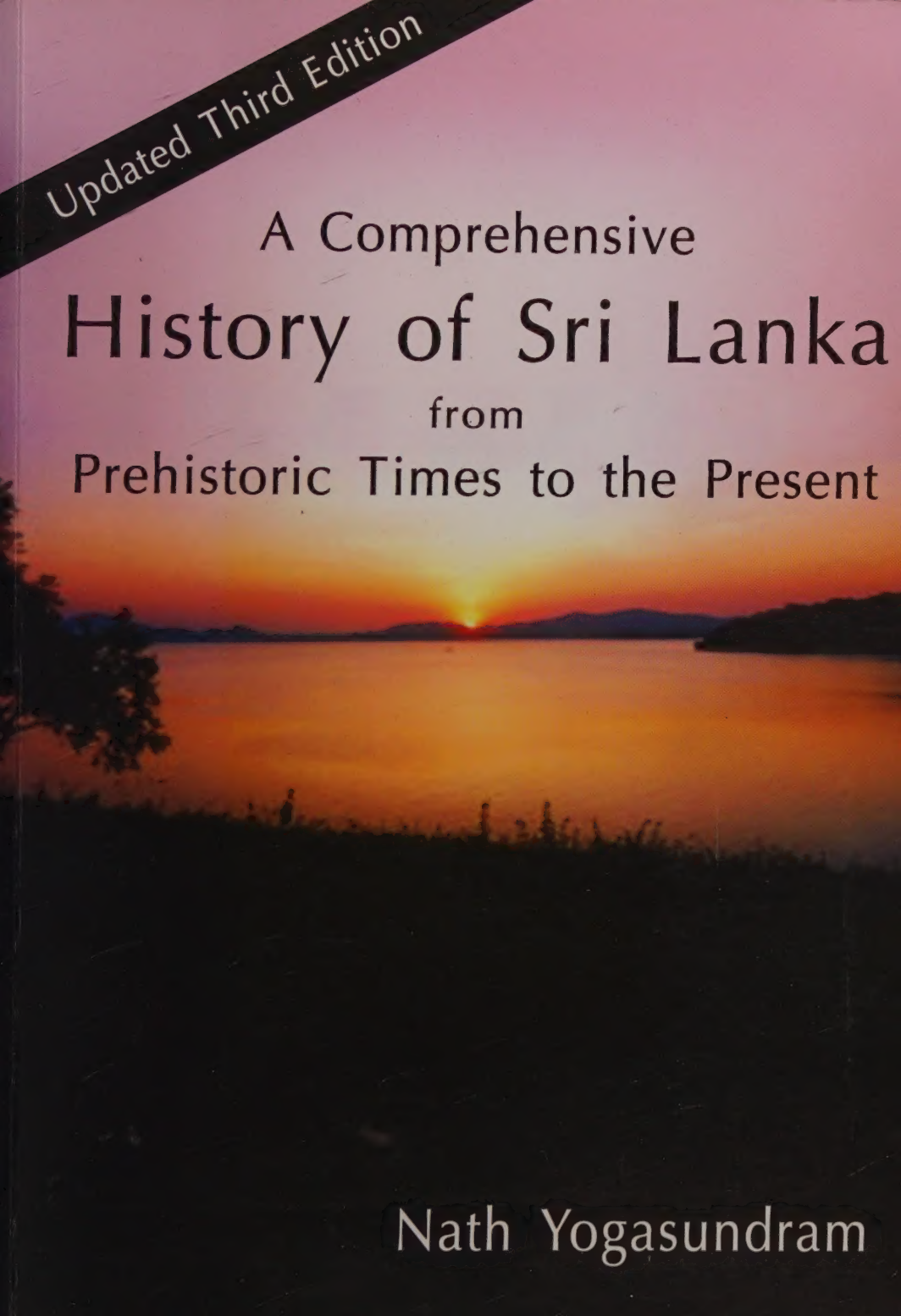


Updated Third Edition

A Comprehensive
History of Sri Lanka
from
Prehistoric Times to the Present



Nath Yogasundram

A Comprehensive
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Prehistoric Times to the Present

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Cover Photograph of Minneriya Tank built circa 300 A.D.
by King Mahasena

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A Comprehensive
History of Sri Lanka
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Prehistoric Times to the Present

by

Nath Yogasundram



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Dedication

To Myrna,
our children and grandchildren

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TRANSLITERATION

The spellings of some names have been altered in the Second Edition to comply with the phonetics of transliteration. To help the reader these alterations are reflected in the Index.

Introduction

I have attempted to provide a detailed source of reference for the main trends in the history of Sri Lanka from prehistoric times to the present. This work does not involve any original research on my part and is a compilation and analysis of facts obtained, mainly, from the writings of contemporary historians. My motive for delving into Sri Lankan history and setting out my findings as a text is purely personal. I wished to try and understand as clearly as possible the reasons for the present predicament of the country in which I was born and spent my formative years. It has been said that the further you look back in history the further you can see into the future.

History, particularly ancient history, often depends on the interpretation of events deduced from vague and fragmented sources and records. It is, basically, an opinion formed by the historian, from evidence he has found, and is not a repetition of unassailable facts. Unfortunately, these opinions are notoriously prone to be biased by the affiliations of the historian. Particularly in a country torn by ethnic strife, events in history are often depicted in a way that would support the racial or religious affiliations of the historian without a great deal of regard for the truth. I have made a conscious effort to meticulously provide an accurate account of facts obtained from the most reliable sources that I could find.

Ancient Sri Lankan history poses a number of questions that are difficult to answer. The problem has always been the absence of accurate, written, contemporary records comparable, for instance, with the detailed records kept by the Romans about

the countries they administered. The ancient history of Sri Lanka is very dependent on the Pali and Sinhalese chronicles. These chronicles, though they provide a valuable and unique history, have numerous inaccuracies mainly due to the fact that they recorded events that occurred hundreds of years before they were set down. Written by the Buddhist clergy they tend to report, in the main, only those events that were of interest to Buddhism. Recent archaeological excavations and epigraphic evidence are helping to answer a number of these questions and will, no doubt, continue to do so for a long time.

Though I have generally followed a chronological pattern in relating the history, chapters on 'Background', 'Administration' and 'Society' have been interposed to provide more detailed information and clarify topics. 'Background' explains the various sources of the history, the origins of the main races and aspects of the important South Indian background. It also provides a very short account of the physical nature of the island and discusses the origins of its names. 'Administration' sets out the more important facets of ancient Sinhalese administration. 'Society' deals with the social structure and tries to provide some information about everyday life and culture in early times. I have provided lists of Sinhalese and Tamil kings under each historical period. Also included are short accounts of these rulers up to the early sixteenth century. Though these accounts may seem superfluous, I feel that they add some piquancy to the general history. They are, after all, the backbone of the chronicles from which the ancient history of Sri Lanka is derived.

This was a civilization, which reached its peak relatively quickly and maintained this peak for several hundred years. It seems unlikely that it was invasion from South India alone that brought it to its knees. The intricate irrigation system finally broke down and a shift of population occurred. The reasons for this breakdown are still not clear. A country, which during the first millennium compared favourably in wealth and power to most Western countries of that time reached an abject state during the second millennium and was unable to resist subjugation. Once

the kingdom in the dry zone fragmented there was irresistible pressure from all sides culminating in the arrival of the Western powers. Sri Lanka's present fragile state as a 'developing' country with an ethnic problem has, perhaps unfairly, been blamed on the past actions of these Western powers, particularly Britain. Some historians claim that since the Portuguese and the Dutch did not rule the entire island and were seldom the principal force in the country, the use of the term 'Period' for their years of occupation is a misnomer and an exaggeration. The term is used here to denote a convenient historical time span and is not intended to over-emphasize the importance of these two nations in the history of the island. There is no doubt, however, that these nations not only had a considerable influence on the history of the island but also left an indelible mark on its culture.

In the context of world history, the dominance of Western civilization, be it for good or for bad, has been an outstanding factor over the past few centuries. It is a fact of life that Asians have become increasingly 'Westernized' and actively embraced Western culture. Why has the West had such an overwhelming influence? Historians point to three changes that led to this world hegemony of Western culture. These are the 'Europeanisation' of Russia, the establishment of an autonomous centre of Western culture in North America and the British conquest of India. However, this begs the question as to why Western culture was able to make these radical changes. The roots of this superiority may be traced back to the ancient Greco-Roman civilization and the later spread of Christianity under its protection. The combination of the civilization and the faith seem to have produced nations in Europe, which excelled in gathering wealth and power.

To avoid confusion, the name 'Sri Lanka' has been used throughout to refer to the country despite various other names being used over the ages, particularly the name 'Ceylon' up to 1972.

Prehistory

Prehistory is the branch of knowledge that describes events and conditions, which existed before written or recorded history. It has been surmised that the history of civilization in Sri Lanka can be traced back to about 3000 B.C. but these assumptions are based on vague facts gathered from retrospective reports made by travellers. It has been said that in the tenth century B.C. King Solomon traded through the port of Tarshish (modern Galle) for Sri Lankan gems. It has also been postulated that settled agriculture with tanks and irrigation was established prior to the coming of the Indo-Aryans. The most widely held view is that civilized history began with the coming of the Indo-Aryans around 500 B.C.

Paleolithic Period

A definite sequence of dateable strata has not, as yet, been established in Sri Lanka. It is likely that the species *Homo erectus*, originating in Africa, spread to Asia and Europe. Humans are known to have existed in various parts of India during the last one million years. Sri Lanka was connected to mainland India on several occasions during this period. These connections depended on the rise and fall of the sea level due to fluctuations of cold and warm conditions in the global climate. The last separation probably occurred around 7,000 years ago. It is possible that humans arrived on the island as far back as one million years ago. If so, they would have belonged to the species *Homo erectus*. They knew how to use fire but not how to make it. They hunted big game in groups and, presumably, developed some method of communicating with each other during these group activities.

The earliest Stone Age implements, found in Sri Lanka, are made from chert and quartz. These hand-axes and scrapers are about 125,000 years old and belong to the Middle Paleolithic Period, which lasted from around 140,000 to 25,000 years ago. The techniques of tool making in Sri Lanka during this period were similar to those found near Rawalpindi in northern Pakistan. It was during this period that the species *Homo sapiens* appeared. This was a more recognizable human-being using technology to overcome the environment. Skin scrapers were used to dress pelts and make clothes. They were now able not only to use fire but also to make it. These hunter-gatherers seemed to have preferred the dry zones in the northern, eastern and southern parts of the island to the wet zone in the west.

Mesolithic Period

Artefacts dating back to the Mesolithic Period have been found throughout the island but mainly in the hill country amongst the grasslands and in the sand dunes along the coasts. The Mesolithic period falls between the chipped stone implements of the Paleolithic Period and the polished implements of the Neolithic Period. Chronologically, the Mesolithic cultures cover an enormous span. In Sri Lanka, several Mesolithic sites have been dated to as early as about 35,000 years ago; the oldest yet recorded for the period in South Asia. The term 'Balañgoḍa Man' has been applied to prehistoric remains from the Mesolithic Period first discovered near Balañgoḍa in Sri Lanka. These human remains have the same anatomical structure as modern man. Cave excavations in the wet-zone in areas near Bulatsinhala, Kitulgala and Kāgalla have yielded remains of human skeletons carbon-dated to periods from 35,000 to 10,000 years ago. It is interesting that the genetic structure of these prehistoric humans is similar to that of Veddas and some Sinhalese, suggesting a continued genealogy, undisturbed by new arrivals with different physical traits. The life style of this 'Balañgoḍa Culture', which appears to have spread to every part of the island may have been similar to that of the Veddas (see later section). They moved from place to place on an annual cycle and

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their food consisted of various yams, wild breadfruit, bananas and a wide variety of animals. They lived in small camps, each camp perhaps containing two families. Selected bones from the dead were interred in the floors of the camp. The Veddas did not follow this latter practice.

The Mesolithic Period is characterized, as in India, by the appearance of microliths. These are small tools made for mounting on a shaft. In Sri Lanka these microliths can be dated to around 28,000 years ago, about 16,000 years before they appeared in Europe. Cultures of this period exhibited a wide variety of subsistence patterns, including hunting and gathering, fishing, and, at least for part of the period, some herding and small-scale agriculture.

Neolithic and Chalcolithic Periods

The periods between the Mesolithic and the Early Iron Age - the Neolithic and Chalcolithic Periods - are not clearly documented in Sri Lanka. The Neolithic Period started about 6000 B.C. in Sri Lanka and it was during this stage that agriculture and animal husbandry came to be practiced. It is from this period that civilization begins to appear. Stone tools were ground and polished. The axe was in use and wood, bone and horn were used for the shafts. Fragments of pottery dating back to this period have been found on the island. Cereals seem to have been cultivated at this stage. The Bronze Age or Chalcolithic Period, which overlaps the Neolithic in India, is not evident in Sri Lanka. The bronze objects discovered are of a later period.

Early Iron Age

Iron was in use in India by about 1000 B.C. Radiocarbon dating of a site at Anurādhapura confirms that iron was in use in Sri Lanka somewhere between 1000 B.C. and 800 B.C. This site was a human settlement at Anurādhapura estimated as being about 10 hectares in area around 800 B.C. and about 50 hectares in size by 600 B.C. This means that there was a settlement, which could be considered a town, at Anurādhapura by 600 B.C.

Megalithic mortuary sites dated from 750 B.C. to 400 B.C. are found in parts of the island. Anthropological studies suggest that 'Balaṅgoḍa Man' was distinct from the people of the Early Iron Age and Megalithic sites. So, this latter group were early intruders into the Stone Age culture probably attracted to the island by various reasons including trade, agricultural potential, presence of copper deposits, pearl banks etc. Amongst the megalithic sites are dolmen at Raṁbukkana and Padavigampola, cists (graves lined with stone slabs) at Kathiraveli in the Eastern Province and stone mounds at Kōnvāva in the North-Central Province. Pottery, dating back to this period has been found within burial urns in Pomparippu and Ratnapura. Some archaeologists have suggested that these megalithic remains are of Dravidian or proto-Dravidian origin.

Since there is no evidence of writing during the Early Iron Age, between 1000 B.C. and 500 B.C., it is described as proto-historic, a transitional period before the onset of the historic period during which writing first appears and some form of record is available. This first writing in Brāhmi, the ancient Indian script, has been found inscribed on fragments of pottery excavated at Anurādhapura. The inscriptions signify ownership. These fragments have been dated by radiocarbon and thermoluminescence to around 500 B.C. As more and more archaeological evidence comes to light, no doubt these dates, and some of our present assumptions, will have to be revised.

Veddas

The Veddas or Vanniyala-ätto (forest dwellers) are a Neolithic people who were considered to be the aboriginal inhabitants of the island but they show a mixed racial constitution attributed to Negrito, Australoid and Mediterranean ethnic elements. They have striking similarities to the jungle tribes of southern India and it seems likely that they were also migrants to Sri Lanka from India in prehistoric times. They claim to be the original inhabitants of the island and it is thought that they arrived about 16,000 B.C. The Yakkhas and Nāgas of the Pali chronicles were, probably, the

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Australoid and Mediterranean types.

Vedda tradition maintains that they once had a civilized kingdom in Sri Lanka with Laṅkāpura as capital. The Veddas grew rice in Sri Lanka before the sixth century B.C. and it seems likely that a basic irrigation system centred on the Mahavāli Gaṅga already existed in the proto-historic period prior to the arrival of the Indo-Aryans. They were driven into the jungles to the east of the island by the successive waves of migrants from India. It is likely that the new, Indo-Aryan, migrants treated them as outcastes and slaves. Assimilation with Sinhalese and Tamils in historical times occurred very slowly probably due to a reluctance to integrate on both sides.

The ever-diminishing Vedda community only had three or four families maintaining their culture in 1995, when Tissahamy, their chief was still alive.

The Nāgas

According to the Pali chronicles the Nāgas occupied the northern part of the island prior to the arrival of the Indo-Aryans. The northern part of the island was called Nāgadvīpa. The Pali chronicles and other ancient literature of India describe the Nagas as supernatural beings. The Chinese traveller, Fa Hsien, who lived in Sri Lanka for a while in the fourth century A.D., describes the Nāgas as being occupants of the country prior to the arrival of human inhabitants. They are also said to have lived in India in a highly civilised state, ruled by their own kings. Who were these mysterious beings? They were not Tamils or even the ancestors of the Tamils. According to some authors they were a distinct race that may have, in later years, mixed with the Tamils and Sinhalese. Curiously, the *Mahābhārata* implies that the standard used by the Nāga kings of northern Sri Lanka was a lion. It was also the standard used by the Sinhalese kings in later years. Many modern Sri Lankan historians believe that they were mythical beings and did not really exist.

Background

Sources of Sri Lankan History

Pali chronicles

These are based on religious commentaries called *aṭṭhakathā* (meaning 'explanation'), which may have reached Sri Lanka as early as the third century B.C. The *aṭṭhakathā*, written in Pali by Buddhist monks in India, gave information about society, culture and religious history in ancient India and Sri Lanka. They served as sources for the epic Pali chronicles written in Sri Lanka some centuries later by Buddhist priests on 'ola' leaves (leaves of the talipot tree turned into a form of parchment). These chronicles, which also had an input from oral tradition handed down by the monks, deal with the religious (Buddhist) and dynastic history of Sri Lanka. They are not concerned with the social or political history and tend to include mythical and supernatural events, which make parts of the text of doubtful historic worth. The history of the island, from its earliest remembered beginnings to the time of Devānampiyatissa when Buddhist history began in Sri Lanka, is made up of material gathered from whatever traditions, myths or legends that existed as there were no Buddhist monks at that time to hand down oral traditions.

Pali is a literary language derived from the vernacular dialects spoken in northern India in the sixth century B.C. and became the sacred language of the Theravāda Buddhist canon. It seems that the Buddha did not wish to have his teachings transmitted in the classical Sanskrit that was the learned language of that time and, mainly, the preserve of Brahmin (Hindu) priests.

Background

He wanted a language that was understood by the common man. In fact, it would appear that he wanted a new start, getting away from the old Hindu concepts promoted by the Hindu priesthood. The Buddha's orally transmitted teachings were eventually written down in Pali, which became a revered, international language amongst Buddhists. It died out as a literary language in mainland India by about the fourteenth century but survived in Sri Lanka until the eighteenth century.

The chronicles were written in metrical verse, so that they could be memorised and recited. The best known of these chronicles and the most relevant to the history of the island are the *Dīpavaṃsa*, *Mahāvaṃsa* and *Cūḷavaṃsa*. There are several others that deal with different aspects of Buddhist history such as the *Lalāṭadhātuvāṃsa*, which deals with the frontal (forehead) bone relic of the Buddha. The *Dāṭhāvāṃsa*, written in the thirteenth century, is the history of the Tooth Relic of the Buddha.

Dīpavaṃsa

The name of this chronicle means 'History of the Island' and was the original history written in the fourth century A.D. Though crudely written, it is one of the main sources drawn upon by the author of the later *Mahāvaṃsa*, which is a much more polished work compiled by numerous authors.

Mahāvaṃsa

Meaning 'Great Chronicle' this is a chronological history of the island, dealing more with Buddhism and dynastic succession than with the social or political history. The Buddhist priest Mahānāma, an uncle of King Dhātusena, compiled the first section in the fifth or sixth century A.D. It covers the period from about the sixth century B.C. to the early fourth century A.D. The kings up to Mahāsena, who reigned from 275 - 303 A.D., were said to be of the 'Great Dynasty' because their achievements were considered to be greater than those of the kings who succeeded them.

The opening lines of the *Mahāvaṃsa* indicate its religious and racial aims. "Having made obeisance to the Sam-buddha the

Pure, sprung from a Pure Race, I will recite the *Mahāvamsa*, of varied content and lacking nothing”.

There is another work called the *Extended Mahāvamsa* or *Cambodian Mahāvamsa*, which also deals with the history of the island up to the end of Mahāsena's reign but is almost twice the length of the original *Mahāvamsa*. New legends, episodes and descriptive passages have been added. The first manuscript discovered was in the Cambodian script. It is written, at a later period than the original, by an author named Moggallāna.

In 1826 a Buddhist priest named Gallé with the help of an Englishman, the Hon. George Turnour, Government Agent for the Sabaragamuwa Province in Sri Lanka, discovered the ‘*ṭikā*’, which is the prose explanation of the mystical verse used in the *Mahāvamsa*. The missing ‘*ṭikā*’ was found in a vihāra (temple) at Mulkirigala, near Tangalle in the Southern Province. With the help of the ‘*ṭikā*’ the mystical verse was translated into prose. This prose explanation, *Mahāvamsa-ṭikā*, was probably written somewhere between the seventh and tenth century A.D. Its author is not known. Despite its myths and inaccuracies the *Mahāvamsa* has, together with its continuation, the *Cūlavamsa*, come to be regarded as one of the most remarkable histories in existence. As a dynastic record of an ancient civilisation its only rivals are the Shu King records of the Chinese Emperors.

Cūlavamsa

The continuation of the *Mahāvamsa* is called the *Cūlavamsa* and the first part of this chronicle was written by a monk named Dhammakitti, who lived in the time of Parākramabāhu I, and covers the period of eight centuries from the end of King Mahāsena's reign to that of King Parākramabāhu I. Most of the sources for this work have been lost. They include two other chronicles, the *Dāṭhāvamsa* and the *Kesadhātuvaṃsa*. The author also depended on records of the benefactions made by successive kings. These were kept in various vihāras.

The second part deals with the period from Vijayabāhu II to the end of the reign of Parākramabāhu IV circa 1325 A.D. The author of this part is not known. Of the eleven chapters, six

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concern Parākramabāhu II and his works of merit. It has little historical value.

In the eighteenth century a monk named Tibboṭuvāvē Siddhārtha Buddharakṣita, at the request of King Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha, composed the third part. He continued the work from the second part and covered the period up to the reign of King Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha in ten chapters but more than half of this is devoted to his sponsor, the king.

Sinhalese chronicles

The *Mahāvamsa* and the *Cūlavamsa* were not translated into Sinhalese until the 'tīkā' was discovered in the nineteenth century. However, Sinhalese chronicles using them as models had appeared from earlier times. The *Pūjāvaliya*, written in the twelfth century deals with offerings made to the Buddha by kings. The *Rājaratnākaraya* was probably written in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. It traces the lineage of Vikramabāhu who ruled at Kandy in the fifteenth century. The first part of this work gives the history of the kings from Vijaya. The *Rājāvaliya* is another dynastic history, provides some material not contained in the *Mahāvamsa* and is most useful for the later Kōṭṭē period of history. Various other works dealing mainly with the history of Buddhism on the island do exist and are useful in giving additional details that may have been omitted in the main chronicles.

These Pali and Sinhalese chronicles were safeguarded in various vihāras, often the ones in which the author or authors lived. It is this form of storage that helped them to survive the centuries.

Tamil chronicles

In 1736, at the request of Jan Maccara, the Dutch Governor of Jaffna, a scholar named Mailvāganam Pulavar compiled the *Yālpāṇa-vaipava-mālai*. This gives a brief history of the earliest phase of Sri Lankan history up to the reign of 'Paṇḍu Maharaja', probably Paṇḍuvāsudeva but deals in greater detail with the period after the invasion by Māgha in the thirteenth century. He has drawn from earlier Tamil works such as *Vaiya-paḍal*, *Kailāya-*

mālai, *Pararājasekaran-ula* and *Rāja-murai*. None of these works are older than the fourteenth or fifteenth century. Another history in Tamil is the *Yālpāṇac-carittiram*, which is more recent and unreliable.

Foreign sources

Since Sri Lanka was on the cross-roads of the trade routes, merchants and travellers visited it from ancient times. These visitors carried stories, which were later incorporated in books, back to their own countries. The island is mentioned in the writings of Aristotle, Onescritus (Alexander the Great's pilot), Megasthenes (a Greek ambassador to the Maurya court in India) and many others. The first map of the island was by Ptolemy, the Greek, circa 140 A.D.

Arab merchants had probably been visiting Sri Lanka from very early times but the earliest Arab account in which the island features was written in the ninth century. The most important of the Arab writers is Ibn Battuta who came to the island in the fourteenth century.

The Buddhist brotherhood included China, Cambodia, Thailand and Burma. Because of the common religion, intercourse between these countries was frequent from ancient times. Accounts by Chinese travellers such as Fa Hsien in the fifth century A.D. and Hsuan Tsang in the seventh century A.D. have made important contributions to our knowledge of ancient Sri Lankan history. Fa Hsien, an ardent Buddhist, lived in Anurādhapura for a couple of years and his account is factual and reliable. Official records maintained by the Chinese Emperors with reference to embassies and political connections are another source.

Pali was a language also used for religious purposes in Burma, Cambodia and Thailand. There are a number of religious works in these countries with references to Sri Lankan history.

There are few Indian references to Sri Lanka. The writing of history was not popular in India where philosophy and religion were thought to be more important. References to Sri Lanka are found in the epic poems, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*. Many epigraphical records in South India during the time of Pāṇḍya and

Cōla empires contain references to the island.

There are many treatises by Portuguese and Dutch authors written during the years that these two nations occupied Sri Lanka. *An Historical Relation of Ceylon* by Robert Knox, an Englishman who was a captive in Kandy from 1660 for about 20 years gives information about conditions at that time. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, British authors wrote several books about Sri Lanka. Emerson Tennent's monumental work, *Ceylon*, published in 1856 soon after the first translation of the *Mahāvamsa* was the first book in English to give a near complete list of the kings of Sri Lanka from Vijaya to Śrī Vikrama Rājasimha.

Epigraphic sources

These are contemporary records and are, therefore, a valuable source of information. The earliest inscriptions are those on the brows of rock caves that date back to around the third century B.C. and are in the Brāhmi script of ancient India, usually consisting of a single line. They give the names, titles, genealogy and profession of those donating the caves, which are found mainly in the regions of the ancient Anurādhapura and Ruhunu kingdoms.

The Brāhmi script gradually gives way to a 'proto-Sinhalese' and finally to modern Sinhalese as time goes on. The later inscriptions are on rock slabs, stone pillars, copper plates etc. There are also inscriptions in Tamil dated around the tenth century A.D. These inscriptions, over the ages, recorded numerous facts and activities. The grants of land, whole villages, tanks and canals were recorded. The beneficiaries of most of these donations were monks living in vihāras, which are specified. Pillar inscriptions of about the eighth century A.D. granting immunity from taxes have records of various types of government officials and give us an idea of how the administration functioned at that time. After the tenth century there are a few very long inscriptions on slabs of rock recording regulations made by the king. The *Gal-pota* (stone-book) in Poḷonnaruva is a stone slab of this nature inscribed on the instructions of King Niśśāṅkamalla.

The graffiti on the mirror-wall at Sīgiriya are inscriptions,

which not only praise the beauty of the women painted on the wall but also give names, titles and brief hints as to the conditions of the time. Most of these graffiti were inscribed between the eighth and tenth centuries but there are some that are of an earlier date.

Racial origins

Terms such as Āryan, Indo-Aryan (or Indo-Iranian), Indo-European and Dravidian signify a group of languages, each of which has a similar origin. They do not indicate a single race. However, the people who spoke these languages are also called Aryan, Indo-Aryan (also termed 'Indo-Iranian') or Dravidian respectively. It is now generally accepted that these are vague and inexact terms.

The term 'Indo-European' refers to a hypothetical parent language spoken by the barbarian tribes originally living in the steppe land stretching from Poland to Central Asia. Some of these tribes migrated south into the plateau, that is now named Iran, and then into India. They and their language came to be named 'Indo-Iranian' or 'Indo-Aryan'. The oldest of the Indo-Aryan languages is Sanskrit. The word 'Āryan' is derived from Sanskrit and means 'noble'. Other tribes from the same, vast area migrated west and spread out into Europe. The initial migrations out of Central Asia and Eastern Europe commenced around 2000 B.C.

In the nineteenth century the Comte de Gobineau propagated the entirely false notion of an 'Āryan race' which spoke the Indo-European languages, was responsible for most of the progress made by man and was superior to the black and yellow races. Hitler made much of this, for political reasons, in the next century.

The Sinhalese

The Sinhalese form 74% of Sri Lanka's population and though like all other races their present composition is of mixed origins, the original Sinhalese can be traced to a group of Indo-Aryans who entered India from the Hindu Kush around 1700 B. C. About the same time, the advanced civilisation which already

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existed in the Indus valley and which had built the cities at Harappā and Mohenjo-dāro disappeared either due to a natural disaster or because of the Āryan invasion. The Āryans, who came into India in successive waves, used Bronze and over the next few centuries moved into the Indus valley and eventually reached the Ganges valley around 1000 B.C.

Initially, they intermingled with the local populace, assimilated themselves into the local social framework, adopted the settled agricultural life style of their predecessors and established small agrarian communities across northern India. The coming of iron, probably about the tenth century B.C., helped this expansion. They did not bring a culture as advanced as that of Harappā and writing, which was evident in Harappā, only reappeared in northern India about the sixth century B.C. The Āryans brought with them the horse, developed the Sanskrit language and laid the foundations for Hinduism with its rigid caste system. From early times 'purity of blood' was emphasised. The early intermingling with the indigenes ceased and these people were made outcastes. The story is the same as that of other colonisations. First, an attempt at integration and the assimilation of any beneficial culture and skills. Next, a gradual contempt for the indigenous people probably derived from fear that they could in some way become superior. Finally, the drawing of a definite barrier between the races backed by religious beliefs promulgated by the priests, making the native an inferior, an outcaste and a slave.

Small kingdoms had formed in the Indus and Ganges valleys by the time the Indo-Aryan founders of the Sinhalese race migrated to Sri Lanka from northern India somewhere between the sixth and fourth centuries B.C. During the early stages of this migration, it is likely that these Indo-Aryans intermingled with people already on the island. The identity of these people is obscure. Over the next few centuries, a new culture developed. It was a culture that was going to be different to the culture from which these Indo-Aryans originated. By about the third or second century B.C. the Sinhalese language had evolved in an archaic form and it is from now on that we can consider the Sinhalese as

a separate race.

The relative isolation of the island helped this rapid development of a culture, different to that on the mainland. As time went on the immigrants were determined to maintain their individuality despite their Indian origin. The way this ultimately came about was not only through the new language but also by the embracing of a new religion that did not really take hold in India where it had originated. Prior to the coming of Buddhism, it is likely that there was intermingling with the Tamils in South India and this early mixing renders the two ethnic groups on the island almost physically indistinct. There is also evidence to suggest that during these early centuries, there was considerable harmony between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. With the coming of Buddhism, a racial and religious identity was firmly established. **Simhaladīpa** (unity of the island with the Sinhalese race) and **Dhammadīpa** (unity of the island with Buddhism) become enduring themes that designate the Sinhalese as custodians of Sri Lankan Buddhist society and find recurrent expression in the historic chronicles. Meanwhile, in southern India powerful Tamil kingdoms were being formed. These were aggressively Hindu and intolerant of Buddhism.

From the fifteenth to the eighteenth century there were migrants from southern India who settled mainly along the southwestern coast of Sri Lanka and were absorbed into the Sinhalese population forming three new castes - Salāgama, Durāva and Karāva (see 'Trade, religion and culture' under Fragmentation Period). In effect, these migrants having adopted Sinhalese culture ultimately became indistinguishable from the rest of the Low-Country Sinhalese population. It seems likely that in the Kandyan kingdom during this same period integration of South Indian migrants also occurred. It has been estimated that 70% of Sinhalese genes are of South Indian origin.

The Tamils

The Tamils are of Dravidian origin and form about 18% of the total population of Sri Lanka. The ancient domain of the Dravidian parent (proto-Dravidian) speech is not known.

Background

However, there is a well-established and well-supported hypothesis that speakers of proto-Dravidian languages must have been widespread throughout India including the northwest. The earliest known Āryan literary work in India, the *Ṛgveda* has a number of features of the Dravidian languages. In India, apart from some surviving islands of Dravidian speech, the Dravidian languages had been entirely replaced by Āryan tongues by the beginning of the Christian era.

The coming of Dravidian speakers into the Indian sub-continent is shrouded in mystery. The Urals, Iran, Mediterranean and western Asia have been postulated as probable sources. More recently, southeast Asia has been suggested. They may have established themselves in northwestern India as early as 3000 B.C. The fact that Brāhui, a language of Dravidian origin, is spoken in the Indus valley region where the ancient and advanced civilisation of Harappā and Mohenjo-dāro existed around 2500 B.C., lends support to the view that this civilisation was Dravidian or proto-Dravidian. Whatever the origins of this extraordinary civilisation, it disappeared completely circa 1700 B.C. and did not reappear in any other part of India. Between 2000 and 1500 B.C. there was a movement of proto-Dravidians to southeastern parts of the sub-continent. This may have been due to the Āryan migrations into the northern areas. It is from this proto-South Dravidian group in the southeastern regions of the subcontinent that the Tamil speakers originated.

It may have been these proto-Dravidians who established the prehistoric Megalithic culture at Pomparippu and other places in Sri Lanka and southern India. However, these people did not speak Tamil, which developed at a later date, and they cannot be considered to have been Tamils. The Tamils as a race must have first made their appearance in southern India somewhere between the fifth and third centuries B.C. It is likely that this occurred through blending of the Dravidians with indigenous people already there and also, perhaps, with Indo-Aryans. This amalgam, by about the third century B.C., spoke a language derived from the Dravidian side of their ancestors and could now be regarded as a distinct Tamil race. The earliest Tamil script can

be traced to inscriptions made in the third century B.C. This is in 'old Tamil' and, like 'old Sinhalese' is derived from the Brāhmī script of ancient India, modern Tamil script is derived from Grantha; a writing system that developed in southern India in the fifth century A.D.

'**Tamīlakam**', or the land of the Tamils, was defined in early Tamil literature as approximately equivalent to the area south of modern Chennai (Madras). It was divided into thirteen *nāḍus* or districts. There were three chiefdoms - Pāṇḍya, Cōḷa and Cēra. These chiefdoms developed into kingdoms. The Pāṇḍyas were, probably, the first to do so in the third or second century B.C. Interestingly, at this stage there were a number of Tamil Buddhists in southern India.

The immigration of Tamils to Sri Lanka from South India continued to occur over many centuries and well into the twentieth century. Distinct from the immigration of South Indian people who integrated with the Sinhalese and became indistinguishable from them (as described above), these Tamil immigrants retained their Tamil culture. Though there is a greater attachment to India, particularly amongst the more recent immigrants, than amongst the Sinhalese, those Tamils whose families had been settled on the island for many centuries have developed in ways that are different to the Tamils on the mainland. The main early settlements were in the north. It is likely that there were Tamil settlements in these northern areas from very early times but the bulk of these settlements occurred after the twelfth century A.D.

There must have been a sizeable Tamil population in Jaffna by the twelfth century because a Tamil inscription by the Sinhalese king, Parākramabāhu I (1153 - 1186 A.D.) has been found in the district. The king would have made an inscription in Tamil only if there was a significant Tamil population. Jaffna had Tamil rulers from the thirteenth century but the Sinhalese kings claimed sovereignty over the area and it is unclear as to how much autonomy these rulers possessed. In Sri Lanka, there seems to have been a great deal of difference between ritual and actual sovereignty as will be explained in another section. The ancient Tamils knew Sri Lanka as *Īlam* (or Eelam). In the present

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concept it has come to mean 'land of the Tamils in Sri Lanka'.

The British, from the nineteenth century, promoted a much later immigration of Tamils from southern India to serve as a labour force on the tea estates. These coolies or labourers constituted a community that was distinct from the indigenous Tamil population of Sri Lanka. Though they also spoke Tamil, their dialect was different to that of the indigenous Tamils. The numbers of these new immigrants increased rapidly as more and more flocked into Sri Lanka to get away from an overpopulated and poverty stricken South India. These later arrivals are called 'Indian Tamils' to distinguish them from the indigenous Tamils who are referred to as 'Sri Lankan Tamils'.

The Moors

The Moors (usually called Muslims - followers of Islam - in Sri Lanka) are the third largest community in the island and comprise 7% of the total population. The term 'Moor' is said to be derived from the Latin *Maurus*, which was the name given to the inhabitants of the Roman province of Mauritania in northwest Africa. It was later applied to the mixture of Arab and Berber people who conquered Spain in 711 A.D. Even later, the Portuguese called the traders from the Arabian Peninsula, with whom they had to compete in Asia, *Mouros*. It is a matter of conjecture as to when these traders first arrived in Sri Lanka. Some historians believe that they were in the island from the early Anurādhapura period (long before the inception of Islam) but the more popular belief is that they first arrived in the eighth century, soon after the founding of Islam, at a time of Arab expansion. These traders settled mainly in the coastal regions of the island and often espoused local women. They spoke the language of the area in which they settled - mainly Tamil but also Sinhalese - and remained followers of Islam.

Another theory has been put forward more recently suggesting that these Moors (or Muslims) are really of South Indian origin. This theory claims that those Hindus who were converted to Islam when the Islamic Delhi Sultanate invaded South India early in the fourteenth century A. D. became *non*

personae gratae when the region was re-conquered by a Tamil (Hindu) king and were driven out of India. They are said to have arrived on the coasts of Sri Lanka in *Marak Alams* (wooden boats) and the Sinhalese name for Muslims is *Marakkala*. Their South Indian Tamil origin is thought to be the reason why the majority of Muslims speak Tamil.

It is likely that the Moors (or Muslims) of Sri Lanka are predominantly of Arabian origin and if there was an exodus of Islamists from southern India, they merely added to the already well-established Muslim community in Sri Lanka. The recent theory of their origin does seem to have political overtones.

South Indian background in ancient times

The Cēra, Cōla and Pāṇḍya kingdoms had, doubtless, existed in South India from ancient times. It is not, however, possible to say when these states were first founded, as there are no clear historical records on this aspect. Some assumptions can be made from the Saṅgam Age in Tamil Literature. Saṅgams were Academies established by early kings of the Pāṇḍya dynasty for the advancement of Tamil literature. However, even the chronology of these Saṅgam works is controversial.

By the first century B.C. the area of India below the northern part of the Deccan plateau was divided into a number of states. Most prominent was the kingdom of the Āndhras, located in the area around modern Hyderabad, and the Tamil states of the Pāṇḍyas at the southern tip of the Indian peninsula with their capital at Madurai, the Cōlas in the region that is now Chennai (Madras) and the Cēras who controlled the southwestern coast (now Kerala). There was constant rivalry between these various groups for land and trade.

The Pāṇḍyas were Tamil rulers in the extreme south of India who established their kingdom somewhere between the third and first century B.C. For a while they belonged to the Jain religion but later became Saivas (worshippers of Siva - a Hindu sect). They ruled extensive territories, at times including Cēra (Kēraḷa), Cōla and also Sri Lanka. The Pāṇḍyan king, Śrīmāra Śrīvallahaba invaded Sri Lanka in the reign of Sena I (831 - 851 A.D.). Sena II

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allied himself with the Pallavas to support a Pāṇḍyan prince, Varaguṇa against his own father, the aforementioned Śrīmāra. The Pāṇḍyans flourished from the twelfth to the fourteenth century but family quarrels and Muslim invasions from the north weakened them and by the sixteenth century all their territories had passed into other hands.

The Cōḷas, another Tamil dynasty, first ruled an area around Tanjāvur (Tanjore) and the valley of the Kāvēri River. On numerous occasions, the Cōḷas invaded and subjugated Sri Lanka. The earliest invasion was by Eḷāra in the third century B.C. The Pallavas subjugated the Cōḷas in the fifth century A.D. but they re-emerged in the ninth century at which time the Pāṇḍyas and Pallavas had exhausted themselves by fighting with each other. The Cōḷa leader, Vijayālaya, captured Tanjore in the middle of the ninth century A.D. He, probably, acted as a vassal of the Pallavas. His son, Āditya I (871 - 907 A.D.), succeeded him. Āditya killed the last of the Pallava monarchs and also invaded Madhura, the Pāṇḍyan capital with the assistance of his son, Parāntaka, who ruled as Parāntaka I (907 - 955 A.D.) and continued the expansionist policies of his father.

There was a period of confusion for about thirty years after Parāntaka's death but, ultimately, Rājārāja I (985 - 1012 A.D.) came to the throne and with him commenced a century of progress and prosperity for the Cōḷa kingdom. He was a soldier, statesman and administrator endowed with vision. Early successes fuelled his ambition. He carried on an active maritime policy aimed at extending the commerce of his country and converting the Bay of Bengal into a 'Cōḷa lake'. He began the practice, which was kept up by his successors, of keeping contemporary records of his reign in *praśastis* (lauds, or hymns of praise), which were revised and brought up to date at intervals. His expansionist policies brought most of South India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives under Cōḷa control. A bureaucratic central government, which combined efficient central control whilst allowing local autonomy, was instituted. The Cōḷa trading activities extended to Sumatra (Śrīvijaya) in the east and even beyond, to China. Eastern ports, such as Trincomalee in Sri Lanka, were important for this purpose. His son, Rājēndra

I (1012 - 1044 A.D.), succeeded him and put his father's legacy to good use. In his reign the Cōla civilisation reached its highest point. Its power and influence deteriorated under his successors and was overshadowed by the Pāṇḍyans in the twelfth century.

The Cēra kingdom did not play a part of any importance in Sri Lankan history. However, there was active trade between the southwestern coast of India and Sri Lanka from ancient times.

The Pallavas, probably, of north Indian origin and initially subjects of the Āndhras, became independent in the third century A.D. with weakening of Āndhra power and inherited the south and southeast of the Āndhra territory. By the late fifth century A.D. they had vanquished the Cōlas who became for the time being a small, subjugated race living on the banks of the Kāvēri River. There were various branches of Pallavas who ruled with different capitals but the best known and most prominent was that with Kāñci as capital. Kāñci became a centre for Buddhism in South India around the sixth century A.D. Through the Pallavas, who were patrons of the arts, elements of Indo-Aryan Sanskritic culture were widely introduced into southern India. Until the revival of Cōla power in the tenth century, there was a tendency for the rulers of Sri Lanka to unite with the Pallavas against the Pāṇḍyas. The struggle between the Cālukyas and the Pallavas resulted in the end of the Pallava kingdom in 895 A.D.

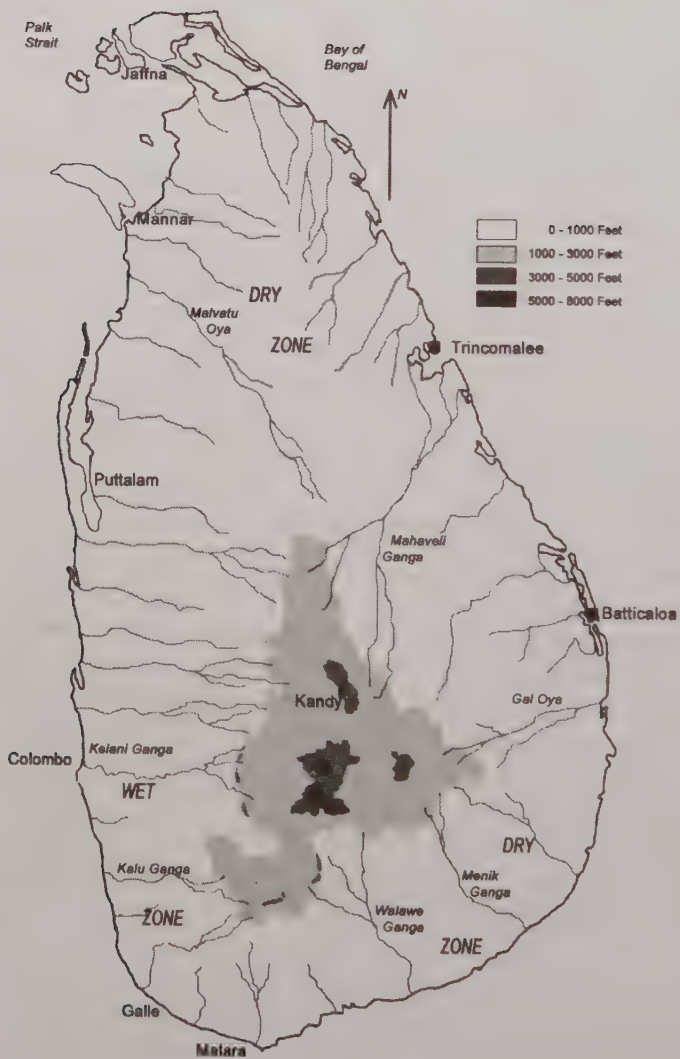
The Cālukyas, probably of north Indian stock, formed a kingdom centred on modern Bādāmi in the fifth century A.D. By the following century they extended their control to Cēra and Pāṇḍya countries. Their struggle with the Pallavas ended with the destruction of the Pallava kingdom in the ninth century A.D. During the tenth and eleventh centuries they were in constant conflict with the Cōlas but then their power declined and they were conquered by neighbouring states in 1200 A.D.

The Kalabhras were a dynasty of obscure origin from the banks of the Kāvēri River. They were probably Jains and hence unpopular in the Hindu south. About the fifth or sixth century A.D. they conquered a large part of South India but were opposed and beaten by the Pallavas and a combination of South Indian rulers in the seventh century A.D.

The Land and its name

Sri Lanka lies about 7° north of the equator, separated from mainland India by the Palk Straits, a narrow and shallow stretch of water 40 miles in width at its narrowest point. The island is 270 miles in length and 140 miles across. Numerous bays offer adequate shelter for sailing ships and the port of Trincomalee in the North-East is one of the largest and safest natural harbours in the world. The position of the island in the Indian Ocean places it in the path of the great sea routes between Europe, India and the Far East. The coastal plain rises gently inland at first and then dramatically in a series of steps to about 6,000 feet. The highest point of this central massif is Pidurutalagala, a mountain 8,274 feet high. The mountainous area above 2500 feet was largely unpopulated until the tenth century. On the lower part of the massif about 1600 feet above sea level is the town of Kandy, which was founded as a refuge from the European enemies below.

In the north and the east is the low-country dry-zone where rainfall is sparse and confined to the North-East monsoon bringing rain across from the Bay of Bengal from about December to April. This rainfall is unreliable. The southwestern and western regions are the low-country wet-zone, which gets the prolific southwest monsoon from May to September. The low-country dry-zone was the cradle of the Sinhalese civilisation. The land in the dry-zone is not uniformly flat, there being several rocky outcrops and many ranges of hills, some exceeding 1000 feet in height. These contours were used in ancient times to store water by closing gaps between ridges. Dams were constructed across rivers at a higher level and canals built to divert the water into the natural depressions between the ridges.



Physical features of Sri Lanka

Background

Ruhuṇa, or Rohaṇa, was the territorial division, which composed all of the area east of the Mahavāli Gaṅga and also the lower Ūva, Hambantota and Galle districts with its capital at Māgama, or Mahāgāma, which is modern Tissamahārāma. Malaya, or Malayadesa, extended over the entire mountain region and its foothills. Rajaraṭa, or Rājaraṭṭha, in the northcentral area was the first of the three principalities. It had Anurādhapura as its capital. Rajaraṭa was later split into four divisions of which Māyāraṭa, or Dakkhinadesa, in the west was the most important. The Vanni was the relatively uninhabited jungle area between Rajaraṭa and Jaffna in the extreme north. Separating Ruhuṇa and Rajaraṭa was the defensible barrier of the Mahavāli Gaṅga.

Sri Lanka has had numerous names given to it from ancient times. **Laṅkā** was the Sanskrit name and, perhaps, the first. **Ratnadvīpa** (island of gems) was also an early name. The early Sinhalese called it **Siṃhaladvīpa** (island of the Lion Race). Vijaya and his followers are said to have named it **Tambapaṇṇi**, which refers to the copper coloured soil they encountered on their arrival near Puttalam. The Tamils called it **Īlam** or **Īlaṅkai**. The Greeks named it **Taprobane** and this was probably derived from the Sanskrit **Tambapaṇṇi**. The Arabs corrupted the Sinhalese **Siṃhaladvīpa** to **Serendib** (which later gave rise to the word 'serendipity'). The Portuguese transformed this into **Ceilão** and the Dutch made it **Zeilan**. The British anglicised this to **Ceylon**. Finally, in 1972 Mrs. Bandaranaike decided to name it **Sri Lanka**. The formal name changed from the Republic of Sri Lanka, in 1972 to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in the 1978 Constitution.

Early Settlement Period

6th Century B. C. to 377 B. C.

Traditional history

Traditions handed down over centuries and recorded much later in the Pali Chronicles and, sometimes, substantiated by earlier Indian literature and writings of Chinese (Buddhist) travellers have formed the basis for a history verging on mythology. This cannot be called history as the term is understood today. Nevertheless it does have a basis of truth, as most myths do, and provides a framework from which one can attempt to deduce the actual happenings in this dim and distant past.

The story begins in northern India. The geography and place names as related in the *Mahāvamsa* are confusing and inconclusive as to where exactly the story begins. The present consensus of opinion is that it began in ancient Lāḷa (or Lāṭa), which was in the region of modern Gujarat in northwestern India. It was here that Siṃhala (or Sinhala), the son of a legendary union between a princess and a lion, formed his own kingdom with Siṃhapura as the capital. His eldest son, Vijaya (or Wijayo), was a wayward youth whose misbehaviour angered his father who banished him from the kingdom.

Vijaya, the hero of the traditional history of the Sinhalese race, set sail from the northwestern coast of India with seven hundred followers. They put in at Suppāraka (modern Sopārā, north of Bombay) but were evicted by the local inhabitants because of their violent behaviour. After many adventures, akin to those of Ulysses, they reached Sri Lanka. They landed on the

northwest coast of Sri Lanka and because of the red colour of the coastal soil in this area due to its high copper content they named the area Tambapaṇṇi. According to the *Mahāvamsa* they landed in the year 543 B.C. on the same day that the Buddha attained Nirvāṇa. The demon queen, Kuveṇi, accosted Vijaya and his followers soon after their arrival. Vijaya managed to overpower her and make her his consort. She helped him to kill her subjects, the Yakkhas, and take over her kingdom.

Vijaya ruled from Tambapaṇṇi whilst his ministers founded various settlements to which they gave their own names. He did not wish to be consecrated king unless he had a queen from a noble house alongside him. His ministers, therefore, obtained for him a South Indian princess from Madurai. Kuveṇi, who had borne two children from her union with Vijaya, went back to her own people with her children and was killed by them for her treachery. Her children escaped and from their union arose a hill people called Pulindas. It is likely that this name was applied to the jungle people of Sri Lanka before the term Vedda ('Vāddā') became common. From then on it was a success story for Vijaya and his followers. They colonised the whole island, made it fertile and attracted more colonists from India.

There are many versions of this story, from different sources, based on the same theme. An account given by the Chinese Hsuan Tsang states that Siṃhala, the son of a merchant named Siṃha, founded the original kingdom in Sri Lanka (known as Siṃhala in ancient India). He arrived on the island with five hundred followers and underwent the same enticements, by cannibalistic women, as Vijaya. The Chinese traveller, Fa Hsien, gives a more realistic version of the story. He maintains that merchantmen of different countries visited the island. The island, at that time, was populated by demons that did not appear in person but only exposed their valuable commodities with the value affixed. "In consequence of these visits," he says, "men of other countries hearing of the wonderful attractions of the place, flocked there in great numbers and a kingdom was founded."

Vijaya died without legitimate male issue in 505 B.C. His uncle, Upatissa, ruled as Regent for about a year until Vijaya's nephew, Paṇḍuvāsudeva (Paṇḍuvasdev), arrived. He is said to have come from the North-Eastern coast of India with his retinue and landed at Gokaṇṇa, near modern Trincomalee, before travelling to Upatissagāma, the seat of government at the time, to be consecrated king in 504 B.C. He was succeeded by his eldest son Abhaya (in 476 B.C.) who was dethroned by his nephew Paṇḍukābhaya in 437 B.C. Paṇḍuvāsudeva was probably the first king to build a tank. Irrigation by means of tanks and canals became an important part of this agricultural society living in an arid zone.

Recent theory

Recent research by some historians has put a new and controversial slant on traditional history. The story now starts with Siṃhala, a chief of the Grāmaṇeya clan in the Indus valley. Alexander the Great had marched into India and was in control of the Indus valley around 325 B.C. but his army was tired. He did not advance any further into India, where more opposition from the new Mauryan empire was likely. He returned to Babylon and died in 323 B.C., at the age of thirty-two. However, he left behind troops with generals in command to keep the conquered territory under control. Siṃhala made a secret alliance with one of Alexander's generals (Seleucus Nicator) against Chandragupta Maurya, ruler of the expanding Mauryan Empire. Chandragupta overpowered Seleucus Nicator and Siṃhala, who had married the Greek general's daughter, fearing reprisals, fled south. He invaded the Puṇḍra (west Bengal), Pāṇḍya and Cōḷa countries. His son Muruṇḍa Śiva (Muṭasiva of the *Mahāvamsa*) sailed south and established himself in Sri Lanka, becoming king of Puṇḍra, Pāṇḍya, Cōḷa and Sri Lanka. He ruled circa 307 - 281 B.C. His son Paṇḍukābhaya made Anurādhapura his capital. Traditional history places the foundation of Anurādhapura at 377 B.C. but if the new research is believed it was actually founded about 100 years later. In this version, Vijaya, Paṇḍuvāsudeva and Abhaya are

Early Settlement Period

not mentioned and Muṭasiva and Paṇḍukābhaya have changed places in the chronological order of kings.

Epigraphical evidence

The earliest evidence of these migrations are the many hundreds of caves with inscriptions engraved on their brows and found in various parts of the island. The script of these records is the same as that used in northern India from about 600 B.C. The edicts of Emperor Asoka are in the same script, called Brāhmi, and a comparison with the letters of these edicts leads to the conclusion that the Sri Lankan inscriptions were made from (approximately) the last quarter of the third century B.C. to the end of the first century A.D. More recent dating of inscriptions in this script made on fragments of pottery suggests that the earliest inscriptions were made around 500 B.C. The language of these inscriptions belongs to the Indo-Aryan family of languages, of which Sanskrit was the most developed, and it is from this that the modern Sinhalese language evolved.

A realistic view

If we put aside the myths, the legends, the racial and religious bias we are left with some assumptions from which a more realistic story may emerge. There was migration to the island from northern India commencing somewhere between the sixth and the fourth century B.C. These early colonisers were of Indo-Aryan origin and we know this because the language they brought with them and which ultimately became Sinhalese is akin to the Indo-Aryan languages. There is a certain uniformity in the various reports about the island at that time, which maintain that the island was peopled by man-eating demons. *Rāmāyana*, the Indian epic, written circa 300 B.C. and recounting events that took place about six hundred years earlier, depicts Rāvaṇa, the king of Sri Lanka as a demon. It is likely that this describes the Neolithic culture that existed in the island at the time. Recent excavations have suggested that the 'Balaṅgoda Man' (remains of a Neolithic man, circa 500 B.C. excavated near Balaṅgoda) was

cannibalistic. On the other hand, merchants who tried to keep competition away from the island may have originated these horror-stories.

The reason for this sudden surge of immigration at this particular time is not clear but this is a similar pattern of migration to that of the Celts in Europe at about the same period. The reasons for the migration were similar. These were young people, looking for a new life in a land, which they felt offered better economical prospects. Most of them could have been merchants who arrived to trade and decided to stay. It has been suggested that these early immigrants were merchants attracted by the pearl banks in the northwest and the gem trade in the southeast.

This migration (in common with similar migrations in other parts of the world) occurred in successive waves over several years. With each wave, a tribe or connected tribes would move in and either absorb, push into the remoter parts of the island or exterminate those already inhabiting the area. It is clear that the Siṃhala (or Sinhala) tribe ultimately became dominant. They may or may not have been the first of the immigrants.

Immigration from North-Eastern India also occurred and is confirmed by the affinity between the Sinhalese language in its early stage of development and the languages of eastern India. These people from North-Eastern India arrived at Gokaṇṇa, near modern Trincomalee. It seems, therefore, that the earliest Indo-Aryan immigrants arrived in North-Western Sri Lanka, made their way inland along the Malvatu Oya and established various settlements on the banks of this river. One of these settlements, Upatissagāma, became the first seat of government and Anurādhapura, further up the river, was the next. Those immigrants who landed on the North-Eastern coast made their way inland along the Mahavāli Gaṅga. Another group of immigrants settled in the southeast at the mouth of the Valavē Gaṅga near modern Ambalantota. They made Māgama (modern Tissamahārāma) the seat of government for their region, which was named Ruhuna.

All these early settlements were in the dry-zone, which

Early Settlement Period

occupies about two-thirds of the island, and their staple crop was rice. The earliest colonists depended on the North-Eastern monsoon for the rain to cultivate their single annual crop of rice. These rains are, notoriously, unreliable. It is difficult to understand why these early immigrants, who were agriculturalists, decided to settle in the driest part of the country rather than the wet-zone in the west. Could it be that there was already basic irrigation available in these dry areas, instituted by their predecessors? Or was it because the wet-zone, covered by thick, tropical jungle and uneven terrain was not as attractive as the dry-zone with its open spaces and more even terrain? Perhaps it was because of both of these factors. We don't really know the answer. As the settlements expanded, a regular source of water for cultivation became essential. This was obtained, initially, by cutting channels from rivers and later by constructing tanks (reservoirs). These early immigrants had the use of iron, which was available in India from the tenth century B.C. and had probably been introduced to the island even before their arrival. A village system, similar to that existing in India, was established. The religion practiced prior to the introduction of Buddhism was Hinduism, which originated in northern India.

The people already in the Island at the time of this immigration, the Veddas and even people of a Megalithic culture (thought by some archaeologists to be Dravidian or proto-Dravidian), would either have been driven away into the jungles (as the Veddas were) or assimilated into the immigrant culture (as, it is likely, the early Dravidians were).

The first few hundred years of colonization were exceptionally productive in the spread and development of agriculture as a result of a superb system of irrigation. Traditionally it was Paṇḍuvāsudeva who started the building of tanks under the guidance of Jotiya, a Brahmin from India. There is evidence, however, that these tank-building skills already existed in the island. The whole expanse of the dry northern plain was transformed from jungle into cultivated fields, villages, towns and roads.

Dravidian influence

The earliest evidence of a possible Dravidian (or proto-Dravidian) presence is that of a Megalithic culture at Pomparippu in the northwest of the island. Significantly, a similar site is present in the adjacent part of South India at Adichchanalluri. This site is dated somewhere between 300 and 500 B.C. The implements used by this group of people were made of iron. Their settlements had four distinct areas – a living area, a tank (reservoir), fields and a burial place. They are thought to have introduced irrigation systems to South India and some researchers suggest that they were the originators of the Dravidian group of languages. There are several such Megalithic sites in Sri Lanka and if they are, in fact, of Dravidian origin, there is no doubt that this culture from South India had a strong influence on Sri Lanka.

By the third century B.C. there were substantial urban and trading centres of Dravidian origin in South India. These were sea-faring people and it does seem likely that they did come to the island either to trade or to settle in the same way that the Indo-Aryans did. There must have been trade relations between Sri Lanka and South India in these early times and trade between Sri Lanka and the countries of the classical Mediterranean world was probably occurring through South Indian ports.

The first recorded invasion by Dravidians was in 237 B.C. (according to the *Mahāvamsa*) or in 177 B.C. (according to recent research). Two mysterious characters, identified as Tamils by the *Mahāvamsa*, but thought by some historians, on rather tenuous grounds, to be merchants from the Sindu (Indus valley) region, killed King Sūratissa and ruled in his place for twenty-two years.

It is clear that Sri Lanka was a multi-ethnic society from very early times and the Dravidian component was always present but not powerful or influential enough to alter the Indo-Aryan character of the Island.

Early Settlement Rulers

These are shadowy figures whose existence is disputed by some historians. Traditional dates originating from the Pali chronicles are given here, but it is very likely that these could be in error by up to a hundred years.

Ruler	Capital	Period of Rule
Vijaya	Tammāṇṇā Nuvara	543 - 505 B.C.
Upatissa	Upatissagāma	505 - 504 B.C.
Paṇḍuvāsudeva	Upatissagāma	504 - 474 B.C.
Abhaya	Upatissagāma	474 - 437 B.C.

Contemporary historians have cast doubts as to the existence of the first four rulers mentioned in the *Mahāvamsa* - Vijaya, Upatissa, Paṇḍuvāsudeva and Abhaya.

Vijaya

According to the Buddhist Pali chronicles, Vijaya (or Wijayo) was the son of Siṃhabāhu (or Siṃhala), a Bengali whose kingdom was known as Siṃhapura. According to Chinese historians he was an adventurer, the son of a merchant seaman.

Tradition relates that he was banished by his father because of his bad behaviour. He sailed south with seven hundred followers and, after many adventures, very similar to those of Ulysses, landed at Tambapaṇṇi, close to modern Puttalam. A Hindu of the Kṣatriya caste, he married a Yakkha princess named Kuveṇi and with her help obtained control of the Island. He, later, repudiated Kuveṇi, drove her out and married a princess from Madurai in South India. Quoting from the *Mahāvamsa*, "The ministers who were eager in consecrating their lord, had overcome any fears about it even as regards difficult tasks. Devoted to their lord they sent messengers, having arranged them to take many valuable gifts like gems and pearls, to the city of southern Madhurā seeking the daughter of the king of the Paṇḍus for the lord and also others daughters for ministers and followers." Vijaya died without leaving a male heir to the throne. His capital was at Tammāṇṇā Nuvara.

Upatissa

Upatissa (Upatissa I, if the *Mahāvamsa* chronology is strictly followed) is another shadowy figure. Tradition has it that he was the regent, for about a year following Vijaya's death. His capital was at Upatissagāma, a few miles northwest of Anurādhapura on the banks of the Malvatu Oya.

Paṇḍuvāsudeva

Paṇḍuvāsudeva (also called Paṇḍuvasdev) ruled circa 454 - 424 B.C according to the traditional account. He was the youngest son of Vijaya's younger brother who sent him from Siṃhapura to succeed Vijaya. He landed with 32 followers at Gokaṇṇa (near Trincomalee), was enthroned at Upatissagāma and continued the Vijaya dynasty. The first tank, the Abayavāva, was built in his reign under the guidance of Jotiya, a Brahmin from the northern plains of India where the building of such reservoirs was understood.

Abhaya

Abhaya is another shadowy figure. He was the son of Paṇḍuvāsudeva and, according to the traditional account in the *Mahāvamsa*, was deposed by his nephew Paṇḍukābhaya. He ruled circa 424 - 387 B.C. After being deposed he was placed in charge of the City of Anurādhapura and designated 'Nagaraguttika'.

Muṭasiva

Muṭasiva (Murunda Śiva), who according to the *Mahāvamsa* was the son of Paṇḍukābhaya and ruled after him from 367 - 307 B.C., has undergone a complete change of role after the new research by Paranavitana who claims that he was the founder of the Sinhalese race and the son of Siṃhala, a chieftain of the Grāmaṇeya clan in the Indus valley region. Siṃhala fled east to escape the wrath of Chandragupta Maurya and conquered Puṇḍra (west Bengal), Pāṇḍya and Cōḷa countries. His son Muṭasiva is said to have sailed south from southern India, established himself in Sri Lanka and ruled circa 307 - 281 B.C.

Early Anurādhapura Period

377 B.C to 303 A.D.

Development of the Sinhalese kingdom

The revision of the dates recorded in the *Mahāvamsa* has given rise to confusion in the chronological order of rulers. It is convenient to follow the traditional dates remembering, however, that they could be in error by up to a hundred years.

Anurādhapura, founded by Paṇḍukābhaya, became the capital traditionally in 377 B.C. but about 100 years later according to contemporary research. The country was, by now, divided into the three main principalities - Rajaraṭa, Ruhuna and Malayadesa. Rajaraṭa was the original Sinhalese kingdom with Anurādhapura as capital; Ruhuna was in the south and east with Māgama (modern Tissamahārāma) as capital. Malayadesa covered the central mountain massif and was politically negligible until the sixth century A.D.

With the founding of Anurādhapura as the capital city of Rajaraṭa the scene was set for the emergence of a kingdom. The name is probably derived from a constellation of stars called Anurādha. There is, however, a legend that an Indian prince named Anurādha crossed over with five companions and founded the settlement in 500 B.C. According to the *Mahāvamsa*, Paṇḍukābhaya set apart a section of the city for the Yonas. It is accepted by scholars of the Pali language that the term Yonas was used to refer to the Greeks. It may be that these were Greek merchants. On the other hand, if the new research suggesting a connection with Alexander the Great's campaign is to be believed,

then it is possible that these Greeks had a substantial part to play in the new administration at Anurādhapura.

The process of the political evolution, which ultimately led to a kingdom claiming to unify the whole island, is not clear. The rulers of these principalities, of which Rājaraṭa was the most important and powerful, were not kings. They were chieftains. Devānampiyatissa was the first to be consecrated king with the help of Asoka, the Indian emperor. He called himself Maharaja with the intention of claiming over-lordship of the whole island. Nevertheless, the rulers of the other principalities did not acknowledge him as their overlord. This refusal to form a union under one king perhaps reflects the way these rulers inherited their positions. It was not always the eldest son, or daughter, who inherited the throne. Various members of a family seemed to gain ascendancy depending on the whim of the ruler. This was one of the reasons for the constant internecine rivalry that became common in later years.

The reign of Devānampiyatissa (traditionally 307 - 267 B.C.) saw the introduction of Buddhism by Arahat Mahinda, the son (or the brother) of the Mauryan emperor, Asoka. In ancient civilisations it was customary for subjects to follow the lead of their ruler with regard to religion. Therefore Mahinda convinced Devānampiyatissa, in the first instance, about the spiritual benefits of Buddhism. In addition to the spiritual benefits there were also some material benefits for Devānampiyatissa, which could have been important in the circumstances leading to his conversion from Hinduism to Buddhism. He desired the acceptance of his royal status by the Indian emperor as this would increase his prestige and support his claim to being the supreme ruler of the island. Asoka sent the Mauryan royal insignia with which Devānampiyatissa was consecrated as king. Most of the population, as expected, followed his lead in embracing Buddhism. This was to have a monumental effect on the future history of the island. There was now a religious divide between Sri Lanka and South India. Shortly after Mahinda's arrival, Saṅghamittā, the daughter of Emperor Asoka also arrived in Sri Lanka bringing with her a

sapling of the sacred Bodhi tree (Bō tree - *Ficus Religiosa*) under which the Buddha had contemplated at Bodh Gayā in North-Eastern India.

Despite the fact that this was a politically unstable kingdom in which a central authority could not be maintained because of the lack of the necessary administrative structure, the construction of intricate, large-scale irrigation works carried on. This in turn gave rise to an economic surplus, which was healthy enough to build and maintain large religious monuments and monasteries. Even the invasions from South India did not have a great retarding effect. Sena and Guttika were the first invaders and ruled at Anurādhapura from 237 - 215 B.C. Elāra, a Tamil prince from the Cōla country in South India, ruled for about forty-four years. He seems to have been treated with some regard by his Sinhalese subjects and it is claimed that several Sinhalese chiefs opposed Duṭugāmuṇu's efforts to overthrow him. The fact that he did rule for such a length of time before being deposed must mean that he was accepted by the majority of his subjects.

These invasions of Sri Lanka from southern India occurred after Asoka's death when the Mauryan empire was weakened and Sri Lanka had lost its powerful patron. At the same time the southern Indian states were increasing in power and were naturally inclined to expand. There is some doubt regarding Devānampiyatissa's immediate successors and the information given in the *Mahāvamsa* regarding chronology is hardly credible. It does seem likely that Devānampiyatissa's three brothers divided the kingdom between them, hence weakening it. It was also a time when a large amount of the country's wealth and energy was spent on religious monuments perhaps ignoring aspects of national defence.

The province of Ruhuna was unaffected during these invasions. It was independent of Anurādhapura. There were two major dynasties at Ruhuna. One was descended from Mahānāga, the brother of Devānampiyatissa. This dynasty ruled at Māgama (or Mahāgāma, modern Tissamahārāma). The other dynasty was that of the Kṣatriya princes who ruled at Kataragama. These

Kṣatriya princes had accompanied Saṅghamittā and the Bodhi tree to Sri Lanka from India and, presumably, were granted land in the southeastern region by Devānampiyatissa. They were, in effect, another wave of immigrants from India. When Mahānāga arrived in Māgama at the death of Devānampiyatissa and set up another principality, only a few miles from Kataragama, the scene was set for a quarrel. The chronicles state that Gōṭhābhaya, the grandson of Mahānāga, whilst ruler at Māgama, murdered the ten brothers of the Kṣatriya clan. This was an act of gross ingratitude as the Kṣatriya clan had helped Mahānāga to establish himself at Māgama. However, it did help to unify Ruhuna under the one ruler at Māgama.

Gōṭhābhaya's son and heir was Kāvantissa, who continued his father's expansionist policy. At this time there were other, small independent chiefdoms in the south. Kāvantissa annexed these chiefdoms starting with that of Giri ruled by his brother-in-law, Siva. He then captured Soma and Seru, which were close to the border with the Anurādhapura kingdom, now ruled by Eḷāra. This made the Mahavāli River the northern boundary of Ruhuna. These moves had, by about 180 B.C., placed Ruhuna in a suitable position to attack the Anurādhapura kingdom across the Mahavāli. In addition, Kāvantissa raised and trained an army of the men of Ruhuna. However, Kāvantissa was a cautious man and did not take the offensive against Eḷāra.

Kāvantissa and his chief consort, Vihāradēvi, had two sons, Duṭugāmuṇu (or Duṭthagāmaṇi Abhaya) and Saddhātissa. Duṭugāmuṇu, Kāvantissa's successor, was destined to become a great, probably the greatest, Sinhalese hero. During a prolonged campaign of fifteen years he not only had to contend with Eḷāra's forces but also with Sinhalese rivals. The latter seem to have preferred Eḷāra's continued domination to Duṭugāmuṇu's political ambitions. He, ultimately, defeated Eḷāra and was proclaimed king at Anurādhapura in 161 B.C. Duṭugāmuṇu was not content with capturing Anurādhapura. Eḷāra's rule did not extend to the entire northern plain. Duṭugāmuṇu's intention was to unite the north. The south was already under his control. He did achieve this and

according to tradition he was the first king of a united Sri Lanka. However, an administrative structure able to make this claim a reality does not seem to have existed in Sri Lanka at that time.

His efforts and great success made him an ideal subject for the Buddhist/Sinhalese propaganda that was to build up in the years to come. Here was a Buddhist (and this was more important than race) hero who vanquished a foreigner. Despite having been a just king, Eḷāra was not only a foreigner but also, even more importantly, held the wrong religious beliefs (he was a Hindu). The victory was a tremendous boost for Buddhism in the island. In gratitude for the victory, not only did the king build several religious monuments but he also granted large areas of fertile land to the monasteries. With his rule the number and power of the Buddhist priesthood increased steadily. The trend of donating generously to the religious institution was to continue with his successors.

Weaknesses in the structure

Duṭugāmuṇu's rule of twenty-four years (161 - 137 B.C.) was a period of peace and stability. Unfortunately, due to several reasons (also see 'Administration'), continued consolidation and stability seemed impossible to attain. The functioning and stability of the entire structure seems to have been based on the capabilities of the ruler. There was no civil service as in ancient China or a strong administrative system as in Rome to maintain continuity and stability in the country during the reign of a weak ruler. This inability to maintain a strong central administration and the vague rules (or absence of rules) of succession combined with intense clan rivalry gave rise to constant political instability, which dogged the Sinhalese kingdom from its inception to the very end.

In addition to these basic problems it is very likely that the general population was apathetic as far as government was concerned. This apathy amongst the majority of the population is common in the Indian subcontinent even in modern times. It, perhaps, has something to do with basic Hindu concepts,

which all Indians and Sri Lankans seem to have inbred in them whatever religion they may now belong to. This may also be a reason for representative government not appearing at an early stage. It is significant that historical records were not thought to be important in ancient India or in Sri Lanka, except for religious purposes. Such records (often in great detail) are kept by people who are not only proud of their past but also wish to keep their successors informed of pitfalls that should be avoided. Greece and Rome were two states that maintained accurate records from ancient times.

Buddhism, though commendable in many ways, tended to be parasitic on the state. A considerable part of the revenue was spent on religious monuments. The priesthood, which was forbidden by religious rules to carry out any form of remunerative work, had to be fed and housed by grants provided, mainly, by the state. The number of priests had increased at a phenomenal rate from the time of Devānampiyatissa. There were several thousand *bhikkhus* in Anurādhapura alone during Duṭugāmuṇu's reign and Fa Hsien, that observant Chinese traveller, states that there were about 50,000 priests in the island during his visit in the fifth century A.D. Proportionate to the total population at the time, this is a very large number.

Despite these drawbacks, the kingdom had certain advantages. Firstly, the early settlers had set the basis for a strong agricultural economy and this combined with the natural wealth of the country helped to maintain a relatively sophisticated civilisation for a time. Secondly, until the coming of the Westerners in the sixteenth century, it was relatively isolated and invasion was not a practical proposition except from South India. Thirdly, the kingdoms in South India were in a constant state of conflict with each other and though they invaded the island on numerous occasions, they were unable to maintain a separate government in Sri Lanka on a permanent basis.

After Duṭugāmuṇu, there were several years of internecine struggles, which were to become commonplace and ultimately cripple the power of the Sinhalese kings. Following the rather

vague rules of succession at the time, it was Duṭṭugāmuṇu's brother Saddhātissa who succeeded him. It is said that Saddhātissa was planning to have Duṭṭugāmuṇu's son, Sāliya, killed so that his own son would inherit the throne. However, Sāliya escaped to India. When Saddhātissa died in 119 B.C. his younger son succeeded him, on the advice of the priesthood, but only ruled for one month before being deposed by his elder brother, Laṇṇatissa who ruled for nine years before being succeeded by another brother, Khallāṭanāga in 110 B.C. The latter was deposed in 104 B.C. by one of his own generals named Mahā Rattaka.

Later in the same year Valagambā, Khallāṭanāga's younger brother, overpowered Mahā Rattaka but only ruled for a few months before being trapped between a civil war started in Ruhuna by a Brahmin named Tīya and an invasion from South India. It seems that orthodox Buddhism was under threat in Sri Lanka at the time. Brahminism, Jainism, Nigantha (an ascetic doctrine) and various heresies were rife. The reason for this may have been that the influence of the Buddhist saṅgha had peaked during the reigns of Duṭṭugāmuṇu and Saddhātissa. The balance of power between the religious organization and the state is critical even in a country as overtly religious as ancient Sri Lanka. The heightened influence of the Buddhist establishment at that time seems to have been resented by some members of the royalty and the temptation was to seek other religions and cults, which they encouraged.

In 104 B.C., during the rule of Valagambā, seven Tamil princes from South India invaded the country. They may have been invited to take over the throne by factions opposed to Valagambā who had adopted certain political views disliked by the orthodox Buddhist factions. Valagambā, who was already having problems with Tīya, sent a message to the rebel at Ruhuna stating that he was surrendering to the South Indians and since Tīya was now, effectively, the king of Sri Lanka he should wage war against the aggressors. Tīya did wage war but was defeated. According to the *Mahāvamsa*, two of the Tamil princes returned to South India with their spoils, which included, amongst other

things, one of Valagambā's consorts. The other five princes ruled, successively, in Anurādhapura.

An ingenious alternative version has been put forward more recently. It has been claimed that Tīya was not killed but was kept on as a surrogate king by the Tamils. The fact that a severe famine, which occurred during these years, was named *Bāmiṇitiyā Sāya*, meaning 'the famine of Tīya', supports this hypothesis. The effects of the famine were felt for several years afterwards and reflect the poor state of the economy and of agriculture in particular at the time. Valagambā became another Sinhalese hero by ousting the Tamil prince ruling at Anurādhapura in 88 B.C. However, his main claim to fame is the fact that he called together a convocation of Buddhists who recorded the sayings of the Buddha for posterity. The main reason for this was to counteract the various heresies, which were in vogue at the time.

The rule of Coranāga (62 - 50 B.C.) was a disaster according to the priests who wrote the chronicles. Apparently, he stole from the monasteries to enrich himself. He is said to have destroyed monasteries that refused to support him and taken back lands granted to monasteries by previous kings. Worse was to come when his successor Kuḍā Tissa married a woman named Anulā who not only became the first female sovereign of Sri Lanka but also its most notorious *femme fatale*. She murdered her husband, Kuḍā Tissa, and then went on to marry five other men, each of whom she placed on the throne and later murdered. This violent woman was herself put to death, probably, by her own son.

At the beginning of the Christian era, during the reign of Bhātikābhaya, a Roman sailor named Annius Plocamus inadvertently landed on the island and spent some time in Sri Lanka. It is not clear how this man reached the island. He must have arrived via India. When he returned to Rome he took a representative back with him to the court of the Emperor Augustus. This representative was, apparently, given ambassadorial status.

In the first century of the Christian era no less than ten kings came to the throne. A number of them died violently, mainly due to internecine troubles. There was an interregnum of three

years after the Lambakaṇṇa clan seized power early in the reign of King Iḷanāga (circa 38 A.D.). There does not appear to have been a king at Anurādhapura until Iḷanāga returned from exile in South India (circa 41 A.D.) and ousted the Lambakaṇṇas. Iḷanāga's son Candamukha Siva, who succeeded him, married a Tamil princess. The Grāmaṇeya dynasty, the first Sinhalese royal dynasty, came to an end in 60 A.D. with the death of Yasalālakatissa. An impostor named Subha followed him and the Lambakaṇṇa clan came back into power in 66 A.D. when one of their members commenced his reign as King Vasabha. This clan was to hold on to power for a long time.

Hinduism had won the silent battle for supremacy against Buddhism in India and many Buddhists fled from India to Sri Lanka and Tibet. However, in Sri Lanka the Wettulyan sect arose. This was based on the heresies of a Brahmin named Wettuliya who attempted to undermine the purity of Buddhist tenets. Although countered by measures to eradicate heresy, laid down at the convocation held at Aluvihāra under the auspices of King Valagambā, it continued to mar the unity of Buddhism.

A period of recovery

The second century A.D. was unremarkable except for the feats of Gajabāhu, another Sinhalese hero. In 110 A.D. an invasion by a Cōḷa king named Karikāla had resulted in several hundred Sinhalese nobles being taken captive to India as slaves to work in the construction of dykes for the purpose of flood-protection at Kāvēri in South India. It is likely that this invasion from South India occurred, as these invasions often did, during a time of weakness in the administration of the island. This weakness was caused by the kingdom being divided between Vasabha's three sons who ruled as independent rulers. In 113 A.D. Gajabāhu revenged this attack by invading Cōḷa and returning not only with the nobles but also with booty and hundreds of Cōḷa captives. The work of building viḥāras and dagobas continued. New tanks were built and maintenance work carried out on the irrigation system. Gajabāhu unified the administration, which had been divided

into three distinct areas by the sons of Vasabha. Around 190 A.D. there was a severe famine known as *ekanālika*, which caused a lot of hardship and provoked a rebellion during which the king (Kuñcanāga or Kuḍā Naga) was overthrown.

The Sinhalese language was more established and in common usage by the third century A.D. in preference to Pali, which continued to be used by the priesthood. The heresy of the Wettuliyān (Vaitulya) sect came into prominence in the Abhayagiri monastery. This unconventional philosophy of Mahāyāna Buddhism was vehemently opposed by the Mahāvihāra school of Theravāda Buddhism, which considered it a heresy. It came to a head in the reign of Mahāsena who was influenced by his tutor, a Wettuliyān. When the monks of the Mahāvihāra refused to accept the Wettuliyān doctrine, Mahāsena decreed that they should not be given any alms and pulled down the buildings of the Mahāvihāra. The old established priesthood fled to the jungles and caves in horror. However, he recanted. In atonement he built (amongst others) the Minnēriya and Kantalai tanks. Irrigation engineering in the island reached its peak in the third century A.D. The Great Dynasty came to an end with death of Mahāsena in 303 A.D.

Early Anurādhapura Rulers

Ruler	Capital	Period of Rule
Paṇḍukābhaya	Anurādhapura	437 - 367 B.C.
Muṭasiva	Anurādhapura	367 - 307 B.C.
Devānampiyatissa	Anurādhapura	307 - 267 B.C.
Uttiya	Anurādhapura	267 - 257 B.C.
Mahāsiva	Anurādhapura	257 - 247 B.C.
Sūratissa	Anurādhapura	247 - 237 B.C.
Sena and Guttika	Anurādhapura	237 - 215 B.C.
Asela	Anurādhapura	215 - 205 B.C.
Elāra	Anurādhapura	205 - 161 B.C.
Dutugāmuṇu	Anurādhapura	161 - 137 B.C.
Saddhātissa	Anurādhapura	137 - 119 B.C.
Thūlatthana	Anurādhapura	119 - 109 B.C.
Lañjatissa	Anurādhapura	109 - 104 B.C.
Khallātanaḡa	Anurādhapura	104 - 104 B.C.
Valagambā	Anurādhapura	104 - 88 B.C.

Early Anurādhapura Period

Five Tamil Kings	Anurādhapura	104 - 88 B.C.
Mahācūlimahātissa	Anurādhapura	76 - 62 B.C.
Coranāga	Anurādhapura	62 - 50 B.C.
Kuḍā Tissa	Anurādhapura	50 - 47 B.C.
Anulā	Anurādhapura	47 - 41 B.C.
Makalantissa	Anurādhapura	41 - 19 B.C.
Bhātikābhaya	Anurādhapura	19 B.C - 9 A.D.
Mahādāthika Mahānāga	Anurādhapura	9 - 21 A.D.
Amaṇḍagāmaṇi Abhaya	Anurādhapura	21 - 30 A.D.
Kanirajānutissa	Anurādhapura	30 - 33 A.D.
Cūlābhaya	Anurādhapura	33 - 34 A.D.
Sivali	Anurādhapura	34 - 38 A.D.
Ilanāga	Anurādhapura	38 - 44 A.D.
Candamukha Siva	Anurādhapura	44 - 52 A.D.
Yasalālakatissa	Anurādhapura	52 - 60 A.D.
Subha	Anurādhapura	60 - 66 A.D.
Vasabha	Anurādhapura	66 - 110 A.D.
Vaṅkanāsikatissa	Anurādhapura	110 - 113 A.D.
Gajabāhu I	Anurādhapura	113 - 125 A.D.
Mahallakanāga	Anurādhapura	125 - 131 A.D.
Bhātikatissa	Anurādhapura	131 - 155 A.D.
Kaṇiṭṭhatissa	Anurādhapura	155 - 173 A.D.
Khujjanāga	Anurādhapura	173 - 183 A.D.
Kuṇḍanāga	Anurādhapura	183 - 184 A.D.
Sirināga I	Anurādhapura	184 - 209 A.D.
Vohārikatissa	Anurādhapura	209 - 231 A.D.
Abhayanāga	Anurādhapura	231 - 239 A.D.
Sirināga II	Anurādhapura	239 - 241 A.D.
Vijaya Kumāra	Anurādhapura	241 - 242 A.D.
Sanḥatissa I	Anurādhapura	242 - 246 A.D.
Sirisāṅgabō	Anurādhapura	246 - 248 A.D.
Gōthābhaya	Anurādhapura	248 - 261 A.D.
Jetṭhatissa I	Anurādhapura	261 - 275 A.D.
Mahāsena	Anurādhapura	275 - 303 A.D.

Paṇḍukābhaya

Paṇḍukābhaya (Paṇḍuka Abhaya or Pakuṇḍaka or Paṇḍuabā), who according to the *Mahāvamsa* was the grandson of Paṇḍuvāsudeva and ruled 437 - 367 B.C., has changed roles, if recent research is to be believed. It is now suggested that he was the son of Muṭasiva and ruled circa 281 - 247 B.C. This would alter numerous other dates including the founding of Anurādhapura. It is said that when planning the city, he set aside a suburb for the Greeks who were resident in his kingdom. This Greek connection accords with the theory that his grandfather (Siṃhala) married a Greek general's daughter. These Greeks may have had a role to play in the newly formed administration in Anurādhapura.

