'Eelaa' unearthed at Poonari, together with the fact that the Poonari area has been traditionally called 'Eelavur', suggest that the ancient name of this area was Eelam<sup>(55)</sup>. Hence, it can be deduced that Senan and Kuttikan had proceeded to attack Anuradhapuram from the Poonari area in Uttaradesam.

The *Mahavamsa* speaks of these two kings as Tamils who were horse traders, and as those who had won the battle against Suratissan with a huge army and ruled Anuradhapuram for 22 years from 177 BC to 155 BC. These monarchs have been credited with diverting Kadambanathi (Aruviyar) so that it flowed beside Anuradhapuram<sup>(56)</sup>.

When the Tamil Kings started ruling Anuradhapuram, Suratissan's elder brother Mahasivan's sons escaped to Urukuna. The ninth of these sons, Aselan regained Anuradhapuram in 155 BC and ruled the Kingdom for 10 years (155-145 BC)<sup>(57)</sup>. It ought to be highlighted here that just as the Sinhalese royal families had gone into hiding at Urukuna when the Tamil kings came from Uttaradesam and captured Anuradhapuram, the Tamil royal families too went into hiding at Uttaradesam when the Sinhalese kings attacked Anuradhapuram from Urukuna. It can thus be inferred that some of the Tamil royal family members had escaped to Uttaradesam when Aselan captured Anuradhapuram.

---

53. Ibid. p. 5

54. Ibid. p. 11

55. - Pushparatnam, P. 1991. 'Sanhakaala Eelam Thamizhar Pradesangalil Ondra?' in *Velicham* (Puratathi-Aipasi 1991). Jaffna. p. 14  
- Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter XXI, lines 10-11. p. 142-143

56. Paranavithana, S. (ed.) op cit, Chapter III. p. 144

57. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter XXI, line 12. p. 143

It is also noteworthy that a stanza in the folk drama entitled 'Aalelan Kuthu' (Ellalan) reads as "Ellalan, the son of Eelasenan". Was Ellalan the son of the Tamil King Senan who had ruled Anuradhapuram for 22 years?<sup>(58)</sup>

## 2.5 Ellalan

In its 220 years of history from the 3rd Century BC (247 BC) to the 1st Century BC (29 BC), the Anuradhapura Kingdom saw 19 Kings of whom 8 were Tamils who had ruled for 81 years<sup>(59)</sup>. The *Mahavamsa* chronicles this period of history in many chapters but only a few verses recite the rule of the Tamil Kings. For instance, the 24-year reign of Duttagamini, extolled as the hero who liberated the Sinhalese from the Tamil King Ellalan, is described in 843 verses, whereas the 44 years of Ellalan's fair and just rule is reported in only 21 verses. This alone suffices to attest that Pali literature does not portray the complete history of the Tamil Kings<sup>(60)</sup>.

Though Aselan had captured Anuradhapuram from the Tamil Kings Senan and Kuttikan, 10 years later, in 145 BC, Ellalan led his huge army from Uttaradesam and conquered Anuradhapuram. Once again, the Kingdom came under Tamil rule. Pali works describe Ellalan as a Chola Prince who had come with his army from Tamil Nadu to capture Anuradhapuram. However, none of the South Indian historical works mention a Chola ruler by that name.

The Tamil King Ellalan has been referred to as 'Alara' in Pali texts and as 'Ellalan' in Tamil works. Velupillai's account that 'Alara' is

58. Kunarasa, K. 1996. *Eelathavar Varalaaru*. Jaffna: Poopalasingham Puthakasalai Publication. p. 34

59. Geiger, W. op cit, Introduction. p. XXXVII

60. Pushparatnam, P. 'Ilankaiyil Thamizh Mannarkalin Aatchi' (A paper presented during the memorial service of the late Mr N. Krishnananthan) in *Porulithal* 3. Jaffna. p. 5

actually a Pali derivative of the title 'Eelarahaj'<sup>(61)</sup> (King of Eelam) is a plausible explanation.

It is highly possible that Ellalan had attacked Anuradhapuram from an area in Uttaradesam. Recent researches reveal that it was Ellalan who had first constructed Vavunikulam. He had probably been able to do so because he had earlier been a minor ruler in Uttaradesam. Having identified Pelilabi, which the *Mahavamsa* states lay north of Anuradhapuram where Vavunikulam had been built, as Paliyaru which lies on the southern boundary of Poonari, Parker advances that Vavunikulam could have been one of Ellalan's early achievements<sup>(62)</sup>.

Pali works, which report Ellalan's 44-year rule as being just and benevolent, do not hesitate to state that he had practised a wrong religion (i.e. Hinduism)<sup>(63)</sup>. The *Mahavamsa* mentions that although this monarch had welcomed Buddhism, he did not abandon his old religious belief<sup>(64)</sup>. Geiger points out that the old religious belief actually referred to the Hindu religion<sup>(65)</sup>. The *Mahavamsa* also highly praises Ellalan for having meted out equal justice to friends and foes, but describes his noble rule as part of the story of Manuneethi Cholan.

The *Mahavamsa* narrates that Ellalan had hung a bell in his bedroom. People seeking justice would pull the rope that hung at the entrance of the castle, and on hearing the bell, the King would immediately appear, inquire and redress their grievances. One day, Ellalan's son (Ellalan had a son and a daughter), who was riding towards Tisavavi,

61. Velupillai, K. 1986. *Thodakakaala Eelathu Ilakiyangalum Avatrin Varalaatru Pinnaniyum*. Jaffna.

62. - Pushparatnam, P. op cit, p. 5

- Parker, H. 1909. *Ancient Ceylon*. London.

63. Sittampalam, C. K. 1994. *Eela Thamizhar Varalaaru*. Chavakacheri: Hindu College. Vol. 1. p. 20

64. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter XXI, line 34. p. 145

65. Pushparatnam, P. op cit, p. 5



had run his chariot over a calf who had been sleeping with its mother. The calf died instantly, and the mother cow promptly went to the palace and rang the bell. Ellalan administered justice by running the chariot over his only son's head, thereby killing him in the same way that the calf had died<sup>(66)</sup>.

In another incident, a snake had swallowed the young of a bird, and the mother bird rang Ellalan's bell seeking justice. The King had the snake promptly fetched, cut its stomach, released the young bird and hung the snake on a tree<sup>(67)</sup>. Yet another story in the *Mahavamsa* relates to an elderly lady who had put her rice grains to dry in the sun. The rice was damaged by sudden rain. When she sought King Ellalan's justice, he prayed to Lord Varuna (the weather god) that henceforth it should only rain once a week and at night<sup>(68)</sup>.

All these stories employed by the *Mahavamsa* to depict the just and fair rule of Ellalan come across as unbelievable fables. One story though does prove that Ellalan had supported and cherished Buddhism.

One day, as Ellalan was travelling in his chariot towards Chetiyagiri, the axle of the wheel damaged a Buddhist shrine. Ellalan immediately jumped down from the chariot and asked his ministers to sever his head. The ministers pacified him by saying that it was a mere accident and the damage could be rectified. Only fifteen stones had been damaged, but the King had spent fifteen thousand 'Kasha coins' to renovate the shrine<sup>(69)</sup>.

## 2.6 Duttagamini

Ellalan's authority had extended throughout Sri Lanka. The Southern kingdoms of Kalyani and Urukuna had accepted his

66. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter XII, lines 15-18.

67. Ibid. Chapter XXI, lines 19-20.

68. Ibid. lines 27-33.

69. Ibid. lines 21-26.



overlordship and their respective rulers, Kalanitissan and Kaakavannatissan, had paid tribute to Ellalan<sup>(70)</sup>. Pali works attempt to connect the family of Kaakavannatissan with that of Devanampiyatissan.

Devanampiyatissan's brother Mahanagan had been the heir to the throne of Anuradhapuram, but Devanampiyatissan's wife wanted her son to ascend the throne after her husband. To achieve her desire, she sent a basket full of ripe mangoes, with a poisoned mango laid uppermost, to Mahanagan. However, her son who had been with Mahanagan then, ate the poisoned fruit and died instantly. Fearing punishment for the tragic death of his brother's son, Mahanagan escaped to Urukuna with his wife and children. There he built a city called Mahagamam and became the ruler of Urukuna<sup>(71)</sup>. He was succeeded by his son Jathalayattissan and thereafter by his grandson Gothabayan. It was only after a fierce struggle that these rulers had been able to defeat ten of the Sathiriya Tamil kings of the Kadirgamam area to secure the throne of Urukuna. According to the book of *Thatuvamsa*, it was Gothabayan who had finally defeated the Sathiriya kings<sup>(72)</sup>. Gothabayan, the father of Kaakavannatissan, had killed Kamani, the minor king of Kadirgamam who had harboured Mahanagan<sup>(73)</sup>, and his ten children. Although ten kings had been wiped out, the Sathiriya influence remained scattered in the Kadirgamam area. Mahatissan, the son of Tharmarajah, the eldest of the ten Sathiriyas who had been killed, continued to rule southeast Sri Lanka. Furthermore, in a Brahmi stone inscription, reference is made to Princess Aby Anurathi, the daughter of a Sathiriya king<sup>(74)</sup>.

During the reign of Kaakavannatissan, Urukuna had prevailed as a rather strong kingdom in Southern Sri Lanka. As Kaakavannatissan had accepted the sovereignty of King Ellalan and paid him tribute, the Tamil King did not interfere with the internal affairs of Urukuna.

70. Senaveratne, John M. 1946. *Dutugemunu*. Colombo. p. 2

71. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter XXII, lines 2-9. p. 146-147

72. Paranavithana, S. (ed.) op cit, Chapter III. p. 146

73. *CISG*. II. p. 99-100

74. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter III. p. 147





Kaakavannatissan had married Viharamaha Devi, the daughter of the Kalyani king Kalanitissan<sup>(75)</sup>. The *Mahavamsa* details the interesting incidents that had led to the marriage.

Kalanitissan's wife had an illicit relationship with his younger brother Aiyaudikan. When the king came to know about their affair, Udikan escaped from the kingdom. Later, he sent a love letter to the queen through a messenger disguised as a Buddhist monk. He had clearly instructed the messenger on how to hand the letter over to the queen. It had been a daily practice that the monks followed the Therar to the palace to receive alms. One day, the disguised monk managed to pass the letter to the queen, but king Kalanitissan had witnessed it. Infuriated upon reading the letter, the king killed the Therar and the disguised monk and threw their bodies into the sea. The sea immediately rose and flooded Kalyani. To appease it, the king placed his daughter Maha Devi in a vessel and sacrificed her to the sea. The boat reached the shores of Mahagamam. Kaakavannatissan found out who Maha Devi was and married her. Since she had landed near a Vihara, she came to be called Viharamaha Devi<sup>(76)</sup>. Despite whether these stories honour or dishonour the Sinhalese dynasty, they are yet to be proven true.

The eldest son of Viharamaha Devi and Kaakavannatissan was Kamini Abayan. As he did not obey his father, he was later called Duttagamini. His younger brother was Satthatissan. The author of *Mahavamsa*, Mahanama Therar has made Duttagamini the hero of his epic. He stresses two aspects in recounting the life of Duttagamini, namely, hostility towards the Tamils and devoted service to Buddhism.

75. Pali works state the names of Sinhalese Kings and Queens together with their titles or the nicknames by which the people had called them. For example, Abayan was called Gothabayan (Kulla Abayan) implying 'short Abayan', Kaavannatissan was known as Kaakavannatissan (Kaaka vanna Tissan) meaning Tissan with the complexion of the colour of the crow, and Maha Devi was called Viharamaha Devi because she was found near a Vihara.

76. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter XXII, lines 13-22. p. 147



The *Mahavamsa* vividly describes three desires of Viharamaha Devi when she was expecting Duttagamini. Her first wish was to obtain a honeycomb huge enough for her and numerous monks to drink from. Secondly, she wanted to drink the water in which the bloodstained sword used to sever the head of a general of Ellalan's first battalion had been washed. Her third desire was to wear a garland made from the imperishable lotus flower of Anuradhapuram<sup>(77)</sup>. All these desires of the expectant mother were fulfilled.

Velusumana, a general greatly trusted by Kaakavannatissan, was sent to Anuradhapuram to fulfil Viharamaha Devi's second desire. Velusumana hid his sword on the shore of Kadambanathi, and proceeded to the palace where he was employed to look after the horses. One day, with the knowledge of others, Velusumana rode away on the royal horse Vaga. On learning about this, Ellalan's general Nandasarathy pursued him on horseback. Hiding in the jungle with his sword, Velusumana severed Nandasarathy's head when he rode pass. He then proceeded to Urukuna with the severed head and the bloodstained sword, and fulfilled Viharamaha Devi's desire<sup>(78)</sup>. Even though the *Mahavamsa* laments on how a chaste woman like Viharamaha Devi could harbour such evil desire, its main objective was to depict Duttagamini not just as an unparalleled valiant but as an evil hero too. Thus, as Professor Kumpurugamuve Vjijhmi of the Pali-Buddhist University in Sri Lanka upholds, the *Mahavamsa* has done injustice to the Tamils<sup>(79)</sup>.

Duttagamini's hatred of the Tamils had been developed ever since he was a foetus. After his birth, Viharamaha Devi had nurtured his rancour against the Tamils. One day, Kaakavannatissan requested three promises from his two sons. The first was that they should be always

77. Ibid. lines 42-46. p. 149-150

78. Ibid. lines 51-58. p. 150-151

79. Kumpurugamuve Vjijhmi. 1976. 'Ellalan-Kamini Yutham' in the *Thinakaran* weekly publication ( 26-05-1976). p. 24

obedient to the Buddhist associations; the second was that they should not fight against each other; and the third was that they should not fight with the Tamils. The two sons respected the first two wishes but refused to comply with the third. Duttagamini immediately went away and lay in bed with his legs bent and drawn towards his chest. When his mother inquired as to why he was sleeping in that position, the *Mahavamsa* states that he replied asking how could he stretch his limbs when to the North, beyond the Mahavali Ganga, were the Tamils, and in the South, there was the sea restricting him<sup>(80)</sup>.

## 2.7 War Between Ellalan and Duttagamini

After the death of Kaakavannatissan, Duttagamini became the king of Urukuna. With his father's well-trained army, and the soldiers he had coached, Duttagamini waged war against the Anuradhapura Kingdom. He was accompanied by 500 monks from Tisamaharamai Vihara and his mother Viharamaha Devi. He had put forth race and religion as the grounds for war. His slogan read that he was engaging in war not to gain the luxurious life of a King, but to safeguard the purity of the Buddhist Charter. In fact, there could not have been any racial nor religious basis for Duttagamini to attack Ellalan as the latter had been a very fair and righteous King. Since defeating him was no easy task, Duttagamini had probably used a religiously appealing slogan to justify his otherwise unjust war against the benevolent Ellalan. Moreover, for the first time in history, he had involved Buddhist monks in a war<sup>(81)</sup>.

Ellalan's military bases had been established along the bank of Mahavali Ganga. It was in Mahiyanganai that war broke out between the Tamil forces and Duttagamini's army. Thereafter, with his strong forces and cunning ways, Duttagamini defeated the Tamil armies at Ambathirtham, Sarpakottai, Antharasoppam, Nallisoppam, Kachchathirtham, Kottanagaram, Nanthikiramam and Vijithapuram.

80. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter XXII, lines 78-86. p. 153-154

81. Kumpurugamuve Vijihmi, op cit, p. 24

Initially, Duttagamini had been unable to overpower Ellalan's battalion at Ambathirtham even after a four-month siege. The General at Ambathirtham, Thithamban had a weakness for women, and Duttagamini exploited it to gain victory. The *Mahavamsa* reports that he had positioned his mother in the sight of Thithamban<sup>(82)</sup>. Although this statement casts certain doubts, Geiger, the English translator of the *Mahavamsa*, indicates in a footnote that Duttagamini had agreed to marry his mother off to his enemy for political gains<sup>(83)</sup>. In the third chapter of his book *History of Ceylon*, Paranavithana too states that since Duttagamini could not capture the Ambathirtham fortress after a four-month siege, he took advantage of the Tamil General's weakness for women, and that Viharamaha Devi had voluntarily come forward to lure the General into Duttagamini's trap<sup>(84)</sup>.

After conquering Ambathirtham, Duttagamini captured the fortress at Sarpakottai and distributed the loot of riches amongst his soldiers. Advancing along the left bank of Mahavali Ganga, the Sinhalese troops defeated many Tamil forces and reached Vijithapuram (Polanaruwa). Ellalan's Vijithapura Fort was a very strong one. It had high walls and security towers, and was surrounded by moats. It took the Sinhalese forces four months to capture Vijithapuram. As the Sinhalese army proceeded towards Anuradhapuram, they defeated the Tamil troops who tried to restrict them at Kirigalam and Magilanagaram. More than one year had passed since the Sinhalese army had left Urukuna. Many soldiers had died in the battles and the remaining ones were exhausted. So Duttagamini camped at Kasaparvatham, which lay eighteen miles southeast of Anuradhapuram, to invigorate his military and to bring over more soldiers and food from Urukuna.

Meanwhile, Ellalan's important generals and troops were ready to meet the Sinhalese forces. Under General Digajanthu, the Tamil army

82. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter XXV, line 89. p. 170-171

83. Ibid. Footnote on p. 171

84. Paranavithana, S. (ed.) op cit, Chapter III. p. 157



attacked Duttagamini's camp at Kasaparvatham. Many disguised as Duttagamini and fought in the war. Having identified the real Duttagamini, the Tamil General raced towards him but was intercepted and killed by the Sinhalese General Suranimalan<sup>(85)</sup>. With the death of Digajanthu, the Tamil forces retreated to Anuradhapuram.

The Sinhalese army then marched towards and besieged Anuradhapuram. After discussing with his ministers, Ellalan decided that he himself would lead his remaining troops. At that time, Duttagamini sent a messenger to Ellalan asking Ellalan to fight him personally. Although he was a 72-year-old man and Duttagamini was young, Ellalan accepted the challenge. It was probably because their respective armies were depleted and tired that the two kings decided to fight it on their own. Nevertheless, Ellalan made a grave mistake in acceding to Duttagamini's request.

Fully armed, Ellalan mounted his elephant Mahaparvatham and reached the southern gate of the city of Anuradhapuram. Duttagamini came on his elephant Kandulan. A fierce fight took place between the two rulers. Since Ellalan was an expert in wielding weapons, Duttagamini spurred his elephant to attack Ellalan's elephant. Kandulan struck the unsuspecting Mahaparvatham with its strong tusk. As Mahaparvatham fell, Duttagamini threw his spear and killed Ellalan. As Ellalan's strength and triumph were not just his but those of the Tamil people as well, his sole defeat spelt their downfall. Thus, the Sinhalese gained reign over the Tamil Kingdom in Anuradhapuram<sup>(86)</sup>.

Ellalan's body was cremated with due respect, and Duttagamini built a Buddhist shrine at the place where Ellalan fell. Duttagamini had an inscription on the shrine stating that whoever, be it a Prince or a layman, who passed by the shrine, whether on an elephant or a palanquin,

85. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter XXV, lines 57-65. p. 174

86. Thiruselvam, M. 1983. *Eelathamizhar Iramai* (3rd edition). Jaffna: Kandalagam. p. 56



should not play any music. His order was complied with for a long time. Those who passed by on elephants got down and walked until they had passed the shrine. Processions passing by the memorial stopped playing their instruments, paid their respects and silently walked past the place before resuming their musical activities<sup>(87)</sup>.

Duttagamini had also defeated 32 Tamil kings who ruled various areas in Sri Lanka before he ascended the throne of Anuradhapuram<sup>(88)</sup>. The *Mahavamsa* states that seven days after Ellalan's death<sup>(89)</sup>, his nephew Balukan attacked Anuradhapuram with 6000 soldiers, but he too had been defeated. Balukan had, most likely, led his army from Uttaradesam (Poonari).

After his coronation, Duttagamini revealed his sorrow to the Buddhist Therars. He told them that he had slain thousands of people during the war, and had no peace of mind. The Therars consoled him by saying that those who did not believe in Buddhism were equivalent to demons and beasts<sup>(90)</sup>. Paravithana too states that the people (Tamils) whom Duttagamini killed in the war were non-believers of Buddhism, sinners and worse than animals; thus, it would not have been a sin to kill them<sup>(91)</sup>.

## 2.8 After Ellalan

The Sinhalese reign from Anuradhapuram recommenced with the end of Ellalan's 44-year benevolent rule in 101 BC. After Duttagamini, Sinhalese Kings continued to rule until 44 BC. During the reign of King Vattagamini, the Tamils attacked Anuradhapuram again. It was no longer unusual for minor rulers to rebel against Anuradhapuram. When Vattagamini ruled Anuradhapuram, Urukuna was ruled by a minor

87. Senaveratne, John M. op cit, Chapter XXV, line 75. p. 59

88. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter XXV, line 75. p. 175

89. Ibid. line 78. p. 175

90. Ibid. line 108. p. 178

91. Paravithana, S. (ed.) op cit, Chapter III. p. 162



Tamil king named Tissan<sup>(92)</sup> who created a lot of trouble in opposing the Anuradhapura rule. Whilst Tissan in Southern Sri Lanka was preparing to wage war, seven minor kings from Uttaradesam marched through Mandai and attacked Anuradhapuram. Some historians claim that these seven Tamil kings from the North were Pandiyas, but the *Mahavamsa* makes no such mention. Tissan joined the seven rulers, and the eight together sent a message to Vattagamini instructing him to surrender his sovereignty to them<sup>(93)</sup>.

Vattagamini managed to conciliate his dispute with the king of Urukuna. He agreed to hand over the Kingdom of Anuradhapuram to Tissan if Tissan defeated the armies of the seven Tamil rulers. Tissan lost the battle, and the seven Tamil kings, engaging the Urukuna army as well, marched towards Anuradhapuram. Their troops met the Anuradhapura army at Kolambalaga, and Vattagamini was defeated. Immediately he ran to the palace, took his two wives and his son, and escaped on a chariot. As he was pursued by the Tamil warriors, to reduce weight and increase the speed of the chariot, Vattagamini dropped off, amongst other things, his second wife Soma Devi<sup>(94)</sup>. One of the seven minor kings took Soma Devi for himself, and another took the bowl of The Buddha. Whilst these two returned to their own kingdoms, the remaining five ruled Anuradhapuram for 14 years and 7 months. These five Tamil kings were Pulagatthan, Bagiyan, Panayamaran, Pinayamaran and Thadikan. Although the *Mahavamsa* states that these five Kings had killed one another<sup>(95)</sup>, it can be maintained that each of them had systematically taken turns to rule Anuradhapuram.

When Thadikan ruled Anuradhapuram, Vattagamini recaptured it and ascended the throne. He recovered Soma Devi and made her his Queen. Vattagamini's reign lasted till 17 BC. Thereafter, Sinhalese rule prevailed in Sri Lanka until the 9th Century AD. When King Soranagan

---

92. Geiger, W. op cit, Chapter XXXIII, line 38. p. 231

93. Ibid. line 40. p. 231

94. Ibid. lines 45-48. p. 232

95. Ibid. lines 56-61. p. 233



ruled the Anuradhapura Kingdom, the throne was shared by two Kings due to the lust of his wife Anula Devi. Anula Devi later poisoned her husband to death, married Tisan and made him the King. Soon she married Siva, Vathukan, Tissan and Neleyan, respectively, and made each the King after poisoning the former. Vathukan and Neleyan were Tamils who had ruled Anuradhapuram with Anula Devi. After killing all her husbands, Anula Devi became the sole ruler of Anuradhapuram<sup>(96)</sup>. History has it that she had subjected 32 palace guards to her whims and fancies.