During his reign the provision of facilities for sanitation and health of the citizens was considered a priority. He constructed a reservoir named Abhayavāpi, now called Basavak-kulam, not only to supply water but also to irrigate the paddy-fields, which produced the rice for the population of the city.

Devānampiyatissa

Devānampiyatissa (Devanapāṭis) is said to have been the second son of Muṭasiva and, according to the early translations of the *Mahāvamsa*, ruled 307 - 267 B.C. More recent work suggests that he ruled circa 247 - 207 B.C. and these dates are more likely to be correct as he was a contemporary of Emperor Asoka (265 - 238 B.C.). He was the first Buddhist monarch of the island and carried out many pious acts, most of them designed to house the already growing army of priests in rock temples and caves. He was also the first king to be consecrated in the Indian fashion with the help of the Mauryan royal insignia sent by Asoka. Amongst his earliest constructions are the Thūpārāma stūpa and the Isurumuṇiya rock temple, both at Anurādhapura. The Thūpārāma was the first stūpa (dāgāba) to be built in Sri Lanka. The king planted the sacred Bō-tree brought by Saṅghamittā, the sister of Mahinda. From his reign onwards, the monarchy supported Buddhism and extended its patronage to the monastic order.

Uttiya

Uttiya was a younger brother of Devānampiyatissa and ruled either 267 - 257 B.C. (*Mahāvamsa*) or circa 207 - 197 B.C. (more recent estimate). He ruled piously and was devoted to a monk named Bhaddasāla who was probably one of the monks who originally accompanied Mahinda. During his reign, Arahat Mahinda, who had brought Buddhism to Sri Lanka, died and was cremated on the Mihintalē rock. A stūpa named Mihiṇḍusāya (the stūpa of Mahinda thera) was built on the site. His reign was peaceful and, no doubt, he continued Devānampiyatissa's work in supporting the monastic order.

Mahāsiva

Mahāsiva was another brother of Devānampiyatissa. According to traditional sources he ruled 257 - 247 B.C. but according to the more recent research his rule was circa 197 - 187 B.C. He, too, continued the pious work of his brothers and built another monastery named Nagaṅgana.

Sūratissa

Sūratissa, or Suvannapiṇḍatissa, said to be another brother of Devānampiyatissa, traditionally ruled 247 - 237 B.C. Other dates given are circa 187 - 177 B.C. Curiously, each of Devānampiyatissa's three brothers ruled for exactly ten years. Sūratissa is said to have built many monasteries. He was put to death, according to the *Mahāvamsa*, when Sena and Guttika captured the throne.

Sena & Guttika

These two mysterious characters were Tamils and carried out the first recorded Dravidian attack on the Sinhalese kingdom. The *Mahāvamsa* describes them as merchant mariners 'powerful in their cavalry and navy'. They may have been mercenaries in the employ of King Sūratissa who assassinated him and ruled in his place. Paranavitana postulates that they were merchants from the Sindhu region, which was famous for its horses. Surprisingly, they were able to rule for twenty-two years at Anurādhapura without being ousted by a popular uprising of the Sinhalese. It is said that they diverted the Malvatu Oya to run by the side of the city so that they could perform their sacred (Hindu) ablutions without having to travel far from the palace. Traditionally, they ruled 237 - 215 B.C. (or circa 177 -155 B.C., if later research is correct in its conclusions).

Asela

Asela is said to have been another son of Muṭasiva, but this seems chronologically impossible. It seems likely that he was a prince of the royal house and a descendant of Muṭasiva. He overthrew Sena and Guttika in 215 B.C. according to the early

English translation of the *Mahāvamsa* but circa 155 B.C. according to recent research. He ruled for ten years and was deposed by Eḷāra.

Eḷāra

Eḷāra (Eḷala) was a Cōḷa prince from South India who invaded Sri Lanka in 205 B.C. Paranavitana postulates (on tenuous evidence) that he was a Parthian, son of one of Asoka's generals. His armies landed at several points and converged on Anurādhapura defeating Asela, who was slain. Eḷāra ruled the country north of the Mahavāli for the next forty-four years. The rulers of Ruhuna and Maya paid him tribute. Eḷāra, as protection against attack from the south, built thirty-two forts across the country. The main fort was at Vijitapura. Eḷāra seems to have treated Buddhism with respect and the *Mahāvamsa* describes him as a just ruler, 'despite being a Tamil'. However, he did not provide the active support accorded to Buddhism by previous kings and the irrigation-works which had flourished in the central and northern districts were neglected under his rule. He is also said to have allowed his followers to return to India with spoils from Sri Lanka. The chronicles state that he ruled 205 - 161 B.C. when he was defeated and killed in battle by Duṭugāmuṇu who treated him as a chivalrous foe.

Duṭugāmuṇu

Duṭugāmuṇu (Gāmaṇī Abhaya) was a descendant of Mahānāga, brother of Devānampiyatissa, who ruled at Māgama (Tissamahārāma) in Ruhuna and the son of Kāvantisā and Vihāradēvi. Legend has it that Vihāradēvi acquired her name because a vihāra was built on the southeastern coast of Sri Lanka where the boat in which she was set adrift by her father, the ruler of Kālaṇi (modern Kelaniya), came ashore. This ruler of Kālaṇi had a close family connection with the Kṣatriya rulers of Kataragama and the marriage of Duṭugāmuṇu's parents may have been a political act to unite Ruhuna for the impending battle against Eḷāra.

Duṭugāmuṇu's ambition, from childhood, was to recapture Anurādhapura. His father sent him to 'Malaya' for his own safety. The term 'Malaya' probably signifies Malayadesa (the name of the central highland region in ancient times) rather than Malaysia. He returned at his father's death to succeed him as ruler of Ruhuna. After several campaigns he marched on Anurādhapura with an army whose commander-in chief was Nandimitra. The final Tamil fortress to fall was at Vijitanagara (which some think was located in or near Poḷonnaruva). He is said to have killed Eḷāra in single combat. Significantly, Duṭugāmuṇu's war cry was 'Not for kingdom but for Buddhism' and when he became king at Anurādhapura in 161 B.C. many religious edifices were built, including the Brazen Palace (Lohapāsāda), the Ruvanvālisāya and numerous monasteries to house the ever-growing number of priests.

Duṭugāmuṇu had a son named Sāliya and there are several different reasons given as to why he did not succeed his father as king. The traditional version is that he married Asokamālā, a woman of the Caṇḍāla caste (untouchables), and for this reason lost all rights to the throne. Another story is that Saddhātissa, his uncle, made plans to have him killed and that he escaped to India where he became a general in an army. It was Saddhātissa who succeeded Duṭugāmuṇu in 137 B.C.

Saddhātissa

During his reign, the Brazen Palace (Lohapāsāda) burnt down and was rebuilt with seven instead of the original nine storeys. Saddhātissa completed the building of the Ruvanvālisāya and built many vihāras, including the Dīghavāpi vihāra at Amparai. He died circa 119 B.C. and influential priests and ministers ignored his eldest son and consecrated the second son as king but the elder brother deposed him after a month and took his rightful place on the throne.

Thūlatthana

Thūlatthana (Tul or Tulu) younger son of Saddhātissa ruled

for just one month in 119 B.C., before being deposed by his elder brother.

Lañjatissa

Lañjatissa (Lajjitissa or Lāmaṇitis), was the eldest son of Saddhātissa and deposed his younger brother, Thūlatthana, to come to the throne in 119 B.C. During the first three years of his reign he neglected the priests because they had wanted his younger brother to be king but he later changed his mind and, like his predecessors, did his best to please the *bhikkhus*. He built the Sela cetiya, a small stūpa, to the east of the Thūpārāma. His younger brother, Khallāṭanāga, succeeded him circa 110 B.C.

Khallāṭanāga

Khallāṭanāga (Kalunnā or Kalunā), was a younger brother of Lañjatissa and ruled circa 109 - 104 B.C. He built many dwellings for the *bhikkhus*, who continued to increase in number and power. Three of his nephews plotted to overthrow him and when they failed, committed suicide in a Jain temple at Anurādhapura by throwing themselves on a burning pyre circa 104 B.C. Khallāṭanāga was put to death by one of his generals named Mahā Rattaka but Valagambā (or Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya), the youngest son of Saddhātissa overpowered Mahā Rattaka.

Valagambā

Valagambā (Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya), youngest son of Saddhātissa, came to the throne in 104 B.C. A Tamil prince from South India deposed him in the same year. He escaped into the mountainous central and southern areas of Malayadesa and Ruhuna. He returned in 88 B.C. with an army of highlanders and managed to overthrow the ruling Tamil prince. The initial rift between Valagambā and the orthodox Buddhist establishment healed after his victory over the Tamils. In gratitude for this victory dagobas, vihāras and tanks were built and dedicated to the priests. One of the dagobas built at this time was the Abhayagiri dagoba, which is said to be the biggest in the world. It was built on the premises occupied by a Jain ascetic called Giri and became the

centre for the Abhayagiri sect of Buddhists. Perhaps Valagambā's most notable act was assembling a convocation of Buddhists at Aluvihāra, near Mātalē, to record the sayings of the Buddha as writings on ola leaves. These sayings had, up to that time, been transmitted orally. This act saved them from extinction. Valagambā also laid down stern measures to eradicate heresy, which threatened Buddhism at that time. He ruled until 76 B.C.

Five Tamil Kings

Seven Tamil princes invaded the island and five of them ruled successively as kings in Anurādhapura for the next sixteen years after the overthrow of Valagambā in 104 B.C.. The first was Puḷahattha who was killed by his commander-in-chief, Bāhiya, after ruling for three years. Bāhiya ruled for two years and was, in his turn, killed by his commander-in-chief, Panayamāraka who ruled for seven years and was murdered by his lieutenant Pilayamaraka who ruled for seven months. His general, named Dāṭhika overthrew Pilayamāraka. Dāṭhika was the king when Valagambā returned from exile in 88 B.C.

Mahācūḷi Mahātissa

Mahācūḷi (Mahācūḷika Mahātissa or Mahadāḷiyātis) was the son of Khallāṭanāga and succeeded Valagambā in circa 76 B.C. He is said to have ruled over the entire island, which had been united by Valagambā and is credited with having built five monasteries, which obviously pleased the priestly chroniclers of the *Mahāvamsa*. During the latter part of his reign (of about fourteen years) Valagambā's son Coranāga rose in rebellion but this was quelled.

Coranāga

Coranāga ruled 62 - 50 B.C. He became notorious as the 'robber king', presumably because he stole from the temples to enrich himself. He destroyed eighteen monasteries that refused to support him during his days as a rebel. He may also have taken back lands given to the priests by previous kings. This did not endear him to the Buddhist priest authors of the *Mahāvamsa* who speak of him with revulsion and refer to him as a robber. He was poisoned by his wife.

Kuḍā Tissa

Kuḍā Tissa, son of Mahācūli, became king in 50 B.C. after his uncle, Coranāga's death. Unfortunately, he had made the mistake of marrying a woman called Anulā, who has earned fame not only as the first female sovereign of Sri Lanka but also as the most notorious female in the island's history. She poisoned her husband after he had ruled for three years.

Anulā

Anulā, the first Sinhalese woman ruler, is the 'femme fatale' of Sri Lankan history and curiously similar to Messalina (22 - 48 A.D.), the third wife of the Emperor Claudius. She was an extraordinary woman. A nymphomaniac, she poisoned her first husband Kuḍā Tissa to gain the throne in 47 B.C. She then married five other men whom she successively put on the throne and then poisoned, all within the space of seven years. These unfortunate men included a palace guard named Siva, a Tamil carpenter named Vaṭuka and Tissa, a wood carrier. Each of these men was king for a year. Her last partner was Nīliya, a Tamil Brahmin officiating as a priest in the palace. He only lasted six months. Anulā then ruled for four months. She was murdered in 41 B.C. The chronicles state that she was burnt alive in her palace by the second son of Kuḍā Tissa - probably her own son, though the *Mahāvamsa* is not very clear on this point.

Makalantissa

Makalantissa (Kuṭakaṇṇatissa) was the second son of Mahācūli Mahātissa. He returned from exile where he had lived as a monk and raised an army to overthrow Anulā in 41 B.C. He succeeded Anulā as ruler after Kuḍā Tissa's son killed her. His rule of twenty-two years was peaceful. He constructed a chapter house in Mihintalē. His mother entered the order of *bhikkhunis* (Buddhist nuns) and the king founded a nunnery for her. During his reign several irrigation projects were undertaken. He built himself a new palace, erected a new wall around the city and created a moat around it. His eldest son Bhātiya succeeded him in 19 B.C.

Bhātikābhaya

Bhātikābhaya (Bhātiya) was the son of Makalantissa and ruled 19 B.C. - 9 A.D. It was during his reign that a Sri Lankan representative went to Rome in the company of Annius Plocamus, a Roman sailor. He was given ambassadorial status in the court of Emperor Augustus. There was peace during Bhātiya's reign and he carried out numerous good works including repairs to the Brazen Palace, improvements to the Ruvanvālisāya and the building of a chapter house for the Thūpārāma monastery. He also gave alms daily to a thousand monks and did away with certain taxes that were for the personal benefit of the king.

Mahādāṭhika Mahanaga

Mahādāṭhika Mahānāga (Mahadāḷiyāmānā), the brother of Bhātiya, ruled 9 - 22 A.D. Mahādāṭhika means 'great beard'. He built the Ambatthala stūpa in Mihintalē and carried out numerous improvements in and around Mihintalē. He also carried out improvements to the Ruvanvālisāya. In his time barbers were employed on a permanent basis at the four gates of the city. It is also recorded that this king ordered remissions on prison sentences. The peace that had commenced in the time of King Makalantissa continued during the reign of his younger son, Mahādāṭhika.

Āmaṇḍagāmaṇi Abhaya

Āmaṇḍagāmaṇi Abhaya (Amaṇḍagāmuṇu), son of Mahādāṭhika, succeeded him in 22 A.D. He increased the height of the Ruvanvālisāya and carried out further improvements to it. He also decreed that no animal should be slaughtered in his kingdom (*māghāta*). His nine-year rule was peaceful but his younger brother, Kaṇirajānu Tissa, murdered him in 31 A.D.

Kaṇirajānu Tissa

Kaṇirajānu Tissa (Kiṇihiridaḷa) murdered his elder brother, Āmaṇḍagāmaṇi, to become king in 31 A.D. He did not get on very well with the priesthood and after a dispute at the Mihintalē monastery he executed sixty priests by having them thrown over

a cliff. He ruled only for three years but the reason for this short rule is not clear.

Cūlābhaya

Cūlābhaya (Kuḍā Abā), a son of Āmaṇḍagāmaṇi, succeeded Kanirajānu Tissa circa 35 A.D. but died after one year. During his short reign he built a monastery named Cūḷagallaka in the south of Anuradhapura on the banks of the Kalā-Oya. His younger sister, Sīvalī, succeeded him.

Sīvalī

Sīvalī (also referred to as Revatī) was the second female ruler of Sri Lanka. In an essentially patriarchal society a woman as ruler could not have been popular. She came to the throne circa 36 A.D. and only ruled for four months. It is not clear as to whether she was deposed or put to death. There seems to have been an interregnum of 2 - 3 years following her rule and the next ruler, King Iḷanāga, came to the throne in 38 A.D.

Iḷanāga

Iḷanāga (Eḷunnā), who ruled 38 - 44 A.D., was the nephew of Āmaṇḍagāmaṇi. It was during his rule that the Lambakaṇṇa clan first came into prominence. This clan is said to have arrived as part of the entourage of Saṅghamittā circa 247 B.C. They had become powerful by holding important secretarial posts. They rebelled and seized power. Iḷanāga was forced into exile in South India for a period of about three years. He returned and, making Ruḥuṇa his base, defeated the Lambakaṇṇas to regain his kingdom. It is said that he punished the rebels by cutting off their toes and noses. His son Candamukha Siva succeeded him.

Candamukha Siva

Candamukha Siva (Saṇḍamuhūṇu), son of Iḷanāga, ruled from 43 - 52 A.D. Perhaps influenced by his father's enforced sojourn in South India, he married a Tamil princess who was referred to as Damiḷadevi (Tamil queen). This king constructed a tank and offered it to the monastery now identified as the

Vessagiri in the Anurādhapura district. His Tamil queen allocated a part of her own revenues to the same monastery. His brother, Yasalālakatissa, assassinated Candamukha Siva.

Yasalālakatissa

Yasalālakatissa (Yasasiḷu) became king in 52 A.D. He is said to have exchanged places, as a jest, with a gate watchman by the name of Subha who bore a striking resemblance to him. This watchman, pretending to be the king, ordered the guards to take away the pseudo watchman (in reality, the king) and execute him for laughing in his presence. Thus ended the reign of the joker king in 60 A.D. Yasalālaka was the last of the Grāmaṇeya kings, the first Sinhalese royal dynasty.

Subha

Subha (Sabha) was the gate watchman who usurped the throne from Yasalālaka in 60 A.D. He ruled for 6 years. He is said to have been the son of another gate watchman named Datta. He must have been a very clever actor as neither his officials nor his subjects saw through his deception and he continued as king for six years carrying out the usual royal good works to propitiate the priests - building chapter houses, donating tanks etc. According to the *Mahāvamsa* soothsayers predicted that a person by the name of Vasabha would seize the throne and Subha decreed that all persons bearing the name in the kingdom should be executed. A young man of the Lambakarna clan named Vasabha in the province of Ruhuna escaped, gathered an army and after a long campaign overthrew Subha.

Vasabha

Vasabha (Vahap or Vāhāp) became king in 66 A.D. having put Subha, the usurper, to death. He was the first king of the Lambakarna dynasty. He ruled for forty-four years, a lengthy rule for a king of that period. His greatest achievement was in the construction of several tanks and canals. The Ālahāra canal connecting the Aṁbangaṅga and the Kiri-oya is forty-eight kilometres long and is the only one of Vasabha's canals that can

be identified today. He also raised the height of the wall around Anurādhapura and laid an underground drainage system. A gold plate inscription of his time found at Vallipuram in Jaffna has been put forward as evidence that his authority was established over the whole island, including Jaffna. At his death (circa 110 A.D.) three of his sons set up independent administrations in Rajaraṭa (Vaṅkanāsika Tissa), Ruhuna (Uttara) and Māyāraṭa (Duṭaga).

Vaṅkanāsika Tissa

Vaṅkanāsika Tissa (Vaknähātis) was one of the three sons of Vasabha who divided up the administration, which had been a single unit under their father. He ruled Rajaraṭa circa 110 - 113 A.D. He married the daughter of the gate watchman king (Subha or Sabha) proving that this man had been accepted as royalty. During the reign of Vaṅkanāsika Tissa, the Cōla king, Karikāla, invaded and took away a large number of captives to work as slaves on the dykes being built at Kāvēri in South India for the purpose of flood protection. His son Gajabāhu succeeded him.

Gajabāhu I

Gajabāhu (Gāmaṇi), son of Vaṅkanāsika Tissa, ruled circa 113 A.D. - 134 A.D. He distinguished himself by undertaking an expedition to South India to bring back those captured by the Cōla king during his father's rule and used as slaves. He has become a Sinhalese folk hero because of his exploits and his name means 'he whose arm has the strength of an elephant'. He is mentioned in a Tamil poem of that period as being present at the consecration of a shrine by the Cēra king in South India. He unified the administration of the three provinces of Rajaraṭa, Ruhuna and Maya by marrying his cousin, daughter of the ruler of Ruhuna. This union of the two provinces of Anurādhapura and Ruhuna led to the province of Māyāraṭa also agreeing to become part of a unified administration with Anurādhapura as the capital. He built the Mātu vihāra at his mother's request and reconstructed the Abhayagiri stūpa.

Mahallakanāga

Mahallakanāga (Mahalumānā) was Gajabāhu's brother-in-law and had administered Ruhuna as Vice-Regent before succeeding him. He came to the throne at the death of Gajabāhu circa 134 A.D. and ruled for six years. His son Bhātika Tissa succeeded him in 140 A. D.

Bhātika Tissa

Bhātika Tissa (Bhātiya Tissa), the son of Mahallakanāga, ruled 140 - 164 A.D. His rule was peaceful and his younger brother, Kanittha Tissa, succeeded him.

Kaniṭṭha Tissa

Kaniṭṭha Tissa (Maḷa/Maḷi/Maḷu Tisa or Cūlatissa), younger brother of Bhātika Tissa, ruled circa 164 - 192 A.D. Recent archaeological evidence suggests that he was the original builder of the Ratanapāsāda, chapter house of the Abhayagiri monastery. It was enlarged and improved by Mahinda II in the eighth century A.D. Kaniṭṭha Tissa also constructed a chapter house at the Kālaṇi Vihāra. His rule of 28 years appears to have been peaceful and his son Khujjanāga succeeded him.

Khujjanāga

Khujjanaga (Kuhunnā or Cūlanāga), son of Kaniṭṭhatissa, ruled 173 - 183 A.D. His younger brother, Kuñcanāga, murdered him to become king.

Kuñcanāga

Kuñcanāga (Kuḍānā or Kuḍḍanāga), younger brother of Khujjanāga, ruled for one year circa 183 A.D. During his short reign there was a terrible famine called *ekanālika* which caused immense hardship. Taking advantage of the unrest during this famine his brother-in-law, Sirināga, who was commander-in-chief of the army, deposed the king and assumed power in 184 A.D.

Sirināga I

Sirināga I ruled 195 - 214 A.D. He was, apparently, a king

with great compassion and reduced taxes, presumably to ease the burden of the recent famine. He made improvements to the Ruvanvālisāya and reconstructed the Lōvāmahāpāya. His son Vohārika Tissa succeeded him.

Vohārika Tissa

Vohārika Tissa, whose name means 'Tissa the Just', (also known as Veratissa), was the son of Sirināga and succeeded his father in 214 A.D. and ruled until 236 A.D. He was the first ruler to ban corporal punishment. During his reign the Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine was introduced by some of the priests in the Abhayagiri monastery. This Wettuliyān (or Vaituliyān) sect was strongly opposed by the traditional Mahāvihāra school of Theravāda Buddhism, which considered it a heresy. Kapila, the Minister of Justice, investigated it. On hearing his report, the king decided to repress the new school and had the Wettuliyān scriptures burnt. His downfall was due to his younger brother, Abhayanāga, a secret lover of the queen, and Subhadeva, a relative. They conspired against the king and when Abhayanāga returned from India with an army of Tamil mercenaries, the king fled to the mountains but was pursued and killed. Abhayanāga succeeded him.

Abhayanāga

Abhayanāga (Abā Tissa or Abāsen), younger brother of Vohārika Tissa, succeeded his brother after having killed him and ruled from circa 236 A.D. to circa 244 A.D. Perhaps stricken by conscience, he carried out various good works of atonement during his reign of 8 years. He is said to have distributed robes amongst the priests and improved numerous religious buildings. Sirināga II, the son of Vohārika, succeeded him.

Sirināga II

Sirināga II, son of Vohārika, succeeded his uncle, Abhayanāga, and ruled circa 244 - 246 A.D. He is said to have been a pious king and carried out many works of merit. He granted a village, a tank and eighteen irrigation canals to the monastery,

which is now known as Vessagiri Vihāra in Anurādhapura. He also improved the buildings around the Sacred Bodhi tree. His son, Vijaya Kumāra, succeeded him.

Vijaya Kumāra

Vijaya Kumāra (Vijayiṇḍu), the son of Sirināga II, ruled for only one year from circa 246 A.D. He was murdered by three conspirators of the Lambakarna clan who came from Mahiyaṅgana on the banks of the Mahavāli River, the border between Rajaraṭa and Ruhuna. They were named Saṅghatissa, Sirisaṅgabō (Saṅghabodhi) and Gōṭhābhaya. Vijaya Kumāra, having been murdered, Saṅghatissa was consecrated king circa 247 A.D.

Saṅghatissa

Saṅghatissa I (Saṅgatis), a member of the Lambakarna clan, ruled circa 247 - 251 A.D. The chronicle states that this king was fond of visiting an island in the vicinity of Mannar famed for its jambu fruit, which the king enjoyed eating. The royal visits became a heavy financial burden on his subjects some of whom poisoned the fruit that the king ate causing his immediate demise. He was succeeded by Sirisaṅgabō.

Sirisaṅgabō

Sirisaṅgabō (Sirisaṅghabodhi), another of the three Lambakarna conspirators, ruled circa 251 - 253 A.D. During his reign there was a severe drought and Sirisaṅgabō is said to have laid down in the courtyard of the Ruvanvālisāya and made a vow that he would not get up unless raised by the water that 'the god shall rain'. Heavy rains set in and he was able to rise. He was overthrown by a rebellion led by his erstwhile friend, Gōṭhābhaya. Sirisaṅgabō had to flee and on the road he met a traveller whose generosity in offering him a meal impressed the pious king so much that he gave his own head to be taken to Gōṭhābhaya so that the reward offered could be claimed. It seems that these pious acts so impressed his successors that from the seventh to the sixteenth century A.D. 'Sirisaṅgabō' was used as the throne name.

Gōṭhābhaya

Gōṭhābhaya (Goḷuabā or Meghavarṇa Abhaya), one of the three Lambakarna conspirators, deposed Sirisaṅgabō and ruled circa 253 - 266 A.D. Recent archaeological research suggests that he was a son of Sirināga II. Religious heresy and schism came into prominence again in his reign. Not only the Wettuliyān sect but also another breakaway group named the Sāgaliya sect, headed by a monk named Sāgali, were in opposition to the traditional Mahāvihāra group. Gōṭhābhaya, initially a traditionalist, carried out a ruthless 'purification' by branding and banishing the heretics. Saṅghamitra, a pupil of a group of these banished monks who had settled in South India, returned to Sri Lanka and by diplomacy and tact not only gained admission to the court but managed to convince the king that the monks of the Mahāvihāra were inferior to him. The king was so impressed that he appointed him tutor to his sons - Jeṭṭhatissa and Mahāsena.

Jeṭṭhatissa I

Jeṭṭhatissa (Kalakān Deṭatis) was the eldest son of Gōṭhābhaya and ruled circa 266 - 276 A.D. He had to crush those of his father's ministers who were in favour of his younger brother, Mahāsena acceding to the throne. The Wettuliyān monk Saṅghamitra who was disliked by Jeṭṭhatissa and who, very probably, instigated the ministers into the conspiracy to make Mahāsena the king, left the country. He rebuilt the Lōvāmahāpāya and renamed it Maṇipāsāda. He also established a new monastery and named it Pācīnatissapabbata.

Mahāsena

Mahāsena (Mahasen), the younger son of Gōṭhābhaya, ruled 275 - 303 A.D. The Wettuliyān priest, Saṅghamitra, returned to the court when he heard that Mahāsena, his pupil, was king. He influenced the king against the traditionalists in the Mahāvihāra and for ten years the Wettuliyāns were in control. The traditional Theravāda monks were compelled to seek refuge in the wilderness because Mahāsena refused them the alms on which they survived. He, also, tore down several traditional monasteries and had their wealth removed to the Abhayagiri vihāra. Ultimately, one of his

Early Anuradhapura Period

ministers rebelled but peace was restored when Mahāsenā agreed to conform to tradition and restore the Mahāvihāra monks to their previous position of prominence. Saṅghamitra was put to death. Mahāsenā's irrigation works were colossal and one of his tanks, Minnēriya, still irrigates a vast area. According to the *Mahāvamsa*, he was the last of the 'Great Dynasty'.

Administration

Administrative structure

The mastery of hydraulic engineering and irrigated agriculture facilitated the concentration of large numbers of people in the northern dry zone, where early settlements were under the control of semi-independent rulers. In time, the mechanisms for political control became more refined. The city-state of Anurādhapura emerged and attempted to gain sovereignty over the entire island. The Sinhalese kingdom at Anurādhapura was in many ways typical of other ancient hydraulic societies because it lacked a rigid, authoritarian and heavily bureaucratic structure. Theorists have attributed Anurādhapura's decentralized character to its feudal basis, which was feudalism unlike that found in Europe. The institution of caste formed the basis of social stratification in ancient Sri Lankan society and determined not only a person's social status but also his social obligation and position within the hierarchy.

The island was divided into three principalities, each with its own ruler or rulers. The three principalities were Rajaraṭa, with Anurādhapura as capital, Ruhuṇa with Māgama (and at times, Kataragama) as capital and Malayadesa, which was politically negligible until the sixth century A.D. As time went on the number of administrative units increased. Māyāraṭa (or Dakkhinadesa) was the southwestern division of Rajaraṭa, governed by the heir to the throne. Uttaradesa was the northern division, Pacchimadesa the western division and Pāchīnadesa the eastern division. The Vanni separated Rajaraṭa from Jaffna of which little is known at this stage.

It was the desire of most of the rulers at Anurādhapura to establish control over the whole island but an administrative structure did not exist that would make this a reality and maintain such control even when there was weakening of royal power in Anurādhapura. Rulers of outlying regions were jealously protective of their possessions and when this factor was combined with local patriotism, any form of union was unpopular. The links between the central administration in Anurādhapura and the outlying provinces were not governed by any formal administrative structure but by informal, more volatile and unpredictable personal ties. The Anurādhapura kingdom was never a centralised, autocratic structure. Though some form of union has been claimed during certain reigns, there was a difference between the ritual sovereignty claimed and the actual sovereignty that existed. It seems likely that the island was not really an integrated political unit, as we would understand it in the modern idiom, until the coming of the British.

A strong government must have been established at an early stage leading to population growth and extensive colonisation particularly in the north-central region. The smallest administrative unit was the *gama* (village), which was under the authority of a *gamika* (headman). These villages were established on land belonging to the king and taxes from these villages (*gabaḍāgam*) were an important part of the king's revenue. Villages were bequeathed to nobles who were relatives of the king or had performed some beneficial service. A feudal system, therefore, developed. This feudal system operated with the king at the head and nobility (*pramukha/parumaka*) that was closely connected with the clan structure. The political and social structure revolved around the monarchy. The higher officials of the kingdom, including the commander-in-chief of the army (*sēnāpati*), were either members of the king's immediate family or *pramukhas*. In theory, the king was the fountainhead of justice and was supposed to listen to complaints from even the meanest of his subjects. A *sabhā*, or council of ministers, advised the king in the early centuries of the Anurādhapura period. Next in importance to the king was the *uparāja* (viceroy). There were

few officials - the *sēnāpati*, the *bhāṇḍāgārika* (treasurer), a few *mahāmātras* (ministers) and *adhyakṣas* (superintendents) and a *purohita* (domestic chaplain). By the tenth century, a complex administrative structure had developed and controlled many aspects of the lives of people especially with regard to irrigation.

The clans and royal succession

An important feature of the political background was the existence of a number of powerful families or clans of which the most prominent up to 66 A.D. was the Grāmaṇeya clan. The kings who ruled up to 66 A.D. belonged to this clan. King Vasabha founded a new dynasty of kings belonging to the Lambakaṛṇa clan in 66 A.D. The Lambakaṛṇas came to Sri Lanka from India at the same time as the sacred Bō tree in the time of Devānampiyatissa. Their name, derived from Pali, means 'scribe' and it is likely that they came into prominence by holding high administrative office. The first Lambakaṛṇa dynasty lasted until the death of King Mahānāma in 428 A.D. During this period of Lambakaṛṇa rule, their rivals were the Moriya clan who were scattered throughout the island and in hiding from Lambakaṛṇa persecution. The first king of the Moriya clan was Dhātusena who regained the throne in 456 A.D. from five Tamil kings who had ruled for twenty-seven years. There were several civil wars in the ensuing centuries until the Lambakaṛṇas wrested back power in 684 A.D.

Political instability seems to have been the rule rather than the exception during a greater part of the Anurādhapura period. The two most important factors giving rise to this instability were the rivalry between the clans and the law of succession to the throne. It must be remembered that the monarch was an absolute ruler. In the early years there was no clearly recognised law of succession and it was the ruling monarch who chose a favoured member of the royal family, usually a son or a brother, to succeed him. Those who thought they had a better claim to the throne often challenged this choice after the death of the monarch. From 684 A.D. onwards, when the Lambakaṛṇas returned to power, succession came to depend on well-established custom.



Sri Lanka in ancient and medieval times

The throne passed was from brother to brother and only then did it pass to the next generation. By this time, it was believed that kingship was akin to divinity and this sanctity combined with an established rule for succession made it difficult for pretenders and rivals to command a viable following even when a weak king ascended the throne.

Taxation, grants and service

The king and the state provided protection in return for the taxes that were collected by officials. The irrigation system was a source of revenue. In addition to the larger tanks, which were the preserve of the king, there were many small tanks and canals often owned by individuals who were taxed. This payment was called *Dakapati*. The king claimed a share of the produce of all occupied and cultivated land. He was traditionally entitled to land revenue equivalent to one-sixth of the produce in his domain.

Unoccupied land was the king's property and he could grant proprietary rights to individuals or institutions if he so wished. Religious institutions received grants of land, tanks and fields from the king and other benefactors.

The question arises as to how the necessary labour was obtained for the various projects carried out by the state and also by individuals. The caste system, which was a throwback to Hinduism, meant that there was a section of people who could be looked down upon and even treated as slaves. Initially, these may have been the indigenous people of the country. There would have been a substantial slave labour force consisting of the original aboriginal inhabitants and the lower castes. From the ninth century A.D. onwards there was a system of compulsory, unpaid service for the king called *rājakāriya*. This was a kind of caste-based compulsory labour. As a condition for holding land subjects were required to provide labour for road construction, irrigation projects, and other public works. This system existed up to the nineteenth century and was exploited by the Europeans.

Irrigation

The importance of a reliable supply of water in the dry zone areas within which this civilisation took root is impossible to exaggerate. This was a hydraulic society, which depended on a man-made water supply for its very existence. As the population increased, more and more water was required. These demands were met by irrigation projects for several centuries until the ancient irrigation works fell into disrepair and the will to maintain and improve them did not seem to exist. An adequate supply of water meant a plentiful supply of rice, the staple diet. The surplus produced went into the coffers of the state and financed the great monuments and the many public works that made up a stable civilisation.

The earlier projects were aimed at water conservation rather than distribution but by the first century A.D. large-scale irrigation works were being constructed. There seems to have been a thorough grasp of hydraulics and trigonometry. The tanks had wide bases to withstand high pressures and at suitable points on the embankment there were outlets for the discharge of water. A great advance was the *bisōkoṭuva* (valve pit), which was a square enclosure of stone slabs. It was used to control the pressure and quantity of water released into a canal from a tank and was first devised about the third century B.C. This was an essential feature and without it the massive irrigation works would not have been possible.

An early problem was the flow of water in the Malvatu Oya and the Kalā Oya, the two rivers in the Anurādhapura area. These rivers dry up during most of the year. To overcome this problem water was diverted via canals from rivers in the wet zone to supply tanks constructed around Anurādhapura. Most of the irrigation works carried out during the first five centuries of the Christian era were in the reigns of Vasabha, Mahāsena and Dhātusena. A vast network of interconnecting canals and tanks had developed by the tenth century A.D. From the time of Mahāsena there was a tendency to harness the waters of the Mahavāli Gaṅga, the island's biggest river. This increased the amount of irrigable land around

Polonnaruwa and may have been one of the reasons for a shift of population to that area. Ruhuna had its own system of irrigation works consisting of a number of small tanks and associated canals. It seems that these constructions were initiated locally and not by the rulers in Rajaraṭa.

Economy

Rice, the staple food was already being cultivated on the island when the Sinhalese arrived. The aim of the early Sinhalese colonists was to grow sufficient food without relying on imports from India and extensive irrigation systems were devised to cultivate the dry zone in which they had settled. A surplus of rice was eventually grown and, probably, exported.

Gems and pearls, which were exported before the coming of the Sinhalese, continued as another export. Elephants were a later export. Horses were imported. The Sinhalese do not seem to have been a sea-faring nation to any extent and mercantile seafarers from other countries, mainly Arabs, acted as middlemen for the purposes of import and export. Trade, internal and external, was conducted by barter as well as by a monetary medium. The principal coinage was in silver but copper was also used.

Warfare

The king had the right to demand from every land-owning family in his territory an able-bodied son for military service. The military service consisted of an elephant corps, cavalry, chariots and infantry. The main missile was the bow and arrow. During the first few centuries of the Anurādhapura kingdom there does not seem to have been a regular army except for a small body of soldiers who guarded the city and the royal palace. Mercenaries from South India seem to have been employed throughout the Anurādhapura period. When an army was formed in preparation for an expected battle, it had several generals (Duṭṭugāmuṇu had ten generals) and the commander-in-chief (*sēnāpati*) was a member of the nobility. The king and the commander-in-chief would ride on elephants at the head of the army. The navy,

Administration

surprisingly, does not seem to have been important though it should have been the first line of defence for an island nation and the best way of stopping invaders from South India. The capital cities had walls and moats around them. Sieges were common and could last many months. Single combat, on elephants, between the opposing kings was, often, the climax of the battle. It must have been morally difficult (but a practical necessity) for a nation professing to follow the Buddha's teachings to go to war and kill its opponents.

Society

The Village

The dominant pattern of human settlement during the last 2,500 years has consisted of village farming communities. The typical settlement pattern in the rice-growing areas is a group of houses (huts) with one or more religious centres that serve as the focus for communal activities. Most of the dwellings in ancient times would have consisted of huts of varying sizes depending on the prosperity of the owner. These huts would have been of the 'wattle and daub' construction, which is still used in the villages of Sri Lanka and India. Sticks and twigs are woven together and plastered with mud or clay to form the walls. The roof is constructed of *cadjan* (or *kajang*), which consists of matted, dried, coconut leaves.

The patriarchal village system, which prevailed in India, was adopted and became the social unit. The family was the biological unit and sentimental attachment to family members and to other members of the village was much stronger than any affinity to the state and differed from attitudes in the West, for example Greece or Rome, where the state was all important. This characteristic still exists on the Indian subcontinent and, perhaps, has its origins in Hinduism. Each village had its own headman and there were bonds between villages in the vicinity for efficient functioning. This mutual interdependency was maintained by intermarriage. Functional groups in certain villages performed certain functions such as laundering, devil dancing etc. These duties belonged to certain castes and people of the same caste would inhabit the same village. Villages were bestowed to nobles in recognition of their services to the king.

Strata

Caste is an ancient institution originating in Hinduism but in Sri Lanka it lost the rigidity and shades of distinction found in India. Buddhism, at least in its early years, may have retarded the growth of the caste system but it could not stop it from becoming the basis of social stratification in Sinhalese society. The caste system in Sri Lanka developed its own characteristics. Although it shared an occupational role with its Indian prototype, caste in Sri Lanka developed neither the exclusive Brahmanical social hierarchy nor, to any significant degree, the concept of defilement by contact with impure persons or substances that was central to the Indian caste system. There was no 'untouchable' category in Sri Lanka, except for the *Roḍiyās*, who were small in number. The claims of the *Kṣatriya* (warrior caste) to royalty were a moderating influence on caste, but more profound was the influence of Buddhism, which lessened the severity of the institution. The monarch theoretically held absolute powers but was nevertheless expected to conform to the rules of *dharma*, or universal laws governing human existence and conduct.

Caste became organised on the principle of function. The ruling families tried to maintain themselves as a distinct and different group. People who performed a certain function or profession came to be grouped together and the respective groups were named after the function or profession. These functions or professions were graded in terms of their perceived importance and thus some castes were perceived as superior to others. It was an agricultural society and therefore the cultivator (or farmer) who usually owned land was the most important caste (*Goyigama*) with the king as chief farmer and landowner. This caste had economic power, increased in number and became warriors and rulers. Pliny the Elder, the Roman encyclopedist and historian, writing in the first century A.D. stated that the inhabitants of the island had a greater degree of civil liberty than in any other region in the east. Perhaps this information originated from the Sri Lankan representative who accompanied Annius Plocamus to Rome (see 'Early Anurādhapura Period').

Religion

The original immigrants from India were Hindus and, very probably, practiced this religion with its rigid caste system and numerous gods. The conversion of Devānampiyatissa to Buddhism was a momentous event in the history of the island. There were many reasons for this conversion. Buddhism, like Jainism, established itself in India at a time of great social unrest. There was a general dissatisfaction with Brahmanical sacrifice and ritual. The concept of renunciation and transcendental knowledge was an attractive new teaching. In contrast to the theological exclusivity of Hindu Brahmanism the Asokan missionary approach featured preaching and carried the principles of the Buddha directly to the common people. This proselytising had even greater success in Sri Lanka than it had in India and could be said to be the island's first experiment in mass education. The other aspect, as far as Devānampiyatissa was concerned, was the fact that the Emperor Asoka, who sponsored Devānampiyatissa's consecration as king, was not only Buddhist but also actively promoting the spread of this new religion. The link between the state and Buddhism developed from this point and became formalised over the centuries.

From early times, the ruler had certain obligations to the religion. Firstly, he had to provide the wherewithal for the maintenance of the *saṅgha* (monastic order). The *saṅgha* originated from the disciples of the Buddha. Together with the Buddha and the *dharma* it formed the Threefold Refuge, which is a basic concept of Buddhism. Buddhist monks, who form the most significant part of the *saṅgha*, are not permitted by their religion to engage in commerce or agriculture. Neither are they allowed to work for a living. Thus, they are entirely dependent on the lay community for economic support. Secondly, the ruler was obliged to use part of the country's agricultural surplus for the construction of religious buildings and monuments. Thirdly, he had to protect the established religion. The *saṅgha*, in its turn, advised the ruler with regard to the governance of the country in accordance with Buddhist ethics. It was with the rule of Duṭṭhagāmuṇi that a kind

of fanatical religio-nationalism began amongst the Sinhalese, akin to the influence of Christianity at a certain stage in its history. However, this form of nationalism still exists in Sri Lanka, which considers itself the protector of Buddhism.

Buddhism also had a great effect on the literary development of the island. The Indo-Aryan dialect spoken by the early Sinhalese was comprehensible to Buddhist missionaries from India and facilitated early attempts at translating the scriptures. The Sinhalese *literati* studied Pali, the language of the Buddhist scriptures, thus influencing the development of Sinhala as a literary language.

Buddhism accepts the Hindu principles of *saṃsāra* and *karman* (Pali: *kamma*), but it differs in one important respect from the Hindu conception of man. Instead of believing that an *atman*, or soul, passes through endless series of incarnations, Buddhism teaches that there is no such preexistent immortal soul that migrates from body to body. Each individual consists of a number of physical and psychic elements (*khandhas*) that combine to create the sense of personal individuality. But this combination is only temporary and is irreparably shattered by death, leaving no element that can be identified as the soul or self. By a subtle metaphysical argument, however, it is maintained that the craving for personal existence generated by the *khandhas* causes the birth of another such personalized combination, which inherits the *karma* of a sequence of previous combinations of *khandhas*.

The Enlightenment won by Gautama Buddha was essentially about the cause of existence in the phenomenal world from which suffering inevitably stemmed. Buddhist teaching and practice have, accordingly, been designed to acquaint men with their true nature and situation. It is then possible for them to free themselves from the craving for existence in the space-time world and so achieve *Nirvāṇa* (a Sanskrit term meaning 'extinction' or 'blowing out'). Traditionally, this goal has been presented in negative terms as the extinction of desire, attachment, ignorance, or suffering, creating the impression that Buddhist salvation means the complete obliteration of individual consciousness.

However, in terms of Buddhist metaphysics, ultimate reality transcends all the terms of reference relevant to existence in this world.

It is obvious from this brief explanation that the metaphysics involved are difficult to understand or appreciate. It is likely that his followers suitably altered the teachings of the Buddha so that they could be 'sold' to the predominantly Hindu population to whom they were preached. It was easier for the masses to consider Buddha as a god, observe various rituals and absorb various stories and morals than try to understand the essential philosophic and metaphysical nature of his teachings.

By 400 B.C. Buddhism, in India, had split into two schools or sects. The Theravāda school followed the Buddha's teachings more closely and is, therefore, abstract and lacking in passion and emotion. The Mahāyāna school defied the teachings of the Buddha in many ways. At the core of Mahāyāna teachings is the *bodhisattva* a compassionate figure who forgoes *Nirvāṇa* to work for the salvation of all beings. The Buddha came to be regarded as a god by this sect, which worshipped images of the Buddha and of *bodhisattva*.

A vast majority of the Sri Lankan population was converted to Buddhism in the third century B.C. Theravāda (or Hīnayāna) Buddhism, which is the earliest and probably the purest form of Buddhism was, and still is, practised in Sri Lanka. The number of Buddhist monks increased at a great rate and Fa Hsien, a Chinese traveller and reliable recorder of facts, states that in the fourth century A.D. when he lived in Sri Lanka for some time, there were about 50,000 monks. Larger and larger resources were therefore required to maintain this growth and pious kings donated large tracts of land to the monasteries and as a result the monasteries, in the course of time, became the largest landowners in the country. An order of nuns (*Bhikkhunis*) had existed from early times but died out during the late Anurādhapura Period.

The two main monasteries at Anurādhapura were the Mahāvihāra and the Abhayagiri. The latter seceded from the Mahāvihāra and established itself as belonging to the Mahāyāna

sect. This resulted in numerous quarrels as to doctrinal interpretation and monastic discipline. The ruler of the time was often asked by the Mahāvihāra monks (who belonged to the Theravāda school) to fulfil his obligations and support them as the true orthodoxy. It was in the reign of Mahāsena that the Abhayagiri sect (also called the Wettuliyans) reached the height of their power with the support of the king. However, orthodoxy was ultimately supreme. Despite this, Mahayanism had a great influence on Sri Lankan Buddhists by shifting the emphasis from an ethical to a devotional aspect of religion, a fact that is obvious to this day. Even the Tooth Relic, which the Mahāvihāra was initially unwilling to accept as an object of worship was brought to Sri Lanka under the auspices of the Mahayanists.

Theravāda Buddhism was also changed by the influence of other beliefs such as pre-Buddhist cults, Hinduism and Tantric Buddhism. The presence of good and evil spirits who needed to be propitiated by ritual and prayer was acknowledged. A ceremony called *pirit* evolved. This consists of public chanting of the Buddha's teachings by priests in times of calamity for the purpose of exorcising evil spirits. Even animal sacrifice was, and probably still is, practiced by Buddhists due to the influence of Hinduism and pre-Buddhist cults. These features of Buddhism could not have been further from the teachings of the Buddha.

Ancient architecture and art

Most palaces, mansions and houses were made of wood and, therefore, there is no trace left of them. Stones and bricks were only used for prestigious monuments. Stūpas (dagobas or cetiyas), which were originally funerary monuments in India akin to the round barrows in Europe, first appeared in Sri Lanka as a religious structure after the introduction of Buddhism and are the characteristic architecture of the island. It is a solid hemispherical dome placed on three stepped terraces. A relic chamber was placed in the centre of the dome and on top was an octagonal pillar carrying an umbrella of stone. In later stūpas the pillar became a cylindrical feature and the umbrella assumed

the form of a moulded brick spire. The stūpa symbolised the cosmos and was made of solid brick. The larger stūpas rose from a circular platform, the sides of which were ornamented with the fronts of elephants giving the impression that they were bearing the weight. These stūpas dominated Anurādhapura, giving the impression of simplicity and serenity. They not only gave credence to the commitment of the state to Buddhism but also to its wealth. Of the five most important stūpas in Anurādhapura the Thūpārāma, built during the reign of Devānampiyatissa, is the oldest. Duṭṭugāmuṇu built the Ruvanvālisāya (or Mahāthūpa) and the Mirisavāti. The two largest are the Abhayagiri (built by Valagambā) and the Jetavana (built during Mahāsenā's reign). The Ruvanvālisāya probably was the largest monument of its type in the world at the time it was built. The Jetavana, the largest, is about 400 feet in height - taller than St. Paul's in London and only slightly shorter than St. Peter's in Rome.

The *vaṭadāgē* is a circular shrine enclosing a small stūpa. The largest of these is at the Thūpārāma at Anurādhapura. Some of these had four circles and others three circles of stone pillars enclosing the stūpa. The earliest is dated around the latter part of the sixth century A.D.

The Lohapāsāda or Brazen Palace, so called because its outer facade was covered with copper plates, was built by Duṭṭugāmuṇu as a monastery. In its heyday it was nine storeys high, the upper floors being occupied by the more senior priests. All that remains are 1,600 stone pillars. A haphazard reconstruction had been attempted in the twelfth century.

Sculpture was the main form of artistic expression. The main examples are found as frontispieces for dagobas. The earlier examples were in soft limestone and are not well preserved. Moonstones are typical of early Sinhalese sculpture, probably dating back to the second century B.C., and are semi-circular slabs placed at the entrance to shrines. Some of these stones are ornamented with the most intricate carvings - typically a central lotus and around this in concentric semicircles are elephant, horse, lion and bull racing each other in procession.

Society

The outer semi-circle consists of conventionalised flames. These are meant to communicate a symbolic significance to the worshipper. Guardstones were stone sculptures of figures placed at the entrance to prominent buildings and monuments. They developed during the Anurādhapura period and by the seventh or eighth centuries were taking on certain distinctive features that seem to depict a hooded Nāga king with dwarves at his feet on either side. The 'Isurumūṇiya Lovers' (circa fifth century A.D.) is a famous sculpture at Isurumūṇiya and depicts either Prince Sāliya and Asokamālā or a god and goddess.

The earliest statue of the Buddha found in Anurādhapura is a first century A.D. marble sculpture. This is a standing Buddha and was probably imported from India. In time the Buddha statues sculpted in Sri Lanka acquired typical characteristics of their own. Of the numerous statues of the Buddha, the best known is the Aukana Buddha (circa fifth century A.D.). It is 42 feet in height and is carved on the face of a rock. The Buddha figures carved on rock faces in Afghanistan and recently destroyed by the Taliban were similar but even larger.

The Sīgiriya frescoes are the earliest examples of the pictorial art in Sri Lanka. They have similarities to the paintings in the Ajantā caves in India and were painted about the same time (fourth or fifth century A.D.). They were once thought to be paintings of the wives of Kāśyapa I, but are now thought to be symbolic representations of 'Lightening Princesses' attended by 'Cloud Damsels' in the palace of the god of wealth, Kuvera.

Language

The earliest script, found in inscriptions incised in caves, dates from circa 200 B.C. and is similar to the ancient Indian (Brāhmi) script used in the time of Emperor Asoka. This belongs to the Indo-Iranian group of languages and was brought to the island by the early immigrants. The Sinhalese language gradually evolved from this 'old Sinhala' and because of its isolation, developed along independent lines. Pali, the sacred Buddhist language, influenced it. It also has some input from Sanskrit.

Tamil had an influence on the vocabulary, idiom and grammar of the Sinhalese language as it developed. Perhaps by the second or third century A.D., the Sinhalese language had evolved to an extent that it could be called a separate language. By about 1250 A.D. the literary language had attained a form from which it has not varied much since but the modern spoken language differs considerably from it.

The Tamil language must have been used in Sri Lanka from ancient times. Sena and Guttika, those early Tamil invaders, must have brought a retinue with them and these would have been Tamil speakers. Elāra, the next Tamil invader, who ruled for about forty years, would certainly have had his Tamil-speaking compatriots living in the island. Over the centuries the Sinhalese kings employed Tamil mercenaries. An inscription of the second century B.C., at Anurādhapura, mentions a corporation of Tamil merchants. A Tamil poet from Sri Lanka is said to have taken part in the Tamil Saṅgam at Madurai. This was, probably, in the first century B.C. Some of the 'old Tamil' words of the Saṅgam period have survived in Jaffna though they have died out in India and this is quoted by some as evidence of the antiquity of Tamil usage in Sri Lanka.

Literature

There are verses in 'old Sinhala' dating back to the second century B.C., inscribed in rock. These are in a script akin to Brāhmi and were already starting to undergo changes. Buddhism was the greatest stimulus to literary activity amongst the ancient Sri Lankans. The chronicles written in Pali were probably translated into this language from oral narratives in 'old Sinhala' which were handed down in the monasteries. Religious narratives relating to the previous lives of the Buddha may also have been preserved in this archaic Sinhala and later translated into Pali by Buddhaghosa and others. In the fifth century A.D. Buddhaghosa made a systematic compilation of Buddhist scriptures. He was a Hindu (a Brahmin), converted to Buddhism and, probably, a Tamil from South India. All these early works in Pali and old Sinhalese

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were mainly religious in nature though based on a historical background. Sinhalese was being used for writing by the second or third century A.D. The earliest known work in a language that could be recognised as Sinhalese is the *Siyabaslakara*, a translation of a work in Sanskrit ascribed to King Sena V (954 - 956 A.D.). Amongst the graffiti at Sīgiriya are verses written by visitors in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Up to about 1000 A.D. Pali was the dominant language in the literature of the island and it is really only after about the twelfth century that examples of Sinhalese literature can be found. An example is the panegyric and war poem, *Pārakumbāsirita*, which is a history of Parākramabāhu VI, who reigned 1410 - 1468 A.D.

Late Anurādhapura Period

303 A.D. to 1017 A.D.

Relationships with other countries

The first four of the one hundred and eleven kings, whose dynastic succession is described in the *Cūḷavaṃsa*, ruled during the fourth century A.D. The poor performance of the *Cūḷavaṃsa* kings (the 'Lesser Dynasty') was attributed by the writers of the Pali chronicles, rather bizarrely, to the fact that these kings were of 'mixed blood' and not 'directly descended from the Sun'. However, during the first century of their rule the country prospered, was undisturbed by foreign invasion and there seems to have been time for kings to patronise art and medicine. Also, during this century significant relationships with other countries developed.

A common interest with China, probably over a period of a few centuries, had been trade. A closer relationship developed when China started taking an interest in Buddhism. Traditional ancestor worship was the original religion in China, later mixed with Taoism and Confucianism. There had been Buddhist monks in China since the third century B.C. and in the first century A.D. the Han Emperor sent envoys to the Buddhist Kuṣāṇa kingdom ruling northern India at that time to gather information about Buddhism. The information that was taken back gave rise to a type of mystical Buddhism, not far removed from Taoism.

It was in the fourth century A.D. that more orthodox Buddhism began to be practiced in China and a relationship with Sri Lanka developed either in the reign of Kitsirimevan (303 - 331

A.D.) or that of his successor, Jetṭhatissa II. It matured in the next century and King Mahānāma (410 - 432 A.D.) sent an envoy to China with a gift consisting of a jade statue. This is confirmed by a Chinese source. It seems that the envoy decided to travel overland across India and the Himalayas, rather than undertake the perilous sea journey, and took ten years to reach his destination. The Chinese records state that in the fifth century A.D. Buddhist nuns (*bhikkhunīs*) from Sri Lanka arrived in China for the purpose of consecrating Chinese women. It was also in the fifth century that Fa-Hsien, the Chinese traveller (a Buddhist), visited Sri Lanka and lived on the island for a couple of years. He was a good observer and prolific writer and his writings have helped clarify various aspects of the Sinhalese kingdom at that time.

The Chinese had a great reverence for Adam's Peak, one of Sri Lanka's tallest mountains (about 8000 feet). Mariners used it for navigational purposes from early times. The 'footprint' (an indentation on the rock, in the shape of a human foot) on top of this holy mountain is said to be that of the Buddha. The Chinese claimed that it was that of *Pawn-koo* (the First Man). Hence it later came to be called Adam's Peak by the Europeans. There was a considerable amount of trade between the two countries. Sri Lanka was in the centre of a trade route that extended to China in the east and to Persia and beyond in the west. Silks, sandalwood, aloes etc. were amongst the goods received in Sri Lanka. Pearls, gems etc. were sent to China.

Diplomatic relations were also established with the Gupta Empire centred in Patna during the reign of Kitsirimevan. India had reached its 'golden age' under the Guptas. Samudragupta (330 - 380 A.D.) began a series of wars of expansion. He subdued the Pallava kingdom in South India and several other kingdoms in the south. However, he allowed these kings to be restored to their thrones on condition that they paid him tributes. A pillar inscription of that period at Allahabad mentions the Sinhalese as a people who paid homage to Emperor Samudragupta. There is no record of his having invaded Sri Lanka. The Guptas tolerated Buddhism but they were Hindus and during this period Hinduism

was gradually absorbing Buddhism and reinstating itself as the main religion of India.

Religious events, art and medicine

The Tooth Relic was brought to Sri Lanka in 312 A.D., during the reign of Kitsirimevan, by a Brahmin woman and housed in a building, which later came to be known as the Temple of the Tooth. The chronicles claim that the woman was the daughter of the ruler of Kāliṅga (a kingdom in southeastern India) in disguise. The Tooth Relic, which is said to be the tooth of the Buddha, became the palladium of the Sinhalese nation over the next few centuries. The belief gradually grew that the well-being and safety of the nation depended on this holy relic.

During the reign of King Mahānāma, early in the fifth century A.D., Buddhaghosa translated the Sinhalese religious commentaries that existed at the time into Pali. Buddhaghosa, a Brahmin from South India, was probably a Tamil. He was a Hindu who had been converted to Buddhism.

Jeṭṭhatissa II (331 - 340 A.D) was proficient in the art of carving ivory and taught the art to many people. It was his son and successor, Buddhadāsa (340 - 368 A.D.) who became well known for his skill in medicine and surgery. He was also interested in veterinary medicine. He undertook numerous welfare works aimed at improving the health of not only the human beings but also the animals in his kingdom. Hospitals were set up in various parts of the island and the attending physicians were maintained at state expense.

Collapse of the Lambakarna dynasty

There was a period of decline after the death of Mahānāma in 432 A.D. The direct line of descent amongst the Lambakarna clan, which commenced with Vasabha (66 - 110 A.D.), came to an end with Mahānāma. There were three ineffectual rulers in the next two years. This weakness must have been perceived by the South Indian kingdoms and in 434 A.D., according to the Pali chronicles, a Tamil prince (it is uncertain as to whether he

came from the Cōla or Pāṇḍya kingdoms) invaded Sri Lanka and seized the throne. It is now thought that he was a member of the Kalabhra dynasty, particularly because he was a Buddhist. His two sons succeeded him and they ruled at Anurādhapura until 456 A.D. when Dhātusena, a scion of the other powerful Sri Lankan clan, the Moriyas, recaptured the throne.

Sīgiriya

Modern historians have questioned the traditional story of Kāśyapa, the patricidal son of Dhātusena, building a fortress on the Sīgiriya rock to protect himself from his vengeful brother, Mugalan. The first part of the *Cūlavam̐sa*, compiled in the thirteenth century (about 800 years later), states that Dhātusena's eldest son, Kasyapa, had his father killed and usurped the throne. Kāśyapa and Mugalan, the younger son, had different mothers. Kāśyapa's mother was of inferior rank and Mugalan was, therefore, said to be the rightful heir. When Kāśyapa killed their father, Mugalan in fear of his life fled to India and Kāśyapa built a fortress on Sīgiriya to be able to defend himself when the vengeful Mugalan returned.

This retrospective report on the founding of Sīgiriya has been called into question by recent archaeological findings, which suggest that there was a flourishing monastic complex belonging to the Mahāyāna sect already at Sīgiriya by the time of Dhātusena. Another theory states that it was King Dhātusena and not his son, Kāśyapa, who built a palace on Sīgiriya. Though doubt is cast on the *Cūlavam̐sa* report of events that occurred eight centuries before it was compiled, evidence that Sīgiriya was a royal palace is available from the 'Sīgiri Graffiti'. These are writings, dating from the eighth to the tenth century A.D., scratched on the Mirror Wall at Sīgiriya. They refer to a royal residence at Sīgiriya and being closer to the time under discussion provide somewhat more reliable evidence that Sīgiriya was used as a royal refuge. As to whether Dhātusena or Kāśyapa was the original builder is unclear but it does seem certain that it was Kāśyapa who used it as his residence. There are many features at Sīgiriya, which

indicate that it was not built purely for military purposes. The lavish living conditions of the king and his court suggest that it was intended to be a miniature *Ālakamandā*, a paradise on earth. The king was considered the equal of Kuvera, the god of wealth, as he presided over this earthly paradise.

Kāśyapa (477 – 495 A.D.) lived in luxury but in perpetual fear and remorse until Nemesis in the form of his brother, Mugalan, returned from exile and killed him in battle. There is some doubt as to whether Mugalan (495 – 512 A.D.) ruled from Sīgiriya or from Anurādhapura. An interesting fact is that Mugalan, who must have learnt from his exile and later invasion of the island against his brother, was the first king to form a naval defence against invasion. Unfortunately, this did not survive his death.

Christian kings

Christians were systematically persecuted in Persia during the fourth and fifth centuries and migrated to the Indian sub-continent where they found a safe haven. Both Hinduism and Buddhism tolerated other religions. During the reign of Dhātusena these Christians found their way to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), probably as mercenaries. General Migāra, the commander of Dhātusena's army, is thought to have been a Christian. According to a work entitled *Christian Topography* and written by an Alexandrian priest named Cosmas Indopleustes in the sixth century A.D. there were Christian churches in India and Ceylon at that time.

Some historians are of the opinion that Mugalan's son Kumāradāsa was a Christian when he became king but reverted to Buddhism four years later. Kumāradāsa's son was Kittisena but it has been suggested that his real name was Kristusena and he, too, was a Christian. Kristusena (or Kittisena), who reigned only for a few months before being killed (circa 521 A.D.) by his uncle, was the last of the Moriya line founded by Dhātusena. Christianity does not seem to have spread to any appreciable extent during this time.

A period of dynastic instability

Following the failure of the Moriya line founded by Dhātusena, there was a period of about a century and a half when there was no dynasty strong enough to establish itself and hold power for any length of time. The Moriya and Lambakarna clans fought with each other to the bitter end. This, ultimately, ruined the economy. Rival kings not only overtaxed their subjects but also plundered the treasures of the nation to pay for the wars against each other. Homicide, parricide, fratricide, constant intrigue and sudden death were a common occurrence in the royal house and amongst the nobility. There was a constant atmosphere of civil commotion and declining civilisation. The *Cūḷavaṃsa* poignantly describes the suffering of the people as they lost money and produce during these internecine battles. Many Sinhalese emigrated to Bihar and Orissa in India. The Pali chronicles recorded this migration and so did a Chinese traveller named Hiouen Tshang in the seventh century.

Surprisingly, there were no invasions from South India during this chaotic period. However, rival kings employed Tamil mercenaries and Tamil influence was growing in the court. There were Tamil ministers and, probably, even a prime minister. Potthakūṭṭha was a Tamil minister who was powerful enough to place a puppet king named Datta in power after the death of Aggabodhi IV in 683 A.D. Potthakūṭṭha continued as the power behind the throne and when Datta died in 684 A.D., he replaced him with another puppet king named Hatthadāṭha. The latter only survived six months before being put to death by Mānavamma. Potthakūṭṭha committed suicide by eating poisoned cakes when he heard of Hatthadāṭha's death. Through most of this period Ruhuna continued as an independent kingdom often untroubled by the problems at Anurādhapura.

A period of relative stability

Compared to the previous century, the eighth century A.D. was politically stable and peaceful. This period of relatively stable political conditions commenced with Mānavamma (684 - 718 A.D.),

a member of the Lambakarna clan, and continued till the reign of Sena I (833 - 853 A.D.) at which time there was a Pāṇḍyan invasion. Due to rivalries within the Lambakarna clan local rebellion occurred sometimes and pretenders to the throne occasionally appeared but peace and good government was maintained until the coming of the Pāṇḍyans. The Lambakarna clan remained in power until the Cōla invasion of the tenth century.

Manāvamma had come into power with the support of the Pallava kingdom in South India and with the help of a Pallavan army. Cultural contacts with the Pallava kingdom were maintained. Pallavan craftsman influenced architecture and sculpture during the seventh and eighth centuries. The custom of appointing a viceroy (*yuvarāja* or *uparāja*) who succeeded to the throne seems to have been well established by the seventh century. This custom, whereby the prospective successor was chosen during the lifetime of the reigning monarch, developed in the hope of preventing the inevitable struggle between rival contenders at the death of the king. Kings followed each other in the succession of brother to brother and the dynastic stability at the time was such that the sons of brothers followed each other in order over a whole generation. Internal rivalry resulted in Ruhuna being totally subjugated by Anurādhapura and the boundary between the two became the Gal Oya (for further details see account on the reign of Mahinda II, under 'Late Anurādhapura Rulers').

The administrative structure was gradually improved during this period of peace. The country was becoming rich again and this is confirmed by the numerous donations to the monasteries and the elaborate festivals held to honour the various dagobas, images and shrines. Poḷonnaruva had grown in importance, having been recognised as strategically important and become the occasional residence of the Anurādhapura kings.

Pāṇḍyan invasion - an ignominious episode

The Pāṇḍyan kingdom in South India was expanding rapidly at the expense of its neighbours during the latter part of the eighth century A.D. In the reign of King Varaguṇa (765 -

815 A.D.) almost all of South India south of the Kāvēri River was under Pāṇḍya rule. His successor, Śrīmāra Śrīvallabha (815 - 862 A.D.), wanted further conquests and it was merely a matter of time before he crossed the sea to invade Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan monarch and his advisors must have been fully aware of this danger and there must have been great uneasiness at the royal court in Anurādhapura, but there is no mention made in the Pali chronicles about any political or military measures taken to avoid this inevitable onslaught. The invasion came early in the reign of King Sena I (833 - 853 A.D.), although the exact date is unknown. The Pāṇḍyan king landed with a large army on the northwestern coast of the island and took over the entire Uttaradesa, the northern division of the Anurādhapura kingdom. According to the *Cūḷavaṃsa*, there were many Tamil people living in this part of Sri Lanka and they went over to the Pāṇḍyan king, hence increasing his power. Unfortunately for the Sinhalese there appears to have been discord amongst their generals and no organised resistance was offered. When the Pāṇḍyan army reached Mahātalitagāma, only a few miles north of Anurādhapura, a makeshift Sinhalese army, led by the viceroy and heir to the throne, Mahinda (Sena's brother), went out to meet them and was badly beaten. Unlike the Sinhalese army, which was not led by its king and was easily demoralised, Śrīmāra Śrīvallabha led the Pāṇḍyan army. Mahinda committed suicide rather than surrender and was gallantly awarded a royal cremation by Śrīmāra Śrīvallabha. When Sena I heard of the defeat, he retreated south with his retinue taking the crown jewels with him. Sena's second brother, Kāśyapa, offered some resistance at Poḷonnaruva but was defeated and killed.

It seems that the role of the Sri Lankan kings in warfare had changed. They used to lead their armies into battle but by the latter stages of the Anurādhapura period the king did not expose himself but preferred to remain in the capital. A commander-in-chief led the army. The victorious Pāṇḍyans sacked Anurādhapura. The treasures that had collected for a thousand years were looted. Śrīmāra Śrīvallabha had no intention of adding Sri Lanka to his growing empire. Perhaps it was because of the

difficulties in administering an overseas country. He was content to return to South India with his loot. Meanwhile, Sena I had stationed himself with his powerless retinue in the area where the Mahavāli Gaṅga is met by its tributary, the Aṃban Gaṅga. He was forced to make a treaty with Śrīmāra Śrīvallabha. He also had to surrender the crown jewels to the Pāṇḍyan and agree to carry on the administration of the country in the capacity of a fiduciary to the Pāṇḍyan emperor. Sena, therefore, retained his kingdom but without honour and spent the rest of his reign repairing the damage done by the Pāṇḍyans. Sri Lanka did not have to remain a fiduciary for very long, probably because Pāṇḍyan power waned.

The sequel to this story occurred in the time of Sena II, the nephew and successor of Sena I. Sena II managed to restore some of the country's honour by invading the Pāṇḍyan kingdom with the support of Prince Varaguṇa who had fallen out with his father, the Pāṇḍyan emperor, Śrīmāra Śrīvallabha, and wished to oust him. In addition he had the support of the Pallava king, Nṛpatunga, whose kingdom to the north of the Pāṇḍya kingdom was also under threat from the Pāṇḍyans. The commander-in-chief of the Sri Lankan forces at this time was an able man named Kuṭṭhaka. Madurā, the Pāṇḍyan capital, fell to the Sri Lankans after a brief siege and Śrīmāra Śrīvallabha, hurrying back from a campaign in the north, was killed. It was the turn of Madurā to be sacked by the Sri Lankan soldiers and it is said that all the treasures looted from Anurādhapura (including the crown jewels) were brought back in addition to other treasures found in the Pāṇḍyan court. Varaguṇa was consecrated as the new king of Pāṇḍya in 862 A.D. with the help of the Sri Lankan army and reigned as Varaguṇavarman II.

Cōla invasions and the downfall of Anurādhapura

During the latter part of the ninth century, after the successful invasion of the Pāṇḍya kingdom by Sena II, Sri Lanka claimed some kind of hegemony over the Pāṇḍyan kingdom whose king they had helped to be enthroned. This hegemony did not last very long because Parāntaka I (907 - 955 A.D.), the Cōla

king, invaded the Pāṇḍya kingdom early in the tenth century (for further details see 'South Indian Kingdoms in Ancient Times' under Background). He defeated an army consisting of Pāṇḍyan and Sri Lankan troops during the time that Kāśyapa V (913 - 923 A.D.) was the ruler at Anurādhapura. The Pāṇḍyan ruler, Rājasimha II, gave up the battle against the Cōlas and fled to Sri Lanka with the Pāṇḍyan crown jewels arriving in Anurādhapura during the reign of Dappula IV (923 - 935 A.D.). Dappula made him welcome but the nobles and army leaders at Anurādhapura did not approve of this hospitality because they, rightly, suspected that Rājasimha II wished to instigate a battle against the Cōlas to regain his kingdom.

Because of this opposition the Pāṇḍyan king left Sri Lanka and went to the Cēra kingdom (Kēraḷa) in South India leaving his crown jewels with the Sri Lankan monarch for safe keeping. Meanwhile, Parāntaka I had subjugated the whole of the Pāṇḍya country. He wanted a formal coronation as king of the Pāṇḍya country. The diadem and other jewels, which had been left in Sri Lanka by Rājasimha II, were required for the coronation. It was during the reign of Udaya IV (946 - 954 A.D.) that the Cōla king seems to have demanded the Pāṇḍyan crown jewels for his consecration. This was several years after he had conquered the Pāṇḍya country. The reason for the timing of these demands may have been that Udaya IV was well known as an alcoholic and slothful ruler (as the *Cūḷavaṃsa* quaintly puts it he was 'a friend of spirituous drinks to the undoing of his subjects') and Parāntaka may have reasoned that this was a good time to make his demands. Udaya IV refused to give up the jewels and, therefore, Parāntaka sent an army to fetch them by force. Udaya's commander-in-chief set forth with an army but was defeated and killed during the battle. Udaya took the crown jewels and retreated to Ruhuna. Anurādhapura was again pillaged.

Fortunately for Udaya and the Sinhalese kingdom the Cōla empire was attacked at this time by an invader from the north. This was the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kingdom led by its king, Kṛṣṇa III. Parāntaka I withdrew his troops from Sri Lanka at this stage

to defend his South Indian possessions and Udaya IV was able to return to Anurādhapura. It would appear that Udaya IV had learnt his lesson and mended his ways. He repaired the damage caused by the Cōlas and carried out various religious works. It also seems likely that there was a counter-invasion of Cōla territory soon after their withdrawal from Sri Lanka and this may have led to the re-establishment of Pāṇḍyan independence for a short time afterwards.

Mahinda IV (956 - 972 A.D.), concerned about the continued threat from South India, made an alliance with the kingdom of Śrīvijaya (in modern Sumatra), another Buddhist country, and married a Śrīvijayan princess to cement the alliance (for further details see section on Mahinda IV, under 'Late Anurādhapura Rulers'). The Cōla kingdom had become powerful once again and subjugated the Pāṇḍyans. To check the Cōla advance, naval strength was required and Srivijaya was able to help in this context. However, the first attack seems to have come from the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king who invaded Sri Lanka in 958 A.D. but was defeated in a battle by the Sri Lankan army under the command of a Malayan general named Sena who belonged to the Śrīvijayan royal family into which Mahinda IV had married. There were a considerable number of Tamil (mercenary) soldiers in General Sena's army. This defeat of the Rāṣṭrakūṭan king may have contributed to the meteoric rise in Cōla power soon afterwards, as it was the Rāṣṭrakūṭans who were keeping the Cōlas in check. In 959 A.D. the Cōla king, Parāntaka II (955 - 973 A.D.), invaded Sri Lanka. His army landed at Ūrātota (modern Kayts), a small island off the northwestern coast of Sri Lanka. Once again, General Sena led the Sri Lankan army to victory and King Mahinda's ploy of involving the Malayans seemed vindicated.

After the death of Mahinda IV, however, the Malayan and Sinhalese factions at court fell out with each other (for details see section on King Sena V, under 'Late Anurādhapura Rulers'). Also, the mercenary soldiers were in revolt because they had not been paid. Ultimately this led to a state of anarchy, which was perceived by the Cōla king, Rājārāja I (985 - 1012 A.D.), who was not

only a great soldier but a statesman of vision (for further details see section on South Indian Background in Ancient Times under 'Background'). He realised that it would be of great benefit to the Cōla empire not only to conquer Sri Lanka but also to administer it as part of the empire to facilitate his ambition of extending the commerce of his country. The use of Sri Lankan ports on the east coast would improve the scope of Cōla sea-power. Mahinda V, the reigning Sri Lankan king, was an incompetent ruler and a man 'smitten by indolence' as the *Cūḷavaṃsa* very aptly describes him. Obviously, this suited Rājarāja who invaded Sri Lanka in 993 A.D. The Cōla troops advanced on Anurādhapura and there was no organised resistance.

The kingdom of Anurādhapura fell into Cōla hands and became a province of the Cōla empire under the Tamil name 'Mummuḍi-sōla-maṇḍalam'. King Mahinda V fled to Ruḥuṇa with the crown jewels. The Cōlas did not seem interested in subjugating Ruḥuṇa at this stage and were content to restrict their rule to the northern part of Sri Lanka. This gave them access to the port of Trincomalee and hence the Bay of Bengal. Rājarāja went on to organise a powerful fleet and conquer the Maldives. He conducted an accurate land survey. His relationships with other countries seem to have been based on trade rather than religion and he was tolerant of Buddhism though he was a Hindu of the Siva sect.

It does not seem to have been the policy of Rājarāja or his son, Rājendra, to actively colonise Sri Lanka. Comparing this invasion to that of Britain by the Normans about seventy years later, Tamil settlements were not initiated in Sri Lanka on a large scale by the Cōlas during the time they were in power. William the Conqueror, on the other hand, settled 180 of his Norman nobles in England and made them his tenants-in-chief. It was during the reign of Rājendra I (1012 - 1044 A.D.) that the next move was made. The Cōlas realised that conquest of the whole island was necessary to maintain their trade with Malaysia and China. They also realised that to rule the whole island and to control the eastern ports, Poḷonnaruva was more suitable as a capital. Poḷonnaruva, situated about sixty miles southeast of Anurādhapura, had in the

past served as a military outpost and in later years had been a temporary residence for some of the kings of Anurādhapura. In 1017 A.D., according to the Tamil *praśastis* (hymns of praise kept as contemporary records), Rājēndra I completed the conquest of the entire island, overcoming Ruhuna and capturing Mahinda, his queen and the crown jewels. The capital was transferred to Poḷonnaruva (which was renamed Jananāthamaṅgalam) and the long history of Anurādhapura came to an end.

Late Anurādhapura Rulers

Sirimeghavaṇṇa	Anurādhapura	303 - 331 A.D.
Jetthatissa II	Anurādhapura	331 - 340 A.D.
Buddhadāsa	Anurādhapura	340 - 368 A.D.
Upatissa I	Anurādhapura	368 - 410 A.D.
Mahānāma	Anurādhapura	410 - 432 A.D.
Svātisena	Anurādhapura	432 - 432 A.D.
Lāminītissa II	Anurādhapura	432 - 433 A.D.
Kalabhrēśvara (Regent)	Anurādhapura	433 - 434 A.D.
Pandū	Anurādhapura	434 - 439 A.D.
Pārēndra	Anurādhapura	439 - 451 A.D.
Kṣudra Pārēndra	Anurādhapura	451 - 456 A.D.
Dhātusena	Anurādhapura	456 - 477 A.D.
Kāśyapa I	Sigiriya	477 - 495 A.D.
Moggallāna I	Anurādhapura	495 - 512 A.D.
Kumārādāsa	Anurādhapura	512 - 521 A.D.
Kittisena	Anurādhapura	521 - 521 A.D.
Siva	Anurādhapura	521 - 521 A.D.
Upatissa II	Anurādhapura	521 - 521 A.D.
Silākāla	Anurādhapura	521 - 534 A.D.
Dāthapabhūthi (Dappula I)	Anurādhapura	534 - 535 A.D.
Moggallāna II	Anurādhapura	535 - 555 A.D.
Kittisirimegha	Anurādhapura	555 - 572 A.D.
Mahānāga	Anurādhapura	572 - 575 A.D.
Aggabodhi I	Anurādhapura	575 - 608 A.D.
Aggabodhi II	Anurādhapura	608 - 618 A.D.
Saṅghatissa II	Anurādhapura	618 - 618 A.D.
Moggallāna III	Anurādhapura	618 - 623 A.D.
Silāmeghavaṇṇa	Anurādhapura	623 - 632 A.D.
Aggabodhi III	Anurādhapura	632 - 648 A.D. - deposed twice
Jetthatissa III	Anurādhapura	632 - 632 A.D.
Dāthopātissa I	Anurādhapura	648 - 650 A.D.
Kāśyapa II	Anurādhapura	650 - 658 A.D.
Dappula I (II)	Anurādhapura	658 - 659 A.D.
Dāthopātissa II	Anurādhapura	659 - 667 A.D.
Aggabodhi IV	Anurādhapura	667 - 683 A.D.

Late Anuradhapura Period

Datta	Anurādhapura	683 - 684 A.D.
Haṭṭhaḍātha	Anurādhapura	684 - 684 A.D.
Maṇavamma	Anurādhapura	684 - 718 A.D.
Aggabodhi V	Anurādhapura	718 - 724 A.D.
Kāśyapa III	Anurādhapura	724 - 731 A.D.
Mahinda I	Anurādhapura	731 - 732 A.D.
Aggabodhi VI	Anurādhapura	732 - 772 A.D.
Aggabodhi VII	Anurādhapura Poḷonnaruva	772 - 778 A.D.
Mahinda II	Anurādhapura	778 - 797 A.D.
Udaya I (Dappula II/III)	Anurādhapura	797 - 802 A.D.
Mahinda III	Anurādhapura	802 - 806 A.D.
Aggabodhi VIII	Anurādhapura	806 - 817 A.D.
Dappula II (III/IV)	Anurādhapura	817 - 831 A.D.
Aggabodhi IX	Anurādhapura	831 - 833 A.D.
Sena I	Anurādhapura	833 - 853 A.D.
Sena II	Anurādhapura	853 - 887 A.D.
Udaya II (I)	Anurādhapura	887 - 896 A.D.
Kāśyapa IV	Anurādhapura	896 - 913 A.D.
Kāśyapa V	Anurādhapura	913 - 923 A.D.
Dappula III (IV/V)	Anurādhapura	923 - 923 A.D.
Dappula IV (V/VI)	Anurādhapura	923 - 935 A.D.
Udaya III/II	Anurādhapura	935 - 938 A.D.
Sena III	Anurādhapura	938 - 946 A.D.
Udaya IV (III)	Anurādhapura	946 - 954 A.D.
Sena IV	Anurādhapura	954 - 956 A.D.
Mahinda IV	Anurādhapura	956 - 972 A.D.
Sena V	Anurādhapura	972 - 982 A.D.
Mahinda V	Anurādhapura	982 - 993 A.D.
Rājārāja I	Anurādhapura	993 - 1012 A.D.
Rājendra I	Anurādhapura, Poḷonnaruva	1012 - 1044 A.D.

Sirimeghavaṇṇa

Sirimeghavaṇṇa (Kitsirimevan or Meghavarṇa Abhaya or Śrīmeghavarṇa), son of Mahāsena, ruled 303 - 331 A.D. He is said to have had diplomatic relations with the Indian emperor, Samudragupta. He had a tolerant policy towards the various factions of Buddhism, helping the Mahāvihāra monks (Theravāda sect) and the Abhayagiri monks (Mahāyāna sect) in equal measure. In 312 A.D. he received the Tooth Relic of the Buddha and enshrined it in a building near the royal palace - later known as the Temple of the Tooth. His brother, Jeṭṭhatissa, succeeded him.

Jeṭṭhatissa II

Jeṭṭhatissa II, brother of Kitsirimevan, ruled from 331 - 340 A.D. He was unusual because he was an artist and patron of the arts. There is little mention about any feeling for the arts and particularly for music amongst the Sinhalese but this king was the exception. He became renowned as a painter and an expert carver of ivory. He founded schools for the teaching of art and this, again, was an unusual achievement for a Sinhalese king. Buddhadāsa, his son, succeeded him.

Buddhadāsa

Buddhadāsa (Bujas), son of Jeṭṭhatissa II, ruled 340 - 368 A.D. Like his father he, too, had interests other than those of kingship. He had a tremendous interest not only in medicine and surgery but also in veterinary science. He treated patients and was also the author of *Sārārtha-saṅgraha*, a medical treatise. During his reign all available medical books were revised, edited and rearranged to help medical practitioners. He founded state hospitals and appointed physicians to whom he extended royal patronage by giving them land to ensure them of a livelihood. It is said that he treated humans and animals alike. He instituted a veterinary service, which is said to have been the first of its kind in the world. He founded the Mayura Pirivena, a centre for higher education. During his time the Pali 'suttas' were translated into Sinhala. His reign was peaceful and his son, Upatissa, succeeded him.

Upatissa I

Upatissa I, son of Buddhadāsa, ruled 368 - 410 A.D. Like his father and grandfather, he was a benevolent ruler and took a great deal of interest in the welfare of his subjects. He constructed nursing shelters for the sick and alms-houses for the poor. During his reign there was a severe famine and a plague. He built many tanks including the Tōpāvāva, near Poḷonnaruva. His queen, the secret lover of his younger brother, Mahānāma, murdered him.

Mahānāma

Mahānāma, younger brother of Upatissa I, ruled 410 - 432 A.D. He had been a priest during his brother's reign. He forsook the robes, became king and elevated his brother's murderous consort to principal queen. His reign was the last of five successive peaceful administrations encompassing a period of 130 years. It was during his time that an envoy was sent to China. The Chinese traveller and historian, Fa Hsien visited Sri Lanka and stayed for a couple of years. His comments are an excellent source of information about the island. Mahānāma's son, Svātisena, succeeded him.

Svātisena

Svātisena (Sotthisena or Sengot) was the son of Mahānāma and came to the throne at the death of his father in 432 A.D. Tradition has it that his mother was a Tamil but other sources suggest that she was from Malaya. She may not have been the principal consort and because of this, the consecration of Svātisena did not find favour - certainly not with his step-sister, Princess Saṅghā, the daughter by the principal consort. Princess Saṅghā, who was married to Prince Balaprāya the ruler of Puṇḍra (in West Bengal), a member of the Kalabhra dynasty, returned to Sri Lanka at the death of her father, Mahānāma, with her infant son, Dhātusena. Saṅghā contrived to have Svātisena murdered. Svātisena had only ruled for a few months. After the death of Svātisena, Lāmāṇitissa was on the throne for a few months but was deposed, a regent being appointed in place of Saṅghā's infant son. The regent was a Kalabhra prince named Kalabhreśvara.