According to Pali works, of the 250 years of Sri Lankan history before the beginning of the Christian era, one third had been Tamil reign<sup>(97)</sup>.

---

96. Ibid. Chapter XXXIV, lines 13-26. p. 239

97. Sittampalam, C. K. op cit, p. 21





## Singhai Nagar Kingdom

The growth of the Naga, and thereby the Dravidian, settlements in Northern Sri Lanka had, most likely, been a matter of great concern for the Sinhalese Kings of Southern Sri Lanka. As the Aryans from North India had to travel through the Northern ports (Mathotam, Jambukolam) to reach Southern Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese rulers of Dakkana Desam (Southern Sri Lanka) would have desired to dominate the Dravidian settlements in Uttaradesam (Northern Sri Lanka). Thus, before or during the 1st Century BC, the Sinhalese must have waged a huge war against Eelamandalam where Kadiramalai (Kantarodai) had probably been the capital.

When the Sinhalese ruler had captured Kadiramalai, a part of its population had crossed the Thondamannaru River and migrated to Vallipuram where they joined in the settlements that had already been established there. However, they could not have continued to live in peace there as, in the 1st Century AD, the Anuradhapura King Vasabha had conquered the Vallipuram region and appointed one of his ministers as its administrator.

A gold plate inscription, belonging to the 1st or 2nd Century AD, discovered in Vallipuram conveys the significant information that during the aforesaid period, the Jaffna Peninsula had been called Nagathivu (Nagadipa), that it had come under the overlordship of King Vasabha (67-111 AD) and had been ruled by his minister Isikiriyān, and that Buddhism had been widely spread in the Vallipuram region.

Other archaeological evidence excavated at Vallipuram and Kantarodai too clearly indicates that Buddhism had been well established in these areas. As noted in the preceding chapters, the Brahmi inscriptions and Buddhist symbols discovered at Kantarodai reveal that this area had been inhabited by Buddhists. The Brahmi inscription

'Thathaha Patha' found on a piece of earthenware resembled the script that had been in use before the beginning of the Christian era. It appears that during the period when Buddhism spread from India, many Tamils in Northern Sri Lanka had embraced the new religion but, over the course of time, these Dravidian-Tamil Buddhists had either converted back to their old religion (Hinduism) or migrated to other areas.

In the 3rd Century BC and the 1st Century AD, Northern Sri Lanka had been ruled by Sinhalese Kings. During these periods, villages in Nagathivu had Sinhalese names such as Kokkuvil, Kondavil and Mirusuvil. Until the 8th Century AD, Northern Sri Lanka had often come under Sinhalese domination, and had been intermittently ruled by Tamil Kings.

In the 3rd Century BC (247-210 BC), Uttaradesam, inclusive of Nagathivu, had come under the sovereignty of the Anuradhapura King Devanampiyatissan. During those days, people from the Anuradhapura Kingdom had used the Jambukolam port (present Sambu Port) to go to East India. It was in Jambukolam that Devanampiyatissan had received Sangamitta Theri, and had built a hall called Shamutha Pannai Shala Mandabam as well as the Jambukola Vihara<sup>(1)</sup>.

In the 1st Century AD, Uttaradesam had come under the rule of Vasabha; in the 2nd Century AD, under Mahallaganaga and Kanistatissa; in the 3rd Century AD, under Voharigatissa; and in the 7th Century AD, under Akkabodhi II and Silamegavanna<sup>(2)</sup>.

In Yaalpanam (Jaffna), the Anuradhapura King Mahallaganaga (136-143 AD) had built a Buddhist shrine called Salipapatha Vihara, King Kanistatissa (167-186 AD) had renovated a shrine, and King Voharigatissa (209-231 AD) had constructed a wall around Tissa Vihara.

- 
1. Indrapala, K. 1970. 'Yaalpana Irachiyam Thondriya Kaalamum Chulnilayum' in *Ilankathir*. Peradeniya. p. 14
  2. Ibid.



The reputed historian Indrapala notes that according to the *Chulavamsa*, King Akkabodhi II (604-614 AD) of Anuradhapuram had converted the Unalomaha Temple in Jaffna into the Rajayathanathathu Vihara, and had donated an umbrella to the Amalathesiya Chaitiya there<sup>(3)</sup>. The *Chulavamsa* also indicates that during the rule of King Silamegavanna (619-628 AD), Kirinagan had attempted to capture Uttaradesam inclusive of Jaffna, but had been curbed by the King. The *Chulavamsa* further states that when King Mahinda II (777-797 AD) ruled Uttaradesam from Anuradhapuram, the Mudalis of Uttaradesam had rebelled against his rule<sup>(4)</sup>.

### 3.1 Ukkira Singhan

The above-mentioned revolt had been led by Ukkira Singhan who had come from Kalinga and settled down in Manatri<sup>(5)</sup>. Waging war to regain the long lost reign, Ukkira Singhan had wrested Nagadipa from the Sinhalese in 785 AD, and ruled Uttaradesam with Kadiramalai (Kantarodai) as his capital<sup>(6)</sup>. Ukkira Singhan had thus become the first known King of Jaffna.

During Ukkira Singhan's reign, the Chola Princess Maruthapiravalli undertook her pilgrimage to Keerimalai. Ukkira Singhan forced her into captivity and took her as his wife. At her request, he built the Maviddapuram Kandaswamy Temple. The *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai* indicates that he brought the statues for this temple and a renowned Brahmin named Periya Manathular from India<sup>(7)</sup>. Later, Ukkira Singhan shifted his capital from Kadiramalai to Singhai Nagar<sup>(8)</sup>.

- 
3. Ibid.
  4. Ibid.
  5. Kunarasa, K. 1987. *Nallai Nagar Nool*. Yaalpanam: Poopalasingham Puthakasalai Publication. p. 10
  6. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) 1949. *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai*. Chunnakam
  7. Ibid. p. 18-23
  8. Rasanayagam, C. 1933. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Vanaarpanai: Sri Shanmuganatha Press. p. 29



### 3.2 Why was the capital shifted?

The reason for the shift is quite apparent. Both Kadiramalai (Kantarodai) and Vallipuram had been predominated by Buddhists. In fact, Kadiramalai had prevailed as an important area of the Buddhists. Furthermore, following the arrival of Sangamitta Theri, a number of Buddhist monks had come to Sri Lanka through Jambukola Pattinam (Thiruvadinalai), and a Buddhist Vihara (Jambukola Vihara) had been built there. As mentioned earlier, the Salipapatha Vihara and Tissa Vihara too had been constructed at Nagathivu. It was when Buddhism had spread throughout Nagadipa that Ukkira Singhan had liberated the region from the authority of the Sinhalese Kings.

Ukkira Singhan was a devout Saivite who had carried out many temple works. He had renovated the Naguleswaran Temple at Keerimalai and, at his wife's request, had built the Kandaswamy Temple at Maviddapuram. To restore the glory of the Hindu religion in his Jaffna Kingdom, Ukkira Singhan brought down respected Brahmins, such as Periya Manathular, from Kasi in India. He also brought over statues of deities from India to be worshipped in the Hindu temples in his Kingdom. Despite his many efforts to promote Hinduism, the influence of Buddhism remained unshaken in the Kadiramalai and Vallipuram areas. Whilst the eastern and western regions of Nagadipa were under the strong influence of Buddhism, the southern area (Jaffna) was sparsely populated. These circumstances prompted Ukkira Singhan to shift his capital. As Rasanayagam aptly remarks, since Ukkira Singhan was a staunch Siva worshipper and Kadiramalai was home to many Buddhist shrines, he saw Singhai Nagar as a better location for his capital<sup>(9)</sup>. It was Ukkira Singhan's desire to choose an area where Hinduism flourished that resulted in Singhai Nagar becoming his new capital.

- 
9. Ibid.





### 3.3 Where was Singhai Nagar?

In his search for a new capital, Ukkira Singhan undertook a short visit to the Vanni area. There he met the seven Vanniya kings who requested him to rule their states and volunteered to pay him tribute<sup>(10)</sup>. As the area came under his sovereignty, Ukkira Singhan established a new capital there which came to be called Singhai Nagar.

The ancient Tamil works of *Segarajasekaramaalai*, *Segarajasekaram* and *Dashinakailasamaalai* indicate the capital of Northern Sri Lanka as Singhai or Singhai Nagar. In Sri Lanka, only the Kottagama stone inscription refers to Singhai Nagar as the capital of the Ariya Kings<sup>(11)</sup>. The name Singhai Nagar, derived from the Sanskrit words 'Singha' (lion) and 'Nagar' (city), seems to be related to the Singhapuram city in the Kalinga state. Indrapala observes that Singhapuram had been the capital of a dynasty in Kalinga which had reigned from the 5th Century AD to the 15th Century AD<sup>(12)</sup>. Singhapuram had also been one of the capitals of the Chola King Paranthakan I who had been an overlord of Eelam as well as Uttaradesam. Pushparatnam is of the opinion that it was this name of the Chola capital that had been later adopted as the name of Ukkira Singhan's capital<sup>(13)</sup>. Nevertheless, I believe that Ukkira Singhan had named his new capital after himself, i.e. Singhan Nagar<sup>(14)</sup>.

Some historians claim that Singhai Nagar was in the Vallipuram area whilst others uphold that it was near Nallur. However, it is more plausible to construe from the researches conducted by Pushparatnam, which reveal that an ancient kingdom had thrived in Poonari, that Ukkira

10. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) op cit, p. 14

11. Indrapala, K. op cit, p. 49

12. Ibid. p. 55

13. Pushparatnam, P. 1993. *Vada Ilankail Singhai Nagar*. Jaffna: Holy Father G. A. Francis Joseph Manivizhasabai Publication. p. 41

14. Kunarasa, K. 1996. *Eelathavar Varalaaru*. Jaffna: Poopalasingham Puthakasalai Publication. p. 60



Singhan had established his capital in the Poonari area. Archaeological evidence unearthed at Poonari too suggests likewise. Hence, it can be asserted that Singhai Nagar, the initial capital of the Tamil Kingdom in Northern Sri Lanka, was situated in Poonari in the Vanni region outside Jaffna.

The Gampola stone inscription and Sinhalese books refer to Singhai Nagar as a place situated at the coast of a sea with mighty waves. Similarly, the Kottagama stone inscription speaks of Singhai Nagar as a location where rising waves made loud noise. Indeed, the present Jaffna Lagoon had been a mighty sea in ancient times. During those days when the Chundikulam sand bar, the Elephant Pass, the Pannai Bridge and the Ponnalai Bridge had not existed, the eastwest connection of the Indian Ocean had kept the Jaffna Lagoon area as a sea with high rising waves<sup>(15)</sup>.

Not knowing how to utilize the underground water in the Jaffna Peninsula, our early Tamil ancestors had settled down in the Vanni region where surface water supplies, like rivers, existed. They had preferred areas like Poonari, Mullaithivu, Vavuniya and Mannar where, with the good water and land supply, they could build tanks and engage in agriculture. Our ancestors had considered the Jaffna Peninsula, with no surface water resources, as a sandy village (Valikamam) and a huge sand hill (Vadamaraachi) not suitable for human settlements. Thus, ancient Tamil settlements had taken place in the larger mainland areas and not in the Peninsula<sup>(16)</sup>.

After Ukkira Singhan, his son Narasinghan (Ukkira Singhan also had a daughter named Senpagavathi), having changed his name to Jeyathunga Pararajasinghan, ascended the throne at Singhai Nagar. It is believed that during his reign, a blind, talented lute musician by the

15. Kunarasa, K. 1995. 'Nallur Kandaswamy Koil Varalaatril Thirutham' in *Veerakesari* weekly issue (27.8.1995). p. 9

16. Ibid.



name of Yalpadi had come to the royal court with the intention of obtaining a reward for his skill. Mesmerized by his music, King Jeyathungan gave Yalpadi the present Karayur and Pasayur which were then a sandy area. Yalpadi had happily accepted the reward and settled down there with his relatives whom he brought over from his native place. Their settlement had come to be known as Yaalpanam. This name was later adopted as the name of the capital of the European conquerors, and has finally become a name denoting the entire Jaffna Peninsula<sup>(17)</sup>.

Despite whether the incident relating to Yalpadi is true or false, it can be maintained that since the sandy area given away as the reward is said to be in the North, then Singhai Nagar, the capital of Jeyathungan's Kingdom, had been in the South<sup>(18)</sup>.

### 3.4 Pandiya Invasion

Invasions by South Indian monarchs resumed when Jeyathungan was ruling Northern Sri Lanka from Singhai Nagar and Senan I was ruling Southern Sri Lanka from Anuradhapuram. The strong Pandiya King Sri Maravallaban (815-862 AD) had attacked Sri Lanka, defeated both Jeyathungan and Senan, got them to pay him tribute, and returned to his country<sup>(19)</sup>.

It appears that Jeyathungan's descendants had ruled Uttaradesam after him. These rulers had probably come under the rule of the South Indian Kings or the Southern Sri Lankan Sinhalese rulers. Indrapala states that the stone inscription found in Kantarodai reveals that in the 9th Century AD, Uttaradesam had been under the sovereignty of the Sinhalese King Kasaba II. In the late 10th Century AD, Uttaradesam

- 
17. Kunarasa, K. 1996. *Eelathavar Varalaaru*. Jaffna: Poopalasingham Puthakasalai Publication. p. 29
18. Kunarasa, K. 1995. 'Nallur Kandaswamy Koil Varalaatril Thirutham' in *Veerakesari* weekly issue (27.8.1995). p. 9
19. Indrapala, K. op cit.



had come under the overlordship of King Mahinda IV. The *Chulavamsa* reports that King Mahinda IV (956-972 AD) had immediately repelled a South Indian invasion of Jaffna in the 10th Century AD without losing the region. The South Indian King who had attacked then was the Chola King Paranthakan II<sup>(20)</sup>, better known as Sundara Cholan. Later, in 1003 AD, Rajaraja Cholan invaded Sri Lanka and successfully conquered it<sup>(21)</sup>.

### 3.5 Chola Rule

In stating that all parts of Sri Lanka, except Urukuna, had been under the reign of the Chola Kings who had ruled from Polanaruwa, the *Chulavamsa* indirectly makes it clear that Jaffna had been under the sovereignty of Chola monarchs. Moreover, stone inscriptions engraved during the Chola rule in the 11th Century have been discovered in Jaffna. An inscription belonging to the period of Rajendra Cholan I was found inside the Jaffna Fort. Two other Chola inscriptions were discovered inside the fort at Kayts. All these findings proclaim that Chola rule had prevailed in Uttaradesam during the early 11th Century<sup>(22)</sup>.

Uttaradesam had probably been ruled by representatives appointed by the Chola Kings. Buvanekavahu or Buanesavasar seems to have been the Chola administrator who had governed Singhai Nagar around 948 AD. (Like Veeravahu, Buvanekavahu is a Tamil name.) According to the Persian work *Karshasp Nama* by Asethi, in the 10th Century AD, the Persian King Dobak had sent an army to Sri Lanka, led by Karshasp, which arrived at the Port of Kala (Kayts) and defeated King Vahu in a place which they reached after a two-day journey. However, there had been no such King in any part of Sri Lanka in the 10th Century AD<sup>(23)</sup>. Perhaps, the Persian work had referred to Buvanekavahu of Singhai Nagar as the King, or minor ruler, Vahu.

- 
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Rasanayagam, C. op cit.





Buvanekavahu must have been the representative of Chola Paranthakan I since historical documentations indicate that at around 945 AD, Chola Paranthakan I had invaded Sri Lanka, and defeated the Sinhalese King Udayan IV and killed the Singhai Nagar King<sup>(24)</sup>.

Other available evidence also testifies that the Poonari area had been under the Chola rule in the early 10th Century AD. As mentioned in Chapter 2, ruins of buildings considered to be parts of an ancient kingdom have been discovered in Poonari. A palace had been built, probably by the Chola representative Buvanekavahu, in the present-day Nallur in Poonari which was actually the ancient-day Nallur of the Tamil Kingdom. It was during the days of Chola Paranthakan I that Cholamandalam and Maniyaru in India as well as Nallur at its southern boundary had prevailed as places of historical significance. Maniyaru had also been known by Paranthakan's honorific name Kujasaramallan. To the southern boundary of the ruins of buildings found in Poonari, lay Cholamandalam, and to the northern boundary lay Maniyaru with a place called Nallur just a little north to it<sup>(25)</sup>. Since several places in South India have been named Nallur, it can be inferred that it was the Cholas who had named the area in Poonari as Nallur too<sup>(26)</sup>.

In the 11th Century, the Sinhalese King Vijayabahu I (1055-1110 AD) drove away the Cholas and became the King of entire Sri Lanka, with Northern Sri Lanka coming under his authority. This is affirmed by the *Chulavamsa* which states that this Southern Sri Lankan King had rebuilt one of the early Buddhist Viharas in Jaffna, namely the Jambukola Vihara<sup>(27)</sup>.

After the death of Vijayabahu, in about 1110, Kulothunga Cholan invaded Sri Lanka and re-established the Chola rule. The General of



the Chola forces was Karunagara Thondaman<sup>(28)</sup>. He had probably administered the affairs of Jaffna for some time, since it was he who had converted Thondamannaru into a port and had exported the Thanpaduvan salt (salt that developed by itself without any human effort) from this area to the Chola Kingdom in India. He had also built the Karunagara Pillaiyar Temple in Urumpirai<sup>(29)</sup>.

In the 12th Century, the Uttaradesa (Northern) Kingdom once again came under the rule of the monarchs of Southern Sri Lanka. The stone inscription found in Nainathivu and another excavated at Thiruvankadu in South India reveal that Parakiramabahu I (1153-1215) had been the Sinhalese King of Sri Lanka at that time. The former inscription indicates that the sea commerce at Kayts had been under the authority of Parakiramabahu, and the latter states that Parakiramabahu's navy had been stationed in areas such as Kayts, Mattivil and Valikamam<sup>(30)</sup>.

It is hence clear that Singhai Nagar had prevailed as the capital of Northern Sri Lanka till the mid-13th Century, and that this Kingdom had been subjected to Chola rule from time to time.

---

24. Ibid. p. 33

25. Pushparatnam, P. op cit, p. 15

26. Kunarasa, K. op cit, p. 15

27. Indrapala, K. op cit.

---

28. Rasanayagam, C. op cit.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.



## Jaffna Dynasty: Vijayakalingan

The 13th Century was a remarkable period in the continuing history of Jaffna. Historians highlight that this period witnessed the establishment of an independent Tamil Kingdom in Sri Lanka. The reign of the distinguished dynasty of Ariya Chakravarthis (Emperors) had commenced in the 13th Century.

Having married into the royal Brahmin family of Rameswaram and accepting their religious way of life, a Tamil King had begun to rule Rameswaram calling himself the Ariya King. Consequently, he became known as 'Sethukavalan'. Adopting the Sethukavalan in full armour carrying the Nanthi (bull) flag as the royal symbol, the Ariya King and his descendants ruled Jaffna bearing the royal names of Segarajasekaran and Pararajasekaran. As their rule became recognized and praised worldwide, they have come to be referred to as the Ariya Chakravarthis<sup>(1)</sup>.

### 4.1 Kalingamahan (Vijayakalingan)

Kalingamahan's invasion, and subsequent rule, is considered to be a turning point in Sri Lankan history. He is believed to have come from South India with a force of 24,000 Tamil and Kerala soldiers. Kalingamahan had conquered Sri Lanka in 1215 and ruled it from Polanaruwa for a period of 21 years till 1236. The many political confusions in the latter part of the Polanaruwa rule had provided a conducive environment for Mahan's victory. Whether Mahan and his large army did come from South India or from some part of Uttaradesam needs to be researched into. Nevertheless, the *Chulavamsa* indicates

1. Rasanayagam, C. 1933. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Vanaarpanai: Sri Shanmuganatha Press.

that Kayts and Valikamam had accommodated Kalingamahan's army which also comprised the assisting forces of Jeyabahu<sup>(2)</sup>. This is confirmed by the Sinhalese history chronicle of *Pujavaliya*<sup>(3)</sup>. As such, it can be maintained that Mahan had led his army from some part of Uttaradesam.

On establishing his rule at Polanaruwa, Mahan had seized the lands and properties that the Sinhalese had taken away from the Tamils and returned them to the Tamils. The *Chulavamsa* states that Mahan did not treat the Sinhalese and Tamils fairly and equally as Ellalan had done. Showering his affection on his Tamil companions, Mahan had given them paddy fields, plantations, grasslands, houses, servants, cows, buffaloes and much more. In short, he had distributed all the belongings of the Sinhalese to the Tamils. The *Chulavamsa* laments that such mannerisms of the demon-like Tamils had destroyed the Kingdom and religion of Sri Lanka<sup>(4)</sup>. Other Sinhalese books too, as Rasanayagam observes, claim that Mahan had ruined Polanaruwa, demolished the Buddhist Viharas there and chased away the Buddhist monks without fearing the consequences of such sinful deeds<sup>(5)</sup>. However, some historians hail that Mahan had not only liberated the Tamil areas from Sinhalese dominance, but had also driven away the aggressors from Rajarata in the Northern province to the South<sup>(6)</sup>. Mahan is also regarded to have been instrumental in the growth of Saivism in Batticaloa<sup>(7)</sup>. The book of *Mattakalappu Manmiyam* speaks highly of this Tamil King's

- 
2. Geiger, W. (ed.) 1925. *Chulavamsa*. London. 83-17
  3. Indrapala, K. 1970. 'Yaalpana Irachiyam Thondriya Kaalamum Chulnilayum' in *Ilankathir*. Peradeniya. p. 18
  4. Geiger, W. (ed.) op cit.
  5. Rasanayagam, C. op cit, p. 49
  6. Kunarasa, K. 1991. 'Kudiyetrangalal Elanthupoona Thamizh Pradesangal' in *Muthamizh Vizha Malar*. Jaffna. p. 132
  7. Pushparatnam, P. 'Ilankaiyil Thamizh Mannarkalin Aatchi' (A paper presented during the memorial service of the late Mr N. Krishnananthan) in *Porulithal* 3. p. 11



efforts in propagating Hinduism in Batticaloa. Nonetheless, the *Chulavamsa* refers to Mahan as one who had adopted wrong religious principles and converted Viharas and other places of Buddhist worship into dwelling areas for his soldiers<sup>(8)</sup>.

During Kalingamahan's reign, the Sinhalese people and Buddhism lost royal patronage and suffered adversely. The Sinhalese considered Mahan a tyrant, and as his rule was more beneficial to the Tamils, the Sinhalese felt disgusted. Consequently, they abandoned their capital city of about 250 years and moved to Southern Sri Lanka. Dambadeniya thus became the new capital of the Sinhalese rulers. Whilst a strong Tamil Kingdom grew in the North, the Sinhalese, fearing for their safety, shifted their capital further South from time to time.

Actions taken against the Sinhalese and Buddhism during Mahan's rule had strong repercussions in the Rajarata region and Uttaradesam, more specifically in Nagadipa (Jaffna Peninsula). The Sinhalese Buddhists who had predominated areas such as Valikamam (Kadiramalai/Kantarodai, Kaasaathurai/Kankesanturai, Jambukola Pattinam/Thiruvadinalai) and Vallipuram, had probably evacuated the Jaffna Peninsula in search of safer grounds in the South. This was why when the Jaffna Kingdom initially took shape -- when the Tamil capital was shifted from Singhai Nagar in Poonari to the Jaffna Peninsula -- settlements had to be created in the Peninsula. Just as the Sinhalese had moved from Rajarata to the South when Mahan had captured Polanaruwa, likewise, with the fall of Mahan, the Tamil people of Uttaradesam migrated towards the North. These events will be extensively discussed later.

Although the Cholas had left Sri Lanka, their rule had a salient impact on the history of Sri Lanka, more particularly, in the history of the Tamil people. The inevitable consequence of the Chola rule was

8. Pushparatnam, P. 1992. 'Naagarigam Thenmerkku Thisai Nooki Idam Peyarinthamaiyum, Irachiyankal Idam Maariyamaikum' in *Varalaaru* 9. Jaffna. p. 57



the profound penetration of the Brahmin-Saivite religious practices as well as the Dravidian culture, architecture and Tamil language into the religion and culture of Eelam, whereby the latter became strong and reached great heights. From this period forth, the authority exercised by South India over Eelam had been entirely based on Hinduism<sup>(9)</sup>. Thus, the Saivites and the Tamil people were able to dominate Sri Lanka during Mahan's rule. As a result of this, the Sinhalese people who had lived in Rajarata to the north of Polanaruwa, and the Sinhalese Buddhists who had inhabited the Jaffna Peninsula, migrated to the South,

In 1236, the Sinhalese King Parakiramabahu II captured Polanaruwa and chased away Kalingamahan. Since there is no evidence to indicate that Mahan had been killed in this battle, Indrapala is of the view that Mahan would have retreated to Uttaradesam with his remaining forces<sup>(10)</sup>. A few others believe that Kalingamahan had fled to Madurai. Nevertheless, it is not clear as to where he was from 1236 to 1242. According to the *Kailayamaalai*, an officer by the name of Pandimalavan had governed Northern Sri Lanka during this period.

It can be inferred from the details in the *Kailayamaalai* that when the threat of the Southern Sri Lankan King began again, Pandimalavan brought Kalingamahan out of hiding and enthroned him as Vijayakalinga Ariya Chakravarthi. Descriptions about Pandimalavan in the *Kailayamaalai* cannot be regarded as false or imaginary stories<sup>(11)</sup>. The *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai* too indicates that Pandimalavan had brought over a person named Vijayakoolankai Chakravarthi. Vijayakalingan thus became the first Ariya Chakravarthi of the Jaffna Kingdom. He had been variously known as Singhai Ariyan and Vijayakoolankai Ariya Chakravarthi. Upon coronation, he had also adopted the royal name of Segarajasekaran.

9. Sittampalam, C. K. 1991. 'Thamizh Makkalin Parambariya Pradesam' in *Muthamizh Vizha Malar*. Jaffna. p. 171

10. Indrapala, K. op cit.

11. Pathmanathan, S. 1970. 'Eelathamizh Varalaaru Noolgal' in *Ilankathir Peradeniya*.



Since Vijayakalingan had initially reigned from Singhai Nagar, he had been called Singhai Ariyan. The name Vijayakoolankai, as Rev. Father Gnanapragasar advances in his celebrated book *Yaalpana Vaipava Vimarsanam*, is most likely a derivative of the name Vijayakalingan<sup>(12)</sup>. Historians, from Rasanayagam to Indrapala, have accepted this explanation. They also assert that there is no difficulty in identifying Kalingamahan as Vijayakalingan who is honoured as the Ariya Chakravarthi who had shifted the capital from Singhai Nagar back to Nagadipa (Jaffna Peninsula).

#### 4.2 Creation of A New Capital

The Uttaradesa King Ukkira Singhan had shifted his capital from Kadiramalai (Kantarodai) to Singhai Nagar in Poonari. This shift, as discussed in Chapter 3, had been effected due to the predominance of the Sinhalese people and Buddhism in the Jaffna Peninsula. But, this state of affairs changed in the 13th Century. As mentioned earlier, the Sinhalese had migrated from Nagadipa to Southern Sri Lanka. The news that Kalingamahan had again been crowned as the Northern Sri Lankan King in Singhai Nagar must have prompted the remaining Sinhalese Buddhists to move out as well.

During this period, a fairly developed settlement had existed at the present Nallur area in Southern Nagadipa. This was the Yaalpanam settlement that had been created by Yalpadi. Probably only a large village under the first Ariya Chakravarthi, after the 15th Century, this settlement was to become the famous city of Yaapapattuna and thereafter as Yaalpanam (Jaffna).

Various reasons can be deduced from historical documents as to why the capital at Singhai Nagar in the Vanni region was shifted to the Jaffna Peninsula. The agriculture in Rajarata (including Vanni) had been destroyed by Kalingamahan's invasion. As a result of the actions taken



by this valiant Saivite King to wipe out the Sinhalese and Buddhism from this region, vast areas of well-cultivated paddy fields of over 1500 years became thick jungles, and the irrigation tanks and channels corroded due to neglect. Consequently, the people of Uttarata and Rajarata died of malaria and other jungle diseases. Floods and droughts became common in this area. The densely populated dry region became sparsely inhabited. Even Uttaradesam was subjected to such crises. These circumstances had probably compelled Vijayakalingan to shift his capital from Singhai Nagar to the North.

Ample evidence attests that settlements had been established in the Vanni area during the early days of history. The ruins of irrigation tanks, paddy fields and buildings affirm the presence of earlier settlements in this region<sup>(13)</sup>. The destroyed tanks and dams found in the midst of jungles reflect that a highly developed agricultural system had prevailed in the area. The young growth on the channels of ruined tanks indicates that the jungles had grown on neglected paddy fields. It is obvious from these ruined tanks and deserted paddy fields that this region had once been well populated<sup>(14)</sup>. Abandoned for various reasons, these ancient settlements have since become overgrown with jungles.

During the earlier days, South Indian invasions of Sri Lanka had often taken place. These military forces seeking to conquer Southern Sri Lanka had established their camps in Northern Sri Lanka. At the same time, the Southern Sri Lankan forces too had proceeded to attack Northern Sri Lanka. Consequently, the Vanni area that lay in the middle of Northern and Southern Sri Lanka had regularly become a battlefield. The frequent wars, epidemic of malaria, and extreme droughts and floods that resulted in poverty and starvation, had prompted people to leave the ancient Vanni settlements and move out in all four directions. Whilst these people had settled down mainly in the coastal areas of

12. Gnanapragasar. 1928. *Yaalpana Vaipava Vimarsanam*. Achchuvveli, Nallur.

13. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) 1949. *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai*. Chunnakam. p. 25

14. Kunarasa, K. 1988. 'Kilinochchiyin Kathai' in *Kandan Karunai* (Kandaswamy Kovil Mahakumbabisheka Malar). Kilinochchi. p. 48



Mullaithivu and Poonari, majority of them had migrated to the Jaffna Peninsula<sup>(15)</sup>.

The severe defeat that Kalingamahan had suffered at the hands of the Sinhalese King was probably another reason that had urged this Ariya Chakravarthi to shift his capital from Singhai Nagar to the Jaffna Peninsula. Fearing further attacks from Southern Sri Lanka, he had most likely wanted to move his capital to a safer place in the North. The Elephant Pass/Jaffna Lagoon furnished a natural moat for the fortress of a capital in the Peninsula. Moreover, Vijayakalingan had been drawn to the underground water resource in the Peninsula because of the water shortage in the Vanni region as a result of its earlier increase in population. Above all, he had desired to shift the capital of his ancestral Kingdom to an area where Hinduism prevailed.

The *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai* states that Vijayakalingan had a minister named Buvanekavahu<sup>(16)</sup>. This minister had been ordered to establish a new capital in a suitable area in the Peninsula. He had selected the Nallur area, and, as the *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai* narrates, a palace was built with the foundation laid at the auspicious time advised by astrologers. Subsequently, the four walls were raised and the entrance was well placed, culminating in the construction of the towers and the entire palace. When the building was completed, the capital was occupied<sup>(17)</sup>. The *Kailayamaalai* too speaks of the erection of the Jaffna city in a verse which conveys the following:<sup>(18)</sup>

'At the end of the literary period (Ilakkiya Sahabtha) eight hundred and seventy, the valiant Buvanekavahu had constructed the flourishing Jaffna city, and also built a temple for God Kanda in Nallur.'

15. Kunarasa, K. 1984. *Karaichi, Poonari, Pachchilai Palli Pradesangalin Nilapayanpaadam Nirvalamun* (MA Thesis) (Unpublished). Jaffna: University of Jaffna.

16. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) op cit, p. 25

17. Ibid. p. 26

18. *Kailayamaalai*. p. 23



It is apparent from the above verse that Buvanekavahu had built the Jaffna city as well as the Nallur Kandaswamy Temple in the Ilakkiya Sahabtha year 870. However, the accurate year of construction needs to be clarified. According to Rev. Father Gnanapragasar's explanation in the *Yaalpana Vaipava Vimarsanam*, the words 'eight hundred and seventy' do not denote the number 870 but should be calculated as the number derived on adding 107 to one thousand, i.e. 1107. Accordingly, the literary period 1107 represents 1248 AD<sup>(19)</sup>. This account is acceptable especially since there is no other evidence suggesting that the Jaffna city had existed before 1248. It can hence be proclaimed that Vijayakalinga Ariya Chakravarthi had ascended the throne in 1242 and in around 1248, had constructed the Jaffna city where he established his new capital. Thus, the capital that the Uttaradesa King Ukkira Singhan had shifted from Kadiramalai in the Peninsula to Singhai Nagar, was moved back to the Peninsula in the Jaffna city by Vijayakalinga Ariya Chakravarthi.

Vijayakalinga Ariyan was a brave, devoted Saivite who had built many temples in the Jaffna city and in his territory. He had constructed the Kailayanathar Temple for his personal worship, and huge separate temples for God Kailayanathar and Goddess Umaiyaval where there were three cultural organizations (Sabhas), buildings for subordinate deities, storage place, sacrificial hall, courtyards, roads for chariot ridding, religious institutions (similar to monasteries) and almshouses. He is noted to have erected these in an exemplary fashion<sup>(20)</sup>. Moreover, to the east of his capital city, Vijayakalingan had built the Veyilukantha Pillaiyar Temple, and in the north, the Sattanathar Temple, the Thaiyalnayaki Amman Temple and the Saalai Vinayagar Temple<sup>(21)</sup>. Some believe that a few of these temples had been constructed by Pararajasekaran who ascended the throne later. But it seems more appropriate to accept that Pararajasekaran had rebuilt some of these temples that had been demolished during Sinhalese attacks.

19. Gnanapragasar. op cit.

20. *Kailayamaalai*. p. 16-21 & Sabanathan, K. (ed.) op cit, p. 31-32

21. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) op cit, p. 26



When the capital of Uttaradesam was shifted to the Jaffna city, a population vacuum existed because it was a new city and a new capital, as well as because a large number of Buddhists and Sinhalese had migrated from the Peninsula to the South. Enormous land was sparsely populated. Plantations, paddy fields and cultivation lands of those who had moved to the South, withered away as there was no one to tend to them. Hence, for social, economic, political and military purposes, people had to be brought in from elsewhere. The *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai* and *Kailayamaalai* indicate that Vijayakalinga Ariyan, the first King of the Jaffna Kingdom, was thus compelled to bring people from South India and settle them in Jaffna.

Settlements were created in villages such as Thirunelveli, Puloli, Pachchilai Palli, Tholpuram, Kovilakandy, Nedunthivu, Pallavarayan Kattu, Innuvil, Irrupalai, Tellipalai and Mayiliddy. Vanniyars too settled down in the Vanni areas such as Karikattu, Moolai Patru, Mulliyavalai, Meil Patru, Merkkumoolai, Kilakkumoolai, Thiriyaai, Kachchai, Kattukulam, Trincomalee, Thambalakamam, Kottiyaraam, Thunukaayi, Ithimadu, Nedunkeni, Nochchimunai, Pulveli and Thanikkal<sup>(22)</sup>.

Pandimalavan and Chenpagamalavan of Ponpattiyur had settled down in Thirunelveli, and Kanagamalavan in Puloli; Neelakandan of Kachchurai in Pachchilai Palli; Kupakaarenthiran of Thiruvoillur in Tholpuram; Thevarajendran of Pullur in Kovilakandy; Irumarapunthuiya Thaninayagam of Maduraanthakam in Nedunthivu; Pallavarayan of Kancheepuram in Pallavarayan Kattu; Peraayiramudaiyan of Thirukovilur in Innuvil; Mudali from Mannadu in Irrupalai; Kanagaraayan of Kaayalpattinam, and Senpagamaapaanan and Chandrasekaramaapaanan of Vaalinagar in Tellipalai; and Narasinghathevan of Kaviriyur in Mayiliddy<sup>(23)</sup>. These people had come with their families, relatives and servants.

22. Kunarasa, K. op cit.

23. *Kailayamaalai*. p. 12-15 & Sabanathan, K. (ed.) op cit, p. 27-29



Subsequently, Vijayakalingan appointed chiefs and village guards (Thalaiyaris) in the following manner: Imaiyaana Maathakan (an official from the army) for North Patru, Vettri Maathakan for South Patru, and Senpaga Maathakan for East Patru. Vettri Maathakan also became Vijayakalingan's Army General<sup>(24)</sup>.

The *Kailayamaalai* and *Vaiyaapaadal* speak of an important phase in the history of the Tamil people in Eelam that had facilitated Tamil settlements in the Vanni region and the Jaffna Peninsula during Vijayakalingan's reign. The many years of close relationship, since the ancient days of the Nagas, between the people of Eelam and South India had created a Tamil country in Eelam. The early Tamil people of Eelam constituted the descendants of traders from South India, warriors invited by Sinhalese Kings, pearl divers, and soldiers who had come during South Indian invasions<sup>(25)</sup>.

### 4.3 The Chavaka (Java) King

Many historians believe that after Vijayakalinga Ariya Chakravathi, his son Kulasekara Singhai Ariyan had ascended the throne. However, evidence indicates that a Chavaka King had ruled Northern Sri Lanka after Vijayakalingan. In 1247, Chandrabanu of Java had attacked Southern Sri Lanka, but the Sinhalese King Parakiramabahu II had repulsed his invasion and drove him away. Indrapala's opinion that after suffering a defeat in Southern Sri Lanka, Chandrabanu had proceeded to conquer the Kingdom at Northern Sri Lanka and thereby became its ruler, is acceptable<sup>(26)</sup>. Chandrabanu had seized the throne from Vijayakalingan, and the people who came with him had settled down in areas which became known as Chavakacheri, Chavakaseema and Chavaka Kottai. Chandrabanu soon enlisted an army to carry out a second attack on the Sinhalese Kingdom. The *Chulavamsa* states that

24. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) op cit, p. 30

25. Pathmanathan, S. op cit, p. 126

26. Indrapala, K. op cit.



this Chavaka King had won over the Sinhalese people of Pathi (Pathaviya), Kurunthi (Kurunthanur) and other districts<sup>(27)</sup>. However, before he could set out to invade the Sinhalese Kingdom, Chandrabanu was defeated by Sundra Pandiyan in 1258 and made to pay tribute. As he did not pay the tribute regularly, in 1262, Jadavarman Veerapandiyan invaded his Kingdom either to punish him or to assist the Sinhalese King Parakiramabahu II. At that time, Chandrabanu had engaged in his second attack on the Sinhalese King, and in the war, Veerapandiyan had decapitated him. It was after this war that Veerapandiyan had engraved the double-fish Pandiya royal emblem in Thirikoodagiri and Trincomalee<sup>(28)</sup>. To date, this emblem can be seen at the entrance of the fort at Trincomalee.

#### 4.4 Kulasekara Singhai Ariyan

Since the Chavaka King was killed in the war in 1262, the son of Vijayakalinga Ariya Chakravarthi, Kulasekara Singhai Ariyan (Pararajasekaran I) became the new King. He had reformed the administrative system and paved the way to promote peace in his realm. After him, his son Kulothunga Singhai Ariyan (Segarajasekaran II) ascended the throne in 1284. The exclusive right to pearl dive in the Mannar Sea had belonged to the Singhai Nagar King. Kulothungan had to fight to re-establish this right when the Sinhalese King Buvanekabahu attempted to seize it<sup>(29)</sup>.

Kulothunga Singhai Ariyan was succeeded by Vickerama Singhai Ariyan (Pararajasekaran II) in 1292. During the latter's reign, religious riots broke out between the Sinhalese and Tamils in Uttaradesam. The chaos subsided when Vickeraman arrested and beheaded Punchi Banda and his seventeen accomplices<sup>(30)</sup> who were responsible for the riots.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Rasanayagam, C. op cit.

30. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) op cit, p. 36



However, several minor Vanni kingdoms began to thrive in Uttaradesam during Vickeraman's rule.

In 1302, Varothaya Singhai Ariyan (Segarajasekaran III) was crowned as the King of Jaffna. He had managed to establish cordial relations between his Sinhalese and Tamil subjects. He had also crushed a rebellion by the Vanniyars. When he died in 1325, his son Marthanda Singhai Ariyan (Pararajasekaran III) ascended the throne. The Vanniyars rebelled again but were curbed by the new King too. During Marthandan's reign, Iban Battuda, a Muslim traveller who came to Jaffna, had been astonished by the mighty navy and accumulated wealth of the Ariya Chakravarthi<sup>(31)</sup>.

In 1347, Gunapooshana Singhai Ariyan (Segarajasekaran IV) became the King of Jaffna. Peace prevailed in the Kingdom during his rule. After him, Virothaya Singhai Ariyan (Pararajasekaran IV) ascended the throne. Although the Vanniyars had revolted during his rule, the Kingdom had been generally peaceful. Virothaya had rendered military aid to the Pandiya King Chandrasekaran, and thereby enabled the latter to regain his lost territories and crown<sup>(32)</sup>.

#### 4.5 Attack on Southern Sri Lanka

Virothaya Singhai Ariyan was succeeded by his son Jeyaveera Singhai Ariyan (Segarajasekaran V) in 1380. During the latter's reign, a dispute on pearl diving had culminated in a war between him and the Southern Sri Lankan King Buvanekabahu. Jeyaveeran defeated Buvanekabahu and made him pay tribute. For the next 12 years, the Southern Sri Lankan rulers continued to pay tribute to the Jaffna Kings<sup>(33)</sup>. However, at some point in time, Alagakonar, the King of Kotte, had not only refused to pay tribute but had also executed those sent by the

31. Rasanayagam, C. op cit.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.



Jaffna King to obtain the tribute. Enraged by these acts, Jeyaveera Singhai Ariyan dispatched a large army to Gampola by land and a navy to Kotte. Fearing to face the army, Buvanekabahu, the king of Gampola, went into hiding<sup>(34)</sup>. The navy, on the other hand, suffered a defeat and retreated.

When Jeyaveera Singhai Ariyan died in 1410, his son Gunaveera Singhai Ariyan (Pararajasekaran V) ascended the throne of Jaffna. During his rule, the Sinhalese King Parakiramabahu had refused to pay tribute. Consequently, the Jaffna King attacked Southern Sri Lanka, defeated the Sinhalese King and made him pay tribute again. The Vijayanagar King had sent his forces to assist Gunaveera Singhai Ariyan in this expedition<sup>(35)</sup>.

#### 4.6 Kanagasooriya Singhai Ariyan

Gunaveera Singhai Ariyan was succeeded by his son Kanagasooriya Singhai Ariyan (Segarajasekaran VI) in 1440. Kanagasooriya's reign marks an important period in the history of the Jaffna Kingdom as the invaluable freedom, protected and cherished by the Ariya Chakravarthis from 1215 to 1450, was lost to the King of Southern Sri Lanka then.

Whilst Kanagasooriya Singhai Ariyan ruled from Northern Sri Lanka, Parakiramabahu VI reigned as the King of Kotte in Southern Sri Lanka. Parakiramabahu VI nursed unremitting hostility towards the Ariya Chakravarthis. He could not bear to see the Southern Sri Lankan Kings pay tribute to the monarchs of Jaffna. The Ariya Chakravarthi had excelled his counterparts of Gampola, Raigama and Kotte in wealth and military strength. He had thus received tributes from nine ports up-country and in the eastern regions<sup>(36)</sup>. Moreover, an Ariya Chakravarthi had not only defeated a King of Gampola but had also recorded his

34. Indrapala, K. op cit.

35. Ibid.

36. Pathmanathan, S. 1992. *Yaalpana Irachiyam - Ariya Chakravarthigal*. Jaffna: University of Jaffna. p. 50



victory in a stone inscription. This is testified by the Tamil inscription discovered at Kottagama near Gampola<sup>(37)</sup>. Parakiramabahu VI could not endure such happenings.

When he became the King of Kotte in 1415, the Sinhalese Kingdom, which had been weak for a number of centuries, became powerful again. An adroit ruler, Parakiramabahu VI took great efforts to extend his sovereignty over entire Sri Lanka. His remarkable achievements include the conquest of the Kandy kingdom, the minor Vanni kingdoms as well as the mighty Jaffna Kingdom<sup>(38)</sup>.

Ever since he had ascended the throne of Kotte, Parakiramabahu VI made necessary preparations to invade Jaffna (Yaapapattuna). Sinhalese books of the 15th Century refer to the throne of the Ariya Chakravarthi as 'Yaapapuduna'<sup>(39)</sup>. The rise of the Vijayanagar Empire in India in the latter part of the 14th Century and its expansion over Northern Sri Lanka had deterred the Ariya Chakravarthi from extending his authority to Southern Eelam<sup>(40)</sup>. This contributed to Parakiramabahu's victory over 'Yaapapattuna'.

In 1450, Parakiramabahu VI sent a large force, led by his adopted son Sappumal Kumaraya (Senpaga Perumal), to capture Jaffna. Sappumal Kumaraya's natural father was a Paniker (a person who trains elephants) from the Malayalam country. Parakiramabahu VI had received him warmly and, taken up by his physical strength and great skill at wielding the sword, got him married to a lady of his family<sup>(41)</sup>. They had two sons and a daughter. Parakiramabahu VI adopted the

37. Kottagama stone inscription (Tamil version)

38. Pathmanathan, S. op cit.

39. *Kogila Santhesa*. p. 236-264 & Indrapala, K. op cit, p. 45

40. Sittampalam, C. K. op cit, p. 173

41. Rasanayagam, C. op cit.





two boys and brought them up in his palace. Both of them grew up to be strong and brave. The valour and military skills of the elder boy, Sappumal Kumaraya, attracted the attention of many in the Kotte Kingdom. Parakiramabahu VI feared that Sappumal Kumaraya would be an obstacle for his grandson Jeyaveera (born to his own daughter Ulahudaiya Devi) to ascend the throne of Kotte. Portuguese writers state that it was this fear that had led Parakiramabahu VI to send Sappumal Kumaraya on the difficult task of conquering Jaffna<sup>(42)</sup>.

The *Rajavaliya* narrates that before invading Jaffna, Sappumal Kumaraya conquered many villages close to the frontier of the Jaffna Kingdom, took the people as captives to Kotte, and learnt about the military strength of his enemy from them. He then sent a large force by land from Kotte to the North. The *Kogila Santhesa* (Messenger Bird) vividly describes the route taken by these warriors. Commencing from the western coast of Kotte, the army had proceeded along the Puttalam-Poonari coastal route<sup>(43)</sup>.