Lāmāṇitissa

Lāmāṇitissa (Chattagāhaka) ruled for a few months in the turbulent period following Svātisena's assassination in 432 A.D. Little is known about him. He seems to have been deposed by Princess Saṅghā's nominee, Kalabhreśvara, who was made regent to rule in the place of her infant son, Dhātusena.

Kalabhreśvara

Kalabhreśvara (Mittasena or Karalsora - 'powerful rice thief') was the man nominated by Princess Saṅghā to rule as regent in place of her infant son Dhātusena. He was a prince of the Kalabhra clan. He ruled from 433 A.D. for one year and was put to death by a Tamil invader (now thought to be another Kalabhran prince) named Paṇḍu.

Paṇḍu

According to the ancient Pali chronicles, Paṇḍu (or Pūrṇa) was a Tamil prince who invaded Sri Lanka in 434 A.D., killed Kalabhreśvara, the regent, and ruled until circa 439 A.D. Recent archaeological evidence has suggested that he was from the Kalabhra clan, which at that time dominated South India. Inscriptions indicate that he and his successors were Buddhist and, therefore, unlikely to be of Tamil origin. His son, Pārēndra, succeeded him.

Pārēndra

Pārēndra (Pārinda), son of Paṇḍu, ruled at Anurādhapura, circa 439 - 451 A.D. His younger brother, Kṣudra Pārēndra, succeeded him.

Kṣudra Pārēndra

Kṣudra Pārēndra (Khuddaparinda or Kuḍā Pārinda), brother of Pārēndra, ruled circa 451 - 456 A.D. when Dhātusena reclaimed the throne. The chronicles state that the sons and grandson of Kṣudra Pārēndra, Śrīdhara (or Tiritara) and Mahādāmṣtrika Mahānāga (or Dāṭhiya) also ruled at Anurādhapura. However, archaeological findings indicate that Kṣudra Pārēndra fled to Ruhuna when he was deposed by Dhātusena and ruled there, being succeeded at his death by his son Śrīdhara. Śrīdhara was killed by one of Dhātusena's generals who was sent to reclaim the province. Mahādāmṣtrika Mahānāga, Śrīdhara's son, managed to regain power in Ruhuna and ruled for about seven years before

Dhātusena invaded Ruhuṇa and brought the province under his control.

Dhātusena

Dhātusena (Dāsenkāli), grandson of Mahānāma and son of Princess Saṅghā (daughter of Mahānāma) and Prince Balapṛāya ruler of Puṇḍra, ruled 456 - 477 A.D. He seems to have been a ruthless and cruel man with a violent temper. His uncle and tutor was the learned Mahānāma who commenced compiling the *Mahāvamsa*. His great irrigation works include the tanks Kalāvāva, Yōdavāva and the Giant's canal. The Aukana Buddha, the largest standing image of Buddha in Sri Lanka, was carved in stone during his time. It is similar to the ancient statues of the Buddha in Afghanistan, which were recently destroyed by the Taliban. It is now postulated that the blueprint for establishing a fortress and palace at Sīgiriya was drawn up during Dhātusena's reign. The son from his first marriage to a Pallavan princess was Kāśyapa and from his second to his cousin, Princess Saṅghā, was Mugalan. Rivalry and cruelty seems to have been rampant in this family and culminated in Kāśyapa seizing the throne. Dhātusena either committed suicide or, according to another story, was walled alive in the embankment (known in Sri Lanka as the 'bund') surrounding the Kalāvāva.

Kāśyapa I

Kāśyapa I (Sīgiri Kasubu) was the eldest son of Dhātusena. But his right to succession was disputed because his mother, a Pallavan princess, was thought to be inferior. When he came to the throne in 477 A.D. his brother, Mugalan, fled to the Malay Peninsula. Kāśyapa I is, traditionally, the founder of Sīgiriya. However, it is now known that Buddhist (probably, Mahāyāna) vihāras existed on Sīgiriya, before, during and after Kāśyapa. Some historians are of the opinion that fortifications were commenced in Sīgiriya during Dhātusena's reign. Despite these new theories the traditional, romantic myth of this frightened parricide living in luxury in his palace on this natural rock fortress cannot be

discarded. Nemesis, in the shape of his brother Mugalan, did arrive in 495 A.D. with an army of mercenaries. The defeated Kāśyapa either committed suicide or met an accidental death, being trampled on by his own elephant in the heat of battle.

Moggallāna I

Moggallāna I (Mugalan), the younger son of Dhātusena, ruled 495 - 512 A.D. The *Cūlavamsa* seems to indicate that he ruled at Anurādhapura but other sources suggest that he continued Kāśyapa's trend and ruled from Sīgiriya. During his reign the Hair Relic of the Buddha was brought to the island. Christianity was introduced to the island either during his reign, or even earlier in the reign of Dhātusena. It is postulated that one of the temples built at Sīgiriya by Mugalan was Christian. Mugalan was probably the first Sri Lankan king to realise that the best way to defend the island against foreign invasion was to establish a navy. He commenced putting this scheme into practice but, unfortunately, it did not survive his death.

Kumāradāsa

Kumāradāsa (Kumāradhātusena), son of Mugalan I, ruled 512 - 521 A.D. It has been postulated that he was a Christian when he commenced his reign but reverted to Buddhism after about four years. According to the *Cūlavamsa*, he immolated himself (killed himself as a form of sacrifice). The reason for this suicide is not known.

Kittisena

Kittisena (Kristusena), son of Kumāradāsa, was the last of the Moriya dynasty, founded by Dhātusena. He ruled for only nine months (nine years according to the translation of the *Cūlavamsa*) circa 521 A.D. before being murdered by his uncle, Siva. It has been suggested that his name was 'Kristusena' and was transcribed into Pali as Kittisena. If this were true, then this king with a name commencing with 'Kristu' (considering its association with Christ) must have been a Christian.

Siva

Siva (Mādi Siv or Sīvaka), uncle of Kittisena murdered his nephew circa 521 A.D. but ruled only for a very short time before being murdered, in turn, by Mugalan's brother-in-law who ruled as Upatissa II.

Upatissa II

Upatissa II (Lāmāṇi Upatissa) succeeded Siva after murdering him, but only ruled for a few months before being deposed by Silākāla.

Silākāla

Silākāla (Lāmāṇi Am̐bahaṇa Salamevan), son-in-law of Mugalan, ruled 521 - 534 A.D. He was a member of the Lambakarna clan who fled to India in the reign of Kāśyapa and became a monk. He returned during Mugalan's reign with the Hair Relic, gave up his robes and was appointed to the high post of Sword Bearer. This man rose in rebellion against Upatissa II, whose son Kāśyapa defended his father's kingdom. Ultimately, Silākāla triumphed and came to the throne circa 521 A.D. and married Mugalan's daughter. He moved the centre of administration back to Anurādhapura from Sīgiriya and with his accession Christian influence waned. He seems to have favoured the Mahāyāna sect and sent an embassy to the Chinese court in 527 A.D. He decentralised the administration and placed two of his sons in charge of two provinces. He also placed Mahānāga, a member of the Moriya clan, in charge of Ruhuna. These appointments were to lead to dissension, rebellion and a battle for the throne.

Dāṭhāpabhūti or Dappula I

Dāṭhāpabhūti (Dappula I or Dāpuḷusen according to Sinhalese chronicles), second son of Silākāla, murdered Upatissa, his younger brother, who had been groomed as the successor to Silākāla, and became king in 534 A.D. However, he only ruled for a few months because his elder brother Mugalan marched on Anurādhapura. The two brothers agreed to fight a duel for the

throne. Dāṭṭhāpabhūti's elephant was mortally wounded and he committed suicide realising that there was no chance of winning the duel.

Moggallāna II

Moggallāna II (or Daḷa Mugalan), eldest son of Silākāla, took his rightful place on the throne circa 535 A.D., his younger brother having committed suicide and his youngest brother having been murdered. He was devoted to the Theravāda school of Buddhism. The appellation 'Daḷa' indicates his devotion to the Tooth Relic. He was a poet and honoured poets, learned monks and writers of distinction. He constructed the Padaviya and Nāchchadūva tanks which still function as sources of water for agriculture. His son, Kittisirimegha, succeeded him in 555 A.D.

Kittisirimegha

Kittisirimegha (Kuḍā Kitsirimevan), son of Moggallāna II, was placed on the throne circa 555 A.D. by his mother who had eliminated all other contenders. He seems to have been a weakling and his mother ruled in his name. The mother's method of ruling seems to have caused confusion and resentment which gave Mahānāga, who had been put in charge of Ruhuna by Silākāla, the opportunity to usurp the throne after having killed the king circa 572 A.D.

Mahānāga

Mahānāga (Senevi Mānā/Mahanā), a member of the Moriya clan, was the 'strong man' appointed by Silākāla to collect taxes and govern Ruhuna. He took the opportunity of a weak government at Anurādhapura, many years later, to usurp the throne. The actual date of his coming to the throne is uncertain. If the dates attributed to the rule of Kittisirimegha are correct, Mahānāga would have been an elderly man when he became king in 572 A.D. He made various improvements to the Ruvanvālisāya, Abhayagiri dagoba and Jetavana dagoba. He appointed Aggabodhi as viceroy. At his death, presumably of old age, in 575 A.D. Aggabodhi succeeded him. After Mahānāga all Sinhalese chronicles insert

a king, Lāmāṇi-Siṅgānā Saladaḷanābō/Saladaḷabōnā (9 years), whose name is missing in the *Cūlavamsa*.

Aggabodhi I

Aggabodhi I (Akbō) was a nephew of Mahānāga and ruled 575 - 608 A.D. It was a long and peaceful reign for this era. The chronicles state that he defended the realm against various dangers but the nature of these dangers is unclear. It is likely that the chronicles were referring to invasions from southern India. He constructed the Minipē canal, which brings water from the Mahavāli River for agriculture. He also constructed the Hiriwaḍuna tank in the Kurunāgala District and the Māmaḍuva tank in the Mullaitivu district. He is said to have made a “coconut garden” and one wonders whether this was one of the first coconut plantations. It seems that he was interested in literature and poetic works in Sinhala are said to have been composed during this period. His sister’s son, also named Aggabodhi, succeeded him.

Aggabodhi II

Aggabodhi II (Kuḍā Akbō), nephew of Aggabodhi I, ruled 608 - 618 A.D. He was the last of the kings at Anurādhapura to undertake major irrigation works. He built the Kantalai and Ġiritālē tanks. He also built a monastery named Veluvana at Gallindakanda in the Kiri Oya valley, close to Sīgiriya. During his reign a prince from Kāliṅga, in India, and his wife visited the island and entered the Buddhist order. He was succeeded by his Sword-Bearer who was a relative of his principal queen.

Saṅghatissa II

Saṅghatissa II, Sword-Bearer to Aggabodhi II and a relative of his wife, did not have a direct claim to the throne and the reason for his consecration in 618 A.D. is a mystery and resulted in many years of unrest. It seems likely that he was a member of the Lambakarnā clan. A man named Mugalan, who had been a general in Aggabodhi’s army, rebelled and defeated Saṅghatissa

in battle. Saṅghatissa went into exile with his kith and kin but was captured and executed at Sīgiriya. One of his sons was dismembered, a favourite method of execution. Saṅghatissa II had only ruled for a few months.

Moggallāna III

Moggallāna III (Lāmāṇi Bōnā Mugalan) was a usurper who ruled circa 618 - 623 A.D. He had been a general in the army of Aggabodhi II. His conquest of Saṅghatissa was facilitated by one of Saṅghatissa's own generals being treacherous enough to change sides during the battle. When Mugalan became king, he appointed this treacherous general to the office of Malayarāja (prince of the central mountains). The general's son was appointed Sword-Bearer. Later, Mugalan suspected the general of further treachery and had him dismembered. This did not please the general's son, the Sword-Bearer, who having formed an alliance with Jetṭhatissa, son of Saṅghatissa, rose in rebellion and overthrew Mugalan, who was slain in battle. The victorious Sword-Bearer was consecrated King Silāmeghavaṇṇa in 623 A.D.

Silāmeghavaṇṇa

Silāmeghavaṇṇa (Asiggāhaka), erstwhile Sword-Bearer to Mugalan III, usurped the throne in 623 A.D. and ruled until 632 A.D.. He was a member of the Lambakarna clan. He carried out a reformation of the priesthood by expelling unruly monks. One hundred priests had their hands cut off and were banished to India because they murdered a monk name Bodhi who had instigated the reformation. It is recorded that there was a severe drought, which caused great hardship during his reign. An uncle of Prince Jetṭhatissa (son of Saṅghatissa), named Sirināga, invaded with an army of Tamil mercenaries from South India but King Silāmeghavaṇṇa defeated him and it is said that he offered the prisoners-of-war as slaves to the monasteries. He died of an illness when touring Dakkhinadesa, a province south of Anurādhapura, and was succeeded by his son Aggabodhi III.

Aggabodhi III

Aggabodhi III (Sirisaṅgabō), son of Silāmeghavaṇṇa, succeeded his father in 632 A.D. There followed several years of internal turmoil. Aggabodhi was deposed three times. Six months after succeeding his father Jeṭṭhatissa, son of Saṅghatissa, deposed him. He regained the throne with the aid of Tamil mercenaries five months later only to be deposed by Dāṭhāsiva, one of Jeṭṭhatissa's generals who was of the Moriya clan and who ruled as Dāṭhopatissa I. Aggabodhi returned from India to regain the throne for the second time. Both Dāṭhopatissa and Aggabodhi looted the monasteries to pay their troops.

Circa 648 A.D. Dāṭhopatissa again deposed Aggabodhi. He fled to Ruhuna and died there. However, his brother Kāśyapa continued the campaign against the Moriyas and ousted Dāṭhopatissa circa 649 A.D.

Jeṭṭhatissa III

Jeṭṭhatissa III (Lāmāṇi Kaṭusara Deṭatis), son of Saṅghatissa III, deposed Aggabodhi III circa 632 A.D. He was said to have been a pious ruler. He was defeated and deposed after only five months by Aggabodhi III and committed suicide on the battlefield. One of his generals was Dāṭhāsiva, who went away to India and waited for a suitable moment to attack Aggabodhi.

Dāṭhopatissa I

Dāṭhāsiva who ascended the throne as Dāṭhopatissa I (Lāmāṇi Daḷupatis), one of Jeṭṭhatissa III's generals and a member of the Moriya clan returned from exile in India to depose Aggabodhi III twice. During these battles the two rival parties plundered the Buddhist monasteries to pay for the maintenance of their armies. Having ruled for a while, he was defeated by Aggabodhi, who returned again from exile in India. However, he in his turn returned to usurp power once again circa 648 A.D. At this stage Aggabodhi retreated to Ruhuna where he died. Unfortunately for Dāṭhopatissa, Aggabodhi's brother, Kāśyapa, continued the battle and put Dāṭhopatissa to flight. The latter took refuge in India and

is said to have taken the royal regalia with him. Circa 650 A.D., Dāṭhōpatissa, obviously a persistent man, made another attempt to regain the throne but was beaten and killed on the battlefield by Kāśyapa.

Kāśyapa II

Kāśyapa II (Pāsuḷu Kasubu), brother of Aggabodhi III and son of Silāmeghavaṇṇa, came to the throne in 650 A.D., having killed Dāṭhōpatissa in battle. Whilst viceroy during his brother's rule he had plundered the treasures of the Thūpārāma dagoba. As a penance when he came to power, he rebuilt the Thūpārāma and did many other pious deeds. He stabilised the political conditions in a country that had been racked by internal strife for many years. He is said to have improved the relationship between the secular and religious factions. Kāśyapa's son being too young, his nephew Māna was made regent when Kāśyapa died in 658 A.D. Māna made an attempt to deport the Tamil mercenaries who had been brought by the previous kings. The mercenaries objected violently and, to pacify them, a mock treaty was concluded in which Māna's father, Dappula, was consecrated king.

Dappula I (II)

Dappula was the father of the regent, Māna, appointed by Kāśyapa II. He came to the throne circa 658 A.D. in an attempt to pacify a rebellion by the Tamil mercenaries in Anurādhapura at the time of his son's regency.

Dappula transported the valuables of the royal palace in Anurādhapura to his palace in Ruhuna in anticipation of an attack by the Tamil mercenaries who had been brought by previous kings and who had established themselves in the capital. These "dogs of war" informed Hatthadāṭha, a nephew of Dāṭhōpatissa I who was in exile in India, about the weak political situation in the island. Dāṭhōpatissa landed with an army, the mercenaries already there joined him and with this powerful force he captured Anurādhapura and ruled, circa 659 A.D. as Dāṭhōpatissa II. Dappula, in the meantime, withdrew to Ruhuna and ruled

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there, doing many good works. These included building shrines to Hindu gods at Kataragama.

Dāṭhopatissa II

Dāṭhopatissa II (Lāmāṇi Daḷupatis), the nephew of Dāṭhopatissa I, deposed Dappula circa 659 A.D. His rule of 9 years was relatively peaceful. Māna, Dappula's son, attacked from the Eastern Province but was beaten and put to death. Mānavamma, probably the eldest son of Kāśyapa II, launched a campaign from South India with Pallava soldiers but though he won the first battle, his commanders wished to return to India when they heard that their king, Narasiṃhavarman I, was seriously ill. Because of this, Dāṭhopatissa managed to retain his throne. He died in 667 A.D and was succeeded by his cousin Aggabodhi IV.

Aggabodhi IV

Aggabodhi IV (Pāsulu Sirisaṅgabō), cousin of Dāṭhopatissa II, ruled 667 - 683 A.D. He had been *yuvarāja* (viceroy) at Dakkhinadesa during the reign of Dāṭhopatissa II. He was a pious king. The greatest of his religious buildings was the Vaṭadāgē at Mādirigiriya. His reign of sixteen years seems to have been peaceful. In the last year of his reign Poḷonnaruva temporarily became the centre of administration.

Datta

Datta (Valpiṭi Vāsi Datta) was a puppet king placed in power in 683 A.D. at the death of Aggabodhi IV by a Tamil minister, named Potthakuṭṭha, who continued as the power behind the throne. Datta died in 684 A.D. and Potthakuṭṭha found another puppet named Hatthadāṭha to rule in his place.

Hatthadāṭha

Hatthadāṭha (Hunannaru Riyandaḷa) was another puppet king installed by the Tamil minister, Potthakuṭṭha, at the death of Datta in 685 A.D. Hatthadāṭha only survived for six months. A son of Kāśyapa II, Mānavamma, who returned with another Pallava

army, put him to death. Meanwhile Potthakutṭha met his death dramatically by eating poisoned cakes, served by a friend.

Mānavamma

Mānavamma (Mahalāpāṇo), a member of the Lambakarṇa clan, came to the throne in 684 A.D. with the aid of a Pallavan army. This was to be a new lineage of Lambakarṇa kings who ruled for the rest of the Anurādhapura period. The alliance with the Pallavan kingdom continued after his accession to the throne and examples of Pallavan art still survive in Sri Lanka. He was a pious king and carried out many repairs to religious buildings. Despite his long reign according to the Sinhalese chronicles, little is known about him because the relevant leaf of the original *Cūḷavaṃsa* manuscript has been lost. His reign ended circa 718 A.D. and his son, Aggabodhi V, succeeded him.

Aggabodhi V

Aggabodhi V, son of Mānavamma, ruled 718 -724 A.D. His rule was peaceful and he carried out restoration of numerous shrines and monastic buildings in Mihintalē. His younger brother, Kāśyapa III, succeeded him.

Kāśyapa III

Kāśyapa III (Suḷu Kasubu), another son of Mānavamma, ruled 724 - circa 731 A.D. His reign was peaceful and he carried out various pious works. He appointed his brother, Mahinda, as viceroy with the intention of having him succeed to the throne.

Mahinda I

Mahinda I (Mihidel or Midel), brother of Kāśyapa III and youngest son of Mānavamma, was the viceroy appointed by Kāśyapa III to succeed him at his death. Curiously, for reasons that are unclear, he was not consecrated king but ruled as *ādipāda* (duke) from 730 - 732 A.D. The close relationship with the Pallava kingdom continued during his time. He appointed his brother Kāśyapa III's son, Aggabodhi, instead of his own son (also called

Aggabodhi) as viceroy and successor. His own son was placed in charge of Dakkhiṇadesa province.

Aggabodhi VI

Aggabodhi VI (Päsuḷu Akbō), son of Kāśyapa III, ruled 732 - 772 A.D. He appointed Mahinda I's son, to the post of viceroy and allowed him to manage the affairs of state. However, some of the actions of the viceroy gave rise to distrust on the part of the king, leading to a quarrel. They challenged each other to a battle that was won by the king's army and the viceroy fled to the central mountains. The king relented and, following reconciliation, the viceroy returned and was married to the king's daughter, Saṅghā. One of Saṅghā's cousins, also named Aggabodhi, the ruler of Ruhuna, abducted her and took her to his own province. The king and the viceroy made this an excuse to attack Ruhuna not only to bring back Saṅghā but also to subjugate that province which was independent at the time. At his death in 772 the viceroy who ruled as Aggabodhi VII, succeeded him.

Aggabodhi VII

Aggabodhi VII (Kuḍā Akbō), son of Mahinda I, ruled 772 - 778 A.D. He had administered the state during most of his predecessor's rule and therefore made a very experienced king. Perhaps because of this, his rule was peaceful. In addition to the usual religious acts (renovating the shrine of the sacred Bō-tree was one of them) he is said to have taken an interest in herbal medicine and studied the medicinal qualities of plants. He also reformed the judicial system by dismissing corrupt and unjust judges. Significantly, he died at his residence in Poḷonnaruva. This implies that Poḷonnaruva was growing in importance and had become an alternative residence for the Anurādhapura kings by the eighth century A.D. His nephew Mahinda, son of Aggabodhi VI, succeeded him.

Mahinda II

Mahinda II (Salamevan Mihiṇḍu), son of Aggabodhi VI

ruled 778 - 797 A.D. He came to the throne fortuitously because of the premature death of the viceroy, son of Aggabodhi VII. At the time Mahinda was in a relatively minor administrative post at Mannar. This may indicate that his peers did not think much of his abilities. However, he stepped into the breach and established himself as king. His accession led to a period of rebellion and civil commotion. He married the wife of his predecessor (his uncle) to strengthen his claim to the throne. Rival claims to the throne came mainly from his cousin, Dappula, whom he defeated in battle on more than one occasion and ultimately signed a treaty allowing him to rule over Ruhuna but reducing that province into a protectorate. His most outstanding religious work was the reconstruction of the Ratanapāsāda. His son Udaya/Dappula succeeded him.

Udaya I or Dappula II/III

Udaya I or Dappula II/III ruled 797 - 802 A.D. He was the son of Mahinda II, by an earlier marriage and was not considered a legitimate heir to the throne by some people. A minor uprising transpired but this was quelled. The ruler of Ruhuna, Dāṭhāsiva, ignored the terms of the treaty made by Mahinda II and encroached on the territory of Anurādhapura. Mahinda, Dāṭhāsiva's son, who was in dispute with his father asked for Udaya's help. This was willingly given and Dāṭhāsiva expelled by force. Mahinda then became ruler of Ruhuna and agreed to keep to the terms of the original treaty. Udaya I is said to have initiated the very significant legal system of recording important judgements so that they could be used as precedents. It is recorded that his queen built a vihāra (Jayasenapabbata) and granted it to a Tamil *bhikkhu* community, which seems to have existed in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) at that time.

Mahinda III

Mahinda III (Sōmihiṇḍu), eldest son of Udaya I, succeeded his father in 802 A.D. and ruled until 806 A.D. He had been viceroy during his father's reign. His rule seems to have been unremarkable. He granted the revenues from a canal named

Gethumba to the Ratanapāsāda, chapter house of the Abhayagiri monastery. His younger brother, who ruled as Aggabodhi VIII, succeeded him.

Aggabodhi VIII

Aggabodhi VIII (Mādi Akbō), brother of Mahinda III and second son of Udaya I, ruled 806 - 817 A.D. His rule was remarkably peaceful. He was known for his great piety. He was also known for his exceptional sense of equality, even towards his slaves. He is said to have treated his mother with great affection and reverence. He disallowed the bringing of meat, fish and intoxicating drinks into the city on Poya days. His younger brother, Dappula, succeeded him.

Dappula II (III/IV)

Dappula II (III/IV) (Kuḍā Dāpuḷu), younger brother of Aggabodhi VIII, ruled 817 - 831 A.D. According to the *Rājāvaliya*, there was a Pāṇḍyan invasion during his reign but this is not confirmed elsewhere. A new alliance was established with the ruler of Ruhuna. Mahinda, ruler of Ruhuna, banished his two sons, Kittagabodhi and Dappula, from his court. The two princes sought refuge at the court in Anurādhapura and their uncle, king Dappula, supported them by sending an army to Ruhuna but this army was beaten in battle. Some time later, Mahinda of Ruhuna was engaged in another war against one of his kinsmen when he was killed. Kittagabodhi hurried back to Ruhuna to take the throne and the king gave him his daughter in marriage. The king appointed his own son, Aggabodhi, as viceroy and ignored his brother's son, Mahinda. Aggabodhi succeeded his father as Aggabodhi IX.

Aggabodhi IX

Aggabodhi IX (Pāsuḷu Akbō), son of king Dappula, succeeded his father in 831 A.D. and ruled until 833 A.D. His cousin, Mahinda, returned from India with a large army of Tamil soldiers in an attempt to claim the throne but was defeated by Aggabodhi and

returned to India. Aggabodhi IX carried out many pious works and at his death was succeeded by his younger brother, Sena.

Sena I

Sena I (Matvaḷa Sen), younger brother of Aggabodhi IX, ruled 833 - 853 A.D. One of his first acts as king was to have his cousin Mahinda, who was in India and was a pretender to the throne, murdered. He appointed the eldest of his three brothers, Mahinda, as viceroy. A Pāṇḍyan invasion led by King Śrīmāra Śrīvallabha (815 - 862 A.D.) occurred during his reign. Sena did not lead his troops into battle. Mahinda, the viceroy, committed suicide after losing the battle and Kāśyapa, the second brother, was killed whilst defending Poḷonnaruva. The Pāṇḍyans looted Anurādhapura after their victory. However, they returned to India having made Sena I proclaim his allegiance to the Pāṇḍyan emperor by surrendering the Sinhalese crown jewels to the invader. The son of Kāśyapa became viceroy and at the death of Sena I, succeeded him as Sena II.

Sena II

Sena II (Mugayinvāsi Sen), the nephew of Sena I, ruled 853 - 887 A.D. Sena II, with the help of the Pāṇḍyan emperor's son, Varaguṇa, who wished to oust his father, Śrīvallabha, launched an attack on the Pāṇḍyan empire, which was at war with the Pallavas in the north at the time. Sena's general, Kuṭṭhaka, captured Mathurai, the Pāṇḍyan capital and the emperor, Śrīmāra Śrīvallabha, was killed in the battle. Sena's army looted Mathurai and Varaguṇa (Varaguṇavarman II) was consecrated King of Pāṇḍya. General Kuṭṭhaka was highly honoured and became an influential figure in affairs of state. Sena II constructed a dam across the Mahavāli River and had an additional outlet built for the Minnēriya tank. He also built a hospital for the *bhikkhus* at Mihintalē. Sena II had restored some of the country's pride by his invasion of Pāṇḍya. His younger brother, Udaya who had been viceroy, succeeded him.

Udaya II (I)

Udaya II (I), the youngest brother of Sena II, succeeded him and ruled 887 - 896 A.D. He married his niece, the daughter of his younger brother Kāśyapa whose other daughter married her cousin, the son of Sena II, also named Kāśyapa. These marriages within the royal family were an attempt to ensure that the succession to the throne would take its lawful course. However, a prince named Kittagabodhi, a son of Mahinda, the king's elder brother organised a rebellion against the king. This was subdued but Kittagabodhi retreated to Ruhuna, where he killed the ruler and ruled in his place. King Udaya sent an army under the command of Mahinda, the son of his nephew Kāśyapa. Kittagabodhi was defeated and sought refuge in the central mountains but was captured by General Vajiragga and imprisoned. Mahinda became ruler of Ruhuna. His younger brother, Kāśyapa, succeeded him.

Kāśyapa IV

Kasyapa IV, younger brother of Udaya, ruled 896 - 913 A.D. There was a rebellion during his reign by Mahinda, the ruler of Ruhuna, who defeated the king's army. Mahinda's father, the viceroy at Anurādhapura, negotiated a settlement and Mahinda returned to Ruhuna only to find that his own subjects had risen against him. Mahinda had to seek refuge at the court in Anurādhapura where he was not a welcome guest. However, the priests intervened and brought about a reconciliation. Mahinda was provided with an army with which he crushed the rebellion in Ruhuna. Kasyapa IV then gave his daughter in marriage to Mahinda, presumably as a precautionary measure against any further hostilities. Meritorious works, not only by the king but also by various high officials, have been recorded during this reign. Kasyapa, son of King Sena II, succeeded him.

Kāśyapa V

Kāśyapa V (Pasuḷu Kasubu), son of Sena II, succeeded his uncle, Kāśyapa IV, in 913 A.D. and ruled until 923 A.D. He had four queens and a number of sons but bestowed the title of viceroy on

his kinsman Dappula. Kāśyapa V sent an army to defend Pāṇḍyan territory against the Cōḷa king, Parāntaka I, at the request of the Pāṇḍyan king, Rājasimha II. This army commanded by Kāśyapa's son was defeated and the Pāṇḍyan kingdom became part of the Cōḷa empire. Kāśyapa V was a learned man and had a considerable knowledge of the Buddhist scriptures. He carried out many pious works including restoration of the Mirisavāṭi monastery. He also built a hospital at Anurādhapura and granted the revenues from several villages for its maintenance. His irrigation works included two tanks, Podonavulu and Pulundavulu. Despite a plague, his rule of ten years was peaceful and, relatively, prosperous. His cousin, Dappula, succeeded him.

Dappula III (IV/V)

Dappula III (IV/V), cousin of Kāśyapa V and son of Udaya II, succeeded Kāśyapa V in 923 A.D. but only ruled for seven months. He granted revenue from a village to the Mirisavāṭi monastery. His short reign was uneventful.

Dappula IV (V/VI)

Dappula IV (V/VI) (Kuḍā Dāpuḷu), son of Sena II and cousin of Dappula III, succeeded him in 923 A.D. and ruled until 935 A.D. During his reign the rulers of Ruhuṇa encroached on the boundary with Anurādhapura (the Gal Oya), breaking the treaty formed by Udaya II. An army led by Prince Mahinda who was the son of the viceroy, also named Udaya, subjugated Ruhuṇa. Prince Mahinda was made Governor of Ruhuṇa and Dappula IV extended his sovereignty over the entire island. An appeal to Dappula IV by the deposed Pāṇḍyan king, Rājasimha II, to regain his kingdom from the Cōḷas was rejected because of the opposition of ministers and nobles who did not wish to undertake this hazardous military mission. Rājasimha II left for Kēraḷa, entrusting his regalia to Dappula IV for safekeeping and this was responsible for a later Cōḷa invasion. His viceroy, Udaya, succeeded him.

Udaya III (II)

Udaya III (II), a cousin of Dappula IV, ruled 935 - 938 A.D. There was a major rebellion during his reign because he had several officials, who conspired against him, killed in the residence of some ascetic monks where they had sought refuge. The monks were upset and left the city. The people rose up against this sacrilege and were supported by the army. However, peace was brought about after the king and his viceroy begged the ascetics' forgiveness. The monks of the three fraternities in Anurādhapura intervened and brought about reconciliation. Sena, whose relationship to Udaya III is not known, succeeded him at his death in 938 A.D.

Sena III

Sena III, whose relationship to his predecessor, Udaya III, is not given in the chronicles, succeeded him and ruled 938 - 946 A.D. His reign was peaceful. He undertook restoration of some dilapidated tanks and canals and gave his patronage to the founding of a Buddhist Academy known as Nagasala pirivena. Udaya, the son of Kāśyapa V, succeeded him.

Udaya IV (III)

Udaya IV (III) succeeded Sena III in 946 A.D. and ruled until 954 A.D. He is said to have neglected the administration of the kingdom and been addicted to alcohol. The lax government inevitably led to corruption. The Cōḷa emperor, Parāntaka I, who had conquered the Pāṇḍyan kingdom, wanted to be consecrated as king of the Pāṇḍyans using the original Pāṇḍyan regalia which had been entrusted to the Sri Lankan royal house in the reign of Dappula IV. His demand was unheeded by Udaya IV and this resulted in a Cōḷa invasion. King Udaya fled to Ruhuṇa, taking the regalia with him. The Cōḷas pillaged Anurādhapura and pursued Udaya but were obliged to abandon the invasion and return to South India because Kṛṣṇa III, ruler of the northern kingdom of Rāṣṭrakūṭa, had invaded Cōḷa territory. Udaya IV, despite his earlier negligence, did restore Anurādhapura on his return from

Ruhuṇa. 'His son, Sena, succeeded him according to the *Cūlavamsa*. However, the Sinhalese chronicles maintain that a king named Pasuḷu Sen succeeded Udaya IV

Sena IV

Sena IV (Mādi Sen), son of Udaya IV succeeded him and ruled 954 - 956 A.D. According to the chronicles he was a wise king. He was also said to be an excellent poet, impartial towards friend and foe and full of pity and goodwill. He had a casket made for the Tooth Relic and established a Buddhist academy named Sithagama pirivena. He also decreed a set of regulations governing the guidance of monks and the conduct of officials at Dakkhinagiri monastery at Kaḷudiyapokuṇa. His viceroy, Mahinda, succeeded him.

Mahinda IV

Mahinda IV (Kuḍā Mihidel or Midel), who was either the son of Kāśyapa V or, in line with recent research, the son of Udaya III, ruled 956 - 972 A.D. Fearful of further invasions from the mainland, Mahinda IV made an alliance with the Malaysian kingdom of Śrīvijaya who were also Buddhists and probably related to the Sri Lankan royal family. In order to cement the alliance, he married a Śrīvijayan princess. The first attack from India was by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king, Kṛṣṇa III in 958 A.D. The Sri Lankan army defeated him. The Cōḷa king, Parāntaka I, landed with an army on the island of Kayts in 959 A.D. but was beaten in a battle with the Sri Lankan army commanded by an able Malay general named Sena. Mahinda IV restored some of the dilapidated irrigation works, hence improving the economy. He also undertook numerous restorative construction works of religious buildings. His son, Sena, succeeded him.

Sena V

Sena V (Salamevan), the son of Mahinda IV and the Malayan princess, succeeded his father in 972 A.D. at the age of twelve. There was intense rivalry in court between the Malay faction, headed by the queen-mother and General Sena (victor

of the battles with the Cōlas and Rāṣṭrakūṭas and a member of the Malayan royal family) and the Sinhalese faction headed by a General Udaya. On the king's orders General Sena's brother, who was having an affair with the queen-mother, was executed. General Sena rose up against the king with a powerful army. The king and his advisor, General Udaya, fled to Ruhuna and General Sena and the queen-mother ruled the country from Poḷonnaruva. A settlement was negotiated whereby King Sena V married General Sena's daughter and banished General Udaya. However, though he regained the throne, the king had very little control of state affairs and died in 982 A.D., age twenty-two, probably from the excessive consumption of alcohol.

Mahinda V

Mahinda V, younger son of Mahinda IV and the Malayan princess, succeeded Sena V and ruled 982 - 993 A.D. Unfortunately, he was another weak king. Malayan mercenaries, brought over by General Sena and over whom the king had no control, terrorised and plundered the country. Also, the king's income had dropped drastically because the weak government was unable to collect the taxes. Mahinda V escaped to Ruhuna whilst chaos and anarchy continued at Anurādhapura. The Cōla emperor, Rājarāja I, having heard of the state of the country, launched an invasion in 993 A.D. and occupied Anurādhapura. It was part of his plan to build Cōla sea power and monopolise trade in the Indian Ocean. Mahinda V was the last Sinhalese ruler of Anurādhapura. In 1017 A.D. he was captured and sent to the Cōla capital (Tanjore) and died there in 1029 A.D. The island had become a province of the Cōla empire and was ruled by Rājarāja I.

Rājarāja I

Rājarāja I was the Cōla emperor who invaded Anurādhapura in 993 A.D. By this time Mahinda V, a weak king, had escaped the clutches of the unruly Malay mercenaries in Anurādhapura by running away to Ruhuna and Anurādhapura fell without resistance. One of the first changes made by the Cōlas was to shift

the seat of administration to Poḷonnaruva which they renamed Jananathamangalam. Anurādhapura ceased to be of any political significance. Poḷonnaruva was chosen because it was more central, making it suitably sited for controlling the whole island, particularly Ruhuna in the south. Also, it was more accessible to the eastern ports, which were important for Cōḷa trade. In 1017 A.D the Cōḷas subjugated Ruhuna and captured Mahinda V who was banished to Tanjore, the Cōḷa capital, together with his queen.

Polonnaruva Period 1017 A.D. to 1235 A.D.

Cōla occupation

Sri Lanka was a Cōla colony from 993 A.D. to 1070 A.D. Although the Sinhalese kings had known of the strategic importance of Polonnaruva for several centuries, they had been reluctant to move away from their ancient capital at Anurādhapura. It was the Cōla king, Rājēndra I (1012 - 1044 A.D.), who transferred the capital, in 1017 A.D., to Polonnaruva from where it was possible not only to access the eastern ports (a gateway to south-east Asian trade) more easily but also to control the important crossing of the Mahavāli River. Control of this area of the Mahavāli was strategically important for restraining the dissident province of Ruḥuṇa. It is apparent that the aim of the Cōlas was to gain as much economic benefit as possible from their occupation of the island and they paid little attention to the island's infrastructure. The irrigation system, for instance, does not seem to have been maintained during their administration of the country.

The Pali and Sinhalese chronicles do not provide adequate information concerning the political and social implications of Cōla rule, which lasted for over seventy years. Cōla rule was accepted and held peacefully in the northern part of the island, whilst the Southern Province of Ruḥuṇa, traditionally a hotbed of patriots and contenders for the crown, was unwilling to pay homage to the Cōlas. In 1025 A.D., having gained control of the entire island (according to Cōla records), Rājēndra I despatched a powerful (and successful) naval expedition against Śrīvijaya

(Sumatra). The Cōlas were now able to dominate the important sea-lanes of Malaysia, which linked the trade routes to China.

The social implications of Cōla rule in Sri Lanka are difficult to fathom. Cōla Governors, who resided at Poḷonnaruva from 1017 A.D., administered the country. Their entourages and troops would also have been resident in the city. In addition, it seems very likely that there were Cōla administrators and soldiers spread out in various strategic points on the island. These Cōlas were Tamil-speaking, Saivite Hindus. A considerable Tamil population settled in the city and its vicinity. Some villages were set aside for these Tamils and are described as *Damiḷa gam* (Tamil villages). However, there seems to have been a great deal of religious tolerance. Hindu Temples existed together with Buddhist shrines and are still visible today. During the seventy years of Cōla occupation there must have been considerable intermingling between the two cultures and it is probable that there was some degree of religious and ethnic harmony.

Rājādhirāja, Rājendra II and Vīrarājendra, in turn, succeeded Rājendra I. These were his sons and they continued with his policies. During the reign of Vīrarājendra (1063 - 1069 A.D.), the Cālukyas, from the Deccan, attacked the Cōlas on the mainland. This weakened the Cōla position in Sri Lanka at a time when Vijayabāhu I was campaigning vigorously against them from his base at Ruhuna. There was a brief respite for the Cōlas when Vīrarājendra despatched a relief expedition from the mainland to recapture Rajaraṭa. After the death of Vīrarājendra, a crisis occurred in the Cōla court and a Cālukya prince came to the throne. The new king, Kulōttunga I, did not have any interest in the Cōla colony of Sri Lanka. His personal prestige was not involved and the security of the Cōla kingdom on the mainland was paramount. He, therefore, ended the attempt to recoup the losses the Cōlas had sustained in Sri Lanka. In 1070 A.D. Vijayabāhu I restored Sinhalese power in Sri Lanka.

Restoration of Sinhalese power

Mahinda V, the last Sinhalese king at Anurādhapura was taken captive by the Cōlas and died at their capital, Tanjore, in 1029 A.D. A succession of Sinhalese rulers then ruled at Ruhūṇa. Cōla records claim that Rājēndra I took control of the entire island around 1025 A.D. but Sinhalese records maintain that Ruhūṇa continued as an independent province. These contradicting claims can be reconciled by supposing that, though the Cōlas had control of the country and particularly its foreign trade, Ruhūṇa did not willingly give its allegiance and did everything it could to oppose the Cōlas. Around 1050 A.D., a young prince named Kīrti, who was related to the old Anurādhapura royalty, was persuaded by the political leaders in Ruhūṇa to lead the battle against the Cōlas. Kīrti organised the campaign, which took several years of preparation and then attacked the Cōlas on two fronts - at Polonnaruwa and Anurādhapura. The Cōlas were defeated and Kirti ascended the throne as Vijayabāhu I (1070 - 1110 A.D.). He decided to keep Polonnaruwa as the capital, though he was consecrated at Anurādhapura. It has been claimed that if not for Vijayabāhu I, the Sinhalese nation would have ceased to exist. This is an overstatement since it seems likely that Cōla power in Sri Lanka was drawing to a close in any case and Vijayabāhu, hero and architect of Sinhalese nationality though he undoubtedly was, merely accelerated the event.

It is significant that even after this restoration of Sinhalese power, Tamil mercenaries were present in large numbers in the employ of Vijayabāhu. These mercenaries were important and powerful enough to be given the duty of guarding the Temple of the Tooth. They were dangerous 'dogs of war' who on one occasion burnt down the royal palace and took the king's sister and her children as hostages in a protest about pay. During his long reign, Vijayabāhu I proved himself to be not only a good general but also an effective administrator. He united the island politically, rehabilitated the irrigation works and restored Buddhism as the main religion. However, he continued with the policy of religious tolerance and gave support to the Tamil population in

their religious practices. In fact, he did all the groundwork for the 'Indian summer' of Sinhalese civilization, which commenced with the rule of Parākramabāhu I.

Period of anarchy

At Vijayabāhu's death the perennial problem of succession appeared once again. Various intrigues arose within the royal family. The outcome was that the country, which had been united by Vijayabāhu, was again split into independent provinces ruled by separate members of the family. These internecine battles were costly and had a devastating effect on an economy that was just beginning to recover. The soldiers of the provincial rulers, very probably mercenaries, were a law unto themselves. Entire villages were plundered and destroyed. The irrigation system was sabotaged and this had an adverse effect on the agricultural economy. The weak administration fostered corrupt officials who became wealthy at the expense of the state. In addition to these civil problems, the Buddhist saṅgha withdrew its support from the state during the reign of Vikramabāhu I (1111 - 1132 A.D.) who was upset because the monks did not support him during the contest for the throne and, as a consequence, treated them badly when he came into power. A good relationship between the saṅgha and the ruler, who represented the state, was important for the peace and well-being of the country (see section on 'Religion' under 'Society').

This turmoil, after the death of Vijayabāhu in 1110 A.D., continued for about thirty years. Development came to a halt and the revenues, which had improved under Vijayabāhu, were just adequate to pay for the internecine military activities. Some stability was regained during the reign of Gajabāhu II (1132 - 1153 A.D.) but confidence and progress were not fully restored until the reign of Parākramabāhu I.

An Indian summer

The reign of Parākramabāhu I (1153 - 1186 A.D.) is fondly remembered as the 'Indian summer' of the Sinhalese civilisation.

It was a period of frenetic activity and great achievements. Though some historians claim that these achievements impoverished the country and led to its ultimate downfall, it was an exciting period, which left behind great monuments that are a credit to Sri Lankan culture.

Parākramabāhu brought about this renaissance through a great deal of careful planning combined with tremendous energy. Where did he find the wealth, in an impoverished country, to carry out all these great public and religious works, not to mention waging domestic as well as foreign battles? The answer lies in the fact that he spent the first few years, as the ruler of Dakkhinadesa, in bringing a large area of new land under cultivation and improving irrigation. Productivity improved dramatically. He continued to do this with each province he conquered and the result was an adequate surplus economy for other activities. Having been accepted as the legitimate ruler at Polonnaruwa, he set about rebuilding the capital as well as the rest of the country. One of the greatest periods of architectural activity in Sri Lanka commenced with his accession.

Polonnaruwa became a city of great beauty and some of the numerous buildings and monuments created by him exist, albeit in ruins, to this day. He paid particular attention to irrigation and is said to have constructed one hundred and sixty three major tanks and countless smaller tanks. He not only had an excellent relationship with the Buddhist saṅgha but also built various structures for the Hindu fraternity, which must have been considerable at the time. Parākramabāhu's army consisted mainly of Tamil mercenaries with a Tamil commander. These *vēllaikkāra* (a term used at that time for body-guards, meaning 'servants' in Tamil) were Hindus and so were the Tamils left over from the Cōla occupation. The *vēllaikkāra*, despite their derogatory name, were powerful in their own right and capable of 'biting the hand that fed them'. It was important to keep their needs satisfied and it was, at least in part, for this reason that Polonnaruwa maintained some of the appearances of a South Indian Hindu city.

Sri Lanka's reputation in Asia must have been at a very low point when Parākramabāhu became king. He seems to have taken an active part in South Indian politics and generated support for the Pāṇḍyas against the Cōḷas. This may have contributed towards the downfall of the Coḷa kingdom and the re-emergence of the Pāṇḍyas as a power in South India. Of greater immediate importance was the prevention of another Cōḷa invasion of Sri Lanka. According to the *Cūḷavaṃsa*, Parākramabāhu led an army against Burma, which was also a Buddhist country, in 1164 A.D. This was because the Burmese king had harassed his envoys and refused to allow Sri Lankan ships to enter Burmese territory. The Burmese chronicles do not mention the episode and it seems likely that this overseas adventure was merely a raid and the Burmese king was not killed in the battle as the *Cūḷavaṃsa* triumphantly claims.

Once he had unified the island he kept a tight check on the provinces, particularly Ruhūṇa. A few rebellions were ruthlessly crushed. All indications of previous autonomy were purposefully eliminated. These measures resulted in centralised, autocratic rule, which worked very well during Parākramabāhu's lifetime but caused serious problems at his death.

It has been estimated that the population of Sri Lanka at the time of Parākramabāhu's death was twenty million. This estimate was made from the words of the great king on his deathbed, reminding his successors of the number of villages he was leaving behind in each province. The average number of people living in a village being known an estimate of the total population can be made. This record of the number of villages in the *Cūḷavaṃsa* may be as exaggerated as some of the other records in this chronicle.

The Indian summer carried on for a few years into the reign of Niśśaṅkamalla (1187 - 1196 A.D.). This king has a mysterious background and there is uncertainty as to his origins. He had no qualms about praising himself and claiming descent from Vijaya, the founder of the Sinhalese race. Most sources state that he was from the province of Kāliṅga in India. Harry Williams in his book 'Ceylon' lists him as a Tamil prince. Wherever he did come

from, he certainly was a foreigner and considered as such by his subjects. Perhaps it was this insecurity that made him install a large number of inscriptions praising his own achievements. This self-praise has made historians wary of ascribing credit for deeds that had not really been carried out by this king. Though his reign was peaceful and the last stable period of this era, the good deeds he carried out have been submerged in the false claims he made.

Collapse of Polonnaruwa

Parākramabāhu did not have any sons and the succession passed to a member of the Kāliṅga dynasty. Kāliṅga was an ancient region in the eastern part of central India - in the area now occupied by the state of Orissa. Dravidian tribes may have founded this state before the Indo-Aryan colonisations. The later inhabitants were of Indo-Aryan descent. There is a theory that Vijaya came from this area. It is curious therefore that some of these Kāliṅga princes have been described as being Tamils. It may be that there had been intermarriage between the Kāliṅga and Pāṇḍya royal houses and the Kāliṅga dynasty does seem to have had alliances with the South Indian Tamil kingdoms at that time. Certainly, Parākramabāhu I was connected with the Pāṇḍyas on his paternal side and his wife had connections with the Kāliṅga dynasty. Most historians do not agree with the theory that the Kāliṅga dynasty was of Malaysian origin. After Niśśaṅkamalla, there was a period of confusion with several short reigns by weak rulers.

The Kāliṅga dynasty maintained itself in power with the help of an influential faction but they kept their precarious hold because the opposition could not come up with an aspirant to the throne with an adequate political claim or sufficient staying power once installed. The fact that the army commanders placed Parākramabāhu's wife, Līlāvatī, on the throne on three separate occasions is proof that this was a very confused period indeed. In addition, the expensive policies of Vijayabāhu I, Parākramabāhu I and Niśśaṅkamalla had sapped the country of its wealth. The individuality and resourcefulness of the provinces had been

removed by the centralisation policy of Parākramabāhu. Ruhūṇa, for instance, had been irrevocably crushed in this respect when Parākramabāhu quelled the rebellion of 1160. These weaknesses in the country led to various incursions by Cōḷa and Pāṇḍya adventurers who were intent on plunder.

Misfortunes came to a climax with the invasion by Māgha of Kāliṅga, who is the most hated of all Sri Lanka's many invaders. There does not seem to be any doubt that he was from Kāliṅga. However, some historians describe him as a Dravidian and a Tamil, though this is not in accord with his origins. The reign of Māgha (1215 - 1236 A.D.) was devastating. Though the Kāliṅgas were Buddhists, Māgha's actions suggest that he was not a Buddhist. During his rule the saṅgha was badly treated and Buddhist monks, having hidden the Tooth and Bowl relics at Kotmalē, fled to Pāṇḍya and Cōḷa countries in South India. Members of the Sinhalese royal dynasties took refuge in the hills and the wet zone of the Island. Tamil settlers occupied the Jaffna peninsula and the Vanni (the region between Anurādhapura and Jaffna). There must have been a Tamil community already in these areas but its numbers increased considerably and some of the Tamil mercenaries who had arrived with invading armies also joined it.

By the thirteenth century these Tamil settlements were powerful enough to form an independent kingdom in Jaffna. At this time there were also scattered Tamil settlements along the eastern seaboard. Māgha's fate, the identity of his conqueror and the date when he left Poḷonnaruva are uncertain. It seems likely that it was Parākramabāhu II who recaptured Poḷonnaruva circa 1236 A.D. Māgha is said to have fled to Jaffna and ruled there, as a satellite of the Cōḷas, until 1255 A.D. Parākramabāhu II was the son of Vijayabāhu III who had ruled at Daṁbadeṇiya from 1232 to 1236 whilst Māgha ruled at Poḷonnaruva. After recapturing Poḷonnaruva, Parākramabāhu II continued to use Daṁbadeṇiya as his capital.

Foreign relations

Rulers at Poḷonnaruva, particularly Parākramabāhu I, tried

to maintain the balance of power in South India by supporting the Pāṇḍyas against their rivals, the Cōlas, who were still the dominant force up to the latter part of the twelfth century. This was purely a matter of self-defence to prevent the dominant South Indian Cōla state from asserting its authority over or interfering with the internal politics of the island. This alliance with the Pāṇḍyas led to a prolonged war during the reign of Parākramabāhu I in which, despite some early successes, the Cōlas defeated the Sri Lankan army. However, the goal of weakening the Cōlas was achieved and contributed to their ultimate eclipse in the next century. In the thirteenth century it was the turn of the Pāṇḍyas to threaten their erstwhile allies in Sri Lanka. Though there is no record of a conquest, a Pāṇḍya prince (Parākrama Paṇḍu) usurped the Sri Lankan throne in 1212 A.D.

Formal relationships with some Southeast Asian countries commenced during this period. Vijayabāhu I had considerable economic aid from Burma to further his war against the Cōlas. The Cōlas must have been unpopular in Southeast Asia because of their aggressive trading policies and this aid would have been given willingly. Parākramabāhu did attack Burma but good relations were soon restored.

Trade, religion and culture

A notable feature during the Polonnaruwa period was the expansion of trade within the country. Market towns emerged and these were linked by trade routes. Merchant corporations were formed and local coinage appeared. This trade was taxed and was a significant part of the state's revenue. Trade and the use of money continued to be secondary in importance to agriculture, which was the predominant economic activity. The Arabs dominated external trade, particularly in the Indian Ocean. Their influence on Sri Lanka's external trade continued until the coming of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. Gems, pearls, cinnamon and elephants were items of this external trade. Some of these Arab merchants commenced settling in Sri Lanka by about the eighth century and their descendants are the Sri

Lankan Moors of today. The Sri Lankan vessels used in external trade were mainly of foreign construction.

The Cōla occupation had a significant Hindu and Tamil influence on the Sinhalese culture at Poḷonnaruva. Dravidian architecture and the Tamil language became more conspicuous. Pali was still being used as the language of Buddhism, in preference to Sinhalese. During this period Buddhism was losing its battle in India, particularly after the Muslim invasions, and Buddhist ties between Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia were strengthened. Hindu practices, always in the background of Buddhism, were reintroduced and it took a great deal of effort by Vijayabāhu I and Parākramabāhu I to reduce their impact.

During this period there seems to have been an increased rigidity in the observance of caste duties. This may have been due to the Hindu influence. Also the process by which caste was divided into the numerous subdivisions, which exist today, was accelerated during this time. Similar to the trend in the West, the growing strength of feudalism was becoming obvious. This trend also manifested itself in the immunities granted to the monasteries. The secular activities of Buddhist monasteries increased during this period because of large land grants and the transfer of administrative control of these lands to the monasteries. Despite the Dravidian influence some of the architecture and sculpture carried out in the reigns of Parākramabāhu I and Niśsaṅkamalla have characteristics that are unique. The Gal Vihāra sculptures, which are the glory of Poḷonnaruva are, perhaps, the summit of Sinhalese artistic achievement.

‘Demise’ of Rajaraṭa

Within fifty years of the ‘Indian summer’, the Sinhalese civilization withdrew from the dry zone, which had been its centre for about 1500 years. It left behind two capital cities, which had great traditional and religious connections with Sinhalese civilization. It also turned its back on the intricate irrigation system, which it had carefully fostered for so many centuries. The island’s hydraulic technology, which was the backbone of its

economy, had reached its highest degree of sophistication under Parākramabāhu I. Yet, only half a century after his death, not only Poḷonnaruwa but also the whole of Rajaraṭa had been abandoned to the jungle.

No doubt there was a combination of events that led to this drastic decision. The invasion by the highly destructive Māgha was one reason. But this was a resilient civilization that had survived several similar invasions in the past. Certainly, the economy was in an abject state but this was a remediable situation and the tendency would have been to improve it by repairing the neglected irrigation system. The threat of further invasion not only from the mainland but also from the Tamil kingdom in the north was one of the important reasons for the move to the rock fortresses that were occupied after the withdrawal from Poḷonnaruwa. The brief reign in Poḷonnaruwa by Parākramabāhu III (1287 - 1293 A.D.) was under the protection of the Pāṇḍyas.

Unfortunately, records were sparsely kept at this time because the Buddhist monks who carried out this duty were in disarray and took some time to recover after Māgha. There could have been another important reason. This is a theory, which cannot be substantiated by the records. The great irrigation system, an essential for agriculture in the dry zone had its dark side. Within it lurked a danger, which could not have been realised or understood in medieval times. This danger was malaria. Whilst the irrigation system was working satisfactorily and when the water was flowing, this danger was minimal. If it was in a state of disrepair and the water was stagnant, the danger was at its height. The fact that under Parākramabāhu the tanks and canals had multiplied many times is significant. When the economy declined maintenance would have become increasingly difficult. In addition, there was the destruction caused by invaders. Chronic malaria is a debilitating disease, and under these conditions could have become an epidemic. The only way to escape its ravages would have been to leave the area. Malaria is still endemic in this part of Sri Lanka. Another interesting aspect is that there may have been a natural disaster around the middle of the thirteenth

century; the Mahavāli River, a main source of water, is said to have changed its course. The reason for this is not known.

Polonnaruwa Rulers

Cōla Rulers	1017 - 1070 A.D.
Vijayabāhu I	1070 - 1110 A.D.
Jayabāhu I	1110 - 1111 A.D.
Vikramabāhu I	1111 - 1132 A.D.
Gajabāhu II	1132 - 1153 A.D.
Parākramabāhu I	1153 - 1186 A.D.
Vijayabāhu II	1186 - 1187 A.D.
Niśśāṅkamalla	1187 - 1196 A.D.
Vikramabāhu II	1196 A.D.
Cōdagāṅga	1196 - 1197
Lilāvati (first period of rule)	1197 - 1200 A.D.
Sāhasamalla	1200 - 1202 A.D.
Kalyānavati	1202 - 1208 A.D.
Dharmāsoka	1208 - 1209 A.D.
Anikaṅga Mahādipāda	1209 A.D.
Lilāvati (second period of rule)	1209 - 1210 A.D.
Lokeśvara	1210 - 1211 A.D.
Lilāvati (third period of rule)	1211 - 1212 A.D.
Parākrama Paṇḍu	1212 - 1215 A.D.
Māgha (Kāliṅga Vijayabāhu)	1215 - 1236 A.D.

Cōla Rulers

The first Cōla ruler at Polonnaruwa was Rājendra I (1012 - 1044 A.D.). He moved the capital from Anurādhapura to Polonnaruwa in 1017 A.D. He was the son of Rājarāja I and followed his father's policy of monopolising the eastern trade routes. He strengthened the Cōla navy and moved the capital to Polonnaruwa to be able to overlook the eastern Sri Lankan ports as well as keep control of Ruhuṇa. His brothers Rājādhirāja, Rājendra II and Vīrarājendra I (1063 - 1069 A.D.) succeeded him in turn. The Cōla rulers did not reside in their Sri Lankan capital and a Governor, residing in Polonnaruwa, carried out the day-to-day administration of the country. During the reign of Vīrarājendra, the Cālukyas from the Deccan repeatedly invaded Cōla territory on the mainland weakening his resolve and ability to control his

Sri Lankan territory. A Cālukya prince, Kulōttuṅga I, succeeded Vīrarājēndra in 1069 A.D. Kulōttuṅga did not have any interest in maintaining Sri Lanka as a colony and did not support his troops on the island.

During the period of Cōḷa rule in Poḷonnaruwa, Ruḥuṇa was being ruled by a series of kings whose autonomy is doubtful. The Cōḷa records claim that they had control of the whole island whilst the Cūḷavaṃsa disagrees and states that Ruḥuṇa was independent. Kāśyapa VI (Vikramabāhu) (1029 - 1040 A.D.), Mahālāna-Kitti (1040 - 1042 A.D.), Vikrama Paṇḍu (1042 - 1043 A.D.), Jagatipāla (1043 - 1046 A.D.), Parākrama Paṇḍu (1046 - 1048 A.D.), Lokeśvara (1048 - 1054 A.D.) and Kāśyapa (VII) (1054 - 1055 A.D.) ruled Ruḥuṇa. Jagatipāla was a prince from Ayodhyā, a city in northern India described in the *Rāmāyana* as the birthplace of Rāma. Vijayabāhu ruled at Ruḥuṇa from 1055 A.D. and at Poḷonnaruwa from 1070 A.D.

Vijayabāhu I

Vijayabāhu was a relative of the royalty at Anurādhapura whose last scion, Kāśyapa VI, son of Mahinda V, had died young due to a sudden illness. Originally known as Kīrti, Vijayabāhu with political support from a chieftain named Budalnā, established himself in Ruḥuṇa with his centre at Kataragama. He carried out a prolonged campaign against the Cōḷas. It is likely that he had financial aid from Burma, a Buddhist country. He finally succeeded in vanquishing the Cōḷas after a two-pronged attack on Poḷonnaruwa and Anurādhapura in 1070 A.D. He made his younger brother viceroy and ruler of Ruḥuṇa. Three other brothers who rebelled against him in 1075 A.D. were punished by death.

He married the daughter of Jagatipāla, who had ruled at Ruḥuṇa, hence making a political connection with northern India. By this queen, he had a daughter named Yasodharā who married a prince named Vīravamma and had two daughters named Līlāvātī and Sugalā. By his second wife, a princess from Kālīṅga, Vijayabāhu had five daughters and a son named Vikramabāhu. His sister, Mitra, married a prince from Pāṇḍya and had three sons namely, Mānābharaṇa, Kīrtiśrīmegha and Śrī Vallabha. Two of

Vijayabāhu's daughters married his younger brothers, Vīrabāhu and Jayabāhu.

He was faced with the tremendous task of re-invigourating the country after the long period of foreign rule. He set about repairing the irrigation system and hence improving agriculture. This was vital. He is said to be the saviour of the Sinhalese race. He died at the age of 73, a ripe old age in those days, having put the country back on its feet.

Jayabāhu I

Jayabāhu was Vijayabāhu's brother and *uparāja* (or *yuvarāja*) at the time of his death. The perennial problem of disputed succession arose, once again, during his reign. Mitra, his sister, plotted to have her son, Mānābharaṇa, appointed *uparāja* in place of Vikramabāhu, the son of Vijayabāhu I. Jayabāhu joined Mitra's faction but their attempt to capture Vikramabāhu failed. Instead, Vikramabāhu took Poḷonnaruva by force and ruled there whilst Jayabāhu and Mānābharaṇa had to be content with ruling Ruḥuṇa and Dakkhinadesa.

Vikramabāhu I

There was anarchy during Vikramabāhu's reign. He did not have the support of the saṅgha and was not consecrated. This was because he was angry with the monks for not supporting his candidature and drove them away from monasteries and plundered the vihāras. This was a bad example to the soldiers, who plundered villages and set fire to them.

Gajabāhu II

The antecedents of this king who succeeded Vikramabāhu are difficult to identify. His rule seems to have been unremarkable until Parākramabāhu started campaigning against him. He married Parākramabāhu's sister.

Parākramabāhu I

Also known as Parākramabāhu the Great, he was the son

of Ratnāvalī, the daughter of Vijayabāhu I and Mānābharaṇa, the son of Mitra who was Vijayabāhu's sister. His father was the ruler at Dakkhiṇadesa when Parākramabāhu was born at Dādigama in the Kegalle district. As a young prince he lived with his uncle, Kīrtiśrīmegha, who was ruler of Dakkhiṇadesa at that time and resided at Kegalle. Kīrtiśrīmegha did not have any sons and brought up the young prince as his heir. It was from Kegalle that Parākramabāhu planned the amalgamation of Poḷonnaruwa and Dakkhiṇadesa under his rule. His first move was to find his way into Poḷonnaruwa. This was made easy by an invitation from Gajabahu II who had learned of Parākramabāhu's presence in his territory.

He spent a great deal of time studying the affairs of the kingdom, including resources for war, troops, stocks of grain and revenues. He also, very craftily, arranged for his younger sister, Bhadravatī, to marry Gajabāhu. When his uncle, Kīrtiśrīmegha, died he became ruler of Dakkhiṇadesa where he greatly increased the amount of land under cultivation by providing the necessary irrigation and, hence, increased his revenues. He also established a capital city near Heṭṭipola and named it Parākramapura. He used the ports at Colombo, Uruwela and Kalpiṭiya, which were part of his kingdom for promoting foreign trade, the main export being gems. The revenues from these ventures made it possible for him to start building an army, mainly from foreign (South Indian) mercenaries.

He waged a complicated campaign against his brother-in-law, Gajabāhu. It was further complicated by the involvement of Mānābharaṇa, ruler of Ruhuna, who also had ambitions of becoming the sole ruler of Sri Lanka. Ultimately, the saṅgha brought about an agreement between the brothers-in-law. Parākramabāhu agreed to withdraw to Dakkhiṇadesa on condition that he would be acclaimed as the sole ruler at Gajabāhu's death. Gajabāhu was an old man who was not expected to live very long. These expectations were realised when he died, soon after, in 1153 A.D.

Parakramabāhu was versed, from boyhood, in the *Arthaśāstra*. This is a work on statecraft by Kauṭilya, the advisor to Candragupta I, the Mauryan emperor. Kauṭilya (321 - 296 B.C.) is compared to Machiavelli and was one of the first thinkers to advocate the divine nature of kings. Parākramabāhu's achievements were many. Though he built many palaces and monuments, his greatest achievements were the great irrigation projects. The most obvious modern remnant of his irrigation projects is the immense reservoir, Parākramasamudra (Sea of Parākrama) at Poḷonnaruva. His foreign policies and invasions have already been dealt with under 'Poḷonnaruva Period'. He is acclaimed as one of Sri Lanka's greatest rulers. He did not have any children but, before he died, secured the throne for his sister's son, Vijayabāhu II, who lived in Kāliṅga at the time.

Vijayabāhu II

This prince's antecedents are a mystery because Parākrama had only one sister who married Gajabāhu and they did not have any sons. He was from Kāliṅga and therefore a foreigner (though he claimed descent from Vijaya) and, naturally, there were objections to his rule. It culminated in his murder by Mahinda VI who ruled for only five days before being put to death by Niśśaṅkamalla. For this reason and because he had no legal right to succeed Vijayabāhu,

Niśśaṅkamalla

The background of this king is also a mystery. He has been identified as a Kāliṅga prince who was *uparāja* during the short reign of Vijayabāhu II. Though he had some royal Kāliṅga connection, he was not directly connected to the Kāliṅga imperial line. It is possible that he was a friend of Vijayabāhu II, during the latter's sojourn in Kāliṅga and was invited to come to Sri Lanka and act as *uparāja*. However, he lied about his ancestry and even claimed direct descent from Vijaya. Some historians have suggested that he was a Tamil, in which case he is likely to have been Pāṇḍyan.

Polonnaruwa Period

Despite his egomania and boastfulness, Polonnaruwa flourished during his reign. He was treated as a foreigner and not generally accepted, particularly in Ruhuna. However, it is recorded that he carried out numerous charitable works and also built and repaired several tanks. These records are treated with suspicion because of Niśśaṅkamalla's capacity to exaggerate his own achievements. His only son, Vīrabāhu, succeeded him at his death in 1196 A.D., but was assassinated the day after his accession.

Vikramabāhu II

This was another Kāliṅga prince (he may have been Niśśaṅkamalla's brother) who succeeded to the throne but was put to death after three months by Cōḍagaṅga.

Cōḍagaṅga

He was Niśśaṅkamalla's nephew and was deposed within a few months. It seems likely that the generals in the army who had assumed the role of kingmakers were propagating this state of anarchy.

Lilāvati

This extraordinary woman had been Parākramabāhu's chief queen and was to rule Sri Lanka on three separate occasions. Though she was connected to the Kāliṅga dynasty, her paternal connection was to Pāṇḍyan royalty and it was, perhaps, for this reason that the anti-Kāliṅga faction put her on the throne. She managed to stay on the throne for three years in the first instance but her ministers were, obviously, male chauvinists and because they did not like the country to be 'kingless', they invited a Kāliṅga prince to take over the throne.

Sāhasamalla

This man was Niśśaṅkamalla's half-brother and deposed Lilavati in 1200 A.D. He ruled for two years before being deposed in his turn.

Kalyāṇavatī

This was Niśsaṅkamalla's second wife and of pure Kāliṅga stock. A general named Āyasmanta placed her on the throne. Her ultimate fate is not known but Dharmāsoka succeeded her.

Dharmāsoka

The youngest person to become king in Sri Lanka, this Kāliṅga prince was placed on the throne in 1208 A.D. at the age of three months by that powerful kingmaker, Āyasmanta, who was the real ruler during this time. There was an invasion by a mysterious man called Anīkaṅga who brought a Cōla army and put both Āyasmanta and Dharmāsoka to death in 1209 A.D.

Ānīkaṅga

A general named Vikkanta killed Anīkaṅga, after he had ruled for a few weeks, and placed Līlāvatī on the throne once again. Līlāvatī ruled only for a year on this occasion before being deposed by Lokeśvara.

Lokeśvara

This was another Kāliṅga prince who invaded with a Tamil army and deposed Līlāvatī. The generals, who again re-installed Līlāvatī, ousted him. In the seventh month of her third term, a Pāṇḍyan king named Parākrama invaded Sri Lanka and deposed poor Līlāvatī for the third time.

Parākrama Paṇḍu

This Pāṇḍyan king seems to have been supported by the ministers at Poḷonnaruva. Perhaps they were trying to break the unstable reign of the Kāliṅga dynasty. The Pāṇḍyan king only ruled for three years before the arrival of the notorious Māgha from Kāliṅga.

Māgha

The most terrible atrocities have been ascribed to this man. He could be considered the Attila of Sri Lanka except that Attila the Hun had some purpose in his destructiveness, while this man

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seems to have destroyed without apparent reason. He was also called Kāliṅga Vijayabāhu and was from Kāliṅga, though some historians designated him as a Tamil in the past. He arrived with a large army of Malabāri soldiers from Kēraḷa. The *Cūḷavaṃsa* complains plaintively that he was 'a heretic, ungenerous, impatient, foolish, unjust, a rejoicer in evil laws and a destroyer of the doctrine of the Buddha'. He was particularly vicious towards the Buddhist Mahāsaṅgha. He turned monasteries and vihāras into residences for his soldiers. Many Buddhist priests left the country. Māgha ruled at Polonnaruwa for twenty-one years and was ousted by Parākramabāhu II in 1236 A.D. but continued to rule the north of the island until 1255 A.D.

Fragmentation Period

1235 A.D. to 1518 A.D.

Renunciation of Rajaraṭa

The centuries that followed the withdrawal from the traditional heartland of the Sinhalese civilization saw the fragmentation of the kingdom. In the latter part of the thirteenth century two kings, Vijayabāhu IV (1270 – 1272) and Parākramabāhu III (1287 – 1293) did rule at Poḷonnaruva for short periods. These attempts at restoration were a failure. Except for Parākramabāhu VI (1411 – 1466 A.D), there does not seem to have been the natural aspiration amongst the Sinhalese kings to unify the island. For a great part of this period there was a separate Tamil kingdom in Jaffna and the Sinhalese kingdom itself was often divided with a system of sub-kings or co-rulers. In the Vanni, between the Tamil and Sinhalese kingdoms, there existed a territory governed by chieftains, both Sinhalese and Tamil.

There are many reasons, some factual and others speculative, for the collapse of the Rajaraṭa civilisation and the drift to the southwest. Despite these theories, some of which are explored below, it remains, together with a similar collapse of other hydraulic civilizations in Southeast Asia during the same period, one of the unsolved mysteries of Asian history.

Destruction perpetrated by Māgha

Without doubt, Māgha and his cohorts caused tremendous damage. Damage to people and property could be considered a natural consequence of invasion but he seems to have gone out of his way to cause irretrievable damage to the very foundations

Fragmentation Period

of the Sinhalese civilization. Two of the most damaged parts of this vulnerable civilization were the irrigation works and the Buddhist saṅgha. The *Cūlavamsa* likens him to a 'fierce drought'. Persecuted Buddhist monks left the country for the mainland in droves. They were the guardians of the culture and the advisors of the king. This would have weakened the kingdom. However, it has been argued that recovery had occurred after invaders from India perpetrated similar destruction in the past. Māgha's acts are, perhaps, not the only reason for the withdrawal from Rajaraṭa, as was once thought.

Strategic and economic reasons

The move to rock-fortresses in the southwest was in anticipation of further attacks from the mainland and also from the Tamil kingdom of Jaffna. The shift to Daṁbadeṇiya (70 miles southwest of Poḷonnaruva), Yāpahuva, Kurunāgala and later to Gampola was, mainly, for reasons of security. The coastal regions in the south and west had for a long time contained centres of trade. With increasing trade between Sri Lanka and other states in the Indian Ocean, these settlements had increased in size and would have become attractive to a kingdom whose traditional economical structure had broken down.

Weakness of hydraulic civilizations

A hydraulic civilization has been likened to an efficient machine controlled by a sensitive and often fragile institutional organization. The German-American historian Karl A. Wittfogel believed that wherever irrigation required substantial and centralized control, government representatives monopolized political power and dominated the economy, resulting in an absolutist managerial state. In addition, there was a close identification of these officials with the dominant religion and an atrophy of other centres of power. He claimed that these factors ultimately led to the disintegration of these kingdoms. Curiously, other hydraulic civilisations in southeast Asia such as northern Thailand, Burma and the Khmer state in Cambodia lost their

vigour and collapsed into irrevocable decline at about the same time.

Policies of Polonnaruva kings

Paradoxically, the policies of Vijayabāhu I, Parākramabāhu I and Niśśaṅkamalla, which brought about a great flowering of the Sinhalese civilization, may have contributed to its collapse. These three monarchs centralised power in the capital city and crushed any resurgence in the outer provinces that had, for centuries, been a refuge of kings with lost causes and a reservoir for talent. That centralization could have been a factor in the downfall agrees, to some extent, with Wittfogel's theory. In addition these kings used up a great deal of the country's wealth in their activities, which in Parākramabāhu's reign included foreign wars and massive irrigation works and in Niśśaṅkamalla's a great deal of personal aggrandisement. Obviously, these acts alone would not have caused a collapse – similar policies had not given rise to disaster in previous centuries. However, they could have been some of the many reasons that cumulatively caused the ultimate downfall.

Natural disasters and disease

The collapse of similar hydraulic civilizations in Southeast Asia at about the same time encourages one to postulate that there was some natural disaster that affected these irrigation systems in the thirteenth century. However, there are no records of any such disaster. It has been suggested that the Mahavāli Gaṅga, an important part of the irrigation system changed its course in the thirteenth century.

Stagnant pools of water in neglected irrigation works encourage the breeding of the *Anopheles* mosquito, the carrier of malaria. There is no doubt that malaria existed in the region. It is endemic there even today and has resisted all attempts at eradication. Resettlement in the area was thwarted because of malaria until the 1930s when pesticides were introduced. Similar areas have suffered from malaria in other parts of the world and it has been known to decimate the population and drive survivors

Fragmentation Period

away from the area. Chronic malaria is a debilitating disease that certainly would lower the morale and the ability to resist foreign invasion or to maintain the economy at a reasonable level.

Loosening of ancestral bonds

During the Poḷonnaruva period, the kinship that had existed within the royal family and nobility since ancient times became more and more diluted. Poḷonnaruva fell into the hands of non-Sinhalese elements, each vying with the others for power and office. Central control from Poḷonnaruva was weakened. The ruling kings were of foreign descent and it is very likely that they did not have the traditional attachment to the ancient Sinhalese heartland of Rajaraṭa.

Consequences of decline

During the thirteenth century, the declining Sinhalese kingdom faced threats of invasion from India and the expanding Tamil kingdom of northern Sri Lanka. Generally, the effective control of the Sinhalese kings (with the exception of Parākramabāhu VI) from 1200 to 1505 did not extend far beyond their capital cities, though they often made extravagant claims. Taking advantage of Sinhalese weakness, the Tamils secured control of the valuable pearl fisheries around the Jaffna peninsula.

During this time, the vast stretches of jungle that cover northcentral Sri Lanka separated the Tamils and the Sinhalese. These stretches of jungle, named the Vanni, became the domain of the Vanni chieftaincies. The chieftaincies emerged because central authority had broken down. These chieftains consisted of dispossessed Sinhalese nobles along the northern borders of the Sinhalese kingdom and Tamil military chiefs (mainly from Māgha's army) along the border of the Tamil kingdom of Jaffna and the remoter parts of the eastern coastal areas outside the jurisdiction of the two main kingdoms. The Vanni chieftains (*vanniyārs*) acted as a buffer between the two main political entities and can be classified into a number of separate groups – those adjacent to the Jaffna kingdom; around Trincomalee in the North-East;

the Mukkuvā chieftains of Batticaloa in the East; those around Puttalam in the North-West; the Vedda chieftaincies; and those *vanniyārs* on the Sinhalese side of the Vanni. These chieftains were autonomous and acted like feudal lords offering military aid to those who came under their protection. They allied themselves to whichever major kingdom was in the ascendancy – often the Jaffna kingdom during this period.

This geographical separation between the Sinhalese and Tamil kingdoms had important psychological and cultural implications. The Tamils in the north developed a more distinct and confident culture, backed by a resurgent Hinduism that looked to the traditions of southern India for its inspiration. Conversely, the Sinhalese were increasingly restricted to the southern and central area of the island and were fearful of the more numerous Tamils on the Indian mainland.

The discipline and morale of the Buddhist *saṅgha* continued to deteriorate from the latter part of the Poḷonnaruva period onwards. Despite the actions of some of the kings, which included purging the *saṅgha* of corrupt priests and the appointment of a *saṅgharāja* or chief priest to restore order, the deterioration continued. This was a time when Hinduism was again beginning to have a strong influence.

The political unification of the island prior to decline of the Poḷonnaruva kingdom had been based on the massive irrigation system for which centralised state patronage was essential. When the move to the rain-fed economy of the southwest took place, there was less dependence on the centre. People were less willing to accept central control and unless there was a strong leader, political fragmentation was bound to occur.

A politically divided and weakened island was an enticement to foreign invasions in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The second Pāṇḍyan empire constantly interfered in the affairs of Sri Lanka. Its forces often supported rival claimants to power and took back considerable sums in payment and booty including, on one occasion, the Tooth Relic – the sacred symbol of Sinhalese sovereignty. Candrabhānu,

whose antecedents are unclear, twice invaded Sri Lanka, the first invasion being in 1247 A.D. Some historians claim that he was a Buddhist king from Java, others state that he was the ruler of a petty kingdom called Tāmbraḷiṅga in the Malay peninsula. This kingdom had established itself in the last days of the Śrīvijaya empire in the thirteenth century. Both invasions ended in failure. He attempted to seize the two most sacred relics of the Buddha in Sinhalese custody, the Tooth Relic and the Alms Bowl but failed. He then captured the Jaffna kingdom (see below in section on 'The Kingdom of Jaffna').

In 1284 A.D. Kublai Khan, the Chinese emperor, sent a delegation to obtain the Tooth Relic (*daḷadā*). The delegation failed in its mission and returned to China, apparently without harbouring a grievance. Also in 1284 A.D. Kulasēkhara, the Pāṇḍyan king, sent an army under Āryacakravarti who captured Yāpahuva, Bhuvanekabāhu's capital. Following the death of the latter in 1284, there was an interregnum for a few years. It seems likely that the island was part of the Pāṇḍyan empire during this period. There is some uncertainty as to the year in which Parākramabāhu III commenced his reign following this interregnum but he was dependent on the Pāṇḍyans who used him as a pawn against their rivals, the Cōḷas.

It is interesting to speculate as to the fate of the 'common man' in Rajaraṭa when the capital moved to the southwest. These peasants would, for centuries, have been cultivating plots of land and been the backbone of the economy. This was a densely populated area at one time. Surely, it would not have been easy for them to give up this settled way of life and move elsewhere? The answer probably is that they did not have any option. This was, essentially, a feudal system. When the nobility who owned the land and afforded protection to their tenants moved, the peasants who worked the land would have been forced to move as well. Also these peasants must have borne the brunt of the ravages of not only Māgha but also of malaria and may have been glad to move. Their numbers must have been considerably reduced by these calamities during the last few decades of the

Polonnaruwa period. Nevertheless, it was the movement of this peasant population that made most of Rajarāṭa an inhospitable jungle-covered area for the next five hundred years.

The Sinhalese kingdom seems to have reached a particularly low point in the middle of the fourteenth century whilst Gampōḷa was the capital. The kingdom had two rulers. Bhuvanekabāhu IV (1341 - 1351) ruled from Gampōḷa and his brother Parākramabāhu V (1344 - 1359) ruled from Dādigama, only a short distance away. Similarly, Parākramabāhu V and Vikramabāhu III (1357 - 1374) were co-rulers. This may have been a planned division of authority as a foil against expected invasion, but it certainly does not give the impression of a united and confident state. In addition, as in other times of weak kings, the advisors became more powerful than the kings themselves. The Alagakkōnāras were originally traders from Vañcipura (Karuvūr, the ancient capital of the Cēra kings: modern Karur in Tamil Nadu) in South India who had migrated to Sri Lanka because of Muslim invasions after the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate and converted to Buddhism. They rose to prominence in the mid-fourteenth century when Niśsaṅka Alagakkōnāra became chief minister to Bhuvanekabāhu IV and built a fort at Jayavardhanapura, later named Kōṭṭē. Another member of this family, Vīra Alakeśvara, married the sister of Vikramabāhu III and, having distinguished himself by rallying the Sinhalese army and defeating a Tamil force when King Bhuvanekabāhu V (1371 - 1408) had fled, became the *de facto* ruler though Bhuvanekabāhu remained on the throne.

A Chinese fleet, which arrived under Cheng Ho, the Chinese admiral, in 1405 A.D. demanding tribute and the *daḷadā* was also unsuccessful. However, Cheng Ho did harbour a grievance. He returned in 1410 and took Vīra Alakeśvara, the *de facto* Sinhalese king, captive to China but did not manage to take the Tooth Relic (for further information about this episode see section on 'Bhuvanekabāhu V' under 'Fragmentation Period Rulers'). The Vijayanagar empire in South India invaded Sri Lanka on a few occasions in the fifteenth century and for a brief period the Jaffna kingdom became its tributary.

Jaffna was a much more powerful kingdom at this stage and extracted tribute from the southwest and central regions. Tax was collected by the northern kingdom from parts of the Gampola kingdom. Jaffna had control of the northwest coast up to Puttalam and maintained a constant pressure on the Sinhalese kingdom. Between 1353 and 1373 the Jaffna kingdom was in control of most of the Matale district and naval forces from Jaffna were in control of the western coast up to Panadura. Fortunately for the Sinhalese, at a time when total subjugation to the Jaffna kingdom seemed inevitable, the Vijayanayagar empire, the dominant force in South India at that time, tried to expand its territory to northern Sri Lanka and the Jaffna kingdom became embroiled in a battle to ward off this powerful adversary. In the latter part of the fourteenth century, therefore, the pressure from the north on the Sinhalese kingdom abated for a while. The capital was moved to Kōṭṭē, where a fort had been previously built. This has been seen as a move to protect the valuable cinnamon growing areas near the west coast. Kōṭṭē became the capital in 1415 and remained so until 1565 A.D.

A brief resurgence

The reign of Parākramabāhu VI (1411 - 1466) began at Rayigama, close to Kōṭṭē, but in 1415 he established himself at Kōṭṭē. For a brief period during his long reign Sinhalese sovereignty was restored over the entire island. In about 1435 A.D. Parākramabāhu fought off an attack from Vijayanayagar and after this success the next step was the invasion of the Jaffna kingdom. This must have been a daunting prospect as Jaffna was at that time a part of the powerful South Indian kingdom of Vijayanayagar. He subdued the Vanni chieftaincies in the first instance. This was a wise precaution to avoid being attacked from the rear. It appears that there was a sizeable Sinhalese population in Jaffna and it is claimed that they revolted against their Tamil rulers even before Parākramabāhu's invasion. The first attack by Parākramabāhu failed but he succeeded with the second and by the middle of the fifteenth century Jaffna, ruled by Sapumal

Kumārayā (Seṇṇahapperumāl) an adopted son of Parākramabāhu, was part of the Sinhalese kingdom. Uḍaraṭa, the mountainous central region, was already under Parākramabāhu's control but in the latter part of his reign a revolt occurred there led by Jōtiya Siṭṭāṇō. This was duly crushed and a prince of the Gampōḷa royal house was placed in charge of the area. These were the origins of the future Kandyan kingdom.

The reign of Parākramabāhu VI was certainly a success in its achievements during his lifetime. Unfortunately, his policies did not attempt to foresee the future and avoid the mistakes of the past – mistakes that again led to the inevitable fragmentation of the kingdom that he had so painstakingly put together. The various regions he had subjugated and united into a single kingdom continued to be ruled by their original rulers or new rulers with extensive, autonomous powers. This worked satisfactorily under his personal, charismatic rule. At his death, however, the inevitable problem of a disputed succession arose and his grandson, who succeeded him, was unable to contend with the powerful factions in the provinces. Sapumal Kumārayā, ruler of Jaffna, killed Parākramabāhu's grandson and became the ruler at Kōṭṭē. He ruled as Bhuvanekabāhu VI. Chaos and disintegration soon returned and Jaffna, again, became a separate kingdom in 1479 A.D.