The soldiers would have thus first reached Singhai Nagar, the old capital of Northern Sri Lanka in Poonari. They completely ruined this elegant and wealthy place. In the Vanni region, the Vanniyars did not resist Sappumal Kumaraya's army as these rulers had already accepted the overlordship of the King of Kotte. The first encounter between the Tamil and Sinhalese forces took place at Chavaka Kottai (Chavakacheri). Here, the warriors of the Vijayanagar King resisted Sappumal Kumaraya's forces but were overpowered. Thereafter, the Sinhalese army reached the Jaffna city<sup>(44)</sup>. The Tamil forces were defeated and Kanagasooriya Singhai Ariyan escaped to India with his two sons.

42. Paranavithana, S. (ed.) 1960. *History of Ceylon*. Colombo. Chapter III. p. 673

43. Ibid. p. 674

44. Kunarasa, K. 1987. *Nallai Nagar Nool*. Jaffna: Poopalasingham Puthakasalai Publication.



Sappumal Kumaraya entered the Jaffna city, killed those who stubbornly resisted him -- thus causing the city to be engulfed in blood -- and tore down towering structures and buildings. Hence, the Jaffna city was completely destroyed<sup>(45)</sup>. Even the magnificent Nallur Kandaswamy Temple, built by Vijayakalingan's minister Buvanegavahu in 1248, was not spared in the invasion by Kumaraya in 1450. Regretting his folly, and perhaps to atone for his sins, Kumaraya rebuilt the Jaffna city and the Kandaswamy Temple<sup>(46)</sup>. Rev. Father Gnanapragasar asserts that it is beyond any doubt that since Sappumal Kumaraya was responsible for the Tamil blood that had spilt all over the Jaffna city; and since he was himself a Tamil who had, from the days of the staunch Hindu Alageswaran, engaged in worship in the Jayawardena Fort; and also because the author of *Kogila Santhesa* had praised him as a devoted Buddhist, Kumaraya had, in favour of the Tamil subjects, promoted Hindu worship in Jaffna<sup>(47)</sup>.

Hence, although Senpaga Perumal had caused great destruction to the Jaffna city whilst fighting with the Ariya Chakravarthi, it is undeniable that he had rebuilt it. This fact is also supported by the *Rajavaliya* which states that Sappumal Kumaraya had built forts and battlements in the Jaffna city<sup>(48)</sup>. Since the Jaffna city, the capital of the Ariya Chakravarthis, had been reduced to ruins, Sappumal Kumaraya established a new city at Nallur which became the capital in the 15th Century.

The news of Sappumal Kumaraya's victory over the Jaffna King had spread far and wide in the Sinhalese areas and caused many to rejoice. The Sinhalese poet who composed *Kogila Santhesa* extols the victory and glorifies Sappumal Kumaraya as the 'great hunter of the Ariyas'<sup>(49)</sup>.

45. Rasanayagam, C. op cit, p. 74-75

46. Ibid. p. 73

47. Gnanapragasar. op cit.

48. Pathmanathan, S. op cit.

49. Rasanayagam, C. op cit, p. 74



Sappumal Kumaraya ascended the throne of Jaffna adopting the name Sri Singhabodhi Buvanekavahu. He ruled Uttaradesam from Nallur for 17 years. In 1467, he was compelled to return to Southern Sri Lanka. His foster father Parakiramabahu VI had died and his grandson Jeyaveera had become the King of Kotte. Resenting this, Sri Singhabodhi Buvanekavahu appointed Vijayavahu as the King of Jaffna and returned to Kotte where he killed Jeyaveera and ascended the throne.

Awaiting a favourable opportunity whilst in exile at Karandurai in Thirukovil, Kanagasooriya Singhai Ariyan and his two sons invaded Jaffna with their forces, killed Vijayavahu and regained their lost Kingdom. Kanagasooriya Singhai Ariyan once again became the King of Jaffna.



## Sankili Segarajasekaran & Paranirupasinghan

### 5.1 Singhai Pararajasekaran

Pararajasekaran, the elder of the two sons of Kanagasooriya Singhai Ariyan, is the most noteworthy King of the Jaffna Kingdom. As mentioned in Chapter 4, when Jaffna was conquered by Sappumal Kumaraya (Senpaga Perumal), Kanagasooriya Singhai Ariyan escaped to Thirukovil with his two sons. The elder boy, Pararajasekaran, emerged as a valiant military figure, whilst the younger, Segarajasekaran, not only excelled in military skills but also in the arts. Both were instrumental in successfully recapturing Jaffna and enabling their father to regain the lost Kingdom of the Ariya Chakravarthis. After Kanagasooriya's demise, his elder son ascended the throne in 1478 bearing the royal name of Singhai Pararajasekaran.

Since the reign of Vijayakalingan till Kanagasooriya, 11 Kings had ruled the Jaffna Kingdom as the Ariya Chakravarthi. These Kings had alternately adopted the royal names of Segarajasekaran and Pararajasekaran. However, as Kanagasooriya had named his two sons as Pararajasekaran and Segarajasekaran, the title of 'Ariyan' or 'Ariya Chakravarthi' ceased to be used as a suffix to personal names after him. Hence, in want of a royal title when Pararajasekaran became the King, he and his brother abbreviated their hereditary title of 'Singhai Ariyan' to 'Singhai' and attached it as a prefix to their names, accordingly becoming known as Singhai Pararajasekaran and Singhai Segarajasekaran<sup>(1)</sup>.

Singhai Pararajasekaran is credited with having transformed Nallur into a city of dazzling grandeur. Despite some historians belief

---

1. Sabanathan, K. 1949. *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai*. Chunnakam. p. 50



that the Hindu temples erected by Vijayakalinga Ariyan were constructed by Singhai Pararajasekaran, it appears more appropriate to accept that the latter had rebuilt the temples that had been destroyed during Sappumal Kumaraya's invasion. Pararajasekaran had probably rebuilt the Sattanathar Temple, Veyilukantha Pillaiyar Temple, Kailayanathar Temple and Veeramakali Amman Temple. The Nallur Kandaswamy Temple, built by Vijayakalingan's minister Buvanegavahu in 1248, had stood on the site where the Christian Church at Muthiraisanthi is presently situated<sup>(2)</sup>. Pararajasekaran had constructed a lake near the former Kandaswamy Temple and filled it with sacred water from the Jamuna River, thereby calling it Jamunari, i.e. Jamuna Yeri (lake)<sup>(3)</sup>. Jamunari is still existent at Sankilithoppu in Nallur, but is fast falling into ruins due to neglect.

## 5.2 Tamil Sangam (Society)

The Tamil Sangam was revived during Singhai Pararajasekaran's reign. This was made possible because the King's younger brother Segarajasekaran was a widely-read Tamil scholar. Bringing together Tamil poets and scholars to form a society, Segarajasekaran had rewarded them with gifts of necessity, and thereby fostered and rejuvenated the use of the Tamil language<sup>(4)</sup>. This Tamil Sangam at Nallur constituted of scholars not only from the Chola, Pandiya and Thondai countries but from Eelam as well. Furthermore, Segarajasekaran, himself an excellent master of various fields of study, had provided many children with education by establishing schools in all towns and villages. He had also written a book on astrology which he named after himself, and a book on medicine named after his brother<sup>(5)</sup>.

- 
2. Kunarasa, K. 1996. *Eelathavar Varalaaru*. Jaffna: Poopalasingham Puthakasalai Publication. p. 118
  3. Rasanayagam, C. 1933. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Vanaarpanai: Sri Shanmuganatha Press. p. 77
  4. Ibid.
  5. Muthuthamby Pillai, A. 1933. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Jaffna. p. 45-46



The *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai* too states that a medical book entitled *Pararajasekaram* and an astrology book named *Segarajasekaram*, as well as the literary book of *Raguvamsam*, had been produced during Pararajasekaran's rule<sup>(6)</sup>. The *Megathootu*, a celebrated Sanskrit work by Kalidasan, was translated into Tamil verses as the *Raguvamsam* by Pararajasekaran's son-in-law Arasakesari who had presented it at an assembly of Tamil scholars in Thiruvathavur. According to the *Yaalpana Vaipava Kaumuthi*, many scholars had flourished one after another in various places of the Jaffna Kingdom. Having paid the authors a token of appreciation, Segarajasekaran brought many Hindu moral works from the Pandiya country and other Saivite organizations, and had them copied and distributed throughout Jaffna. Hence, education had been widely propagated and became highly developed in the Jaffna Kingdom<sup>(7)</sup>. The book called *Pararajasekaran Ula* is also believed to have been composed during this period<sup>(8)</sup>.

The works carried out by King Singhai Pararajasekaran himself are greatly astonishing. This monarch had divided the Jaffna Kingdom into 32 districts (big villages) and appointed an official in each district to ensure its smooth administration. Judicial assemblies, known as the Panchayams, had also been created. Moreover, King Pararajasekaran had built a large almshouse for the less fortunate in Jaffna. Likewise, his brother Segarajasekaran had constructed an almshouse in Rameswaram. With the support of the King, Segarajasekaran had also built hospitals in all districts. Furthermore, he had cultivated an herbal plantation called Marunthu Maamalai Vanam in Kallyankadu<sup>(8a)</sup>.

## 5.3 The Royal Family

Before ascending the throne, Singhai Pararajasekaran had married **Rasaletchumi Ammal** of the Chola Dynasty who later became his

- 
6. Sabanathan, S. (ed.) op cit, p. 49-50
  7. Velupillai, K. 1918. *Yaalpana Vaipava Kaumuthi*. Vasavilan. p. 28
  8. Rasanayagam, S. op cit, p. 78
  - 8a. Muthuthamby Pillai, A. op cit, p. 46



Queen. He had also wed **Valliammai**, the daughter of Arasakesari<sup>(9)</sup>, as his second wife. Arasakesari belonged to the Ponpattiyur Velalar caste of the Pandimalavan dynasty known as the Mudithotta Velalar. Moreover, Singhai Pararajasekaran had kept **Mangathammal** of the Manava family<sup>(10)</sup> as his concubine. He had eight children from these three ladies. Queen Rasaletchumi Ammal bore him two sons, **Singhavahu** and **Pandaram**. Valliammai had four children, a son named **Paranirupasinghan**, two other sons and a daughter<sup>(11)</sup>. Mangathammal bore a son named **Sankili**<sup>(12)</sup> and a daughter named **Paravai**. Singhai Pararajasekaran thus had six sons and two daughters.

However, Portuguese books indicate two other names, namely Vickrathukkuri Pandaram (Vagru Tucuri Pandarao) and Ceyankeri. The author of *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai* explains that the third prince Paranirupasinghan had been referred to as Vickrathukkuri Pandaram by the Portuguese writer Father Queroz. Perhaps, this name was actually Varodaya Sri Pandaram which could have been either the royal name or household name of Paranirupasinghan<sup>(13)</sup>. By 'Ceyankeri' was meant 'Sankili'. However, the Ceyankeri mentioned by Father Queroz does not refer to Singhai Pararajasekaran's son Sankili but to Sankili Kumaran, the last King of the Jaffna Dynasty<sup>(14)</sup>. The author of *Yaalpana*

9. This Arasakesari is not the writer of the *Raguvamsam*.
10. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) op cit, p. 48
11. It has not been possible to trace the names of Paranirupasinghan's two younger brothers and a sister. Nevertheless, research on the lineage of Singapore Eliyathamby (born in Araly) reveals that Paranirupasinghan's sister was Maragathavalli whom Arasakesari (the author of *Raguvamsam*) had married and thus became Pararajasekaran's son-in-law and Paranirupasinghan's brother-in-law.
12. According to the *Yaalpana Vaipava Kaumuthi*, Mangathammal had a son named Sankili. Similarly, A. Muthuthamby Pillai, the author of *Yaalpana Charithiram*, states that Mangathammal bore a son named Sankili and a daughter named Paravai.
13. Gnanapragasar. 1928. *Yaalpana Vaipava Vimarsanam*. Achchuveili, Nallur. p. 117
14. Kunarasa, K. op cit, p. 87



*Vaipavamaalai* has made a grave mistake in confusing the names of Pararajasekaran's son and the last Jaffna King. An interval of one century had existed between the reigns of these two monarchs during which five Kings had ruled the Jaffna Kingdom<sup>(15)</sup>.

The latter part of King Singhai Pararajasekaran's rule was filled with grief and sorrow. His last son Sankili had been primarily responsible for this state of melancholy. Historians do not speak satisfactorily of Sankili. Of all of Pararajasekaran's children, Sankili is noted to be very evil in thoughts, words and deeds, and as fearing no one<sup>(16)</sup>. Although he was of manly vigour and was skillful in military art, Sankili was very shrewd and deceitful<sup>(17)</sup>. Portuguese writers describe him as a murderer and tyrant of the worst order. He is said to have murdered his royal predecessor and killed up to 2000 loyal soldiers of the deceased monarch before ascending the throne<sup>(18)</sup>.

#### 5.4 Paranirupasinghan

Desiring his eldest son to be his successor, King Singhai Pararajasekaran had made Singhavahu the crown prince. But, wanting the throne for himself, Sankili poisoned Singhavahu<sup>(19)</sup>. Historian Daniel S. John criticizes Sankili as a heartless criminal to have killed the future King, a brother with whom he had eaten in the same house, had been educated in the same place, played in the same gallery and slept in the same palace<sup>(20)</sup>.

After the tragic death of Singhavahu, King Pararajasekaran made his second son Pandaram the crown prince. To overcome his grief at

15. Nadesan, S. 1960. 'The Northern Kingdom' in *History of Ceylon*, Vol. I, Part II. Colombo.
16. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) op cit, p. 50
17. Muthuthamby Pillai, A. op cit, p. 45
18. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) op cit, p. 114
19. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) op cit, p. 55 & Rasanayagam, C. op cit, p. 82
20. John, Daniel S. 1930. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Jaffna. p. 27



the loss of his eldest son, the King entrusted the Kingdom to Pandaram and undertook a pilgrimage to Kumbakonam with Sankili<sup>(21)</sup>. A Chola King<sup>(22)</sup> had already arrived at Kumbakonam with his Queen. As a consequent of the trouble that Sankili had created at Kumbakonam, the Chola King imprisoned Sankili, King Pararajasekaran and his retinue of guards<sup>(23)</sup>. On hearing of this, Paranirupasinghan departed with an army and liberated his father, brother and the guards. Despite being badly wounded, Paranirupasinghan had fought valiantly and won the battle<sup>(24)</sup>. Elated by this victory, King Pararajasekaran became very fond of Paranirupasinghan.

### 5.5 Chieftain of Seven Villages (Elurathipan)

On returning back to Jaffna, Singhai Pararajasekaran honoured his son Paranirupasinghan with many rewards and prizes. In appreciation of the great military prowess and strength he had displayed, and for having saved the dignity of the Jaffna monarchy, the King conferred upon Paranirupasinghan seven huge villages in the Kingdom and had this bestowal engraved on a copper plate. Thus, Paranirupasinghan became the Chieftain of the seven villages of Kallyankadu, Sandiliypay, Araly, Achchuveli, Udupiddy, Kachchai and Mallagam. Sankili, however, could not tolerate the copper plate endowment nor the fact that

21. Muthuthamby Pillai, A. op cit, p. 50

22. It is not clear if this King was from the Chola country since the period of the Jaffna Kingdom coincides with the rise of the Vijayanagar Empire. He might have been a minor Chola king or chief of Kumbakonam. According to the History of Tanjore (Tanjore Gazette), he was, most likely, Achuthappan who is said to have fought with the Persians in Nagapattinam. A. Muthuthamby Pillai, the author of *Yaalpana Charithiram*, is of the view that the expert in reading inscriptions had gravely misread the name 'Pararajasekaran' as 'Persian'.

23. Velupillai, K. op cit, p. 30-31

24. The *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai* states that Paranirupasinghan had imprisoned the Chola King and ruled the Chola country for 3 months before he returned to Jaffna on having the Chola King pay him tribute.



Paranirupasinghan was made the second in command. He was very determined to seize the throne and, in the company of evil schemers, awaited an ideal opportunity<sup>(25)</sup>.

Paranirupasinghan, like his uncle Segarajasekaran, was very competent in medicine. When the queen of Kandy was suffering from a chronic stomach ailment, which baffled all the physicians of Kandy, the king dispatched a message to King Pararajasekaran requesting him to send a reputed physician to treat his queen's excruciating pain. King Pararajasekaran sent Paranirupasinghan who cured the queen's stomach ache with just one medication, thereby demonstrating his indisputable proficiency as a physician. The king of Kandy was so pleased that he gave Paranirupasinghan valuable gifts, elephants and gem-set palanquins. Before Paranirupasinghan could return home, another tragedy struck the Jaffna Kingdom.

Planning to become the King before Paranirupasinghan returned from Kandy, Sankili murdered his younger brother Pandaram as he had earlier killed the crown prince Singhavahu<sup>(26)</sup>. One day, when the unarmed Pandaram was taking a walk in the garden alone, he was ambushed and stabbed by Sankili<sup>(27)</sup>. Blaming the Vanniyars for Pandaram's brutal murder, Sankili proclaimed himself as the King of Jaffna. In 1519, he ascended the throne adopting the royal name of Sankili Segarajasekaran. King Pararajasekaran remained silent as he was by then frail and thus feared Sankili. Rasanayagam remarks that it was due to his overwhelming love for Sankili that Pararajasekaran had pretended not to know anything and remained indifferent to Sankili's treachery<sup>(28)</sup>.

25. All historical books talk about the history of the seven villages based on the facts contained in the *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai*.

26. Velupillai, K. op cit, p. 32

27. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) op cit, p. 57

28. Rasanayagam, C. op cit, p. 83



Returning from Kandy, the enraged Paranirupasinghan fruitlessly attempted to regain the throne as the rightful heir. But, as Sankili fell at his feet and spoke highly of him, Paranirupasinghan could do nothing but bless the new King. Claiming that Pandaram had been murdered by the Vanniyars, Sankili assured Paranirupasinghan that he had taken over the Kingdom for Paranirupasinghan's sake, and that he would rule it according to Paranirupasinghan's advice. Paranirupasinghan reluctantly acquiesced to Sankili's words<sup>(29)</sup>. On further stating that they need not fear any enemy if they shared the throne and ruled the Kingdom together, Sankili offered to be the King only in name and let Paranirupasinghan run the Kingdom as the minister. Moreover, he reassured Paranirupasinghan that he could continue to rule his seven villages. Paranirupasinghan had no choice but to endorse everything that Sankili said<sup>(30)</sup>.

Hence, Paranirupasinghan began to function as a co-monarch with Sankili, and appointed his son **Pararajasinghan** as the Chief of his seven villages. But, Sankili's verbal promises were short-lived. He brought the officials and the military under his control, and stopped granting Paranirupasinghan a portion of the royal income, choosing to pay him instead the salary of a minister. He also interfered with Pararajasinghan's administration of the seven villages. These changes greatly affected both Paranirupasinghan and Pararajasinghan. Realizing that they had been fooled, both men were determined to re-establish their lost royal rights.

## 5.6 Titles of 'Mudali' and 'Madapali'

Singhai Pararajasekaran, Paranirupasinghan and Pararajasinghan had been deeply hurt by Sankili's treachery. However, they could not control Sankili as the army was under his command. Meanwhile, the affection that the people of Jaffna had for Paranirupasinghan agitated

29. Ibid. p. 84

30. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) op cit, p. 58



Sankili. In one instance, when returning from Vadamarachi after suppressing a disturbance, the musicians stopped playing their instruments as soon as they had crossed the border of Irrupalai because the area belonged to Paranirupasinghan<sup>(31)</sup>. This incident made Sankili hate Paranirupasinghan even more. Although Sankili wanted to seize the rights to the seven villages, he could not do so because of the copper plate endowment. When Sankili learnt of Pararajasekaran's plan to crown Paranirupasinghan as the King of Jaffna with the assistance of the Vanniyars<sup>(32)</sup>, he became a little fearful and sought reconciliation by restoring Paranirupasinghan's share of the royal income and Pararajasinghan's authority over the seven villages.

Desiring to rip Paranirupasinghan and Pararajasinghan off their royal titles, Sankili gave them the title of 'Mudali' borne by the Velars of the North<sup>(33)</sup>, and accordingly recorded their names as Paranirupasingha Mudali and Pararajasingha Mudali. Sankili thus successfully managed to separate and isolate them from being royal heirs. At one stage, he also conferred the title of 'Madapali' on Pararajasinghan, claiming that he wanted to bestow on Paranirupasinghan and Pararajasinghan a title such that generation after generation, their authority will permanently remain in their lineage. Sankili explained that he had granted them the title 'Madapali' because it denoted the idea of leadership and protection over 500 villages<sup>(34)</sup>.

31. Ibid. p. 62

32. Ibid. p. 63

33. Velupillai, K. op cit, p. 36. It is noteworthy that the title of 'Mudali' continued to be bestowed on the descendants of Pararajasinghan. During the Portuguese rule, 'Mudali' was adopted as a title for administrative officers.

34. Ibid. Rev. Father Gnanapragasar, in his book *Yaalpana Vaipava Vimarsanam*, states that the royal families who came from Madapaliyur in the Kalinga state were called 'Madapaliyar'. As the author of *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai*, a Mayilvagana poet, correctly indicates, 'Madappam' means leadership of 500 villages and 'Ali' implies protection. In the later years, 'Madapali' underwent adaptation and became pronounced as 'Madaipalli', a term used to denote the generation of cooks in the royal household.



Sankili is the most remembered of all the monarchs of the Jaffna Dynasty. He had aspired to become the King so as to erase the stigma that he was a concubine's son. Though he had achieved this end by murdering his elder brothers (children of the lawful Queen), King Sankili Segarajasekaran is regarded as a hero who had fought with the Portuguese till the very end, never allowing them to rule Northern Sri Lanka and thereby protecting the independence of the Jaffna Kingdom<sup>(35)</sup>.

A few reasons can be cited as to why Portuguese writers have referred to Sankili in harsh terms such as 'criminal', 'murderer' and 'tyrant'. From the very beginning, Sankili had opposed Portuguese activities and punished those who had any contact with them. He had been a valiant monarch who was a patriotic leader and a ruthless and farsighted ruler<sup>(36)</sup>. The Portuguese had captured Kotte in 1505 but were only able to establish relationship with Jaffna in 1543 because of Sankili's adamant resistance.

### 5.7 Brutal Killings in Mannar

The Portuguese, who had brought Southern Sri Lanka under their control, were awaiting an opportunity to extend their authority over the Jaffna Kingdom. In 1542, the Portuguese priest Francis Xavier arrived in Mannar and converted 600 people to Christianity. On hearing about this, King Sankili hurried to Mannar with an army and beheaded the 600 converts and Father Xavier. Furthermore, to get rid of the Sinhalese Buddhists who were responsible for the widespread unrest in Jaffna, Sankili destroyed their places of worship and ordered them to leave his Kingdom within a certain grace period. Consequently, many Sinhalese citizens migrated to the Vanni region and the Kandy District<sup>(37)</sup>.

35. Many literary works on King Sankili I have been published. Of these, the following are noteworthy: 'Sankili', a drama written by Prof K. Kanapathipillai; 'Thurokam Thantha Parisu', a drama by Sokkan; *Nathi Kadal*, a novel by Dr Sengaiazhiyan K. Kunarasa; and *Sankilyam*, an epic by poet Kaarai Sutthampillai.