Trade, culture and religion

During this extended period of domestic instability and frequent foreign invasion, Sinhalese culture experienced fundamental change. Rice cultivation continued as the mainstay of agriculture but was no longer dependent on an elaborate irrigation network. In the rain dependent wet zone, large-scale administrative cooperation was not as necessary as it had been before. There is some evidence that the agricultural surplus was considerably diminished following the shift to the southwest.

Foreign trade was of increasing importance to the Sinhalese kings. Spice, particularly cinnamon, which grew wild in the jungles along the southwestern coast, had become an important export to

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the west. This taste for spices in the West grew after the Crusades. Other important items of export were gems, pearls, elephants and arecanuts. Until the coming of the Portuguese, arecanuts continued to be the most important export. The export trade had three main outlets – the well established trade between East and West; trade with India via the ports along both the east and west coasts of the mainland; and trade with the country controlling the Straits of Malacca. This was initially Śrīvijaya and later, in the fifteenth century, the Sultanate of Malacca. Cloth and dried fish were the chief imports. As this external trade increased, the use of money became more common and was well established by the end of the fifteenth century. The state took a large share of the profits from this export trade but this revenue was still less than that obtained from rice and land taxes. Another loss for the state was the tax on irrigation, which had been an important source during the period that Sri Lanka was a hydraulic civilization. The fact that during the Fragmentation Period great building projects were not undertaken probably means that the economic surplus had been greatly reduced and the country was much poorer.

Arabs were prominent in external trade. In addition to the Arabs and the indigenous Sinhalese and Tamil traders, but on a smaller scale, there were Chetties, who were bankers from South India. The ports of Colombo, Galle, Kalpiṭiya, Bēruvela, Puttalam, Negombo and Chilaw were prominent in this external trade and in these areas more and more Arab traders settled and gave rise to the modern Muslim population of Sri Lanka, which is really a mixture of Arabs with the local population of Sinhalese or Tamil and not purely Arab. There was also an influx of Muslims from South India. From the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, there were economic migrants from South India who settled along the southwestern coasts. They were absorbed into the local Sinhalese community, adopted their culture and formed three new castes – Salāgama, Karāva and Durāva – presumably because they took on the available occupations at the time (for further information see section on 'Racial origins' under Background). The Salāgama caste, for instance, were originally weavers but as cinnamon

became more and more important, this caste gradually became cinnamon peelers. With the rise in demand for cinnamon peelers, particularly during the Portuguese period, other castes performed this job and were absorbed into the Salāgama caste.

The influence of Hinduism was being strongly felt again at a time when the defenders of the purity of Buddhism, the saṅgha, were losing their sense of dedication. In contrast, the number of Brahmins (Hindu priests) increased not only in the north but also in the south. Hindu gods were being accepted in some Buddhist temples. Upuluvan, Saman, Vibhīṣaṇa and Skanda (all Hindu gods) were national deities. This was contrary to the teachings of the Buddha. After the death of Parākramabāhu VI, the upper crust of society in the Kōṭṭē kingdom became increasingly Hindu in outlook. Amongst other Buddhist countries, however, Sri Lanka continued to maintain its position as a prominent centre of Theravāda Buddhism.

Surprisingly, literature flourished in this period of decay. Poetry, particularly secular poetry, was taking the place of religious prose. The earliest classical Sinhalese prose work, the *Pūjāvaliya*, appeared in 1266 A.D. The *Pansiya-Panas-Jātaka-Pota* (meaning, the book of five hundred and fifty *Jātaka* stories), which was translated from the original Sinhalese commentary by Buddhaghosa in the fifth century A.D, was translated into modern Sinhalese during this period. The *Jātaka* stories are tales of former lives of the Buddha. There is humour in these stories and considerable variety. The future Buddha may appear in them as a king, an outcast, a god, or an elephant - but in whatever form, he exhibits some virtue that the tale thereby teaches.

The situation when the Portuguese arrived

Though the Kōṭṭē kingdom dominated the island at the beginning of the sixteenth century it had started losing influence soon after the death of Parākramabāhu VI. When Bhuvanekabāhu VI died in 1477, the authority of the king of Kōṭṭē was restricted to the southwest and a small portion of the northwest. There was a distinction between ritual sovereignty and political reality.

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Though the Kōṭṭē rulers continued to claim sovereignty over the whole island, the political reality was quite different.

Jaffna was independent again by 1479 but a much weaker kingdom than in the fourteenth century and did not attempt to challenge the sovereignty of Kōṭṭē south of Mannar. Kōṭṭē was too involved with its own internal problems to make any attempt to subjugate the northern kingdom. Uḍaraṭa (later the kingdom of Kandy) was beginning to assert itself despite being sparsely populated and underdeveloped. Its situation and terrain proved an advantage in maintaining some degree of independence. Sēnāsammata Vikramabāhu (1469 - 1510) made himself the autonomous ruler of Uḍaraṭa mainly because of the political instability in the Kōṭṭē kingdom. However, Kōṭṭē was powerful enough to prevent him or his successor (Jayavīra, 1511 - 1552) from attaining full independence.

Early in the sixteenth century, the Vanni principalities extended from the outskirts of Jaffna along the eastern coast to Yala and Panama in the southeast and petty chieftains, called *vanniyārs*, ruling small principalities in the Vanni also accepted the sovereignty of Kōṭṭē. As Kōṭṭē weakened, some of the *vanniyārs* on the east coast began to accept the overlordship of Uḍaraṭa, which was gradually becoming a significant political force. Other Vanni principalities, bordering the coastal areas of the Jaffna kingdom in the northwest up to Mannar probably owed allegiance to Jaffna. The area covered by the Vanni was mainly jungle and very sparsely populated. It was the main source of elephants in which there was considerable trade. Very little is known about the administration, if any, in these areas and the varying allegiances of the *vanniyārs*.

The Kōṭṭē kingdom, at this time, extended from the Malvatu Oya in the north to the Valavē Gaṅga in the south and from the seacoast in the west to the eastern area of the mountainous centre. It was divided into forty *kōraḷēs* or districts. For convenience, some of these *kōraḷēs* were grouped together under one ruler – hence the terms Four Kōraḷēs, Seven Kōraḷēs etc. A major part of the island's population lived within this area. Provincial rulers,

accepted by the king, had varying degrees of autonomy. During the reign of Dharma Parākramabāhu IX (1489 - 1513), four of his brothers ruled different parts of Kōṭṭē though they remained subordinate to the main ruler. This policy of decentralizing power, though it had certain advantages, led to a further weakening of the king's authority. The usual rivalries between members of the royal family and disputed succession meant that the Kōṭṭē ruler's authority was often challenged.

The kingdom of Jaffna

The name 'Jaffna' only came into existence in the sixteenth century and is the Portuguese version of the original Tamil name 'Yālpāṇam', which means 'Port of the lute'. Nallūr was the capital for much of the time that Jaffna was a kingdom and Jaffna town only came into existence after the coming of the Portuguese. The existence of an independent kingdom in Jaffna, its extent and the period during which it existed are subjects that are hotly debated by Tamil and Sinhalese nationalists. The Tamil chronicles recording these events were written three centuries after the founding of the first Tamil kingdom in the thirteenth century and are unreliable. The sections of these works dealing with the history of the Tamils in Sri Lanka prior to the thirteenth century are full of legendary material and are totally unreliable. The Tamil works of South India have no notable allusions to the activities of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, the Pali chronicles have ignored the northern kingdom. The absence of accurate records has been made use of by both Tamil and Sinhalese nationalists. The former have attempted to exaggerate the importance and area of influence of the Tamil kingdom in the search for 'Īlam' and the latter have refused to accept that such a kingdom did exist as an autonomous political entity. It is difficult to determine the truth in this maze of propaganda. One of the problems is in recognising the difference between ritual and actual sovereignty. Claims made by kings that they were rulers of the whole island may not have been the actual political reality when a part of the kingdom was ruled by another ruler who was entirely autonomous and often

more powerful.

On the slender evidence available it would be far-fetched to claim that there were any widespread, permanent Tamil settlements in Sri Lanka prior to the eleventh century A.D. On the other hand, bearing in mind the proximity of South India, intermarriage between royal houses and the recurrent invasions from the mainland, it is very likely that there was a sizeable Tamil community, which integrated with the Sinhalese and lost its separate Tamil identity. However, after the Cōḷa invasions of the tenth century, separate Tamil settlements did occur. These settlements began to expand in the eleventh century. Tamil settlers occupied the Jaffna peninsula and the Vanni. There must have been a Tamil community already in these areas but they increased considerably in number and were joined by some of the Tamil mercenaries who had arrived with invading armies.

By the thirteenth century these Tamil settlements were powerful enough to form an independent kingdom in Jaffna. At this time there were also scattered Tamil settlements along the eastern seaboard. By the latter part of the thirteenth century the Tamils, too, withdrew from the Vanni (which broke up into small principalities ruled by *vanniyārs*, as described above) and thereafter their main settlements were confined to the Jaffna peninsula and possibly also to several scattered settlements on the eastern seaboard. With the foundation of an independent Tamil kingdom, the first rulers followed a deliberate policy of settling Tamils in the Jaffna district and the Vanni regions. This led to a migration of peaceful settlers from South India. It was this peaceful migration that was largely responsible for the Tamil settlement of the Jaffna district. When Parākramabāhu II ousted Māgha in 1236 from Poḷonnaruva, it would seem that Māgha fled to Jaffna and ruled there, as a satellite of the Cōḷas, until circa 1255 A.D.

Māgha seems to have been accepted in Jaffna, by the Tamils, as their ruler. He was an Āryan from the state of Kāliṅga in India and not a Tamil. There is an interesting theory that a Kāliṅga dynasty ruled the north of the island from the ninth century

and the Kāliṅga princes and princesses involved with the royal houses at Anurādhapura and Poḷonnaruva originated from this dynasty in the north. If this is correct it could mean that Māgha, who having initially ruled Jaffna, invaded Poḷonnaruva from there and when he was defeated by Parākramabāhu II returned to his original kingdom. However, there is insufficient evidence to confirm this theory.

In 1255 A.D., Candrabhānu raised an army from the Cōḷa and Pāṇḍya countries and captured the territory in northern Sri Lanka ruled by Māgha. His origins are uncertain – it has been suggested that he was a Buddhist king from Java or the ruler of a small kingdom on the Malay peninsula. The place names such as Chavakachcheri, Chavankoddai and Chavakkoddai in Jaffna came into existence as a result of the rule of Cāvakas (or Jāvakas) in the thirteenth century and this may indicate that he was Javanese. The Pāṇḍyans invaded Jaffna when Candrabhānu was ruling there and forced him to submit to Pāṇḍyan power but did not allow the Sinhalese to re-establish power over Jaffna. He was allowed to remain as king so long as he did not disturb the balance of power at the expense of the Sinhalese ruler. When he embarked on a further invasion of the south, Parākramabāhu II appealed to the Pāṇḍyans who sent a force, which in combination with the Sinhalese forces won an overwhelming victory and Candrabhānu was killed. However, the Pāṇḍyans did not hand over Jaffna to Parākramabāhu but installed a son of Candrabhānu as ruler. When he, too, threatened the Sinhalese a further appeal by Parākramabāhu made the Pāṇḍyans intervene again but Sinhalese control of Jaffna was still unacceptable and they installed Āryacakravarti, the leader of the Pāṇḍyan army of invasion, as ruler of Jaffna. When the Pāṇḍyan empire collapsed because of Muslim inroads into South India from the north, Jaffna became an independent kingdom under the Āryacakravartis.

In the second half of the fourteenth century, Jaffna under the Āryacakravartis became the most powerful and affluent kingdom in the island. By the middle of the fourteenth century, Jaffna had effective control of the northwest coast up to Puttalam. In 1344

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Ibn Battuta, a famous Moorish traveller and writer on his way to the Maldives, was forced to stop at Jaffna because of bad weather. He describes a large naval force in the harbour and numerous articles of merchandise at the port ready for distribution to other parts of the world. In 1353 part of the Four Kōraļēs came under Tamil rule and over the next two decades Jaffna seemed to be poised to establish supremacy over the whole island. Fortunately for the Sinhalese, the Jaffna kingdom became embroiled in a battle for survival with the Vijayanayagar empire. The impact of South India on Jaffna was not restricted to culture and religion but affected its political evolution as well. Jaffna was drawn into the orbit of the dominant South Indian state of the day. By the latter part of the fourteenth century Jaffna was a Vijayanayagar satellite and Sinhalese poems of this period describe the people of Jaffna as 'Canarese'. Canarese (or Kanarese) is a Dravidian language spoken in the Vijayanayagar empire and in modern times the official language of Karnataka (originally Mysore State).

Parākramabāhu VI invaded Jaffna (circa 1450) and the king fled to South India. Parākramabāhu installed Sapumal Kumārayā, his adopted son of Tamil descent, as ruler of Jaffna. Jaffna regained its independence in 1479 under Pararājasēkaran but it was a much weaker kingdom than it had been in the previous century and no longer a threat to the kingdom of Kōṭṭē. Despite its weakened state, this was a period of stability for Jaffna and a *saṅgam* (academy) was established around 1479. A treatise on Ayurvedic medicine was produced by this *saṅgam*.

Fragmentation Period Rulers

During this confused period not only was the island divided into separate kingdoms, each with its own ruler, but also there were times when the same kingdom was ruled by more than one king.

Vijayabāhu III	Dam̃badēṇiya	1232 - 1236 A.D.
Parākramabāhu II	Dam̃badēṇiya	1236 - 1270 A.D.
Vijayabāhu IV	Polonnaruva	1270 - 1272 A.D.

Bhuvanekabāhu I	Dam̃badeṇiya and Yāpahuva	1272 - 1284 A.D.
Parākramabāhu III (after interregnum)	Polonnaruva	1287 - 1293 A.D. (dates uncertain)
Bhuvanekabāhu II	Kuruṇāgala	1293 - 1302 A.D. (dates uncertain)
Parākramabāhu IV	Kuruṇāgala	1302 - 1326 A.D. (dates uncertain)
Bhuvanekabāhu III	Kuruṇāgala	1326 - 1335 A.D. (dates uncertain)
Vijayabāhu V	Kuruṇāgala	1335 - 1341 A.D.
Bhuvanekabāhu IV	Gampola	1341 - 1351 A.D.
Parākramabāhu V	Dādīgama and Gampola	1344 - 1359 A.D.
Vikramabāhu III	Dādīgama and Gampola	1357 - 1374 A.D.
Bhuvanekabāhu V	Gampola and Kōṭṭē	1371 - 1408 A.D.
Parākramabāhu VI	Kōṭṭē	1411 - 1466 A.D.
Jayavīra Parākramabāhu	Kōṭṭē	1466 - 1469 A.D.
Bhuvanekabāhu VI	Kōṭṭē	1469 - 1477 A.D.
Paṇḍita Parākramabāhu VII	Kōṭṭē	1477 A.D.
Vīra Parākramabāhu VIII	Kōṭṭē	1477 - 1489 A.D.
Dharma Parākramabāhu IX	Kōṭṭē	1489 - 1513 A.D.

Kings of Jaffna during Fragmentation Period

The dates given for the earlier kings have been deduced from various sources and may not be accurate. From the latter part of the fourteenth century, Portuguese records give more credibility. The ubiquitous Māgha is said to have ruled the north of the island up to circa 1255 A.D. However, the first Kingdom of Jaffna may have commenced when the Pāṇḍyans installed Āryacakravarti as the ruler.

Kulasēkara (Āryacakravarti)	Capital not known	? - 1256 A.D.
Kulōttuṅga	Capital not known	1256 - 1279 A.D.
Vikrama	Capital not known	1279 - 1302 A.D.
Varōtaya	Capital not known	1302 - 1325 A.D.
Mārtanda	Capital not known	1325 - 1348 A.D.
Guṇapūṣaṇa	Capital not known	1348 - 1371 A.D.
Vīrōtaya	Capital not known	1371 - 1380 A.D.
Jeyavīra	Capital not known	1380 - 1410 A.D.
Guṇavīra	Capital not known	1410 - 1440 A.D.

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Kanagasūriya	Capital not known	1440 - 1450 A.D.
Sapumal Kumārayā (Bhuvānekabāhu Vi)	Nallūr	1450 - 1479 A.D.
Pararājasēkaran	Nallūr	1478 - 1519 A.D.

Vijayabāhu III

Contemporary records claim that he was a descendant of Srisaṅgabō, who belonged to the Lambakarṇa clan. His son claimed descent from the Pāṇḍyan kings and it is possible that Vijayabāhu married a Pāṇḍyan princess. However, he started his career as a Vanni chieftain. Being an able warrior he became the ruler of Māyārāṭa and made Daṁbadeṇiya his capital. He conveyed the Tooth and Bowl relics from Kotmalē to another hiding place near Kegalle.

Parākramabāhu II

He was the son of Vijayabāhu III. Probably with the help of the Pāṇḍyans, he ousted Māgha from Poḷonnaruva but continued to rule at Daṁbadeṇiya. It seems likely that he remained in power because of the Pāṇḍyans.

Vijayabāhu IV

The son of Parākramabāhu II, he attempted to restore Poḷonnaruva. One of his own generals assassinated him after he had ruled for two years.

Bhuvanekabāhu I

The younger brother of Vijayabāhu IV escaped assassination and was crowned in place of his brother as Bhuvanekabāhu I with the help of Rajput mercenaries. The latter part of his reign was at Yāpahuva. He was constantly under pressure from the Jaffna Kingdom and in 1283 dispatched an embassy to the Sultan of Egypt requesting an alliance. This was denied. Probably towards the end of his reign, Kulasēkhara, the Pāṇḍyan king sent his minister, one of the Āryacakravartis, to invade the Daṁbadeṇiya kingdom and take the Tooth Relic to India. There also seems to have been a famine at this time. After Bhuvanekabāhu's death there was an

interregnum and the kingdom was probably under the control of the Pāṇḍyans until Parākramabāhu III commenced his reign.

Parākramabāhu III

The son of Vijayabāhu IV, he became king after the interregnum but it is likely that he was a vassal of the Pāṇḍyans. The Pāṇḍyans restored the relics to him after he humbled himself and he ruled at Poḷonnaruva under their protection, which was important at a time when the power of the Jaffna Kingdom was increasing. His cousin Bhuvanekabāhu II overthrew him at a time when Pāṇḍyan power was waning due to Muslim incursions from the north.

Bhuvanekabāhu II

He was the son of Bhuvanekabāhu I and made Kurunāgala his capital.

Parākramabāhu IV

He succeeded his father, Bhuvanekabāhu II, at Kurunāgala. Literature flourished during his time and the *Jātaka* stories were translated during his reign. The second part of the *Cūḷavaṃsa* chronicle ends with his reign and the final part begins again in the eighteenth century.

Bhuvanekabāhu III

Very little is known of this king but since he was known as Vanni Bhuvanekabāhu, it is possible that he was a Vanni chieftain who came into power.

Vijayabāhu V

Again, little is known.

Bhuvanekabāhu IV

The origins of this king are unclear. Due to civil unrest, the capital was moved from Kurunāgala to Gampola during his reign. It was also during his time that one of the Alagakkōnāras, originally traders from Vañcipura in South India, became chief

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minister. The Laṅkātilaka and Gaḍalādeṇiya Vihāras, near Kandy, were built during his reign.

Parākramabāhu V

The brother of Bhuvanekabāhu IV, he was a co-ruler of the kingdom with Dādigama as his capital. Apparently this type of rule was common in the Cōla Empire.

Vikramabāhu III

He was a co-ruler with Parākramabāhu V. His sister married Vīra Alakeśvara, one of the Alagakkōnāras who later distinguished himself in battle. A reform of the priesthood was undertaken during his reign.

Bhuvanekabāhu V

He seems to have been a figurehead. Kumāra Alakeśvara and, later, Vīra Alakeśvara were the *de facto* rulers during an eventful reign. In 1405 Cheng Ho, a Chinese admiral, arrived with a Chinese expedition and demanded tributes and obedience to the Chinese emperor. He wished to take back the sacred Tooth Relic to China, also a Buddhist country. Vīra Alakeśvara was the true ruler at this time and not only refused the request of the Chinese admiral but also imprisoned him for a period. Cheng Ho went back to China empty handed but returned in 1410 with a powerful naval force consisting of several junks. He took Vīra Alakeśvara, his wife and several notables from the Sinhalese court as captives to China. They were freed and returned in 1414 but Vīra Alakeśvara did not regain his position. The Chinese Emperor had nominated one of the other captives as his choice for king but by the time they returned, Parākramabāhu VI was on the throne and the country was much more stable.

It has recently been claimed that Cheng Ho (an eunuch, also known as Zheng He), who was in charge of a formidable Chinese fleet equipped with star-charts and maps, circumnavigated the globe and landed in America several years before Columbus.

Parākramabāhu VI

This was a long and distinguished reign (1411 – 1466) during which some semblance of stability was restored to the Sinhalese kingdom. The appellation ‘Śrī’ is sometimes added to his name to signify his greatness. His origins and date of accession are uncertain. Probably the most noteworthy event in his long reign was the conquest of Jaffna by his adopted son, Sapumal Kumārayā, circa 1450 A.D. At this time Jaffna was a tributary of the Vijayanayagar empire of southern India. Sapumal ruled Jaffna and probably was the first ruler of Jaffna to make Nallūr the capital. Also about this time the ruler of the hill country (Uḍaraṭa), Jōtiya Siṭāṇō, rebelled. Parākramabāhu VI crushed the rebellion and placed a prince from the Gampōḷa royal house as ruler of Uḍaraṭa. This was the commencement of the Kandyan kingdom. Literature, particularly poetry, flourished during his reign. He was the last Sinhalese king to fashion any semblance of unity in the island.

Jayavīra Parākramabāhu

He was the grandson of Parākramabāhu VI and ruled for about three years before being ousted by Sapumal Kumārayā.

Bhuvanekabāhu VI

The sequence of events that led to Sapumal Kumārayā being crowned king at Kōṭṭē as Bhuvanekabāhu VI is unclear. According to the *Rājāvaliya* he killed Jayavīra Parākramabāhu and took, what he felt was his rightful place, on the throne. This may be an inaccurate version and the reality may have been something more mundane. Nevertheless, this adopted son of Parākramabāhu VI, Seṇpahapperumāl or Sapumal Kumārayā, whose father was a Tamil, left Jaffna and arrived at Kōṭṭē to rule as Bhuvanekabāhu VI, circa 1469.

(Paṇḍita) Parākramabāhu VII

He was the son of Bhuvanekabāhu VI and was killed soon after his accession to the throne by his uncle, Ambulugala Raja, who then ruled at Kōṭṭē as (Vīra) Parākramabāhu VIII.

(Vīra) Parākramabāhu VIII

Ambulugala is an area close to Kegalle and probably the 'seat' of Sapumal Kumārayā's family. 'Ambulugala Raja' literally means 'king of Ambulugala'. It seems that this king faced a number of problems because of civil wars caused by disputed dynastic succession. Two of his sons probably were his co-rulers and succeeded him later as Parākramabāhu IX and Vijayabāhu VI.

(Dharma) Parākramabāhu IX

This weak king was the ruler when the Portuguese first arrived in 1505 A.D. He summoned his brothers to Kōṭṭē and an agreement was reached with the foreigners. The agreement was later disputed by the two sides, the Portuguese claiming that it was a treaty with the Kōṭṭē kingdom agreeing to pay tribute and the Sinhalese maintaining that it was an accord of friendship and an exchange of presents.

Kings of Jaffna

Very little factual information is available about the kings of Jaffna. The first king was, very probably, a member of the Āryacakravarti dynasty. The Āryacakravartis were an influential family who were ministers and army commanders in the Pāṇḍyan empire in the thirteenth century. Kulasēkhara was the commander of the Pāṇḍyan army that overcame Candrabhānu who ruled Jaffna circa 1255 A.D. It was this dynasty that continued to rule in Jaffna until the arrival of the Portuguese. The Āryacakravartis were Brahmins. Despite the implications of their name, they were Dravidians and not Āryans.

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1505 A.D. to 1658 A.D

It seems appropriate, at this stage, to append a brief history of Portugal leading up to the time that the Portuguese first made their appearance in Sri Lanka.

Development of Portugal

The achievements during the reign of Afonso III, the assertion of royal power before the Church and the incorporation of commoners in the Cortes (Parliament) indicate important institutional changes very similar to those occurring in other countries of western Europe at the time. Under his son Dinis (1279-1325), Portugal was to come into closer touch with western Europe. The chartering of fairs and the increased use of minted money bear witness to the growth of commerce and the planting of pine forests to hold back the advancing sand dunes near Leiria illustrates Dinis' concern for furtherance of shipbuilding and agriculture. In 1317 Dinis engaged a Genoese admiral, Emmanuele Pessagno, to build up his navy, having already adopted various measures to stimulate foreign trade. A great part of the fourteenth century was engaged in disputes with Castile and when, in 1385, the Portuguese won a resounding victory against a much larger army from Castile, they became desirable allies to other countries in western Europe.

The Treaty of Windsor was a firm, binding and permanent alliance with England made in 1386. João (John) I of Portugal married the daughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster (younger son of Edward III) in 1387. She introduced various English ways to

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Portugal. In 1415, during John's reign, Portugal conquered Ceuta, a commercially important city on the coast of Morocco. This is seen as the start of the great age of Portuguese expansion. João II (1481-95) was as cautious, firm, and jealous of the royal power as his father had been open-handed and negligent. John II was predeceased by his legitimate son and therefore succeeded by his cousin, the duke of Beja, as Emmanuel I (1495-1521), known as 'the Fortunate'. Emmanuel, who later assumed the title of 'lord of the conquest, navigation, and commerce of India, Ethiopia, Arabia, and Persia', inherited, because of the work of John II, a firmly established autocratic monarchy and a rapidly expanding overseas empire. Emmanuel I was the king when the Portuguese first arrived in Sri Lanka.

How and why did the Portuguese, a small country with a population of about one million, become the first western nation to make a successful naval expedition to the East? Its geographical situation makes Portugal ideally situated for naval expeditions. It had to have a strong navy to survive. This must have been recognised from early times and by the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, shipbuilding and the establishment of a navy was being encouraged by the king. The Portuguese developed the caravel in the fifteenth century. This was, essentially, a ship to explore the coast of Africa and consisted of a light broad-beamed vessel, which was capable of sailing to windward. It was also capable of remarkable speed, considerably reducing the time taken to sail long distances. Another factor was the ability to mount cannon on these ships and by the late fifteenth century a special sliding mount was available.

It was fortunate for the Portuguese that the third son of João I, Prince Henry the Navigator had the resources (he was grandmaster of the Order of Christ, a wealthy order sponsored by the Pope), the intelligence and the knowledge to draw together skilled geographers and navigators. Under his auspices, the techniques of cartography were advanced, navigational instruments were improved and commerce by sea was vastly stimulated. He equipped a series of expeditions that gradually

bore fruit. He was also the designer of a grand strategy - not to be brought to fulfilment until after his death in 1460 - whereby Christian Europe outflanked the power of Islam by establishing contact with Africa south of the Sahara and with Asia.

The main reason for these expeditions was trade - the hope of finding a way to the rich spice trade of the east. The traditional land trade routes via the Red Sea and Egypt, through Syria, Persia and Turkey were, by the fourteenth century, increasingly blocked by the Muslim Ottomans and the Venetian monopoly. The Portuguese had inherited the crusading spirit and the simple idea of fighting the Muslims on their own soil was another reason. There were other more complicated motives. They had the impulse to spread the Christian faith and, perhaps, the desire to explore in a scientific sense. In 1488 Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope and reached the East African coast, and the seaway to India lay open. His return was followed in 1493 with the news that Christopher Columbus had, as he thought, discovered the 'Indies' by sailing across the Atlantic.

In July 1497 Vasco da Gama sailed from Lisbon with a fleet of four caravels. He rounded the Cape of Good Hope, with help from Dias, and arrived at Calicut on the west coast of India in May 1498. He failed to conclude a treaty with the ruler of Calicut mainly due to the animosity of Muslim merchants and returned to Portugal in August 1498. In January 1502, da Gama, now an Admiral, set off on his second voyage with twenty ships and called at Goa, which later became the focus of Portuguese power in India, before proceeding to Cannanore, north of Calicut. Here he trapped an Arab merchant vessel carrying about 400 people including women and children and set fire to it. The Portuguese were starting to earn a name for wanton cruelty. They moved on to Calicut, which they bombarded when the ruler refused to stop trading with Muslims. Sailing south, they reached Cochin where they formed an alliance with the ruler. Vasco da Gama returned to Portugal in 1504 leaving behind Portuguese representatives in India, mainly in Goa. In 1505, Dom Francisco de Almeida was nominated viceroy in India and it was his son, Dom Lourenço de

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Almeida who arrived with a fleet of ships in Sri Lanka in 1505 whilst on his way to the Maldives.

When da Gama arrived in India he was restoring a link with the West that had existed for several centuries after Alexander the Great's invasion of India. This trade link had passed into the hands of the Arabs with the decline of the Roman empire in the fourth century A.D. After this there was only the occasional contact made by travellers from the West. The Portuguese method was to rely on sea power based on fortified posts and backed by settlements. Portuguese ships, sturdy enough to survive Atlantic gales and mounted with cannon, could easily dispose of Arab and Malay shipping. However, Portugal, soon to be involved in Africa and America as well, was desperately short of manpower. Most of the sailors who volunteered for these voyages were the riff-raff of Europe. Soon the forts were turned into settlements to provide a resident population for defence. Inter-marriage was encouraged. At the same time, Christianity was promoted through the church. This did not mean that there was no racial prejudice. Dark skinned people were, generally, treated as inferiors.

In 1494 Spain and Portugal divided the non-Christian world between them by the Treaty of Tordesillas. Portugal could claim and occupy everything to the east of an imaginary north-south line about 1300 miles west of the Cape Verde islands. This arrogant treaty, which had the sanction of the Pope, allowed the Portuguese to operate in the east without competition from other Europeans. Territorially, theirs was not strictly an empire. It actually consisted of a number of strategically placed, fortified trading posts. They did not have sufficient manpower to conquer the countries in which they installed these trading posts. A viceroy appointed by the King of Portugal and based in Goa was in overall charge. Until the Portuguese incursion, Arabs and other Muslims had dominated the trade in the Indian Ocean. The Hindus (and also the Buddhists of Sri Lanka) were not as enterprising as far as trade was concerned and had caste restrictions with regard to sea voyages.

Portuguese intentions in Sri Lanka

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the main concern of the Portuguese was to monopolise the trade on the Malabār Coast and to oust their Muslim (Arab or Moor) rivals. The Arabs, unable to compete with the naval power of the Portuguese, had moved their southeast Asian trade route around the southern coast of Sri Lanka hence avoiding the Malabār Coast. The Portuguese viceroy, Francisco de Almeida, sent a contingent of ships under the command of his son, Dom Lourenço, to intercept this Arab traffic and also to explore the possibilities of trade in the Maldives and Sri Lanka. In either November 1505 or August 1506 (the records are not clear as to the exact date), Dom Lourenço and his fleet were driven by adverse winds to the western coast of Sri Lanka. It must be remembered that there were no reliable maps of Sri Lanka at the time and it was probably the Portuguese who established the fact that it was surrounded by the sea and hence an island.

There are numerous versions of the circumstances surrounding their arrival and these details are often confused with those of their later visit in 1517. It would seem that, initially, they impressed the native population not only with the power of their guns but also with their wealth, paying more than was necessary for the food they purchased. Eventually they arrived at Kōṭṭē and met the king. The Arab traders on the island must have been aware of the nature of these foreigners, particularly with regard to their behaviour in India, and doubtless this information must have been available to (Dharma) Parākramabāhu IX, the Sinhalese king, and his advisors. It may have been easier for the Sri Lankans to understand the nature of the Portuguese than that of later western intruders. One reason for this was that in the early sixteenth century western and eastern cultures had not diverged as much as they would a hundred years later. Another reason, as one writer suggests, may have been that the Portuguese had an oriental streak of extremism and sudden violence similar to the Sri Lankans. (Dharma) Parākramabāhu IX took the advice of his brothers, who ruled parts of the Kōṭṭē kingdom, and the royal

council. The decision was to treat these powerful westerners favourably. The terms of negotiation were later disputed with Sri Lankan sources claiming that it was a friendly exchange of presents and Portuguese sources insisting that it was an agreement whereby the Portuguese were to receive a regular tribute consisting of cinnamon. This Portuguese contingent left the island after a few months.

The construction of a fort on the island was the logical next step for the Portuguese. However they were kept busy with efforts to stabilise their trade in India. Also, de Albuquerque, who succeeded de Almeida, does not seem to have been convinced of the need for a fort on the island. It was only in 1517 that Albuquerque's successor, Lopo Soares de Albergaria, led a powerful fleet to Sri Lanka. Having arrived in Colombo, probably after an initial landing at Galle, the Portuguese asked permission from Vijayabāhu VI, ruler at Kōṭṭē, to build a fort in Colombo so that they could protect their trade. Colombo (Koḷam̃ba in Sinhalese, meaning port or haven) was at that time a small port, spread round the bay and used for several centuries by Arab (Moor), South Indian, Persian and Chinese trading vessels.

The *modus operandi* of the Portuguese was not territorial conquest. They had no wish, or the resources, to govern directly. On the other hand, their plan was to use their naval power to subdue the region and extract whatever goods they desired. The word 'trade', as used in modern times, was a mere euphemism in this sixteenth century context. Their military technology was far superior to that of the Sri Lankans who did not possess cannon or muskets in the early sixteenth century, though these weapons became available later in the century. In addition Sri Lanka did not, to its great disadvantage over many centuries, possess an adequate navy. Despite these advantages, the Portuguese lacked manpower and the sailors and soldiers they managed to recruit for this lengthy and perilous service in remote countries were the riff-raff of Europe.

Vijayabāhu VI, unwilling to face the prospect of open conflict with these powerful foreigners, consented to the fort,

which was promptly built and named Santa Barbara. When the Portuguese were confident that they could defend themselves, they demanded that all the cinnamon in the royal store be delivered to them at the current price. The king felt that this was not in line with the treaty he had made and encouraged by the Muslim traders who were going to be the losers if this deal went through not only refused but also decided to attack the fort and drive out the foreigners. This was a mistake and the king had to accept defeat and sue for peace. Peace negotiations ended with the king of Kōṭṭē agreeing to become a vassal of the Portuguese king and to pay an annual tribute of cinnamon, gems and elephants.

Once this was accomplished, de Albergaria left with a large part of the Portuguese force leaving behind only two ships, about a hundred and twenty Portuguese and a few Indian soldiers to defend the fort that, at this stage, was a poorly constructed structure. Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, who succeeded de Albergaria in 1518 as Governor in India, was not very interested in the Sri Lankan venture, which was neglected during his Governorship. Inadequate funds and supplies were sent and by 1519 the occupants of the fort in Colombo were in dire straits. Their commander went to the extent of requesting that Arab (Muslim) vessels start trading again with Colombo. Vijayabāhu VI, realising the plight of the Portuguese, delayed payment of the tribute.

This would have been the ideal time to drive out the Portuguese but the king of Kōṭṭē was too involved in a battle with the ruler of Uḍaraṭa at the time and a golden opportunity was missed. By 1520, the fort had been reconstructed and the military position strengthened probably as a result of direct orders from Lisbon to obtain a total monopoly of the cinnamon export from the island and also levy taxes on elephants exported from the island. This latter export was in the hands of the Muslims. These impositions were indignities that the king could not tolerate and, having temporarily subdued the ruler of Uḍaraṭa, he built up a large force with the help of the Muslim traders. Mercenaries were recruited from India and muskets acquired. This force besieged the Portuguese fort but was ultimately beaten in October 1521 when

the Portuguese received reinforcements from India. Vijayabāhu VI had to sue for peace again. The Portuguese agreed a return to the *status quo* but their superiority had been emphasized^c and their influence increased.

Sri Lankan disunity

In the early sixteenth century the broad political divisions of the island consisted of the Kōṭṭē kingdom, the Jaffna kingdom and the Vanni areas that were under the control of semi-autonomous rulers. The Kōṭṭē kingdom, with its capital at Kōṭṭē, included the southwest, a small area of the northwest and the central, mountainous region. This latter region, the Uḍaraṭa, had its capital at Seṅkaḍagala (later named Kandy) and its own ruler who was striving to attain independence from Kōṭṭē that, at this stage, was the wealthiest, most powerful and populated region in Sri Lanka. The Jaffna kingdom, with its capital at Nallūr, consisted of the Jaffna peninsula, a portion of the neighbouring mainland of Sri Lanka and the islands along the coasts of these areas. The Vanni areas, similar to the Marches in medieval Britain, were chieftaincies ruled by semi-autonomous chiefs or *vanniyārs*. The Vanni, consisting mainly of jungle, bordered the Kōṭṭē and Jaffna kingdoms and effectively separated them. The allegiance of the *vanniyārs* varied from time to time but was usually given to the neighbouring kingdom, either Kōṭṭē or Jaffna. The total area of the Vanni also varied but was considerable and probably larger than that of the Kōṭṭē kingdom in the early sixteenth century. As a consequence of these variations the borders of the two kingdoms, which were in thinly populated jungle areas, were poorly demarcated.

Even with the wolf, in the form of the Portuguese, at their door there was no attempt made by these different groups on the island to unite against this common and powerful enemy. Perhaps it was only obvious in retrospect that the whole island was under threat. It may also be that the nature of the beast was not fully perceived until later. Not only did the island fail to unite but also the kingdom of Kōṭṭē, first in the line of fire, started falling apart.

This disintegration was not only due to the threats from the Portuguese and Uḍaraṭa but also to the perennial problem of royal succession. The fragments of the original Kōṭṭē kingdom then started fighting amongst themselves each asking for Portuguese help whenever they thought this was necessary.

The struggle for the Kōṭṭē succession

Vijayabāhu VI and his brother Rājasimha had a shared queen. This curious arrangement had produced four sons of whom one had died in childhood leaving three princes (Bhuvanekabāhu, Pararājasimha and Māyādunnē) with ambiguous paternity. Vijayabāhu had married again but having failed to produce a son from this second alliance, he had adopted a boy called Dēvarājasimha whom he and his ministers wished to make his successor instead of one of the three princes. Having foiled an attempt to assassinate them, the three princes rallied support from the ruler of Uḍaraṭa who was only too happy to provide assistance for this venture, which he knew would weaken Kōṭṭē and hence improve his chances for independence. After the defeat by the Portuguese, the popularity of Vijayabāhu VI had waned considerably amongst his own subjects. In 1521, Kōṭṭē surrendered to the rebel army led by the three princes and Vijayabāhu VI was put to death. The eldest of the three princes succeeded him at Kōṭṭē as Bhuvanekabāhu VII (1521 – 1551). Pararājasimha, the second prince, was made a sub-king ruling a division of Kōṭṭē called Rayigama and Māyādunnē became the ruler of Sītāvaka, another division bordering Uḍaraṭa.

Māyādunnē was a resourceful and energetic man who very soon overshadowed his elder brother at Kōṭṭē and had the obvious intention of uniting the Kōṭṭē kingdom under his own rule. The weak Bhuvanekabāhu VII sought the Portuguese help, which came at a price – Kōṭṭē became a Portuguese satellite and as the sixteenth century progressed, it became more and more subservient to the Portuguese. Meanwhile Jayavīra, the Kandyan (Uḍaraṭa) ruler, realised by 1540 that Māyādunnē, the ruler of

Sītāvaka, was a far greater threat to the Kandyan kingdom than Kōṭṭē had been.

When Pararājasimha, ruler of Rayigama, died in 1538 Māyādunnē took possession of his territory with Bhuvanekabāhu's consent. In the following year Māyādunnē's repeated provocations culminated in a battle between Kōṭṭē supported by the Portuguese and Sītāvaka supported by the Zamorin of Calicut, whose help Māyādunnē had obtained because of his support of Muslim traders in Kōṭṭē. Bhuvanekabāhu VII had expelled the latter at the insistence of the Portuguese. Māyādunnē lost this battle and was humiliated by the Portuguese but retained his territory. His popularity in Kōṭṭē had increased because of his antagonism to the Portuguese who had earned the hatred of the local populace. Their arrogant and cruel behaviour together with their attempt to convert the native population to Catholicism had made them extremely unpopular. Because of his association with the Portuguese, Bhuvanekabāhu had lost the esteem of a considerable proportion of his subjects.

In 1543 Bhuvanekabāhu VII made a desperate attempt to prevent Māyādunnē's succession to the throne of Kōṭṭē. He requested King João III of Portugal to give his formal approval for Bhuvanekabāhu's grandson, Dharmapāla, to succeed him as king of Kōṭṭē. In return for this help, and at the request of Lisbon, Bhuvanekabāhu VII invited Franciscan missionaries to come to Kōṭṭē. He, himself, was not converted to Catholicism because he realised that he would become even more unpopular amongst his people. His subjects did not like the presence of the missionaries.

The ruler of Uḍaraṭa, afraid of being attacked by Sītāvaka, had followed in Kōṭṭē's footsteps and become a satellite of the Portuguese. In 1545 Māyādunnē, concerned about the increasing power of Uḍaraṭa, which by now had the support of the ubiquitous Portuguese, organised a combined attack by Sītāvaka and Kōṭṭē forces against the Kandyans. The Portuguese help arrived too late and the Kandyans had to accept the terms made by Māyādunnē. The Portuguese presence in Kandy was intensely disliked by the Kandyans because of the insolent behaviour of the Portuguese

soldiers. In 1546 the Portuguese, having fallen out with the Kandyans, attacked Kandy in combination with Kōṭṭē but this ended in defeat. Kōṭṭē and the Portuguese blamed each other for this debacle. In 1550, Māyāduṇṇē still in pursuit of his right of succession to the Kōṭṭē throne commenced another war against Kōṭṭē. The Portuguese supported Kōṭṭē and during the campaign a Portuguese soldier shot Bhuvanekabāhu VII and killed him. The Portuguese claimed that this was an accident but it is possible that they wished to eliminate the king.

The Portuguese proclaimed Dharmapāla as king, with his father Vīdiyē Baṇḍāra as regent. Māyāduṇṇē also claimed the throne and advanced on Kōṭṭē with an army. Vīdiyē Baṇḍāra, who proved himself to be as resourceful and energetic as Māyāduṇṇē, led the Kōṭṭē forces. Aided by the Portuguese he vanquished Māyāduṇṇē, who had to flee into the hill country, but his adversaries did not follow him and he was later able to return to Sītāvaka. Meanwhile the Portuguese had become suspicious of Vīdiyē Baṇḍāra's motives and imprisoned him but he escaped and joined forces with Māyāduṇṇē. In 1553 their combined onslaught on the Portuguese confined the latter to an area on the coast close to Colombo. Vīdiyē Baṇḍāra's successful exploits gave Māyāduṇṇē cause for concern. He was obviously going to be a formidable opponent as a contender for the throne at Kōṭṭē. Māyāduṇṇē, therefore, joined forces with the Portuguese, his erstwhile enemies. This cynical move ended in the destruction of Vīdiyē Baṇḍāra who fled first to Kandy but was later expelled and had to seek refuge in Jaffna where he died.

Meanwhile, the native population's hatred for the Portuguese increased not only because of their acts of undisciplined cruelty but also because they were attempting to make Kōṭṭē a Catholic state. Churches were built in the coastal districts and many Sinhalese, particularly from the Karāva caste converted to Catholicism. In 1557 Dharmapāla became a Catholic. Most of his subjects disapproved of this conversion, particularly as he handed over some Buddhist vihāras and Hindu temples to the Franciscan missionaries. Māyāduṇṇē, convinced of support

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from Dharmapāla's dissatisfied subjects, commenced a prolonged, harrying campaign against Kōṭṭē. Māyādunnē's youngest son, Tikiri Baṇḍāra (who later came to be called Rājasimha) was a leading light in the battles against the Portuguese who, by 1558, were confined to an area near the coast by barricades put up by the Sītāvaka forces. Another tactic of Māyādunnē and Rājasimha was to burn and pillage the Sinhalese villages of Wattala, Mutwal, Peliyagoda and some others in the area occupied by the Portuguese. The Portuguese were recruiting these villagers, probably Christian converts, as soldiers.

In 1563 Kōṭṭē was in dire straits and narrowly escaped being overcome by the Sītāvaka forces only because the Portuguese received help from Karaliyaddē Baṇḍāra, the Kandyan king, who was concerned that Sītāvaka would attack him next. By 1565 after further attacks from Sītāvaka, the Portuguese decided to withdraw from Kōṭṭē to their fort at Colombo, taking Dharmapāla with them. Dharmapāla died in 1597 and the Portuguese captain-general took formal possession of the kingdom of Kōṭṭē. This was because Dharmapāla had, in 1580, formally bequeathed his kingdom to the Portuguese monarch at his death. In all these battles against the Portuguese, it seemed that it was never possible to administer a *coup de grace*. The main reason for this was disunity amongst the Sinhalese factions and their treachery towards each other. The other reason was Portuguese naval power and the ability of the Portuguese to obtain help from their bases in India and, later, Mannar. These were the two factors that saved the Portuguese from total expulsion.

Portuguese seizure of the Jaffna kingdom

Jaffna was of interest to the Portuguese not only because it was strategically placed for the control of the sea route to the Coromandel coast but also because it overlooked the major pearl fishery in the Gulf of Mannar, which was under the control of Muslim chiefs on the South Indian coast. Nevertheless, it was not these attractions that first brought the Portuguese to northern Sri Lanka. In 1543 the fishermen in the Mannar region, who belonged

to the Parava caste, impressed by the conversion to Catholicism of their brethren on the adjacent coast of India, invited Francis Xavier, a Spanish Jesuit missionary (he was canonized in 1622) at Goa, to Mannar. On his first visit he converted nearly six hundred of these fishermen to Catholicism. These converted Christians were then treated as Portuguese subjects and asked to pay tax to the Portuguese. This insult to his authority so enraged Çankili (or Saṅkili) I, the king of Jaffna that he proceeded to Mannar with an army and executed all those Christians who refused to give up their new faith. This did not meet with the approval of most of his Hindu subjects because Hinduism is, generally, tolerant of other religions. Despite the pleas of the missionaries the Portuguese did not retaliate at this stage. From the 1540s Çankili I had been strengthening his forces by settling Vaḍugai troops from South India in strategically placed villages on the coast and on the islands.

In 1560 some of these Vaḍugai troops attacked the Catholic Parava settlements on the South Indian coast on several occasions. Dom Constantino de Bragança, the Portuguese viceroy, arrived in Jaffna with a powerful fleet in September 1560 and was victorious after a prolonged battle in which Çankili's son, the crown prince, excelled himself. Peace was negotiated and the Portuguese, who were running out of provisions, agreed to come to terms. Under these terms a Portuguese garrison was to be stationed in Jaffna and though Çankili was allowed to regain control of most his kingdom, the Portuguese were to have authority over the islands and coast. Also, the crown prince was taken to Goa as a hostage, conversion to Catholicism was to be permitted and Çankili was asked to pay an annual tribute of ten elephants to the Portuguese. In return the Portuguese agreed that the Christian converts would pay their taxes to the king of Jaffna.

The soldiers of the Portuguese garrison had antagonised the local population by killing cows for food (a serious crime in the eyes of Hindus). They were also accused of raiding the houses of local people. In addition, it was alleged that Hindus were being forced into conversion to Catholicism. The local population soon

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retaliated by killing a Franciscan priest and some Portuguese soldiers who had destroyed a Hindu temple. There was a general uprising and Bragança, realising the danger, withdrew to Mannar where he built a fort. He left a Portuguese garrison and some ships at Mannar before he returned to Cochin. This base in Mannar was of use to the Portuguese up to the time they left the island. It controlled the pearl fishery and served as a supply base for actions both in the north and the south of the island. The Portuguese, by now, had a sizeable contingent of Indian and Sinhalese troops.

In 1561 Puvirāja Paṇḍāram Pararājasēkaran, one of the sons of Čaṅkili I, deposed his father and soon there was a dispute regarding succession. The Portuguese at Mannar were asked to help. They were, of course, delighted to oblige and placed their own nominee on the throne but this man was assassinated. Jaffna was in a state of confusion for a few years and in 1565 the Portuguese captain of Mannar placed a man called Periyapullē on the throne. The Portuguese, in addition to the revenues from the pearl fishery and revenues from the land they controlled around Mannar, extracted an annual tribute of elephants and money from the king of Jaffna. They also received revenues from taxes imposed on temples and trade in Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

Puvirāja Paṇḍāram Pararājasēkaran, who regained the throne and succeeded Periyapullē in 1582, initially continued with the latter's policies but in 1591 with the help of the ruler of Calicut he attacked the Portuguese at Mannar with a large force. The Portuguese summoned reinforcements from India and Kōṭṭē. Pararājasēkaran was defeated and summarily beheaded. Ethirimanna Čiṅkam, a Portuguese nominee, was installed in his place as king of Jaffna, the annual tribute was increased and other impositions put in place. This king was unpopular amongst his subjects at first because of his support for the Portuguese. He had to move, for his own safety, from his palace at Nallūr, the capital, to the new town of Jaffna that had been established by the Portuguese and where their garrison was stationed.

The aggressive behaviour of the Portuguese missionaries gave rise to problems amongst the local population. Mosques and

temples were being taken over by the Portuguese at the request of the Catholic missionaries or set on fire if there was a refusal to hand them over. The king was beginning to be dissatisfied with his Portuguese patrons and they with him because they suspected him of sending supplies to the Kandyan kingdom, which they were trying to suppress at that time. The Portuguese were planning to depose him but he died in 1617. He had a three year old son but at this stage his nephew, *Çaṅkili Kumaran*, usurped the throne and put to death all the princes in line for the throne except the immediate heir. Because of these atrocities he was disliked by his subjects but had the support of the Portuguese. He ruled as *Çaṅkili II*.

By this time the Portuguese were seriously considering making the Jaffna kingdom a part of the Portuguese empire. They knew that *Çaṅkili II* had dealings with the kingdom of Kandy and was trying to persuade *Senarat*, king of Kandy, to join with him in an attack against the Portuguese. He had also asked for aid from the Dutch in India and had attacked Portuguese shipping. *Constantino de Sá y Noronha*, the Portuguese captain general for Sri Lanka, sent two detachments to Jaffna, one by sea and the other overland, under the overall command of *Filipe de Oliveira* in 1619. The Jaffna forces were defeated. *Çaṅkili II* was captured in 1620 and executed in Goa.

The Portuguese had annexed Jaffna but in the next couple of years there were serious uprisings by the Jaffna Tamils who had military aid from the ruler of Tanjore in southern India. The Jaffna Tamils wished to expel the Portuguese and install the prince of *Rāmēsvaram* (the only remaining member of their royal family) as king. The Portuguese dealt with these uprisings very severely, massacring women and children as well as setting fire to villages to strike terror into the hearts of the rebels. To combat the reinforcements from Tanjore, the Portuguese brought a large contingent of Sinhalese (probably Catholic converts) from the south to Jaffna. By February 1621 these rebellions had been totally crushed. Portuguese rule in Jaffna was particularly oppressive because of their religious intolerance and excessive taxation.

They introduced tobacco, which became a prominent item of trade in Jaffna particularly during the Dutch period. According to Portuguese writers, the prosperity of the area did improve during the course of their rule. However, it was the Portuguese authorities, rather than the local community that benefited from the improved trade. The Portuguese also gained from increased land revenues.

Rise and fall of the kingdom of Sītāvaka

Though Dharmapāla remained as a puppet king under Portuguese protection until 1597, the Sinhalese kingdom of Kōṭṭē had, effectively, ceased to exist and Sītāvaka had become the dominant Sinhalese kingdom by 1565. After the victory over Kōṭṭē most of the latter's lands had become part of the Sītāvaka kingdom (which had its capital close to modern Avissawella, about 40 miles east of Colombo) and this had not only increased the area but also the wealth and the size of population that the ruler of Sītāvaka controlled. The great problem for Sītāvaka was that it had to contend not only with the Portuguese but also with the Kandyans.

Rājasimha realised the value of the cinnamon, which grew mainly in Sītāvaka, and carried on an active policy of keeping the prices high by burning any excess - he had learnt this from the Portuguese. He also improved the military strength of Sītāvaka not only by recruiting more soldiers but also by manufacturing more muskets and cannon. The latter techniques were also probably learnt from the Portuguese who, early in their rule, had established foundries. He imported gunners and gunpowder from India and Sumatra. He also made an attempt to establish a navy - one of the very few Sinhalese kings to do so - and he risked unpopularity by increasing taxes to meet his military needs. When Māyādunnē died in 1581, he became king and ruled as Rājasimha I. Portuguese historians (and also the *Cūlavamsa*) have claimed that Rājasimha killed his father. The latter was eighty years of age and may have died of natural causes but both he and Rājasimha were ruthless, violent men who were prepared to dispose of anybody

or anything that got in their way. In fact, for this very reason, they were effective rulers for that period.

After being driven back to Colombo in 1565 the Portuguese, in the next few years, depended on two different tactics to regain their superiority. They carried out repeated punitive raids on Sītāvaka's coastal villages (such as Negombo, Panadura, Moratuwa, Hendala and Peliyagoda) and they established new centres of influence in other parts of the island such as Puttalam, Galle, Batticaloa and Trincomalee. From 1571 to 1581, Colombo was under siege from a Sītāvaka force of about 25,000 soldiers (armed with traditional weapons and also muskets), artillery consisting of several small cannon and an impressive elephant corps. The Portuguese used their naval power to harass and divert the Sītāvaka forces by attacking any unprotected villages and, ultimately, the siege had to be lifted when the Portuguese received substantial reinforcements.

Rājasimha turned his attention to Kandy in 1582. Supported by a Kandyan faction he conquered Kandy and put the Kandyan king, Karaliyaddē Baṇḍāra, to flight. He now had even more territory and resources under his control but did not mount another attack on the Portuguese until 1587 because of serious problems within his own kingdom. There was opposition to his rule and even an attempt to poison him. One of the reasons for this opposition may have been due to the fact that he had become a Hindu, though this was not an unusual conversion amongst Sinhalese kings. Characteristically, Rājasimha acted decisively and ruthlessly. He had some of the leaders of the revolt killed.

In 1587 Rājasimha laid his last siege of Colombo. His army now numbered around 50,000, with at least a third of the men armed with muskets. There were also a number of small cannon and a large number of elephants. The Beira Lake, on the east side of Colombo and forming a natural barrier, was drained by the Sītāvaka forces to prevent the Portuguese from putting small vessels, with mounted cannon, on it. Victory was within sight for Sītāvaka but it seems that it was their navy that let them down and allowed the beleaguered Portuguese to send for help from

Mannar. Rājasimha even tried to enter the fort by having his large workforce dig tunnels under the walls but this was thwarted by the Portuguese. Having received further reinforcements, the Portuguese navy raided numerous villages along the coast. These villages were sacked and set on fire. Several temples, both Buddhist and Hindu, were destroyed. However, Rājasimha only gave in because he had to deal with another revolt in Kandy. The Portuguese, naturally, supported this Kandyan revolt and in 1590 a combined Portuguese and Kandyan army took Kandy. Karaliyaddē Baṇḍāra's nephew, Yamasimha Baṇḍāra, who had fled to Mannar in 1582 and been converted to Catholicism (taking the name of Dom Felipe), was crowned king of Kandy.

In 1592 Rājasimha I, having subdued a revolt in the Seven Kōraḷēs, attempted to retake Kandy but Vimaladharmasūriya I, king of Kandy at that time, mounted a successful defence of the strategic Balana Pass against the Sitavaka forces. On his return from this campaign, Rājasimha died of an infected wound in his foot. He was 50. His son Rājasūriya succeeded him but was a weakling and the commander-in-chief of the army, Manamperuma, was the power behind the throne. The latter soon got rid of Rājasūriya and his brother and made Rājasimha's sister's grandson the king. However, Manamperuma fell out of favour at Sītāvaka, decided to change sides and defected to the Portuguese. This was the beginning of the end for Sītāvaka and other commanders of the Sītāvaka army crossed over to Dharmapāla and the Portuguese. By 1594 Sītāvaka had been taken over by Kōṭṭē and was under the control of the Portuguese with Dharmapāla as a puppet king. It was Rājasimha's policy of eliminating all prospective rivals that left Sītāvaka without a suitable leader after his death. This was one of the main reasons for its eventual collapse.

The Kandyan kingdom

The Kandyan kingdom evolved from Uḍaraṭa (meaning up-country), which was also called Kanda-uḍa-Pasraṭa (meaning five 'countries on the mountain' - or regions consisting of Gampola, Mātālē, Ūva, Balaviṭa and Pansiyapattuva). The name Kandy was

later given to the kingdom (and also to its capital, Senkaḍagala) by the Portuguese who derived the name from *kanda*, the Sinhalese word for 'hill'. A feeling of common identity was felt by the people in these regions by about the fourteenth century when they were levied for local defence against armies from the north. In the 1460s, Parākramabāhu VI placed a member of the Gampola royal house (Sēnāsammata Vikramabāhu) as the ruler of the area and after Parākramabāhu's death in 1466, this ruler claimed autonomy but was repressed by Kōṭṭē. In the early days of the kingdom, the power of its ruler was limited by the army and the influence of powerful chiefs (Baṇḍāras).

In 1521 Kandy benefited from the break-up of the Kōṭṭē kingdom but was soon being harassed by Sītāvaka. In the 1540s Jayavīra, the Kandyan ruler, sought help from the Portuguese to thwart an invasion by Māyādunnē, ruler of Sītāvaka, but this help arrived too late and the victorious Māyādunnē extracted a tribute from Kandy. Relations between the Kandyans and the Portuguese were strained after this episode and the Portuguese sent two punitive expeditions, both of which failed, to Kandy. Jayavīra, still concerned about Māyādunnē, allied himself with Kōṭṭē by arranging a marriage between the royal houses. Jayavīra's successor, Karaliyaddē Baṇḍāra (1552 - 1582), became a Roman Catholic probably influenced by the conversion of Dharmapāla, the king of Kōṭṭē in 1557. In 1582 Rājasimha I invaded Kandy and annexed it to Sītāvaka and from then until 1590 the kingdom of Kandy did not exist.

A combined force of Portuguese and Kandyans took Kandy from Rājasimha I in 1590 and a nephew of Karaliyaddē Baṇḍāra named Yamasimha Baṇḍāra, who had fled to Mannar in 1582 and been converted to Catholicism, was crowned as Dom Felipe but died soon after, probably having been poisoned. A Kandyan called Konappu Baṇḍāra also a Christian and, initially, a protégé of the Portuguese proclaimed himself king of Kandy under the name of Vimaladharmasūriya I (1591 - 1604) and reverted to Buddhism. The Portuguese did not approve of this and claimed sovereignty over Kandy, asserting that it was part of the Kōṭṭē kingdom, which

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had been bequeathed to the Portuguese monarch by Dharmapāla in 1580. Dom Felipe during his brief reign in 1590 had also signed a deed leaving the Kandyan kingdom to the Portuguese monarch. The acts enacted by these two Sinhalese kings, no doubt carried out under pressure from the Portuguese, were the main legal reasons for the claims made by the Portuguese that Vimaladharmasūriya and his successors were rebels. This argument justified the attacks they carried out on Kandy in the ensuing years.

In 1594 the Portuguese took Kandy and tried to place Dona Catherina on the throne. This lady, originally named Kusumāsanadēvi, was the daughter of Karaliyaddē Baṇḍāra. She had fled to Mannar in 1582 and become a Catholic. She did not have the support of the Kandyans and Vimaladharmasūriya was able to recapture Kandy. He later made her his queen and this helped to strengthen his claim to the throne. A further invasion of Kandy in 1602 by the Portuguese was repulsed.

In 1602 Joris van Spilbergen, a Dutch envoy, arrived in Kandy with an offer of naval help against the Portuguese in return for being allowed to establish trading centres on the east coast. This did not materialise because when another envoy, De Weert, arrived a few months later with concrete proposals, there was a misunderstanding between the Kandyans and the Dutch and the entire Dutch delegation was slaughtered by the Kandyans. At this stage many Sinhalese in Kōṭṭē, disgruntled with the Portuguese, supported the Kandyans. The Kandyans also had the support of the Jaffna kingdom and some South Indian rulers, who sent aid in the form of troops. Meanwhile, the Portuguese commenced a campaign by cutting off supplies to Kandy, carrying out sorties into Kandyan territory and encouraging the settlement of Portuguese and Indians in coastal areas. The Kandyan court withdrew into the inaccessible mountain areas, which were easily defended.

Dona Catherina succeeded Vimaladharmasūriya but was deposed by the latter's brother, Senarat (1604 - 1635), who then made her his queen. When revolt broke out against the Portuguese in 1616, led by Nikapiṭiyē Baṇḍāra, Senarat sent troops to support

the rebels. The rebellion was a success, initially, but Senarat felt threatened by Nikapiṭṭiyē Baṇḍāra's success and withdrew his troops in 1617. He then proceeded to make a pact with the Portuguese acknowledging their sovereignty over the lowlands. This treaty of 1617 laid down definite boundaries for the Kandy kingdom, which on the east coast included the port of Koṭṭiyār, Batticaloa and the coastal area down to Panama.

In 1620, the Danish East Indian Company, with the approval of the Kandyans, established a fort at Koṭṭiyār. To counter this danger, the Portuguese built a fort at Trincomalee in 1623 at the site of an ancient Hindu (Kōnēsvaram) temple. In 1628 they seized Batticaloa and built a fort there. This gave rise to renewed hostilities between the Portuguese and the Kandyans. In 1628 and 1629 the Kandyans attacked Jaffna, which the Portuguese had taken over completely in 1620. These attacks failed after initial successes. Senarat's youngest son Rājasimha was named as his successor in 1628. He took an active part in the attacks against the Portuguese and later came to the throne as Rājasimha II (1635 - 1687). Rājasimha assumed the view that not only Kandy but also the entire original Kōṭṭē kingdom should come under his authority. A siege of Colombo lasting over a year failed to dislodge the Portuguese. A treaty was concluded in 1634 whereby the Portuguese retained the fort in Batticaloa but the boundaries of the Kandy kingdom were once again accepted as those defined by the treaty of 1617.

By the 1630s the Dutch were well established in Asia. The Portuguese, concerned that Kandy had formed an alliance with them, decided to invade Kandy to prevent this alliance from coming into fruition. The Kandyans were prepared and in March 1638 the attacking Portuguese army was massacred at Gannoruva. In May 1638, after overtures by Rājasimha, a Dutch fleet captured Batticaloa and Rājasimha made a treaty with the Dutch giving them the monopoly of the cinnamon trade and repayment in merchandise for any expenses incurred in supporting him.

Rājasimha made the mistake of believing that the Dutch were not interested in acquiring territory. In 1639 the Dutch took

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Trincomalee and in 1640 a combined Dutch and Kandyan force took Negombo and Galle. At this stage the Dutch refused to hand over Trincomalee and Batticaloa to Rājasiṃha unless they were paid and Rājasiṃha realised that these new foreigners were going to be as bad as the old. A truce in 1640 between Spain, which now ruled Portugal, and the Netherlands halted any hostilities between the Dutch and the Portuguese and in 1645 the boundary between the possessions of the two countries was demarcated. Also in 1645 Rājasiṃha commenced a battle against the Dutch by destroying crops and depopulating the lands occupied by them. Though the Dutch made another treaty with Rājasiṃha in 1649, they delayed the return of the land that they had misappropriated.

The truce between Spain and the Netherlands expired in 1652 and the Dutch were now free to resume hostilities against the Portuguese. Rājasiṃha recommenced his attack on the Portuguese and drove them back to the coast but the Dutch refused to support him in taking Colombo. Instead, strengthened in 1655 by a large fleet under the command of General Gerard Hulft, they besieged Colombo and the Portuguese surrendered to them in 1656. The Dutch promptly shut the Kandyans out and gave evasive replies to Rājasiṃha's request for the captured territory to be handed over. The furious Rājasiṃha withdrew to his mountain fastness having destroyed the lands around Colombo and taking most of the population with him.

Portuguese rule in Sri Lanka

In 1597, at the death of Dharmapāla, the Portuguese deviated from their usual policy of acting through a client ruler and commenced direct rule of Kōṭṭē. Similarly, when Çaṅkili II died in 1620, they annexed Jaffna. They departed from their normal practice because they realised that in neither of these kingdoms was it practical to continue using a puppet ruler and also that to maintain their supremacy in Asia they had to stabilise and extend their holdings in Sri Lanka. By the late sixteenth century the Dutch were becoming a threat to the *Estado da Índia* (Portuguese possessions in India). There was also the threat of an attack by

Akbar, the Mughal emperor, on Portuguese holdings along the Indian coast. After the fall of Sītāvaka it became obvious that their military strength on the island was sufficient to extend the area they controlled. The compliant Dharmapāla was coaxed to cede Kōṭṭē, at his death, to the Portuguese king. In addition, after his death, the Portuguese exiled to Goa all those who were in the line of succession for the Kōṭṭē throne. Despite these precautions there were ten major rebellions against the Portuguese from 1594 onwards. These 'popular' uprisings were due to a number of reasons. The main reasons were the Portuguese land policy, the brutality of the Portuguese officials, the ever-increasing demands for goods and services by the Portuguese and the hostility of the local population towards Roman Catholicism.

The basic purpose of Portuguese administration in Sri Lanka, in common with previous (South Indian) invaders of the island, was to exploit the resources of the country for their own benefit. To do this effectively, law and order had to be maintained. To obtain some form of cooperation, the indigenous people had to be treated fairly. The Portuguese, despite some rhetoric from their senior representatives on the island, were never able to achieve these objectives. Though, in theory, Portuguese officials held similar posts in the administration to their Sinhalese or Tamil counterparts before them, in practice they had considerably more power. The majority of these Portuguese appointees looked upon their posts as rewards for years of faithful service to the Portuguese crown. It was an opportunity to make a personal fortune in a foreign land where the laws that governed the indigenous population were not applicable to the Portuguese.

At the head of the Portuguese government in Sri Lanka was the Captain-General who was appointed by the ruler of Portugal. He was the head of the civil administration and his wide-ranging powers included that of being able to declare war. He was subordinate to the viceroy at Goa and was assisted by a judge and an official in control of the revenue. The administrative structure remained basically the same as under the Sinhalese kings in Kōṭṭē and the Tamil kings in Jaffna. The Portuguese authorities

agreed to administer the country under the prevailing laws of the island. The main reason for these concessions was because the Portuguese did not have sufficient personnel of their own to make drastic alterations. A Captain-Major, under the Captain-General at Kōṭṭē, administered Jaffna separately. In the latter years of Portuguese rule, a separate Captain-General took charge of Jaffna and Mannar.

The original Kōṭṭē kingdom (excluding the Kandyan kingdom) was divided into four *disāvanes* (provinces). These were Matara, Sabaragamuva, Four Kōraḷēs and Seven Kōraḷēs. Jaffna was divided into three provinces. The Portuguese held the highest offices, though local officials were from the Sinhalese and Tamil land-holding nobility loyal to the Portuguese. The traditional land tenure system continued with some important alterations such as the acceptance of rent in place of service tenure. However, service tenure was retained where advantageous and used extensively to obtain cinnamon, elephants and other such items required by the Portuguese. A *tombo* or land register was compiled to provide details of land-holdings, tax obligations etc. Portuguese settlers were granted land and became village land-holders. Some of the traditional royal villages (*gabaḍāgam*), which were the mainstay of the king's revenue, were given to the Roman Catholic missionaries and Portuguese settlers. These new landlords were entitled to the revenue from these villages and consequently the Government suffered a loss in land revenue. Conversely, there was a great increase in the revenue from exports.

Colonisation by Portuguese and Indian settlers was encouraged. The idea was to implant Portuguese authority in native soil and these colonies of pro-Portuguese, Catholic immigrants were meant to act as political stabilisers. They were also meant to provide a willing source of manpower when required. Portuguese officials lacked a proper understanding of the traditional Sinhalese and Tamil economic and social structures and, therefore, the insensitive and excessive demands made by them in Kōṭṭē and Jaffna produced resentment and hostility. Trade in cinnamon and elephants became a Portuguese monopoly and

this produced considerable profits, as did the trade in arecanuts and pepper. The peasant population who bore the brunt of the numerous wars, heavy taxation and loss of trade did not have the opportunity to acquire wealth but some of the local land owning aristocrats, who had converted to Catholicism, did acquire a great deal of wealth and improved their standard of living.

The Portuguese introduced an elected municipal council in Colombo. Only Portuguese settlers were able to vote and, obviously, the council strongly supported the interests of these settlers. The hospital in Colombo was restricted to the use of Portuguese soldiers. The nucleus of the Portuguese military institution on the island consisted of between 600 and 800 Portuguese soldiers divided between Kōṭṭē, Jaffna and the forts at Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Galle, Kalutara, Negombo and Kayts. This nucleus was supported by a few hundred Indian and African troops and several thousand Sinhalese troops. The coastal areas were guarded by a few small ships but, in an emergency, larger trading ships could be requisitioned. From the early days of their occupation foundries had been established to manufacture muskets and cannon from raw material obtained on the island.

The Dutch, with a far superior naval force, expelled the Portuguese from southwestern Sri Lanka in 1656 and captured Mannar and Jaffna in 1658.

Administration

The king held the rights over the distribution of land grants and this was used as an instrument of patronage though, in reality, he had to retain the loyalty of certain powerful families and his hands were tied in this respect. There was a royal council of ministers in which the commander of the army (*sēnāpati*) and the chief minister (*ēkanāyaka*) were important members. Amongst others were the ministers in charge of the treasury (*mudalnāyaka*) and the royal stores (*baṇḍāranāyaka*). The sub-kings who ruled parts of Kōṭṭē were included in the royal council in times of crisis. Significantly, the chief of the merchants was included in

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this council and this explains the considerable influence of the Muslims traders (and of the Portuguese traders after them).

The forty *kōraḷēs*, or basic units of administration, into which *Kōṭṭē* was divided, were organised into four *disāvanes* each under an official called a *disāva*. The *disāva* had extensive judicial powers, got together the militia and led them when the occasion arose. He also controlled the allocation of land. In each *kōraḷē* there were civil and military officials. The civil officials consisted of various types of headmen with varying functions. The *kōraḷē vidānē* was the chief with responsibility for the administration of justice and collection of revenue. The *kōraḷē mudaliyars* commanded the troops in their *kōraḷē*.

Jaffna was divided into four provinces - Vaḍamarachchi, Valikāmam, Tenmarachchi and Pachilaipalai. These were under the control of *mudaliyars* who had similar powers to the *disāvas* and were a part of the aristocracy of Jaffna. *Adigārs*, similar to the *vidanes*, were the revenue collectors in Jaffna. The Portuguese retained the basic administrative structure but there were significant differences in implementation. The Captain-General, very probably, had much more real power than the king he supplanted. The emphasis was on trade and land revenue was less important under the Portuguese.

The population of the whole island was around 750,000 and the population of the Jaffna peninsula alone was about 150,000. About 400,000 were concentrated in the west and southwest, whilst there were pockets of population in the areas around Gampōḷa and Seṅkaḍagala (Kandy). Outside the Gampōḷa and Kandy areas, particularly above 3000 feet, the Kandyan population was sparse. There were other pockets of population around Batticaloa and Kantalai.

Trade

Arecanuts, coconuts, cinnamon, pepper, elephants, gems and pearls were the main commodities traded, mainly through Arabs, early in the sixteenth century. Money had been introduced and crops were cultivated for sale and not merely for subsistence.

Arecanut, which is chewed with the betel leaf very commonly in the Indian subcontinent, was an export item of importance and grew (and still does) in abundance in the southwest and also in the lower reaches of the Kandyan kingdom. Sri Lankan elephants were highly valued because of the ease with which they could be tamed and trained. In Kōṭṭē, elephants were a prerogative of the king but traders could purchase them for export. In Jaffna, the king did not have this monopoly. Because of this and also because of the proximity of the Vanni where elephants were abundant, Jaffna was a centre for the elephant trade. The shipping of elephants was carried out, with difficulty, in special boats. The revenue from the trade of these highly valued animals was considerable. Gem production was substantial on land leased out by the king but gems over a certain size had to be handed over to the state. Pearls were harvested mainly from the Gulf of Mannar but in the sixteenth century this trade was in the hands of South Indian merchants.

To the Portuguese, cinnamon was the most important article of trade. The plant (*Cinnamomum Zeylanicum*) grows wild in the southwest of the island. The dried and peeled bark is used as a condiment. The gathering, drying and peeling was carried out by the Salāgama caste and it is estimated by Portuguese writers that in 1518 the Portuguese took 1,000 *bahars* of cinnamon from the island. A *bahar* was about 400 pounds. It became an extremely lucrative trade for the Portuguese fetching many times its original purchase price in Sri Lanka when sold in Cochin or Ormuz and even more when sold in Lisbon. The price was kept artificially high by the Portuguese and increased a thousand fold during the sixteenth century.

Religion and culture

Intense Roman Catholic missionary activity was prevalent during the entire Portuguese occupation. Initially it was those in the lower castes who saw no future in Hinduism or Buddhism and agreed to conversion. Hence it was the Karāva and Parave castes, in the southern and northern coastal areas respectively,

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who were converted. Some of these coastal areas underwent mass conversion. Later, and particularly after the Portuguese secured control of the island, they used their extensive powers of patronage in granting appointments to promote Catholicism amongst the upper classes and higher castes. It was customary, particularly amongst the landed aristocracy, to take Portuguese surnames at baptism.

Since Hinduism and Buddhism are, relatively, tolerant religions able to accept other religious faiths in their midst, it must have been a considerable shock to the sensitivities of the indigenous population when it became obvious that the proselytising Catholic missionaries were aggressively intolerant of any other religion but their own. In the sixteenth century there were a number of Hindus amongst the Sinhalese in the southwest. Rājasimha I of Sītāvaka became a Hindu. A number of Hindu temples existed in Kōṭṭē. Some of the Buddhist and Hindu temples were large and had considerable revenues. The Muslim community, mainly descendants of Arab traders, were adherents of Islam and were few in number. In 1567 the ecclesiastical Council held in Goa decreed that all non-Catholic temples in Portuguese territories should be demolished. However, the majority of the Sinhalese population remained Buddhist and the majority of the Tamil population remained Hindu. This destruction of temples, both Buddhist and Hindu, drove Buddhist and Hindu priests to the security of the Kandyan kingdom.

Traditionally, the basic skills of reading and writing in Sinhalese were taught by the *bhikkhus*. The Portuguese language, which was taught in the schools attached to churches and had become the *lingua franca* of the trading community on the coasts of the Indian subcontinent, spread extensively and until recently a Portuguese *patois* was spoken in some coastal areas of Sri Lanka. The upper classes became particularly proficient in the Portuguese language presumably because this was a requirement for holding posts in the higher echelons of the administrative service. Portuguese words soon entered both the Sinhalese and Tamil vocabularies. Polygamy and polyandry, which were

practised throughout the Sinhalese kingdoms, became much less prevalent in the low-country with the advent of Catholicism but polyandry persisted in the Kandyan kingdom even during the early part of the British period. With regard to architecture, the Portuguese introduced more permanent building materials in the construction of houses than had been used previously in Sri Lanka. A form of architecture, with curved clay tiles for roofing, became a feature.

The caste system remained prevalent amongst the Sinhalese and Tamil communities and it was advantageous for the Portuguese to maintain this *status quo*. Many immigrant groups were absorbed gradually into this society. On the other hand people of mixed race resulting from liaison between Portuguese and the native Sinhalese and Tamils were not absorbed and came to be called Portuguese Burghers. Unlike the Dutch and the British, the Portuguese actively encouraged some of their countrymen to mix with the native population to produce future recruits for their army and navy. After the departure of the Portuguese these people were not accepted by the Dutch, were only able to obtain employment as artisans and were treated with suspicion by the native population. The Muslims were not included in the caste system and formed a separate community of their own.

Portuguese Period Rulers

කොට්ඨේ

Dharma Parākramabāhu IX	1489 - 1513
Vijayabāhu VI	1513 - 1521
Bhuvanekabāhu VII	1521 - 1551
Dharmapāla	1521 - 1597

සීතාවකා

Māyādunnē	1521 - 1581
Rājasimha I	1581 - 1593
Rājasūriya	1593 - 1594

KANDY

Sēnāsammata Vikramabāhu	1469 - 1511
Jayavīra	1511 - 1552
Karaliyaddē Baṇḍāra	1552 - 1582
Dom Felipe (Yamasimha Baṇḍāra)	1590 - 1591
Vimaladharmasūriya I	1591 - 1604
Senarat	1604 - 1635
Rājasimha II	1635 - 1687

JAFFNA

Pararājasēkaran	1478 - 1519
Çāṅkili I	1519 - 1561
Puvirāja Paṇḍāram Pararājasēkaran	1561 - 1565
Peryapillai	1565 - 1582
Puvirāja Paṇḍāram Pararājasēkaran	1582 - 1591
Ethirimanna Çīṅkam	1591 - 1612
Çāṅkili II	1616 - 1620

Dutch Period

1656 A.D. to 1796 A.D.

The Dutch in their own country

The Dutch advantages in trade lay not only in their geographical situation but also in the efficient design of their bulky flyboats (*fluiten*). These were manned by small crews at less cost than any of their competitors. Amsterdam was becoming a centre of European trade and an exchange bank was established in 1609 to provide monetary exchange at agreed rates and later to act as a safe-deposit bank. Trade in the Indian Ocean, competing with the Portuguese (who were ardent Catholics), commenced early in the seventeenth century and the Dutch, in addition to their trade in Europe, became the major importers of spices and other luxury goods from the east.

The power of the Dutch was based on trade and not on inherited land. The people used the limited resources of their small land to the full and lived by a strict work ethic. They had formed several individual companies but in 1602 these were united as the Dutch East India Company by command of the States General because this union would lead to reduction in costs and increased security. This company, like its British counterpart, was granted quasi-sovereign rights in the lands under its control. In the seventeenth century, the Dutch West India Company, which did not prosper as much as its counterpart in the east was pre-eminent in the slave trade. Agricultural progress, in technology and understanding of the market, which spread from the Netherlands to Britain and the rest of Europe in the sixteenth

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century, transformed the appearance of the Dutch countryside and helped maintain a rapidly increasing population.

Why were these Europeans so successful in their expansion? Soon they were to lay claim to about half the world's surface. The Arabs and the Chinese had long possessed the technology and the knowledge for prolonged sea voyages but did not make any attempt to occupy other countries and extract their wealth. The main difference between these nations was that the European nations had the strong backing of their states, which by the sixteenth century had stable institutions in place. Another reason may have been the basic differences in culture. Christianity and the Greco-Roman background made Europeans different in their attitude towards other peoples. At this stage in their history, not long after the crusades and the battle against Islam, they had a sense of superiority and righteousness, which made them contemptuous of other cultures and civilisations. They felt that they were morally correct in taking anything that, from their point of view, could be put to better use. It probably never even occurred to them that in doing this they were destroying another culture. It so happened that their technology in sea travel and military power improved so much around this time that they were able to carry out the actions that their culture had sanctioned. It is important to realise that at this time Asia did not need anything from Europe. On the other hand Europe needed a great number of luxury items from Asia and Europeans were prepared to go to any length to obtain these goods. Within the next few centuries the wealth the Europeans extracted helped to accelerate their advance in technology, completely out-distancing the Asian nations in this aspect and reversing the direction in which luxury goods would travel.

Dutch strategy

Unlike the Portuguese, the Dutch were traders first and foremost and had little inclination to spread their religion, though they did introduce Protestantism in the form of the Dutch Reformed Church to Sri Lanka. Their main aim was to obtain

spices from the Indonesian archipelago, which was known as the East Indies with the Dutch headquarters at Batavia (modern Jakarta). They soon realised that to be able to do this they would have to get rid of the Portuguese opposition in Malacca, which was regularly reinforced from Portuguese bases in South India and Sri Lanka. By the 1630s the Dutch navy in the Indian Ocean was powerful enough to defeat the Portuguese and the British. Over the next thirty years they ousted the Portuguese not only from Sri Lanka but also from southern India. To make these tactical moves economically viable and to balance their books, they had to exploit the available resources in Sri Lanka. This, they knew from experience, would not be possible without complete control of the territory.

An account of their initial dealings with the Kandyan kingdom is related in the section on 'Kandyan kingdom' under 'Portuguese Period'. After the Portuguese were expelled from the old Kōṭṭē kingdom, Dutch strategy essentially consisted of coming to terms with Rājasiṃha II. The situation was different in Jaffna and will be dealt with separately. Unlike the Portuguese, the Dutch tended to be scrupulously fair and restrained in their dealings with the Kandyan kings, particularly Rājasiṃha II. However, they were relentless in their wish to exploit the island's resources and when it became obvious that Rājasiṃha was unwilling to cooperate they kept the territories that they had captured from the Portuguese, which Rājasiṃha claimed were part of his kingdom.

The Dutch insisted that their occupation of these maritime territories was legal and based on the treaty made with Rājasiṃha II in 1638 in which he agreed to reimburse them for all their expenses in helping him to expel the Portuguese. Poor Rājasiṃha had the mistaken impression that he was engaging them as mercenaries to do his fighting for him and they would go away when this was finished. They presented him with an enormous bill in 1658 - a bill they knew he would be unable to pay. The Dutch claimed that they were holding the lowland areas as security - a typical merchant-banker's argument. A superior military force backed this claim. Another tactic shrewdly used by

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the Dutch against Rājasiṃha II was flattery. General Hulft, sent to report progress to the king in 1656, knelt before him in his palace at Ganegalla and told him that he was well-known throughout the world. The Dutch also gave him grandiose, and meaningless, titles. Rājasiṃha was vain enough to be flattered but his resentment of these Western foreigners continued unabated.

In 1658, the total area of territory under Dutch rule in Sri Lanka was much less than the area ruled by the Portuguese. Not only were the important eastern ports at Batticaloa and Trincomalee in Kandyan hands but so also was the western port of Kalpiṭiya. It became obvious to the Dutch that successful exploitation of the land was not going to be possible without the goodwill of the king and the trust of the people. Admiral Rijckloff van Goens, who was in overall charge of Dutch affairs in the island, tried not only to placate the king but also set up posts, manned by soldiers known as *lascarins* (Sinhalese *laskiriñña*), at the borders of the Kandyan kingdom. For a brief period there was peace and then in 1659 the Dutch, having made no further progress with the king, attacked and captured the port of Kalpiṭiya. The Kandyans responded in their usual manner by laying waste the lands bordering Kalpiṭiya and taking away the Sinhalese population. The Supreme Government at Batavia refused van Goens' request that he be allowed to take Trincomalee and Batticaloa on the grounds that this would prove an unnecessary expense for the Company.

However, in 1665 there was a revolt against Rājasiṃha II and he was forced to swallow his pride and ask for help from the Dutch. This was an opportunity the Dutch could not miss, particularly as they were concerned about the British who had made contact with Rājasiṃha. They made further inroads into the Kandyan kingdom and also occupied the ports of Trincomalee and Batticaloa. Within the next couple of years the territory held by the Dutch in Sri Lanka had doubled. The Dutch encouraged people to migrate back into these newly annexed territories under the pretext that this annexation was being carried out at the king's request. In addition, the Dutch collected the taxes that were due

to the king. By 1670 they controlled the entire coastal area of the island, were in a much stronger position with regard to the Kandyan kingdom and also with regard to any British or French attempt to break up their monopoly of the Sri Lankan trade. Early in 1670 the Kandyans struck back and re-took some of the inland territory and in March 1670 a French squadron appeared and installed itself, with Rājasimha's blessing, on an island in the Trincomalee bay. They did not remain long because they ran out of food and most of the fleet sailed off to India, leaving a small force, which the Dutch easily overcame.

However, the presence of the French had encouraged Rājasimha to attack the Dutch, often successfully, on several fronts. There was also increasing guerilla activity against the Dutch. Dutch forces on the island were severely extended and repeated requests for reinforcements convinced Batavia by 1677 that Rājasimha was not as easy a target as van Goens had made him out to be and the economic benefits of van Goens' aggressive policy were very meagre. They, therefore, decided that the king should be placated by being offered a return of all his lands taken by the Dutch since 1665. This policy was not put into effect because of the opposition of Admiral van Goens, who had been appointed Governor-general at Batavia and his son, van Goens jnr., who was now the Governor in Sri Lanka.

In 1682, when Laurence Pyl was the Governor, Rājasimha was approached by the Dutch with the promise that they would withdraw from the king's lands when they received his specific orders to do so. By this time Rājasimha II was not only old but also in poor health. It has been suggested that he was mentally deranged. Whatever it was, the Dutch did not receive an answer. The Dutch were now concerned about the succession to the throne and made no further attempt to offer withdrawal as they felt that it would be prudent to hold on to the territory they held in case Rājasimha's successor did not wish to cooperate. In the last few years of his reign, Rājasimha showed some signs of goodwill towards the Dutch. In 1686 he sent Gaṇē Baṇḍāra, a member of the royal family who was the chief *Bhikkhu* at Kandy, as an emissary

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to Pyl who sent back a message stating that he would support any successor that the king chose. In 1687, Rājasimha freed the Dutch prisoners held at Kandy. He died in December 1687 and his son succeeded him.

Dutch policy in Jaffna

Jaffna was recovering from the initial effects of the Portuguese occupation when the Dutch expelled the Portuguese in 1658. From the Dutch viewpoint Jaffna had certain advantages as a main area of settlement. It was relatively easy to defend and a good distance away from Colombo, which was a coveted target of other Western powers. The introduction of tobacco by the Portuguese had brought back some prosperity to Jaffna. A large number of entrepreneurs, mainly from the Coromandel Coast, had settled in Jaffna and with the increase in prosperity the population of the Jaffna peninsula had also increased. This was a considerable source of revenue for the Dutch and they did not have to contend with a ruler. They commenced their occupation by making an example of fourteen people (five were Portuguese) who were suspected of a conspiracy to help the Portuguese overthrow the Dutch. Horrible punishments were inflicted on them before they were executed. This episode later became the subject of a Tamil play (*nāḍagam*).

The Dutch, like the Portuguese, administered Jaffna as a separate entity under the Kommandment of Jaffnapatnam. The territories under this Kommandment were the Jaffna peninsula, the islands around it and the borders of the Vanni south of the lagoon that separates the peninsula from the mainland. Further south there was the territory under the control of *vanniyārs* who were semi-autonomous and owed allegiance to the Jaffna Kommandment. The borders of the sparsely populated Vanni were ill-defined (for more information about the Vanni see 'Consequences of decline' under 'Fragmentation Period'). In 1766 the territory under the Jaffna Kommandment was extended down the east coast to meet the Galle Kommandment around Yala and to include Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

It would seem that the Dutch were at greater liberty to impose their will on the local population in Jaffna than they were in the south and southwest of the island because in these areas they were constrained, to some extent, by the need to keep the goodwill of the Kandyan king so that they could carry out their trading activities, particularly the gathering of cinnamon, in peace. From the outset the Dutch maintained a total monopoly of the trade in Jaffna and there was a complete ban on any free trade. The next step was to improve its taxation revenues and they did this by improving the *tombos*, or land registers instituted by the Portuguese. For this purpose, the peninsula was divided into four provinces (Valikāmam, Vaḍamarachchi, Tenmarachchi and Pachilaipalai) each with a local headman, who acted as tax-collector, supported by sub-headmen. The populated islands off the peninsular coast had a separate *tombo*. The collectors were paid a salary and entitled to one percent of the taxes collected. These headmen were also responsible for providing the labour force for the obligatory service to the state (an indirect form of taxation) called *ūli* (or *ūliyam*). The castes that were expected to perform the *ūli* service, which was similar to *rājakāriya* in Sinhalese areas (see 'Taxation, Grants and Service' under Administration), were the Vellālas, the *paradesis*, who were of similar status, Maḍappalis, Agambaḍis, Malayālis and Kovias. The Moors, other traders and those who practiced a craft were exempt. The revised *tombos* of 1675 meant increased taxation at a time when prolonged drought and the restrictions on trade had impoverished the local population. In addition, the poll tax was increased.

It was not altogether surprising, therefore, that there was a rebellion in 1675, probably instigated by the land-owning headmen who were particularly threatened by the revised *tombos* because these would reveal the full extent of their land-holdings. A number of these headmen were related to the *vanniyārs* and when the Dutch attempted to crush the revolt, they fled to the Vanni areas, some of which owed allegiance to the Kandyan kingdom, and requested help from Rājasimha II. Tennakōn Rāla, the Kandyan *disāva* of the Seven Kōraļēs invaded the Vanni

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in 1675 and destroyed any Dutch fortifications he could find. However, the rebellion could not be sustained and the rebels returned to Jaffna. The Dutch were undeterred by this rebellion and continued to increase taxation despite the fact that the impoverished local population were not going to be able to pay without very great hardship. There were two other taxes, which were levied on persons. One was known as the *adigāri*, originally paid for the maintenance of the king's chiefs (or *adigars*) by the higher castes - the Dutch doubled this levy. The other was the *officie*, which was levied from those who practised a craft and was originally levied on a communal basis. The Dutch levied it on an individual, personal basis increasing the total annual levy from this source considerably. The kings of Jaffna had levied these taxes and the Dutch continued the levies more efficiently and on higher scales.

Not all the methods used by the Dutch officials to improve Company profits were successful. The making of cloth was an old and profitable industry in Jaffna. A heavy tax was imposed on the imported cotton used by the weavers so that the price of locally produced cloth would rise, become uncompetitive and hence help the sale of cloth imported by the Company. However, the weavers left for the Vanni, taking their looms with them and continued to produce cheap cloth that was smuggled back into Jaffna. The Company was forced to reduce the tax on cotton. The Dutch also tried to monopolise the trade in tobacco, which was very profitable in Jaffna at that time. They did this by stopping private sales and buying the tobacco themselves at a very low rate set by the Company. This policy rebounded on them when it became obvious that the tobacco grower's production had dropped significantly since it was no longer profitable, hence reducing tax revenues. This policy, too, was abandoned.

The palmyrah, a palm tree with many uses, has separate male and female trees of which only the female bears fruit, which is extensively used as food and also as a source of an alcoholic toddy by the people of Jaffna. Palmyrah timber is very durable and was a valuable export. The Dutch bought the timber at a nominal

price and banned its trade by the local people. The result was a massive drop in the number of trees grown and since the female trees (which also provide the best timber) were also felled there was a considerable reduction in the food supply. Despite the fact that it was obvious to many of the Dutch officials themselves that restrictions on trade and heavy taxation were having a disastrous effect on the economy of Jaffna, Batavia was reluctant to cease trying to obtain maximum revenue and continued 'flogging a dead horse' until the end of their rule.

A Dutch Governor in 1697 listed forty-one castes in Jaffna. At the top of the list were the *vellalas*, or agriculturalists, who were patronised by the Dutch, and at the bottom were the 'untouchables'. Don Philip Changarapillai, a Vellāla Tamil and broker for the Indian elephant merchants was the leader of the caste whose goodwill was of importance to the Dutch. The Portuguese and Dutch maintained these caste systems because it was advantageous to them. The Dutch conferred the legal status of 'slaves' on the 'untouchables' and even deprived them of any land they possessed, strengthening the position of the Vellālas. Untouchables were also imported from South India, increasing the number of people who were legally unable to own land.

Another policy of the Dutch was to encourage their discharged soldiers to settle in Jaffna. Also, when the British expelled the Dutch from Colombo, many Dutch families settled in Jaffna. This gave rise to a large Dutch Burgher community and remnants of Dutch architecture were common up to recent times. When the British were in power, a great number of these Burghers entered Government and Mercantile Services in Colombo. Many of the descendants of these Jaffna Burghers are now in Australia.

The Kandyan kingdom and the Nāyakkars

The remarkable personality of Rājasiṃha II dominates the history of the Kandyan kingdom during most of the seventeenth century. His own subjects sarcastically claimed that Rājasiṃha II had 'given pepper and got ginger' (which is analogous to 'from the frying pan into the fire') when he exchanged the Portuguese for the Dutch. However, in 1658 the Kandyan kingdom was

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more extensive than at any time during the Portuguese Period. Rājasimha claimed that he was no longer king of Kanda-uḍa-Pasraṭa (the country on top of the mountain) but of Siṃhalē, the country of the Sinhalese, which included Pahata Raṭa (the country below) that had been part of the kingdom of Kōṭṭē. The majority of his subjects venerated Rājasimha. Sinhalese and Pali literature of the time extols him as a popular hero. Nevertheless, a number of contemporary observers have portrayed him as a cruel and autocratic tyrant. The truth, perhaps, lies somewhere between these two extreme views. Without doubt he was unpopular amongst a faction of the nobles. This group, probably instigated by the Dutch, provoked a revolt and conspired to kill him in December 1664.

Robert Knox was a British sailor taken prisoner by the Kandyans when two vessels belonging to the English East India Company were captured near Trincomalee in 1659. Knox escaped after twenty years of captivity in Kandy and wrote *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*, which was first published in 1681. He gives a first-hand account of the rebellion and states that there were a number of Europeans in captivity who were cruelly treated by Rājasimha. Another contemporary report was written at the request of the Dutch by the leader of the rebellion, Aṃbanvela Rāla, who escaped execution. Both these authors claim that the rebellion was caused by the chiefs' discontent at the autocratic and oppressive actions of the king. Aṃbanvela Rāla also claims that the king neglected Buddhism and allowed Muslims, Christians and Hindus to practice their religion in his kingdom. The fact remains that Rājasimha II had managed to hold his kingdom together, first against the Portuguese and then against the Dutch. He was the last Sri Lankan king to lead his troops into battle, having planned the campaign himself. In later years a few Frenchmen had enlisted in his service and become army commanders. Though the rebellion was crushed with the help of Tennakōn Rāla, the influential *disāva* of the Seven Kōraḷēs, it weakened Rājasimha's authority and the Dutch were able to take advantage of this setback in the kingdom (see 'Dutch Strategy').

In 1676, there was another plot to overthrow the king. Tennakōn, who had royal ancestry, was suspected of wishing to usurp the throne. He defected to the Dutch before the inevitable retaliation by Rājasimha. Several of the aristocracy were executed in 1678 and 1679. Rājasimha's attitude towards the Dutch became more benign during the last few years of his long reign.

Perhaps because of the constant fear of rivalry from the Kandyan chiefs and concern about succession, Rājasimha had taken the step towards making matrimonial alliances with the Nāyaks of Madurai. 'Nāyak' was the name given to the South Indian Governors of the Vijayanayagar empire. Initially, these Nāyaks (or Nāyakkars) were of royal descent but by the seventeenth century a number of people from the Telegu speaking areas in the northern Deccan had moved into the Tamil speaking southern regions and called themselves Nāyaks though they were not of any specific social group and were referred to (in Tamil) as *vadukun* (or northerner). It was common practice for Sinhalese royalty to marry Tamil princesses from South India, but from the seventeenth century it became a matter of policy so as to avoid marriages with the local (Kandyan) aristocracy, which could lead to a dangerous increase in influence of a section of the nobility.

Rājasimha's chief consort was a Tamil queen from Madurai. Madurai had, on numerous occasions, given military aid to the Kandyan and Jaffna kingdoms. Vimaladharmasūriya II (1687 - 1707) was Rājasimha's son from his marriage to the Tamil princess. He was a mild man who also married a princess from Madurai. His son and successor, Narēndrasimha (1707 - 1739), who already had a wife from the Kandyan aristocracy, followed the established Kandyan tradition of marrying a South Indian Nāyakkar lady. This marriage was of great importance to the future of Kandyan royalty because it was this lady's brother who came to the throne as Śrī Vijaya Rājasimha (1739 - 1747) and established the Nāyakkar dynasty because Narēndrasimha did not have a male heir with his Nāyakkar queen. The ancestry of the latter is open to question and it has been claimed that she was from a family of 'no consequence', meaning that she had no royal

connections. With her had come a large contingent of *vadukuns* and soon there was a cultural impact being made in Kandy by this Dravidian group.

The Kandyan aristocracy must have viewed the accession of a new dynasty of South Indians with some trepidation but these Nāyakkars were astute enough to soon adjust themselves to the local political situation and, except for the last incumbent, were popular rulers. They did not disturb existing traditions or interfere radically with the administration of the kingdom. Perhaps most important of all, they converted from Hinduism to Buddhism, became devout patrons of Buddhism and revived the *saṅgha* (the monastic order). Roman Catholicism had got a firm foothold in Kandy from the time of Rājasimha II. The Calvinistic Dutch were strongly opposed to a Catholic presence in their territory and Roman Catholic priests found a refuge in Kandy where the Buddhists and Hindus were far more tolerant to other religions. With the advent of the Nāyakkar kings, the Catholic priests were accused of writing anti-Buddhist literature (a rumour probably spread by the Dutch) and expelled from Kandy.

The Nāyakkar rulers were shrewd enough to keep the internal rivalries amongst the nobles alive so that this powerful faction was too busy fighting amongst itself to bother about deposing the ruler. Śrī Vijaya Rājasimha, for instance, appointed Levukē disāva of the Three and Four Kōraḷēs to balance the power of Levukē's rival, the influential First adigar, Ehelapola. He also appointed Sammanakodi, Levukē's relative, Second adigar in place of Pilimatalauve, a relative of Ehelapola. The Nāyakkars were wealthy traders. Though the rich relatives of the king lent the impoverished Kandyan nobility money and did them other favours the Kandyan aristocracy disliked them because they interfered with politics. The Dutch disliked the Nāyakkars because they were rival traders, particularly experienced in South Indian trade. Despite these dislikes, arising mainly because of jealousy, the Sinhalese subjects of the Nāyakkar kings were intensely loyal to them.

Śrī Vijaya Rājasimha, who did not have a male heir, was

succeeded by his wife's brother (also a Nāyakkar) who ruled as Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha (1747 - 1782). Since he was only sixteen his father (Nārenappā Nāyakkar), who was amenable to bribery, took all the major decisions at court. He became so arrogant that the Kandyan nobility threatened a rebellion and this induced the young king to ban his father from further interference with government. Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha was a strong supporter of the Buddhist *saṅgha* and during his reign a contingent of Buddhist monks arrived from Siam (Thailand) to start a Siamese chapter in Kandy. Strangely, entry into this chapter was restricted to the highest (Goyigama) caste. The higher echelons of the priesthood were often members of the aristocracy and the *vihāras* became centres of wealth and influence. The monasteries in the rest of the island became affiliated to the Malvatu *vihāra* whose incumbent was the head of the *saṅgha*.

It was Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha who sponsored the continuation of the *Cūlavamsa* from the reign of Parākramabāhu IV down to his own reign. In 1760, an abortive attempt was made by a faction at the Malvatu *vihāra* to assassinate the king and replace him with a Siamese prince. Though this attempted coup was crushed, from 1760 Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha's position was one of insecurity. Even amongst his Nāyakkar kinsmen there were rival contenders for the throne. Relations with the Dutch, who were concerned that he was plotting with other western powers in India to oust them from the island, were strained. There was insurgency against the Dutch amongst the Low-Country Sinhalese (a term the Dutch first used in an attempt to drive a wedge between the Kandyans and other Sinhalese) due to the harsh administration of Governor Schreuder. The king was asked for help. These Low-Country Sinhalese remained loyal to the king though he was a Tamil and a foreigner and the king responded by attacking the Dutch on a number of fronts in 1761. The commander-in chief of the king's army was Galagoḍa Rāla.

The initial campaigns were a success but the Kandyans were unable to consolidate their victories and the Dutch eventually regained their losses with the help of reinforcements from India.

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In the meantime the king had made contact with the British in Madraṣ. John Pybus, a senior member of the East India Company arrived in Kandy but the treaty he offered was worded in such a way that it would have made the king a vassal of the Company and was, therefore, refused. Pybus left with vague protestations of friendship but the visit worried the Dutch who became more and more intractable in their dealings with Kandy and this was reflected in the attitude of their Governors.

The Dutch under Governor Baron van Eck invaded Kandy. The first attempt in 1664 was a failure, the Kandyans made full use of their difficult terrain to defeat the Dutch forces. Van Eck succeeded in 1665 and Kandy was thoroughly sacked and comprehensively looted. The king and his retinue retreated to Haṅguranketa, taking the Tooth Relic with them. There was no offer of surrender by the Kandyans. However, despite van Eck's hopes, the Dutch were unable to maintain their position in Kandy. The rains had arrived and their food supply became precarious. Also a variety of illnesses took their toll. They withdrew within a few weeks and suffered more casualties from attacking Kandyans as they retreated.

By December 1765, both the Dutch and the Kandyans were at the end of their tether. Van Eck died soon after returning to Colombo and was replaced by Governor Iman Willem Falck. The Dutch, still concerned about their legal position in Sri Lanka and their British rivals, attempted to force Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha to sign a treaty giving them sovereignty over one 'Sinhalese mile' width of the entire coastline as well as monopoly of the cinnamon trade. The king did sign this treaty under duress but did not keep his end of the bargain though the Dutch now had legal possession of the coastal areas.

Rājādhirājasimha (1782 - 1798) succeeded his brother Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha and from the records of grants it is clear that he was an outstanding patron of religion and literature. Rājādhirājasimha seems to have been accepted by the majority of the Kandyan nobles not only because he was born and bred in the Kandyan court but also because he had been, during his brother's lengthy

reign, tutored for succession by two eminent bhikkhus. He was persuaded to appoint Pilimatalaue First adigar in 1787. This was the son of the Pilimatalaue who had been ousted from the post of Second adigar (see above) during the reign of Śrī Vijaya Rājasimha but had been later reinstated and appointed First adigar in 1761 only to be killed by the Dutch in 1767. Unlike his father, the new First adigar was a scheming and highly ambitious man who very soon acquired sixteen offices within the Kandyan administration. He became dangerously powerful and engaged in intrigues with the Dutch, and later, the British.

Kandyan administration and society

The political and social system, as in ancient times, revolved around the monarchy. The king's power was based on his absolute right to make grants of land. He was the chief patron of the Buddhist saṅgha, the highest judicial authority and the upholder of the social order. His power was modified by the need to follow in the footsteps of tradition and, therefore, was not 'absolute' though this depended on the personality of the king. Popular opposition to the actions of the king could be expressed by rebellion and such uprisings could threaten the throne, particularly that of a weak king. The other recourse of the subjects was assassination and this was a threat that was taken very seriously. Unlike some of the European kings of that period (Louis XIV, for example) Sri Lankan kings did not claim a 'divine right' probably because Buddhism is essentially an atheistic religion. Also unlike most European countries of the time, there was no standing army of any strength (except during the reign of Rājasimha II) and soldiers were conscripted, whenever necessary, from the local peasantry by the *disāvas* and this, too, weakened the power of the king. Communications were difficult mainly because of the lack of roads, which was a mixed blessing because it made invasion also difficult.

The country was administered through a bureaucracy consisting of nobles appointed by the king and whom he could remove if and when he wished. This administrative class was

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graded and entry depended on caste. The king had, in theory, to take the advice of the royal council, also appointed by him. The structure of the council was different to that of Kōṭṭē and consisted of the two *adigars*, the *disāvas*, the chief secretary or *maha mohottāla* and the *raṭērālas*.

The term *adigar* was used for the two principal ministers in the Kandyan kingdom whereas in Jaffna and in the old Kōṭṭē kingdom it had a different connotation and *adigars* ranked below *disāvas*. The two *adigars* were also called *maha nilamēs* and were, next to the king, the most important and powerful people in the kingdom. Their duties were extensive and the First *adigar* was also commander-in-chief of the army. Each *adigar* had five villages set aside for the purpose of accommodating people who provided three specialised services. These were the messengers who conveyed orders to the provinces, the jailers who guarded the Kandy jail and acted as executioners and the whipcrackers (*kasakārayās*) whose duty was to precede the king or *adigars*, cracking whips in their honour. An *adigar* was preceded wherever he went by a man bearing his standard and several *kasakārayās* cracking enormous whips. An *adigar's* importance was greatly increased by the fact that an audience with the king could only be obtained through him. The *adigars* paid the king a sum of money when they were appointed. There was a similar system in France at the time where ministers bought their posts from the king.

This system of buying appointments inevitably led to bribery and corruption, which became ingrained. Self-interest (and family interest) rather than of society as a whole became the governing motive even amongst senior officials and was one of the drawbacks that led to the ultimate collapse of the kingdom. Territorially, the kingdom was divided into the *raṭas*, which consisted of the original core or *Pasraṭa* and the *disāvanies*, which were added on by later amalgamation with parts of the Kōṭṭē kingdom. When the British took over in 1815, there were nine *raṭas* and twelve *disāvanies*. The *raṭērālas* collected the revenue from the *raṭas* with the assistance of *kōrāḷas*, *atukōrāḷas* and *vidānēs*. The latter were the headmen of individual villages. The *disāvas*

collected the revenue from the *disāvanies* with the help of similar assistants. The *disāvas* and other senior officers were paid with grants of land by the king and there was very little use of money.

The pomp and the magnificence of the court increased in Kandyan times and this was, perhaps, a sign of insecurity amongst the monarchy. There was also the desire to impress the Western predators who were a constant threat. There were numerous court officials to maintain this pomp and during the *Āsaḷa* festival in July and August a procession (*perahāra*) consisting of these officials in order of precedence followed the Tooth Relic, which was carried on an elephant. At the head of these court officials, who were divided into various groups, was the *maha mohottāla* (chief secretary or archivist). Then there were the *mohottālas* or *lēkams* who were chiefs in charge of groups of functionaries. The most important *lēkam* was the *gajanāyaka nilamē* (chief elephant-keeper).

The king's bodyguard was under the *atapattuvē nilamē*. Curiously, Rājasiṃha II had African bodyguards - presumably the Portuguese brought these Africans to the island. Bodyguards from South India were common even in ancient times and were, not surprisingly, the norm with the Nāyakkar kings. In common with other countries, foreign bodyguards were considered more reliable than the native. The *veḍikkāra lēkam* commanded the king's musketeers. The *nanāyakkāra lēkam* kept a record of the nobility (a sort of Burke's peerage) and from this list the king selected his officers. Below the *lēkams* were the *muhandirams* through whom the *lēkams* ran their departments. The chief treasurer (*maha aramudalē vannaku nilamē*) and the *maha gabaḍāva* were in charge of the treasury and the royal stores. The *appuhāmies* were enlisted from the sons of the upper classes and were the people who carried the king's orders to the *adigars*. They had to approach the king on their knees and the post was a step on the ladder to higher administrative office. There were numerous officers given the tasks of washing the king's hair, his feet etc. The king, for security reasons, ate his meals alone served by the *batvaḍana nilamē*.

There was great reverence for birth and rank amongst the Kandyan people and this led to a concentration of a very small number of individuals near the apex of the pyramid and ultimately resulted in a single individual holding a large number of the important posts. For example, the infamous Pilimatalaue held sixteen posts in 1798. The influence and power wielded by such individuals was considerable and extended into every aspect of the administrative system. The families at the top, though they often quarrelled with each other, were connected by marriage.

The caste structure in Kandy developed in a slightly different manner to the low-country. It was basically divided into two major groups. There were the Govikula (Goyigama), who though categorised as farmers, in reality did not have a function except, perhaps, that they were often landowners. They consisted of about half the population and were considered superior to the rest who were the *hīna jāti* or low-born. The *hīna jāti* specialised in some hereditary craft. The Govikula had, over the course of time, split up into various sub-castes of which the *radaḷa* and the *mudali* were the highest and formed the aristocracy. They preserved their superiority by marrying within their own group and would not eat or drink with anyone of a lower caste. It was from this group that the king chose his senior administrators and hence, they were the recipients of the king's land grants. Wealth and prestige accumulated within these families and was reflected in the clothes they wore with puffed out shoulders and hips. The other ranks of Govikulas were graded and occupied administrative posts compatible with their rank within the Govikula.

Amongst the *hīna jāti*, or lower castes, there was no fixed order of precedence. The Navandanna caste that included goldsmiths, carpenters, blacksmiths and painters was next in rank to the Govikula but this changed and by about 1800, the *Ārāvē* or fisher folk were next to the Govi in rank. This stratification of society became more pronounced as the kingdom weakened and was more and more under threat. It was at its most inflexible towards the end of the eighteenth century. The caste system was strongly supported by the state and there were courts known as

the *raṭa sabhā* that adjudicated on matters of caste, social status and marriage. The British abolished these courts in 1833. In the usual form of marriage (*dīga*), the woman would leave her parental home and live with her husband and his family whilst in the less common version (*binna*), the man lived in his wife's parental home. The latter form was usually observed when the wife was wealthy and the sole heir to her land-owning parents.

Kandy maintained the association between the monarchy and Buddhism. In the eighteenth century Buddhism in the island was at a low ebb and one of the problems was in the valid ordination of *bhikkhus*. Because of this, some entered the Buddhist order without undergoing the prescribed ceremony and had a part-layman, part-*bhikkhu* status. This was, obviously, an unsatisfactory situation and missions were sent to Burma and Thailand to obtain *bhikkhus* who would restore the higher ordination ceremony (*upasampadā*). Thai monks did this in 1753. These Thai monks had a considerable influence on the reorganisation of the priesthood, the *viharas* and associated ceremonies. They, for instance, included the Tooth Relic, in the *Āsaḷa Perahāra*, which was essentially an annual Hindu ceremonial. It thus became much more Buddhist orientated. The *Daḷadā Māligāva* (Temple of the Tooth) was the focus of the *vihara* system. The *vihara* lands were extensive and exempt from taxation by the king. The *Daḷadā Māligāva* was situated next to the king's palace and owned extensive lands, which were named *maligagam* and administered by a high official, the *diyavaḍana nilamē*. Only the *Govikula* (*Goyigama*) were permitted to undergo the higher ordination for priesthood. The king appointed relatives of the nobility as the chief *bhikkhus*. The *Nāyakkar* kings and their queens became Buddhists for political reasons so that they maintained at least one common bond with their subjects. Their relatives at court continued to practice Hinduism.

The Kandyans were very tolerant of other faiths and this is confirmed in the writings of Robert Knox who described the Kandyan customs in *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*. Thus Hindus, Muslims and Catholics were allowed to practise their religions

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in the Kandyan kingdom without persecution. Hinduism with its polytheism, superstitions and rituals continued to have an influence even in the Buddhist areas. Attached to almost every temple in Kandy, there was a *dēvālē* dedicated to a Hindu god. Often an image of this god would be under the same roof as one of the Buddha. During Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha's reign, non-Goyigama *bhikkhus* were excluded and some exiled to Jaffna. This exclusiveness in the saṅgha had existed for the past few hundred years but was made legitimate by the decree of Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha. It soon produced a reaction in the low-country where a non-Goyigama group of *bhikkhus* was established.

Wood, ivory and stone carving was the commonest form of art in the Kandyan kingdom. These carvings adorned not only temples but also the houses of people right across the social strata. A variety of motifs including human and animal figures, the rope design, geometric shapes etc. were used. Not surprisingly, there was a strong South Indian influence that is apparent in the art and architecture of this period. The making of silver and gold jewellery and other forms of Kandyan metal-work has continued to the present day and is now highly commercialised. Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha's reign (1747 - 1782) saw an increase in artistic output, probably because of his great patronage of Buddhism. Mural painting became popular during this period.

The Nātha *dēvālē* and the Daḷadā Māligāva are the oldest buildings still in existence in Kandy. They were both built during the reign of Narēndrasimha (1707 - 1739), the two-storeyed Daḷadā Māligāva replacing a three-storeyed structure built in the previous reign. Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha instigated a building programme and the chief architect, Dēvēndra Mūlācārya, was asked to make Kandy look like a celestial city. However, Kandy had neither the economic resources nor the political stability required for the scale of architecture that had been possible in ancient times. Perhaps due to the lack of resources, the buildings themselves tended to be fragile in comparison to the ancient structures in Anurādhapura and Poḷonnaruva and stone was used sparingly. The extensive use of wood in the royal palaces

meant that they could be easily destroyed by fire and both the Portuguese and the Dutch burnt down the royal palaces when they invaded Kandy. A characteristic Kandyan contribution to Buddhist architecture is the *tampath vihāragē*. These *vihāras* (or image houses) stand on stone pillars of varying height and number and were probably derived from the structure of grain-stores, which were thus elevated to avoid attacks by termites. Another characteristic of Kandyan architecture was the double-pitched, peaked roof. This bears a resemblance to Buddhist temple roofs in Nepal and Burma, which have a Chinese influence. Domestic architecture was simple, the humblest having walls of mud beaten into a timber framework and a floor of mud and cow-dung. The *valauvas* were more elaborate houses occupied by the elite and these usually had an open, inner courtyard.

There is little information available about slavery but it was well established throughout the island. Slavery was an accepted part of society from ancient times. According to Sinhalese custom, people who failed to pay their debts became bond slaves to their creditors. Slaves were not only bought and sold but also imported from other parts of the world - mainly South India - by the Portuguese and Dutch. The number of slaves at any given time, their impact on the economy and the way they were treated does not seem to be known.

Dutch administration and its legacy

The attitude of the Kandyans towards the Dutch is aptly described in the *Cūlavamsa*, which states that the Dutch were powerful sea-merchants who had been entrusted with the protection of Sri Lanka during the reign of Rājasiṃha II. The Dutch, on the other hand, claimed that the maritime provinces belonged to them because they had captured these territories from the Portuguese. They also evoked the treaty with Rājasiṃha, which had been distorted in their favour. The fact remained that there were no legal grounds for their presence, which depended entirely on their superior military power. It must be remembered that when we refer to the Dutch in this context we are referring

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to a commercial company (the Dutch East India Company/ Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or VOC, formed in 1602), which had been granted a monopoly of the trade in eastern waters by the Dutch government and also the right to maintain armed forces, build forts and conclude treaties with native princes. Administration was carried out by officials who were required to take an oath of loyalty to the Dutch government. A Directorate was formed in Amsterdam as the Company's supreme authority. Batavia (Jakarta) was established as the seat of the VOC's Governor-general, supported by a council, in 1619. Subordinate administrations, one of which was in Sri Lanka, were set up under the central administration in Batavia. Each of these subordinate administrations had a Governor with a council. Because of the delays involved with communication (it took about an year for a reply to a letter from Batavia to Amsterdam and a few months from Sri Lanka to Batavia) these administrative centres were, to a large extent, autonomous.

The Governor was the chief executive officer and was assisted by a Council, which consisted of the Chief Administrator, the *disāva* of Colombo, the Treasurer (Fiscal), the Trade Accountant, the First Warehouse Keeper, the Pay Accountant, the Commander of the troops and the Secretary. In theory, the Governor was obliged to take the advice of the Council but he had immense powers of patronage and was, in practice, often able to influence the Council. There were about 3000 Dutch officials on the island. The commercial cadre consisted of merchants of varying seniority and clerks. The military and naval personnel had their own hierarchy but both commercial and commissioned military personnel were appointed to political and civil administrative posts. The third group of officials was that of the professional and skilled workers - doctors, apothecaries, carpenters boat builders etc. From 1640 to 1658 (when it moved to Colombo until the end of Dutch occupation), Galle was the Dutch seat of government. There were three administrative divisions - Colombo, Jaffna and Galle. The commandants of Jaffna and Galle were next in importance to the Governor. Internal administration was carried out by

a *disāva* (originally a Sinhalese office, which was taken over by the Portuguese and continued by the Dutch). Colombo, Jaffna and Matara each had a *disāva* who had a number of functions, the maintenance of law and order being one of them. The *disāva* was in charge of native officialdom in his province and had to be proficient in Sinhalese or Tamil, depending on his province. The Dutch, with *mudaliyārs*, *kōrāḷas*, *atukōrāḷas* and *vidānes* as the chief native officials, continued the division of each *disavany* into *kōrāḷē*, *pattu* and village. These officials were responsible to the *disāvas* and their main duties were to ensure that taxes were collected and obligatory duties carried out. The senior native officials were often recruited from wealthy Christian Sinhalese families in the south and, similarly, the *mudaliyārs* and *muhandirams* in the north were recruited from wealthy Christian Tamil families. These native officials were invaluable to the Dutch in administration but were treated by them with some suspicion because of their divided loyalties. The *maha mudaliyār* was the most important *mudaliyār* and was in constant attendance on the Governor.

Native officials were recompensed by grants of land, which were not heritable and could not be sold. However, since the posts were often hereditary, the land also became so in practice. They were also paid very small salaries. Dutch officials were paid a fixed monthly salary and prohibited from any private trade, although this was illicitly carried out and some Dutch officials retired with large fortunes. Corruption of Dutch officials even at the highest level was a major problem and commissioners were regularly sent from Holland and Batavia to investigate matters. In 1730, Governor Petrus Vuyst was sacked and the court of justice in Batavia found him guilty of various misdemeanours, including murder, and sentenced him to death. The total cost of the administration in Sri Lanka was considerable and one of the reasons for the high budget deficit was that a large part of the trade was carried out in the interest of corrupt Dutch officers.

The charter of the Company allowed it to administer justice in the territories it controlled, on behalf of the States General of the United Netherlands. A hierarchy of judicial authorities was

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established. Initially, a complaint would be made to the local village headman and if he felt it necessary he would pass it on to the relevant officer above him and, ultimately, to the Governor himself if it was a matter of great importance. Even the minor headmen handed down sentences in writing. These measures were merely a continuation of the system that already existed in Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim areas. There was no clear separation between judicial and executive administrative functions at this time either in Sri Lanka or in Europe. There were three High Courts of Justice (*Raad van Justitie*) - in Colombo, Jaffna and Galle. Appeals from the courts at Jaffna and Galle were heard at Colombo and it was possible to appeal to the High Court at Batavia from the High Court at Colombo.

A Circuit Court, the *Landraad*, was presided over by the *disāvas* and native officials were invited to sit in on cases that involved local custom. The *Civiele Raad* was a court that dealt with minor civil jurisdiction and later became the Court of Matrimonial and Petty Causes. Initially, the customary law of the country was used in judgements. In 1707, the traditional law of the Tamil areas (*Thēsavalamai*) was collected by Dutch officials, revised with the help of prominent Tamils and codified. Muslim law was also codified with the help of Muslim headmen.

There were difficulties in codifying Sinhalese law because of its complexity and regional diversity. Roman-Dutch law was increasingly applied in the Sinhalese areas particularly to Christian Sinhalese. One of the consequences of this was the spread of private property rights. Another was a shift towards monogamy.

With regard to marriage, in both Sinhalese and Tamil areas, only those solemnised by the Dutch Reformed Church were considered legal. The majority of marriages, conducted in the traditional manner, were therefore illegal and the children from these marriages lost their rights to the inheritance of property under Roman-Dutch law. From 1759 *procurers*, or pleaders, could appear in the three types of courts. Strict rules were laid down as to their conduct in court and they were sworn in annually.

These lawyers were named proctors under the British regime and continue to function in a similar capacity today.

It has been suggested that the weakening and submergence of native by an alien legal culture resulted in abuse of judicial procedures and persistent litigation. Despite these problems and the difficulties of making the native population understand the function of courts of law, which were alien to them, the Dutch judicial system was well organised and the orderliness of codified law was introduced widely for the first time. Roman-Dutch law continues to have an influence, not only on the laws of Sri Lanka but also on the laws of other countries occupied by the Dutch, such as South Africa. Its main influence is on the laws pertaining to property, persons and succession. It is the most lasting contribution by the Dutch to Sri Lanka.

Trade and economy

Sri Lanka's international trade underwent a radical change after the arrival of the Europeans. The control of the maritime regions, and hence the ports, meant that these western powers were able to influence and change the patterns of trade. For both the Portuguese and the Dutch, Sri Lankan trade was merely a part of a broader colonial and economic interest.

The Dutch monopolised and administered trading, particularly in cinnamon, more efficiently and ruthlessly than the Portuguese. A Cinnamon Department or *Mahabadde* organised the peeling and delivery of the cinnamon by all the men belonging to the Salāgama caste. A fixed amount had to be delivered (without payment) by each man as part of his obligatory caste service. This had been the custom during the reign of the Sinhalese kings and was exploited by the Portuguese and the Dutch. The Dutch not only continued with this system, which was vastly advantageous to them, but also tightened up the procedure by keeping accurate records of all the Salāgama men and inflicting heavy punishments for absenteeism or any other misdemeanours. A pittance was paid for any additional weight of cinnamon delivered. Most of the cinnamon was sold in Europe, where the price escalated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and only about a fifth was sold in Asia. Since the Dutch were the sole suppliers of cinnamon both in Europe and in Asia they were able to dictate the price of this commodity. Since the cost of production was minimal, the profits were considerable. This did not benefit the island and the sales appeared as profits in the Netherlands for the Company.

Elephants were another important export, particularly to Bengal where they fetched high prices. Jaffna was the main centre for the elephant trade. Elephants were used in war, haulage and ceremonial purposes. Sri Lankan elephants were popular because they were more easily tamed and trained. They were trapped in the jungles of Sri Lanka, mainly in the Vanni areas, and shipped in large boats called *champanas*. The elephants were loaded on to these boats by being made to walk backwards (so that they could not see the sea) through a tunnel made of strong wooden planks. Arecanuts, pearls, gems, *chanks* and *cowries* (types of sea-shell) were also exported, mainly to India. Pepper and cardamoms were obtained mainly from the Kandyan kingdom by way of Matara. Coconut cultivation increased rapidly during the Dutch period. Coffee, which had been introduced to Europe in the mid-seventeenth century and had become popular by the eighteenth, was grown (as a garden crop) from 1720 and by 1739 a

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hundred thousand pounds were exported. By 1740 Javanese coffee production increased greatly and since they were oversupplied, the Dutch decided to stifle the production in Sri Lanka - by 1760 coffee export had ceased but began again under the British. Tobacco grown in Jaffna was in demand in Travancore where the trade was the monopoly of the Raja. Palmyrah timber was also an export from Jaffna to south India.

The main imports were rice and textiles. Rice came mainly from Bengal and the Coromandel coast where it was cheaper than the west coast of India. For most of the seventeenth century, other than for cinnamon, which had become a monopoly of the European powers, there was a brisk sea trade between Sri Lankan ports and those of southern Asia. The Dutch monopoly tended to stifle the trade with India and this led to a shortage of essentials such as rice and textiles. Because of this, very early in the eighteenth century, the rules were relaxed and traders from India were allowed to participate more freely but the Dutch continued to control prices by a system of passes and inspection. Galle was strategically situated for international trade and the Dutch allowed Portuguese and English merchantmen to carry on an exchange of goods at this port from the eighteenth century. Sinhalese traders in the south and west, Tamil traders in the north and east and Muslim traders who lived in all the ports carried on a flourishing coastal trade in small boats. The Dutch built a system of canals, which are part of everyday life in the Netherlands, in Sri Lanka. One of the first canals connected Negombo with the Maha Oya. These canals were useful not only for the transport of goods but also acted, in some places, as flood protection schemes and, in others helped to irrigate crops.

The Kandyan kingdom participated in trade by exporting such items as arecanuts, pepper and cardamoms and importing rice and textiles. Muslim traders who brought Kandyan produce to the coast and took various products back into Kandy promoted Kandyan trade. The salt supply to Kandy was also controlled by the Dutch who allowed just enough to be taken away from the salt-pans along the coast for current needs and the excess was

thrown back into the sea to avoid storage within the Kandyan kingdom.

Though the Dutch did not allow the Kandyans freedom of trade, this trade continued not only illicitly but also openly with South India because of Nāyakkar influence. Though the Dutch policy of stifling free trade reduced the rate of economic growth, there was a general increase in productivity. By the eighteenth century, the money economy had expanded to include all classes. Indian merchants brought in gold and silver coins for the larger transactions and copper coins became popular for the smaller transactions, which were becoming more frequent with the expanding economy. Despite the fact that the Dutch monopolised the most valuable aspects of trade, a competitive trade continued not only with India but also with the Maldives and other countries of southern Asia. From this trade there emerged a group of entrepreneurs - Muslims, Sinhalese, Tamils and Indian expatriates - who formed a class consisting of merchants and middlemen, which became more prominent during the British period.

Society, religion, education, art and architecture

The social gulf between the indigenous people and the European occupiers of the maritime areas increased during this period. The Dutch, despite their attempts at being impartial and their apparent obsequiousness, were race and colour conscious. This feeling of superiority was necessary if exploitation of the conquered was to be carried out to the full. A variety of European races were employed by the VOC in Sri Lanka and they were given preferential treatment. Only those born in Europe were considered to be European. Amongst the Europeans, class differentiation was rigidly maintained. The children, of European parentage, born in Sri Lanka were called *pusties*. The offspring of *pusties* were named *casties* and considered to be natives - therefore less competent than Europeans. The children of mixed marriages between Europeans and natives were called *mestici*. The men of all these classes wore European dress. The *mestici* women had a costume of their own.

The psychological impact of this assumption of European superiority on the indigenous population is difficult to fathom. Both the Sinhalese and the Tamils were used to a caste structure and a hierarchical system. It is likely that the native population subconsciously fitted the Europeans into this system thus making their superiority acceptable. It is the upper rungs of this native social ladder that would have felt the greatest impact. The Dutch, and to some extent the Portuguese before them, tried to curb the power of those individuals at the top of the native administrative hierarchy in the maritime Sinhalese areas that they ruled. They did this by modifying the structure that already existed and appointing caste headmen with caste, rather than territorial, jurisdiction. The Salāgama caste was given headmen of their own caste. The Durāvas had a *muhandiram* of their own caste. Similarly, the Karāvas had their own headmen. The Salāgamas, Durāvas and Karāvas were no longer under the jurisdiction of the Goyigama *disāvas*. There were several small single-caste villages. The multi-caste villages were usually larger, had several headmen and were more important.

The *mudaliyārs*, traditionally superior headmen and military leaders, often wealthy and influential, had their powers reduced and were given routine administrative duties. Their numbers were also reduced. The Dutch also regulated the way in which natives dressed and adorned themselves at their feasts. Only higher caste women were entitled to wear jewellery on these occasions. In the north where caste distinctions were rigidly maintained, petty family vanity was taken advantage of by the Dutch who sold an equivalent of a patent of nobility, conferring the title of Don, to some of these families for a modest sum of money. Apparently every Vellāla family, which was able to pay the sum, got itself ennobled.

During the first few decades of their occupation the Dutch made every attempt to stamp out Roman Catholicism not only because they were Protestants but also because they wished to eradicate any vestige of Portuguese power. In place of Roman Catholicism, the Dutch Reformed Church proselytised amongst

the Sinhalese and Tamils. Roman Catholicism was banned by law and the priests banished. However, most Roman Catholics continued practising their religion surreptitiously and the priests found refuge in the Kandyan kingdom. By the early eighteenth century, the Dutch had relaxed their anti-Catholic stance and their half-hearted proselytisation. Buddhists were not persecuted, perhaps because of a wish to maintain the peace with the Kandyan monarch who considered himself the guardian of Buddhist rights (for further information see 'Kandyan administration and society' above). However, Hindus and Muslims were harassed. Neither Buddhists nor Hindus were allowed to worship in the towns. By the eighteenth century the Tamils were allowed to remain Hindus but were not permitted to maintain temples or hold religious processions.

Only members of the Dutch Reformed Church were allowed entry into the higher rungs of service under the Dutch and this, perhaps, explains why there were around 50,000 converts in Colombo and about 200,000 in Jaffna in the mid-eighteenth century. Another important spur for conversion was the fact that in both Sinhalese and Tamil areas under Dutch jurisdiction only marriages, which were solemnised by the Dutch Reformed Church were considered legal. Most of these people were Christians (Calvinists) only in name. The Dutch were aware of this and it was probably one of the reasons that their enthusiasm for proselytisation waned. The Church had very limited financial resources and this would account for its restricted scope and activity. Calvinism, unlike Roman Catholicism, did not long survive the Dutch withdrawal in 1796.

Both the Portuguese and the Dutch had established schools, usually attached to churches, providing simple instruction in reading and writing in the vernacular languages and in arithmetic. The children were also taught Christianity. Regular attendance by the pupils was insisted on and reinforced by fines. The schoolmasters were paid by the state. In 1690 the Dutch established the first seminary for higher education in Nallūr and another was later established in Colombo. The more talented

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pupils from all over the island were sent to these institutions, at state expense, for training as teachers. Instruction was in the vernacular languages with some Latin and Dutch. A few of these students were sent to the Netherlands for further education in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Also in the eighteenth century the Dutch established a printing press in Colombo with the purpose of publishing religious books. Indeed, the purpose of both the Portuguese and the Dutch in establishing schools was to spread Roman Catholicism and Calvinistic Christianity. The Portuguese succeeded to some extent in this purpose but Calvinistic Christianity did not spread. Perhaps this was because the puritanical aspects of Calvinism did not appeal to the more permissive Sri Lankans. On the other hand, these schools had a considerable impact in spreading literacy in the maritime provinces, which the Portuguese and Dutch controlled, whilst the upland areas of the Kandyan kingdom were backward in this aspect.

Dutch architecture was simple but solid. Architecture of their country was adapted to the Asian climate. Of their forts, the star-fort at Matara (constructed by Governor Baron van Eck between 1763 – 1765) with its walls in the shape of a six-pointed star is the most picturesque and the fort at Jaffna is the most impressive from a military point of view. Their churches are well proportioned and have characteristic gables. A few of these still exist. The Wolvendaal church in Colombo (built circa 1750) was the main place for Dutch worship. The Dutch called the suburbs of the bigger towns the *pettah* and this term is still used for an area next to the Colombo fort. Dutch houses with verandahs separated from the road by wooden trellises and low-pitched roofs remained a popular architectural pattern in Sri Lanka long after the Dutch departed. The Dutch also introduced various designs of furniture, which continued to be in vogue well into the British period.

The final chapter of Dutch rule

By 1767 Dutch power was declining worldwide and the Dutch East India Company (VOC) was nearly bankrupt. The treaty, which Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha (1747 – 1782) signed under duress in 1766, could not be effectively implemented by the Dutch because the Kandyans would not cooperate and the Dutch had inadequate resources to implement it by force. In the meantime Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha, disappointed by the previous British response was negotiating with the French - offering them territory on the island in exchange for help to oust the Dutch. France had ambitions with regard to occupying British territory in India. Negotiations were still going on when in 1780 Britain declared war against France and Holland became an ally of the French. From this point on negotiations regarding Sri Lanka were governed by the international situation. Trincomalee was an important factor in the ensuing events. The British Eastern Fleet had used the harbour on many occasions from 1746 onwards to shelter from the North-East monsoon. It was essential for defending British interests in India against the French. The Dutch had allowed this up to 1781 because they were either allies of the British or were neutral. In 1781 the Dutch, now the allies of France, refused British entry into the harbour.

Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha died in 1782 and was succeeded by his brother Rajadhirajasimha (1782 - 1798). During the next few years there were complex negotiations between the Kandyans, the Dutch, the British and the French. In January 1782, Britain captured Trincomalee but lost it to the French in August 1782. At this stage, Britain seemed to be losing the battle in India and Rājādhīrājasimha was not convinced that British power was viable enough for a treaty to be concluded. He made overtures to the Dutch and though Governor Falck was willing to negotiate, Batavia refused any concession on the question of coastal territories. The French held Trincomalee until peace negotiations were concluded with Britain in 1783 when the Dutch regained control of the port with Britain's agreement. Falck died in 1785 and was succeeded by van der Graaf, a much more aggressive character. He

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planned to expand the Dutch territories by force and occupy all the lower reaches of the Kandyan kingdom. Despite the fact that he had the surreptitious support of the First *adigar*, Pilimatalaue, he did not have adequate resources for the plan to succeed and was instructed by Batavia not to attempt this foolhardy move. In disgust, he resigned his post in 1794. However, relations between the VOC and the Kandyans were soured, once again.

Britain had become more convinced of the importance of Trincomalee to its Asian interests. Initially, the British were only interested in a political arrangement that would allow British ships to use the port and prevent French ships from doing the same. They persisted in negotiations with the Dutch but by 1791, it was clear that these were not going to be of any avail. In Holland a party that had a similar ideology to revolutionary France had come into power and a defensive alliance between the Dutch Republic and France was concluded in 1795. The Dutch Stadtholder took refuge in England and resided at Kew Palace. At this stage the British became concerned about the possible political implications of this Franco-Dutch alliance with its revolutionary ideology on Holland's overseas possessions. The Stadtholder was persuaded to write a letter (later named the Kew Letter), in his capacity as the Captain-General and Admiral of Holland, ordering all Dutch Governors and commanders to allow the British to take over all forts and military installations, under their command. A vague assurance was given that these possessions would be returned to the Dutch when Holland's established form of government had returned to the state it was prior to the alliance with France. The British used this letter to obtain control of Dutch East India Company's possessions. They were prepared to use force against the Dutch if necessary. The Kandyans had not succeeded in negotiating with the Dutch Governor, van Angelbeek, who was van der Graaf's father-in-law. When a senior British official, Robert Andrews, arrived in 1795, the Kandyans were far more willing to negotiate with the British than they had been in 1782. The British, cunningly, explained the implications of the possible spread of revolutionary French

ideology to a monarchy such as Kandy.

The British did not require the support of the Kandyan because Dutch resistance on the island collapsed. The main reason for this collapse was that the Dutch did not have adequate resources for anything but a token resistance. William Pitt and Henry Dundas had recruited Hugh Cleghorn, a Scot who was Professor of Civil History at St. Andrew's into the British Secret Service. Cleghorn persuaded Comte Charles de Meuron whose mercenaries guarded the Dutch forts at Colombo, Trincomalee and Batticaloa to withdraw his soldiers to India. The letter carrying the Comte's instructions was ingeniously smuggled into Colombo inside a Dutch Edam cheese. In addition, the Council at Colombo was deeply divided. Some of its members were strongly of the opinion that the Dutch possessions should be handed over to the British. In 1796, the British (in the form of the English East India Company) took possession of all Dutch controlled territories on the island without any significant military action having to be undertaken. Negotiations with Kandy were continued in Madras and the British insisted that all the Dutch possessions in Sri Lanka were theirs by right of conquest. They offered Kandy a trade outlet on the coast. The king never ratified this draft treaty.

The Kandyan kingdom now had to contend with a much more powerful neighbour than either the Dutch or the Portuguese.

Kings of Kandy during Dutch and British Periods

Vimaladharmaśūriya II	1687 - 1707
Narēndrasimha	1707 - 1739
Śrī Vijaya Rājasimha	1739 - 1747
Kīrti Śrī Rājasimha	1747 - 1782
Rājādhiraśimha	1782 - 1798
Śrī Vikrama Rājasimha	1798 - 1815

British Period

1796 A.D. to 1948 A.D.

British background

In 1707 the Act of Union formally united England and Scotland. This enabled Scottish professionals and scholars to make a major contribution to the prosperity of Great Britain. In 1714 the British crown passed to the Hanoverian, George I, who was unable to speak English and government business was conducted by a first minister and his cabinet. Political power had passed from the hands of the monarch to the property owning classes, who were represented in parliament, and for the rest of the century parliament was to increase the prosperity of the landowners at the expense of the poor.

The Georgian period (1714 - 1837) was one of change and confrontation. There was an accumulation of wealth similar to that which occurred in the Netherlands but in eighteenth century Britain this was followed by a change in the very infrastructure of the country. The wealth that accumulated in Britain during this period was mainly from overseas sources. The East India Company had a lucrative trade in cotton, silk, indigo, saltpetre and spices from India and tea from China. The slave traffic in South America was another highly profitable trade bringing in considerable revenue to the country and to some individuals. It was even indulged in by the first minister to George I (the term 'Prime Minister' only came into use later), Sir Robert Walpole. The infrastructure was changed because of agricultural developments

and industrial innovation. The population increased and there was a trend towards urbanisation. The increasing population called for the production of more food and an agricultural revolution occurred in Britain when it followed the Dutch example. Farms became more efficient. For instance, root vegetables were grown for animal feed, new high yield grasses and new crops (and new methods of rotation) were introduced and selective breeding improved the quality of livestock. The upper classes who lived on their estates took an interest in farming and even the king, George III, contributed articles to a farming journal. The countryside changed with the old communal fields being replaced by enclosed fields. Britain's naval and military strength grew in line with its increasing wealth and by the end of the century it was the foremost power in the world, well able to keep its competitors at bay.

Industrial innovation resulted in the Industrial Revolution, which commenced in Britain around the middle of the eighteenth century and spread to other parts of the world despite British efforts to stop the export of this newly invented machinery. Inventions such as the Flying Shuttle, the Spinning Jenny, the water frame for spinning and the Power Loom mechanised the cotton industry. This cottage industry became factory-based and productivity was greatly increased. Coal was used to smelt iron from the early part of the century. The Scotsman, James Watt, elaborated the technological basis of enabling steam to drive an engine in the 1760s. The innovators in this new age did not have a conventional academic background such as that of Isaac Newton. They were either self-taught or the products of Scottish or dissenting education.

The results of this Industrial Revolution were diverse. Britain's manufacturing capacity increased tremendously and she profited from possessing colonies and dependencies, which were a captive market for her manufactured goods. The Industrial Revolution also produced considerable social changes. Political power was gradually being transferred from the landowners to new industrialist capitalists, who had acquired great wealth. In

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addition a large urban working class was created. Adam Smith, in 1776, laid the basis of modern economics in *The Wealth of Nations*. He argued for the benefits of competition in a free economy and against both state control and the abuse of monopoly powers. These arguments were, and still are, influential in government and business circles not only in Britain but also in other capitalist countries.

The Seven Years War (1756 - 1763) with France was costly for both countries. In Britain there was a tremendous increase in the national debt but with the Treaty of Paris in 1763 she acquired large portions of India, Quebec, Florida and the West Indies. An attempt to reduce the large national debt by increasing the revenue obtained from the colonies was one of the reasons for the increasing tension in her American colonies and the American War of Independence (1775 - 1783) during the reign of George III. Britain's competitors - France, the Netherlands and Spain - took the opportunity to join the new American nation in opposing Britain and the British campaign against her American colonists collapsed in 1783.

After the loss of the American colonies, there was greater interest shown by the British government in Asia. The English East India Company had, from its inception in 1600, been the agent of British imperial expansion in Asia. The Company, like its Dutch counterpart, had been granted a monopoly of trade in Asia and permitted to maintain military forces and to negotiate with native princes. Its policies in India were influenced by shareholders meetings where votes could be manipulated by purchasing shares. There was a great deal of corruption amongst the Company's officials in India. This again was a similar situation to that which existed in the Dutch East India Company, which was nearly bankrupt in its final years due not only to corruption but also to bad management. In 1784 the British government decided to have closer control of the Company and its assets and appointed a Board of Control to supervise various aspects of the Company's functions including its revenues, its diplomatic relations and its military expansion. This was a sign that the British government

was going to take over control of the Company's possessions and functions in the east though this was not the initial intention.

British dominance (1796 - 1818)

In its relationship with Sri Lanka, the English East India Company seemed to lack any consistent policy, each phase being governed by the priorities of the moment. The decisions made by the Company were based on the feeling that British control over Sri Lanka's maritime regions would only be temporary. Furthermore, there was disagreement between the Governor-General Sir John Shore in Bengal and the Governor of Madras, Lord Hobart, who was directly in charge of the Sri Lankan operation. Hobart envisaged a permanent British settlement on the island whilst Shore viewed the operation purely as a military manoeuvre. In addition to the negotiations with the Kandyans in Madras, the British were also negotiating with the Dutch and French in Paris (1796) and Lille (1797). The treaty with the Kandyans was not ratified by either party. The Kandyans were dissatisfied because they felt that they had little to gain and the British realised that they did not require the help of the Kandyans any longer. The Dutch Republic would not agree to the British takeover of its Sri Lankan possessions and the negotiations in Paris and Lille were a failure. At this stage the British government particularly Henry Dundas, the President of the Board of Control for India (the ultimate authority for territorial administration by the Company), felt that the Company's possessions in Sri Lanka should become a Crown Colony. However in England at that time empire building was frowned upon – 'to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour and policy of this nation', claimed the preamble to an Act of Parliament in 1792. Nevertheless, it would be much easier to negotiate for acquisition of the former Dutch territory if it was under government control rather than under the control of a commercial company. Since this territory was seen as essential for the security of their Indian possessions,

which the British had no intention of relinquishing, any feelings of repugnance in acquiring territory were put aside.

Meanwhile in Sri Lanka the Company's senior officials, who had decided to continue the administration of the Island in a similar manner to their Dutch predecessors, made two serious mistakes. They brought in South Indian officials causing resentment amongst their Sri Lankan counterparts and Robert Andrews instigated a set of poorly conceived economic and social reforms. The South Indian officials not only displaced the existing native hierarchy, they also practised extortion and petty tyranny. The reforms meant that not only were traditional forms of taxation such as *rājakāriya* and *ūliyam* removed but also the new forms of taxation (such as those on owners of coconut trees) caused an immediate increase in taxation levels. This increase was very probably an attempt to make up for the financial losses the Company had suffered in the expeditions against the Dutch.

These actions of the Company brought about general civil unrest (a rebellion supported by the Dutch and the French), which lasted throughout 1797 although all the British armed forces on the island were used to subdue it. A Committee of Investigation was set up and in 1798 it recommended a restoration of the *status quo*. The mishandling of administration on the island was a further incentive for the British government to take over, though the decision to do so had already been made before the rebellion. Lord Wellesley, who succeeded Sir John Shore as Governor-General in Bengal, and the Company's directors protested claiming that it would be best for Sri Lanka to remain under the Indian authority. A compromise was reached whereby the British government shared the administration of the island with the Company and the Company was allowed a monopoly of the trade. In October 1798 this Dual Control system came into operation and the Honourable Frederick North was appointed Governor.

The Governor, a highly educated but vain man of 32, was the son of a former British prime minister and an aristocrat with the best possible political and social connections. He had full executive and legal powers but was subject to the dual authority

of the British government and the Court of Directors of the East India Company. It was before the era of the steamship and because of the time taken for dispatches to go back and forth he had considerable discretionary powers at a time when no clear policies had been formulated as to the future of the island. This Dual Control system was a makeshift arrangement that could not last.

He commenced his duties by attempting to restore the old order as recommended by the Committee of Inquiry. The headmen were returned to office and *rājakāriya* and *ūliyam* were restored. North had the liberal ideas popular amongst some of the British upper classes at that time and a firm belief in the civilising influence of English culture (particularly the English language) and Christianity. These ideas and beliefs were tempered by the need to impose British authority on the island and to improve the revenue. He was responsible for organising the entire structure of the island's government and made many reforms, which included establishing a Ceylon Civil Service and appointing Agents of Revenue and Commerce in place of the traditional *disāvas* as collectors of revenue. They were to become 'Government Agents' under the next Governor. He also restored the system of headmen and formed medical, survey, education and other departments. 'Black Agents' (as North referred to native officials) were not trusted and only British people were appointed to the highest supervisory positions (despite the fact that many British Company officials had proved themselves to be as grasping and untrustworthy as their native counterparts). It was apparent to North and his successors that the social structure should be changed only if it was to the advantage of the rulers. The *Mudaliyars*, for instance, had to be tolerated though it meant accepting a system based on caste and land holding. The British continued the Dutch practice of appointing only Protestant Christians (either Dutch Reformed Church or Church of England) to posts such as headmen.

By 1800 the threat posed by Napoleon to India was another good reason for making Sri Lanka a Crown Colony. British

territorial control over the maritime regions of Sri Lanka was confirmed at the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 and in the same year Sri Lanka became a Crown Colony mainly for reasons of imperial strategy. The English East India Company retained its monopoly of external trade, particularly cinnamon, until 1822. The value of cinnamon (Sri Lankan cinnamon was said to be the best available) in Europe was high during the first three decades of the nineteenth century and the Company obtained substantial profits from which Sri Lanka did not receive any significant advantage.

The position of the land-locked Kandyan kingdom had become untenable but King Śrī Vikrama Rājasimha refused any offers of further negotiation. Governor North who not only considered himself a liberator of the oppressed but also had ideas of following in the footsteps of his friend, Lord Wellesley, commenced intriguing with Pilimatalaue, the Kandyan First *adigar*. The initial intention was a 'regime change' with the installation of a more amenable monarch at Kandy. When it became obvious that this was an unlikely scenario, conquest of the Kandyan territory was thought to be the only alternative. There were numerous advantages for the British in having control over Kandy. One of these advantages would be easier communications with the port of Trincomalee. As to whether Pilimatalaue was a villainous traitor or merely a man who was misunderstood by North is still unclear because of inadequate Kandyan records. The intrigues failed and North resorted to force making the maltreatment of Moorish traders by the king an excuse. However, the First Kandyan War (1803 - 1805) was a farce from which the British learnt a painful lesson (for further details see 'The final years of the Kandyan kingdom'). North avoided humiliation by blaming his subordinates and Pilimatalaue's treachery.

Sir Thomas Maitland, a Scottish nobleman, succeeded North as Governor in 1805. Aged 46 he had more administrative experience than North but was an autocrat like his predecessor. He reformed and consolidated the administration of the island. A system of provincial and district administration was created and the whole administrative system was streamlined with

Government Agents in charge of all government activities in the provinces and districts. Maitland attempted to curb expenditure and maintained peace with the Kandyans rather than risk another expensive war. His object was to make the island pay for itself and he was so successful in achieving this that the colony, which was a drain on the British Treasury when he took office was able to finance itself by the time he left, all its debts having been cleared. He convinced the Secretary of State that Europeans should be allowed to own up to 4000 acres of land on the island (ownership of land by Europeans was forbidden up to that time). This was intended to raise the level of agricultural produce by the injection of capital and reduce imports - particularly of rice.

He also reformed the judicial system setting up courts with civil and criminal jurisdiction and repealed the laws discriminating against the Catholics. Roman-Dutch law continued to be used. In 1811 trial by jury was extended to all British subjects. Sir Alexander Johnston, another Scot, who was an outstanding judicial officer (later Chief Justice) proposed a scheme for a Legislative Assembly during Maitland's Governorship but this was only put into practise some years later after the Colebrooke-Cameron Commission Report.

Sir Robert Brownrigg, a military man from a humble Irish background was appointed Governor in 1812 and with his appointment the fate of the Kandyan kingdom was sealed. Skirmishes had occurred on a number of occasions between the British and the Kandyans. In 1815 Śrī Vikrama Rājasimha provided an excellent excuse for invasion by mutilating ten Moors who he claimed were British spies. Brownrigg took personal command of nearly 4000 men in an attack on Kandy. The capital fell and the king was captured. The Governor and the senior Kandyan chieftains agreed to a pact termed the Kandyan Convention, which pronounced the end of the last Sri Lankan kingdom.

The final years of the Kandyan kingdom

The Kandyans' success in surviving against the Portuguese and the Dutch had led to complacency and a false sense of their

own invincibility. It was true that the difficult mountain terrain, the inherent diseases, the difficulty in obtaining provisions and the weather conditions did not welcome strangers, particularly Europeans. However, their methods of warfare were relatively primitive and the main reason for the inability of the Portuguese and the Dutch to overcome the Kandyans was that they did not possess adequate resources. The British had the advantage that after 1802 control of the maritime provinces was in the hands of the British government and not a trading company and militarily Britain had far more resources than those possessed by her predecessors. The draft treaty negotiated in Madras with the British had given the Kandyans slightly more favourable conditions than those imposed by the Dutch but they did not ratify it mainly because the British refused to concede Kandyan sovereignty over the maritime provinces. After they had assumed power the British realised that it would not be to their advantage to have such a treaty in force. It was clear that they were to retain possession of the maritime provinces. They, therefore, refused to reopen negotiations.

The childless Rājādhirājasimha died unexpectedly in 1798 and the succession was in dispute. This was an opportunity for the British to follow the precedent set in Java by the Dutch (and later in India by Lord Wellesley) and attempt to get a foothold in a neighbouring native kingdom by involving themselves in the succession dispute. The Nāyakkar dynasty was, by now, well established and accepted by its Kandyan subjects. There was no valid Sinhalese claimant for the throne except for the First *adigar*, Pilimatalauve, who claimed descent from the ancient Sinhalese kings. Rājādhirājasimha's brother-in-law, Muttusāmi, attempted to claim the throne stating that the late king had nominated him for the role but the powerful Pilimatalauve imprisoned him and his sisters (Rājādhirājasimha's wives) and placed Śrī Vikrama Rājasimha on the throne. The latter, a young uneducated man of eighteen, was the nephew of one of Rājādhirājasimha's wives.

There is controversy amongst historians as to Pilimatalauve's motives. The consensus of opinion seems to be that Pilimatalauve

had no intention of assuming the irksome task of being king but preferred to remain the power behind the throne, particularly when the new king seemed pliable enough to accede to his wishes. However, it very soon became apparent that the new king was far from pliable and had a mind of his own. This did not suit Pilimatalaue who commenced plotting with the British to dethrone him. The British who found the Kandyan kingdom to be a hindrance to the consolidation of their interests on the island, felt that it would be an advantage to have control over the kingdom either by making it a vassal state or by complete conquest. Governor North did not have sufficient experience in this form of diplomacy and the British found themselves drawn into a conflict that they did not desire at the time. They blamed 'the perfidious' Pilimatalaue but, unfortunately, we only have their version of the story as the Kandyan records are meagre. The young Śrī Vikrama Rājasimha was surrounded by traitors and went in constant fear of assassination. He did not have the training required to cope with these stresses and soon took to drink and started behaving erratically and violently. The punishments he imposed were extreme and he even executed some Buddhist priests. He is said to have been supportive of the lower classes protecting them from the chieftains whose power he tried to diminish. Many of these chieftains became his mortal enemies, instrumental ultimately in his downfall. Surprisingly, and this is where both North and Pilimatalaue were totally mistaken, his common subjects remained loyal to him.

A small army consisting of Malay soldiers and a few British officers under General Hay Macdowall was sent to Kandy in 1803. This was a punitive expedition and the start of the so-called First Kandyan War (1803 - 1805). The Kandyans, no match for the British army, left the capital with their king and Macdowall installed Muttusāmi as a puppet king. However, it was soon obvious that the Kandyans would not accept Muttusāmi. By this time the British soldiers were suffering not only from a lack of provisions but also from malaria. In addition the monsoon season had commenced. Macdowall, who was ill, returned to Colombo leaving Major Davie

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in charge of a garrison of about three hundred and seventy men. This force was isolated amongst a hostile population and Davie attempted an evacuation to Trincomalee across the Mahavāli River, which was in flood. There are various versions of the events that followed but it is clear that most of the soldiers died - the Kandyans killed many and some committed suicide to avoid being taken captive. Muttusāmi also suffered a horrible death at the hands of the Kandyans. Śrī Vikrama Rājasimha's prestige amongst his own subjects increased after this victory but the war dragged on for another two years. The British regularly attacked the borders and the Kandyan economy was depressed. The people were intimidated and the chiefs continued to intrigue with the British.

The king, in the meantime, his prestige heightened and living in an aura of false complacency, commenced having the beautiful Kandy lake constructed. He divided the Seven Kōraḷēs into two in 1808 and placed Ehelapola and Molligoda in charge of the two provinces thus formed. This led to discontent and a rebellion that was suppressed by Pilimatalauve and his son-in-law, Ratvatte. Since Pilimatalauve's prestige increased it aroused the suspicions of the king and he fell out of favour. In 1811 Pilimatalauve went too far by provoking a revolt and plotting the king's murder. The plot failed and he was executed. Ehelapola, who was Pilimatalauve's nephew, was appointed First *adigar* in his place. At this stage the king's unpopularity amongst the nobility and the priesthood was at its height and Ehelapola was soon plotting with the British, inviting them to intervene. In 1814 the king dismissed Ehelapola who had refused to present himself and answer to complaints from his province of Sabaragamuwa. He raised a rebellion, which was crushed by Molligoda, who was appointed the First *adigar*. Ehelapola went over to the British leaving his wife and children in Kandy at the mercy of the king who had them executed in a particularly sadistic manner. This hideous act, perhaps exaggerated and widely publicised by the British, turned a great proportion of the Sinhalese against the king. Molligoda (who as First *adigar* was commander-in-chief of the Kandyan

forces) and all other important chiefs now supported the British in a political conspiracy contrived by the Kandyan aristocracy against their king who they felt was threatening their interests.

This was an opportune moment for the British to attack and the king provided an excellent excuse by mutilating ten Moorish traders, who were considered British subjects, but Whitehall opposed punitive action. The technicality of British territory being invaded as an excuse for invasion was found when the king's troops chased some insurgents across the border into British territory at Sabaragamuwa. Brownrigg claimed that the war was being undertaken to free the oppressed Kandyan people. The Governor not only had the advantage of a force of 4000 men but he also had the help of skilled engineers who managed to get cannons up the Balana Pass. This was the Second Kandyan War in which the Kandyan, put up very little effectual resistance and the king was captured in February 1815. He was taken to Vellore in South India and interned with his wives and family in Tippu Sultan's palace where he died in 1832. His only son died without issue in 1843. The reason for the downfall of the Kandyan kingdom at this stage was basically due to the antagonism between the king and the aristocracy. However, it seems very likely that if this reason did not exist the British would have found some other reason for acquiring the Kandyan territory and thus obtaining total control of the island.

Formal arrangements for ruling the Kandyan domain were drafted with the help of John D'Oyly, a member of the Ceylon Civil Service who had a good knowledge of the Sinhalese language and of Kandyan affairs. He was able to discuss matters directly with the Kandyan chiefs. It was an awkward moment for the British whose avowed intent was against territorial expansion. They had to justify the annexation of this previously independent kingdom by the British Crown.

The Official Declaration of the Settlement of the Kandyan Provinces emphasised the fact that the invasion had been carried out at the invitation of the Kandyan chiefs and met with the acclamation of the people of Kandy. St. George had slain the

dragon! The kingdom was formally handed over to the British on 2 March 1815 under terms embodied in the Kandyan Convention signed by Governor Brownrigg and the Kandyan chiefs. Under this Convention important concessions were made (or appeared to be made) to the Kandyans. Perhaps the most important concession (looked upon with suspicion in England) was that the 'religion of Boodhoo professed by the Chiefs and Inhabitants of these Provinces is declared inviolable; and its rites, Ministers and Places of worship are to be maintained and protected.' The privileges of the chiefs were preserved as were the Kandyan laws, customs and institutions. Śrī Vikrama Rājasimha and his heirs were excluded from any future claim to the throne.

D'Oyly was appointed British Resident in Kandy and a Board of Commissioners (consisting of British officials) administered the law. Unfortunately, as is often the case in treaties made between the vanquished and their conquerors, the Kandyans and the British regarded the Convention differently. To the Kandyans the Convention was an unchangeable and sacrosanct agreement between the two parties. The British, on the other hand, having agreed on the wording due to the expediency of the moment fell back on English Constitutional law by which the Convention was considered a treaty that could be changed by future legislation. In Article 4 the words 'for the time being' seems to mean a temporary arrangement and Ehelapola expected to be made king. It soon became obvious to the chiefs (the ordinary people of Kandy appear to have been indifferent to the transfer of their government) that the British had no intention of sticking to the letter of the Convention. The power that the chiefs wielded previously was seriously eroded and their revenues diminished. The new government ignored traditional observance of the caste system. In addition to the dissatisfaction amongst the aristocracy, the ordinary Kandyan people were beginning to have nostalgic yearnings for a restoration of their monarchy.

The trouble brewing between the British and the Kandyans was brought to a head by several incidents of which the most serious occurred in Vellassa, a small province on the northern

border of Ūva. A Muslim (Haji Muhandiram alias Marikkār) had been appointed headman by the British Assistant Resident, Wilson, against the wishes of the Sinhalese population. A pretender to the throne appeared in the Vellassa region falsely claiming to be Doraisāmi, a relative of Śrī Vikrama Rājasimha. In reality he was a former priest named Vilbāvē. He soon raised a turbulent following and both Haji Muhandiram who was initially sent to investigate and Wilson who later went to inquire into the incident were killed by this mob. A leading member of the Kandyan nobility, Käppeṭipola disāva of Ūva, was sent to Vellassa to control the uprising but, instead, joined the rebels and became their leader.

This was the start of the 1817 - 1818 Rebellion, which the British controlled with difficulty and with the help of reinforcements from India. It was not only the military strength of the British but also the inability of the Kandyan chiefs (most of whom, with the notable exception of Molligoda, joined the rebels) to cooperate with each other that caused the revolt to fail. In November 1818 the Rebellion was over and a Proclamation reduced the powers of the chieftains (in effect they became paid servants of the government) and made changes to the guarantees on religion given in the Convention. Käppeṭipola and Maḍugallē were executed at Kandy. Maḍugallē, the Dumbara disāva, had spirited away the Tooth Relic (the palladium of the Sinhalese nation) from the Daḷadā Māligāva, with the aid of a *bhikkhu* but the Relic was later recaptured and restored by the British. The rest of the chieftains involved were exiled and their property confiscated. The few nobles who supported the British were amply rewarded with grants of land and other material benefits. The British lost about a thousand men (mostly Indian and Sri Lankan recruits) but the Kandyans lost ten times that number.

The Rebellion has been likened to the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and both uprisings have been considered to be the protests of dying feudal systems. With its suppression the British were in total control of the island but administrative unification only came about after the road-building programme was completed in

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1832. The development of the Kandyan provinces (as compared to the maritime regions) was retarded for several decades because of this delay in joining the unified administration.

Foundations of British colonial rule

The Proclamation of 1818, after the rebellion was suppressed, established direct British rule over the entire island. The Governor and his officials had total political authority in the island and the British Crown retained final power over the colony through the Secretary of State in Whitehall. In 1824, with the appointment of Sir Edward Barnes as Governor, there commenced a period during which the future course of colonial rule in Sri Lanka was defined. At this stage Britain had complete mastery of the Indian Ocean and was confident of being able to protect her vast possessions in India. Her self-confidence had grown not only with the defeat of Napoleon but also with the increasing wealth that she was accumulating as the 'workshop of the world' - a consequence of the Industrial Revolution. The conquest of the Kandyan kingdom and the suppression of the Rebellion of 1817 - 1818 had given her complete and undisputed control of the whole island. In the early days of colonial rule, when Sri Lanka was considered a strategic outpost, the situation there was similar to that in an ancient Roman province and power was concentrated in the hands of the colonial Governor. The early Governors were autocrats with almost total legislative and executive powers, which were barely kept in check by an advisory council, a Supreme Court and a High Court of Appeal.

In Britain the policy of mercantilism (which maintained that colonies existed for the economic benefit of the mother country) was being replaced by more liberal views put forward by Adam Smith and the utilitarian (later termed philosophical radicalism) philosophers, such as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, who followed him. These philosophers favoured the policy of *laissez-faire*, which claimed that individuals pursuing their own economic goals, without interference from government, would achieve the best results for the society of which they were a part.

The function of the state was to maintain order and security without interfering with the individual's economic activities. A government, which provided for the moral welfare of its people would ultimately benefit commercially because of their increased output. Of course these theories were initially applicable to western countries but they were to spread to the colonies, mainly through the expanding and increasingly wealthy and influential British middle-class formed as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution. These liberal attitudes were to have an effect not only on economic activity but also on all other aspects of government in Sri Lanka.

In the 1820s and early 1830s Sri Lanka was, economically and socially, in a deplorable state. The only important item of export was cinnamon. Up to 1822, when its charter expired, external trade was monopolised by the English East India Company and only a small proportion of the profits was made available to the island's economy. After the government took over the monopoly in 1822, the price of Sri Lankan cinnamon fell mainly because of the competition from the East India Company. The British continued to use the *Salāgama* caste to collect cinnamon in their traditional role as providing free labour for a service that was essential to the state. The total annual revenue of the island was only £378,000. A large proportion of the external trade at this stage was the coastal trade with South India. The export of coffee increased in 1820s with the personal encouragement of Governor Barnes, who abolished the export tax on coffee and made loans available for investors. This trade improved with the road-building program that Barnes initiated.

The building of this network of roads was made possible by the use of *rājakāriya*. However, the British extended the traditional idea of this ancient form of service tenure to include all landowners (not merely those who had been granted land by the king or ruler). This radically changed the nature of this service tenure and made it an irksome form of taxation, which was resented. The Kandyan peasants, in particular, were exploited. Despite this the roads greatly improved the infrastructure of the island

and made unified administration more feasible. The road from Colombo to Kandy was a great engineering feat by Major Skinner and Captain Dawson. It was started in 1820 and completed in 1831 though Dawson died in 1829. A tunnel had to be drilled through a massive stone blocking the Kaḍugannāva pass fulfilling an old prophesy that the people who pierced the rock would inherit the kingdom of Kandy. Major Skinner also built a road from Kandy to Nuwara Eliya at Governor Barnes' request. Barnes had sumptuous residences all over the island including Barnes' Hall in Nuwara Eliya, the beautifully situated building that is now the Mount Lavinia Hotel and the Pavilion in Kandy, which is also now a hotel.

Though internal trade improved with the building of roads, external trade was slow to develop because it was still a government monopoly. The traditional powers of the chiefs and headmen had been greatly diminished by the British administration and these duties, which the Portuguese and the Dutch had allowed to continue in accordance with native custom, had been taken over by British civil servants. It was claimed by the British authorities, probably correctly, that there were no natives with the ability or the training to carry out these important administrative duties. The Sri Lankan elite was, therefore, downgraded on the social scale and the gulf between the Europeans and the natives widened. There was no official provision for education in the native languages and the country was divided into three regions on cultural and ethnic lines (Kandyan Sinhalese, Low-Country Sinhalese and Tamil). In the Kandyan region the judicial system operated on traditional custom, in the low-country it was mainly Roman-Dutch law and in the Tamil areas it was a revised form of *Thēsavalamai*. The total population in 1824 was 851,940.

There was concern at Whitehall at the island's financial state and the inability to balance its budget. A Royal Commission of Eastern Inquiry was appointed in 1829 to investigate the manner in which resources were managed. The Commission consisted of Lieutenant-Colonel William Colebrooke (he was knighted later), an experienced colonial administrator, and

Charles Cameron, a Scottish barrister. These Commissioners were doubtless influenced by the popular liberal and political ideas in Britain at the time. A prevalent view in Britain at the time was that the new colonial territories should be considered as trusts and given the benefit of British liberalism. The Colebrooke Report of 1831 - 1832 is a landmark in the colonial administration of the island, although it is rightly claimed that the Commissioners' recommendations were not new and had been put forward by individuals such as Sir Alexander Johnston and some of the previous Governors. The reforms suggested by the Report were wide-ranging and included administrative, political, economic, judicial, educational and social changes, which ultimately led to the independence of Sri Lanka. The Report was accepted, almost in its entirety, by the Secretary of State and the recommendations gradually implemented over the ensuing years. In effect, the Commissioners were recommending that similar institutions to those that already existed in Britain be established in Sri Lanka with the intention of converting a static, feudal society that had stagnated into a more vibrant and economically viable one - on the British pattern. This was, in fact, the commencement of a planned westernization of the country. It must be remembered that these recommendations and their implementation were not made from a purely altruistic point of view. The main purpose was to improve the economy and make the island less of a burden on British resources.

The English language was to be the main tool for this conversion and accordingly Colebrooke recommended that the government should only be responsible for the establishment and management of English schools - including a secondary school for those wishing to qualify for higher administrative posts. He, like many colonial administrators of the time, had great faith in the civilising influence of English. Oriental learning was deemed unimportant. The Commission recommended that Sri Lankans be recruited into the bureaucracy from all parts of the country regardless of caste and race. In practice, only the lower rungs were open to the natives and members of the Burgher community who

were proficient in English often filled these, in the early years. Native Sri Lankans were only able to enter the higher echelons of the civil service in the twentieth century.

The unified administration of the entire island was divided into five provincial units (later extended to nine provinces), which were demarcated on administrative grounds rather than race or caste. The purpose was to merge the Low-Country Sinhalese, the Kandyan Sinhalese and Tamil areas into one political unit - similar to the situation in Britain with regard to the English, Welsh and Scots. A Government Agent administered each province. In the legal field Cameron proposed the maintenance of the Roman-Dutch law along with Kandyan law in the Kandyan areas and *Thēsavalamai* in the Tamil areas. The Commissioners felt that *rājakāriya*, the compulsory labour of the feudal system, impeded mobility of labour and obstructed the growth of a national economy. They recommended that it be abolished. They suggested that free trade and private enterprise be encouraged and government monopolies be abolished.

An important phase of the political development of Sri Lanka began with the Report's recommendation that the Advisory Council be replaced by an Executive Council, which was totally official and a Legislative Council consisting not only of officials but also of representatives appointed by the Governor 'in equal proportions from the respectable European Merchants and Inhabitants and the higher classes of natives'. This was the start of an embryonic representative government. In 1833 three of the sixteen members of the Legislative Council were Sri Lankans - representing the Low-Country Sinhalese, the Tamils and the Burghers. Obviously the Kandyans had not, as yet, come in from the cold. These constitutional reforms reduced the autocratic powers of the Governor (very slightly) but Colebrooke's recommendation that the Governor's arbitrary powers be abolished and he serve merely as a figurehead was not accepted mainly because of the vehement opposition of Governor Barnes (1824 - 1831) and his successor Sir Robert Wilmot Horton (1831 - 1837). The latter, a relative of Lord Byron (who disliked him but was apparently

more favourably disposed towards Horton's wife about whom he wrote the famous lines 'She walks in beauty like the night...') had enthusiastically supported the appointment of the Commission but did not agree with its findings. Because of the disagreement not only of the Governor but also of a number of senior civil servants, the Commission's recommendations were not implemented fully in the spirit that they were conceived.

Coffee stimulates the economy

The balance between self-interest and enlightened reform, which was the basis of the Colebrooke-Cameron recommendations, was difficult to maintain. Mainly because the balance was often tilted in favour of self-interest, evolution towards the type of equitable society that Colebrooke and Cameron envisaged was very slow. The recommendations were often not implemented in the spirit that they were made. Nevertheless, the country became more stable and financially more viable. *Pax Britannica* had a highly beneficial influence.

Improving the economy was a priority and as early as 1820 coffee, which had been introduced by the Dutch, was being seen as an important export. Export duties on coffee were revoked and tax on coffee plantations was abolished in 1825. Coffee grew well in the upland regions of the old Kandyan kingdom and up to about 1835 coffee was mainly grown by native villagers in their own gardens - as it was in Dutch times. In 1835 import duties in Britain on coffee from the West Indies and Asia were equalized, further helping the profitability of the Sri Lankan exports. Self-interest and greed became prevalent as soon as it was obvious that a great deal of money could be made from coffee. Many thousands of acres in the Kandyan region, described as crown land, was sold by the government to be made into coffee plantations.