36. Krishnakumar, S. (Mrs). 1992. 'Yaalpana Mannarkalum Portugayarum' in *Yaalpana Irachiyam*. Jaffna: University of Jaffna. p. 67

37. Rasanayagam, C. op cit.



Some historians assert that King Sankili had killed the 600 converts and the priest, as well as the royal representative Ilansinghan, not due to religious considerations, but because he believed that the converts would pave the way for Portuguese intrusion. Viewing from a political perspective, and bearing in mind the several atrocities that the Portuguese had committed at that time, Sankili's deed cannot be condemned as being completely unjust<sup>(38)</sup>. In fact, it is apparent from his actions that he had been very careful and determined not to allow the Portuguese to have a foothold in the Jaffna Kingdom. In 1545, he had allied himself with the Sitawakka and Kandy kings and sent a force to Kotte to resist the Portuguese. This expedition, however, failed to secure victory. When Vidya Pandara came to Jaffna in 1552, after falling out with the King of Kotte and the Portuguese, Sankili warmly welcomed him. But, Vidya Pandara was killed during a revolt in the Veeramakali Amman Temple.

### 5.8 Portuguese Invasion

In order to avenge the tragedy that took place in Mannar, a Portuguese army led by Martin Alphonsus De Souza was sent to Jaffna in 1543. When the Portuguese ships anchored at Delft, Paraniropasinghan approached the General for help. However, satisfied with the valuables given by King Sankili, Martin Alphonsus pulled his forces out of Jaffna. Paraniropasinghan (Vickrathukkuri Pandaram) escaped to Goa fearing Sankili. In view of regaining the monarchy, Paraniropasinghan embraced Christianity. But he never got the opportunity to ascend the throne of the Jaffna Kingdom.

For the second time, in 1560, the Portuguese forces in 77 ships under the command of Constantine De Braganza arrived in Karaiyur. Despite their utmost resistance, the Tamil army could not stop the Portuguese forces from advancing to Nallur. The white warriors plundered Nallur, and took the wife of the crown prince and other ladies

38. Krishnakumar, S. (Mrs). op cit, p. 69



in the palace as captives. King Sankili escaped to a fortress in Kopay. When the Portuguese General proceeded to Kopay to capture Sankili, the Jaffna King retreated to Pachchilai Palli. Unable to fight any further, the Portuguese army entered into an agreement with Sankili whereby the Jaffna King had to pay the Portuguese a yearly tribute of 12 elephants with big, long tusks and 1200 sovereigns. In addition, Sankili had agreed to surrender the island of Mannar to the Portuguese<sup>(39)</sup>. However, it appears that King Sankili did not pay tribute to the Portuguese.

Constantine De Braganza took possession of Mannar and constructed a fort there. The Portuguese had obtained the stones for this fort by demolishing the Thiruketheswaram Temple. They also managed to easily spread Christianity in Mannar. Even the pearl diving areas of Mannar fell into the hands of the Portuguese.

King Sankili seems to have reigned the Jaffna Kingdom till 1565. In 1564, he had dispatched a Northern force to assist King Mayathunai of Sitawakka oppose the Portuguese. Even until then, Sankili had still resisted the Portuguese who could not capture him.

Sankili Segarajasekaran was succeeded by the following six Kings: Puviraja Pandaram, Kaasinayinar or Kunjunayinar (1566), Periyapillai Segarajasekaran (1570), Puviraja Pandaram Pararajasekaran (1582), Ethirmanna Singha Kumaran (1591) and Sankili Kumaran Segarajasekaran (1616). These monarchs were unable to establish a firm rule over Jaffna due to internal confusion and the political intervention by the Portuguese. Although Puviraja Pandaram Pararajasekaran had attacked Mannar twice, he had not been able to drive away the Portuguese.

### 5.9 Sankili Kumaran Segarajasekaran

For the third time, in 1591, a large Portuguese military force was sent to Jaffna under the command of Andre Pedro De Medonza. The

39. Rasanayagam, C. op cit, p. 109



Tamil and Portuguese forces fought at the area between the Nallur Kandaswamy Temple and Veeramakali Amman Temple, and the Tamil army was defeated. Andre Pedro departed upon enthroning Ethirmanna Singha Kumaran, the son of Periyapillai Segarajasekaran, as the King of Jaffna. Ethirmanna Singhan died in 1616 and was succeeded by Sankili Kumaran Segarajasekaran who was to be the last King of the Jaffna Kingdom.

The final invasion of the Portuguese took place in 1620. Commander Phillip De Olivera led the Portuguese forces who severely attacked and defeated the Tamil army. Sankili Kumaran and his family were taken as captives to Goa where the Jaffna King was decapitated, thereby terminating the Dynasty of the Ariya Chakravarthis.

Phillip De Olivera appointed himself as the viceroy of the Jaffna Kingdom. During his rule, the Nallur Kandaswamy Temple and many other Hindu temples were completely demolished, and the stones were used to build the Jaffna Fort.

Hence, in 1621, the sun set on the long-cherished, independent Tamil Kingdom in Jaffna.





## Paranirupasinghan & his Descendants

### 6.1 Paranirupasinghan

It is a pity that, though a rightful heir to the throne, Paranirupasinghan never became the King of Jaffna. Born as the eldest child of Singhai Pararajasekaran's second wife Valliammai, herself a descendant of the Pandimalavan dynasty, Paranirupasinghan could not ascend the throne because of Sankili's cunning intrigues. Paranirupasinghan had two brothers and a sister, but historical works on Jaffna do not furnish any details about his siblings. These works only reveal that those who had hereditary rights to the throne became the monarchs of Jaffna after King Sankili Segarajasekaran. As noted in Chapter 5, Singhavahu and Pandaram, the sons of the lawful Queen, had died under tragic circumstances. There is no historical evidence indicating that they had any children. Sankili, however, had a son who was the crown prince. But, in accordance with the agreement that Sankili made with the Portuguese, he had to send his son and two Mudaliyars as hostages. The crown prince and his wife were taken to Goa where the heir to the throne died in 1571<sup>(1)</sup>.

This left Paranirupasinghan and his two brothers as the only rightful heirs to the throne besides Sankili. Since Paranirupasinghan had died before Sankili, it is highly likely that Kaasinayinar and Periyapillai Segarajasekaran, who succeeded Sankili, were Paranirupasinghan's brothers. Paranirupasinghan's sister **Maragathavalli** had married the great poet **Arasakesari** who had translated Kalidasa's celebrated Sanskrit work into Tamil as the *Raguvamsam*. The author of *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai* describes him as 'Arasakesari, the brother-in-law of

Paranirupasinghan and the son-in-law of Pararajasekaran'<sup>(2)</sup>. Documentary evidence specifies that Paranirupasinghan had a son named Pararajasinghan.

As already mentioned, Paranirupasinghan was a man of immense military prowess. He had, though badly wounded, successfully liberated his father King Pararajasekaran, Sankili and the King's retinue of guards when they were arrested at Kumbakonam by the Chola King of Tanjore. Paranirupasinghan was also a physician of unparalleled skill. He had not only received many valuable rewards for curing the chronic stomach ailment of the queen of Kandy, but had also gained great fame. Taking advantage of the period when he was away at Kandy, Sankili had usurped the throne of Jaffna. Although initially enraged by the outrageous act of Sankili, Paranirupasinghan regained his composure and self-control on realizing that a battle would not be to his advantage. He reluctantly tolerated Sankili's deceitful acts and accepted the position of a minister under him for one or many of the following reasons: he was afraid that Sankili would kill him like he had murdered the crown princes Singhavahu and Pandaram; he lacked the support of the military who completely backed Sankili; or as some historians have said, he loved his brother Sankili or was mindful of the internal unrest that prevailed then.

Paranirupasinghan had been satisfied with Sankili's initial conduct. Although Sankili had ruthlessly suppressed a Sinhalese riot, a Maravar revolt and the intrigues of the Vanniyaars, no differences of opinion arose between Sankili and Paranirupasinghan who, though a valiant military general, was not of a cruel disposition. Furthermore, Sankili had given Paranirupasinghan an equal share of the royal income, and did not interfere in the administration of the seven villages duly inscribed on a copper plate and granted to Paranirupasinghan by Singhai Pararajasekaran. However, as Paranirupasinghan's popularity grew, and since he always had the support of their father Singhai Pararajasekaran, Sankili took all necessary measures to prevent Paranirupasinghan from

1. Rasanayagam, C. 1933. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Vanaarpanai: Sri Shanmuganatha Press. p. 107

2. Sabanathan, K. 1949. *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai*. Chunnakam. p. 49-50



rebellng against him. Sankili had Paranirupasinghan and his family ripped off their royal rights to the throne by bestowing on them the titles of 'Mudali' and 'Madapali'. When Sankili also started to interfere in the administration of the seven villages, and ceased to pay Paranirupasinghan his due share of the royal revenue, paying him instead the salary of a minister, Paranirupasinghan realized Sankili's true selfish character. Though, on learning that Pararajasekaran and Paranirupasinghan were maintaining close contact with the Vanniyars, Sankili had promptly sought reconciliation by restoring Paranirupasinghan's portion of the royal income and his authority over the seven villages, Paranirupasinghan remained very cautious of Sankili.

'On hearing about Sankili's plot to poison him, Paranirupasinghan issued an order disallowing anyone from the palace to enter his kitchen. He also dismissed all the people who manned his kitchen, and himself selected and appointed high-class, loyal Velalars as the new cooks and officials of his kitchen. He named his kitchen personnel as 'Raja Madaipalliyar', those of his son's kitchen as 'Kumara Madaipalliyar' and those of his ministers' kitchen as 'Sarva Madaipalliyar'. The Raja Madaipalliyar and Kumara Madaipalliyar remained the close kin of Paranirupasinghan and Pararajasinghan.'<sup>(3)</sup>

'It is indeed very strange that Paranirupasinghan had given the title of 'Madaipalliyar' to the high-class Velalars, whom he had selected and appointed as cooks and officials of his kitchen, at a time when he had lost the Kingdom and was functioning as a co-monarch who received an income from Sankili, when the title of 'Madaipalli' had already been bestowed on the people who were engaged in menial work during the reign of prestigious Kings like Pararajasekaran.'<sup>(4)</sup>

'It is a well-known fact that Paranirupasinghan's son Pararajasinghan's seven sons' and only daughter's descendants, Paranirupasinghan's two younger brothers' descendants, as well as his sister's (Arasakesari's wife) descendants are, till today, known as

3. Muthuthamby Pillai, A. 1933. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Jaffna. p. 61
4. Velupillai, K. 1918. *Yaalpana Vaipava Kaumuthi*. Vasavilan. p. 38



'Madapaliyars', and that these people are living in the villages of Nallur, Kallyankadu, Mallagam, Mathagal, Sandiliypay, Araly, Achchuvveli, Udupidy and Kachchai as well as the neighbouring villages. It is noteworthy that since the Sangamar, Saaliyar, Paradesigal, Paanar and Akampadiyar had declared themselves as 'Madapaliyar' during the days of the Dutch, they have come to be referred to by the demeaning name of 'Sanku Madapaliyar' or 'Saruhu (small) Madapaliyar'. Perhaps, these people had not registered themselves as Velalars fearing the official tax levied on the Velalars then.'<sup>(5)</sup>

When Sankili's activities began to adversely affect the subjects, Paranirupasinghan realized the need to oust him from power. Consequently, Paranirupasinghan maintained secret contact with the Portuguese. 'On hearing that the Portuguese General Martin Alphonsus De Souza had anchored at Delft in 1543, Paranirupasinghan approached him and promised to help the Portuguese in areas such as trade and religion if the General dethroned Sankili and enthroned him as the King. On the pretext of agreement, Martin Alphonsus had not only obtained pearls from Paranirupasinghan, but when Sankili came to see him later, he threatened to conquer Jaffna and thereby intimidated Sankili into offering him valuables which he took and departed.'<sup>(6)</sup>

'In 1546, Paranirupasinghan approached the Portuguese General Michael Pereira for help. With genuine intention, the General obtained the permission of the Portuguese viceroy in Colombo to have Paranirupasinghan converted as a Christian and to make him the ruler of the Jaffna Kingdom. The General then came to Kayts, summoned Paranirupasinghan and promised to seize Jaffna and make him the King provided that Paranirupasinghan and his family converted to Christianity. As Paranirupasinghan did not trust the General, he negotiated that he would become a Christian on the condition that he and his retinue be allowed to go to Goa to meet and enter into a pact with the Portuguese

5. Ibid. p. 39

6. Rasanayagam, C. op cit, p. 93



representative there. Michael Pereira rejected the proposal and left Kayts.<sup>(7)</sup>

The latter part of Paranirupasinghan's life has been narrated in two different versions. According to one of these, he had escaped to Goa where he died later. 'After the gruesome killings at Mannar by King Sankili Segarajasekaran, an internal revolt broke out in the city of Nallur to remove Sankili from power and enthrone Paranirupasinghan, the rightful heir to the throne.'<sup>(8)</sup> 'Perturbed by the disturbance, Sankili captured and beheaded some of the Christians whom he suspected were members of the conspiracy. He also took steps to have Paranirupasinghan arrested and subjected to similar brutality. Sensing Sankili's evil scheme, Paranirupasinghan escaped with his retinue to Santhome (Mylapore). From there, he took the coastal route to Goa and sought help from the Portuguese. The Portuguese viceroy received him warmly, promised to grant him all the help he could to capture Jaffna, and accommodated him in St. Paul's Church. Paranirupasinghan embraced Christianity and lived in the Church till his death.'<sup>(9)</sup> 'To regain the Jaffna Kingdom, Paranirupasinghan even solicited the help of the chief priest Father Xavier. Since the Portuguese were facing a lot of problems at that time, they could not deal with the Jaffna matter immediately.'<sup>(10)</sup>

The other story about Paranirupasinghan's last days narrates that the contact between Paranirupasinghan and the Portuguese had taken place through the Kayts chief Kaakai Vanniyan. The Portuguese who had failed in their first attack to invade Jaffna, made a second attempt at the persuasion of Kaakai Vanniyan, with Paranirupasinghan providing the information that it was the most apt time for their invasion.

---

7. Ibid. p. 95-96

8. Gnanapragasar. 1928. *Yaalpana Vaipava Vimarsanam*. Achchuveli, Nallur. p. 117

9. Rasanayagam, C. op cit, p. 98

10. Gnanapragasar. op cit, p. 118



The historian Muthuthamby Pillai describes the Portuguese invasion as follows: 'As the Portuguese forces immediately prepared for battle, Kaakai Vanniyan went ahead to Nallur, before dawn, to meet and discuss with Paranirupasinghan, after which he disguised himself again and joined the Portuguese army. At dawn, the Portuguese forces surrounded the western entrance of the Fort. On hearing this, Sankili gathered his forces and reached the Fort entrance. Meanwhile, the guileful Paranirupasinghan sent a messenger to Sankili's General informing him that a spy was waiting at the eastern entrance of the Fort with a vital strategy for victory. As the General set off to meet the spy, Kaakai Vanniyan went to meet Sankili who rushed to warmly welcome and embrace his intimate friend who had come in his hour of need. Whilst the deceitful traitor Kaakai Vanniyan tightly hugged Sankili, the Portuguese rushed to grab hold of Sankili and handcuffed him.'<sup>(11)</sup> Since there was no General to give orders, the Tamil army was unable to fight the Portuguese forces and was easily defeated. Sankili was then decapitated. 'But, there are others who have said that Sankili was arrested and sent to Goa, and was released when he transferred the royal power to Paranirupasinghan while retaining his authority only over Mannar. However, Sankili was later killed in Goa.'<sup>(12)</sup>

'As earlier agreed in secrecy, the Portuguese enthroned Paranirupasinghan as the Jaffna King making him pay tribute to them, whilst his son Pararajasinghan was made the Chief of the seven villages under his sovereignty. Paranirupasinghan died after nine years of reign. During his lifetime, the Portuguese exercised their authority over financial and religious matters without resorting to tyranny. After Paranirupasinghan's death, the Portuguese converted the Nallur Fort into their residence, and made Pararajasinghan their prime minister. As a disciplined statesman with great wisdom, Pararajasinghan was well received by the Portuguese and the people of Jaffna. The Portuguese, in most instances, ruled Jaffna according to his advice. They respected him as a man of great dignity.'<sup>(13)</sup>

---

11. Muthuthamby Pillai, A. op cit, p. 68-69

12. Ibid. p. 71

13. Ibid. p. 73-74



## 6.2 Pararajasinghan's Children

Pararajasingha Mudali had eight children of whom seven were sons. Although Pararajasinghan ought to have been a crown prince, he had only been the Chief of the seven villages of Kallyankadu, Mallagam, Sandiliypay, Araly, Achchuvveli, Udupiddy and Kachchai entrusted to him by his father. Even then, he had not been able to exercise full control as Sankili, during his reign, had constantly interfered in the administration of the seven villages. When Pararajasinghan was appointed as the minister of the Jaffna Kingdom, he distributed the seven villages under his ownership to each of his seven sons. His eldest son **Alaganmaivalla Mudali** received Kallyankadu; his second son **Thanabalasingha Mudali**, Mallagam; his third son **Vetrivelayutha Mudali**, Sandiliypay; his fourth son **Vijayathevendra Mudali**, Araly; his fifth son **Thidaveerasingha Mudali**, Achchuvveli; his sixth son **Chandrasekara Mudali**, Udupiddy; and his seventh son **Rajaratna Mudali**, Kachchai<sup>(14)</sup>. His seven sons settled down in their respective villages and became the administrative officers (Mudalis) of the villages. During the Portuguese rule, the title of 'Mudali' was used as a term to denote administrative officers.

Since Pararajasinghan prevailed as a powerful official during the Portuguese rule, he granted the village of Mathagal to his daughter **Vethavalli**, and married her off to **Thanabala Mudali**, the Velalar chief of Mathagal and son of Rajendra Mudali who was the chief of Pararajasinghan's Madaipalli.

With regard to the appointment of Pararajasinghan's seven sons as administrative officers in their own villages, Rasanayagam, the author of *Yaalpana Charithiram*, remarks, 'Seven people of the royal family were appointed as officers in various parts of Jaffna. They were given the title of 'Mudali', which belonged to the Velalars, as well as the family name of 'Madapaliyar' in order to establish their heritage so that they

---

14. Ibid. p. 74



will always remember the Kalinga state of Madapaliyur from where their lineage originated.'<sup>(15)</sup>

These seven Mudalis had, under the Portuguese rule, provided immense administrative assistance. It appears that they were contented with being the chief official of their respective villages.

---

15. Rasanayagam, C. op cit, p. 116



## Vijayathevendra Mudali

Araly was one of the seven large villages that the Jaffna King Singhai Pararajasekaran had bestowed on his son Paranirupasinghan. After Paranirupasinghan's death, the Portuguese took over the administrative authority of the Jaffna Kingdom. They ruled Jaffna by appointing members of the royal family as their minister or representative in name only. When Paranirupasinghan's son Pararajasinghan thus became the minister, he had, as already noted, distributed the seven villages that he had inherited from his father to his seven sons and appointed them as the chief of their respective villages. The responsibility of managing Araly was given to his fourth son **Vijayathevendra Mudali**.

When Vijayathevendra Mudali and his family moved to Araly, another family of his royal origin had already established itself there. Paranirupasinghan's sister Maragathavalli and her husband, poet Arasakesari had, in around 1525, left the capital city of Nallur and migrated to Araly where they lived permanently. Perhaps, Arasakesari had wanted to be away from the power struggle between Sankili and Paranirupasinghan. Undoubtedly, the beauty and prosperity of Araly had lured the poet to settle down there. When Vijayathevendra Mudali shifted to Araly, he was well received by his cousin **Sithamparanatha Mudali**.

It is believed that Arasakesari had a son named **Veerasundara Mudali** who had been an authorized tax collector in Araly. The revenue collected at Araly had been dispatched to Nallur from time to time. It was Veerasundara Mudali's son Sithamparanatha Mudali who had warmly welcomed Vijayathevendra Mudali and handed over the administrative authority of Araly to him. Hence, maternal quarrels had been amicably avoided.



'Under the sole sovereignty of the Portuguese, which commenced in 1620, the first viceroy Phillip De Olivera made Nallur his residence. He torn down the Nallur Kandaswamy Temple and used the stones to build the (Jaffna) Fort and houses (in Parangitheru). He demolished all Saiva temples in Jaffna as well. When the temple authorities and priests heard of his intention, they hid the statues of their respective temples in wells and ponds, and fled. The Portuguese also destroyed all the Buddhist shrines that they chanced upon in Jaffna and other areas.'<sup>(1)</sup>

'Since De Olivera stubbornly upheld that the Roman Catholic faith adopted by the Portuguese was the only true religion, and that all other religions were devil worship, he decreed that everyone in Jaffna must embrace Christianity. As such, Christianity spread rapidly than ever before. The Portuguese historian Father Queroz claims that in twelve years since the Portuguese had conquered Jaffna, 52,000 people within the lifetime of 20 members of the royal family had converted to Christianity. Anyone who had not embraced Christianity was not entitled to key positions of authority.'<sup>(2)</sup> Vijayathevendra Mudali, the chief of Araly, was no exception to this rule.

However, many people had pretended to be Christians due to fear or to be in positions of authority. 'People continued to worship Hindu deities and to observe the religious rites in secrecy. They worshipped the various symbols they had on the walls of their houses, in their compounds and under trees. They concealed the banana leaves, on which they ate during the fasting period, in roofs and fences.'<sup>(2a)</sup> Vijayathevendra Mudali and his family too had outwardly acted as Christians whilst remaining Saivites at heart.

'The Portuguese ordered that the title of 'King' must no longer be attached to the names of members of the royal family, and that they be

- 
1. Rasanayagam, C. 1933. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Vanaarpanai: Sri Shanmuganatha Press. p. 131
  2. Ibid. p. 133-134
  - 2a. Muthuthamby Pillai, A. 1933. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Jaffna. p. 77

known by their caste name of 'Mudali'. After Pararajasinghan's death, they terminated the position of prime minister.<sup>(3)</sup> Instead, they divided the Jaffna Kingdom into four large regions and appointed four Maathakans (officials from the army) as their representatives in these provinces. The four divisions were known as Valikamam (Western country), Thenmaraachi (Southern country), Vadamarachi (Northern country) and Pachchilai Palli (Eastern country). Only the children and grandchildren of Pararajasinghan were appointed as the Maathakans. Pararajasinghan's seventh son and the chief of Kachchai, Rajaratna Mudali's son **Cholasingha Senathiraja Mudali** was appointed as the Maathakan for the Eastern country (province). Pararajasinghan's eldest son and the chief of Kallyankadu, Alaganmaivalla Mudali's son **Rajavallapa Mudali** was made the Maathakan for the Southern country. Pararajasinghan's fifth son and the chief of Achchuveli, Thidaveerasingha Mudali's son **Kumarasooriya Mudali** became the Maathakan for the Northern country. Since Pararajasinghan's fourth son and the chief of Araly, Vijayathevendra Mudali's son **Paranirupasingha Mudali** (named after his great-grandfather) was still young, Vijayathevendra Mudali was appointed as the Maathakan for the Western country. Having brought the citizens under control in accordance with the Portuguese desires, these four Maathakans exercised their authority over the people.<sup>(4)</sup>

'During the reign of the Tamil Kings, the whole country belonged to the Crown. The citizens did not possess lands on the basis of ownership but as tenants who paid tax to the King. Hence, the Crown was entitled to one sixth of the profits from all lands.'<sup>(5)</sup> It was the duty of the Mudalis to collect these dues. This system of taxation continued to be enforced by the Portuguese. 'All males were subjected to taxation, and taxes such as authority tax were collected. During this period, the

3. Ibid. p. 76

4. Ibid.

5. Gnanapragasar. 1928. *Yaalpana Vaipava Vimarsanam*. Achchuveli, Nallur. p. 169

administrative officers (Mudalis) of the villages did not receive any salary from the Portuguese authority, but were paid from the taxes collected.<sup>(6)</sup> These taxes were collected by the Pandarapillais who worked as subordinates to the Mudalis. People of various castes were obligated to render services to the authorities too. This obligation was called 'Rajakariya'. It was also the duty of the Mudalis to ensure that the practices of the country (Thesavalamai) were duly observed. More specifically, they had to ensure that the customs of 'Mudusam' (inherited property), 'Sethanam' (dowry), and 'Thediya Thettam' (acquired property) were followed without any deviation from the ancient rules that were handed down from generation to generation. Vijayathevendra Mudali not only carried out these duties in Araly, but also supervised their enforcement in the entire Valikamam province (Western country).