This was land, mainly virgin forest, which had belonged to the Kandyan kings. Major Skinner, the military engineer who constructed the original road from Colombo to Kandy, had surveyed this wilderness in the 1820s and 1830s and produced a map of the region. Though some of this land had been granted

in the past to the Kandyan kings' subjects, individual ownership could not be validated - neither a land registry nor title deeds existed. Obviously, this problem of proving entitlement in a court of law had not been envisaged by the old Kandyan custom of land tenure. Although Governor Stewart Mackenzie (1837 - 1841) failed in his attempt to convince Whitehall that this land was the property of the British crown, Governor Sir Colin Campbell (1841 - 1847) succeeded. The land was sold mainly to British officials in Sri Lanka (including civil servants who were not allowed to partake in trade but were allowed to buy land and sell its produce), British employees of the East India Company in India, British soldiers and capitalists who arrived from Britain. Civil servants in Sri Lanka were permitted to own coffee plantations up to 1845 after which the only property they were allowed to buy was a house. Very few native Sri Lankans were able to afford the capital or had the influence that was required to be able to invest in this venture.

The Kandyan peasant was willing to carry out the initial labour of clearing the forest if he was paid for it, but he was unwilling to carry out the harvesting of the berries between August and November because this was the time when he needed to work in his own fields. The other reason for refusing to do this work was that the labourers were badly treated and poorly paid. The local population would not countenance the indignities that an immigrant labour force would tolerate. The Kandyans could return to their own agricultural pursuits, which though limited were sufficient for their needs. This refusal earned them the unfair stigma that they were lazy and work-shy. A reliable and cheap source of labour had to be found.

The quest for these wage-slaves was not difficult. Economic conditions in South India had worsened by the 1830s. There were willing migrants and by the latter years of the decade the British were transporting South Indians to various parts of their colonial empire to work in plantations. Planter's agents recruited labourers (coolies) from this destitute population of South Indian Tamils who arrived on the northwestern coasts of Sri Lanka and made the long and hazardous trek through the jungle to

the Central Province, many dying of disease and deprivation en route. They were paid a pittance but it was more than they would have earned in India. These coolies were employed during the four months of the harvest and having scrimped and saved assiduously, most of them returned to their homeland. Some did remain and work as road maintenance labourers for the Public Works Department where they were slightly better paid than in the plantations.

The plight of these labourers was for a long time ignored by those who were involved in their exploitation. The planter assuaged his conscience by claiming that he was doing this for the good of the country's economy and the governments in Sri Lanka and Britain saw it as the typical workings of the *laissez faire* principle in which they should not interfere. However, the government did provide hospitals with very limited facilities at the ports on the northwestern coast at which these Indians disembarked and also resting places with supplies of drinking water for the journey from Puttalam to Kurunāgala. The planter made every effort to ensure a regular supply of immigrant labour, usually by paying the *Kaṇḍānīs* (coolie recruiting agents) in advance. In 1841 the unwritten 'contract' between planter and coolie was made legally binding. This made it impossible for the coolie to run away even if he was badly treated, as he would have been taken to court where the judge could well be his employer. By the 1860s there was a sizeable population of Indian immigrants who had settled in the Central Province and this was already giving rise to hostility from the Sinhalese peasants, who felt that these foreign workers were being more favourably treated than themselves.

In 1845 the economic depression plaguing Britain spread to Sri Lanka with dire effects on the coffee industry and a number of the smaller investors became bankrupt. In 1848 the Sri Lankan government, rattled by falling revenues due to the depression, imposed some ill-conceived new taxes. These taxes were based on the *Report on the Finances and Commerce of Ceylon* written in 1846 by Sir James Emerson Tennent, the recently appointed Colonial Secretary (who published his comprehensive

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work entitled *Ceylon* in 1859). The gist of this report was that there should be more direct and less indirect taxation. Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies, who was keen on reducing tax restrictions on industry, approved this change in taxation. The rapid development of plantations and the new land legislation, which gave rise to landlessness amongst the Kandyan peasants, had already caused discontent and the taxes imposed by Governor Viscount Torrington (1847 - 1850) in 1848 brought about civil unrest. The British called this a rebellion, rather exaggeratedly. As in 1817, a pretender to the Kandyan throne appeared. He was a Low-Country Sinhalese from Moratuwa and not a Kandyan. Torrington was a man with an undistinguished career and owed his appointment to the fact that he was the cousin of Lord John Russell, the British Prime Minister. He, with the encouragement of Tennent and Sir Herbert Maddock, Deputy Governor of Bengal, who was visiting his coffee estate in Sri Lanka, over-reacted and declared martial law. Several Sri Lankans were shot and property burnt by the army in the Central Province. The disturbances were suppressed but martial law was continued until the pretender was imprisoned.

Mainly due to the efforts of Dr Christopher Elliot, an Irish doctor who had become a journalist and editor of the 'Ceylon Observer', the matter was aired in the British Parliament (much to the embarrassment of Russell's government), a Select Committee was appointed in 1849 and Torrington asked to resign. Tennent was dismissed from the civil service but in 1852 he was appointed Secretary of the Board of Trade. These disturbances were half-hearted as compared to the rebellion of 1817 - 1818 and the relative mildness of the uprising perhaps showed a greater willingness to accept the British as rulers. By 1855 the market had recovered, the price of coffee rose in Europe and more capital came into Sri Lanka from Britain. Tennent gives statistics from the 'Ceylon Observer' of 11th. July 1857, which show that there were 409 coffee estates at that time with a total acreage of 80,950 in cultivation and a labour force of 129,200 at crop time. In addition, peasant coffee cultivators owned about 48,000 acres. By

the 1870s the cultivated area had increased to 272,000 acres and the up-country region had been almost completely stripped of its virgin, tropical forest.

Torrington was replaced as Governor by Sir George Anderson (1850 - 1855) whose cautious handling of the finances earned him the hostility of the planters and the local press but it did result in a surplus being accumulated. This surplus was used by his successor Sir Henry Ward (1855 - 1860), one of the most able Governors of the nineteenth century, to help further expand the coffee industry. He improved communications not only by building many more roads but also by initiating the development of a state financed railway from Colombo to Kandy. The latter project was commenced in 1858 and completed in 1867. It was known as the Ceylon Government Railway. In addition Ward restored some of the ancient irrigation works in the northwest and encouraged the cultivation of rice, the staple diet.

Because of the need for more labour to service the building of roads and railways the state agreed to supervise the immigration of Indian labourers. Despite an economic depression in Britain in 1866, there was rapid recovery in the coffee industry and during the latter part of Sir Hercules Robinson's Governorship (1865 - 1872) and during Governor Sir William Gregory's regime (1872 - 1877) the economy prospered. The surpluses were used to improve the infrastructure and the networks of road and railway were expanded. A Medical College was set up in 1870 and a Law College in 1874. Gregory followed Ward in further restoring irrigation works and improving the production of rice. It was Gregory who decided that the Colombo harbour should be developed in preference to the one at Galle and in 1875 the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) laid the foundation stone of the breakwater for the port. Communications between Britain and Sri Lanka had improved considerably by 1870. In the early days of the sailing ships it took three to four months, by 1841 steamships were doing the journey in four weeks and with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the journey only took three weeks. Communication by means of the electric telegraph commenced in Sri Lanka in

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1856 and by 1857 there was a telegraph connection to India. In 1865 India was connected to Europe by a telegraph network and in 1879 a direct connection was established between Bombay and London.

The improvement in the economy had been mainly due to coffee. The downside of the success of coffee was that other crops and sources of revenue tended to be ignored. Even rice cultivation was thought to be relatively unimportant as rice could be imported from Bengal using some of the revenue that accrued from coffee. This was a short-sighted policy, which some of the more enlightened Governors tried to correct. The value of cinnamon had dropped considerably because of competition and it only played a minor role in export revenue. Sugar-cane cultivation was tried but did not succeed in the face of cheaper West Indian and Javanese sugar. Coconut, grown all over the island but mainly in the maritime districts, became more popular as an export. Coconut plantations required little capital investment and were owned mainly by Sri Lankans. Rubber plants (grown in Kew gardens from seeds smuggled out of Brazil by Sir Henry Wickham) were sent in the 1870s to Sri Lanka where they thrived and some seedlings from Sri Lanka were sent later to Malaysia. Rubber grew well in the foothills of the Southern, Western and Sabaragamuwa Provinces. It was a profitable export and a help when the main cash crop was not doing well. About half of these rubber plantations belonged to Sri Lankans.

In 1869 an orange-red discolouration was noticed on coffee leaves and within a few years this had spread to almost every coffee plant in the island. The hillsides of the up-country districts took on the unfamiliar, autumnal colours of the northern hemisphere. It was a deadly disease for which there was no cure. This coffee blight (*hemileia vastratrix*) had destroyed the coffee industry by the late 1870s and a number of people were ruined. Fortunately, there was a substitute waiting in the wings. This was tea but before tea could be grown profitably the cinchona plant from which quinine is produced was successfully grown as an interim measure.

Britain benefited not only from an excellent return on the capital invested in the plantation industry but also from an expanding market in the island for her manufactured goods, brought about by the increasing prosperity of the Sri Lankan population. This increasing prosperity was mainly amongst a growing middle-class consisting of professional people and government officials who had acquired an English education. The majority of the population was still extremely poor and little was done to correct this imbalance. The expanding plantation industry tended to destroy the fragile peasant economy. It also took away land from the peasants and gave rise to discontent. Despite these drawbacks, coffee had given a tremendous boost to the island's economy resulting in an improved infrastructure and an increase in the population, which had reached 2.5 million by the 1870s.

Constitutional stasis (1833 – 1900)

An elected, representative legislature, which was the ultimate aim of the Colebrooke-Cameron recommendations of 1832, was firmly resisted by the British administration until 1920. In the non-European colonies Britain's desire to agree with local demands for a greater share in political influence conflicted with her wish to maintain political control. There does not seem to have been a consistent long-term plan towards responsible, representative government in the dependencies as envisaged by Colebrooke and Cameron. Reforms were instituted only as a matter of expediency in response to local agitation. The Governor as chief administrative and executive officer wielded enormous power. As 'the man on the spot' he was the main obstacle to the transition into an elected, representative government. However, in Jamaica, Mauritius and Trinidad the transition occurred in the 1880s, very probably because these countries had large contingents of vociferous, politically mature European planter-settlers. In Sri Lanka, successive Governors felt that since the majority of the population did not seem interested in being represented by an elective system, the Governor should retain the power to protect

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the welfare of this majority against any sectional interest. Sir Henry Ward (1855 – 1860), one of the ablest Governors, was of the opinion that this transition would upset the balance between the interests of the Europeans, Burghers, Moors, Sinhalese, Tamils and others. It was also felt that education and literacy amongst the population should improve before franchise was granted. These were valid reasons for maintaining the *status quo* and the structure of the constitution therefore remained static. The agitation for elected representative institutions in Sri Lanka in the nineteenth century seems to have come mainly from British journalists residing in Sri Lanka such as Christopher Elliot in the 1840s and William Digby in 1876. Whitehall refused to make any concessions to these journalists mainly on the grounds that there were no such demands from the Sri Lankans themselves.

In Sri Lanka, the Legislative Council served as an independent source of information through which Whitehall could have some control over the Governor. Its main function within the colony was to provide an input about local conditions and their relevance to legislation. It consisted, initially, of sixteen members. Ten of these were officials and included the Governor (who presided), the Chief Justice and the Commanding Officer of British troops. The European merchants and planters had three representatives and the Low-Country Sinhalese, Tamils and Burghers had one representative each. The population of the island when the Legislative Council was set up in the 1830s consisted of a couple of thousand Europeans (none of whom were permanent settlers), about a million and a half of native Sri Lankans and about fifteen thousand Burghers. The Governor nominated these representatives. Nominated (unofficial) members were allowed to take part in debates but could not initiate legislation.

It was only when a strong vested interest emerged amongst the coffee planters that there was agitation for more influence in the Legislative Council particularly with a view to having some control over the budget - they wished to have more money spent on roads and the railway to ease their transport problems. The Burghers supported this because it seemed a way of furthering

the ambitions of English educated Burghers to enter the administrative service. At this stage the Burghers exercised an influence out of all proportion to their numbers not only because of their ability to speak English but also because they were distinctly more European than the indigenous Sri Lankans. This agitation gave rise to the Ceylon Political League in 1864. Charles Ambrose Lorenz, a lawyer who was the Burgher representative in the Legislative Council and an eloquent speaker, became the leader of this group of political agitators and had the support of the other unofficial members, including the Europeans. A primary object of this group was to obtain a majority of unofficial members in the Council. However, the European representatives did not wish to have the number of Sri Lankan representatives increased. The government, backed by Whitehall, rejected these demands.

The Sinhalese and Tamil representatives in the Legislative Council throughout the nineteenth century were from families of the traditional Sri Lankan elite. These were the families of *mudaliyars* who had become accustomed to serving the colonial ruler - going back to Dutch and even Portuguese times. They were wealthy, high caste, landowning families who had done well for themselves by collaborating with the foreign rulers and, not surprisingly, were opposed to any change in the *status quo* and had no intention of pressing for political reform. Also, these *mudaliyars* had lost touch with the common people whom they were meant to represent and therefore the information they passed on to the British rulers about their subjects was often erroneous. However, by the middle of the century these representatives were often highly talented, very well educated (in Sri Lanka as well as in England) men. In the 1860 and 1870s, for instance, the Sinhalese representative was James de Alwis (the first Sri Lankan author of a history of the island in English) from a land-owning, Protestant Christian Low-Country Sinhalese family of the Goyigama caste and the Tamil representative was Muttu Coomaraswamy (a distinguished lawyer who became the first Sri Lankan to be knighted in 1874) also from a wealthy family of the

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Vellāla caste whose father had been the first Tamil representative in the Legislative Council. Neither of these representatives was at all keen on increasing the Sri Lankan representation in the Council. When the grain tax - a tax that with slight variations had existed from ancient times - came under fire as an abhorrent tax that caused great hardship for the peasant, James de Alwis supported the efforts of the administration, which wished to retain it. He and the land-owning elite to which he belonged were concerned that a land tax would take the place of the grain tax.

An attempt to break the established trend of nominating members of a section of the traditional elite to the Legislative Council was made in 1882 with the formation of a political body called the Ceylon Agricultural Association, which became the Ceylon National Association in 1888 and contributed significantly to the campaign which succeeded in having the grain tax abolished. It was formed by C. H. de Soysa, an extremely wealthy businessman of the Karāva caste. He is said to have entertained the Duke of Edinburgh in 1870 to a meal at which the plates, the cutlery and the wine goblets were all of pure gold. The agitation for political reform by this Association was viewed with some concern by the British administration. Governor Sir Arthur Gordon (1883 - 1890) did institute some reforms in 1889, which he hoped would keep the new political activists in check. He increased the number of nominated representatives by two but allocated these to the Kandyans and the Moors. He also restricted the term for which a representative could serve to five years whilst retaining the right to suspend or dismiss any representative. Unfortunately, caste rivalry was a prominent feature of nominations amongst the Sinhalese at this stage. Rivalry between the races was not, as yet, an obvious factor. The caste factor in politics caused the early split within the Sri Lankan elite. The British administration persisted in its practice of nominating members of the traditional elite from the Goyigama caste and looked on the wealthy and often highly educated candidates from the Karāva caste with suspicion. James Pieris (later Sir James Pieris), a lawyer who had a brilliant career in Cambridge and had been President of the Cambridge

Union, was put forward for nomination as the Low-Country Sinhalese candidate in 1900 and 1905. He was of the Karāva caste and was supported by the Ceylon National Association. On both occasions, the Governor ignored the campaign waged by the Karāvas and nominated S. C. Obeyesekera, a member of the Goyigama family from which representatives had been chosen since the inception of the Legislative Council. This caste rivalry was obviously beneficial to British interests. The Karāvas now sought to have elected representation introduced knowing that if ownership of property and educational attainment were made criteria for franchise, then they would be in a strong position. This expenditure of energy on caste rivalry in politics merely held back progress in political reform.

Early constitutional reform (1900 - 1921)

Ideally, the two most important constitutional reforms needed were the abolition of communal or racial representation and the implementation of the elective principle. Unfortunately, the minority communities would have met the first of these reforms with suspicion. The political immaturity of the electorate and strong communal rather than national loyalty meant that members of the minority communities had little chance of being elected on political grounds in a territorial electorate. Also, under these circumstances it was very likely that the Tamils, the second largest community, would become politically impotent. These considerations made the British administration wary of any reform that would lead to the minorities being marginalised. By the final quarter of the nineteenth century, there were several intelligent and well-educated people available to represent this diverse electorate and press for reform.

Unfortunately, Sri Lankan politics had already started on the path that accentuated the rivalries not only of race but also of caste and religion. These rivalries became more obvious during the first two decades of the twentieth century and effectively reduced the impetus of the demands for reform. The British administration, which preferred to maintain the *status quo*, found

these rivalries an advantage and did nothing to discourage them - and in some instances actively encouraged them. There also seems to have been a great deal of inertia particularly amongst the wealthy Sinhalese elite, which was becoming even more affluent because of involvement in business and the plantations. It was able to attain this affluence because of the secure business environment under the British regime and was, naturally, opposed to any change. John Ferguson, a British journalist, owner-editor of the Ceylon Observer and one of the European representatives in the Legislative Council, tried to organize a public meeting in 1902 to demand reform of the constitution. He did not get any support either on this occasion or when he put forward a resolution in 1904 asking for another seat for the Low-Country Sinhalese in the Legislative Council. In fact, S. C. Obeyesekera, the Low-Country representative, voted against the resolution. It was because of this inertia that the Ceylon National Association soon became moribund due to neglect.

The Tamils, being a minority with somewhat less diversity within the community, were more easily represented. However, an example was being set not only to Tamils but also to the other communities by the nephews of Sir Muttu Coomaraswamy, two of whom (Ponnambalam Coomaraswamy and Ponnambalam Ramanathan) followed him as Tamil representatives in the Legislative Council and a third, Ponnambalam Arunachalam, was a distinguished civil servant who took a keen interest in politics. These three brothers (the apparent difference in surnames is due to the peculiarity of the Hindu Tamil method of naming), two of whom were later knighted, made a considerable contribution to the political and intellectual life of the country in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century. The opportunities for economic advancement by commercial means was limited in the Tamil as compared to the Sinhalese areas and this was one of the reasons for a proportionally greater number of Tamils entering the professional and administrative sectors. In 1908 the European representation in the Legislative Council remained at three for a population that was now 9,000. The Low-Country

Sinhalese, Kandyan Sinhalese, Tamils, Moors and Burghers had one representative each for approximate populations of 1,450,000, 870,000, 950,000, 225,000 and 23,000 respectively. It is noteworthy that by having a separate representative for the Kandyan Sinhalese a wedge was already being inserted between the two groups of Sinhalese.

In the first decade of the twentieth century various events not only in Sri Lanka but also in other parts of the world encouraged the movement towards nationalism, representative government and, ultimately, self government. At this time there were a number of western educated young men from influential and wealthy families who were able to understand the restrictions of colonial rule and, unlike the previous generation, were able and willing to do something about it. In England a Liberal government had been elected with a big majority in 1906 and it seemed likely that the Liberals would be more amenable to proposals for reform. Governor Sir Henry McCallum (1907 - 1913) was of the view that the Sri Lankans who were pressing for reform were a privileged minority whose proposals would lead to an oligarchy rather than a representative government. He also held the paternalistic view common to British Governors of the time that the Sri Lankan peasant who composed the vast majority of the population was content if he was allowed to continue his agricultural pursuits in peace and security and did not have any desire to exercise electoral power. This was a valid but reactionary view.

In response to a letter from James Pieris and deputations to Members of Parliament in Britain some minor reforms were conceded by Crewe, the Colonial Secretary. In 1910 the 'educated Ceylonese' were allowed to have their own representative in the Council. This representative was to be elected by voters who had an income of more than Rs 1,500 per annum and had passed the Senior or Junior Cambridge Local examination (in English). The Low-Country Sinhalese and the Tamils were each permitted an extra member nominated by the Governor. The Europeans and Burghers were allowed to elect their own representatives. McCallum's advice to Crewe had resulted in most of the proposals

being denied. A Tamil, Ponnambalam Ramanathan, was elected as the first representative of the 'educated Ceylonese' though a divergence in interests between educated Sinhalese and educated Tamils was becoming apparent. The Sinhalese continued to be divided by caste.

There were two movements that were prominent in the early part of the twentieth century. The Buddhist revivalist movement commenced around the turn of the century and was mainly the work of Anagarika Dharmapala (son of Don Carolis, the wealthy founder of a well-known furniture shop) who combined Buddhist revival with Sinhalese nationalism and demands for *svarāj* (national independence). His activities are comparable to those of Bal Tilak, his Indian contemporary. This Buddhist movement was overtly anti-Christian. The temperance movement in Sri Lanka was also based on Buddhist principles and was primarily a protest directed against the government, which was earning a considerable revenue from the liquor trade and seemed to be encouraging the proliferation of taverns. Both these movements had strong political undertones and were viewed with suspicion by the government. One of the leaders of the temperance movement, which drew large crowds to its meetings, was Don Spater Senanayake, a rich businessman who had earned most of his money by trading in plumbago (graphite). His sons, D. S., F. R. and D. C. Senanayake were all involved in the movement, which was a stepping-stone to more serious politics. In addition to these movements there was also a revival of interest in Sinhalese and Tamil culture mainly due to the work of Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, a well-known Orientalist and the son of Sir Muttu Coomaraswamy.

On Vesak day (the anniversary of the Buddha's birth) in May 1915 shortly after the outbreak of the First World War there were riots directed at the Coast Moors. These Muslims were relatively recent immigrants from the Malabar coast of India. They were aggressive traders and tended to ignore the rights of other religious groups particularly the Buddhists. Perhaps because of recent political agitation by the temperance groups,

the British administration felt that the riots were being directed at them by the Sinhalese. The Governor, Sir Robert Chalmers (1913 - 1916) had recently lost his two sons in active service in Europe and perhaps was not in a position to make quick, rational decisions. The temperance activists (including the Senanayaka brothers) and A. E. Goonesinha, who had formed the Young Lanka League, were arrested. Other arrests were made amongst trade union activists, martial law was declared and the riots suppressed with considerable brutality. Ramanathan and his brother Arunachalam supported the Sinhalese leadership strongly but without much success. Ramanathan's persistent attempts to obtain the appointment of a Select Committee of the Legislative Council to look into the accusations made by Sinhalese leaders with regard to the grave miscarriages of justice by British officials and the unnecessarily severe punishments handed out by the military and civil authorities (and even the planters) was also fruitless. The over-reaction of the administration caused a surge of antagonism against the British rulers, which added impetus to political agitation for change.

The recriminations made in England by various deputations from Sri Lanka and also the evidence of a few impartial critics had the effect of Chalmers being recalled. Sir John Anderson (1916 - 1918) was appointed as Governor. Anderson attempted to restore public confidence by releasing the prisoners and appointing a Commission of Inquiry into the disturbances. He made himself unpopular amongst the European community in the island by making it clear that the actions of the administration during the disturbances were unjustifiable and he commenced looking into the possibility of reforms to prevent such incidents occurring in the future. Unfortunately, he fell seriously ill and died in Sri Lanka in March 1918.

The Ceylon Reform League was formed in 1917 with Ponnambalam Arunachalam as its first president. The distinguished membership included Don Baron Jayatileka, James Pieris, Dr Marcus Fernando and Ponnambalam Ramanathan who were all knighted later. It also included F. R. Senanayaka,

E. W. Perera, the Jayewardene brothers and D. R. Wijewardena who founded the Lake House Press. The League asked for the replacement of the Legislative Council by a Legislative Assembly with a large increase in elected members and a Speaker. It also asked for elected, unofficial members in the Executive Council. It soon became obvious that to obtain any meaningful reform, a wider based body similar to the Indian National Congress, which had been formed in 1885, was necessary. The conservative faction of the elite who felt that widening the political base of the Reform League could bring in radical elements that would endanger their position and the privileges that they enjoyed opposed this. Despite their opposition, the Ceylon Reform League became the Ceylon National Congress in 1919 and commenced a vigorous agitation for constitutional reform. Whitehall was now much more sympathetic. The two main factions within the Congress were the old conservative elite who wished to continue negotiating along the established channels and the younger radical faction called the Young Lanka League, which wanted a much more vigorous form of agitation. The leader of this younger faction was A. E. Goonesinha. Up to the 1920s there was remarkable harmony between the political leaders of the Sinhalese and the Tamils. The main reason for this was that they were all from a similar social and educational background and had the common aim of obtaining constitutional reform from the British. The Tamils were fortunate in having the leadership of the Ponnambalam brothers whose integrity was respected across the racial barriers.

Governor Sir William Manning (1918 - 1925), unlike Sir John Anderson, was totally opposed to any change in the constitution. He felt that any such change would damage British interests. He soon gauged the disunity within the newly formed National Congress and used it as a means of preventing any substantial reform. He befriended the Kandyans whose main grievance was that their region was the most economically backward though it was the centre of the plantation industry. Educationally, too, they had fallen behind. When levels of education and wealth were laid down as criteria for being able to vote, they were placed at a

disadvantage. They were pleased to have Manning on their side - and Manning was delighted to have them as collaborators. Soon, he was able to do the same with the Tamils who were in dispute with the Low-Country Sinhalese about a separate Tamil seat that they had been promised in the Western Province.

The National Congress was weakened by these disputes, which had shattered its unity, and had to agree to the reforms that were introduced in 1920 though they fell far short of its original demands. From each of the European, Sinhalese and Tamil communities a nominated member to the Executive Council was allowed. The seats in the Legislative Council were increased to thirty-seven with fourteen official and twenty-three unofficial members of whom eleven were to be elected on a territorial and eight on a communal basis. The Governor had the power to designate any measure he wished as one of 'paramount importance' in which case only the official, nominated members could vote. He was also able to stop any proceedings that, in his opinion, could disturb the peace and safety of the country. He, therefore, still retained a considerable degree of control. The composition of the Legislative Council ensured that no single group or community could dominate it. The franchise was restricted by property and educational qualifications and of the total population of 4,500,000 only about 180,000 (4 per cent) could vote. In Britain an Order in Council formally conceded devolution of authority and the first elections were held in 1921. Representative rule had commenced in a diluted form.

Representative government (1921 - 1936)

The Ceylon National Congress continued to press for further changes in the constitution, which was amended by another Order in Council in 1923 when Winston Churchill was the Secretary of State for the Colonies. In 1924 the Legislative Council was expanded to 49 members of whom thirty-seven were unofficial, elected members giving the latter an unequivocal majority over the twelve official, nominated members. The Governor's powers were reduced and he was no longer able to

ban debates or disallow legislation. However, legislation could be stopped by Royal assent if the Governor recommended this course of action to the Secretary of State. These changes were still much less than those demanded by Congress. Its majority of elected representatives gave the Legislative Council some power but it still lacked responsibility.

Within the Congress the stresses imposed by racial and communal differences were becoming more accentuated. The Sinhalese leadership in the National Congress had reneged on a written undertaking to support the provision of a separate seat for the Tamils in the Western Province. Many Tamils left the Congress and a Tamil Mahajana Sabha, similar to the Sinhala Mahajana Sabha (see below) had been formed in Jaffna. Ponnambalam Arunachalam, who had previously refused to join in communal politics, was disillusioned and moved reluctantly into the Tamil camp to which his brother Ramanathan already belonged. This camp, which essentially had a narrow outlook, was against having an elected majority in the Legislative Council because of the fear that the Tamils, as a minority, would be marginalised. The Tamils began, increasingly, to think of themselves as a minority community whilst previously they had considered themselves as one of the two majority communities in the island. The Kandyans were also disillusioned and demanded separate representation in the Legislative Assembly. At this stage the solution advanced for overcoming this dissension was federalism. This idea was aired not only by the Kandyans but also by a small, new party called the Progressive National Party headed by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. However, neither the Sinhalese nor the Tamils wanted a federal constitutional structure. The few Burghers in the Congress had all left by 1924.

The Ceylon National Congress had formed a network of societies called the Sinhala Mahajana Sabha in the Sinhalese rural areas in 1919 to promote social reform. These *sabhās*, which were mainly for the benefit of peasant cultivators (the majority of the population), were emphatically Sinhalese and Buddhist in their outlook and like the earlier temperance movements

became political units loyal to their leaders. The leadership of the latter was dominated by the Senanayake brothers (particularly F. R. Senanayake) and D. B. Jayatileka in whose political lives this association with the rural masses was to pay considerable dividends. At the same time a smaller, radical, urban movement of workers under the leadership of A. E. Goonesinhe was becoming prominent in the 1920s. The Ceylon Labour Union evolved from this in 1922 and became a militant platform for the working classes of Colombo and soon affiliated with the Ceylon National Congress.

It had become obvious to the British that colonial rule was only workable if the majority of the highly educated and vocal politicians in Sri Lanka collaborated. They were willing to transfer power, but only step-by-step, to a carefully constructed democratic government. During the various steps the Governor would keep a parental eye on the proceedings. In 1927, at the request of Governor Sir Hugh Clifford (1925 - 1927), a Commission chaired by the Earl of Donoughmore was appointed by the Secretary of State to review the constitution. After considering a great deal of conflicting evidence, the Commission produced its report and this gave rise to the Donoughmore Constitution. It was implemented in 1931 under the stewardship of Governor Sir Herbert Stanley (1927 - 1931).

The basic aim of the Commission's recommendations was to combine power with responsibility within the constitution. It recommended that the Executive and Legislative Councils be merged into a single chamber (the State Council) embodying the Legislature, which was divided into seven Standing Committees each one responsible for certain departments of administration. Each of these Committees elected its own Chairman and the seven Chairmen together with three Officers of State formed a Board of Ministers. The Officers of State (Chief, Financial and Legal Secretaries) who were in charge of defence, external affairs, finance and justice were appointed by the Governor and were only responsible to him. In this way the interests of the British government were protected. The Governor could have legislation

made into law even if the State Council refused to sanction it and he had the power to take control of any department in an emergency. All important Public Service appointments continued to be made by the Governor.

It was the view of the Commission that communal representation was undesirable because it prevented the binding together of the diverse elements of the population to form a common citizenship. In this, as later events were to prove, the Commission was over-rating the wisdom and tolerance of the Sri Lankan voter. Communal representation was abolished and only territorial representation was allowed with franchise given to all adult men and women regardless of educational qualifications or property ownership. At first, the voting age was to have been twenty-one for men and thirty for women but the Colonial Office changed this so that the voting age for women was also twenty-one. About 40 per cent of the population (approximately 2,200,000) could now vote. Territorial representation was a disaster for the minorities and a windfall for the Sinhalese majority. Whilst before 1931 the representation ratio between Tamils and Sinhalese was 1:2, after implementation of the Commission's report, the ratio became 1:5.

There were numerous valid objections to the Donoughmore Constitution but probably the most important objection in a multi-racial, multi-religious community was the lack of safeguards for protecting the interests of minorities. The minorities objected to universal suffrage because it would lead to domination by the majority Sinhalese community. Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan was against universal suffrage not only because he represented the Tamils but also because he (and some of the older Sinhalese politicians) felt that Sri Lanka was not ready for it and a further spread of education was needed before it was implemented. It was only in 1928 that universal suffrage had been granted to citizens of the United Kingdom. The National Congress, which initially objected to the proposals on the grounds that they did not go far enough towards a full democracy, finally accepted it 'for a short period'. E. W. Perera, who was the president of the Congress, resigned on this issue and formed his own political

organisation - the All-Ceylon Liberal League. A. E. Goonesinha, the leader of the Ceylon Labour Union was very much in favour of the Donoughmore proposals. He had founded the All-Ceylon Trade Union Congress, which actively organised several major strikes in the latter part of the 1920s. With the death of Ramanathan in 1930 (Arunachalam had died in 1924), the Tamils had a new and more radical leadership. The Jaffna Youth League organised a boycott of the elections in 1931 because they wanted *swaraj* or independence for the whole country. It was only in 1934 that elections were held for the first time in Jaffna and G. G. Ponnambalam was elected to the Point Pedro constituency and became the political leader of the Tamils.

The State Council assembled in 1931 and whilst still in its infancy had not only to deal with the economic problems of the Great Depression of 1929 - 1931 but also with a malaria epidemic which ravaged the country from 1934 - 1935. The Vice-Chairman of the Board of Ministers, Leader of the House and Minister for Home Affairs was D. B. Jayatileka and D. S. Senanayake became Minister of Agriculture. These two politicians soon established themselves as leaders of the Sinhalese (F. R. Senanayake had died by this time). C. W. W. Kannangara became Minister of Education and Francis Molamure was elected Speaker. In an attempt to ease the economic problem the State Council appointed a Commission under a Parsee banker, Sir Sorabji Pochkhanawala, to review banking in the country and report on the advisability of a state-aided bank. Sir Sorabji recommended the founding of such a bank in 1935 but the Secretary of State was unsympathetic towards this venture and it was only in 1939 that a bank (Bank of Ceylon) with a much more limited prospectus than that envisaged by Sir Sorabji was founded. A chance to help business development and aid the country to establish its own sources of credit had been lost. The malaria epidemic was followed by severe drought. It was estimated that there were 100,000 deaths due to the combined effects of the epidemic and the drought. The benefits of an elected Legislature became apparent when the State Council rapidly authorised a great deal of money to be spent on the affected areas - the elected members could not ignore the plight of their electorates.

The world-wide economic depression also encouraged Marxism, which was absorbed by young Sri Lankans such as Philip Gunawardena and N. M. Perera, Colvin R. de Silva, Leslie Goonewardena and Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe all of whom were educated during this period in Britain and the U.S.A. In 1935 this group founded a Marxist socialist party called the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP). Their aim was not only to appeal to the urban workers (this was resented by A. E. Goonesinha) but also to the rural masses and with the latter object in view they worked to help the peasants during the malaria epidemic. In the 1936 State Council elections Philip Gunawardena and N. M. Perera, members of this small party, were able to win seats. Also in the 1936 State Council the chairmanship of all seven committees (the Board of Ministers) was taken by Sinhalese leaders (in the previous State Council there had been two Ministers from minority groups). Curiously enough this was not engineered by the Sinhalese but by a Tamil Professor of Mathematics, a friend of D. S. Senanayake, who came up with a method whereby supporters were dispersed in the various committees according to a preconceived mathematical formula, which produced this result at the election within the Council. At this stage Professor Suntharalingam was a believer in nationalism as represented by the Sinhalese leaders of the time. This complete domination of the Board of Ministers by the Sinhalese leaders led to a great deal of suspicion amongst the minorities, particularly the Tamils. The Board of Ministers, convinced that its election to office endorsed its demands for further constitutional reform, went ahead and put forward a new set of demands to Governor Sir Edward Stubbs (1933 - 1937) without consulting the State Council.

The road to Independence (1936 - 1948)

The Board of Ministers were moderate nationalists and the constitutional reform they envisaged was self-government within the empire (Dominion status) that had already been attained by the 'white' colonies of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, which retained constitutional links with Britain. The main proposal of

the 1936 Board of Ministers was that a cabinet form of government be instituted. A Chief Minister would either be elected by the State Council or invited by the Governor to form a government. This would be similar to the British system of government and encourage the formation of a party system in politics. The other proposals included a reduction of the Governor's powers and abolition of the posts of Officers of State who had been compared to 'policemen in plain clothes'. Governor Stubbs prevaricated by suggesting that another Commission be appointed. At this stage, in the first quarter of 1937, the Governor's special powers and the ability of an Officer of State to infringe on an elected minister's functions were highlighted by the case of Mark Antony Lyster Bracegirdle.

Bracegirdle was a young Englishman who had recently emigrated to Australia. In 1936 he had come to Sri Lanka as a planter. Obviously a man with communist tendencies, he made rousing speeches to the workers in the plantation districts and was supported by the LSSP. The Governor used his emergency powers and issued a deportation order. On the authority of the Chief Secretary (one of the Officers of State) and the Inspector General of Police and without reference to the Minister for Home Affairs, Bracegirdle was arrested. The LSSP issued a writ of *habeas corpus* against the police and the case was heard by the Supreme Court, which decided that the government had no right to use emergency laws when there was no emergency. Bracegirdle was freed and disappeared with the help of the LSSP. That seems to have been the end of his brief political and planting careers. The incident gave support to the Board of Ministers demands and provided the LSSP with a great deal of publicity. However, in January 1938 the Colonial Office strengthened the Governor's powers even further. This was very probably because it expected D. S. Senanayake to succeed D. B. Jayatileke as Vice-Chairman of the Board of Ministers. Senanayake was disliked by Stubbs who thought he was strongly anti-British and precautions were being taken against his probable leadership.

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Sir Andrew Caldecott (1937 - 1944) succeeded Stubbs as Governor. He had a much more liberal outlook and so did Malcolm MacDonald, the Secretary of State at the time. Caldecott was willing to listen and suggestions as to reform came from all quarters. His favourite admonition to these impatient politicians was "*hemin, hemin*" which means "slowly, slowly" in Sinhalese. G. G. Ponnambalam, the leader of the Tamils, demanded that the seats in the State Council be equally divided between the Sinhalese majority and the minorities. This 'fifty-fifty' demand became something of a joke and the subject of a play. The Governor ignored most of these demands but recommended that those put forward by the Board of Ministers with regard to cabinet government headed by a chief minister be implemented. He also agreed that the Officers of State should not be members of the cabinet. However, he felt that the Governor's powers should be even further strengthened, temporarily, whilst this transition was taking place. With the agreement of the Secretary of State these reforms were to be implemented in 1939 but the commencement of the Second World War made it necessary not only to suspend these changes but also to postpone the State Council elections of 1940. The leaders of the LSSP, who had demanded complete independence from the British and were seen as anti-British and subversive, were imprisoned and the party remained undercover for the duration of the war.

The LSSP's form of nationalism was treated with suspicion not only by the British administration but also by the conservative politicians in the State Council. However, there was a more orthodox but also extreme form of nationalism being advocated by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and the Sinhala Maha Sabha that he had established in 1937. Bandaranaike was constructing a political programme that was narrowly based on religion (Buddhism) and language (Sinhalese). Religion and language were obviously a good political platform for an ambitious and eloquent politician but its potentially divisive effect was also obvious. At this stage his political activities were treated with suspicion not only by the

minorities but also by the conservative leadership in the National Congress.

In 1942 D. B. Jayatileka left the State Council and D. S. Senanayake became the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Ministers. Unlike his late brother, F. R. Senanayake, he had not received a higher education in England but though he was nicknamed 'Jungle John' because of his rural background and rugged appearance, he had all the characteristics of a born leader and a fundamental shrewdness combined with commonsense. He was one of the few politicians of the time to have a broad communal outlook and he firmly believed that all the races in the island could be welded together into a homogeneous society. Arunachalam Mahadeva, the son of the late Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, took Jayatileka's place as Minister of Home Affairs. This tactful move of a Tamil into the Board of Ministers was planned by D. S. Senanayake. Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton was appointed Commander-in-Chief of Sri Lanka in 1942 to organize armed and civilian services and D. S. Senanayake gave him his full support. Oliver Goonetilleke (later Sir Oliver), the Auditor-General and a very talented administrator, was appointed the Civil Defence Commissioner by the Governor.

The Board of Ministers continued negotiating with the British government, which prompted by Layton and Caldecott, reassured them in 1943 that after the war a Commission or Conference would consider the grant of 'full responsible government under the Crown in all matters of civil administration'. This Commission or Conference would consider any detailed proposals that the Ministers put forward in the nature of a full constitutional blueprint. This declaration by the Secretary of State also stated that the draft constitution had to be approved by a three-quarters majority of the State Council. This meant that the minorities in the Council had to support the draft constitution for it to be accepted by the British government. In the same dispatch, the British government showed its appreciation of Sri Lanka's contribution to the war effort.

By 1944 a draft of the constitution had been prepared with the help of Ivor Jennings (later Sir Ivor), Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ceylon. Later in the same year the Secretary of State announced that a Commission was to be appointed to consult with the various interests in the country, including the minority communities, on constitutional reform before advising the government. The ministers protested that they had been informed in 1943 that it was only the Board of Ministers that would be consulted and because of this development, they refused to cooperate. The Soulbury Commission, chaired by Lord Soulbury, arrived in Sri Lanka in December 1944 during the Governorship of Sir Henry Monck-Mason-Moore (1944 - 1948) and had meetings with various factions of the community for the next four months. The ministers refused to appear at its sittings but their views, and particularly Senanayake's, were made clear to the Commission by intermediaries and also at informal meetings on a personal level.

The Soulbury report was published in July 1945 and soon after the Conservatives were replaced by a Labour government in Britain. The main proposals of the report were that representation was to remain territorial but with electorates redrawn on a population basis to give the minorities better representation, Cabinet government headed by a Prime Minister, a House of Representatives, a Senate of 15 members and a Governor-General representing the Crown with full powers in regard to Defence and External Affairs. The war in the east was over with Japan's sudden defeat. Senanayake travelled to London with the object of arguing his case when the report was published. He was astute enough to take advantage of the change in circumstances and ask for full Dominion status now that the threat of war was no longer a factor. He and his advisers prepared a further draft of the constitution, which included a clause about the main point of contention - Defence and External Affairs. This draft, presented to the Secretary of State in September 1945, proposed that full self-government be established pending the conferment of Dominion status and subject to an agreement on Defence and External Affairs.

The British government would not agree to allow self-government in Sri Lanka before India or Burma and in October 1945 it offered a constitution similar to that recommended by the Soulbury Commission. Despite this offer being far short of his own draft proposals, Senanayake advised the State Council to accept it because the Secretary of State had made a specific promise of Dominion status. He also gave his own personal assurances to the minorities that their rights would be protected. The State Council voted by a majority of fifty-one to three to accept the new constitution. In the new constitution the interests of minorities were to be protected by Section 29, which is meant to prevent any discriminatory laws on grounds of community or religion being enacted by Parliament. Unfortunately, the Soulbury constitution had numerous defects that later allowed discriminatory legislation to be passed. It did not define citizenship or franchise and it did not have a human rights clause.

By 1946 the British government was preparing to grant independence to India and Burma (Myanmar) and this was an added incentive for requesting Dominion status for Sri Lanka. Oliver Goonetilleke carried out negotiations with Whitehall in early 1947. Unlike India there had been no civil disturbances in Sri Lanka caused by extremist nationalistic influences because the moderates had remained in power. However, the moderates were being threatened by increasing pressure from left-wing forces and this was another argument for the granting of Dominion status. D. S. Senanayake organized the United National Party (UNP) in 1947. This was meant to be a party with a conservative outlook and a consensus of moderate opinion. It consisted, at this stage, mainly of the westernized elite and was intended to counter the influence of the left. D. S. Senanayake's personal popularity made it a party acceptable not only to the majority but also to the minority communities. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike brought in his Sinhala Maha Sabha further strengthening the UNP's appeal amongst the Sinhalese. The Tamil Congress and the Muslims also joined. At this early stage the UNP bridged the gap between the various communities and religions. However the Indian Tamils in

the plantations were deliberately left out of this party because they were still considered non-nationals. Under Senanayake's leadership the UNP tried to create a united, homogeneous nation. Its main appeal to the public was its promise to extend the social welfare schemes with free universal education, food subsidies, improvements in working conditions and better medical services.

The British government announced in June 1947 that the island would receive 'fully responsible status' (synonymous with Dominion status but more politically acceptable) within the British Commonwealth on the lines set out by Senanayake's draft proposals of September 1945. In September 1947 elections to the new House of Representatives were held and Senanayake became Prime Minister with a House of Representatives of 101 members and a Senate of 30 members. Of the fourteen ministers in the Cabinet eleven were Sinhalese, two were Tamils and one was a Muslim. Senanayake was the leader of the UNP, the party with the majority in the House of Representatives. In opposition there were three Marxist parties, the Ceylon Indian Congress (representing the estate workers) and a few Independents. In November 1947 the British and Sri Lankan governments signed three pacts. The Defence Agreement gave the British the use of bases in the island in return for protection against any aggression from outside and also an undertaking by Britain that it would train Sri Lanka's armed forces. This Agreement could be unilaterally terminated. The External Affairs Agreement confirmed that relations between Britain and Sri Lanka would be the same as those between existing members of the Commonwealth and the Public Services Agreement merely safeguarded the existing terms of service with regard to British civil servants working in Sri Lanka.

The Ceylon Independence Bill, which effectively stopped Britain's ability to legislate for Sri Lanka and amended Sri Lankan law so that all provisions in the Sri Lankan constitution that restricted autonomy could be removed, was passed and received Royal assent in December 1947. On 4th. February 1948 Sri Lanka became an independent nation. The emblem of the new state was

a golden lion with a sword on a crimson background edged with gold. This centrepiece represented the royal banner of Sinhalese kings. As D. S. Senanayake pointed out in 1947 the banner was that of the last Kandyan king who happened to be a Tamil. The flag, taken away by the British in 1815, was found and retrieved from Chelsea Hospital in 1947. Two stripes one green and the other orange, representing the Tamils and the Moors respectively, were added later.

The cultivation of tea and rubber

The catastrophe that befell the coffee industry (see 'Coffee stimulates the economy') ruined many people but the basis had already been created for the cultivation of other crops in the upland districts. The infrastructure for the transport of the product from the hill-country to the coast was already in place. Cinchona, from the bark of which quinine is extracted was tried first but it soon became obvious that there was a limit to the amount of quinine required and overproduction depressed world prices. The tea plant (*camellia sinensis assamica*) had been found growing wild in the hills of Assam in 1824 by the British. The Chinese had known of the beverage since 2700 B.C. and cultivation of the Chinese variety (*camellia sinensis sinensis*) began in China in the third century A.D. The Assamese variety was probably introduced to Sri Lanka between 1824 and 1828 to be grown in the Botanical Gardens at Kalutara. It was reintroduced to the Botanical Gardens, which had been moved to Peradeniya (near Kandy), in 1839. An attempt at growing the Chinese variety at Labookellie by Maurice Wörms, a member of the Rothschild family, in 1841 was a failure. It was thought that Sri Lanka was too close to the equator for tea to be grown successfully. However, by the 1860s some planters were growing the Assamese variety alongside coffee. Tea prospered and not only took the place of coffee but it did even better as it was able to thrive at a greater range of altitudes and was more resistant to disease. The first tea to be made and sold in Sri Lanka was at Loolecondara Estate in 1872 by a Scotsman named James

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Taylor who had been given tea seedlings by G. H. K. Thwaites, the superintendent of the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens.

By 1883, the dark tea from Sri Lanka was noted for its distinctive aroma in the London market. It became a very popular, non-alcoholic beverage in Britain about this time. Sri Lankan and Indian teas had the advantage that they were produced within the British empire and their production and importation to Britain could be controlled unlike the tea imported from China. Also, whilst the green, expensive and rather insipid Chinese tea had been favoured by the upper classes the cheaper, much more aromatic and stimulating tea of Sri Lanka (which also had the advantage that it could be sweetened) appealed to the commoner classes. There was an increasing demand for the dark teas from Sri Lanka and India in the British markets and as a natural consequence the price of tea increased. In 1890 Thomas Lipton, the owner of a chain of grocery stores in Britain, invested money in the tea plantations. His excellent advertising campaign claimed that he was bringing the product 'straight from the tea gardens to the teapot'. Soon Sri Lanka was known as Lipton's tea garden.

By the late 1890s tea plantations were expanding by about 20,000 acres per annum and by 1900 the total acreage under tea was 384,000 and in modern times it is about 500,000 acres. Of the total export earnings in 1900 of about 91 million rupees, tea accounted for about 54 million rupees (or 60%) and coconut accounted for about 16.5 million rupees. The average yearly consumption of tea in Britain was 6.07 lbs per person in 1900 (as compared to 1.22 lbs in 1840). Unlike coffee, tea cultivation requires a large labour force working all year round and high capital investment in factories and machinery. The requirement of a permanent, large work force not only meant that even more immigration from South India was necessary but also that these immigrants had to become permanent residents - adding another racial element to the already multiracial society. By the 1890s there were about 250,000 Indian immigrants and most of them were permanent settlers. They worked not only on the plantations but also in a number of areas where the work was hard and often unpleasant.

In the estates they were housed in 'coolie lines' and in urban areas they lived in slums. Their different language, culture and even appearance segregated them from the Sinhalese people amongst whom they lived. This Indian immigrant problem has continued into modern times.

The tea bush is an evergreen from which two tender leaves and a bud are plucked mainly by women labourers and then put through the five processes of withering, rolling, fermenting, firing and sorting in the factories situated on the tea estates. In 1897 there was a fall in demand and a slump in world tea prices both of which encouraged better management and an improvement in quality. More capital investment was necessary to improve mechanisation and this was beyond the capability of most individual operators. As a result plantation units combined to form much larger estates, which were controlled by British companies. Some of these companies had their head offices in Colombo and their shares were quoted in rupees in a new share market in Colombo. By 1905, the amount of tea being produced dropped but the quality improved and prices rose again and kept doing so until the outbreak of the First World War. By the 1920s there were few individual owners of tea estates, most previous owners being employed as superintendents by the companies, which had agency houses in Colombo. The processed tea was auctioned in Colombo and in Mincing Lane, London. A broker would act as intermediary and the buying merchant would employ a tea-taster who would blend the teas after having sampled them. The profits made on the capital invested by British companies was enormous and during the colonial era most of these profits were taken out of the country and little was reinvested in the island. Tea became the most important single factor in the island's economy and remains so to this day.

When the price of tea fell in 1897 a search was made for alternative crops. More investment was made in coconut plantations but there was now a greater interest in rubber, which overtook coconut and became the second most important export by 1910. Rubber had been introduced in the 1870s and by the

turn of the century was being grown on a commercial scale. The growth of the motor industry increased the demand for rubber and between 1905 and 1910 rubber prices rose several times. The acreage under rubber during this period was about 200,000. The cultivation of rubber is not labour intensive and does not require as much capital investment as tea cultivation and because of this a number of individuals took to rubber production. Rubber is grown at a lower altitude than tea and in more densely populated areas. The population had increased from 851,940 in 1824 to 4,106,300 in 1911. With the increasing amount of land given over to tea, coconut and rubber the land/population ratio was adversely affected particularly in the more densely populated areas where rubber and coconut were grown.

Peasant agriculture

The plantation industries of coffee, tea, rubber and coconut were essential for the island's economy but the majority of Sinhalese and Tamil people were (and still are) peasant agriculturalists who eked out a living from the small areas of land they cultivated and their main subsistence crop was rice. These people gained little from the plantation economy. It was the peasants living in the dry zone, particularly in the North Central Province, who faced the greatest hardship. Rice requires a great deal of water. The old irrigation systems had suffered neglect over hundreds of years and this not only resulted in lack of water but also encouraged the spread of malaria. Famine and disease resulted in high mortality rates in these areas, which were sparsely populated. In the wet zone water was not a problem but the spread of coconut and rubber plantations was reducing the amount of land available for rice cultivation.

To the more enlightened British administrator it was clear, particularly with a rapidly increasing population, that rice cultivation had to be promoted and less reliance placed on rice imports. Improving irrigation was a fundamental step - and what better way was there to do this than by restoring the ancient irrigation works? It was on the initiative of Governor Sir Henry Ward (1855 - 1860) that restoration work commenced

and the peasants themselves enthusiastically supported it. It was temporarily suspended by his successor, MacCarthy, who was concerned about the expense, but was started again by Governor Robinson and gained momentum under Governor Gregory (1872 - 1877). It was under the latter that the irrigation programme was extended to the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa areas. These were the areas where drought and disease had taken their greatest toll. Gregory started by having the numerous, small village tanks repaired and then moved to the larger tanks such as Kantalai and Kalawewa. Each of these larger tanks (reservoirs) was expected to irrigate several thousands of acres. Investment on irrigation, which resulted in 200,000 acres being added to rice cultivation between 1855 and 1905, was very modest compared to the investment in the plantation crops. In most areas this was subsistence agriculture and little rice was sold. The increase in local food production and the necessary increase in communications by road building improved the lot of the peasants in the dry zone. However, there was a concomitant increase in population and therefore the increased supply of food did not result in a surplus. The lack of a surplus was probably because of inefficient methods of cultivation and the easy availability of cheap rice from abroad, which was often preferred for its taste and texture. Thus there was no adequate incentive for more investment in rice cultivation.

In Sri Lanka, in common with some other tropical countries, 'slash-and-burn' agriculture (called 'chena' cultivation) has been practiced for centuries. This primitive form of agriculture (in which a small area of jungle is cut down and burnt and dry grains grown on this weed-free patch of land) was disliked and discouraged by the British. It is subsistence agriculture carried out mainly in the dry zone and survives to this day. After some years of cultivation when fertility disappears, the peasant moves to another area of jungle.

The Jaffna peninsula was the one area in the dry zone in which there was an adequate source of water and therefore a thriving peasant agriculture. The reason for this is that Jaffna lies on a substratum of limestone through which wells have been drilled. The peasants in the north were noted for their industry

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and their methods of agriculture were very productive. Not only rice but also a variety of vegetables and tobacco (exported to South India) were grown.

A tax on grain grown by the peasant was in operation from the time of the ancient Sinhalese kings and the Portuguese, Dutch and British perpetuated it with modifications made for their own benefit. The main impact of this tax was on paddy (rice in its husk) but it was also imposed on dry grains in the coastal areas. In practice the tax on dry grains was only of importance in the northern areas. In the nineteenth century it was a complex tax with variations in the amount collected and the method used in collection. The government's share ranged from a half to a fourteenth of the gross produce. In some areas collection was rented out to a middle-man and was not carried out by state officials. This latter system was open to abuse. The government also taxed the rice imported from India. The grain tax was extremely unpopular amongst the peasants and though it caused these already impoverished people great hardship it was continued until the 1890s because it formed a fifth to a quarter of the total revenue and was therefore thought to be essential. Also, if it was abolished it was likely that a land tax (which was a significant source of revenue in other British colonies in Asia) would replace it. For this reason abolition was opposed by the Sinhalese representatives in the Legislative Council who belonged to a group of elite land-owners. It was ultimately abolished in the 1890s after a campaign not only in Sri Lanka but also in Britain.

British administration

The foundations for the administrative structure were laid by Governor North and even more so by Governor Maitland (see 'British dominance'). It was modified following the Colebrooke-Cameron recommendations and further modifications occurred during the course of the nineteenth century. At first the provincial administrators were appointed for the purpose of revenue management during Governor North's tenure and replaced the traditional *disāvas*. Unlike the Portuguese and the Dutch the British did not use the existing indigenous administrative

machinery but chose the much more expensive method of appointing British personnel to all the higher posts in the administrative service. These administrators were called 'Agents of Revenue and Commerce' or 'Collectors'. Initially they and their assistants were the only British officials in the districts and more and more duties were allocated to them. The Ceylon Civil Service was established in 1802 and during Governor Maitland's regime the 'Collectors' became 'Government Agents' in whose hands the major administrative, financial and revenue powers of the province were placed. In the earlier days Government Agents had judicial as well as executive powers and acted as local magistrates. This combination of powers was frowned on by the Supreme Court Judges and was later separated with the appointment of District Judges.

The division of the island into Low-Country Sinhalese, Kandyan Sinhalese and Tamil administrative units in the first few years of British rule was changed by the Colebrooke-Cameron reforms and the island became, politically and administratively, a single unit in 1833. This unit was first divided into five provinces and later into nine - Western, North- Western, Southern, Central, Northern, North-Central, Eastern, Uva and Sabaragamuwa. The boundaries of these provinces were defined purely by administrative factors without regard to race and each province was placed under the control of a Government Agent. Colebrooke and Cameron attempted to liberalise the administration and alter the typical colonial structure (as in the Dutch administration) in which the collection of revenue was the overwhelming concern. The original Northern Province demarcated by Colebrooke was a very large area and administration by the Government Agent stationed at Jaffna was difficult. It was therefore divided into two by Governor Gregory and the southern area (called Nuwarakalawiya in the time of the Kandyan kingdom) became the North-Central Province. In the 1880s Uva and Sabaragamuwa, which had also been separate provinces in the days of the Kandyan kingdom, were cut out of the Central Province and restored as provinces.

The provinces were divided into districts. There were twenty-one districts in total and in each province a Government

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Agent (who was also in overall charge of the province) administered the main district and an Assistant Government Agent administered the other districts. The districts were further divided into (native) chief headmen's divisions of which there were a total of 110. These were subdivided into 613 sub-divisions under superior headmen and these, in turn, into around 4000 villages under village headmen. These native headmen, particularly the *mudaliyars*, were treated with some suspicion by the British but remained an essential channel of communication between the rulers and the ruled. With the institution of an annual conference (in 1873) of all the Government Agents to make administration more uniform and also with improved communications, some of the decision making power moved from the Government Agents to the secretariat at Colombo.

The Governor was the chief administrative and executive officer. He had enormous power and prestige, which was gradually whittled away but still remained substantial up to the time the island became independent. At the head of the civil service was the Colonial Secretary based in Colombo and next in line were the Government Agents each in charge of a province. The candidates for appointment to the Civil Service were upper-class young men educated in an English public school and Oxbridge (usually in the Classics) but without any special training in administration. Candidates were appointed by either the Secretary of State or the Governor.

From 1863 the Governor's candidates had to pass a non-competitive examination held in Colombo and from 1880 all candidates had to sit for a competitive examination in London. The new recruits were apprenticed as cadets under a Government Agent and given a 'hands on' experience in administrative, fiscal and judicial duties. A civil servant was meant to be a 'Jack of all trades'. This did not make for a particularly efficient service and may have lacked professionalism. However, most of these men were people with integrity and some had extraordinary talents. George Turnour, Government Agent of Sabaragamuwa, was not only instrumental in finding the '*Tika*' or prose explanation of the *Mahāvamsa* but he also mastered the difficult canonical Pali script

through Sinhalese and was able to translate this into English (see 'Sources of Sri Lankan History' under Background). Leonard Woolf, author of *A Village in the Jungle* and husband of Virginia Woolf, was a Government Agent in the early part of the twentieth century.

Sri Lankans were excluded from the higher echelons of the civil service by design - it was felt that allowing the entry of Sri Lankans would lower standards and make the service less efficient. Expatriate British entrants were thought to be better at looking after the welfare of the natives than local candidates. This was one of the reasons for having the competitive examination in London. The few Sri Lankan candidates who did manage to get in at this stage were side-tracked into judicial posts, which were much less prestigious. Ponnambalam Arunachalam was the first Sri Lankan to pass the examination and enter the Civil Service in 1875. Despite his obvious talents he was not made a Government Agent but was appointed to the relatively unimportant post of Registrar-General. After the opening of the Ceylon University College in 1921, there was an increase in the number of local candidates and from 1924 the Civil Service examination was held simultaneously in Colombo and London. Recruitment of British civil servants was stopped in 1937 and by 1940 there were eighty-one Sri Lankans and only forty-nine Britons in the Civil Service. A great deal of pressure had to be exerted by local politicians before the first Sri Lankan Government Agent, C. L. Wickremasinghe, was appointed in 1931. The clerical service, which assisted the civil servants and formed the lower echelons of the administration, consisted almost entirely of Burghers in the nineteenth century.

The Second World War

The First World War being mainly confined to Europe had very little effect on Sri Lanka. The Second World War, because of better communications, seemed closer even before Japan joined in. Also, Sri Lanka now had an elected, representative government with responsibility and some power. The Leader of the House, D. S. Senanayake, assured His Majesty King George VI and the British Government of the whole-hearted support of the State

Council in the prosecution of the war. The LSSP members refused to support this motion and so did D. S. Senanayake's son Dudley Senanayake (a member of the State Council and a future Prime Minister). The latter did so because he was a dedicated pacifist and abhorred violence. The LSSP underwent an internal crisis when the majority in the party condemned Stalin and the Third Communist International (which supported fascism) and became a Trotskyite party. The few who were Stalinists (including Dr. S. A. Wickremasinghe) were expelled from the LSSP and formed the Communist Party of Ceylon in 1943.

The leaders of the LSSP used every opportunity in the State Council to emphasise its antagonism to the links with Britain and in 1940, with Britain under threat, its leaders were arrested and the party went underground for the duration of the war.



Provinces of modern Sri Lanka

In December 1941 Japan entered the war and there was a dramatic change in Sri Lanka's role in the war. She had reverted to her eighteenth century position of being strategically important in the defence of British India, which was a prize that Japan would try to win. After the rapid fall of Malaya and Burma, Sri Lankan bases became even more important. The situation was obviously very serious and in March 1942 Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton was posted to the island as Commander-in-Chief. He had wide-ranging powers with complete control not only of the army, navy and air force based in the island but also of civil authorities including the Governor. Britain had not expected Sri Lanka to be involved in the war and no preparations had been made with regard to the civilian population. Layton established a War Council, which included the various Chiefs of Staff, the Governor, the Board of Ministers and the Civil Defence Commissioner. The latter was O. E. Goonetilleke, the Auditor-General. Despite a disconcerting stutter he was a brilliant man of many talents, which included administration and diplomacy. He was knighted after the war and was to become the third Governor-General of Sri Lanka.

The Civil Defence Commissioner organised the food supply during the war as the importation of rice and other necessities, which were not produced in the island, had become difficult. Food rationing was instituted and this was the main hardship that the civilians had to suffer. It was obvious to the civilian population by early 1942 that Japanese invasion could be imminent. Stories of the atrocities committed by the Japanese in Malaysia had already reached the island. A large number of civilians left the coastal towns and moved into the interior. This exodus accelerated after the Japanese air raid on Colombo (2 April 1942) and on Trincomalee (9 April 1942). In fact, this was the only action seen in Sri Lanka. Neither of these attacks caused serious damage and the defence (a few anti-aircraft guns and some fighter planes) did remarkably well. In 1943 the South-East Asia Command (SEAC) was established with Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten as Supreme Allied Commander. The head-quarters, initially in India, was later moved to the Botanical Gardens in Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, and it

was from here that the Burma campaign was organised. There was an influx of British and Commonwealth forces into the island at this stage in preparation for an onslaught on Japanese forces in Singapore and Burma and for the first time Sri Lankans came into contact with 'ordinary' British people.

The war was a great opportunity for a number of Sri Lankans to make money. Not only were buildings required for housing the forces but also large amounts of food, drink and entertainment were needed and there was no shortage of contractors to provide these services at a price that they would not have dreamt of in peacetime. Airstrips were built and the ports improved. Rubber and graphite were sold at increased prices. Since Malaysia had been taken by Japan, Sri Lanka was the largest supplier of rubber to the Allies. The cost of living rose during the war and the people who suffered most were those on low, fixed incomes. The situation became worse soon after the war when the troops had left, the prices continued to rise and wages were only increased slightly by the Salaries Committee of 1945. Inevitably, a general strike was threatened in 1946 instigated by the Clerical Service and supported by the Communist Party. This threat was subdued with the help of the military but the problem arose again the following year. Government employees were not allowed to belong to a union or strike at this stage. When they did strike the government again subdued the strikers by using the police and army. Many of these strikers were members of the English educated *elite* and had been strong supporters of the government leadership. It highlighted the deteriorating economic situation mainly amongst workers in the government service.

Social change, ethnic and communal awareness

The traditional elite, amongst both the Sinhalese and the Tamils, consisted of those who had been chief headmen (*mudaliyars*) under the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British. Those who had managed to survive in these prestigious positions had done so by collaborating with the rulers. They were high-caste (Goyigama and Vellāla) land-owners who lived in semi-feudal style and despite the fact that the British treated them with suspicion, they were

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useful channels of communication between the common people and the rulers. The land they owned had been granted to them for services rendered. These land grants were abolished in 1832 as a result of the Colebrooke-Cameron recommendations, which reduced the importance of the *mudaliyars*. Despite the reduction in their power, their inherited superiority survived. Being the wealthiest amongst native Sri Lankans, they were (together with the Burghers) the first to take up an English education. Governor Gordon (1883 - 1890) reversed the government's policy of reducing the influence of the *mudaliyars* and the aristocracy regained some of its prestige.

The development of a capitalist economy combined with a *laissez faire* attitude in the second half of the century produced a class of entrepreneurs amongst the local population. This new elite, having made their money in coffee and other ventures, were able to compete with the traditional elite. In the Tamil areas the Vellāla community managed to maintain its position at the top of the ladder but in the Sinhalese areas these *nouveau riche* were not necessarily from the Goyigama caste but also belonged to some of the castes considered as lower such as the Karāva, Durāva and Salāgama. Government policy of selling land made it possible for these people with newly acquired wealth to overtake the traditional elite in the ownership of land. In addition, they were also able to obtain an education in English and compete for jobs in fields that had once only been open to upper caste candidates. In the Sinhalese areas the Karāva caste, which was second only to the Goyigama in numbers, dominated certain aspects of lucrative trade (such as the distillation and sale of arrack). In Moratuwa, for example, the de Soysa family having made their fortune in the coffee industry branched out into other trades and was the most affluent family in Sri Lanka by the middle of the nineteenth century. As in other societies the *nouveau riche* tended towards ostentation as exemplified by C. H. de Soysa's reception for the Duke of Edinburgh in 1870 (see 'Constitutional stasis') and the traditional elite resented this.

The spreading affluence and the openings made available in the bureaucracy, the government departments and the professions for an English educated elite led to a considerable expansion in the middle-class. By the early twentieth century a large proportion of this group were either directly or indirectly associated with the government. These 'government servants', particularly those who had reached the upper echelons, were gradually taking the social positions of the Europeans who had occupied these posts. Their fellow countrymen treated the Sri Lankans who achieved these senior positions with respect similar to that given to their European predecessors. In addition, the expansion of commercial plantations created new trades and occupations such as planters, contractors, transport agents and businessmen. This new middle-class was an upwardly mobile group. It was concentrated mainly in the urban areas. Being educated in English schools (and some in English universities) the members of this group were anglicized and steeped in Western culture. They wore western clothes and were sarcastically referred to as the 'trouser class' or 'brown sahibs'. This was, indeed, a triumph for British colonial policy and culture. They had managed to produce a powerful group that was not only loyal to the British government but had a British outlook and emulated Western customs.

The vast majority of the population did not belong to the elite groups described above. About ninety per cent of the population, in the nineteenth century, lived as they had done for several centuries. They were peasants living at subsistence level or less in villages without any of the basic amenities of life. The change in their situation from ancient times was that the social and economic centres had moved away from the villages, which had become neglected backwaters. The village, once an important facet of the kingdom, was no longer of any importance to the rulers. Education in the vernacular languages did spread amongst this group but there was a tremendous and unbridgeable gap between them and the elite. Some of these peasants did move to urban areas but only to be employed in menial jobs often as servants in the houses of the elite. There was also an increasing

working class of labourers and other low paid workers in the towns. It was only with representative self-government that the villages regained a little of their importance. Unfortunately, some unscrupulous politicians used them as a political ploy.

Cohesion between the heterogeneous groups that formed the educated elite in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was superficial despite the common anglicized outlook. Though they now formed a single class, caste, religious and racial sensitivities were still very real and the homogeneous society that the British were hoping to produce did not materialize. It was not difficult to produce an apparent Western outlook but almost impossible to get people to put aside their outmoded but deep-rooted traditional differences. The differences between the two main ethnic groups were conveniently submerged in the union they formed against their British rulers. However even at this stage, though social mixing was commonplace, intermarriage was very rare. Marriage was usually arranged within the community either by the parents or well-wishers and usually involved a dowry provided by the wife's parents. Inter-communal marriage occurred occasionally, particularly amongst the English educated elite, in the twentieth century but was generally disapproved of. It never occurred amongst the peasants in the villages mainly because of the segregated nature of these villages. This ethnic awareness was also present amongst the other minorities and, paradoxically, became even more accentuated when communal representation was abolished with the implementation of the Donoughmore Constitution in 1931. Communal fears amongst the Tamils that they would be reduced to an impotent minority were already present in the 1920s when the wrangling for the allocation of seats began (see 'Representative government 1921 - 1936')

The Burghers (descendants of Dutch, Portuguese and other European colonists), who were amongst the first to obtain an English education and therefore enter the bureaucracy and the professions, did not mix freely with other Sri Lankans in the nineteenth century. They considered themselves a privileged

class and indeed they exerted an influence out of all proportion to their numbers. Though they were of European descent, the British treated them as native Sri Lankans and did not mix socially with them. The Burghers had their own intrinsic social distinctions in which the Dutch Burghers were at the top and the Portuguese Burghers were at the bottom. The Dutch Burghers were those who could demonstrate European ancestry (Dutch or Portuguese) through the male line. They were white, belonged to the Dutch Reformed Church and were Dutch speakers. Inter-marriage with Sinhalese and Tamils was rare in the nineteenth century but became somewhat more common in the twentieth. The Dutch Burghers were further divided in importance within their community by the relative prominence of their families during the Dutch period. The Portuguese Burghers were those who had an uncertain European ancestry, a dark skin, were Catholics and spoke Creole Portuguese. They lived in the coastal areas and were later called 'mechanics' perhaps because that was the type of occupation common amongst them. Most of them did not aspire to an English education and (well into the twentieth century) wore a garb similar to that worn by the Portuguese sailors of the sixteenth century, the most striking feature being the 'three-quarter length' trousers.

The origin of the Moors (Muslims) has been discussed in the section on 'Racial origins' in the chapter on 'Background'. These Muslims remained faithful to Islam and its culture during the colonial periods. During British rule some of the wealthier Muslim families acquired an English education and entered the professions and the bureaucracy. Here, too, social mixing occurred within the middle-class but inter-marriage with the other communities was rare.

The Planters were another group that emerged with coffee, tea and rubber cultivation. Initially they were all British but in the twentieth century the Burghers and then Sinhalese and Tamils entered the group. The British planters represented a wide spectrum of the British population. They acquired a reputation for working hard and enjoying life to the full. They lived in spacious

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bungalows in idyllic settings. Each group of estates had its own exclusive social club with its tennis courts and other facilities. Fishing and shooting were popular pastimes.

The British planters were similar to most other British people on the island in that they could never adjust to a culture that they found totally alien. It seems to have been as much a 'culture shock' to these British officials in the nineteenth century as it is to a British tourist in the twenty-first century. They knew that their sojourn on the island was temporary and rarely mixed socially with the natives. In fact, for most of the period it was official policy that any social association with native Sri Lankans was taboo. They maintained an air of superiority and only mixed socially with other Europeans. Many of those in executive positions were from the British upper class and this air of superiority perhaps came naturally and was strongly supported by the positions of real power that they held. The Government Agent of a province, for instance, acted and was treated like royalty. He was, after all, the undisputed ruler of the province. The gap between the rulers and the ruled was immense and though it narrowed towards the end of the period, it never closed. In contrast, Sri Lankans who came to England in the nineteenth century were surprised and impressed at being well treated in social terms by the English in their own country. Some of these Sri Lankans even returned to Sri Lanka with English wives. This ambiguity was very probably because the British abroad felt insecure and unsure of themselves in social dealings with the people whom they ruled.

Education and religion

In the early stages of their rule, the British maintained the rudimentary network of schools left behind by the Dutch. There was great enthusiasm for evangelism in Britain and this made the Secretary of State for the Colonies request Governor Maitland (1805 - 1812) to encourage the establishment of Christian schools in the island. The colonial government was reluctant to expand education because of the expense and the lack of an adequate administrative structure. Various missionary societies undertook

the management of parish schools. Protestant missions arrived not only from Britain but also from other parts of the world (for instance, in 1816 an American mission founded the island's first girls' schools in Jaffna) and by 1826 there were two hundred missionary schools. In the Kandyan region mission schools were established from 1818 and by 1823 there were five. Before 1834 it was the missions that constructed a system of schooling, which laid the foundation of education in Sri Lanka for many years to come.

The medium of instruction in most of these missionary schools was English and the aim was to convert the children of the elite who attended these schools to Christianity. The opinion at the Colonial Office was that instruction in the vernacular languages and the spread of education to the masses were unnecessary. In 1826 English became essential for even a minor post in the administration. Buddhists, Hindus and Roman Catholics in whose schools instruction was in the vernacular languages were at a great disadvantage despite the fact that their schools outnumbered the Protestant missionary schools. The Colebrooke-Cameron Report was very critical of the state schools and recommended the establishment of a School Commission made up of the Archdeacon of Colombo, the Christian clergy and some senior government officials. With this Commission in place by 1834 the state assumed a much greater responsibility for education. In 1835 Reverend Marsh, a Scotsman, started a private school on the rear verandah of his church for educating Sri Lankan upper class children in English. This school, called the Hill Street Academy, did so well that Governor Horton was persuaded to convert it into a government school. It was renamed Colombo Academy (Royal College from 1881) and charged a lower range of fees than its predecessor thus allowing the education of a wider strata of society.

The view that instruction in the vernacular languages was unnecessary was opposed by some people with influence such as Governor Stewart-Mackenzie (1837 - 1841) and a Wesleyan missionary, Reverend D. J. Gogerly. It was due to the latter's

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efforts that vernacular education was officially adopted between 1843 and 1848. By 1870 education policy was implemented by the Department of Public Instruction and the number of vernacular schools had increased greatly. Three types of schools evolved - the English schools, the bilingual schools (teaching in English and the vernacular) and the vernacular schools. The colonial government promoted the vernacular schools and made education from the ages of five to fourteen compulsory with no fees being charged at these establishments. However the standard of education in these schools, which were mainly in rural areas, was poor and so was pupil attendance. There was a vast divide between the relatively small number of privileged English schools and the large number of vernacular schools. The Education Code drafted by Charles Bruce in the 1880's was clearly aimed at restricting the primary education in rural areas. A few schools, called Central Schools, set up by the Central School Commission were the only English schools supported by the government. On the other hand, there were a number of well run missionary schools teaching in English. The Department of Public Instruction merely supplemented the educational activities of the missionaries. In the educational system that came into existence in colonial times, English was all-important and the vernacular languages were ignored except in the villages. The bilingual (Anglo-vernacular) schools attempted to be 'all things to all men' and taught in the vernacular in the mornings and in English in the afternoons. They were not a success and gradually disappeared.

In the English schools run by the missionaries and in the Colombo Academy the curricula followed were very similar to those in the public schools and grammar schools in England at the time. Even the history and geography of Sri Lanka was neglected in favour of the history and geography of Britain. The purpose was to prepare students for higher education in British universities and also for the professions. These schools levied fees. Not surprisingly a small westernized, mainly Christian, native elite was produced. The vast majority of the population did not have the opportunity to avail themselves of this English

education, which was essential for entry even into a minor post in the public service. The colonial government did not see the need (and did not wish to spend the money) for the spread of English and higher education in the island. Influential members of the traditional elite, concerned that their own position in society would be threatened, were also against the spread of education to the peasant population. This position amongst the elite changed with the coming of representative government in the twentieth century and the need to acquire votes in rural areas.

By the early years of the twentieth century, the Buddhist revivalist movement was very critical of the dominance of the denominational Christian schools in the education system and felt that the state should take the major responsibility. The Buddhist movement was also against proselytisation of students by Christian organisations within Christian schools. The Roman Catholics were the most antagonistic to more state control whilst the Anglicans and Methodists were less vehement. A 'conscience clause' to prevent proselytisation in schools was recommended by the Wace Commission in 1905 and again by the MacRae Commission in 1929 but in both instances the missionary organisations were influential enough to resist implementation of the recommendations. Although the denominational system was still dominant in the education system its expansion had slowed and state schools were increasing in numbers at a faster rate by 1930. In the late 1930s the Minister of Education, C. W. W. Kannangara, commenced a programme of radical reform. The most important change came into effect in 1943 when education from the kindergarten to the university was declared free. The state was to pay the teachers salaries and provide grants for maintenance and equipment. This was not only a move towards social welfare but also a check on the denominational schools. Most schools joined the scheme but a few remained private.

Secondary education in government schools only commenced in 1870 following the implementation of the recommendations made by a Committee chaired by Robert Morgan, a distinguished Burgher lawyer. Facilities for higher

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education were limited and a university education could only be acquired by going abroad or by taking an external degree of the London University, which was less prestigious. The Technical School, which became the Ceylon Technical College, was founded in 1894 and provided training in engineering and surveying to government technical staff.

There was agitation for a university for a long time, particularly by Ananda Coomaraswamy and Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, before a coeducational Ceylon University College was founded in 1921 to prepare students for degrees of the London University. Entry to the College was obtained by passing an examination held annually in Sri Lanka by the Local Examinations Syndicate of Cambridge. In 1929 a Commission chaired by Sir Walter Buchanan-Riddell of Oxford University agreed on a university similar to Oxford and Cambridge sited at Peradeniya but plans were shelved with the onset of the economical depression followed by the onset of World War II. The nonresidential University of Ceylon was established in Colombo in 1942 mainly because the site at Peradeniya was not ready for occupation. By 1949 some students were moved to Peradeniya and in 1952 the entire Faculty of Arts and Oriental Studies was moved to the residential campus at Peradeniya.

The revival of Buddhism was a response to the progressive encroachment of western culture and religion. Initially the efforts of Christian missionaries to convert the natives to Christianity was treated with indifference but by the middle of the nineteenth century resistance was becoming more obvious. Public debates were held between Christian missionaries and champions of the Buddhist faith (usually *bhikkhus*). The debating skills of the latter improved as time passed and by the 1870s a Buddhist priest named Migettuvatte Gunananda proved himself an outstanding debater and became the unofficial leader of the revivalist movement. These debating triumphs increased the self-confidence of the Buddhists and news of the debates came to the notice of Colonel H. S. Olcott, the American founder of the Theosophical Society. Olcott, who was very critical of Christianity,

corresponded with the Ven. Gunananda. The latter translated the correspondence into Sinhalese and made it available to Buddhists throughout the island. Olcott arrived in Sri Lanka in 1880 and his main contribution was to encourage the use of the more intellectual aspects of the revivalist movement against the spread of Christianity within the island. He was also responsible for the founding of three Buddhist colleges and several Buddhist schools. At the same time an attempt was made to reform the *sangha* and cleanse it of Hindu influence. This Buddhist revival contributed greatly to the rise of nationalism (also see 'Early constitutional reform 1900 – 1921') and was exploited particularly by Anagarika Dharmapala who possessed exceptional skills of communication and became a well-known publicist for Buddhism.

One of the reasons for the importance of the association between the state and religion was the subsidies provided by the government. By the 1840s Christian missionaries had succeeded in dissociating Buddhism from the state. The Anglican Church, however, continued to have some support from the state until 1881 when it was disestablished. In the 1880s, under the Governorship of Sir Arthur Gordon there were signs that the state had begun to accept that it had a special obligation towards Buddhism. A contribution towards repairs to the Ruvanvālisāya and a gift to the Daḷadā Māligāva were the first signs of this change in policy. The reason for this change is not clear but the activities of Colonel Olcott may have had some influence. Buddhist temple lands had deteriorated considerably because of poor administration and corruption particularly within the wealthy Kandyan temple properties. Governor Gordon made an attempt to correct this by placing control of these lands in the hands of lay committees elected by the priesthood and responsible to provincial committees but this proved unsatisfactory. In 1907 the provincial committees were abolished and the district committees were given more powers. The colonial government was unwilling to agree to the wishes of the Buddhist revivalists and take direct control of the temple lands.

In Jaffna a revival in Hinduism had commenced by the 1840s due to the work of Arumuga Navalar, a multi-talented and energetic Tamil classicist. His critical essays of classical Tamil texts and his systematic compilation of Saivite doctrines gave a new life to Hinduism in the north and east of the island and kept the proselytising activities of the Protestant Christian missionaries in check. However, he was not anti-Christian and worked with the missionaries even translating the Bible into Tamil. He also founded several schools including the school that later became the Jaffna Hindu College. Hinduism, unlike Buddhism, was able to draw on the enormous Hindu resources in India and it was easier to retain Hindu culture and customs. Because of this, the caste system continued to be more rigidly observed in the Hindu areas with the Vellāla caste maintaining its superiority and becoming the main recipient of the opportunities provided by the British.

Islam survived in Sri Lanka because Muslims were very much against conversion to Christianity and wary of the impact of any foreign culture. It was mainly for these reasons that few Muslims undertook an English education. As a consequence the Muslim community became relatively ignorant, more and more involved in trade, very materialistic and inward looking. In the latter part of the nineteenth century M. C. Siddi Lebbe, a Muslim lawyer, and an Egyptian exile named Arabi Pasha encouraged English education amongst the Muslims. They also campaigned for reforms in Muslim religious practice, founded the Muslim Educational Society and a newspaper named the 'Muslim Nation' (this was in Tamil, the language spoken by the majority of Sri Lankan Muslims). Neither Islam nor Hinduism, in contrast to Buddhism, produced a nationalistic movement in Sri Lanka.

After a very bleak period under the Dutch, Roman Catholicism in the island recovered under the British. In 1806 the religious sanctions imposed by the Dutch were removed and religious freedom restored. However in England at the time anti-Catholicism was in vogue and this had an adverse effect on the attitude of British officials towards Roman Catholicism in Sri Lanka. It was only after the British Parliament passed the

Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829 that a more liberal attitude became apparent. The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka was then able to demonstrate its resilience by competing with the Protestant Church not only in the field of education but also in its scope for proselytisation.

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A semblance of stability (1948 - 1956)

On 4 February 1948 Sir Henry Monck-Mason-Moore, the last Colonial Governor of Sri Lanka was sworn in as the first Governor-General of the newly independent country. In contrast to other countries in the Indian subcontinent the transfer of power in Sri Lanka at independence was peaceful and the acrimony within the various factions of the population was submerged. It was a freedom, which seemed to have been obtained without much effort or rancour. To the vast majority of the, mainly rural, population of the country, who had not really taken any active part in considering the effects of freedom, there was no apparent change in the previous colonial structure. It was the westernized *elite* who had been instrumental in obtaining independence. Within the new government peace and stability were maintained mainly because of the personality of D. S. Senanayake (see 'The road to Independence'). Under his leadership the United National Party (UNP) was successful in bridging the gap between the various communities and religions in this time of euphoria. The provisions in the constitution preventing discriminatory laws being passed against minorities and Senanayake's determination to maintain Sri Lanka as a secular state also placated the minorities at this stage. The policy, at this new and innocent phase of Sri Lanka's independence, was to subjugate communal and religious differences to a common goal - that of working towards a united nation through democratic institutions.

The General Election of 1947, in which only 49% of the total electorate voted, had not given the UNP an absolute majority in Parliament but D. S. Senanayake was able to obtain the support of the twenty-one Independents and the six nominated members (four Europeans and two Burghers) to form a coalition government. The three left-wing groups were in opposition with eighteen seats. It was only in 1950 that they agreed to make Dr. N. M. Perera, who headed the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), Leader of the Opposition. The UNP had made use of the communist bogey in the election campaign to obtain the support of Buddhist and Roman Catholic priesthood against the Marxist LSSP, which campaigned on the merits of its doctrine, which was opposed to the nationalist *bourgeoisie* obtaining power. It was advantageous for the UNP to exaggerate the threat posed by the leftist parties not only to obtain the support of the mainly conservative rural electorate but also to maintain the goodwill of western governments (concerned at this time about the spread of communism in Asia), which were prospective sources of economic aid. However, the LSSP was also committed to a multiracial, secular state and their concept of citizenship also included the immigrant Indian Tamil workers.

The Indian Tamils, who made up a considerable proportion of the population in the central highland areas, were anti-UNP and D.S. Senanayake was concerned that they would be enticed from the Ceylon Indian Congress by the leftist parties. There was also the concern that they would lend additional political weight to the demands of the indigenous Tamils and Sinhalese opinion was very suspicious of the Indian Tamils. The British, who had caused the problem by importing cheap Indian labour, not only to Sri Lanka but also to other parts of the empire, washed their hands of the matter, leaving the Sri Lankan and Indian governments to sort out this intractable problem. Citizenship Acts passed in 1948 and 1949 restricted Sri Lankan nationality to those who could claim it on grounds of descent or by registration on conditions, which were almost impossible to substantiate. These Acts effectively deprived about ten per cent of the total population of their citizenship rights. Also, in 1949 an Act of Parliament denied these workers of

Indian origin the right to vote. The latter Act was beneficial to the UNP at the next election when the Ceylon Indian Congress, which had six seats in the first Parliament, lost a vast majority of its voters in the central electorates and the UNP won five additional seats. Not only were the Citizenship Bills the first Parliamentary enactments that made racial feeling politically acceptable but they also distorted the electoral balance in favour of the Sinhalese rural voter.