When the Portuguese divided the Jaffna Peninsula and the neighbouring islands into 32 parishes, and built a church in each parish, Araly lost some of its significance as an important village in the province. Valikamam had been divided into fourteen parishes, one of which was Vaddukoddai. Araly was subsumed under Vaddukoddai probably because Saivism had been predominant in Araly.

Araly Vijayathevendra Mudali was entrusted to maintain the 'Thombu' (register) of Araly as was the practice in all other areas of Jaffna. 'The names of lands, their extent, the names of their owners and the taxes to be paid, as well as the people of all castes, the duties they had to render to the authorities and the taxes they had to pay were all detailed in the register.'<sup>(7)</sup> It ought to be noted that revenue increased when the new register system was implemented. Taxes on tobacco, trees, roots from which dyes were obtained, liquor, and plantations were also collected under the supervision of the Mudalis.

6. Velupillai, K. 1918. *Yaalpana Vaipava Kaumuthi*. Vasavilan. p. 75-76

7. Rasanayagam, C. op cit, p. 147



After the death of Vijayathevendra Mudali, his son Paranirupasingha Mudali was appointed as the administrative officer of Araly. At that time, Jaffna had been conquered by the Dutch. During the Dutch rule, it was the duties of the Mudaliyars to inquire into the happenings in their respective villages and, from time to time, send reports to the Dutch authorities, as well as to ensure that the necessary works that had to be carried out in their villages were accomplished.<sup>(8)</sup> Hence, during the Dutch reign, the Mudalis were stripped off many of their powers that were transferred to the Mayoral, a newly created position superior to that of the Mudali. The authority to collect taxes such as per capita tax, land tax and paddy tax rested with the Mayoral, whilst the duty of collecting these taxes and sending them to the Mayoral was given to the Mudalis. For this, Araly Paranirupasingha Mudali was paid the same salary as the other Mudaliyars, namely ten moneys and one bushel of rice. In addition, Paraniurupasingha Mudali was granted some official privileges that permitted him to wear the 'Thalaipagai' (headgear) at all times and in all places, as well as to have palanquins and to go anywhere he wanted with the umbrella folded.

Araly Paranirupasingha Mudali was assisted in his administrative functions by **Vickeramasingha Mudali**. Vickeramasingha Mudali was the son of Sithamparanatha Mudali who was of the Maragathavalli-Arasakesari lineage. After Paraniurupasingha Mudali, his son **Vijayendra Mudali** became the administrative officer of Araly. It was during the latter's time that the Dutch had codified and published the rules of the 'Thesavalamai' of Jaffna. 'Claasz Isaacs, the Dutch dissave of Jaffna collated the ancient customs of the Jaffna people which were published as a legal book of oath. Twelve Mudalis of that time had been signatories to verify that the customs contained in this book were true.'<sup>(9)</sup> Araly Vijayendra Mudali had been one of them. Issues such as freedom and indisputable rights, adoption of children, land ownership, donations, mortgages, labour employment, buying and selling, imprisonment, and money loaned on interest (pawn) that have been detailed in the book of *Thesavalamai* have come to be integrated into the judicial system of Jaffna.

8. Ibid. p. 174

9. Ibid. p. 179



During Vijayendra Mudali's time, a tragic incident took place in the Jaffna Fort. Pararajasinghan's eldest son Alaganmaivalla Mudali's son, Rajavallapa Mudali had a son called **Puvinyaga Mudali**. Puvinyaga Mudali's son was **Poothathamby Mudali**. Poothathamby Mudali was thus a cousin brother of Araly Vijayendra Mudali. It is believed that Nallur Mudaliyar Poothathamby was involved in a conspiracy to oust the Dutch from power and capture the Jaffna Fort. The leader of the conspiracy was Don Louis. Five Portuguese, a Catholic priest named Caldera, and the chief of one of the parishes in Mannar were also involved in the plot. When their scheme came to light, all the conspirators were captured. Poothathamby was beheaded, and the bodies of the others were ripped open, their hearts taken out and fed to birds<sup>(10)</sup>.

The Dutch Governor General Ryclof Van Goens used Poothathamby Mudali's act of treachery as a pretext to curb the powers and titles of the Mudaliyars in Jaffna. The Mudaliyars in some provinces were completely stripped off their duties. Araly Vijayendra Mudali's descendants too were banned from inheriting his authority and from bearing the title of 'Mudali'. In fact, both the Mudaliyar families in Araly had lost their authority and title. Araly Vijayendra Mudali and his uncle Araly Vickeramasingha Mudali had been made to renounce their 'Mudali' title as a consequent of Poothathamby's treachery.

Vickeramasingha Mudali had a son named **Ambalavanar**. Ambalavanar and Vijayendra Mudali were contemporaries and cousins. Araly Ambalavanar was married to a lady called Kathiripillai and had a son named **Sethupillai**. Vijayendra Mudali had a daughter named **Rathi**. Sethupillai and Rathi were married in a grand wedding ceremony. The two families, who had an abundance of wealth and properties in Araly, were united by this marriage. Through this matrimonial bond developed a huge family tree.

10. Kunarasa, K. 1995. *Yaalpana Kottai Varalaaru*. Jaffna: Kamalam Publishers. p. 27



## Eliyathamby to Narasinghan

When Vijayendra Mudali's daughter Rathi and Ambalavanar's son Sethupillai got married in Araly, Jaffna had been conquered by the British. 'On 27 September 1795, a large naval force under Colonel Peter Reynolds Stewart arrived at Point Pedro. Having captured Fort Fredrik in Trincomalee as well as the Batticaloa Fort with comparative ease, Stewart's happy forces anchored at Point Pedro and arrogantly marched towards the Jaffna Fort. The Jaffna Fort came under siege by the British forces on 28 September 1795. Colonel Stewart sent an ultimatum asking everyone in the Jaffna Fort to surrender. As the then Dutch Commander Raket was unable to do anything, he surrendered the government of Jaffna to the British. Thus, Jaffna came under the control of the British.'<sup>(1)</sup>

### 8.1 Ambalavanar to Sithamparapillai

Ambalavanar was aware of his ancestry. He knew that Arasakesari's wife Maragathavalli was the only lawful daughter of Singhai Pararajasekaran, and that Veerasundara Mudali, Sithamparanatha Mudali and Vickeramasingha Mudali were, respectively, the direct descendants of Arasakesari. Since his father Vickeramasingha Mudali was made to renounce the title of 'Mudali', Ambalavanar bore no caste name as a suffix to his personal name. His son Sethupillai owned many lands at Kottaikadu in Araly. When he married Rathi, he received more lands, inclusive of lands housing goats and cattle, as dowry. Sethupillai and Rathi had only one son named **Sithamparapillai**. Although he did not have any of the power or authority of his predecessors, Sithamparapillai aspired to be a very rich man. He wanted to venture into a good business to acquire more wealth.

At that time, Chankanai was one of the booming markets in the Jaffna Peninsula. Many traders from all parts of the Peninsula thronged this market. They also bought properties in Chankanai and settled down there to further their business. Tobacco sale was predominant in the Chankanai market. As a strategically important port, Kayts prevailed as a place for cattle trade between South India and Jaffna. Likewise, large bundles of treated tobacco were transported by bullock carts to Kayts and exported to Kerala in South India. Intending to venture into the profitable tobacco trade, Sithamparapillai shifted his residence from Araly to Chankanai. He bought lands in Chankanai where, besides engaging in agriculture, he also cultivated tobacco.

During the successive reigns of the Portuguese, Dutch and British, tobacco remained a very important commodity in Jaffna. The government earned high revenue from the tax levied on tobacco. 'The tobacco tax was also leased as tender to interested parties. Law was enacted such that no one, except the lessee, was permitted to sell tobacco; that anyone who imported tobacco for the purposes of business must sell it only to the lessee; that no one was allowed to possess any tobacco without written permission from the lessee; that the Velalars and Paradesis (foreigners) could only possess tobacco for their personal use and not for sale; and that any person who smuggled tobacco into Jaffna will be punished.'<sup>(2)</sup>

### 8.2 Tobacco Trade

Since tobacco yielded high government revenue in Jaffna, the Dutch and British strongly encouraged its cultivation. As an impetus, the government delayed the imposition of the tobacco tax. Initially, lands used for the cultivation of tobacco were merely registered in the 'Thombu' (register), and later, even when tobacco was not grown on these lands, a high tax was levied on them. Acceding to public request to rescind

1. Kunarasa, K. 1995. *Yaalpana Kottai Varalaaru*. Jaffna: Kamalam Publishers. p. 41-42

2. Rasanayagam, C. 1933. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Jaffna: Sri Shanmuganatha Press. p. 150





this practice, the government thereafter levied tax on lands only when tobacco was cultivated. From this tax, the government earned an annual revenue of 7000 Riyals. A 30% tax was also imposed on tobacco brought over from other countries.<sup>(3)</sup>

Having moved to Chankanai, Sithamparapillai made rapid progress in the tobacco trade. The Jaffna-grown tobacco was then very popular in Kerala and Malaya (Malaysia) with 60% of it being exported to Kerala, 30% to Malaya and 10% to Galle. Due to the high demand, tobacco from Jaffna was also illegally exported to Kerala. To regularize the tobacco trade with Kerala, the 'Jaffna Malayalam Trade Company' was established. Sithamparapillai had played a significant role in setting up a branch of this company in Chankanai. Since he was of the Mudaliyar lineage, Sithamparapillai was highly respected by the people and the government of Jaffna. Whenever the King of Kerala created problems in the tobacco trade with Jaffna, the Governor General (North) Sir Thomas Maitland managed to iron out the differences with him. Sithamparapillai too had, on behalf of the 'Jaffna Malayalam Tobacco Company', been to Kerala to negotiate and successfully settle disputes.

Sithamparapillai resided at Thoddiladdy in Chankanai where he acquired many hundreds of acres of land. He had a son named **Ramalingam** who assisted him in the cultivation and maintenance of his lands as well as in his business. Ramalingam supervised the grading and bundling of the tobacco produced by his father's company. The bundles, weighing 318 pounds each, were tied such that they consisted of 150 pounds of first-grade tobacco and 168 pounds of second-grade tobacco.

After the demise of Sithamparapillai, Ramalingam carried on his father's business. Compared to his father, Ramalingam was more willing to help others. When Jaffna was hit by a severe famine, he had distributed the paddy from his granary equally amongst the people of

---

3. Ibid. p. 215



Chankanai and Araly, taking only one such share for himself. Ramalingam had thus demonstrated his compassion and generosity. He was also a very pious man who had donated nine hectares of his land to the Chankanai Pillaiyar Temple. The sixth-day festival at this temple is, to date, conducted by his descendants.

### 8.3 Kuttithamby The Ascetic

Ramalingam had three sons named **Nannithamby**, **Mudalithamby** and **Kuttithamby**, respectively. The eldest son married **Maragathanachiyar** of Tholpuram. More about Nannithamby's family will be discussed later. Ramalingam's second son Mudalithamby had a son called **Krishnar** who had two daughters named **Umayavathy** (married to the artiste (vidwan) **Sivapatham**) and **Kamalavathy**. Mudalithamby's younger brother Kuttithamby remained a bachelor who led an ascetic life, spending his time attending temples and involving himself in religious thoughts and meditation. It was his practice to go on a yearly pilgrimage by foot to Kadirgamam. During one such pilgrimage, when he was staying in a house that belonged to his father at Kumilamunai in Batticaloa, Kuttithamby dreamt of Lord Siva who told him to take the Siva statue from a particular well and worship it by enshrining it in a temple. Kuttithamby then awoke and, accompanied by a few others, went to the well where, on drawing water, they saw the statue of Lord Siva. Kuttithamby took the statue home to Jaffna. He built a small shed in the compound of his family home at Thoddiladdy in Chankanai, where he worshipped the statue everyday.

Unhappy with Kuttithamby's actions, Nannithamby and his family, who lived in the same compound, gave it to Kuttithamby and shifted to Tholpuram. As Nannithamby and his wife Maragathanachiyar were not pleased with worshipping Lord Siva, who tolerated no wrongdoings, in a small shed, they built a slightly bigger hall at the place where the shed stood. Maragathanachiyar and the villagers then had a statue of Goddess Ammbal made and stood it next to the statue of Lord Siva. The next day, Kuttithamby and the Siva statue were missing. Later, it



was learnt that, on that very night, Kuttithamby had taken away the statue and sailed to India.

The hall where the Ammbal statue was enshrined is now known as the Moolai Amman Temple. Maragathanachiyar and her relatives had daily worshipped at this temple. Till today, the ten days Thiruvembavai festival is conducted in a grand manner at this temple.

Maragathanachiyar is the most significant person of the royal family described here. She was one of the four children of **Kanapathipillai**, himself the son of **Arumugam** of Tholpuram. Maragathanachiyar had an elder brother called **Marimuthu** and two younger brothers named **Sinnapillai** and **Sangarapillai**. Maragathanachiyar was related to Nannithamby by way of his father's lineage. Nannithamby and Maragathanachiyar had five children, namely, **Sellathurai**, **Appachi**, **Visalachi**, **Eliyathamby** and **Kandasamy**. Sellathurai had married his relation **Valliyammai** from Tholpuram and had two children called **Sellamma** and **Rajalingam**. Appachi had married **Yogamma** of Kaithady, but he died young. Visalachi married the artiste (vidwan) **Velupillai** and they had one daughter named **Parvathapathini**. Nannithamby's youngest son Kandasamy, like his uncle Kuttithamby, remained a bachelor. Everyone in Nannithamby's family was predominantly engaged in agriculture.

#### 8.4 Eliyathamby

Nannithamby's third son Eliyathamby was very different from the others. He was not drawn to cultivation nor farming, but showed a keen interest in the stories about his ancestors that his father told him. He was very elated to know that he was a descendant of Paranirupasinghan's royal family. It is said that he had always told himself, "Paranirupasinghan is my ancestor. Pararajasinghan and Araly Vijayathevendra Mudali are my forefathers. I hail from the family of Paranirupasingha Mudali and Vijayathevendra Mudali." By the age of fifteen, Eliyathamby had wanted to rise to the most significant state of the Jaffna Dynasty.



Eliyathamby was born in Tholpuram on 15 September 1894. It was a time when Sir Twynam was the government agent of Jaffna. Jaffna was being administered by 11 Maniyagars, 109 Udaiyars, 8 Adappans and 168 Vidanais. The great Arumuka Navalar was working for the advancement of Saivism and Tamil. During Eliyathamby's childhood days, Arumuka Navalar and Christian priests were fiercely propagating religious thoughts through their writings and speeches. Though sympathetic since young, Eliyathamby was disobedient, stubborn and rough. He lived in Chankanai till he was fifteen.

In the meantime, Nannithamby had an intimate friend from Vaddukoddai named **Vythilingam** who was very proficient in English. People who knew English in Jaffna then were well employed in the government service. 'As English education became widespread in Jaffna, more and more of the English-educated sought employment in various parts of Sri Lanka and India where they found good jobs and subsequently acquired a lot of wealth. The well-educated Jaffna youths also went to Singapore and the Federated Malay States. After the institution of the Vaddukoddai seminary in 1855, the Vaddukoddai English High School was established under the leadership of people like R. Brackenrich. The Vaddukoddai-born Vythilingam, who received his education in this High School, was the first to have sought and found a good job in Singapore. With the influence that he had gained in Singapore, Vythilingam helped many Jaffna youths to secure jobs there. He thus became popularly known as Singapore Vythilingam. Following Vythilingam's success, many Jaffna youths went to Singapore where they found employment and began to live comfortably as the citizens of the country. Soon more and more people from Jaffna migrated to Singapore. As many of them settled down in the Federated Malay States, Kuala Lumpur has come to be known as 'Little Jaffna'. These people yearly remit large sums of money to Jaffna.'<sup>(4)</sup>

Sellathurai, Nannithamby's eldest son, was educated at the Vaddukoddai English High School till he was sixteen. He married at

4. Velupillai, K. 1918. *Yaalpana Vaipava Kaumuthi*. Vasavilan. p. 294-295



twenty and had two children. It was at this time that Singapore Vythilingam visited Nannithamby while he was in Jaffna. Since Sellathurai was an English-educated young man, Vythilingam invited him to Singapore, saying that he could prosper there if he worked hard. Hence, when Vythilingam sailed back to Singapore, he took Sellathurai, his wife and two children along with him.

Having found a good job, Sellathurai settled down in Singapore. He married his daughter Sellamma off to **Chellappah** who was working as a stationmaster in Singapore. When Sellathurai came to Jaffna in 1914, Eliyathamby adamantly insisted on following him back to Singapore. Sellathurai advised Eliyathamby that without English education, one could only work as a labourer in Singapore. He explained that the Indians were working as labourers and the people from Jaffna as the second-in-command only because the latter knew English. Eliyathamby refused to heed his brother's advice and joined him on his return journey to Singapore. At that time, Eliyathamby was twenty years old.<sup>(4a)</sup>

At twenty-two, Eliyathamby set up his own business, and soon bought a car. With his excellent communication skills, pleasant character and self-confidence, Eliyathamby gradually became a top businessman.

When he came to Jaffna later, Singapore Eliyathamby married **Sundaravalli** of Mathagal. They had a grand wedding ceremony at both Mathagal and Tholpuram. Befitting her name, Sundaravalli was a lady of surpassing beauty and a quiet disposition. She was a descendant of Vethavalli, the daughter of Paranirupasinghan's son Pararajasinghan. History has it that Pararajasinghan had given the village of Mathagal to Vethavalli. Her husband Thanabala Mudali, the son of Mathagal Rajendra Mudali, had been the administrative officer (Mudali) of Mathagal during the Portuguese reign. Thanabala Mudali's son had functioned as a Mudaliyar during the Dutch rule, and his son Thillaiampalam had been

4a. Pugalenthi, S. R. 1998. *Indian Pioneers of Singapore*. Singapore: B J Times International. p. 50



an Udaiyar of Mathagal during the British rule. Thillaiampala Udaiyar's son was Subramaniam whose son was Sittampalam. Sittampalam's son was Vannithamby<sup>(5)</sup> who had a son named Kanapathipillai. Sundaravalli was Kanapathipillai's daughter. Although the position of Udaiyar had ceased to be in function after Thillaiampalam, his descendants continued to be known and respected as Udaiyars.

Eliyathamby and Sundaravalli returned to Singapore where they resided at No. 327 Bukit Timah Road. They had four daughters and a son, namely, **Thanga Devi, Visalachi Devi, Thanaletchumi Devi, Retna Devi** and **Vijayendran**. Sundaravalli died during childbirth when Vijayendran was born in September 1930.

Eliyathamby brought Sundaravalli's ashes to Jaffna as he desired to perform the thirty-first-day rites in Mathagal, and to dissolve the ashes in the waters of Keerimalai. While he was in Jaffna, his relatives persuaded him to remarry. Considering the well-being of his five young children, Eliyathamby, then thirty-six, married eighteen-year-old **Thangammal**. The newlywed returned to Singapore while Sundaravalli's mother took care of Visalachi Devi, Thanaletchumi Devi and Vijayendran for a decade.

Thangammal was a cousin of Sundaravalli. **Vaithilingam** and his wife **Nagal**, who lineally descended from Vethavalli and Thanabala Mudali, had two children named **Suppiah Pillai** and **Veerakathi Pillai**. Suppiah Pillai, a staunch devotee of Lord Kanda engaged in reciting the Kandapuram in the Nuwasai Murugan Temple at the historically significant Mathagal, ventured into business at Tamil Nadu in South India and accumulated wealth at Mathagal. He married his cousin **Muthukutty**, and Thangammal was born as their second daughter in 1912. Thangammal had two sisters called **Parasakthi** and **Parvathi Pillai**.<sup>(6)</sup>

5. Udaiyar Vannithamby was the father-in-law of the Mathagal Communist Kandasamy.

6. 'Thangammal-Eliyathamby' in the *Thiruvadiperu* verses



The Eliyathamby-Thangammal couple was blessed with eleven children. Together with the children from his first marriage, Eliyathamby had a total of sixteen children. How well the customary blessing of "Gain sixteen (wealth) and live long" showered on newlyweds befits Eliyathamby! Thangammal bore him seven boys and four girls -- **Paranirupasinghan, Vickeramasinghan, Parameswari Devi, Maheswari Devi, Athigarasinghan, Nitchinga Senathirajah, Pooma Devi, Narasinghan, Maragathanachi Devi, Eliyasinghan and Rajasuran**, respectively. Thangammal showered the same affection on both her children and stepchildren.

Eliyathamby was a well-reputed trader, business magnate and wealthy man in Singapore and Malaysia. Principally an insurance agent, he had dealings in places from Singapore as far as Alor Star. He was a representative of the New Zealand Insurance Company, General Insurance Company, Overseas Insurance Company, Cathay (China) Insurance Company, Oriental Insurance Company and Great Eastern Insurance Company. The commission he received from the insurance business was sufficient to make him a millionaire. However, his business acumen did not stop here. He also engaged in real estate. He bought properties in Singapore, Mersing, Penang, Kuala Lumpur and many other places at a low price, renovated them and sold them off making enormous profit. Whenever he embarked on a car journey from Singapore to Alor Star, brokers in prominent cities along the way would stop his Vauxhall 40 and inform him about the lands, houses and shops that were up for sale. He would hear all the details and by the time he made his return journey, he would have already decided on which property to purchase and which to sell. The decisions he made never failed him.

Moreover, Eliyathamby was solely involved in other business ventures like lending money and sale of vehicles, gold and diamonds. Early in the morning, he would also go to the port to buy and sell goods. As sixty percent of his business dealings was with the Chetty community, their business tactics became second nature to him. Since he fully utilized his time, Eliyathamby only saw his relatives during weddings or funerals. Even then, he would talk to them at their doorsteps and leave immediately.



Eliyathamby had numerous properties in Jaffna, Singapore and Malaysia. In Malaysia, he owned many rubber estates as well as houses in Jalan Selangor, Jalan Pajala and other places. He also had a luxurious holiday bungalow near the beach in the city of Mersing. This house was destroyed during World War II. His Vauxhall that was parked there was stolen and never found. Nevertheless, he owned four other cars. Since he did not know driving, he employed two drivers who took turns to drive the cars for his personal use and for the requirements of his family.

A very long list would be drawn up in recording Eliyathamby's properties. He had either acquired, inherited or received these properties as dowry. These include Putharan Valavu, Vilappu Vayal, Kumaranpulam Valavu and Navakiri Valavu in Moolai; Thalaikaniappai Valavu, Paruthiolai Valavu, Velathottam and Vettukadu Valavu in Tholpuram; Sinnathankarai Valavu, Karavetai Valavu, Pirankadu, Konavalai, Anthiyadi Valavu, Kayavathai Palavin Valavu, Manthampirai Valavu, Koodavilathi Valavu, Arukottai Valavu, Kambanthottam, Annai Valavu, Arukona Valavu and Yathumbai Valavu in Mathagal; Ooripiddy Valavu, Karaiodai Valavu and Vellaimaanthundy Valavu in Sillalai; Veemanolai Valavu, Sikkavithilin Valavu, Choolavai Sivalanai Valavu and Sokaiveeravai Valavu in Pandatharipu. These places were either plantations/estates, paddy fields or housing areas which are now owned by Eliyathamby's children.

Eliyathamby was very particular about observing the practices of Saivism. He was also a very strict and disciplined man with a strong sense of time, especially with regard to meals and work. He inculcated the same habits in his children. All his children had to be up by five in the morning. Having completed the morning routine, they had to be in the prayer room with holy ash on their foreheads. After prayer, they had to engage themselves in their respective studies. Eliyathamby had his daughters learn to sing and play the violin which he insisted that they must practise every morning, failing which they were punished. Though autocratic, Eliyathamby was a doting father. He participated



in all religious functions with his family. No matter where he was, he would return to Singapore on auspicious days like Thaipusam, Pongal and the Hindu New Year. From Ministers to Chettiars, many prominent people called in on Eliyathamby. Even when he came to Jaffna, he had many distinguished guests. The former government agent of Jaffna Mr M. Srikanth too had been Eliyathamby's close friend.

When Eliyathamby was living in Singapore, the Second World War broke out. Singapore and Malaysia became the battlefield for the American, British and Japanese forces. The streets were under siege by the army. It was due to such circumstances that Eliyathamby had sent some of his children to Jaffna to pursue their studies while staying with relatives or in hostels. Since he had an immense passion for the Tamil language, Eliyathamby had his children study Tamil in Jaffna. Paraniropasinghan, Athigarasinghan, Parameswari Devi, Maheswari Devi, Nitchinga Senathirajah and Pooma Devi were those who had received education in Jaffna. Whenever his children came in first in their class, Eliyathamby rewarded them with gifts.

### 8.5 Eliyathamby's Children

Of the five children that Eliyathamby's first wife Sundaravalli had borne him, only Thanga Devi and Thanaletchumi Devi are still living in Sri Lanka and Singapore, respectively.

Eliyathamby-Sundaravalli's eldest daughter **Thanga Devi** lost her mother when she was only seven. Nevertheless, under the loving care of her stepmother Thangammal, Thanga Devi grew up to be a skilled violinist who had performed in many local concerts. She was married off to advocate **Vijayathevendran**, who is also a descendant of Araly Vijayathevendra Mudali, in a grand wedding ceremony in Tholpuram. It is said that their wedding celebrations had continued for thirty-one days. They had two daughters named **Gowri** and **Thiruvarul Jothi**. To date, the 75-year-old Thanga Devi lives at Kottaikadu in Araly with her daughter Gowri and son-in-law **Selvaratnam** who is a JP.



Currently the President of the Vanapuram Sri Visalakashi Amman Sametha Visvanatheswarar Temple, Selvaratnam has written books on Saivism, temple discipline, Lord Siva and Sundaramoorthy Nayanar.

Eliyathamby's second daughter **Visalachi Devi** was born in Mathagal on 8 December 1924. She received her primary education at the Saivapragasa Vidyasalai in Moolai, and later studied English in Singapore. She had been a teacher as well as a Commissioner for the Girl Guides Movement at the Tapah District in Perak, Malaysia. Visalachi Devi was married to **Gnanathurai Thiyagarajah** who worked as a postmaster in Tapah. Thiyagarajah had a son named **Poologatarsan** from his first wife Parvathi Pillai. Visalachi Devi bore him a son called **Pooinpatarsan** who is now a doctor, and a daughter named **Puvanesaselvi** who died when she was young. Visalachi Devi passed away in 1988.

Eliyathamby's third daughter **Thanaletchumi Devi** married **Erambamoorthy** and had two children called **Sundaravalli** (named after her grandmother) and **Mangayakarasi**. To date, the 72-year-old Thanaletchumi Devi resides in her own house in Singapore.

Eliyathamby's fourth daughter **Retna Devi**, who lived with her stepmother, was married off to **Kanagaratnam**. Retna Devi had taken over and managed her father's business successfully. The Kanagaratnam-Retna Devi couple had five children, namely, **Nanmalar**, **Thavamalar**, **Ganesan**, **Pushpaselvamalar**, and **Puvanesvaran** who is now an advocate practising in the United Kingdom.

Eliyathamby's fifth child **Vijayendran** had married **Vijayamalar** and had two daughters named **Shamini** and **Ranjini**. Vijayendran, who ran a successful agency in Singapore known as 'Argus Advertising Pte Ltd', died young.

As mentioned earlier, Eliyathamby and his second wife Thangammal had eleven children. Eliyathamby had named the eldest



child after his distinguished royal ancestor Paranirupasinghan. Eliyathamby's son **Paranirupasinghan** had been the Chairman of the Tanglin Community Centre in Singapore for many years. He has been awarded the PBM and BBM National Day honours by the Singapore government for his outstanding community service. Paranirupasinghan married **Shanthi Devi** who bore him three children named **Eelama Devi**, **Eelarajasinghan** and **Eelasingha Devi**. Paranirupasinghan is presently engaged in business in Singapore.

Eliyathamby-Thangammal's second son **Vickeramasinghan** is a man of literary pursuits who has been honoured for his services rendered to the Tamil language and for promoting the Thirukkural. He has, in fact, done a thorough study of the Thirukkural. Himself an author of several books, Vickeramasinghan has also published books by other writers. Presently, he is running a major Tamil bookshop, known as the 'EVS Book Store', in Singapore. Married to **Seethadaavi** from Urumpirai, who had been a teacher in Singapore, Vickeramasinghan has a daughter called **Thangam** (named after her grandmother Thangammal). Thangam is currently studying in the Arts Faculty at the National University of Singapore.

Eliyathamby's third child from his second marriage **Parameswari Devi** was formerly a teacher (Diploma in Education). Her husband **Indrasit** is an engineer in Malaysia. He is the son of Dr Arasaratnam of Urelu in Urumpirai. Indrasit and Parameswari Devi have a daughter called **Anbukarasi** (LLB), and a son named **Arasendran** (BA Hons.) who is a financial consultant with a bank in Singapore.

Eliyathamby-Thangammal's fourth daughter **Maheswari Devi** had her primary education in Singapore and her secondary education in the Holy Family Convent in Jaffna. She received her higher education in London. A teacher by profession, Maheswari Devi is also a prolific English writer who has received several book awards. She has published a book on Jaffna as well as a few cookery books and other publications. Her cookbook entitled 'The Handy Rice Recipes' was named as one of



the best-published books in 1971 in Singapore. Maheswari Devi has also participated in cookery demonstrations, inclusive of television shows. She is married to **Navaratnam**, a science graduate from Point Pedro, who is currently a science teacher in Singapore. They have a daughter named **Elitha Devi**.

Eliyathamby-Thangammal's fifth son **Athigarasinghan** spent his childhood in Mathagal and received most of his education at the St. Henry's College in Ilavalai. Like his ancestors Nannithamby and Ramalingam, Athigarasinghan too is involved in agriculture. Presently, he owns and works on Eliyathamby's lands in Mathagal. He is married to **Saraswathi**, the daughter of Mathagal Thangarajah who was a cousin brother of Thangammal. Before marriage, Saraswathi worked in Pandatherupu, a multi-purpose cooperative union in Mathagal.

Eliyathamby-Thangammal's sixth child **Nitchinga Senathirajah** is married to **Shanthi**, the daughter of Vijayaratnam of Sandiliypay. Santhini's mother was the sister of the famous physician Dr Vetrivelu. Nitchinga Senathirajah and Shanthi Devi have a son named **Vikneshwaran**.

Eliyathamby's seventh child **Pooma Devi**, who lives in Tholpuram, is married to advocate **Nadarajah**. Nadarajah's father Thiagarajah was a famous advocate in Sandiliypay, and his grandfather was Piraisudum Perumal, an Adigar of Sandiliypay. His paternal forefathers were Adigar Vetrivel and Adigar Kumaravel. Nadarajah's mother Sookirthavathi Ammal is a descendant of the Ulaganatha Mudaliyar family of Navali. Nadarajah and Pooma Devi have two children. Their son **Giridharan** is currently pursuing a degree in accountancy whilst engaging in his own business. Their daughter **Neerajakshi** is married to **Ahilesan** (ACMA (Lon.), ACA), a chartered accountant, and has two sons called Avinash and Ashviin. Ahilesan is the son of K. E. Arumugam (BA) of Puloli, a JP who is a retired Assistant Director of Education, Hinduism in Sri Lanka.



The eighth child **Narasinghan** studied in Singapore and pursued his higher education in the UK. He takes on the characteristics of Eliyathamby and the compassionate nature of Thangammal. Like his father, Narasinghan is engaged in real estate in Sri Lanka, England, Australia, Malaysia and many other countries. He is also the Managing Director of 'ENS Marketing & Consultancy S'pore Pte Ltd', a food processing company in Singapore which exports its products overseas. Selected and sponsored by the Singapore Trade Development Board, Narasinghan has represented his company in various international food fairs in London, Paris, Germany, Japan and the USA. Moreover, he is the Chairman of the Port Kennedy Bay Owners' Association in Perth, Australia as well as the Honorary Social and Welfare Secretary of the Singapore Ceylon Tamils' Association. His wife **Dr Meenambikai**, the daughter of Arumugam, runs the 'Meenara Clinic' in Singapore. Narasinghan and Meenambikai have two children. Their elder son **Eliyathamby** is named after his grandfather as a sign of Narasinghan's gratitude to his father. Their younger daughter is called **Eliyanachii**, a name derived from the combination of her grandfather Eliyathamby and her paternal great-grandmother Maragathanachiyar. Narasinghan's children received their education at premier schools in Singapore -- his son at the Anglo Chinese School (Independent) and the Anglo Chinese Junior College, and his daughter at the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus and the Raffles Junior College. Narasinghan's son Eliyathamby is now pursuing an Engineering (Hons.) course whilst his daughter Eliyanachii is studying Genetics (Hons.) in the UK.

Eliyathamby-Thangammal's ninth child **Maragathanachi Devi**, named after her paternal grandmother, was educated in the Victoria College in Chulipuram and is presently a teacher in Singapore. A wonderful and intelligent daughter, as well as a devoted and caring sister, Maragathanachi Devi was her father's favourite child as he had been blessed with tremendous luck and fortune after she was born.



The tenth child **Dr Eliyasinghan** and his wife **Dr Prabha** currently run the Eliya Prabha Maternity Centre in Bangalore, India. They have two sons named **Sooriyadevan** and **Eliyadevan**.

The last child **Rajasuran** studied in the St. Andrew's School in Singapore, and has worked in established firms like the Printers and Converters, Singapore National Printers and Times Printers. He is married to **Sushila** of Kopay and is presently living in Singapore with his three children called **Thangammal**, **Saravanan** and **Eliyaruben**.

As we have identified and discovered through this historical treatise, the ancient Jaffna Dynasty has not gone into extinction. The surviving descendants have assimilated with the people in various parts of Jaffna as well as in countries like Singapore and Malaysia. They are very determined to preserve the identity and dignity, and thereby perpetuate the glory, of their royal lineage.



## References



TAMIL BOOKS

1. Gnanapragasar, G. (ed.) 1921. *Vaiyaa*. Achchuveli.
2. Gnanapragasar. 1928. *Yaalpana Vaipava Vimarsanam*. Achchuveli, Nallur.
3. Gnanapragasar. 1932. *Thamizharin Poorva Charithiramum Samayamum*. Achchuveli: Catholic Printers.
4. Gunasingham, S. 1973. *Koneswaram*. Peradeniya.
5. Indrapala, K. 1972. *Yaalpana Irachiyathin Thotram*. Kandy: Jaffna Archaeological Society.
6. Jambulingapillai, S. V. (ed.) 1939. *Kailayamaalai*. Madras.
7. Jeganathan, P. 1987. *Yaalpana Thamizharasar Varalaarum Kaalamum*. Jaffna Ilakiyavatta Publication.
8. John, Daniel S. 1930. *Yaalpana Charithiram* (Part I). Jaffna.
9. John, S. 1882. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Jaffna.
10. Kadirthanigasalam. 1992. *Thamizhar Varalaarum Ilankai Edapeyarvu Aaivum*. Madras: Saravana Publishers.
11. Kanapathipillai, K. 1956. *Ilankaivaal Thamizhar Varalaaru*. Peradeniya.
12. Kandiah, V. C. 1964. *Mattakalapu Thamizhagam*. Jaffna.
13. Krishnarasa, S. 1998. *Tholliyalum Yaalpana Thamizhar Panpattuthonmaiyyum*. Jaffna: University of Jaffna.
14. Kunarasa, K. 1984. *Karaichi, Poonari, Pachchilai Palli Pradesangalin Nilapayanpaadum Nirvalamum* (MA Thesis) (Unpublished). Jaffna: University of Jaffna.
15. Kunarasa, K. 1987. *Nallai Nagar Nool*. Jaffna: Poopalasingham Puthakasalai Publication.
16. Kunarasa, K. 1995. *Yaalpana Kottai Varalaaru*. Jaffna: Kamalam Publishers.
17. Kunarasa, K. 1996. *Eelathavar Varalaaru*. Jaffna: Poopalasingham Puthakasalai Publication.
18. Mayilvakanam, N. 1974. *Airoppiyar Parvaiyil Ilankai*. Jaffna.

19. Muthuthamby Pillai, A. 1933. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Jaffna.
20. *Manimekalai*. 1956. Madras: Swaminatha Iyar Publication.
21. Nadarajah, K. S. (ed.) 1980. *Vaiyaapaadal*. Colombo.
22. Nadarajah, S. 1962. *Mattakalapu Maanmiyam*. Apex Edition. Colombo.
23. Pathmanathan, S. 1970. *Vanniyar*. Peradeniya.
24. Pathmanathan, S. 1992. *Yaalpana Irachiyam - Ariya Chakravarthigal*. Jaffna: University of Jaffna.
25. Pushparatnam, P. 1992. *Thamizheela Nooku*. Volume 1, Part 2.
26. Pushparatnam, P. 1993. *Vada Ilankaiyil Singhai Nagar*. Jaffna: Holy Father G. A. Francis Joseph Manivizhasabai Publication.
27. Ragunathaiyar, E. S. (ed.) 1942. *Segarajasekaramaalai*. Kokkuvil.
28. Raman, K. V. 1967. *Tholliyalaiyukal*. Segar Publishing House.
29. Rasanayagam, C. 1933. *Yaalpana Charithiram*. Vanaarpanai: Sri Shanmuganatha Press.
30. Rasanayagam, C. 1935. *Yaalpana Charithiram - Angileyar Kaalam*. Jaffna.
31. Sabanathan, K. (ed.) 1949. *Yaalpana Vaipavamaalai*. Chunnakam.
32. Sabanathan, K. 1971. *Nallur Kandaswamy*. Nallur Deivastabana Publication.
33. Shahjahan, A. N. M. 1992. *Puttalam Varalaarum Marapukalum*. Colombo: Asseay.
34. Sharma, Balasubramaniam C. (ed.) 1927. *Yaalpana Vaipavam*. Chankanai.
35. Sittampalam, C. K. (ed.) 1992. *Yaalpana Irachiyam*. Thirunelveli: University of Jaffna.
36. Sittampalam, C. K. 1994. *Eela Thamizhar Varalaaru*. Chavakacheri: Hindu College. Volume 1.
37. Sivananthan. 1932. *Yaalpana Kudiyetram*. Jaffna.
38. *Segarajasekaram*. 1932. Achchuveli: Gnanapragasar Yathirasalai.
39. Thanapakiyam, G. 1988. *Ilankaiyil Tholliyalaiyukalum Dravida Kalacharamum*. Batticaloa.
40. Thiruselvam, M. 1983. *Eelathamizhar Iramai* (3rd edition). Jaffna: Kandalagam.
41. Velupillai, K. 1918. *Yaalpana Vaipava Kaumuthi*. Vasavilan.
42. Velupillai, K. 1986. *Thodakakaala Eelathu Ilakiyangalum Avatrin Varalaatru Pinnaniyum*. Jaffna.





## ENGLISH BOOKS

1. Arasaratnam, S. 1958. *Dutch Power in Ceylon (1665-1687)*. Amsterdam.
2. ARE. 1901. No. 128 of 1901, 5II VII, No. 778.
3. Baldeaus, Phillip. *A True and Exact Description of the Great Island of Ceylon*.
4. Birch, T. W. 1967. *Maps: Topographical and Statistical*. Oxford University Press.
5. Brohier, R. L. 1935. *Ancient Irrigation Works in Ceylon (Parts I & II)*. Colombo.
6. Brohier, R. L. 1973. *Discovering Ceylon*. Colombo.
7. De Silva, K. M. 1981. *A History of Sri Lanka*. Colombo.
8. De Silva, R. K. and Beumer, W. G. M. 1988. *Illustration and Views of Dutch Forts in Ceylon, 1602-1796*. London.
9. De Queyron, F. 1930. *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*. Translated by Father S. G. Pereira. Colombo.
10. Ferguson, J. T. 1873. *Tree and Serpent Worship in India*. London.
11. Geiger, W. (ed.) 1925. *Chulavamsa*. London.
12. Geiger, W. (ed.) 1950. *Mahavamsa* (English translation). Colombo.
13. Geiger, W. 1960. *Culture in Medieval Times*. Heigz Bechert (ed.).
14. Jewis, J. P. 1985. *Mannuel of Wannu*. Colombo.
15. Kumaraswamy, A. K. 1971. *The Yakkas*. New Delhi.
16. Kunarasa, K. 1991. *A Critical Survey of Land Settlements and Land Development in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka* (PhD Thesis) (Unpublished). Jaffna: University of Jaffna.
17. Legge/Fa-Hieris. 1886. *Record of Buddhist Kingdom*. Oxford.
18. Mahadevan, I. 1916. *Corpus of The Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions*. Madras.
19. Mendis, G. C. 1946. *Early History of Ceylon*. Culcatta.
20. Navaratnam, C. S. 1958. *Tamils and Ceylon*. Jaffna.
21. Navaratnam, C. S. 1960. *Vanni and Vanniyas*. Jaffna.
22. Nelson, W. A. 1984. *The Dutch Forts of Sri Lanka*. Colombo.
23. Nicholas, C. W. and Paranavithana, S. 1961. *A Concise History of Ceylon*. Ceylon University Press.



24. *Origins of The Art of Writing: Progress, Development & Mixture*. 1989. Batticaloa.
25. Paranavithana, S. (ed.) 1960. *History of Ceylon (Parts I & II)*. Colombo.
26. Paranavithana, S. 1970. *Early Brahmi Inscriptions*. Colombo.
27. Paranavithana, S. 1970. *Inscriptions of Ceylon*. Colombo.
28. Parker, H. 1909. *Ancient Ceylon*. London.
29. Pathmanathan, S. 1978. *The Kingdom of Jaffna*. Colombo.
30. Pereira, S. G. 1948. *A History of Ceylon*. London.
31. Pieris, P. E. 1948. *Ceylon and the Hollanders*. Colombo.
32. Pugalenth, S. R. 1998. *Indian Pioneers of Singapore*. Singapore: B J Times International.
33. Raghavan, M. D. *Tamil Culture in Ceylon*. Colombo.
34. Ragupathy, P. 1987. *Early Settlements in Jaffna - An Archaeological Survey*. Madras.
35. Ranasingha, A. G. 1951. *Census Report of 1946*. Colombo.
36. Rasanayagam, C. 1926. *Ancient Jaffna*. Madras.
37. Senaveratne, John M. 1946. *Dutugemunu*. Colombo.
38. Somaratne, G. P. V. *Political History of the Kingdom of Kotte*. Colombo.
39. Tamil Dictionary. 1989. Madras: The Thirunelveli Saivasidhantha Publishing Society.



## TAMIL ARTICLES

1. Devarasan, A. 1991. 'Brahmi Ezhuthukkal Oru Varalaatru Nooku' in *Desiya Thamizh Sahithya Vizha Malar*.
2. Indrapala, K. 1959. 'Yaalpana Sasanangal' in *Ilankathir*. Peradeniya.
3. Indrapala, K. 1969. 'Yaalpanathu Kalvetukal' in *Sinthanai*. Peradeniya.
4. Indrapala, K. 1970. 'Yaalpana Irachiyam Thondriya Kaalamum Chulnilayum' in *Ilankathir*. Peradeniya.
5. Indrapala, K. 1993. 'Kantarodaiyil Kedaitha Oru Brahmi Sasanam' in the Jaffna Archaeological Society magazine.
6. Krishnakumar, S. (Mrs). 1992. 'Yaalpana Mannarkalum Portugayarum' in *Yaalpana Irachiyam*. Jaffna: University of Jaffna.



7. Kumpurugamuve Vijihmi. 1976. 'Ellalan-Kamini Yutham' in the *Thinakaran* weekly publication (26-05-1976).
8. Kunarasa, K. 1974. 'Yaalpana Nagaram' in *Yezhilmiku Yaalpanam* (Managarsabai Silver Jubilee magazine). Jaffna.
9. Kunarasa, K. 1985. 'Kunchuparanthan Mudhumakkal Thaali' in *Eelanadu* weekly magazine (9.6.1985). Jaffna.
10. Kunarasa, K. 1986. 'Yaalpana Irachiyathin Kathai' in *Vidhya*, Urumpirai Hindu College Pavalavizha Malar.
11. Kunarasa, K. 1988. 'Kilinochchiyin Kathai' in *Kandan Karunai* (Kandaswamy Kovil Mahakumbabisheka Malar). Kilinochchi.
12. Kunarasa, K. 1991. 'Kudiyetrangalal Elanthupoona Thamizh Pradesangal' in *Muthamizh Vizha Malar*. Jaffna.
13. Kunarasa, K. 1993. 'Nallur Periya Kovil' in *Nallaikumaran Malar*. Managaratchi, Jaffna.
14. Kunarasa, K. 1995. 'Nallur Kandaswamy Kovil Varalaatril Thirutham' in *Veerakesari* weekly issue (27.8.1995). Colombo.
15. Navalur, Arumuka. 1875. 'Nallur Kandasamy Kovil (1, II)' in *Navalar Prabantha Thirattu* (Part II). 1955. Madras: Vidhyanubalana Yathirasalai.
16. Navaratnam, C. S. 1996. 'Vanniyum Vanniyarum' in *Thiruketheesvaram Thirukudathirumanjana Malar*. Mannar.
17. Pathmanathan, S. 1970. 'Eelathamizh Varalaatru Noolgal' in *Ilankathir*. Peradeniya.
18. Pathmanathan, S. 1972. 'Thamizh Sasanangalum Eelavaralaatru Aarachiyum' in *Ilanthendral*. Jaffna: Tamil Society, University of Jaffna.
19. Pathmanathan, S. 1982. 'Adangaapatru Vannimaigal' in *Pandara Vanniyan Vizha Malar*. Vavuniya.
20. Pathmanathan, S. 1985. 'Ilankaiyil Hindumatham - Ariya Chakravarthigal Kaalam' in *Sivathamizh Aarachi Katturaigal*. Tellippalai.
21. Pushparatnam, P. 'Ilankaiyil Thamizh Mannarkalin Aatchi' (A paper presented during the memorial service of Mr N. Krishnananthan) in *Porulithal* 3. Jaffna.
22. Pushparatnam, P. 1991. 'Sanhakaala Eelam Thamizhar Pradesangalil Ondra?' in *Velicham* (Puratathi-Aipasi 1991). Jaffna.
23. Pushparatnam, P. 1991. 'Yaalpana Irachiyathin Thalainagar' in *Muthamizh Vizha Malar*. Jaffna.