One of the two Tamil Cabinet Ministers, C. Suntharalingam, resigned in protest at the Citizenship Bills but the Tamil Congress, representing the Sri Lankan Tamils, joined the government and its leader, G. G. Ponnambalam, became a Cabinet Minister. A dissident Tamil group, unhappy with Ponnambalam's policy of collaboration with the Sinhalese-dominated UNP, broke away from the Tamil Congress and formed the Federal Party or FP (Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi in Tamil - ITAK) with Samuel James Velupillai Chelvanayakam, popularly known as S.J.V., as its leader. Unlike the Tamil Congress, which favoured a single united nation, the Federal Party wished to preserve Tamil identity by establishing an autonomous Tamil linguistic state within a federal union of Sri Lanka.

In the years following the end of the Second World War the country's economic assets were remarkably good and in 1948 the amount owed to it because of British forces spending in the island was the equivalent of 1,260,000,000 rupees in sterling balances. However, the agreement between the two governments was vague and the foreign income derived from this quarter, which was the main source of national income began to fall. At the same time the cost of imports rose making a heavy deficit in the balance of payments. The economy was also dependent on the export of tea, rubber and coconut, which were at the mercy of price fluctuations in the world markets. The Korean War in 1950 had the welcome effect of raising the price of rubber and boosting the flagging economy. The government also had the advantage of being the largest landholder, controlling about three million acres of mainly jungle land, which required development to become economically

viable. The country's standard of living was much higher than that of India, Pakistan or Burma. This higher standard came with the social welfare schemes commenced in the 1930s following the Donoughmore Commission and these schemes consumed about sixty per cent of the government's resources in 1948. The population was increasing at about 3% per annum by 1949 mainly because of a drop in the death rate that, in turn, was due to the eradication of malaria. In retrospect it is clear that this increasing expense on social welfare was going to be impossible to maintain.

Despite the new facade the policies for development were a continuation of those that had already been put in place by the Board of Ministers in the previous administration. The early UNP governments were lulled into a feeling of spurious economic security by the boom that occurred in the early 1950s because of favourable world prices for the cash crops. Insufficient investment was made into industrial projects, which would have been the obvious route to improving and substantiating the economy. The hydro-electric scheme, a possible source of cheap electricity to power industrial development, took twenty-six years to start functioning and when it finally did so in 1950 the electricity was only sufficient for domestic use. On the whole the Six Year Plan put forward by the UNP ministers was not a success except with regard to agriculture. D.S. Senanayake had commenced this work when he was Minister of Agriculture and Lands in the State Council. Its highlight was the Gal Oya Project, which was meant to provide 150,000 acres of irrigable land and also provide hydro-electric power for industrial purposes. This and other projects designed to help peasant agriculture did improve the production of paddy by 1955. Associated with these agricultural projects were colonization schemes, which the Tamils saw as a threat to the communal composition of areas that were traditionally Tamil.

In 1951 at a time when the prestige of the UNP was at its zenith S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, who had joined the UNP (see 'Road to Independence') and was a Cabinet Minister and Leader of the House, crossed over to the opposition. His politics perhaps evolved from a distinctly anti-British sentiment that he developed

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whilst at Oxford and was obvious enough to be mentioned in the autobiography of his contemporary, the writer Evelyn Waugh. Waugh hints, in his characteristically spiteful manner, that this may have been due to the fact that he was referred to as a 'black man'. From this came a strong nationalist, pro-Sinhalese, pro-Buddhist stance. As the most adroit Sri Lankan politician of his time he must also have realised that these policies were the most opportune ways of obtaining power. He understood that there was social and economic discontent amongst a large group of Buddhist activists, which felt that the party in power was neglecting it. In September 1951 he formed the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), which was meant to attract all those who were dissatisfied with the UNP and did not agree with the Marxist opposition. The policies of the SLFP were to eventually put an end to the concept of a multi-racial, secular, single nation.

In March 1952, D.S. Senanayake died after being thrown whilst exercising his horse on Galle Face Green. There was rivalry for the succession and Lord Soulbury (Governor-General from 1949) appointed D.S. Senanayake's son, Dudley Senanayake, much to the chagrin of Sir John Kotelawala, the most senior minister and UNP Treasurer. The new prime minister had strong liberal-minded and pacifist views. He was a good administrator and had been Minister of Agriculture in his father's cabinet but lacked his father's charisma and certainly did not have the driving ambition of some of his contemporary politicians. Unusually, for a politician, he had a conscience. At the General Elections of 1952 the UNP, probably aided by the 'sympathy vote' because of the tragic death of a popular leader, won a decisive majority. Significantly the SLFP won enough seats to make Bandaranaike the Leader of the Opposition. In 1952 the price of rubber had fallen again but the disastrous effect on the economy was averted, albeit temporarily, by a new trade agreement with communist China that guaranteed a satisfactory price for sheet rubber. This pact, signed in Peking by the new Minister of Commerce, R.G. Senanayake (Dudley's cousin), though unpopular in the West, had no political overtones.

By 1953 the country had grown used to the food subsidies

that were instituted during the Second World War and had been continued into the post-colonial period. These were meant to prevent famine and hardship during the war years but became an expected handout that the government did not dare withdraw. A World Bank Mission supported the Ceylon Central Bank in its advice to the government that this subsidy, which had a crippling effect on the economy, should be reduced. Acting on this advice, the government reduced the rice subsidy despite having promised, during the election campaign of 1952, to maintain it at the same level. The price of rice trebled and the LSSP took the opportunity of provoking an island-wide strike on 12 August 1953. This *hartāl* (a term first used in India to signify nation-wide strikes) ended in a state of emergency after the police over-reacted and shot several people. The prime minister was conscience stricken by this violence and resigned. He was replaced by the ebullient Sir John Kotelawala who, despite several years of political experience, did not have much political foresight and was out of touch with the rural masses.

It was a time during which the economy seemed buoyant. Tea prices rose and the price of rubber was stable. It was possible to partially restore the food subsidies. It was also possible for the new prime minister to play at being an international statesman. He did this with great verve. A conference of South East Asian powers was convened at Colombo in 1954 on his initiative. These meetings of Asian nations did serve a useful purpose in conveying to the world powers that interfering in Asian politics would provoke a reaction from a consortium of nations. It was at a time that France was being forced to withdraw from Indo-China. At Bandung in Indonesia twenty-nine Afro-Asian countries, including communist China, met in 1955 and Sir John Kotelawala attempted to make his mark on the international stage by accusing the communist powers of practising a new form of colonialism. This earned him the sarcastic title of 'hero of Bandung' in the Sri Lankan press but did nothing to improve his popularity with the electoral masses.

In 1954 Sir Oliver Goonetilleke became Governor-General at the end of Lord Soulbury's term and in the following year Sri

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Lanka, which had been kept out of the United Nations because of a veto by the USSR, was admitted to the UN as a result of a deal made between the western powers and the Soviet Union. As far as the majority of voters were concerned none of these matters made any difference to the central issues of the day, which had become language, religion and culture. It was the intelligentsia amongst the Sinhalese-educated voters who felt that they were excluded from rewarding careers because of their lack of English. This Sinhalese-educated faction was mainly Buddhist, as most of the Sinhalese Christians would have had an English education in the Christian mission schools. In addition, there was resentment that the Tamils held senior governmental and professional posts out of all proportion to their relative numbers. This was attributed to their having had an unfair advantage as far as an English education was concerned. It was also felt that Buddhism and Buddhist culture were being neglected. The prime minister and the UNP ignored this upsurge of linguistic and religious nationalism whilst Bandaranaike and the SLFP not only understood its significance but also encouraged it.

Towards the end of 1955, Sir John Kotelawala brought matters to a head by making a speech in Jaffna claiming that he would legislate for the parity of Sinhalese and Tamil. A compromise had been reached about the use of both Sinhalese and Tamil in 1944 but constitutional provision for this had not been made though all the national political parties had stood for both Sinhalese and Tamil as official languages up to this time. This speech caused an unprecedented uproar in the Sinhalese areas, which surprised even the supporters of the SLFP but they promptly took advantage of the situation by stating that they would make Sinhalese the official language but allow for a 'reasonable use' of Tamil. The UNP countered, too late, by reversing their policy and stating that they would make Sinhalese the official language - without any mention of Tamil.

1956 was the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha's death and there was dismay amongst Buddhists that the elections had been brought forward to this year of celebration (*Buddha Jayanti*) by the

UNP, which wished to capitalize on its new stance on language. Bandaranake had made a no-contest pact with the LSSP and CP. The SLFP had joined with Philip Gunawardena's section of the LSSP to form the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) or Peoples United Front. In the run-up to the General Elections in April 1956 the political activities of the Buddhist priesthood (*bhikkhus*) played an important role in convincing the mass of rural Sinhalese voters that this was a symbolic struggle against the UNP not only for Buddhism but also for the Sinhalese language and nationhood. Kotelawala and the UNP suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the MEP and a new era began with S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike as prime minister.

The opening of Pandora's box (1956 - 1959)

The MEP and UNP tried to outdo each other in stoking the fires of racialism, religious intolerance and rabid nationalism. In their desire for power at any cost they did not seem to realize that the extreme emotions and aggression that were raised could not easily be brought under control even after the objective was achieved. Like Pandora, in Greek mythology, they had opened a box out of which came a number of evils and miseries that flew out of their control and were to plague the country for many years to come. The MEP was a coalition and not a single party and the various people who financed it and voted for it (this included powerful sections of the Buddhist priesthood) felt that they should be able to take advantage of the success achieved by the people they had supported. One of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's main problems when he came into power in 1956 was to keep the promises and pay the political debts that he had accumulated on his way to becoming prime minister. He did not get much help from a divided and mediocre Cabinet. Perhaps as a result, he relied on his ability as a demagogue with a fluent vocabulary to enable him to survive. This merely stoked the fires even further.

The relationship between Buddhism and Sri Lankan nationalism does go back a long way and according to the *Mahāvamsa* was being expressed even at the time of Duṭṭhagāmuṇu

(see 'The development of the Sinhalese kingdom'). This relationship was kept alive by the Buddhist priesthood particularly as a means of maintaining Sinhalese nationhood in the face of opposition from Tamil (Hindu) southern India. This Buddhist-Sinhalese nationalism was suppressed during the colonial period when Sri Lanka had become a multiracial, multi-religious state incorporating the Jaffna kingdom populated by Tamils, who are mainly Hindus. Movements with political overtones combining Buddhism with Sinhalese nationalism, such as the one started by Anagarika Dharmapala (see 'Early constitutional reform'), had existed during the British period but it was the declaration made by the Vidyalankara *bhikkhus* at Kelaniya in 1946 that opened the door for overt political activity by Buddhist priests.

The Buddhist *saṅgha* claimed that it was now able to speak not only for Buddhism but also for Sinhalese nationalism and the Sinhalese language. A new form of militancy appeared amongst Buddhist priests who had as one of their leaders the Chief Prelate of the Kelaniya Temple, Mapitigama Buddharakkhita Thera. This militancy evinced itself in hostility towards other races, particularly the Tamils and towards other religions, particularly Roman Catholicism, and bore no resemblance to the teachings of the Buddha. The Buddhist temple and its organization in Sri Lanka are such that they can effectively muster public opinion particularly in rural areas and hence influence a majority of voters. The militancy shown by the Buddhist priesthood was encouraged by many Sinhalese political leaders who saw it as a means of obtaining power for themselves. The support for the revival of Buddhism and, by extension, of Sinhalese nationalism and language became particularly vehement in 1956, the year of celebration of *Buddha Jayanti* - the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha's death. In addition to the Buddhist priesthood Bandaranaike's other sources of support from the Sinhalese 'intelligentsia' were Sinhalese teachers and practitioners of Ayurveda (indigenous medicine). Sinhalese nationalism was being propagated as Sri Lankan nationalism at the expense of the multi-ethnic, multi-religious state. The balance of political forces that D. S. Senanayake had so

assiduously cultivated was discarded.

At the previous elections of 1952 the SLFP manifesto had emphasized the place of 'swabhasha' (the national languages - both Sinhalese and Tamil). As less than 5% of the population spoke English, the language of administration, this was a commendable and valid stance. But by 1956 the SLFP's stance had changed mainly for the purpose of inflaming emotions against a community, traditionally regarded as an enemy, and thereby winning the votes of the majority. Language was the main issue in 1956 with the SLFP, closely followed by the UNP, now campaigning for one national language (Sinhalese) as the only official language. Despite the serious disadvantages that this would cause the Tamil community, the Sinhala Only Bill was introduced in June 1956. The democratic path was, in legal terms, being followed to the letter but not in spirit. Because of the flexibility of the constitution and the absence of a bill of fundamental rights it was possible to introduce legislation that seemed to contravene the essence of Section 29, which was meant to protect the interests of the minorities (see 'The road to independence'). This section provides safeguards against legislation being passed by Parliament that results in disabilities or restrictions being placed on persons of one community or religion to which persons of other communities or religions are not made liable. It also makes clear that privileges or advantages given to people of any one community or religion should also be made available to members of other communities or religions.

Sinhalese is only spoken by the Sinhalese population of Sri Lanka whilst Tamil is not only spoken by the Tamils in Sri Lanka but also by many millions of people in southern India. However, this is not a cogent reason for degrading the use of Tamil in Sri Lanka. Not only geography but also historic tradition separates the Sri Lankan Tamils (as distinct from Indian Tamil plantation workers - see 'Origins' under Background) from the Tamils of Tamil Nadu in South India but this is not easily understood or accepted by the average Sinhalese. Mainly for political reasons it has become convenient to group all Tamils together as the traditional

enemy from southern India. Tamil Members of Parliament protested against the Sinhala Only Bill by means of *satyagraha* - the nonviolent protest that was introduced by Mahatma Gandhi. They were attacked by a racist mob when they staged a sit-down 'strike' in Galle Face Green. There were also attacks on Tamil colonists in Gal-Oya and isolated attacks on Tamils in other parts of the country.

Concerned by these disturbances, and adept at temporizing, Bandaranaike procrastinated not only on the issue of Sinhala Only (the Bill was not passed until January 1961) but also on making Sri Lanka a Republic. He had promised to carry out both these transformations as soon as he came into power. A compromise was sought and negotiations with the Federal Party resulted in the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact of July 1957 whereby Tamil was to be made the official language in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, administrative powers were to be devolved to regional councils and Sinhalese colonization in Northern and Eastern irrigation schemes was to be curtailed.

In December 1957 Maitripala Senanayake, the Minister of Transport and Works, introduced an amendment to the Motor Traffic Act to allow the use of the Sinhalese letter 'śrī' as a prefix on vehicle number plates where English letters had been used previously. This was seen by the Tamils as a provocative act of Sinhalese chauvinism and an 'anti-sri' campaign was launched by Tamil politicians. In their turn, Sinhalese extremists regarded this campaign as an affront to the Sinhalese community. Vimala Wijewardena, the Minister of Health, Sri Lanka's first woman Cabinet Minister and a close friend of Buddharakkhita Thera, the Chief Prelate of the Kelaniya Temple, led a number of Buddhist priests in a *satyagraha* on the lawn of the prime minister's residence in April 1958 demanding that the Pact with Chelvanayakam be abrogated. The Pact was seen as the basis for the creation of a Federal state and was vehemently opposed by Sinhalese nationalists, including those in the UNP. In retrospect, it now seems a missed opportunity. Unfounded suspicion as to the real nature of the concessions made to the Tamils incensed racial

passions even further.

In the face of the vehement opposition from his erstwhile supporters, the prime minister formally abrogated the Pact. This only made matters worse. In May 1958 trains taking Tamils from the south to a Federal Party Convention in Vavuniya were sabotaged and several Tamils were killed. An unexplained explosion in another part of the country killed some Sinhalese people. These events set off horrific racial riots on 24 May 1958 when various inhuman acts, particularly incomprehensible in a country proud of its Buddhist heritage, were committed mainly on Tamils but also on some Sinhalese in the east. Many hundreds of people lost their lives (though the official estimate was only 159). Law and order had broken down and the police, politically influenced and also often racially motivated in many areas of the country, did not interfere. The prime minister and his government did nothing to curb the excesses. It was only when the Marxist Youth League threatened to take control of the situation that Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, the Governor-General, declared a state of emergency on 27 May. The army and navy brought the situation immediately under control but the state of emergency was to last until March 1959.

The political turmoil during S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's premiership prevented many of the MEP's socialist policies, with greater emphasis on state control of the economy, being carried out. Nevertheless, bus transport, life insurance and the port of Colombo were nationalized. Philip Gunawardena, one of the two Marxist ministers, introduced the Paddy Lands Act, giving the tenant cultivator security of tenure. The land-owners within the government were dissatisfied at this curtailment of the landlords' rights and the Bill had to be watered down before it was passed in 1958. The conflict within the government on this issue resulted in the resignation of both Marxist ministers in 1959. Though Bandaranaike claimed that the government's policies were egalitarian and socialist, there was no longer any left-wing involvement in government. Unfortunately the unrealistic hope of a redistribution of wealth that was a tenet of the coalition was not conducive to economic growth, which was neglected.

The previous booms in exports ceased because of changing conditions in world markets. There was a marked increase in the population and a corresponding increase in imports. In addition trade union pressure, marked by numerous strikes, made for an increase in wages. Though there was a commendable increase in expenditure on social welfare the economy was depressed by ideological restrictions on foreign investment. There was a considerable deficit in the balance of payments and a depletion of foreign assets. These economic problems were to worsen by the 1960s. With regard to foreign relations, Bandaranaike was one of the pioneers of the neutralist movement, which came to be called the Non-aligned Movement during the Cold War.

Bandaranaike abrogated the Defence Agreement (which he suspected had hidden clauses favourable to the British) that D. S. Senanayake had made. There were no secret clauses unearthed. These bases were no longer of importance to Britain. The advent of new long-range weaponry, such as the Polaris missile, had greatly reduced their strategic significance. In addition, maintaining these bases in the midst of a potentially hostile population had become unjustifiable and in 1957 Britain withdrew amicably from Trincomalee and Katunayake. This withdrawal gave rise to an increase in Sri Lanka's defence costs. Bandaranaike also abolished the system of imperial honours.

The majority of Bandaranaike's supporters, particularly the Buddhist priests led by Buddharakkhita Thera, were antagonistic to the left-wing members who were the most innovative and reformist of Bandaranaike's government. This antipathy arose because of the cosmopolitan, multiracial, and secular outlook of the Marxists. It was this faction of Buddhist priests that instigated the conflict within the government, which brought about the resignation of the left-wing ministers in 1959. Not only political but also sordid commercial considerations were involved in the pressure that this group exerted on the prime minister and the government. It culminated in the assassination of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike in September 1959 by a Buddhist priest, the plot having been hatched by Buddharakkhita Thera.

In November 1959 Buddharakkhita, Vimala Wijewardena (Minister of Health and later Minister of Lands) and four others were charged with conspiracy to murder the prime minister and Talduwe Somarama (the *bhikkhu* who shot Bandaranaike) was charged with murder. Vimala Wijewardena and three alleged conspirators were later acquitted but Buddharakkhita, Somarama and another man accused of conspiracy were sentenced to death. Capital punishment, which had been suspended in 1958 by the Bandaranaike government was not only repealed in 1959 but also made retroactive. Somarama was executed but the other two had their death sentences changed to life imprisonment.

Confrontation and economic stress (1959 - 1970)

The period following S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's assassination was a hectic political interlude presided over by W. Dahanayake, who as acting Leader of the House, became prime minister of a caretaker government. Dahanayake was a veteran politician. In his younger days he had been the M.P. for Bibile and later became the Member for Galle. Despite his experience, he did not have the temperament of a political leader. He was an individualist whose abrasive personality soon put him at loggerheads with the members of Bandaranaike's Cabinet most of whom either resigned or were sacked during the six months of his premiership. A vote of no confidence was successfully passed against the caretaker government, parliament was dissolved on 5 December 1959 and a general election scheduled for 19 March 1960. Dahanayake resigned from the SLFP and formed his own party, Lanka Prajatantra Pakshaya (LPP) or Lanka Democratic Party, which was destined to have a short life particularly after Dahanayake lost his seat at the next election.

The March 1960 election ended in a hung parliament with the UNP winning 50 seats and barely ahead of the SLFP, which secured 46. The Federal Party won 15 seats whilst the Tamil Congress only managed to win a solitary seat. Dudley Senanayake, who was once more leader of the UNP, was invited to form a government. His advances to the Federal Party for support

were rebuffed by Chelvanayakam. The anti-Tamil posturing of the UNP during previous elections and its hostility towards the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact had not been forgotten by the FP. The SLFP successfully canvassed the FP for support promising to implement the Pact if they were called on to form a government when Senanayake's minority government fell as it was bound to do. Inevitably, the UNP government was defeated within a month of the elections but the Governor-General did not ask C. P. de Silva, the SLFP leader, to form a government but, instead, dissolved parliament and called for a fresh election in July 1960.

At this stage the senior members of the SLFP who were by now convinced that their leader, C. P. de Silva (who happened to be of the Salāgama caste - a caste alleged to be lower than the Goyigama, which in Sri Lanka's caste conscious and semi-feudal society traditionally provides the leaders), was not going to lead them into an electoral victory, brought in S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's widow, Sirimavo. Mrs. Bandaranaike had no political or administrative experience but she had the tremendous advantage of being able to appeal to the naturally sentimental and emotional Sri Lankan rural voters by reminding them of the premature and tragic death of her husband and promising to continue with his political programme. She did this so effectively that the SLFP won the elections of July 1960 by a convincing majority. The new leader of the SLFP had not contested a parliamentary seat but was nominated to the Senate and as a Member of the Senate was able to become prime minister, the first woman in the world to do so. She also took the portfolio of External Affairs and Defence. The FP, which expected to be in a strong bargaining position with 16 seats, was disappointed because with 75 seats (out of a total of 151) the SLFP no longer relied on its support and felt free to renege on its pre-election promises, particularly with regard to implementation of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact.

Mrs. Bandaranaike faced a worsening economic situation with falling external assets, which had halved since 1956. The price of tea, which provided two-thirds of the country's foreign exchange, continued to fall and though the quantity exported

was increased by about 60%, foreign exchange only increased by about 10%. Similarly rubber and coconut prices had also fallen. The economic strains were made worse by an unprecedented increase in the population (from 8 million in 1953 to 10.5 million in 1963) and by inflation both of which were accompanied by increasing unemployment. These economic problems had become apparent during the premiership of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike but were, unfortunately, not considered a priority during the political turmoil of that period. Mrs Bandaranaike's government unsuccessfully resorted to conventional fiscal measures such as increased taxation and control of exchange and imports. In the early 1960s the import of not only all luxury items but also, increasingly, of many indispensable goods was stopped.

Mrs Bandaranaike, having promised to continue with her husband's policies, extended state control over important sectors of the economy. The Bank of Ceylon was nationalized, a network of government sponsored co-operatives and the state controlled Co-operative Wholesale Establishment distributed consumer articles. The distribution of petroleum and kerosene was also nationalized and the assets of the foreign (Western) oil companies in the island were taken over by the state. Some of the State Corporations that were established to administer these nationalized industries were soon being ridiculed for their inefficiency. This was due to dual problems of managerial ineptitude and the workers belief, which had been fostered by politicians (particularly since S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike came into power), that this was the age of the common man to whom the country belonged. The result was that little productive work was carried out but a great deal was expected from the state by workers in return. A visiting economist pointed out that the Sri Lankans were tasting the fruits even before the tree was planted. Neither the fiscal measures nor the extension of state control could solve the problem of a declining economy, as they did not increase productivity but merely generated shortages, which in turn increased inflation. Also, these measures were inefficiently administered and hampered by corruption amongst officials and politicians.

Under pressure from Sinhalese extremists, and foregoing the chance of a compromise by using the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact as a basis, Mrs. Bandaranaike made Sinhalese the official language on 1 January 1961 without any concessions to the Tamils. This totally alienated the FP and resulted in civil disobedience campaigns in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in March and April 1961. The government responded by declaring a state of emergency in these provinces and provocatively stationed an army detachment, to which was entrusted the civil administration, in Jaffna. She lost any semblance of support in parliament from the FP, which moved closer to the UNP.

Clearly, Mrs. Bandaranaike was made of sterner stuff and much more aggressive than her late husband. Having dealt with the Tamils she embarked on an offensive against the minority religious (mainly Roman Catholic) groups by bringing state-aided secondary schools, including all denominational schools, under state control. There were some valid arguments in favour of this scheme. Although these state aided mission schools depended almost totally on state funding and the majority of their pupils were Buddhists, the teaching staff was recruited almost exclusively from members of the particular Christian denomination that the school belonged to. However, a great deal of resentment was generated particularly amongst the Roman Catholics. Some of the larger mission schools retained their independence by becoming private institutions and refusing state aid, but they had to struggle to survive.

This bitterness, caused by what was regarded as religious oppression, together with the anger at the government's economic and administrative incompetence were the main reasons for the abortive coup d'état of January 1962, which was planned by senior officers in the police and armed services. The leaders were predominantly Roman Catholics and the coup was meant to be bloodless and similar to that of the 1958 coup by General Ayub Khan in Pakistan. The coup was detected and aborted at a very early stage. The participants underwent a trial lasting three years following which ten of the leaders were sentenced

to a term of imprisonment and forfeiture of their property. However, the penalty had been created by the Criminal Law Act of 1962 especially for this conspiracy and was therefore deemed retroactive. The convictions were later dismissed. A rumour that Sir Oliver Goonetilleke was the main organizer of the coup had the unfortunate effect of forcing him out of office and W. Gopallawa, a Kandyan lawyer and a close relative of the prime minister, became the Governor-General.

Whereas her husband tried to maintain a policy of non-alignment in foreign affairs, Mrs. Bandaranaike took on a distinctly anti-American, pro-People's Republic of China stance. When her government refused to compensate American oil companies for their assets that had been nationalized, the United States stopped its programme of aid to Sri Lanka. However, Sri Lanka commenced purchasing oil from Russia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe at lower prices than it had done from the West. Trade with these regions also increased. Relations with China became more and more cordial at a time when there was severe friction between India and China. Sri Lanka remained neutral in the Sino-Indian dispute of 1962 and Mrs. Bandaranaike acted as a mediator but without much success.

In October 1964 Mrs. Bandaranaike persuaded Lal Bahadur Shastri, the Indian prime minister, to accept 525,000 workers of Indian Tamil origin in Sri Lanka as Indian citizens over the next fifteen years. Of the remaining Indian Tamil immigrants, 300,000 were to be made Sri Lankan citizens and the rest (about 150,000) were to have their fate negotiated by the two governments in due course. Shastri was more accommodating than his predecessor, Jawaharlal Nehru, mainly because he had already been forced to accept the forcible deportation of Indians from Burma in July 1964. When it became apparent that the SLFP government intended to place all Sri Lankan citizens of Indian origin on a separate communal electoral register, the Ceylon Workers' Congress, the main trade union of the Indian workers led by Saumiammoorthy Thondaman, withdrew its support from the government and moved over to the UNP on the understanding that the UNP would

not only repudiate the separate register but also re-consider the repatriation of Indians.

The deteriorating political situation caused mainly by inflation, rising unemployment, shortages in many essential items and a consequent lowering in the standard of living, induced the government to prorogue parliament in March 1964. The UNP was obviously gaining in strength and Mrs. Bandaranaike was compelled to unite with a group within the LSSP led by N. M. Perera to form a coalition government. In December 1964 C. P. de Silva and some of his supporters crossed over to the opposition and the coalition government was defeated. During the campaign for the General Election of March 1965 the SLFP-LSSP coalition was attacked not only by the political parties that opposed it but also by the Press. The Press vilified Mrs Bandaranaike and her party because her government had planned to vest control of it in a public corporation. The union with a Marxist party lost the SLFP its core of support amongst the Sinhalese-Buddhist intelligentsia, including some of the Buddhist saṅgha, which was regaining confidence after maintaining a necessarily low political profile following S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's assassination by a Buddhist priest.

The UNP, led by Dudley Senanayake, won the election with sixty-six seats. It required the support of the FP, the Tamil Congress, the MEP (now divorced from the SLFP and led by Philip Gunawardena) and C. P. de Silva's new group to form a government, that, with the six nominated members, would have an absolute majority. Significantly, a few politically militant Buddhist priests from the Eksath Bhikshu Peramuna (United Front of the *Bhikkhus*), an organisation inaugurated by Buddhist priests in 1956 to further Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism, had joined the UNP. The FP hoped to resuscitate the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact but as soon as Dudley Senanayake the new prime minister expressed his wish to bring about communal and religious reconciliation there was an outburst of hatred from the Sinhalese-Buddhist extremists. The SLFP was joined by the LSSP and the Communist Party in orchestrating this flood of racist propaganda. It would seem

that, by this time, the intermittent instillation of racial hatred, which goaded the politically immature masses into a blind frenzy, had become the established norm of Sri Lankan party politics.

The coalition led by the UNP did manage, against considerable opposition and the risk of race riots, to implement the language provisions in the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact but in 1968 Dudley Senanayake was forced to abandon a bill that proposed the establishment of district councils not only due to pressure from extremists but also from within the government's own parliamentary party. As a result, the FP stopped supporting the government and another opportunity for reconciliation was lost. This opposition to the establishment of district councils was, and still is, motivated by the fear that a federal structure would result in a division of the country, which the Sinhalese extremists believe belongs to them in its entirety.

Although the UNP was a party that was supposed to have links with the Roman Catholics, the new government did not make any concessions to them with regard to schools. In addition, the usual sabbath holiday was abandoned in favour of a *poya* holiday confusingly based on the phases of the moon. It was clear that this UNP-led coalition government had neither the power, nor perhaps even the desire, to bring about ethnic and religious reconciliation. It was politically much easier for Dudley Senanayake to concede to Thondaman on the Indian Tamil issue despite protests from the Kandyans. Not only were the rules concerning enforced repatriation relaxed but also the proposal to have a separate electoral register abandoned.

The UNP government agreed to compensate the oil companies for their loss of assets and this resulted in the resumption of much needed American aid. Relations with China became less friendly and this made for friendlier relationships not only with the United States but also with India and the Soviet Union. Dudley Senanayake was against any active involvement in foreign affairs, which he rightly felt was an expensive luxury for a small, economically backward country such as Sri Lanka

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but he continued to maintain the links with other Third World countries.

By 1967 there were signs that the government's policy of encouraging food production by increasing the income in rural areas was having a beneficial effect on the economy. This programme to grow more food, mainly rice, and hence increase employment in that sector, though beneficial, took a few years to have any effect. By this time the increase in the population and, particularly, of the young unemployed reduced any favourable impact on the economy. The more vociferous of the young unemployed were those that had a University education and looked down on employment in the agricultural sector. The high expenditure on state education had not only resulted in a correspondingly high rate of literacy but also in an increasing number of educated unemployed. The reduction of the voting age to eighteen in 1959 had resulted in a mushrooming number of these strident, young, dissatisfied voters. Paradoxically, it was the laudable effort by Dudley Senanayake's coalition to improve the economy by food production, as D. S. Senanayake had tried to do soon after Independence, which was attacked most vigorously by its opponents and resulted in its defeat at the elections of May 1970.

The evolution of an autocratic regime (1970 - 1977)

Whilst in opposition the SLFP had formed a coalition with the LSSP and the 'Moscow wing' of the Communist Party (CP). This coalition, led by Mrs. Bandaranaike, was called the United Front (UF). The three parties in the coalition set out a common programme of a radical and socialistic nature, which they claimed would result in improvements in all aspects of everyday life. The electorate, seemingly impressed by this rhetoric and disappointed with the inability of Dudley Senanayake's UNP-led coalition to improve economic conditions during its term in government, voted the UF into power in May 1970 with an unassailable majority of 120 seats (out of a total of 157).

The euphoria of this victory did not last long. The new government made some changes, which had a minimal effect on the basic problems that beset the country. It amended the cut in rice rations made by the UNP-led coalition in 1966 and also made changes in its foreign policy to give it a greater tilt towards the left. Diplomatic links were formed with the German Democratic Republic and North Korea whilst those with Israel were severed. None of the changes that were made had any effect on the basic problems, which beset the country. There was no improvement in the economy. Unemployment and inflation continued to rise and essential items remained difficult to obtain. By the beginning of 1971 it was clear that the improvements promised by Mrs. Bandaranaike's coalition government were not going to materialize.

Support for the UF during the election had come not only from the traditional Sinhalese, Buddhist, nationalistic base that had originally supported the SLFP but also from a vociferous, young, educated unemployed group of voters. This group had formed an ultra-left, militant party called the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) - or the Peoples Liberation Front - in 1968. The members of this party were the young of the rural poor. They were Sinhalese and Buddhist, a considerable number of them being from the lowest, depressed castes such as the Vahumpura and Batgama. These young people were naturally attracted to Marxism but were dissatisfied with the policies and progress made by the established parties on the left. Their heroes were Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. The JVP was the instrument through which these young people formed a common ideology and it provided them with the vital components for revolution, including leadership. It was the logical outcome of the policies that had encouraged higher education and corresponding aspirations amongst young people without being able to provide them with suitable jobs and at the same time claimed that this was the age of the common man to whom the country belonged.

By 1970 the JVP had become a well-known organization with a central committee led by Rohana Wijeweera (Patabendige Don

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Nandasiri Wijeweera), who had been educated in the Lumumba People's Friendship University at Moscow where he had dropped out of a course in medicine to read political sciences. He was a Marxist-Leninist who described himself as a modern Bolshevik and was an eloquent public speaker. The JVP was armed with smuggled weapons paid for with locally grown cannabis and local gems. Contacts were made with similar revolutionary groups in other countries. Soon after the elections of May 1970, the JVP leadership became increasingly dissatisfied with the government that it had initially supported because the promises made in the election manifesto were not being kept. The JVP was willing to use violence to gain its objectives and made clear at mass meetings throughout the Sinhalese areas, mainly in the south of the country, that it was willing to overthrow the government if the radical economic and social changes that it wanted were not immediately implemented.

In April 1971 the JVP commenced an insurgency against the government. It was a rebellion against the establishment, which seemed unable to deal with the blatant economic inequalities in a poor country that was rapidly becoming, manifestly, even poorer. It is in the nature of such rebellious groups that internal rivalries are a factor in bringing about their downfall and so it was with the JVP. Rohana Wijeweera had been arrested and imprisoned in March 1971 probably due to an act of treachery and there was even a plot, by some of his own party, to kill him whilst he was in the Jaffna prison. The attack on several police stations by armed youths in April 1971 was a failure and it is estimated that about 16,000 insurgents were either killed by the police and army or imprisoned. It was a poorly equipped and inadequately trained force that set out to do battle with the state. Most importantly, the majority of the working class did not support the JVP.

By September 1971 the insurgency had been suppressed. Rohana Wijeweera was sentenced to life imprisonment by a Criminal Justice Commission in 1974 on the grounds that he was responsible for the decision to strike against the government but was freed in 1978 and continued to re-organise the JVP, which by

1980 was the strongest leftist party in the country. North Korea, suspected of having supported the insurrection, was asked to close its embassy in Colombo. Several countries including India, Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union came to the Sri Lankan government's assistance. Relations with America became friendlier and links with the Commonwealth were improved. The insurrection encouraged the government to push through some radical social and economic changes.

Soon after the JVP insurgency was crushed in September 1971, the Bandaranaike government abolished the Senate and renamed the House of Representatives the National Assembly. On 22 May 1972 a new constitution was introduced and Ceylon, as it was then called, became the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and William Gopallawa (who had been Governor-General) was nominated President by Mrs. Bandaranaike. The constitution subordinated the judiciary to the National Assembly and made the political executive all-powerful. It also took away the power of the courts to determine the constitutionality of legislation passed by the National Assembly. This was a clear move towards an autocracy as there were no significant constraints on the powers of the executive. In addition the government succeeded, with the help of its overwhelming majority and through the new constitution, in extending its term from five to seven years (until 1977). The new constitution was adopted by a vote of 120 to 16.

The insurrection had also provided the government with an excuse for indefinitely prolonging its emergency powers. This was a convenient method by which an autocratic government could deal with any form of dissent and put a stop to normal political processes and even intimidate political opponents. The spontaneous, mass demonstrations of grief at Dudley Senanayake's death in April 1973 worried the government and further encouraged it to maintain an authoritarian attitude towards its political opponents. Furthermore, though Mrs. Bandaranaike had failed during her first government to curtail the freedom of the Press, she managed to do so during her second term. The main newspaper group, the Associated Newspapers, which was pro-

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UNP, was brought under state control by a special new law and the other groups of newspapers were either similarly brought to heel or forced to stop publishing.

By 1972 the economic situation was getting even worse for a number of reasons of which the increase in the price of imported food was the most important. The leftist government was ideologically committed to industrialisation rather than the production of food. The effect of discarding Dudley Senanayake's food production programme and a doctrinal decision to make the purchase of locally produced rice a state monopoly depressed production. The government was forced to follow the example of Dudley Senanayake's administration and reduce food subsidies. N. M. Perera, Trotskyite leader of the LSSP and the Minister of Finance, announced a ceiling on expendable income of 2000 rupees per month. Ownership of land by public companies and by private landowners was restricted to 50 acres. The Land Reform Law of 1972 and the Land Reform Amendment Law of 1975 meant that the government had re-possessed 500,000 acres of land. About 60 per cent of tea, 40 per cent of rubber and 10 per cent of coconut plantations came under the control of the state in 1975.

Compensation at US \$95 per acre of tea was paid to the foreign companies owning the estates, which were to be run by the Peoples Estate Development Board (Janawasama). The rest of the tea, rubber and coconut plantations was in the hands of small-holders and small, private estates. Though the SLFP would argue that it was reflecting Kandyan interests and redressing an old grievance, the Land Reform statutes were based on the doctrines of socialism (and Marxism) without much regard for the economic plight of the country, which worsened due to falling production levels and uncompetitive pricing. Other attempts to reduce the budget deficit, which was 400 million rupees in 1972, included a demand by the government that all Sri Lankan citizens residing abroad should remit ten percent of their income to the Sri Lankan government.

The 1972 constitution also increased the tension between the majority Sinhalese and the minority groups, particularly the

Tamils. The author of the 1972 constitution, Colvin R. de Silva, was of the opinion that section 29 of the 1948 constitution, which was meant to protect minority rights, had proved to be a weak instrument of protection. He, therefore, replaced the section with the Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, which he felt provided better safeguards for the minorities. However these Rights and Freedoms as set out in Chapter VI, section 18, of the 1972 constitution were subject to certain restrictions, which could be imposed in the interests of racial harmony and of the economy. Chapter III confirmed Sinhala as the official language and made no further concession to the Tamil language. Chapter II stated that 'the Republic of Sri Lanka shall give Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the state to protect and foster Buddhism'. The rights of the other religions were to be safeguarded by the provisions of section 18. This meant that Sri Lanka was no longer a secular state.

The Tamils felt that the new constitution was a further attempt to reduce them to an inferior status. This feeling was reinforced by the introduction of the district quota system and the standardisation of marks for university admission in 1972. Academic ability alone was no longer the criterion for admission in these, plainly discriminatory, regulations. It was true that under the previous system a disproportionate number of Tamils found places, particularly in the science-based faculties. The main reason for this was that the educational facilities in the Tamil districts of the north and east were superior to those in the rural Sinhalese and Muslim areas. The Universities Commission Report of 1959 stated that the Jaffna district had schools with university entrance science classes for 1:15,000 of its population as compared to 1:118,000 in other areas. Not surprisingly it also stated that the proportion of Tamil students receiving university education was 1:320 of their population as compared to 1:3212 amongst Sinhalese students. This disproportion was reflected in the number of high government service posts held by Tamils. The quota system and standardisation of marks caused a considerable reduction in the number of Tamils admitted to university, though

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in 1979 it was claimed that the Tamils were still obtaining a sizable share of university places and further restrictive measures were suggested.

The opposition to the 1972 constitution had the effect of uniting the Tamil political parties into the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). This was formed not only by the Federal Party and the Tamil Congress but also by the Ceylon Workers' Congress and other Tamil politicians. The widening gap between the Sinhalese and the Tamils was highlighted by the support within the TULF for a separate Tamil state within Sri Lanka. The intransigence of successive governments was beginning to make even moderate Tamil politicians feel that separatism rather than federalism was the solution to the Tamil problem. Also the worsening relationship was making Sri Lankan Tamils consider links with Tamil Nadu in India. This contrasted with the attitude of previous generations of Sri Lankan Tamils who had considered themselves superior to the Tamils in India and tended to dissociate themselves from southern India.

In the north and the east there were increasing numbers of young, vociferous, educated, but often unemployed Tamil youths who were much more militant than their elders and agitated for separatism because of a valid concern that they were being discriminated against in the competition for university places and for employment in the public sector. These youths were divided amongst themselves by ideology, caste and personal antagonisms into several groups collectively known as the Tamil Tigers. The strongest of these groups was the Tamil New Tigers (TNT) formed by Velupillai Prabhakaran in 1972. This group came into prominence when some of its members assassinated the Mayor of Jaffna, who was a SLFP supporter, in 1975.

The Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka who were mainly workers in the plantations of the Central Province had no interest, at this stage, in a separate Tamil state in the north and east. These Indian Tamils as well as other minority groups such as the Roman Catholics and Muslims had come to terms with the fact that the Sinhalese Buddhist state was a *fait accompli* and the relationship between the

government and these groups had improved. In 1974 an amicable agreement with India meant that about half a million of the stateless Sri Lankan Indians would become Sri Lankan citizens. The leadership of the Indian Tamil estate workers placed much more importance on fighting for better wages and living conditions than for language or religion. These workers were the most economically depressed group in the country. The relationship between the Muslims and government improved after a Muslim, Badiuddin Mahmud, became Minister of Education. However, anti-Muslim feelings were aroused by allegations of favouritism towards Muslims in the field of education and triggered Sinhalese-Muslim riots in Gampola and Puttalam between 1974 and 1976.

Within the SLFP, those on the right were beginning to feel that further state involvement in trade was unnecessary and that private enterprise had a part to play. This was not acceptable to the LSSP and the uneasy alliance between the SLFP and the LSSP came to an end in October 1975 when after a difference of opinion concerning the manner in which plantations were to be nationalised, Mrs. Bandaranaike expelled the LSSP from government. With the departure of N. M. Perera and his party, the government was free to abolish some of the doctrinal decrees that had been imposed. The ceiling on incomes was removed and taxes were reduced substantially. The free market in rice was restored. Perhaps significantly, the relationship between the Sri Lankan government and the United States improved considerably at this stage.

With the expulsion of the LSSP, the government had lost not only its two-thirds majority but also its ablest debaters. The SLFP hoped that the conference of non-aligned nations held at Colombo in July and August 1976 (on which the state spent a considerable amount of money) would boost Mrs. Bandaranaike's popularity. Soon after the conference, the SLFP campaigned for a postponement of the elections, which were scheduled for 1977, even going so far as to ask the TULF for support in this matter. This campaign failed and in early 1977, the government was faced by a series of strikes encouraged by the LSSP and provoked by the

falling living standards. The government's rigorous handling of the strikes increased its unpopularity.

By 1977 the Sri Lankan electorate was heartily disillusioned of left-wing politics and even more so by the autocratic government that had developed since 1970. It was not a great surprise when the UNP, now led by the seventy-one year old Junius Richard Jayewardene, who had re-directed the party (traditionally a party of landowning and big business interests) into a programme of democratic socialism, won a resounding victory in the elections of July 1977. The UNP won 140 seats out of a total of 168 giving it a clear majority. The SLFP only had eight seats and the Marxists did not win any. The death of S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, leader of the FP and the TULF (shortly before the elections) weakened the TULF, which was now the main opposition party in parliament, and left a power vacuum that was to be filled by militant Tamil separatist groups.

A free and righteous society? (1977 - 1982)

The veteran politician Junius Richard Jayewardene, who had deferred to the Senanayake family for many years, had become the leader of the UNP at the death of Dudley Senanayake in 1973. He set about changing the UNP's image from a party of the affluent to a party that would inaugurate a 'free and righteous society'. At the elections of July 1977, it was the electorate's disenchantment with Mrs. Bandaranaike's authoritarian government rather than its belief in the promises made by the UNP that gave the UNP such a resounding victory. The Sri Lankan Tamils in the north did not support Jayewardene or any other non-Tamil politician. All 14 seats in the Northern Province, as well as 4 seats in the Eastern Province, were won by the TULF, which became the main party of opposition. Appapillai Amirthalingam was now the leader of the TULF, which by 1976 had adopted a demand for a separate, independent, secular, socialist state of Tamil Eelam.

The UNP's victory raised the hopes of moderate Sri Lankans and seemed to augur well for the future of Sri Lanka. The price of tea and rubber had improved with a favourable impact on the balance-

of-trade account. One of the new government's first actions was to abolish the standardisation of marks at the university entrance examination and introduce a scheme for admitting 30 per cent on merit, 55 per cent on a district basis and 15 per cent from under-privileged areas. This was meant to placate the Tamils but in August 1977 an apparently false rumour that Tamil terrorists had killed a Sinhalese policeman in Jaffna set off communal riots that spread throughout the island. During these disturbances Sinhalese extremists also attacked many Indian Tamil estate workers and this had the effect of encouraging these Indian Tamils to join the Tamil separatists of the north. This was the first major communal riot since the 1950s and a contributory factor was probably the fear amongst Sinhalese extremists that the main opposition party in parliament now consisted of Tamils.

The UNP government brought the disturbance under control without resorting to emergency rule (as the previous administration would have done) and announced the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry into the circumstances that led to the riots. Jayewardene's government had undertaken to correct the numerous anomalies put in place by the previous, autocratic regime and in September 1977 a parliamentary select committee on constitutional reform was appointed. An amendment to the Public Security Act early in 1978 prevented the arbitrary imposition of emergency rule, a common occurrence during Mrs. Bandaranaike's regime. Henceforth it had to be debated and voted on by the National Assembly.

J. R. Jayewardene, having reached the top of the political ladder after many years of waiting in the wings, was not only determined to improve his power-base but also to stay at the summit for as long as possible. Under a constitutional amendment he became the first elected executive president of Sri Lanka on 4 February 1978. The previous, Westminster style of parliamentary government was converted to a French style of government in which the president was not only the head of state but also chief executive and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The president's powers were formidable as compared to those of the

legislature and led to a valid claim by Mrs. Bandaranaike that Sri Lanka was becoming a dictatorship. The constitution of 1978 also gave the president, who was to be elected by direct suffrage, the power to appoint the prime minister with parliamentary approval. Jayewardene appointed Ranasinghe Premadasa as prime minister (with greatly reduced powers). In keeping with the new image of the UNP, Premadasa, unlike previous UNP leaders and prime ministers was from a poor family and of a low caste.

Against a background of escalating violence by Tamil extremist groups in the north and east, concessions were made to the Tamils in the new constitution. Although Sinhala remained the official language and language of administration throughout the country, Tamil was given a 'national language' status and was to be used in some administrative and educational circumstances. Jayewardene also offered some top-level administrative posts to the Tamils. These compromises did not placate the Tamils who felt that the concessions were too little and came too late. The TULF, which was the main party in opposition, dissociated itself from the forming of the new constitution to emphasise its commitment to a separate state. The Indian Tamils were given significant concessions including equal civic rights for those who were 'stateless' and the revocation of the distinction between citizens by descent and citizens by registration. S. Thondaman, the leader of the Ceylon Workers' Congress (the main political party of the estate workers), showed his willingness to work with the government by agreeing to become a Cabinet Minister in September 1978.

In the 1977 elections the TULF with only 6.4 per cent of the total votes cast, won 18 seats whilst the SLFP with 29.5 per cent of the votes only got 8 seats. As the 'first past the post' system did not correctly reflect the true strength of the parties, under the new constitution elections were to be held on the basis of proportional representation. More significant to Jayewardene and his party was the fact that in previous elections the UNP would have fared far better under a system of proportional representation.

Despite Jayewardene's public support for a free and independent press, the Press Council Law of 1973 that restricted

the freedom of the press was not repealed and control of the press continued to be subtly applied by the government. The Criminal Justice Commissions Law, which had been brought in by Mrs. Bandaranaike in the aftermath of the JVP insurgency and had led to abuse of human rights and the harassment of political opponents, was repealed. This led to the release of Rohana Wijeweera from jail.

The vindictiveness towards political opponents and their elimination from the political scene by newly made and retrospectively effective laws, which had commenced under Mrs. Bandaranaike, continued under Jayewardene and became endemic in Sri Lanka. A Special Presidential Commission was appointed in August 1978 to inquire into any acts of political victimisation, misuse or abuse of power, corruption and any fraudulent act between May 1970 and July 1977. On 25 September 1980 (perhaps coincidentally, this was the anniversary of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's assassination) Mrs. Bandaranaike was found guilty of abuse and/or misuse of power. She was expelled from parliament and deprived of her civic rights for seven years. This effectively eliminated her, albeit temporarily, from the political scene. Her son, Anura Bandaranaike, became the leader of the SLFP but was soon accused of being excessively right-wing and an instrument of the UNP by his sister, Chandrika, and her husband, Vijaya Kumaratunga, who formed a new party called the Sri Lanka Mahajana Pakshaya (SLMP) - Sri Lanka People's Party - in 1984. Mrs. Bandaranaike was pardoned in 1986 and resumed the leadership of the SLFP.

The UNP government was committed to a mixed economy with an emphasis on encouraging private enterprise. However, though managerial efficiency and productivity had visibly declined in the tea and rubber plantations after nationalisation, no attempt was made to reverse the process of state control. Some of the larger state-run textile mills were handed over to the private sector and an Industrial Processing Zone (IPZ) was established in an area north of Colombo with the object of attracting industries manufacturing for export by granting tax incentives. The Mahaveli

Project, which was intended to harness the waters of Sri Lanka's largest river to help irrigate the dry zone, generate electricity, increase employment and settle people in several agricultural settlement areas, commenced in 1972 and was meant to be spread out over several decades. The UNP government speeded up the Project's pace of development. In November 1977 removal of many of the import controls imposed by the previous administration had an immediate beneficial effect on the economy. It also reduced the sense of austerity that had been prevalent for the past seven years and this boost in the 'feel-good factor' helped the government to reduce food and other expensive subsidies without generating unpopularity.

Despite these measures the country's economy remained in dire straits with rampant inflation and high unemployment. As usual it was the lower paid public servants who suffered most and in July 1980 there was a general strike, which was soon crushed by the government using the Essential Services Act of 1979. Under this Act the government could declare any service, public or private, as an essential service and any employee who went on strike would be deemed to have vacated his post and hence lose his or her job. It was an Act that made trade union action ineffective. The Marxist parties, the natural champions of the trade unions, were politically too weak in 1979 to object.

The concept of a separate Tamil nation (or Eelam) within Sri Lanka, a 'Promised Land' of the Tamils, had been germinating for some years, particularly during the regimes of the two Bandaranaike's. It had been given political endorsement at the first national conference of the TULF at Vaddukoddai in 1976 when a Resolution was passed claiming (mistakenly) that 'from the dawn of history' the Sinhalese and Tamils had divided Sri Lanka between them. By this time even moderate Tamil leaders were beginning to be persuaded that a separate Tamil state was the only valid solution for the Tamils. Some even talked of an armed struggle but they were not taken seriously. A third of the island was supposed to be 'traditional Tamil homeland'. One reason for the concern about territory was the recent settlement of Sinhalese

people in areas that were considered to be Tamil in British times. However, these objections ignored the fact that 30 per cent of the Tamil population was dispersed in Sinhalese areas.

Meanwhile, in the north and the east, the Tamil terrorist groups were growing in strength. In the early seventies these groups, consisting mainly of young, militant men, seemed to be rebelling not only against Sinhalese domination but also against their moderate leaders in the Tamil establishment. They were Marxist orientated and were following a similar path to the JVP in the south. Indeed, in the early stages Velupillai Prabhakaran, the leader of the most prominent and violent group, bore in many ways a similarity to Wijeweera, the JVP leader. Initially their violence was mainly against other Tamils who cooperated with the Sinhalese authorities and also against those in rival Tamil terrorist groups. About 10 per cent of the population of Jaffna was Sinhalese at this stage and seemed to live amicably with the Tamils until Tamil militancy and extremism became established following the communal riots of the 1980s.

The most prominent of the terrorist groups, the Tamil New Tigers (TNT) led by Prabhakaran, had in 1975, after they had assassinated Alfred Duraippah (the mayor of Jaffna and an SLFP supporter), begun calling themselves the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The tiger was chosen not only because of its ferocity but also as an appropriate opponent of the Sinhalese lion. At this stage their fellow Jaffna Tamils who felt that their own cause was being upheld affectionately labelled these militant and increasingly violent Tamil youths 'the boys'. In the late 1970s the LTTE had close but secret links with Amirthalingam and the TULF who covertly encouraged these terrorists but were alarmed by some of their excesses. The Sansoni Report of July 1980, the result of the Commission of Inquiry into the communal riots of 1977, gave a detailed account of the involvement of Amirthalingam and other TULF leaders in encouraging the youths of Jaffna into acts of violence. The object was to make the government more receptive to the demands for autonomy. However the TULF felt that there was still a possibility of solving the problem by negotiating with

the government and therefore tried to keep the terrorists in check..

By 1979, the activities of the LTTE had spread from the Northern to the Eastern Province. Like the JVP, these Tamil terrorist groups had help from terrorist groups abroad. Help from the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) included training facilities in the Lebanon. By the end of 1979, the LTTE had not only killed a number of policemen (mostly Tamils), some Tamil politicians and several rival terrorists but had also robbed several banks. The infuriated government passed a draconian piece of legislation called the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The LTTE was officially proscribed in May 1979 and a full army brigade stationed in the Jaffna peninsula to wipe out terrorism. This crackdown persuaded the terrorist groups that discretion was the better part of valour and many of the terrorists (including Prabhakaran) temporarily left Sri Lanka for Tamil Nadu in South India. At this stage guerrilla training abroad (mainly in the Lebanon and Tamil Nadu) also intensified. Jaffna was relatively quiet during 1980.

The idea of establishing district councils, which had to be abandoned by Dudley Senanayake in 1968 (see 'Confrontation and economic stress'), was revived by Jayewardene as a further method of placating the Tamils and a District Development Councils law was enacted in 1980. Amirthalingam and the TULF agreed to participate in the elections. Jayewardene felt that the UNP could win the elections, to be held on the basis of proportional representation, in Jaffna. By 1981, when the elections were to be held, the LTTE had not only grown in strength but it had also acquired new skills and techniques and become even more ruthless. In March 1981 the LTTE robbed a Peoples Bank in the Jaffna peninsula of 8 million rupees and shot two Sinhalese policemen during the attack. In May 1981 Thiyagarajah, a Tamil candidate put forward by the UNP, was shot dead by the terrorists. Also in May the Jaffna library, which contained a large number of priceless books, was burned down. It was alleged that Sinhalese policemen, who had been brought to ensure security during the elections, committed this crime. A Commission of Inquiry was promised but never appointed.

The District Council elections were held in June 1981. In Jaffna many of the officials picked by the Commissioner of Elections were replaced on the instructions of UNP ministers just before the poll and it was claimed that for the first time in Sri Lanka the conduct of the election was taken away from the duly constituted authority and exercised by a political party. The Government Agent of Jaffna, Yogendra Duraiswamy, who was the Returning Officer for the elections, was in no doubt that the poll had not been properly conducted. Unfortunately, this was to become a commonplace occurrence in Sri Lanka. Despite this, the TULF won easily in Jaffna and also in Trincomalee. The UNP won elsewhere, the SLFP having decided to boycott the elections. In August 1981 a bomb explosion at a meeting being addressed by Mrs. Bandaranaike near Colombo was attributed to Tamil terrorists and sparked off another communal riot that was brought under control by the armed forces.

In July 1982, the president proposed several amendments to the election laws. The purpose of these changes was clearly to guarantee that the president and the ruling party remained in power without too much regard for the normal process of democracy. The cabinet approved an amendment enabling the president, at any time after the expiry of 4 years in office, to seek election for a further term of 6 years. The passage of this amendment was facilitated by the fact that the opposition, particularly the SLFP, was in disarray. Jayewardene's victory was inevitable in the presidential election of October 1982. The SLFP, deprived of Mrs. Bandaranaike, put up an obscure candidate, Hector Kobbekadduwa, who polled 39.1 per cent of the votes to Jayewardene's 52.9 per cent. The four other candidates from the LSSP, JVP, N SSP and the Tamil Congress polled 8.1 per cent of the vote. The TULF boycotted the election.

A vortex of violence (1982 - 1985)

With the fourth amendment to the 1978 constitution Jayewardene made sure that the parliament of 1982, in which he controlled 85 per cent of the votes (the UNP held 145 of the 168

seats), would continue till August 1989 without an election having to be held. He attempted to defend this, obviously undemocratic, act by claiming in a government communication of 3 November 1982 that he had been made aware of a plot by a Maoist terrorist (Naxalite) group to establish a military government following the forthcoming elections. He had, therefore, decided to hold a referendum instead of an election. This 'shoddy stratagem', as the Times of India called it, survived an appeal to the Supreme Court. Moreover, Jayewardene insisted that all UNP Members of Parliament should resign so that he could present a revised list after the referendum. This was a crude method of appointing his own MPs rather than having them elected but he got away with it because the SLFP was in disarray and there was no credible opposition. The SLFP had split into two groups, one headed by the disfranchised Mrs. Bandaranaike and the other led by Maitripala Senanayake.

Before the referendum was held several SLFP members and other leftist activists, who may have been a threat to Jayewardene's victory in the referendum, were taken into custody on the allegation that they were involved in the plot to establish a military government. The result of the referendum held on 22 December 1982 and conducted in an atmosphere of lawlessness that included thuggery and impersonation was a foregone conclusion. Jayewardene and the UNP won the mandate to continue in power until 1989 without a general election. In February 1982 the new parliamentary complex in Kotte, which later reverted to its earlier name of Jayavardhanapura (see 'The consequences of decline' under Fragmentation Period), had been completed.

By 1982 the most prominent Tamil terrorist groups were Velupillai Prabhakaran's LTTE, a splinter group called the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) formed by Prabhakaran's erstwhile colleague, Kadirgamar Umamaheswaran and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) formed in 1977 by Nadarajah Thangathurai. Kandasamy Pathmanabha only launched the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) in 1982. Amirthalingam, the leader of the TULF (the party

representing the Tamils) claimed in parliament that he wanted peace and was in support of the District Development Councils. He had lost any trust the terrorists may have had in him with regard to achieving a separate Tamil state though the government remained convinced that the TULF was still closely associated with the LTTE. Thus the TULF had lost all political credibility. There were sporadic acts of violence in the north and the terrorists killed several policemen, both Sinhalese and Tamil. In their turn, the Sri Lankan army rounded up a large number of Tigers and killed them without any attempt at holding a trial claiming that they were shot whilst trying to escape. The terrorists had decided by 1983 that they would continue their violence against the Sinhalese despite the possible consequences to Tamils living in Sinhalese areas.

On 23 July 1983 the terrorists ambushed an army patrol on the outskirts of Jaffna killing thirteen Sinhalese soldiers. This act provoked a violent retaliation by the Sinhalese against Tamils living in Colombo and surrounding areas. It seems clear that this retaliation was not entirely spontaneous but had been carefully pre-planned perhaps even with the connivance of government officials. The rioters who attacked Tamils and burned their homes seemed to know exactly where to go and even carried electoral lists with names and addresses. The burning and looting continued despite a curfew, which was seemingly ineffective. The forces of law and order seemed reluctant to act and there were instances where the police stood by and watched the rampage without interfering. This was the most serious and widespread violence against the Tamil community since independence. About 400 people, mainly Tamils, were killed. In Jaffna the army killed 51 unarmed civilians. Thousands of Tamil homes in Sinhalese areas were burned and looted. Numerous Tamil and Indian businesses were damaged or destroyed. An estimated 10,000 Tamils became refugees.

The president made no move to condemn this racial violence. Instead, after the rioting had carried on for five days, Jayewardene spoke to the nation and implied that the rioting was a just retaliation for the killing of the soldiers and the demand for a separate state. He stated that the government had decided

to legislate, on behalf of the Sinhalese people, that anyone belonging to a party, which advocated division of the country would be prohibited from entering the legislature. Political parties that proposed division of the nation would be made illegal and proscribed. These proposals of the president were incorporated in the sixth amendment to the constitution, which was rushed through parliament and became law on 8 August 1983. Amirthalingam and the TULF, whose mandate for election had been to work for a separate state, were unable to comply with the provision of the amendment that obliged them to take an oath against separatism. They forfeited their seats in parliament. Not only had the Tamils lost their representatives in parliament but also the president and his government had lost their chance of negotiating through relatively moderate channels.

Though it would be an exaggeration to call it a pogrom, it certainly seemed to the Tamils that the violence of July 1983 (unlike previous race riots) was an organized attack on their community, which was condoned by the authorities. Many joined the expanding Tamil Diaspora abroad (it is estimated that about 150,000 Tamils left the island); others became more militant in demanding separatism and were attracted towards the terrorist groups. The latter were often young, educated people who were able to contribute significantly towards the increasing sophistication of the Tamil terrorist factions. This violence was to have psychological effects not only on the Tamils but also, curiously, on the Sinhalese. Rather than remembering what the two communities had in common, there was a heightening ethnic awareness even amongst those with liberal and moderate attitudes. There were similar feelings amongst the Germans towards the persecuted Jews in Hitler's Germany. Those in power manipulated this awareness, for political reasons.

The LTTE and the other terrorist groups benefited greatly, and in a number of ways, from the events of July 1983. Not only did their numbers increase but there was also condemnation for Jayewardene and his government from all over the world. In addition, the virtual elimination of Tamil parliamentary

representation meant that the government would ultimately have to negotiate directly with the extremist Tamil groups to obtain any form of peaceful settlement. The stage was set for a change from sporadic acts of terror to a civil war without any end in sight. The vortex of violence was to become a part of everyday life.

In 1983 the population of Sri Lanka was about 15 million of which 74 per cent (about 11.1 million) were Sinhalese, 12.6 per cent (about 1.9 million) were Sri Lankan Tamils, 5.6 per cent (about 840,000) were Tamils of recent Indian origin and 7.8 per cent (about 1.1 million) were Moors (called Muslims in Sri Lanka) and other races. The government claimed that the accusation of discrimination against the Tamils was false because there were two or three times their ethnic proportions in the most important posts of the public and corporation sectors as well in private enterprise. The Tamils argued that they got to these positions by merit but this argument was countered by the claim that they had attained these positions because of the preferential treatment in education and employment given to them by the colonial rulers at the expense of the majority Sinhalese because of the policy of these rulers to 'divide and rule'. These were arguments that could not be satisfactorily substantiated by either side.

The existence of a traditional homeland of the Tamils in Sri Lanka is based on historical facts that are difficult to confirm and equally difficult to discard out of hand. There is no doubt that a Tamil Kingdom of Jaffna did exist from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century (see 'The Kingdom of Jaffna'). There is controversy as to whether it was a sovereign state or whether it was under the suzerainty of a Sinhalese state in the south. Its political boundaries shifted with its changing fortunes. Those seeking to claim a historical continuity for a Tamil homeland in the Northern and Eastern Provinces point out that these areas are predominantly occupied by 'Tamil speaking people' (a term that includes both Tamils and Tamil speaking Muslims).

The Cleghorn Minute, a great bone of contention between Tamil separatists and Sinhalese nationalists, is a report by Sir Hugh Cleghorn (see 'The final chapter of Dutch rule') in 1799 stating

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that the Tamils possessed the northern and eastern districts. Tamil separatists have made much of this minute also claiming that the British administrative arrangements were in keeping with these areas being Tamil. These arguments are countered by the contention that these divisions were made because of colonial economic interests and had nothing to do with historical divisions or the long-term interest of the country. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the Eastern Province has a large Muslim population (a third of the entire Muslim population of the island lives there) and though these Muslims are Tamil speakers, there is a great cultural and religious difference between them and the Tamils. The Muslims have no wish for a separate state. The basis for a peaceful coexistence between Tamils and Muslims in the Eastern Province disappeared following Tamil-Muslim clashes at Akkaraipattu in 1985 and subsequent acts of violence against Muslims by Tamil militants. Since independence the settlement of Sinhalese people in the Eastern Province has been encouraged by successive governments to the extent that the Sinhalese and Muslim communities now together constitute about 60 per cent of the population.

Indira Gandhi, the Indian prime minister, and her government were in a difficult situation with regard to the escalating violence in Sri Lanka. She did not wish to alienate the 55 million people in Tamil Nadu who were her prospective supporters. These Tamils showed a desire to support fellow Tamils in Sri Lanka. On the other hand she was concerned that the doctrine of separatism would spread to India. Instability in Sri Lanka could pose serious problems for her neighbour. It would seem that the Indian authorities, at this stage, surreptitiously supported the militant Tamil movement in Sri Lanka. It is also very likely that India's intelligence agencies took an active part in training terrorists and helped them to smuggle arms into Sri Lanka. The fact that Jayewardene had received help from Israel and Pakistan for the battle against the terrorists did not please India. However, Mrs. Gandhi played the part of the honest mediator and insisted that she preferred a political rather than a military settlement to Sri Lanka's problems. After the July 1983 disturbances there was an

exchange of envoys with a view to reducing the tension between the two countries.

Jayewardene called a Conference of National Reconciliation in January 1984 at which all the major political parties, including those that had been proscribed (the TULF in particular) participated. The talks that, at least in part, were aimed at placating India continued until the end of 1984 but nothing substantial emerged. The TULF wanted control of the Northern and Eastern Provinces combined in one jurisdiction with a Tamil majority whilst the government envisaged local control at the district council level. A proposal by the government to establish a second chamber that would have powers over minority issues was also rejected by the Tamil leaders. Meanwhile, the vortex of violence continued in the north. When terrorists killed soldiers the army retaliated by going on a rampage and massacred civilians, burning and looting their properties.

The international press and human rights organizations including Amnesty International condemned the government's excesses in the battle against the terrorists. India's attempts at mediation led to cease-fires in June and October 1985 but these were short lived. Rajiv Gandhi who had become prime minister after his mother was assassinated in October 1984 publicly rejected any intention of Indian military intervention in Sri Lanka and brought together representatives of the Sri Lankan government and six major Tamil groups in Bhutan for peace talks in July 1985 but these, too, were unsuccessful. The attempts of the Sri Lankan navy to stop arms being smuggled across the Palk Strait continued to irritate the Indian authorities and in an attempt to improve relations Lalith Athulathmudali, the Sri Lankan national security minister went to India to discuss the ethnic problem. Soon afterwards the Indian foreign minister visited Sri Lanka and reiterated India's commitment to the 'unity, integrity and sovereignty' of the island. The United States deplored the guerrilla attacks and granted aid for the training of Sri Lankan soldiers in the United States. Margaret Thatcher denounced the terrorists when she inaugurated the Victoria Dam, near Kandy, in April 1985

and claimed that her government was doing its best to prevent the terrorists procuring arms in Britain.

The violence continued throughout 1986 despite negotiations between the government and the TULF with India acting as intermediary. In June the government offered special status to the Northern and Eastern Provinces each with their own decision-making assembly and police force. The TULF, still concerned that the increasing Sinhalese and Muslim population in the Eastern Province would lead to loss of Tamil influence in this area, continued to insist that the Northern and Eastern Provinces be treated as one Tamil province. In April and May 1986 after an outbreak of fighting between the Tamil terrorist groups Prabhakaran and the LTTE became the dominant group, the others being seriously weakened. It was clear that from now on the LTTE would have to accept any agreement with the government for it to be practicable. Meanwhile, Mrs. Bandaranaike's civic rights had been restored and she had resumed the leadership of the SLFP, which now had every intention of sabotaging any negotiation between the UNP government and the TULF on the grounds that the UNP was 'selling out' the Sinhalese people.

In 1986 the economy was again in dire straits not only because of a drop in tea and coconut prices but also because of a number of other factors caused by the escalating violence and instability of the country. The expense of the military effort against the terrorists caused problems with the budget, tourism was adversely affected, foreign investors were reluctant to take the risk of putting money into the country and the Mahaveli Project suffered because of terrorist attacks. In addition, the Kantalai Dam collapsed in April 1986 flooding several villages and causing numerous deaths.

Indo-Sri Lankan Accord (1987)

India had provided retreat and supply bases for the Tamil terrorists from the mid-1970s. Mrs. Gandhi, anxious to retain the Hindu vote in Tamil Nadu, had responded to the concern expressed by the Tamils in India after the escalation of violence

in 1983 by surreptitiously providing support for the terrorists (see 'A vortex of violence'). However, it was difficult for the Indian government to support separatism in Sri Lanka whilst opposing similar demands in the Punjab, Orissa and other parts of India. The Dravida Munnethra Kazhagam (DMK), a race-conscious and major party in Tamil Nadu that claims to speak for Tamils all over the world, has separatist ideas. Also, world opinion was against India supporting the terrorists. From 1985 onwards Rajiv Gandhi tried to negotiate a peaceful settlement in Sri Lanka.

In December 1986, after a meeting between Rajiv Gandhi and Jayewardene in Bangalore during the previous month, an offer was made by the Sri Lankan government to exclude Amparai, which has a Sinhalese majority, from the Eastern Province so that the province would demographically have a Tamil majority. As a first stage the institutional linkages between the Northern and Eastern Provinces were to be strengthened. In the second stage the two provinces were to be constitutionally united, if the people in these areas agreed. The Sri Lankan government also agreed to examine a proposal that a post of vice-president be created for a Tamil incumbent. Rajiv Gandhi was firm in his belief that India should help Sri Lanka preserve its unity and territorial integrity. He did not wish India to be a party to the break up of a small country that was a close neighbour.

The LTTE would not accept these proposals and continued to insist on Tamil Eelam. They did not trust Jayewardene and did not believe that his government would institute these proposals that, in any case, fell short of their demands. There is evidence that Lalith Athulathmudali, the national security minister, and Sri Lankan intelligence agencies had engineered attacks on Muslims in the Eastern Province and blamed it on the Tamil terrorists hence provoking Muslim anger against the Tamils. Also, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran were financing Islamic cultural activities in Sri Lanka accentuating the divide between Tamil speaking Muslims and Hindu Tamils. Meanwhile the Buddhist clergy continued to be militantly anti-Tamil demanding that the security forces deal more harshly with Tamil civilians in Colombo and the North-

Central Province. These ramifications were not conducive to successful peace negotiations.

The terrorist groups, who had for the past few years established themselves in Madras with offices and residences in the capital of Tamil Nadu, became *non personae gratae* in India because of various disturbances they had caused including the shooting of an Indian civilian. Despite this setback the LTTE had already established a strong military machine by purchasing arms in the international markets with money from abroad. The Tigers had also established arms factories in Jaffna and set up a sophisticated telecommunications network linking not only Tamil Nadu but also Singapore, Malaysia, Australia and Mauritius. The LTTE's operational base moved from Madras to Jaffna in 1986 and Prabhakaran announced that the LTTE would take over the civil administration of northern Sri Lanka in January 1987.

The Sri Lankan government had also boosted its military capacity by 1987. When the LTTE took over the civil administration of Jaffna the government imposed a fuel blockade in the north and launched a major military offensive on Jaffna soon afterwards. Essential food supplies did not reach Jaffna during the blockade resulting in semi-famine conditions. The LTTE's response by setting off bombs in Sinhalese areas and the counter-response by the army and air force, which bombed the Jaffna peninsula indiscriminately, resulted in the deaths of numerous innocent civilians. Both the army and the LTTE were guilty of mass atrocities and the civilian population of Jaffna suffered most. The Indian representative at the UN Commission on Human Rights accused the Sri Lankan government of committing atrocities on Tamil civilians. There were accusations of attempted genocide from various international quarters perhaps orchestrated by Tamils living in these regions. By March 1987 the Sri Lankan army was in control of Jaffna and the Tigers had moved into the jungles of the Vanni but continued to make devastating attacks on army positions.

The Sri Lankan government's move towards finding a military solution rather than a negotiated settlement and the

increasingly anti-Tamil views being expressed by government dignitaries such as Premadasa, the prime minister, caused great concern to the Indian government. After a meeting with Rajiv Gandhi's special envoy, Jayewardene agreed to a cease-fire if the Tamil militant groups agreed to enter into a political dialogue. Obviously the LTTE did not wish to negotiate whilst in a weakened position and responded by stepping up its attacks. In April 1987 over a hundred Sinhalese were killed at Habarana by the LTTE and a bomb at a major bus station in Colombo also killed many Sinhalese. Jayewardene's answer was to confirm the continuation of military action on an increased scale. He explained to Gandhi that he felt that the militants were being pushed into a corner and would thus become more amenable to realistic discussions. In Sri Lanka Jayewardene claimed that this was a fight to the finish and apparently told army commanders to raze Jaffna to the ground, if necessary, and then rebuild it.

In May 1987 Rajiv Gandhi warned Sri Lanka that India would intervene to safeguard the welfare of the civilian population of Sri Lankan Tamils against the military attack. Jayewardene ignored this warning and in June India sent essential supplies by sea to Jaffna under the aegis of the Indian Red Cross. The Sri Lankan government denied that there was any situation in Jaffna that required relief supplies and accused the Indian government of violating its sovereignty. The Sri Lankan navy was dispatched with orders to take punitive action against the Indian vessels if required. The latter returned to Tamil Nadu without having delivered their cargo much to the delight of the Sinhalese nationalists. On the following day India countered by carrying out an airdrop of food and other essential supplies on Jaffna after having warned the Sri Lankan government that Indian fighter aircraft would act as escorts. India claimed that it had been compelled to do this for humanitarian reasons. Sri Lanka reacted angrily, accusing India of bullying, of violating Sri Lanka's territorial integrity and attempting to fragment the country. On the whole, world opinion was that though the relief operation would have ideally been carried out with Sri Lankan cooperation, humanitarian

considerations were such in this instance that the rescue exercise had to take precedence over the principle of non-interference.

Indo-Sri Lankan relations were at a very low ebb when in July 1987 the LTTE offered to arrive at a compromise. They wanted some basic demands met by the Sri Lankan government and the ensuing agreement guaranteed by India. In what later became clear as an interim tactical manoeuvre, the LTTE was trying to escape from a weakened position having lost India's support and suffered militarily. However, neither the Sri Lankan government nor the Indian government could ignore this tempting offer. The problem was that the Sri Lankan government, particularly Athulathmudali and Premadasa, did not have any faith in the Indian government, which they felt was pro-Tamil, to act as a honest broker. The Indian High Commissioner, J. N. Dixit, pointed out that it was the result of repeated bad faith on the part of the Sri Lankan government towards its Tamil citizens that had caused the present crisis. He also made it clear that the Sinhalese majority should make up its mind as to whether it wanted Sri Lanka to continue as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multilingual nation or make it a Sinhalese-Buddhist country. If the latter was the case then the other communities were going to demand secession.

Despite the threat of a violent reaction from the Sinhalese nationalists urged on by the SLFP and a recently revitalized JVP an Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, designed to end the civil war, was signed by Rajiv Gandhi and Jayewardene at Colombo on 29 July 1987. The Accord accepted that the Northern and Eastern Provinces had been the areas of historic habitation by the Sri Lankan Tamils and allowed for the union of these two provinces initially under a single provincial council and after one year the issue of union was to be put before the voters of the two areas in a referendum. Together with Sinhala, Tamil and English were also to become official languages. The LTTE was to forego its demand for Tamil Eelam. Hostilities were to cease within 48 hours of the pact being signed. All arms held by militant groups were to be surrendered according to a procedure agreed with the Sri Lankan government and consequent to this surrender Sri Lankan army personnel

were to be confined to barracks. The Indian government was to provide military assistance to implement these proposals at the request of the Sri Lankan government and Jayewardene consented to Gandhi's suggestion that a token Indian political and military presence should be in Jaffna to see that disarmament and ceasefire conditions were fulfilled in a fair manner. India insisted that Sri Lanka's territorial integrity and unity would remain inviolate.

Prabhakaran and Anton Balasingham, the London-based LTTE ideologist, had met Rajiv Gandhi in Delhi on 28 July 1987. Gandhi promised the LTTE the major share in any proposed administration in the North-East and the LTTE insisted that the EPRLF should not be included in the administrative set-up. Prabhakaran is said to have agreed to the Accord as a temporary measure. The LTTE later denied accepting the Accord. Gandhi claimed that he trusted Prabhakaran's word and did not obtain a written acceptance of the Accord from the LTTE.

It was an agreement that was kept alive by the enthusiasm of Rajiv Gandhi who not only wished to placate the Tamils in South India but was also concerned about the increasing help being provided to Sri Lanka in security matters by countries such as Pakistan, Israel and the United States. The Indian government felt that these foreign powers were antagonistic to the interests of India and their increasing influence in Sri Lanka could eventually lead to destabilization in southern Asia. Unfortunately it was an agreement that was doomed from the start because of a lack of faith on all sides. Even before the Accord was signed serious civil disturbances commenced in the Sinhalese areas of the North-Central, Central and Southern Provinces encouraged by the SLFP, JVP, Buddhist clergy and even sections of the UNP who felt that too many concessions were being made to the Tamils. The situation became serious enough by the morning of 29 July for Jayewardene to request aircraft from the Indians to transport troops from Jaffna and Vavuniya to the affected areas. He also asked Gandhi for an Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) that would be located in Jaffna and Trincomalee.

Gandhi agreed reluctantly to the IPKF but insisted that this should have legal sanctions based on a separate bilateral agreement. About 6000 Indian troops were to be deployed to northern Sri Lanka and the first of these were flown out to Jaffna on 30 July 1987. The Accord was seen by Sinhalese nationalists as a pretext for the Indian domination of Sri Lanka. The violent reaction by Sinhalese nationalists and their animosity towards India was typified by the abortive attack by a Sinhalese Sri Lankan naval rating on Rajiv Gandhi whilst he was inspecting a guard of honour in Colombo prior to his return to Delhi on 30 July. On 18 August 1987 there was a grenade attack within parliament with the purpose of killing the President. Jayewardene escaped but two people died and several were injured. This attack was believed to have been carried out by the JVP.

In Jaffna the initial euphoria of the civilian population at the arrival of Indian troops was soon overshadowed by the anger of the LTTE at being ousted by an army that the Tigers considered to be alien. Prabhakaran delivered a speech to an estimated 50,000 audience at Suthumalai in the Jaffna peninsula on 4 August showing his dissatisfaction with the Accord but reluctantly agreeing to surrender weapons to the IPKF. On the following day some, mostly obsolete, weapons were handed over. The Tigers' feeling of humiliation increased with this token surrender in front of their own people and they were beginning to blame the Indians for their discomfiture. Characteristically, the Sri Lankan Tamils in North-Eastern Sri Lanka, contrary to the perception of most Sinhalese, felt that these Indians were foreigners invading their country. By the middle of August, pamphlets were being distributed in Jaffna demanding the withdrawal of the IPKF.

Meanwhile the Indian government was going ahead with its plans to devolve powers to the North-Eastern region. The LTTE was angry to find that, despite the assurances that it thought it had received earlier, all other Tamil groups as well as the Muslims were to have seats in the provisional council. By September, due to the IPKF's poor intelligence, the LTTE had managed to obtain a large consignment of weapons by sea. In retrospect it is clear that

the Indian army was not only poorly equipped for the operation it had undertaken but it had also underestimated the opposition it would face. The LTTE recommenced its battle by attacking other Tamil terrorist groups such as PLOT and EPRLF and massacring several of their members.

In October, twelve LTTE prisoners committed suicide by biting cyanide capsules whilst being taken to Colombo by the Sri Lankan army. At this stage Prabhakaran claimed that he was no longer interested in taking part in the political processes that were meant to establish an interim administrative council in the North-East. The LTTE also retaliated by killing eight Sri Lankan soldiers who had been in its custody for several months. Soon afterwards the LTTE killed five Indian soldiers. The Indian media was, by now, strongly in favour of the IPKF having a military showdown with the LTTE. Jayewardene revoked the amnesty given to the LTTE and offered a reward of one million rupees for Prabhakaran - dead or alive. The war between the IPKF and the LTTE had begun in earnest to the gratification of Sinhalese nationalists.

Massacres and Assassinations (1988 - 1993)

Sri Lanka was moving into a period when all semblance of tolerance and justice, the hallmarks of a stable democratic society, seemed to be under threat. In the north and east there was heavy fighting between the Tigers and the IPKF whilst in the Sinhalese areas of the south and southwest the JVP resumed its terrorist activities with assassinations of leading political figures. Not to be outdone, the government was soon to unleash its own form of terror. Meanwhile the economy continued to suffer due to the costly civil war, decreased tourist revenues and declining foreign investment.

By mid-October 1987 Indian forces had given up any pretext of being peace keepers and had launched the inaptly named Operation Pawan (meaning 'wind') against the Tigers. It was meant to take swift military control - in an estimated 72 hours. Though the Indian army is the fourth largest in the world, the IPKF in Sri Lanka was poorly equipped particularly with regard to

establishing an intelligence network - of prime importance in any war but even more so in this battle against terrorists who mixed with the civilians and had no compunction about using them as cover. Surprisingly, there were very few Tamil speakers in the IPKF (which had increased to about 20,000 troops by 1988) and direct communication with the locals was difficult. Unable to distinguish civilians from guerrillas the Indian army killed indiscriminately though charges of indiscriminate killing and rape were later denied. No longer did the civilian population of Jaffna, which now openly supported the Tigers and was being punished for it, make the Indians welcome. It was soon clear to the IPKF that the Tigers were not only experts at improvisation but were also very well trained in the use of weaponry including explosives. It was also clear that the LTTE's intelligence network was excellent and the army's plans were known to the Tiger leadership well in advance.

At this stage the LTTE had an estimated force of 3,000 and the organisation of its machinery was the key to its success. Prabhakaran controlled all sections of the organisation with ruthless efficiency. His main lieutenants in 1988 were Mahattaya (in military matters), Anton Balasingham (who was based in London and dealt with LTTE ideology and propaganda), Shanmugalingam Sivashankar (also known as Pottu Amman), (chief of intelligence) and Kumaran (in charge of finance). The performance of all LTTE members was constantly monitored. Prabhakaran was always heavily guarded and his location was a closely guarded secret. He rarely spoke directly to the LTTE network. Messages, to and fro, were passed through relays. Although by the end of October 1987 the IPKF was in control of Jaffna after very heavy fighting and at great cost to the civilian population, the Tigers had escaped again into the jungles of the Vanni and continued a very effective guerrilla war against the Indians.

Jayewardene made clear to Rajiv Gandhi at Delhi in January 1988 that not only were senior members of his government opposed to the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces on a permanent basis but so also were the Supreme Court, the Attorney General and several MPs. They felt that devolution of law

and order and financial powers to provincial councils would mean that the Sinhalese would lose control of the Eastern Province and this could lead to the fragmentation of the unitary nature of the Sri Lankan nation.

The JVP, at one time an extreme left organisation (see 'The evolution of an autocratic regime'), had become an ultra-nationalist group and was totally against any compromise with the Tamils. It had started a campaign of assassination against anybody who was opposed to its new ideals. Its object was to destabilise the government and prevent it from complying with the terms of the Accord. By the end of 1987, in addition to the attempt on Jayewardene's life (see 'Indo-Sri Lankan Accord'), it had murdered several local government officials who supported the establishment of provincial councils. Prime Minister Premadasa, National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali and some senior army officers who were also opposed to the Accord had taken the dangerous step of colluding with the JVP and even supplying it with arms. It is also known that towards the end of 1987, Premadasa and Lalith Athulathmudali offered the LTTE assistance in its battle against the Indians if it agreed to a political solution different to that visualized by the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord.