24. Pushparatnam, P. 1992. 'Naagarigam Thenmerkku Thisai Nooki Idam Peyarinthamaiyum, Irachiyankal Idam Maariyamaiyum' in *Varalaaru* 9. Jaffna.
25. Sittampalam, C. K. 1982. 'Kristhuva Sahapthathirkku Munthiya Vanni Nadum Tholliyal Sandrugalum' in *Pandara Vanniyan Vizha Malar*. Vavuniya.
26. Sittampalam, C. K. 1983. 'Pandaiya Eelathu Yaksha, Naga Vazhipaadu' in *Sinthanai*, Issue III, Volume 1.
27. Sittampalam, C. K. 1984. 'Eelamum Hindumathamum (1250-1505)' in *Sinthanai*. Jaffna: Arts Faculty, University of Jaffna.
28. Sittampalam, C. K. 1991. 'Thamizh Makkalin Parambariya Pradesam' in *Muthamizh Vizha Malar*. Jaffna.
29. Sivasamy, V. 1974. 'Nallurum Tholporulum' in the *Oli* magazine. Jaffna.
30. Subramaniam, V. 1982. 'Pughalpootha Vannimannin Kavalarkal' in *Pandara Vanniyan Vizha Malar*. Vavuniya.
31. Thanapakiyam, G. 'Vanga Elavarasar Vijayanin Varalaarum, Ilankaiyil Sinhala Enamum'.
32. Velupillai, A. 1959. 'Sasanathu Thamizh Ilakiyam' in *Ilankathir*. Peradeniya.



## ENGLISH ARTICLES

1. Chetty, Simon Asie. 1834. 'On the History of Jaffna from the Earliest Period to the Dutch Conquest' in *JRASC*, Volume I. Colombo: Ceylon Gazetteer.
2. Gunawardena, P. A. L. H. 1982. 'An early place in the evolution of political institutions in ancient Sri Lanka' in *The Sri Lanka Journal of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences*, Volume VIII, No. 142.
3. Johnstone, Sir Alexander. 'The Temple of Kandaswamy, Jaffna' (Manuscripts) in *CALR*, Volume II, Part III.
4. Mendis, G. C. 1965. 'The Vijayan Legend' in *Paranavithana Felicitation Volume*. Colombo.
5. Nadesan, S. 1960. 'The Northern Kingdom' in *History of Ceylon*, Volume I, Part II. Colombo.



6. Paranavithana, S. 1909. 'Pre-Buddhist Religious Beliefs in Ceylon' in *JRASCB*, Volume XXXI, No. 82.
7. Paranavithana, S. 1956. 'Archaeological Investigations Near Pomparippu' in *Ceylon Today*, 5 (II), Nov 1956.
8. Paranavithana, S. 1961. 'The Ariya Kingdom in North Ceylon' in *JRASCB*, Volume VIII, Part II.
9. Paranavithana, S. 1970. 'The Brahmi Inscriptions of Ceylon'. Colombo.
10. Paranavithana, S. 'Vallipuram Gold Plate Inscription of the Reign of Vasabha' in *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Volume IV, No. 29 (1934-1942).
11. Parker, H. 1887. 'Report on Archaeological Discoveries at Tissa Maharama' in *RAS*, Volume VIII, No. 27.
12. Peiters, Sophia. 1910. 'Memorie of Laurens Pye'. Colombo.
13. Peiters, Sophia. 1910. 'Memorie of Ryclof Van Goens'. Colombo.
14. Pieris, Paul. 'Nagadipa and Buddhist Remains in Jaffna' in *JRASCB*, Volume XVII, No. 70 and Volume XXVIII, No. 72.
15. Winslow, Miron. 1835. 'A Memoir of Mrs. H. W. Winslow - Combining A Sketch of Ceylon Mission'. New York.



## The Jaffna Dynasty

(FAMILY TREE)

VIJAYA KALINGA ARIYA CHAKRA VARTHI (1242)  
(SEGA RAJA SEKARAN I)

KULA SEKARA SINGHAI ARIYAN (1262)  
(PARA RAJA SEKARAN I)

KULO THUNGA SINGHAI ARIYAN (1284)  
(SEGA RAJA SEKARAN II)

VICKERAMA SINGHAI ARIYAN (1292)  
(PARA RAJA SEKARAN II)

VARO THAYA SINGHAI ARIYAN (1302)  
(SEGA RAJA SEKARAN III)

MARTHANDA SINGHAI ARIYAN (1325)  
(PARA RAJA SEKARAN III)

GUNA POOSHANA SINGHAI ARIYAN (1347)  
(SEGA RAJA SEKARAN IV)

VIRO THAYA SINGHAI ARIYAN ( ? )  
(PARA RAJA SEKARAN IV)

JEYA VEERA SINGHAI ARIYAN (1380)  
(SEGA RAJA SEKARAN V)

GUNA VEERA SINGHAI ARIYAN (1410)  
(PARA RAJA SEKARAN V)

KANAGA SOORIYA SINGHAI ARIYAN (1440-1450) & (1467)  
(SEGA RAJA SEKARAN VI)

SINGHAI PARA RAJA SEKARAN (1478)

SANKILI SEGA RAJA SEKARAN (1519-1565)

PUVI RAJA PANDARAM ( ? )

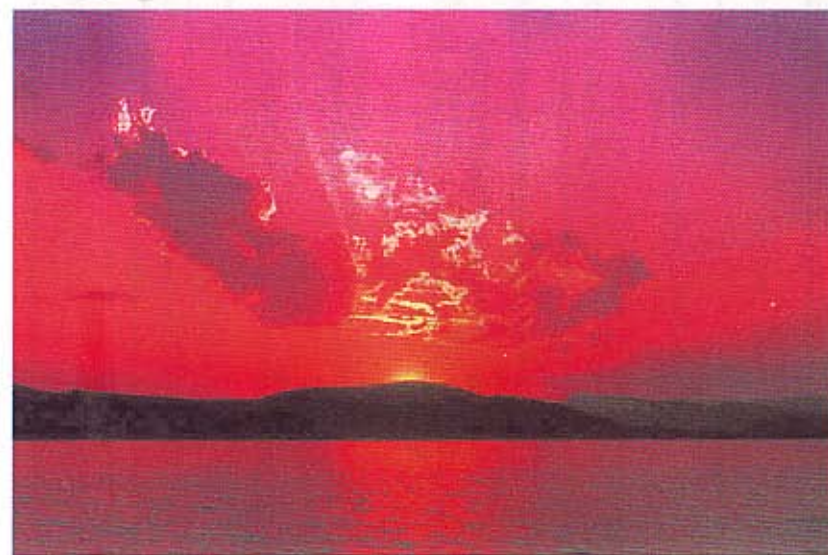
KASSI NAYINAR OR KUNJU NAYINAR (1566)

PERIYA PILLAI SEGA RAJA SEKARAN (1570)

PUVI RAJA PANDARAM PARA RAJA SEKARAN (1582)

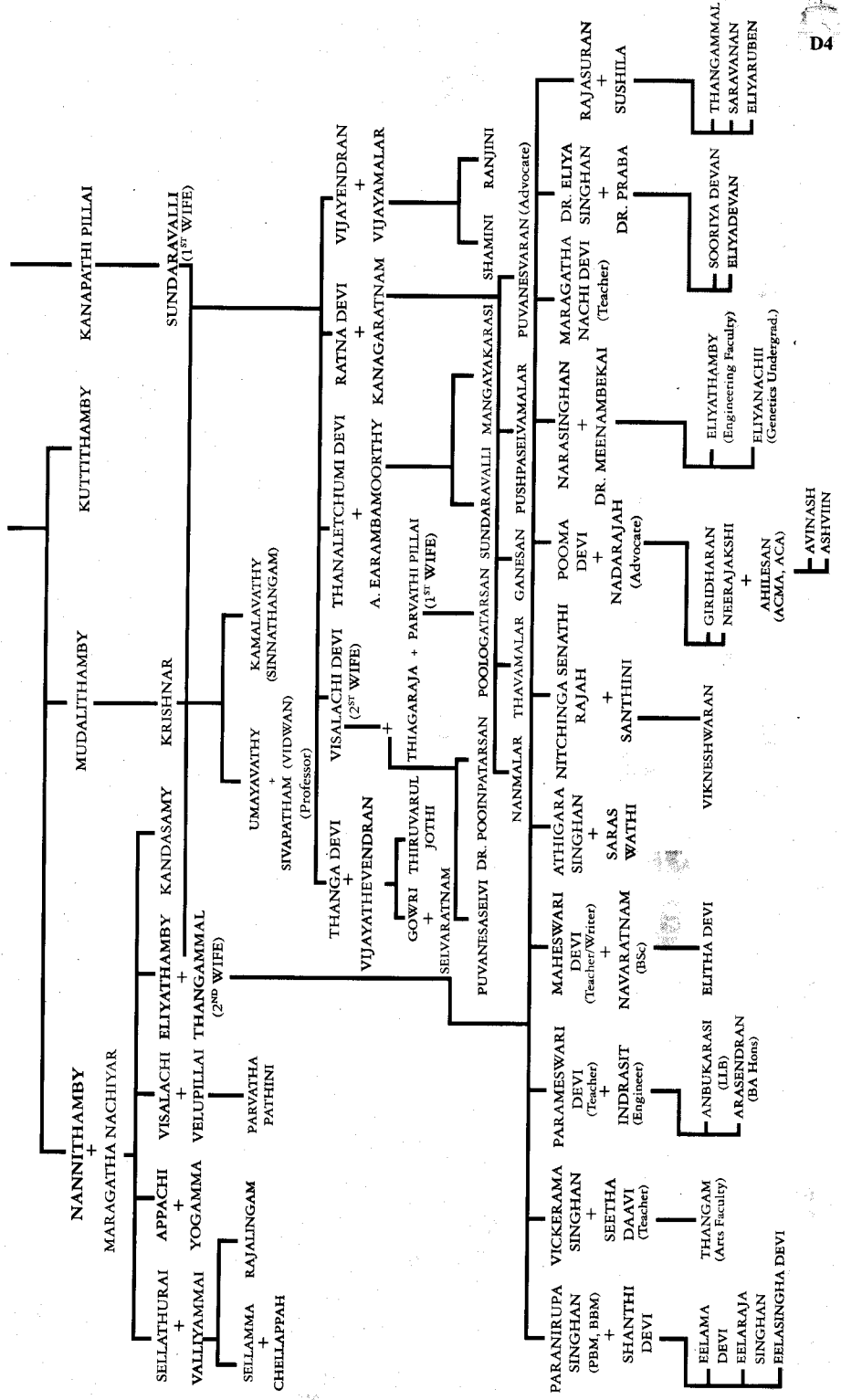
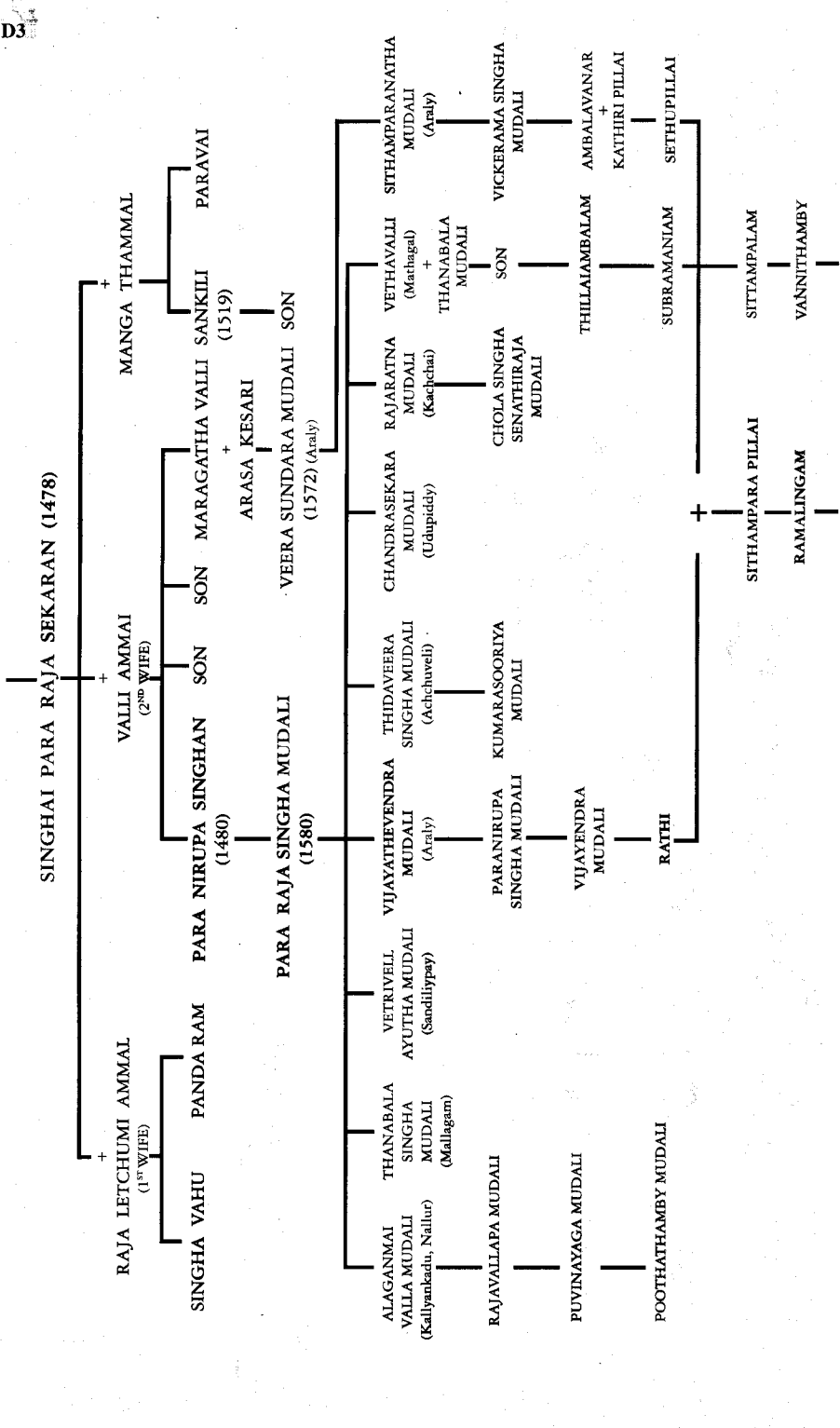
ETHIR MANNA SINGHA KUMARAN (1591)

SANKILI KUMARAN SEGA RAJA SEKARAN (1616)



*In 1621, the sun set on the long-cherished, independent Tamil Kingdom in Jaffna.*

SINGHAI PARA RAJA SEKARAN (1478)







Photos of  
**Jaffna**  
&  
Eliyathamby's  
Family






 Nallur Kandaswamy Temple




 The Church, at Muthiraisanthi, now stands where the ancient Nallur Kandaswamy Temple stood.




 The Minister's Residence at Nallur  
(formerly Paranirupasinghan's residence;  
front was later modified by the Dutch)




 The Minister's Residence as it is to date.  
(front gate of Paranirupasinghan's residence)



 Jamunari (Jamuna Lake), Nallur



 Jamunari as it is to date





Entrance of the palace at Sankilithoppu, Nallur



Kailasa Pillaiyar Temple



Veyilukanda Pillaiyar Temple



Nallur Sattanathar Temple



Vallipuram Krishnar Temple



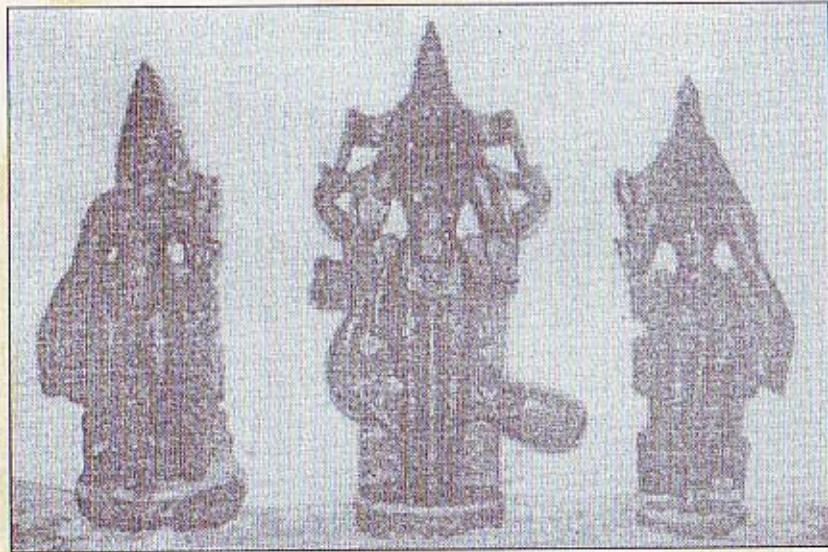
Another view of the Vallipuram Krishnar Temple




Vallai Muniyappar Temple




Thondamannaru Sannathi Murugan Temple



 Ancient statues




 The street shelter (madam) at Point Pedro



 Yaalpana Koddai Muniyappar Temple




 Mathagal Nuwasai Murugan Temple



 Paralai Murugan Temple



 Paralai Vinayagar Temple



 Moolai Sithivinayagar Temple



 Moolai Murugan Temple



The well at Moolai Amman Temple  
(built from Eliyathamby's donation)



Moolai Amman Temple

Photos by : Aravinth



Nannithamby Eliyathamby



Thangammal



Thanga Devi



Visalachi Devi



Sundaravalli



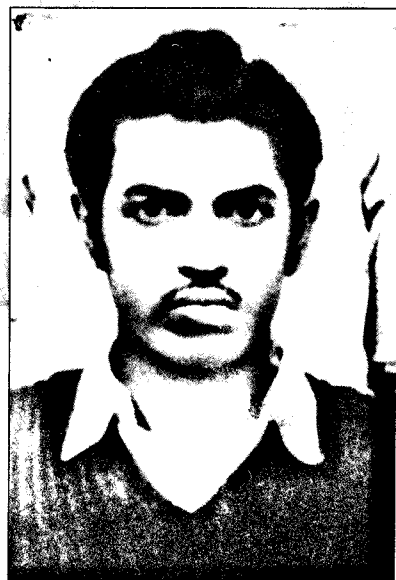
Thanaletchumi Devi



Ratna Devi



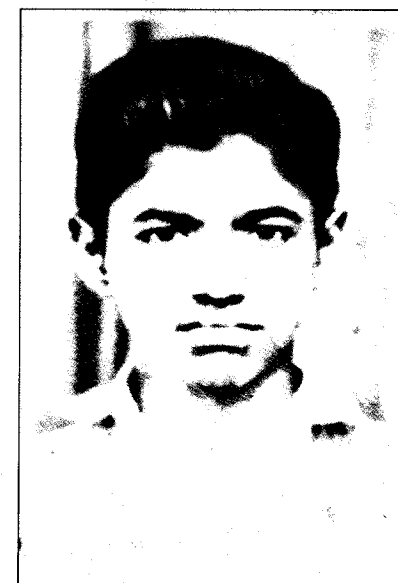
Vijayendran



Paranirupasinghan



Maheswari Devi



Athigarasinghan



Vickeramasinghan



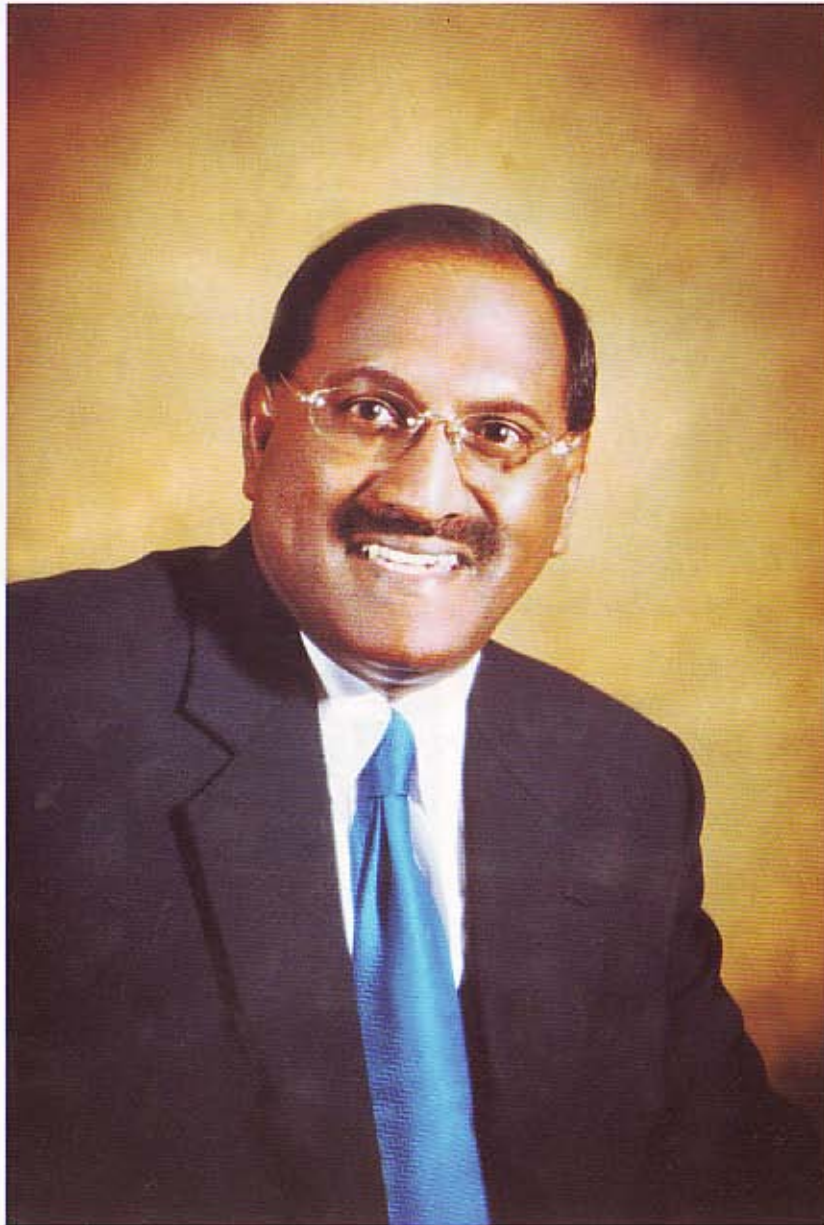
Parameswari Devi



Nitcinga Senathirajah



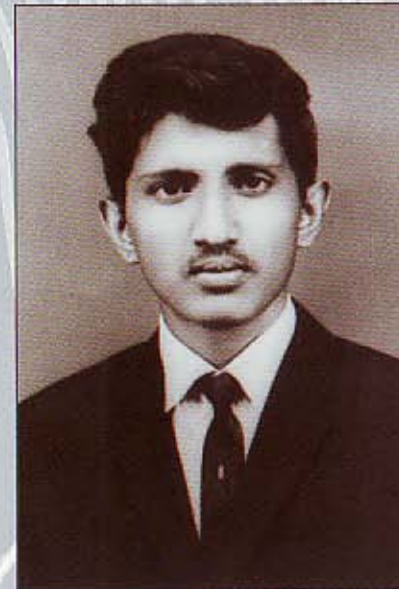
Pooma Devi



Narasinghan



Maragathanachi Devi



Eliyasinghan



Rajasuran

நூலகம்



# Map of Jaffna

Mathagal