Despite the violence, provincial elections were held between April and June 1988, against a background of bombings and murders by the JVP. Amongst the many prominent political figures assassinated in 1988 was Vijaya Kumaratunga - former movie star, leader of the SLMP (see 'A free and righteous society?') and husband of future president, Chandrika. His murder, initially blamed on the JVP, is now thought to have been contrived by Premadasa. The SLFP, the main opposition party led by Mrs. Bandaranaike, refused to participate and the UNP won in the seven provinces in which elections were held. The elections in the Northern and Eastern Provinces were postponed because of the fighting. In September 1988 the Northern and Eastern Provinces were temporarily merged, as promised, by Jayewardene and elections were held in November.

The LTTE refused to participate in the provincial elections.

In the Jaffna and Mannar districts the EPRLF was the only party to contest and in Kilinochchi, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu only the Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF) came forward. These two parties were awarded all the seats in the Northern Province. In the northern Tamil areas of the Eastern Province the ENDLF won seats whilst in Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Amparai the Muslim Congress and the UNP won most seats. Out of a total of 107 seats in the new North-Eastern Provincial Council the EPRLF-ENDLF alliance won a clear majority. With the unlikely prospect of this new provincial council working satisfactorily Nalin Seneviratna, a retired senior army officer, was appointed Governor and the chairman of the EPRLF, Annamalai Varatharajah Perumal, was made chief minister.

The IPKF's main function, at this stage, was to prevent the LTTE from disrupting the democratically elected provincial government from functioning in the north and the east. Meanwhile Premadasa and Athulathmudali were providing clandestine support for the LTTE with the intention of upsetting the functioning of the new provincial government. In addition it is known that they encouraged the JVP to provide assistance to the LTTE for the same purpose. Jayewardene having lost support within the UNP decided that he would not come forward for a further term as president. In December 1988 Premadasa was elected president beating Mrs. Bandaranaike of the SLFP and Ossie Abeygoonesekara of the United Socialist Alliance. Premadasa was immensely popular with the rural masses that had benefited from his housing and rural development programmes. During the presidential elections the JVP continued to assassinate members of the UNP and during the parliamentary elections in February 1989, which the UNP won, both the JVP and LTTE carried out numerous political killings.

In April 1989, Premadasa invited the LTTE and the JVP to stop their terrorist activities and join the democratic mainstream. The JVP refused but the LTTE was willing to negotiate and in May 1989 the Sri Lankan government started negotiating directly with the LTTE for the first time. In June the LTTE agreed to cease military action against the Sri Lankan security forces and negotiate the transference of power to the Tamil regions. The Indian government

was concerned that the Tigers would wreak vengeance against the former terrorist groups, which were now legalised political parties working with the IPKF, if the latter withdrew. The Tigers had already assassinated Amirthalingam, leader of the TULF, and Umamaheswaran, leader of PLOTE in July 1989.

Premadasa, who had remained extremely antagonistic to Indian involvement, wanted Rajiv Gandhi to withdraw the IPKF by July 1989. He also abrogated the proscription on the LTTE and claimed that it was a recognised political group with which his government would have dealings. The initial refusal by the Indians to withdraw brought about a spate of killings by the JVP. At this stage civilian supporters of Premadasa and the UNP formed death squads, which identified and killed JVP members and even their relatives. There were numerous killings by both sides with stories of entire villages being massacred by government security forces and pro-government death squads. Several hundred young people belonging to the JVP were killed - mainly in southern Sri Lanka. In November 1989, Rohana Wijeweera, the JVP leader, was shot dead whilst in the custody of government security forces. On the insistence of Premadasa, the IPKF withdrew in September 1989.

These brutal tactics stopped the insurgency by the JVP and the LTTE (which had regained its legal status as a political party in December 1989) maintained its ceasefire against government forces and continued talks until June 1990. However, the Tigers fought and defeated the Tamil National Army, which had been formed and trained by the IPKF before it was withdrawn. This Tamil National Army had been created to defend the other Tamil parties against the LTTE. The Tigers also assassinated the leadership of the EPRLF. By June 1990 negotiations had failed and the Tigers resumed their attacks on government forces. Having learnt the effectiveness of death squads against the JVP, Premadasa used the same tactics against the Tigers in the east to kill alleged Tiger sympathisers. In addition, attacks were made on Muslims, often in Mosques, and blamed on the Tigers. The Muslims had formed a new and aggressive political party called the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), which had the support of Muslims in Iran and

Pakistan. The Muslims in the Eastern Province retaliated against the Tamils and there were numerous deaths on both sides.

The death toll continued to rise in 1991 with the LTTE massacring Sinhalese villagers on the border between Northern and Eastern Provinces. It claimed that these were Sinhalese colonisers of Tamil territory. Bolder bomb attacks were carried out by the LTTE in Colombo. One of these bombings was in the military operational headquarters and in addition to killing 23 people was a severe psychological blow to the Sri Lankan authorities. In May 1991, Rajiv Gandhi was murdered by an LTTE suicide bomber causing great outrage in India and leading to the arrest of numerous LTTE supporters in India. The LTTE was banned in India and this crippled its arms supply network for a while. Despite this setback it was soon clear that the LTTE now possessed Russian built SAM missiles for the first time. Many Sri Lankan politicians were beginning to seriously doubt the ability of the government forces to defeat the Tigers.

In August 1991 an attempt was made to impeach the president by members of his own party, including Lalith Athulathmudali, on the grounds that he had abused his power by supplying the LTTE with arms in 1990 and had also instigated the killing of thousands of young people by death squads. However, support for the petition soon disintegrated leaving only eight signatories who were expelled from the UNP when the petition failed. An attempt was then made by the expelled MPs to discredit Premadasa through the media but he countered by claiming that it was an Israeli plot to depose him (he had closed the Israeli interests section in the US embassy in 1990). Premadasa survived this attempt and also public allegations of human rights violations made by a former police officer in April 1992 but it was clear that he and his government were unable to stabilize the country. Not only did the war with the Tigers continue unabated but also the JVP recommenced its insurgent activities in the second half of 1991. The government carried out several major military offensives against the LTTE in 1992 but the army was dealt a severe blow in August when ten of its senior commanders, including Major General Denzil

Kobbekaduwa who commanded the northern force, were killed by a LTTE landmine on the island of Kayts off the coast of Jaffna. In November more senior officers were killed in Colombo by a LTTE suicide bomber.

The SLFP leadership squabbled within itself as to who should replace Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike when she retired. Mrs. Bandaranaike supported her daughter, Chandrika Kumaratunga, whilst a faction composed of longstanding party stalwarts supported her son, Anura Bandaranaike. Meanwhile, the UNP government survived the human rights violations allegations but a climate of fear prevailed with journalists and opponents of Premadasa often being subjected to violent harassment. In April 1993 Lalith Athulathmudali, who had formed a new party called the Democratic United National Front (DUNF), was shot dead whilst at an election rally. The LTTE was blamed but the finger of suspicion pointed at Premadasa. Within a few days of this assassination, at a May Day celebration, Premadasa himself was killed by a Tamil suicide bomber and this was very probably the work of the LTTE.

Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, the incumbent prime minister, was elected president by parliament to serve until the presidential elections were held at the end of Premadasa's term in December 1994. At the provincial elections in May 1993 the UNP only held four of the seven provincial council seats (excluding the Northern and Eastern Provinces). In the north and the east the interim administration of the provincial council had been unable to function without the cooperation of the LTTE and further elections were not held. Chandrika Kumaratunga, won the leadership of the SLFP and having led her party to victory in the provincial council elections, was sworn in as chief minister of the Western Province. Anura Bandaranaike resigned from the SLFP and joined the UNP.

Political tensions relaxed in the latter part of 1993 and the new president tried to reconcile the alienated sections of the UNP. In the north the civil war continued with the fighting being concentrated in and around the Jaffna lagoon. The Tigers had profited not only from the secret supply of arms by Premadasa but also by being allowed to take over territory previously held

by the IPKF. In reality there was now an Tamil Eelam in the north and the LTTE had even introduced a visa system for entry into the Northern Province. In November the Tigers attacked the large Pooneryn military base and occupied it for several days before being forced to retreat. Both sides suffered numerous casualties making this the bloodiest battle of the civil war up to that time. In the south the economy improved due to a favourable tourist season and a substantial increase in textile exports.

A tactical peace offensive and its aftermath (1994 - 1997)

A mood of optimism prevailed when Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunga led the People's Alliance to victory, by a narrow margin, in the parliamentary elections of August 1994 with a pledge to end the civil war. The People's Alliance (PA), a leftist party formed in 1993, was an alliance of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL), Sri Lanka Mahajana Pakshaya (SLMP) and the Desha Vimukthi Janatha Pakshaya (DVJP). Mrs. Kumaratunga had previously shown a genuine desire to come to some form of compromise arrangement with the Tamil terrorist groups when in 1986 she and her husband Vijaya talked informally with some of the leaders of these organizations in Tamil Nadu. However, the Kumaratungas' attempt to educate Sri Lankan public opinion about the need for the Sinhalese to come to terms with the concerns of their Sri Lankan Tamil compatriots was vilified not only in political circles but also by the Sri Lankan media. It was probably one of the reasons for the assassination of Vijaya (see 'Massacres and Assassinations').

The PA's election victory was mainly due to the, now established, predisposition in Sri Lanka for a disillusioned electorate to vote against the past. Jayewardene's failures and Premadasa's excesses swung the electorate against the UNP, which had been in government for the past 17 years. Mrs. Kumaratunga had to form a coalition with the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), the Eelam People's Democratic Front (EPDF) and the Sri Lankan Muslim Congress (SLMC) to create a majority government.

Early in October 1994 the government sent representatives to meet the LTTE leaders in Jaffna and commence negotiations for a peace settlement. On 23 October a suicide bomber killed 53 people at a presidential election rally in Colombo. Amongst the casualties was the UNP's presidential candidate, Gamini Dissanayake. The bombing was attributed to the LTTE and negotiations were suspended. The UNP replaced Dissanayake with his wife, Srimala, but Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunga was a clear winner at the presidential election in November 1994 with 62 per cent of the vote. The new president appointed her mother, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, as prime minister in her place.

The economy had strengthened in 1993 and 1994 due to a growth in tourism, a robust garment industry and an increased production of rice because of adequate rainfall. This growth was marred by a fall in foreign investment caused not only by the civil war but also by concerns within the international community about the poor record of human rights violations by the previous administration. In addition there was concern about the potential policies of Mrs. Kumaratunga's leftist government with regard to private investment. The proposals for peace were meant to reassure the international community that her government was doing its utmost to bring the war to an end. If peace was not achieved by this peace offensive and the fighting started once again, then Mrs. Kumaratunga was assured of the sympathy and support of not only the majority of Sri Lankans but also of the international community. In addition the majority of Sri Lankan Tamils, who also wanted peace, would be exasperated by the behaviour of the Tamil militants if they refused an apparently reasonable peace proposal.

A democratically elected government is obliged to abide by the wishes of the pressure groups within its support base to be able to continue in power. In no country is this as obvious as in Sri Lanka where pressure groups, such as the Buddhist priesthood, have an overwhelming influence on the electorate. Mrs. Kumaratunga, whilst appearing to 'bend over backwards' to end the civil war had also to stay in line with the wishes not only of the

Sinhalese majority but also of the Buddhist clergy, the Sri Lankan army and the Muslim community. The proposals were aimed at ensuring that all communities had the freedom to express and promote their distinct identity including the right to cultural and religious practices. Their right to promote their own language and transact business with the state in the national language of their choice was upheld. These proposals were similar to those in the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord but were more clearly defined. However, the same problems remained with regard to demarcation of the Eastern Province into areas that would take into account Tamil, Muslim and Sinhalese demography. This demarcation had not been acceptable to the LTTE in 1987. The proposals did in some ways satisfy the aspirations of many moderate Tamils within Sri Lanka and amongst the Tamil Diaspora. In a war-weary climate there was a great deal of hope that Mrs. Kumaratunga's scheme would succeed.

The PA Government loosened some of the restrictions on the media and Mrs. Kumaratunga showed herself to be receptive to advice promoting foreign investors. A stock exchange had already been founded in 1990, exchange controls had been eliminated and there were generous tax incentives for foreign investors. The United States was the most important export market and it was the largest market for textiles in 1994. Foreign aid, vital for developing the infrastructure, had increased since the decline of human rights violations and was about \$500 million in 1994. In 1995 the government lifted the economic embargo on Jaffna and allowed consumer goods into the Northern Province.

Negotiations with the LTTE were resumed in December 1994 and a cease-fire was declared on 8 January 1995 after Mrs. Kumaratunga and Prabhakaran signed a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. It was to be monitored by a Peace Committee chaired by representatives of Canada, Norway and the Netherlands. In April 1995 the LTTE declared that the government was not negotiating in good faith. It claimed that the devolution package was unsatisfactory and did not satisfy the promises made by the government. The LTTE's demand was that all the Sinhalese people

who had been settled along the upper reaches of the Mahaveli River since the 1950s be removed and the land be given back to the Tamils. The systematic settlement of Sinhalese colonists by successive governments had been a source of aggravation for the Tamils who considered this an encroachment on their territory. This was an unrealistic demand by the LTTE, as it knew that no Sri Lankan government would remain in power if it met this demand. In retrospect it would seem that this cease-fire was another delaying tactic by the LTTE so that it could regroup. On 19 April 1995 the LTTE violated its cease-fire agreement by blowing up two ships at Trincomalee and shooting down an army plane.

This renewed violence by the Tigers aroused the sympathy of the international community. Many western countries condemned the LTTE and extended diplomatic support to Mrs. Kumaratunga and her government. This was a victory that she, very probably, anticipated when she made the peace proposal. Also, as anticipated, moderate Tamil opinion turned against the Tigers. Support also came from the United States in the form of military advisors and in 1996 a contingent of Green Beret specialists commenced training Sri Lankan soldiers. In August 1995 the government put forward a scheme outlining its proposals for devolution. The scheme allowed for the creation of provincial governments with extensive powers and was later presented to parliament in October 1997 as a draft for constitutional reform. It envisaged a federal structure, though Sri Lanka would retain its unitary status. It was rejected not only by the LTTE but also by Sinhalese nationalist groups, which commenced political agitation to prevent it from being implemented.

The nature of the LTTE's military operation had changed after 1990 and its ranks had swelled from the compact 3,000 or so personnel required for guerrilla warfare to around 10,000 in 1995. These numbers and more were required if the LTTE was going to defend the vast territory it had acquired when the Indians withdrew. To maintain these numbers the LTTE banned the departure of young people from its territory and also made desperate appeals for recruits from outside. From being terrorists

the Tigers were trying to assume the image of 'freedom-fighters' not only to improve their international representation but also to attract more recruits and donations.

In October 1995 Operation Riviresa (sunshine) was launched by the Sri Lankan military with the object of taking over the entire Jaffna peninsula. This military assault was spectacularly successful and by December 1995 Jaffna town was in the hands of the army. Around 300,000 people fled from the area (mainly to Kilinochchi and Vavuniya to the south of the Jaffna peninsula) before the entry of the army. These evacuees suffered terrible hardships. The Tigers did assist with this evacuation but it is not clear as to whether they forced these people to flee. From the point of view of propaganda it was now possible for the LTTE to claim that the civilian population ran away in fear of their so-called liberators. It now seems likely that the Tigers did not hold out against the army, as they knew they would lose the battle. They withdrew to the Vanni and also to the Eastern Province.

By May 1996 the entire Jaffna peninsula was under government control and attempts were being made to restore normalcy. A Rehabilitation and Resettlement Authority of the North was set up directly under the president by the government, which was keen to offer a workable democratic alternative to the people of Jaffna as a contrast to the rule of the LTTE. This was an effort to win the hearts and minds of the people of Jaffna who, for several years, had suffered at the hands of not only the terrorists but also the government's security forces. There was assistance from the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme for this project. Unfortunately, a ban by the government not only on journalists but also on any outsider meant that there was little information available about government activities in the north at the time. It seems likely that the government's initial 'softly, softly' approach towards the civilians became more vicious later as the threat of LTTE attacks increased.

LTTE activities continued despite the taking of Jaffna by the Sri Lankan army. On 31 January 1996 a LTTE bomb in Colombo destroyed the Central Bank and killed several people. In July the

Tigers took the military base at Mullaitivu killing over a thousand soldiers. The government took the base back after a few days and in September captured Kilinochchi, which had been the administrative headquarters of the LTTE. The Tigers retreated into the jungles of the Vanni. Kumaratunga's government indicted Prabhakaran in October 1996 for the Central Bank bombing. It had managed to persuade several foreign governments of the essentially terrorist nature of the LTTE and also its links with international terrorism. In October 1997 the United States designated the LTTE as a terrorist organization making it illegal for anybody in the United States to provide aid to the group. India and Malaysia had already banned the LTTE and several other countries including Canada and Australia were taking steps to curtail the activities of the LTTE on their soil. The international community was, at last, beginning to think of collective action against terrorism.

By the end of 1996 the earlier popularity of Kumaratunga's government had begun to wane. The plans for devolution had earned the odium of the Sinhalese nationalists. There was a resumption of government intolerance to legitimate political opposition. The president, having earlier denounced violence in politics, now seemed to be justifying the use of force by her supporters. The relaxation of the restrictions on the media was abandoned and journalists were again harassed if they were critical of the government. The local elections of March 1997 were marred by allegations of pervasive fraud by the government's supporters. There was also widespread violence before the elections. A government MP was assassinated and a state of emergency was imposed. Though support from the United States and its own propaganda had improved the government's image with regard to human rights violations, it was clear that the government continued to be involved in torture, rape and assassination. From July 1996 to April 1997 there were 700 disappearances of civilians in government occupied Jaffna according to a report to the UN Commission on Human Rights by the United States.

The government proposals for constitutional reforms, which included the proposal for devolution of authority to the

area populated by Tamils, were put before parliament in October 1997. The main party in opposition, the UNP, refused to support all the changes. Since the government did not have the required majority, the proposals were postponed until it acquired the necessary support. As these proposals not only required a two-third majority in parliament but also an affirmative nation-wide referendum, their implementation seemed unlikely.

Impasse (1998 - 2000)

The inability of the major political parties to arrive at a consensus in dealing with the ethnic problem reflects the inability of political leaders to rise above party and personal rivalry in the face of a national catastrophe. No statesman of sufficient stature has emerged as yet to unite the country behind a solution that would be seen as impartial by all communities. By 1998 about 55,000 people had been killed in the conflict. The LTTE was, undoubtedly, the dominant Tamil organization both politically and militarily in Sri Lanka. It would not compromise on its demand for Tamil Eelam, an independent Tamil state within Sri Lanka. The government's proposals for constitutional reform envisaged a federal structure that did not go far enough to meet the LTTE's demands and went too far for the Sinhalese nationalists. The main opposition party, the UNP now led by Ranil Wickremasinghe, withdrew from discussions aimed at achieving unanimity because of the impending elections of 1999. In the civil war the military establishments of both sides, though exhausted by the constant conflict over such a long period, felt that they should only negotiate from a position of strength. All these factors were to lead to a political stalemate.

International concerns had changed over the previous few years and the creation of a new world economic order with a free market economy had become the common aim of the world powers subduing the old ideological suspicions of the cold war era. International security was essential for this free market to function satisfactorily. In this political climate it was clear that the world powers, particularly the United States, could neither afford to allow terrorism to flourish in any country nor allow governments

to be excessively communal. Whilst condemning terrorism there is international support for the legitimate political aspirations of the Sri Lankan Tamils. These factors were to put increasing pressure on the combatants to come to a settlement.

The roots of the ethnic conflict lie not only in the growing awareness that the existing system of governance did not cater for any form of power sharing between the communities but also actively discriminated against the main minority Tamil community with regard to language rights, employment and higher education. In addition there was the colonization of land in previously Tamil areas by Sinhalese settlers. As Sinhalese attitudes hardened, Tamils were faced with anti-Tamil pogroms and harassment not only by the security forces but also by the LTTE. These factors led to extensive emigration of the Tamil community. The early emigration, which began in the late 1950s and early 1960s, was mainly for economic reasons and consisted chiefly of professional individuals who did not feel they had any prospects in Sri Lanka after the introduction of the Sinhala Only Bill in 1956 (see 'The opening of Pandora's box'). The trickle became an exodus after the race riots of 1983 (see 'A vortex of violence') and encompassed the whole strata of Sri Lankan Tamil society. It is estimated that out of a total of three million Sri Lankan Tamils half a million now live abroad.

Many of these Tamil emigrants, particularly those later emigrants who left the country of their birth in an atmosphere of fear and anger, were supportive of the Tigers and willing to accept them as a group that was fighting for the legitimate rights of the Sri Lankan Tamils. They felt that the aggressive tactics of these terrorists had coerced the government into accepting the need for granting concessions to the Tamils that had previously been rejected. The moderate Tamil political parties had not been taken seriously by the government and from their position of weakness had been unable to negotiate any form of settlement that was satisfactory to the Tamil community. The LTTE supporters amongst the Tamil Diaspora are a potent source of financial support for the organization. Their over-zealous fundraising,

particularly in countries with liberal traditions such as Canada, has caused concern. The Tamil Diaspora has not only provided the LTTE with funds but also with various forms of expertise acquired abroad, including the legal aspects of negotiation. However, in the past few years many of these emigrants have begun to feel that a negotiated settlement to the conflict was desirable.

This 'long-distance nationalism' is not confined to Sri Lankan Tamils. There is also a substantial Sinhalese Diaspora consisting of people who have gone abroad not only for economic reasons but also to escape the instability of a country in the throes of a debilitating war. Many of these Sinhalese emigrants also have strong communal and nationalistic feelings. It is not surprising, therefore, that the expatriate literature from these two groups are very similar in that they express similar feelings of extreme communalism. This has led to antagonism between the two factions and it is only recently that attempts at reconciliation, with a view to making a combined effort to bring about peace, are being made. There is a significant amount of wealth being brought back into Sri Lanka by these Diaspora and by 2003 it was the second largest source of income, next to the export of clothing.

In January 1998, shortly before the fiftieth anniversary of Sri Lanka's independence on 4 February 1998, two LTTE suicide bombers set off a truck bomb that severely damaged the Temple of the Tooth at Kandy and killed several people. Kandy was to have been the centre for the anniversary celebrations, which Prince Charles was to attend. The Temple of the Tooth houses the Tooth-Relic, which is the palladium of the Sinhalese nation. Despite this setback the celebrations were held under heightened security with Colombo as the centre and in the presence of Prince Charles. The fighting continued in the north with the Sri Lankan army attempting to take control of the highway to Jaffna, which would allow land access to the peninsula. The transport of troops and supplies had to be made by air and sea since the LTTE took control of the strategic town of Mankulam. The army managed to capture Mankulam in September 1998 but the LTTE retained control of the more important town of Kilinochchi. Morale was very low in the

Sri Lankan army and there have been about 25,000 desertions in recent years.

The security forces made use of ex-militant Tamil groups and home guards as auxiliaries to aid in military operations and this led to some of these groups waging their own little wars using torture, murder, forced conscription and unlawful eviction. The Peoples Liberation Organization for Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) were two of these groups whose battles with each other claimed many innocent civilian lives. Human Rights organizations also accused the government's security forces of carrying out large-scale arbitrary arrests of Tamils based mainly on their ethnicity. In July 1999, a LTTE suicide bomber killed Neelan Tiruchelvam who was a Tamil member of parliament and a prominent human rights activist. He had proposed devolution of powers along ethnic lines as an alternative to a separate Tamil state. The 'tit for tat' attacks by the LTTE continued. When in September 1999 several Tamil civilians were killed in an air-raid by government forces at Mullaitivu, the LTTE responded a few days later by killing a number of Sinhalese civilians in the same area.

Independent press coverage of the war in the north was severely censored by the Kumaratunga government in 1995 but further restrictions were instituted in June 1999. Access to the areas of conflict and reporting on the conduct of security personnel was banned amongst allegations of mass killings and other atrocities by the army. Mrs. Kumaratunga called the presidential election eleven months early in the hope of substantiating her leadership. Three days before the elections on 21 December 1999 a LTTE suicide bomber killed twenty-three people and wounded Mrs. Kumaratunga in the eye at an election rally. This reinforced popular support for Kumaratunga who won the election with 51 per cent of the vote - only slightly more than the 50 per cent required to take office. Ranil Wickremasinghe, her main opponent and leader of the UNP captured 43 per cent of the vote.

The scene was set for further personal bitterness between these two political rivals, who were destined to dominate the Sri

Lankan political stage in the next few years, when Wickremasinghe accused Mrs. Kumaratunga's party of serious election violations - an accusation that was supported by some independent election monitors. However, at the presidential swearing-in ceremony Mrs. Kumaratunga not only called on the LTTE to negotiate with the government but also invited Wickremasinghe to join the government in negotiating a peace settlement.

In April 2000 the large Sri Lankan Army base at Elephant Pass, the gateway to the Jaffna peninsula, was overrun by the LTTE. This was a catastrophic defeat for the government, which sought and obtained large-scale military assistance from abroad - mainly from Israel, Pakistan, the United States and Britain. During the next few months there was very heavy fighting in southern Jaffna but with the help of the military supplies that they had received from abroad the Sri Lankan army managed to hold on to Jaffna. Norway had volunteered to mediate and Anton Balasingham, the LTTE's London-based ideologist and political advisor, had talks with Eric Solheim, the newly appointed Norwegian special envoy to Sri Lanka, in April 2000. A Norwegian fact-finding mission was to visit the Vanni at the invitation of the LTTE and at the same time parallel discussions were to be held with the Sri Lankan government. Norway had the advantage of being an impartial third party in that it did not have any political, ethnic or colonial linkages with the Sinhalese or Tamils and therefore had high credibility with the warring parties.

The LTTE continued with its terrorist activities even whilst these discussions were going on and in July 2000 attacked the international airport at Katunayake, destroying several military and civilian planes. This was a serious set-back for tourism. In August 2000 the government, pressurised by the overtly racist Buddhist clergy and other Sinhalese chauvinist groups, withdrew the devolution package it had offered the LTTE (see 'A tactical peace offensive and its aftermath'). Also in a move to pacify the chauvinists the president removed her ailing mother, Mrs. Bandaranaike, from the post of prime minister and replaced her with Ratnasiri Wickremanayake, who has close ties with the Buddhist clergy. In

his first speech as prime minister, Wickremanayake claimed that the only way to eliminate terrorism was by war and declared that the war against the LTTE would continue. At the parliamentary elections held in October 2000 Mrs. Kumaratunga's party, the People's Alliance (PA), won with a slender majority and required the support of the Sri Lankan Muslim Congress (SLMC) to form a government.

The two main objectives of the Norwegian initiative were to negotiate a protracted cease-fire and to promote direct bilateral negotiations between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. It was hoped that the negotiations would lead to political and constitutional solutions to the dispute. It has been suggested that the LTTE agreed to mediation by Norway because it had failed in its military objective of dominating Jaffna. Also, its military strength diminished during 2000 and the international acceptability of the Tigers as freedom fighters had diminished. Nevertheless, the LTTE demanded that the government should lift its ban on the organization and acknowledge that the LTTE was the sole political representative for Sri Lankan Tamils. These were its pre-conditions for negotiation. Although it is an acknowledged terrorist organization the LTTE has earned political credibility in the minds of many Sri Lankan Tamils. Prabhakaran, having stamped his authority as supreme leader, is perceived as a highly competent military and political leader committed to the welfare of the Tamils. The LTTE, having withstood the Indian Army and fought the Sri Lankan Army to a standstill over several years, has demonstrated a single-mindedness and resilience in promoting self-determination for the Tamils. In December 2000 the LTTE declared a month-long, unilateral cease-fire 'as a goodwill measure to facilitate the peace process'. The government refused to reciprocate stating that a cease-fire need not precede negotiations and that it would continue with its military operations. It also refused to lift its economic embargo on Tamil areas not held by its own military.

Scope for limited optimism (2001 - 2003)

Given the previous intransigence of the LTTE and the inability of the Sri Lankan government to work purposefully towards reaching a mutually acceptable compromise, there was only scope for limited optimism that the Norwegian initiative would bring about peace. Optimism, however slight, is based on international pressure being brought to bear on both parties. Even the Tamil Diaspora, hitherto a supporter of the LTTE in the main, was moving towards advocating a negotiated settlement. One obvious problem is that the leadership of the LTTE, particularly Prabhakaran, would have the same difficulty, as other terrorists have had in the past, 'to come in from the cold' and return to a normal democratic environment. The massive international military assistance given to the government meant that the Sri Lankan army is better equipped than ever before and Prabhakaran admitted in his annual Heroes' Day speech of November 2000 that this was the reason that the LTTE gave up its advance to Jaffna. However, the Sri Lankan army with its poor morale and lack of manpower due to desertions, casualties and poor recruitment was never in a position to score a decisive victory over the Tigers. In any case it has become very clear that a purely military solution will not work.

The LTTE extended its unilateral ceasefire, month by month, until April 2001. It claimed that the Sri Lankan army had killed 133 of its fighters since the self-imposed cease-fire commenced in December 2000. The Sri Lankan government did not reciprocate because of the pressure brought to bear on it by Buddhist priests and other groups of Sinhalese chauvinists. In April 2001 the unilateral cease-fire ended when the Tigers resumed fighting in southern Jaffna and many Sri Lankan army soldiers were killed. In retrospect this was an unnecessary waste of lives and poor judgment on the government's part but more was to come. On 26 May 2001 a conference of Buddhist organizations including the National Sangha Council, the main body that represents the Buddhist clergy, convened to consider the implications of the proposed peace talks and constitutional

proposals, resolved that Sri Lanka 'being the home of the Sinhala people no part of it can be the home of a minority'. It also resolved that the war should be continued and urged the government 'to prosecute the war correctly'. Meanwhile the LTTE had resumed its activities. It destroyed a police station near Amparai, killing several policemen.

In August 2001 the minority PA government, realising its impotence, invited the UNP, the main opposition party, to join in forming a national reconciliation government to tackle the crisis. The talks between the PA and the UNP collapsed because the PA wished to make a constitutional amendment introducing a new post of vice-president to which Ratnasiri Wickremanayake, the incumbent PA prime minister, would be appointed before Ranil Wickremasinghe, the leader of the UNP, was made prime minister of the proposed new government. This was not acceptable to the UNP. Indeed, as the General Secretary of the LSSP pointed out, it was a consensus between all political parties to resolve the crisis that was required rather than merely a consensus between the two main parties. In September 2001 the PA government formed an interim coalition with the JVP. The Marxist JVP was strongly opposed to peace talks with the LTTE and also opposed to the economic reforms recommended by the IMF and the World Bank. Despite the coalition the government was unable to withstand the threat of a no-confidence motion because several government members crossed over to the opposition and Mrs. Kumaratunga dissolved parliament in October 2001. In the meantime the UNP had made an alliance with the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), some of the PA dissidents and some smaller parties to form the United National Front (UNF) in readiness for the forthcoming elections.

The main Tamil political opposition parties - Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) and the All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC) - decided to unite in forming the Tamil National Alliance (TNA). According to the TULF the TNA was formed 'to support the liberation struggle of the LTTE in and out of parliament'. At the annual LTTE Heroes' Day

speech in November 2001 Prabhakaran urged the Sinhala people to reject racism and to offer justice to the Tamils so that peace, ethnic reconciliation and economic prosperity could return to the island. He emphasized that the ban on his organization had to be lifted to allow it to negotiate as the legitimate, authentic representative of the Tamil people. He also claimed that the LTTE was a national liberation organization and not a terrorist group. Clearly, he was concerned that in the wake of the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001 the international war against terrorism would intensify.

At the General Election held in December 2001 the UNP, which Mrs. Kumaratunga had accused of conspiring with the LTTE to undermine the Sinhala nation, won a slim majority but was able to form a government with the help of its new coalition, the UNF. The JVP showed a massive increase in parliamentary representation and this together with the failure of the UNP to win a clear majority with its appeal for conciliation towards the Tamil militants showed that the Sinhalese majority were still not convinced that negotiation was the best way towards peace.

In response to a ceasefire unilaterally declared by the LTTE, the UNF Government also declared a month long ceasefire from 24 December 2001 and lifted the economic embargo from some parts of the North-East. Ranil Wickremasinghe, the new prime minister, officially requested Norway to resume its facilitator role in bringing about peace talks with the LTTE and Prabhakaran, the LTTE leader, also called for Norway's continued involvement. A Memorandum of Understanding for a permanent ceasefire to commence on 23 February 2002 was signed by Ranil Wickremasinghe and Prabhakaran. Despite strong opposition from Mrs. Kumaratunga, the JVP and the Sihala Urumaya (a hard-line Sinhalese nationalist party) the permanent ceasefire was maintained. However, the rift between the president and the prime minister had irrevocably widened. At the local government elections in March 2002, the prime minister's UNF routed the president's PA and also the JVP endorsing the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement by the Prime Minister. The defence levy on all goods and services, imposed by

Mrs. Kumaratunga to finance the war and blamed for the rapid rise in the cost of living, was abolished by the UNF Government. The expenditure on defence was also reduced.

At a press conference at Kilinochchi that attracted considerable international and local media attention in April 2002, Prabhakaran claimed that he was committed to peace and denied that the LTTE was under pressure because of the international war on terrorism. Also in April Prabhakaran signed an agreement with Rauf Hakeem, leader of the SLMC, to cooperate on affairs dealing with the Muslim community and as a first step displaced Muslims were invited to return to the North-East. The government lifted the ban on the LTTE early in September 2002 after arrangements had been made for the Norwegian facilitated peace negotiations to commence in Thailand on 16 September.

At this stage of the negotiations, during which both parties gave assurances of their desire for peace and their wish to continue talking, Anton Balasingham stated that the LTTE would only seek an independent state if its demand for substantial regional autonomy and self government was not met. The main discussions at this session in Thailand concerned the solution to the difficult humanitarian problem in the North-East, the resettling of internally displaced persons and issues relating to the High Security Zones (HSZ). The latter are areas surrounding military camps and designated as such to prevent surprise attacks by the LTTE. Displaced people are not permitted to resettle in these areas giving rise to a humanitarian problem. The suggestion of an interim administration for the North-East headed by the LTTE was also broached by Balasingham but was put aside for the time being because of constitutional obstacles. It also met with public suspicion in Sri Lanka that this was a ploy by the Tigers to gain permanent control. Instead, a Joint Task Force constituting a partnership between the government and the LTTE that would identify, finance and monitor urgent humanitarian needs in the North-East was to be established. The Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister stressed that it was in the interests of the world community that the peace process succeeded and asked for international

funding for 'practical peace building on the ground'.

The next session was also held in Thailand in November 2002 and both sides agreed, contrary to Mrs. Kumaratunga's views, that there should not be a time frame for the talks. They also expressed their strong support for the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), which is an international verification mission consisting of monitors from the Nordic countries. It is in Sri Lanka at the invitation of the parties involved in the conflict and its primary role is to monitor any violations of the Ceasefire Agreement.

Meanwhile the unworkable relationship between the executive president with extensive powers and a democratically elected prime minister who was the leader of a rival political party with opposing views was seriously threatening the peace process. The main reason that the president did not nullify the Ceasefire Agreement and hence stop the peace process was her concern about adverse international opinion. Also, at this stage it seemed likely that the majority of the electorate would back the peace process and hence if Mrs. Kumaratunga dissolved parliament a year after the government assumed power, as she was entitled to do under the 1978 constitution, the UNF was convinced that it would win the ensuing elections with an even bigger majority. The improvement in the economy during 2002 had contributed towards the popularity of Wickremasinghe and the UNF.

It was under the shadow of the president's disapproval that the government and the LTTE reached what was acclaimed as a historic agreement in Oslo on 5 December 2002 at the third session of peace talks. The agreement was 'to explore a solution to end the island's conflict founded on the principle of internal self-determination in areas of historical habitation of the Tamil speaking peoples, based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka'. The LTTE seemed to be settling for a federal model within a united Sri Lanka. However the LTTE insisted that regional autonomy had to have 'internal self-determination' for the Tamils and Muslims in the historic areas where these people live and be clarified within an appropriate constitutional basis. Despite the scepticism of the government's critics there was still a great deal

of hope that a permanent solution would be found.

Further opposition to the peace process appeared in January 2003 in a new Sinhala nationalist group calling itself the 'Organization to Protect the Motherland' (OPM). Though the inauguration of this organization was convened by extreme Sinhalese nationalists it was, significantly, attended by influential political figures in the opposition including Ratnasiri Wickremanayake, the former PA prime minister. The group was campaigning for the de-merger of the North-Eastern Province into Northern and Eastern Provinces. The fear amongst these nationalists and the politicians, including Mrs. Kumaratunga who supported them, was that Ranil Wickremasinghe and his government would agree to terms permitting a separate state in the North-East under the guise of federalism.

At the fourth session of the peace talks, held in Thailand in January 2003, the emphasis was on an 'Action plan for an Accelerated Resettlement Programme for the Jaffna District' and plans were to be made to release property occupied by the Sri Lankan security forces to the original owners. The fifth session, held in February 2003 at Berlin, also focused on the humanitarian aspects with an appeal to the international community to make funds available for rehabilitation in the North and East. Concern was expressed at this session about the sinking of a Sea Tiger vessel near the island of Delft off the coast of Jaffna by the Sri Lankan navy. The Sri Lankan security forces were trying to prevent the Tigers from smuggling arms by sea.

The sixth session of peace talks was held in Hakone, Japan, in March 2003 with the Japanese government promising to actively support the peace initiative. The talks were overshadowed by the sinking of another ship belonging to the Tigers (described by them as a merchant ship) in international waters off Trincomalee by the Sri Lankan navy. Eleven Tiger cadres were killed in this episode and the LTTE called it a grave violation of the Ceasefire Agreement. The Norwegian head of the SLMM promised to use his good offices to prevent a confrontation. The government and the LTTE, in their turn, agreed to strengthen the mandate of the

SLMM to prevent serious breaches of the ceasefire on land and at sea. In their political discussions both parties reiterated their commitment to a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka. A complete plan outlining the necessary steps to be taken by the parties to attain this federal solution, particularly with regard to the division of powers between the centre and the regions, was to be put forward at the next session.

By April 2003 Sinhalese opposition to the peace initiative, orchestrated by Mrs. Kumaratunga and her party, had reached a level that worried the government sufficiently to consider holding an island-wide referendum on the peace negotiations. The LTTE objected stating that the UNF government's victory at the last election had confirmed the people's desire for peace and a referendum was, therefore, superfluous. The president was adamant that she, too, desired peace but the ongoing negotiations were not the best way to obtain this goal. The peace process was further undermined when the LTTE was not invited to an international Donor Conference in Washington to discuss the raising of funds for rehabilitation in the North-East. The LTTE had been designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization under US law in 1997 and its members are not entitled to US visas. The LTTE expressed its anger and frustration claiming that from the onset of the peace process it had an equal and joint partnership with the government in the context of soliciting international financial assistance for rehabilitation in the North-East and had participated in the previous Donor Conference in Oslo.

On 20 April 2003 the LTTE suspended its participation in the peace talks 'for the time being'. Anton Balasingham, its chief negotiator, cited the failure by the government and the Norwegian facilitators to find a more appropriate venue for the Donor Conference, the continued presence of government security forces in Tamil homes, places of worship, schools and other public buildings despite an agreed time-frame for evacuation that had lapsed and the failure to return the North-East to normalcy.

Reluctant negotiations (2003 - 2004)

Soon after suspending the peace talks, the LTTE also suspended meetings of the Sub-committee on Immediate Humanitarian Rehabilitation Needs (SIHRN), which had succeeded the Joint Task Force established after the first session of peace talks and was the main forum for cooperation between the government and the LTTE. It claimed that the Sub-committee was ineffective in restoring normalcy in the North-East and, again, requested the establishment of an interim administrative structure with adequate powers to undertake reconstruction and development in the North-East. The LTTE wanted greater participation both in the decision-making and delivery of tasks though fully aware that there were legal and constitutional constraints for the formation of such a body. The Sri Lankan government then proposed that a Development and Reconstruction Council be established as an extended version of SIHRN. When the LTTE refused this concept the government offered to expedite implementation of efficient rehabilitation programmes in the North-East by forming an 'Apex Body' (Council) as an interim measure. This was not an advance on the previous proposal as far as the LTTE was concerned and was also rejected.

By May 2003 the constitutional crisis within the Sri Lankan government caused by the dissension between the Head of the Executive and the Head of the Legislature was clearly making a permanent political settlement with a radical change in the constitution, allowing for regional autonomy and self-government for Tamil-speaking people, unlikely. The LTTE was well aware of this and Balasingham, its Chief Negotiator, stated in a letter to the prime minister that the government was caught between an enraged president and an entrenched constitution, which allowed little room for manoeuvre. Mrs. Kumaratunga widened the rift between herself and the prime minister even further when she took over the administration of the Lottery Board from a senior UNF minister without consulting the prime minister.

In June 2003 representatives of 51 countries and 22 international organizations met in Japan for a Donor Conference,

which the LTTE refused to attend because they had not been able to attend the previous Donor Conference in Washington. At the Conference \$4.5 billion was pledged as aid to Sri Lanka over a period of four years. However, payments were made conditional on the satisfactory progress of the peace talks.

In answer to the government's proposal for a Provisional Administrative Council of the Northern and Eastern Provinces with a LTTE majority in the council, the LTTE made a formal proposal that an Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) be established to administer eight districts - Amparai, Batticaloa, Kilinochchi, Jaffna, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee and Vavuniya. The LTTE's proposals were diligently prepared following visits of a LTTE team led by Suppayya Paramu Thamilchelvan, head of the LTTE's political division, to several western countries and South Africa and a meeting of the LTTE's Constitutional Affairs Committee in Paris where they had the advice of legal and constitutional experts from the Tamil Diaspora.

The ISGA was to be composed of members appointed by the LTTE, the government and the Muslim community in the North-East. The LTTE was to have an absolute majority in the ISGA, which was to have plenary power over the governance of the North-East including taxation and law and order. The ISGA was also to have control of the marine and off-shore resources of the adjacent seas and the power to regulate access to these areas. This would mean that nearly two-thirds of the island's shores would be under the control of the ISGA. According to the LTTE document the ISGA would continue until a final settlement to the ethnic conflict was reached and implemented. The plan was condemned on the grounds that it exceeded the parameters of federalism and went beyond the agreements reached in the third session of peace talks at Oslo. There was no reference to the Sri Lankan Parliament or Supreme Court in the LTTE's proposals. These omissions were thought to be intentional rather than accidental. Any 'self-governing' authority, interim or otherwise, was not something that the Sri Lankan government could sanction as it was not only unconstitutional but also anathema to the Sinhalese nationalists.

However, the LTTE's proposals were coherent and could form a firm basis for negotiation, which the UNF government was unable to undertake because of the constitutional crisis that the president had created. The international community, including the United States, felt that these proposals were an important step forward in the peace process. Mrs. Kumaratunga and her Sinhalese nationalist supporters were strongly of the opinion that negotiation based on the LTTE proposals would undermine not only the unity of the country but also its security. Soon after the proposals were received and whilst the prime minister was on an official visit to the United States in November 2003 the president used her constitutional powers to sack the Ministers of Defence, Interior and Media and prorogue the parliament for two weeks. Mrs. Kumaratunga maintained that as president she was solely responsible for Defence and National Security. The Ceasefire Agreement and the peace process was to be allowed to continue but the president would take over the defence of the country. She was also critical of the Norwegian facilitators' suggestions to remove strategically important army camps and to recognize the LTTE's 'illegal' naval unit. The SLMM was to be allowed to continue functioning but with 'clear instructions'.

The prime minister claimed that this was a desperate and irresponsible action aimed at plunging the country into chaos and anarchy. At this stage the UNF Government felt that it could not continue with the peace process as it was not in control of defence, the interior or the media and informed the diplomats of Norway, the EU, Japan and the US of its intention to pull out of the negotiations. The prime minister declared his willingness to hand over the responsibility to the president. The Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister, Vidar Helgesen, after talks with the prime minister, the president and LTTE leader, Prabhakaran, stated that in the present political crisis there was 'no space for the further efforts by the Norwegian government to assist the parties'. Norway temporarily withdrew from its role as facilitator. Helgesen also made it clear that in this political vacuum the ceasefire would become increasingly fragile and stressed the concern felt by the

international community.

In response, the president suggested that a Government of National Reconstruction and Reconciliation be established¹ and requested the prime minister to continue with the peace process 'in the light of recent changes'. She wished to have a committee appointed to facilitate smooth functioning between the Defence Authority, which she now controlled and the government's Peace Secretariat. It was clear that Mrs. Kumaratunga wished to dominate the peace negotiations. It was also clear that her party, the PA, would lose if elections were held at this stage because it was very likely that the minority parties would vote en bloc for the UNF. During the two weeks that parliament was prorogued, there was frantic activity by both main parties to ensure that their MPs did not cross the floor. The UNF asked their MPs to take a pledge of loyalty. The SLMC was willing to do this on condition that the Muslims were included in any future negotiations between the LTTE and the government. The LTTE objected to this on the grounds that negotiations should be between the parties in conflict.

The political vacuum continued into 2004. In January, the prime minister threatened to withdraw from the Ceasefire Agreement, placing the president in the invidious position of having either to re-negotiate the Agreement with the LTTE or to hand back the three ministries she had taken over. The president, playing for time, avoided picking up the gauntlet thrown down by the prime minister and proposed that a committee be appointed to discuss the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement. She dissolved parliament in February 2004 and a General Election was scheduled for April. Also in February, exercising the powers vested in her by Article 47 of the constitution, she removed 39 non-cabinet ranking ministers from the UNF government.

In preparation for the elections a new party called the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) was formed by a coalition between the Marxist JVP, which continued to be opposed to the peace negotiations, and Kumaratunga's SLFP. The LTTE claimed that this new party was opposed to a peaceful resolution of the

ethnic conflict and demonstrated the re-emergence of Sinhalese-Buddhist chauvinism. There was a split in the SLMC and some Muslim members formed a new party called the Muslim National Front (MNF), which would contest the elections under the banner of the UPFA. The Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC), the Indian Tamil estate workers' party and a component of the UNF, refused an offer to join a grand alliance with the Tamil parties in the North-East and made an alliance with the UNP.

Meanwhile the LTTE, which declared its intention to continue observing the ceasefire and its commitment to peace, was having problems of its own with a split in its ranks. Its Batticaloa-Amparai district commander, Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan (also known as Karuna) was discharged from the LTTE and relieved of all official duties ostensibly for embezzling funds and for treachery. It soon became plain that the age-old rivalry between the Tamils of Jaffna and those from Batticaloa had re-surfaced. Karuna had formed his own group with Tamils from the Eastern Province. One of the areas of contention was that Batticaloa and the rest of the Eastern Province was being neglected in favour of Jaffna and surrounding areas in the reconstruction and development programme though the LTTE claimed that these accusations were being made to camouflage embezzlement of funds by Karuna and his followers. The split in the LTTE was welcomed and encouraged by some elements in Mrs. Kumaratunga's new coalition and it was reported that Karuna's group was negotiating with the UPFA. The JVP forecast the demise of the LTTE. At the end of March 2004 the Karuna Group, as it was now referred to by the media, asked all Jaffna Tamils to leave Batticaloa. In April a well-planned exercise by the LTTE ousted Karuna and coerced many in his Group to rejoin the main faction of the Tigers. Karuna disappeared for a while but it became clear in June 2004 that he was being sheltered by the Sri Lankan army in Colombo.

The General Election to Sri Lanka's thirteenth parliament was held in April 2004. Under the PR system, with the addition of 29 national list parliamentarians, the UPFA (SLFP and JVP) won 105 of the 225 seats and failed to obtain a majority by 8 seats. The

UNP only managed 82 seats. The TNA won 22 seats becoming the third biggest party and the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) or National Sinhala Heritage, which is a party formed by Buddhist monks, won 9 seats. The SLMC won 5 seats and 2 seats went to smaller parties. Lakshman Kadirgamar, Mrs. Kumaratunga's International Advisor and a Tamil, was the first person favoured for the prime ministerial post but pressure from the powerful lobby of Buddhist clergy made the president change her mind in favour of Mahinda Rajapaksa who had been Leader of the Opposition in the previous parliament.

In May the president requested Norway to resume its role as facilitator in the peace talks. The LTTE also agreed to resume talks but wished their proposal for an ISGA be taken up for negotiation first. The government wanted to have parallel talks on the final solution to the conflict. The LTTE felt that this was a ploy by Mrs. Kumaratunga to satisfy international concerns by re-starting the peace talks but aborting them after a while on the grounds of unreasonable demands. The LTTE asked the international community to recognize Kumaratunga's duplicity and bring pressure on her government to 'be principled and honest in negotiations'.

The LTTE claims that the primary purpose of the ISGA is to allow the people of the North and East to plan their own future and develop their area of the country. The UNP, the main opposition party, has stated that it is willing to support the government if it commenced talks based on the ISGA proposals. The LTTE has declared that its ISGA proposals are not rigid and is willing to discuss them at the negotiating table. On the other hand, Mrs. Kumaratunga's main coalition ally, the JVP, is uncompromisingly against any negotiations with the LTTE based on the ISGA proposals. It has commenced an active campaign not only against the ISGA but also demanding a de-merger of the North-Eastern Province and, as a consequence, inciting extreme Sinhalese nationalist feelings in the south.

The election has not paved the way for the stable administration that the country needs so urgently. A consensus

between the two main parties would go a long way towards providing a stable and credible political background. In her televised address to the nation in June 2004 the president, perhaps ironically, deplored the absence of a consensus between her party and the UNP and said she would 'continue to dare to hope that the major political parties will soon gain the ability to put Nation before self, in order to work towards achieving consensus in the interest of the Nation'. Mrs. Kumaratunga's hope seems unlikely to be fulfilled in the foreseeable future mainly because of the personal rivalry and animosity between the leaders of the two main parties. Instead the government and the main political parties are split into various factions, which do not seem to have any coherent policy towards attaining a honourable peace and each is furthering its own ends. The LTTE has a similar problem of a split in its ranks but, in this context, has the distinct advantage of not being a democratic institution.

It is clear that the longer it takes for peace talks to recommence, the greater the likelihood of anti-peace sentiments gaining momentum. The main opposition party and the TNA boycotted the National Advisory Committee for Peace and Reconciliation, a group formed by Mrs. Kumaratunga and proclaimed as an instrument for involving all concerned in the peace process. The LTTE ridiculed it as a mere delaying tactic. A permanent peace still seemed out of reach as the year drew to a close. Nevertheless, Sri Lanka's economic prospects seemed favourable so long as peace, however fragile, was maintained and government intervention in the economy was minimised.

The Tsunami, a disaster beyond belief

At 0058 GMT (7.59 a.m. local time) on 26 December 2004 a primeval event occurred between the Eurasian, Indian and Australian tectonic plates in the bed of the eastern Indian Ocean 255 km southeast of Banda Aceh at the northern tip of Sumatra. The western Australian and Indian plates moved sideways and downwards beneath the eastern Eurasian plate. The enormous stresses released by this movement resulted in the biggest

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earthquake in 40 years, measuring 9 on the Richter scale. The earthquake itself caused extensive damage in northern Sumatra, Indonesia and the Nicobar Islands but the greatest devastation was caused when the energy from the earthquake pushed up a 1000 km strip of the seabed by several metres displacing hundreds of cubic kilometres of water. This massive displacement produced large waves that moved through the ocean in all directions, away from the epicentre of the earthquake.

The Japanese have called the series of waves produced in this manner *tsunami* meaning 'harbour wave', a term applied to the phenomenon by Japanese fishermen who returned to harbour and found it devastated by the waves though they had not noticed anything untoward out at sea. This is because these waves have a very long wavelength but only a small amplitude (wave height) in deep water where the tsunami moves at speeds of up to 800 kph. When they reach shallow water they slow and their amplitude increases greatly giving rise to gigantic waves. When the leading edge of the wave is its trough the sea recedes from the coast to a distance equal to half the wavelength before the wave arrives. A similar recession, on a much smaller scale, is seen when ordinary surface waves reach the shoreline. In the case of a tsunami, if the slope of the seabed near the shoreline is shallow, the distance of this recession can be several hundred metres. When the leading edge of the wave is its first peak flooding, which can be made worse by succeeding waves, occurs. Tsunamis move the entire depth of the ocean rather than just the surface and the sheer weight of water is capable of annihilating any object in its path as it floods into coastal areas.

The tsunami caused by this event devastated some of the coastal areas of Sumatra, Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar, the southern Bay of Bengal and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands reaching the east coast of Sri Lanka in the Amparai district, which is 1500 km away from the epicentre of the earthquake, at 8.31 a.m. Sri Lankan time – about 2½ hours after the initial event. Sri Lanka's narrow continental shelf and wide coastal plain made it particularly susceptible to the sudden release of the tsunami's

energy as it reached shallower waters. Within an hour of reaching the coast at Amparai the tsunami devastated large areas of the eastern, northeastern, northern, southern and southwestern coastal belt. (see map on page 263) It is possible for science to explain and for us to understand the material facts of this event but in a country unused to natural disasters on this scale it was beyond belief even for those who had actually witnessed and experienced it. The tsunami not only changed the coastal geography of Sri Lanka but it is also bound to make a significant impression on the future history of the island.

Although it is only relatively recently that scientists have analyzed the true nature and mechanisms of tsunamis, historical mention of sea flooding and submergence of the land indicate that this phenomenon has occurred in the past in Sri Lanka. If we ignore the mythological references to such floods prior to the commencement of written history, the first reference to a tsunami-like occurrence is in the *Mahāvamsa*, which states that 'the wrath of the sea gods made the sea overflow into the land'. This happened at the time when Kālaṇitissa was ruler of Kālaṇi (modern Kelaniya), circa 200 B.C. The *Rājāvaliya* describes the extensive damage caused to fishing villages and it is clear that the Kālaṇi kingdom suffered a major blow to its economy. Kālaṇitissa, in an attempt to propitiate the gods, set his daughter, Devī, adrift in a boat. She not only survived by coming ashore on the southeastern coast of Sri Lanka but also later married Kāvantisā, ruler of Ruhuna, and was the mother of Duṭṭagāmuṇu (also see account of Duṭṭagāmuṇu under 'Early Anurādhapura Rulers'). From the available descriptions (which were written many centuries later) the damage, though extensive, was localized to a portion of the western coast centered on Kelaniya.

The last tsunami to strike Sri Lanka was on 27 August 1883 and is well documented. It was caused by a massive eruption from Krakatoa, a volcano on the Indonesian island of Rakata. Similar phenomena to the effects of the recent tsunami were reported along the south coast particularly at Galle and Kalutara, the sea retreating and returning several times. In Batticaloa there was

unusual ebbing and flowing between the sea and the lagoon. There was one human casualty reported in the southeast but there seems to have been little damage to property. It must be remembered that in 1883 the population was very much smaller, there were very few towns or villages in close proximity to the sea and a tourist industry did not exist.

It so happened that the recent tsunami struck on a Sunday, which was not only Boxing Day but also a Poya (full moon) day. A Poya day is, traditionally, a day of reverence for Sri Lankan Buddhists, a national holiday and a day of relaxation away from work. Full moon days are also the days of high tides. Inevitably, large numbers of people had gathered on the numerous beautiful beaches and surrounding areas of the coastal belt. This included not only Sri Lankans but also many foreign tourists enjoying their Christmas holiday. At Kalutara the first sign of the tsunami was when the sea suddenly retreated exposing hundreds of metres of beach and seabed including the coral reef. Then came the several waves of the tsunami at intervals of between 5 and 40 minutes. These were of varying height and reached inland for about a kilometre in some places along the coast. Similar phenomena occurred all along the affected coastline. At Trincomalee witnesses reported fourteen metre (40 foot) high waves travelling inland for a kilometre. A large number of factors including underwater topography and orientation of the coastline influenced the height and force of the tsunami causing its effects to vary considerably from place to place.

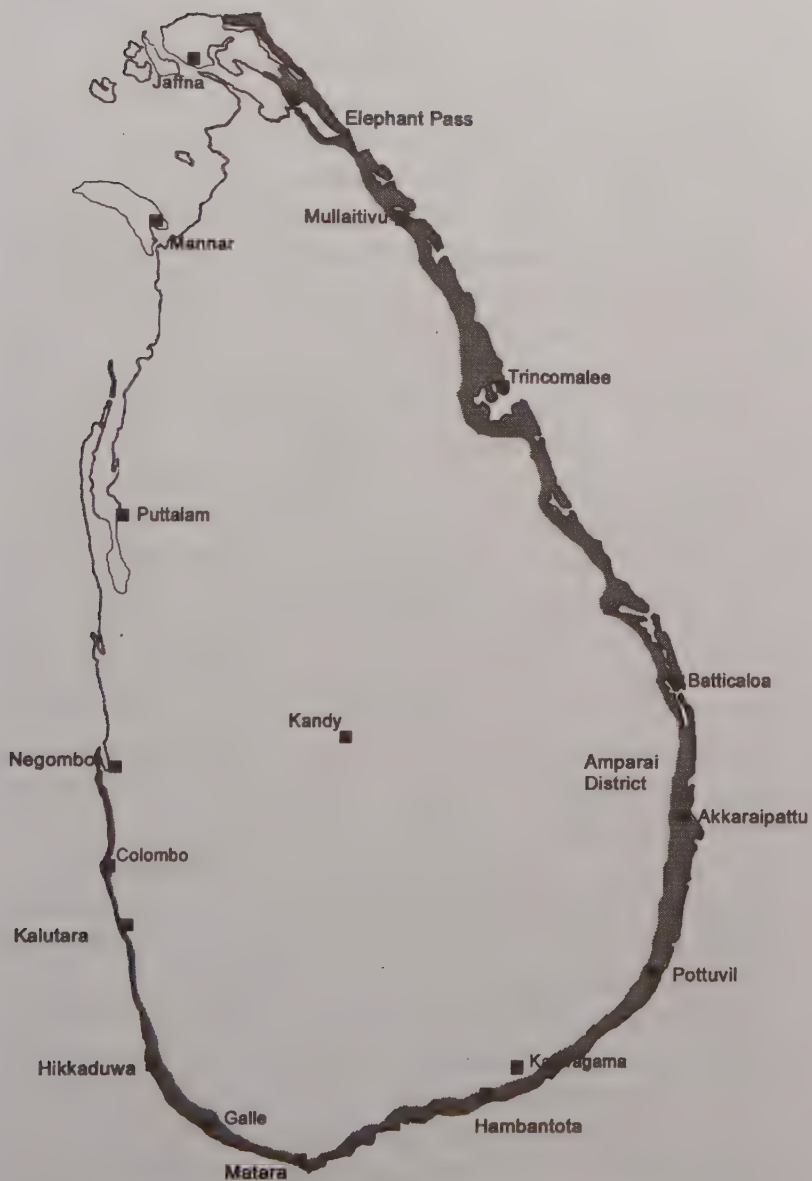
Fourteen districts along the coast were severely affected by the tsunami. These included Jaffna, Killinochi, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Amparai, Hambantota, Matara, Galle, Kalutara and Colombo. For a number of reasons, including accessibility and the presence of a large number of tourists, the damage in the South-Western and Southern areas was, initially, more widely publicized by the world's media. However the damage to the Eastern, North-Eastern and Northern regions, some areas of which are under LTTE control, was even greater than in the South and South-West. These areas were attempting to recover

after being ravaged by the civil war. The statistics of the damage are apparent at this stage, three months after the event, but the tremendous human tragedy is, still, unimaginable. At the end of February 2005, it was estimated that about 31,000 people perished in Sri Lanka due to the tsunami and about a third of these fatalities were in the Amparai district on the East coast.

There is a large Muslim population in this region and it is believed that 70% of the deaths and 65% of displaced people in the East were from the Muslim community. Some of the estimates in the North and the East may be inaccurate, particularly because of difficulties in obtaining accurate figures from LTTE controlled areas, and it could be that the figure given above is an underestimate. About 4500 died in each of the Hambantota and Galle districts. Batticaloa, Mullaitivu and Jaffna lost about 3000 people each. The rest of the casualties were in Trincomalee (about 1000), Matara (about 1400), Kalutara, Colombo and Gampaha districts (about 300 in total) and Kilinochchi district (about 600). However, approximately 4700 people are still missing.

This great tragedy is made even worse by the fact that about a third of the deaths (in Amparai it is estimated at a half) was amongst children. Many small villages lost their next generation. In mid-January 2005, it was estimated that 896 children had been orphaned and 3202 had lost one of their parents because of the tsunami.

There was considerable difficulty in recovering the thousands of dead bodies amongst the debris. In Peraliya, close to Hikkaduwa on the south coast, the Samudra Devi (Ocean Queen), a train travelling south from Colombo along the coastal line was struck by the tsunami. There were about 1200 people aboard. In addition, many villagers and people from vehicles on the adjoining main road clambered on the train's roof in the hope that it was a safe platform. The train succumbed to a third, giant wave and it is estimated that about 1600 people perished making it the world's worst ever train disaster. Here and in several other places bodies were still being recovered one month after the event.



Area of coastline affected by the tsunami

It is estimated that 15,000 people were injured and 450,000 people lost their homes. Not only was there massive disruption of livelihoods but there was also extensive damage to the infrastructure of society in the affected areas. In some coastal communities entire families, livelihoods and social networks have completely vanished. Many schools were badly damaged. Roads, railways, water supplies and sanitation systems were wrecked. Telecommunications in ten districts were badly affected and there was considerable destruction at the ports of Galle, Trincomalee, Kankasanturai and Point Pedro. A number of hospitals, clinics, drug stores and administrative offices were damaged. There was also substantial damage to the fishing industry, an important part of the island's economy. About 100,000 houses were damaged and about 80,000 of these were completely destroyed. The infrastructure of the valuable tourist industry was seriously damaged and some beach hotels in the East and South were completely washed away.

Various figures have been put forward as estimates of the finance needed for reconstruction, rehabilitation and resettlement. The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce in its preliminary assessment stated a figure of US\$ 1 billion. The Asian Development Bank, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and the World Bank estimated a figure of approximately US\$ 1.5 billion. Having assessed the damage, the Ministry of Finance and National planning has put forward an implementation plan to rebuild the tsunami-affected areas in 3 phases estimated at costing a total of around US\$ 3.7 billion. The latter figure includes provision for improvements and additions to the infrastructure that was destroyed. The Sri Lanka Country Director for the World Bank rightly pointed out that the tsunami had adversely affected a large number of poor people and any rebuilding should ensure that they did not return to the same poverty. This is certainly a great opportunity for making substantial improvements to the infrastructure. He also suggested that rebuilding should find ways of strengthening the peace process. It has been estimated that the East will require 45%, the

South 26%, the North 19% and the West 10% of the total finance provided.

The financial sector is optimistic that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is a measure of the economic production of the country, is unlikely to falter to any great degree because of the tsunami. The worst affected areas – the Northern, Eastern and Southern Provinces together only contribute 15% of the GDP. Important economic activities such as garment manufacture, tea plantations, banking and other services have not been adversely affected. The badly affected industries of Tourism and Fisheries each only contribute about 2% of the GDP. Taking into account the potential for post-tsunami expansion in the construction industry the growth rate is expected to reduce by only about 1% because of the tsunami. A poor country has relatively little to lose financially. Most of the destroyed houses were not covered by insurance. Also the value of many of the insured properties was not high. These factors minimized the losses sustained by the insurance sector. If a similar disaster had occurred on the coast of the USA the financial implications would have been horrendous.

The response of the international community in providing aid for the tsunami-stricken areas has been substantial. In many countries, including Britain, it was the response of the public itself that seemed to shame the governments into providing aid. Within days of the tsunami, countries around the world pledged US\$ 4.6 billion worth of aid to the affected regions of Southeast Asia. This unprecedented generosity was in itself an indication of the enormity of the disaster. The G7 countries have also pledged further aid by debt relief and a freeze on repayments. Some of this promised aid would be made available through various services, including medical, and not in the form of cash. This will be short and medium term aid aimed at rehabilitation and resettlement. It must also be recognised that financial aid for reconstruction will only be paid out if the donors are satisfied that the rebuilding process is being carried out in an efficient manner. However, the

money that has been pledged and the debt relief will mean that the Sri Lankan government will have to borrow less, resulting in lower and more stable interest rates. There has already been an appreciation in the value of the Sri Lankan rupee against the US dollar.

Several foreign and local Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) such as Merlin, UNICEF and the Sri Lankan Red Cross were active in Sri Lanka when the tsunami struck. These and other voluntary community organizations were invaluable in supplying aid, which included the provision of refugee camps, medical aid and urgently required supplies. Initially about 800 refugee camps were established in religious and public places, including schools. Temporary refuge was also provided by foreign donations of tents. Government response was, as expected, too slow and ponderous to provide quick and effective relief. Though not all the NGOs were well organized and administered, they did function across political and ethnic barriers. Initial aid to the badly stricken East was severely hampered by torrential monsoon rains, which caused flooding and added to the survivors' misery.

The proposed implementation plan by the government for rebuilding the tsunami-affected areas includes the establishment of 62 new townships. These new towns are to have modern living apartments and all the other facilities and services that a modern town requires. The approximate cost of this ambitious plan is US\$ 500 million. The government has made a restriction in construction of buildings within a 100-metre zone from the coastal line in the south and 200 metres in the north. Serious objections have been raised to these reconstruction plans. Local community leaders and civil society organizations have argued that the social networks and livelihoods of these displaced people would be adversely affected if these plans were to be implemented. It would seem that certain restrictions with regard to building close to the sea were already in place. Since 1990 the Coast Conservation Department (CCD)

has been implementing an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Programme to deal with such problems as coastal erosion, land use, prevention of loss of coastal natural habitats etc. Any person wishing to build within the coastal zone (a strip of land within 300 metres of the sea) had to obtain a permit from the C.D.

It is clear that every reasonable precaution should be taken to prevent or lessen the effects of a similar natural disaster in the future. In March 2005 investigation of the bed of the ocean in the region where the earthquake occurred on 26 December 2004 indicates that the 3000-mile long fault line has been further destabilised by the recent earthquake making it likely that more earthquakes will occur. An early warning system for tsunamis, such as the one operational in the Pacific, is obviously essential for the Indian Ocean. A World Conference of Disaster Reduction, held in March 2005 at Kobe in Japan, agreed that such an early warning network, with monitoring units in each of the countries at risk, should be set up as quickly as possible and promised US\$ 8 million as initial funding for the project. However, the effectiveness of such a network would ultimately depend on the ability of the individual countries themselves to quickly transmit the warnings to people in the potentially endangered area. In the poorer coastal villages of Sri Lanka this would not be an easy task and will require a considerable amount of organisational planning. An early warning network will also help to raise the confidence of foreign tourists who have become an essential facet of the Sri Lankan economy. In the context of early warning, it is an interesting fact that though the Yala Sanctuary in the South was severely affected by the tsunami and many people were killed, the wild animals seemed to have sensed the impending disaster and withdrawn to safer ground well in time.

In the North and the East, despite reports to the contrary, there was some initial cooperation between the government and the LTTE in dealing with the disaster. The organization

and structuring of the LTTE has necessarily developed in a way that makes it capable of dealing with disasters and unlike the government it has better knowledge of local conditions. It was hoped that cooperation between these two antagonists would ultimately lead to a permanent peace settlement. Unfortunately suspicion of each other's motives in organizing and providing aid together with the insistence by some of the government's supporters that it should not compromise the prospect of a unitary administration for the country has made this hope unlikely. The LTTE has appointed multidisciplinary Task Forces for each district under its control. In Mullaitivu the Task Force consists of members of the LTTE's political wing, representatives of the government, members of the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO) and other foreign and local NGOs. It has become apparent to unbiased observers that the LTTE, like the government, had drawn up a plan of action for rehabilitation and reconstruction at an early stage. Though similar to the government's, the LTTE's plan was presented in a sequential manner and provided a clearer picture of the mechanisms for implementation.

Norwegian peace facilitators have discussed the formation of a common structure to deal with humanitarian needs in the devastated areas. The need for an agreed common policy between the LTTE and the government is highlighted by the pledges of international aid and the concerns of the donor governments that this aid be equitably distributed. As Lakshman Kadirgamar, the Foreign Minister, has pointed out, in international practice there is a great deal of difference between pledges of funds and the reality of actual payment. However, he expects Sri Lanka to receive about US\$ 1.8 billion. These funds will be paid to the government and Kadirgamar has affirmed that it is the government's duty to ensure that they are equitably distributed.

He stated that since the LTTE is not a state entity the policy of the government and of international donors is that funds cannot

be directly remitted to it. Clearly, the government does not wish the LTTE to be regarded as an independent authority in Sri Lanka, particularly by the international community. However, it is willing to accept the *de facto* situation of the LTTE being in control of certain areas of the North and the East in which the government is unable to implement its own projects. Therefore these funds, after having been officially received by the government, will have to be passed on to the various organisations providing rehabilitation and reconstruction in these areas. Obvious fears and suspicions arise at this point as to whether these funds will be used by either (or both) the antagonists in the civil war for re-arming in readiness for a possible break-down in the Ceasefire Agreement. Extremists on both sides are using these suspicions to prevent any consensus being reached. It is plain, however, that not only is a consensus required but also an agreed method of getting this financial aid as quickly as possible to the regions where it is most required.

The government is aware of the danger of a 'donor circus' whereby donor countries operate aid projects that favour their own country's business interests. This detracts from the value of the aid provided and is ultimately detrimental to national development. Also very detrimental is the corruption amongst politicians and officials, which is endemic in many Asian countries. The UN General Assembly adopted a Convention against Corruption in 2004. Although its implementation in developing countries will be difficult, the Convention does have provision for prevention of corruption. These include rules concerning public procurement, recruitment and transparency in public administration. There is also provision for the criminalisation of certain acts committed by public officials. There is evidence of significant institutional progress in the fight against corruption in other parts of the world and it is clearly vitally important that Sri Lanka joins in this progress.

The tsunami, though devastating in its immediate effect

on the country, will ultimately prove to have had much less of a detrimental effect than the prolonged civil war. The LTTE has gradually evolved from a military to a political organization. For peace to become a reality, it is essential that the two sides trust each other, blindly if necessary, and understand clearly that the alternative to this trust is continuation of a war that will cause more destruction than any that a natural disaster can inflict.

Epilogue

In a country with a recorded history of over 2,000 years, the events occurring over the three years since the first edition of this book was published may seem insignificant but perhaps it is important to bring the reader up to date and this is the purpose of a short epilogue. The tsunami of December 2004, which for many Sri Lankans living along the coast must have seemed like the end of the world, has almost become a distant memory. The hope that cooperation between the antagonists in Sri Lanka's prolonged civil war in combating the mutual tsunami disaster would bring about a permanent peace settlement was dashed a long time ago.

Despite repeated Sri Lankan Government claims that its tsunami recovery programme has been a notable success there are many counter claims to the contrary and allegations of large sums of missing donor aid, which it is claimed the Government has utilised for other purposes. According to the Development Assistance Database (DAD) donor agencies gave Sri Lanka \$1.2 billion although they had initially pledged much more. Up to December 2007 only about \$685 million of this aid had been spent on tsunami projects in Sri Lanka. Nearly 9,000 people still live in makeshift shelters particularly in the North and East.

Paradoxically the Sri Lankan economy improved soon after the tsunami for a number of reasons, one of them being the foreign aid provided and another being an initial influx of tourists, though this was soon disrupted by the resumption of the civil war. The growth in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), an

indicator of the size of the country's economy, was 6.2 per cent in 2005 and for 2006 it was a record 7.7 per cent. The growth in the GDP was due to economic growth in the telecommunication, garment and banking sectors.

Analysts have attempted to explain the paradox of continuing economic growth despite not only the tsunami but also the continuing civil war by claiming that businesses have learned to live with the conflict mainly because it has been relatively localised. However, the inflation rate also rose from 10 per cent in 2005 to 11.3 per cent in 2006, 17 per cent in 2007 and to a staggering 21.6 per cent in February 2008. The recent increase in inflation has been blamed on the uncertainties of the war-front, repeated increases in fuel prices and the priority given by the Government to political management at the expense of economic management. The unemployment rate is 6.2 per cent and there is a budget deficit of 8.4 per cent.

Sri Lanka depends on a global economy that remains strong for investment and to expand its export base. The Government has plans for an ambitious programme to improve the infrastructure and hence boost growth. Nonetheless, the country's future economic health is clearly dependent on political stability and a return to peace with continued policy reforms, particularly in budget management and fiscal discipline. The service sector is the largest component of the GDP at around 56 per cent in 2007. Public administration and defence expenditures increased in 2007 due to increase in hostilities, expansion of public sector employment and the dubious luxury of maintaining a 104-minister cabinet.

The assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar at his home in August 2005 is widely believed to have been the work of the LTTE though it has been denied by the organization. Kadirgamar, a Sri Lankan Tamil, had been a distinguished lawyer and international humanitarian. He came into prominence in international circles mainly because of his outspoken condemnation of the LTTE. His assassination led to further censure of the LTTE amongst foreign nations.

At the Presidential elections of November 2005, Mahinda Rajapaksa was elected President and Ratnasiri Wickremanayake

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became Prime Minister. Rajapaksa's victory by a narrow margin over Opposition Leader, Ranil Wickremasinghe, was aided by the LTTE's call for a Tamil boycott of the election and forcible prevention of Tamil voters from casting their votes. The new President launched his campaign by rejecting demands for Tamil autonomy. He signed a poll deal with two nationalist parties, vowed to review the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) and indicated that Norway would no longer play a role as peace broker. These sent clear signals that he was going to take a hard line against the LTTE.

The violence exacerbated after Mahinda Rajapaksa's election and sporadic claymore bomb blasts, blamed on the LTTE, killed a number of soldiers. There were also clashes between the Sea Tigers and the Sri Lankan navy. Despite these clashes, the Government and the LTTE renewed their commitment to the CFA in February 2006 at talks in Geneva four years after the original Agreement was signed. There was a lull in the violence until April 2006. In March 2006, the Karuna faction had registered its own political party, the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Puligal (TMVP) or the Tamil People's Liberation Tigers.

In April 2006 a suicide-bomb attack at the Army Headquarters in Colombo severely injured Army Commander Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka. The Government retaliated by Air Force bombings of guerrilla positions in the North. These raids allegedly killed a number of Tamil civilians. There was heavy fighting in the North and the East and terrorist attacks in the south with massacres involving civilians, which the two opposing sides blamed on each other. In June 2006 another suicide-bomber succeeded in killing the army's third in command, Major General Parami Kulatunga, in a suburb of Colombo. The CFA was clearly no longer effective in practice. Although the President claimed at this stage that he was not in favour of a military solution to the conflict, the Government's military budget was increased by 23 per cent in 2006.

In July 2006 the LTTE closed the sluice gates of the Mavil Aru, effectively cutting off the water supply to numerous villages in the Government-controlled areas thus destroying the crops in

large areas under rice cultivation. The Government responded by air and ground attacks on LTTE positions. A shroud of propaganda makes it difficult to ascertain who was responsible for the re-opening of the gates on 8 August 2006. After heavy fighting, the Government troops gained control of the sluice gates on 15 August. Sri Lankan Air Force bombing of a suspected LTTE training camp on the previous day killed a number of Tamil children at Chencolai causing great concern not only amongst humanitarian organizations but also in Tamil Nadu.

Ignoring India's opposition and claiming 'security compulsions', Sri Lanka turned to Pakistan and China to obtain military hardware as India had refused to supply offensive weapons. Jane's Defence Weekly, Britain's well-known analyst of military activity around the world, reported that in April 2006 Sri Lanka made a \$37.6 million deal with China's Poly Technologies to supply its forces with ammunition and ordnance for the army and navy in addition to various types of small arms. According to Jane's Defence Weekly Poly Technologies is authorized by the Chinese Government to sell conventional military equipment as well as short and medium-range ballistic missiles. China is also helping Sri Lanka to augment its air defence capability.

Attacks and counter-attacks continued with Government forces driving the Tamil Tiger rebels from the vicinity of Trincomalee in September 2006 and the LTTE retaliating by attacking a Navy bus convoy at Habarana, killing a number of sailors and soon afterwards attacking the Sri Lankan Navy Headquarters in the southern city of Galle. The Government troops took control of Vakaraï, a Tiger stronghold in the northeast in January 2007.

In March 2007 the LTTE launched their first-ever air attack targeting the Katunayake Air Force base adjacent to the Bandaranaike International Airport. By July 2007 the Government forces had managed to take control of all the territory held by the Tigers in the Eastern Province. In November 2007 a Sri Lankan Air Force bomb in the North killed the LTTE's political chief, S.P. Thamichelvan. Also in November, the LTTE detonated a bomb in a busy Colombo shopping area killing and wounding many.

Continuing large-scale violation of the Ceasefire Agreement by both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government has resulted in the dismantling of the various structures painstakingly built over the past few years to monitor and regulate the peace process. It has become increasingly clear to the international community that the Sri Lankan Government instead of seeking a credible political solution to the conflict is favouring the military option. In January 2008 the Government, having formally abandoned the truce brokered by Norway in 2002, also insisted that the LTTE must disarm before any future peace talks.

Meanwhile, a number of attacks on civilians in the deep South soon after the Ceasefire ended have been attributed to the LTTE. Analysts say that one reason for the Government's withdrawal from the Ceasefire is to prevent the LTTE from reclaiming any areas wrested from them by the army as the map has now been redrawn.

In June 2007 armed Sri Lankan police forcibly evicted a number of Tamils, who had come from the North and the East and were living in temporary accommodation in Colombo and surrounding areas. These people were returned to the war-torn areas from which they had fled. The Sri Lankan authorities claimed that this was an essential step to clear the area of terrorists. Human Rights groups described the action as akin to ethnic cleansing and it naturally caused concern amongst the local Tamil population and probably strengthened the hand of the LTTE. The Supreme Court ruled that this controversial coercion was a violation of fundamental human rights and ordered the authorities to bring these people back. It is estimated that about 40 per cent of the population of Colombo are Tamil and this figure has swollen recently due to Tamils fleeing from the areas of conflict in the North.

Some of the recent bomb blasts in Colombo are thought not to be the work of the LTTE but of various other groups with hostile political and business interests. The LTTE has repeatedly claimed that landmines recently used against the Government forces were the handiwork of dissident Tamil groups, which were not under its control. It is clearly facile to blame one terrorist

group for all atrocities whilst other organizations with adverse political and business agenda take advantage of the ongoing situation and cloud the issue. A picture has been painted of total anarchy and some international observers have claimed that Sri Lanka is a 'failed state' and a 'flawed democracy'¹.

The violation of basic human rights in Sri Lanka by both the terrorist organizations and the Sri Lankan Government has been a cause for international concern. Abuses by the LTTE are well documented but those perpetrated by the Sri Lankan Government and allied armed groups are also being brought to light. In its 2007 report a human rights organization reported that escalating political killings, child recruitment, abductions and frequent armed clashes created a climate of fear in the East spreading to the North by the end of the year. As hostilities increased recently the Government's respect for international law seems to have declined.

It has been claimed that the Government has given its armed forces the green light to use 'dirty war' tactics. Ethnic Tamils have borne the brunt of these actions but members of the Muslim and majority Sinhalese population have not been immune from these violations. In November 2006, in response to increasing international and domestic concerns, the Government established a Presidential Commission of Inquiry (COI) to investigate serious human rights violations since August 2005. This Commission has been criticized on the grounds that it consists of Sri Lankan members only although they are assisted by a group of international observers.

Having ruled out a UN Human Rights monitoring mission and with no other impartial international monitors the Government has become increasingly isolated from the

1. The allegation that Sri Lanka is a 'failed state' is contained in a report by the 'Fund for Peace', which is based in the US. This organization has a 'failed state index' based on social, economic and political indicators. Sri Lanka has been placed 25th in this index just above the Republic of Congo and just below the Yemen. Sudan and Iraq are 1 & 2. There is also a 'democracy index' (based on such factors as civil liberties, political culture etc.) put out by the *Economist*, a British weekly, and this has categorized Sri Lanka as one of the world's 'failed democracies'.

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international community with regard to human rights and accountability. There are no independent accounts of the military action and propaganda from both sides inflating enemy losses and playing down their own losses has become the norm. As the Amnesty International has pointed out, the termination of the CFA between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE is very likely to lead to a dramatic rise in the indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population. It urged the international community to establish an independent, international monitoring presence on the ground without delay.

The Sri Lankan Government is obliged to convince the majority Sinhalese electorate that it is in control and is winning the war to gain continuing support for a debilitating war. This electorate is notoriously capable of vigorously demonstrating its displeasure with the governing party at the next election by a spectacular switch in political affinity. Regular and exaggerated reports of enemy losses with the loss of only a few government soldiers without any possibility of independent confirmation has become commonplace and is a means of demonstrating that victory is both certain and imminent and that sacrifice is worth bearing.

The military estimates that there are only 5,000 Tigers left alive. On the other hand, the Sri Lankan army has around 200,000 personnel with improved military training tactics and superior firepower that includes reconditioned jet fighters. It is clear that the Government does have the advantage over the Tigers in military terms and recent events have confirmed that the LTTE has lost ground. The significant difference between the combatants is the Government's superior air power². The LTTE has tried to remedy this but it seems unlikely that the Tigers will be able to build up an effective air force in the near future. However, though it is unlikely that the Sri Lankan Army will be defeated it could easily become bogged down again in a protracted and debilitating guerrilla war, which the public may find difficult to tolerate.

2. From a report in Reuters of 27 Feb. 2008, giving an analysis of the present state of the conflict.

The international community's response to Sri Lanka's decision to favour the military option in dealing with the LTTE will be conditioned by each country's self interest. The European Union, Norway, Japan and the United States, the four co-chairs of the Tokyo Donor Conference, together with India, the United Kingdom and Canada have expressed regret at the Sri Lankan Government's decision to withdraw from the peace process. They have also made it clear that Sri Lanka could resolve the issue not merely by military means but with a political package on devolution.

India as the major regional power and with its close cultural, geographical and trade ties with Sri Lanka has its own agenda. There are many geo-strategic issues that condition its responses to Sri Lanka's ethnic problem. Bearing in mind that it has its own population of several million Tamils it is in India's interest to ensure a smooth resolution to the problem. In recent years India has been keen to be seen as a regional power strong enough not only to look after itself but also its neighbours. Of all the countries affected by the tsunami, India was the most developed and with its strong economy was not only able to bear the brunt of its own losses without foreign aid but was also able to assist Sri Lanka by deploying 1,000 military personnel, five navy vessels including a hospital ship and six Indian Air Force helicopters.

India remains wary of any encroachment into its 'sphere of influence'. When the United States suggested in 2004 that it construct an international airport in Southern Sri Lanka, India countered by offering to upgrade the existing airport at Pallaly in Jaffna. Influential lobbyists for the LTTE in India such as P. Nedumaran and George Fernandes have managed to stall the Defence Cooperation Agreement between India and Sri Lanka, which was first proposed in 2003 during Ranil Wickremasinghe's premiership.

There are advantages and disadvantages for Sri Lanka in being within India's sphere of influence. India has reiterated its commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. It has expressed its opposition to terrorism in all its manifestations and supports a negotiated settlement. India

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has also welcomed the Government's decision to implement the recommendation of the all-party conference to implement the 13th Amendment of the Constitution of Sri Lanka giving wider powers to the provinces. However, remaining in India's sphere of influence would define and limit Sri Lanka's defence and foreign policy options. It will not have the freedom of action of a non-aligned nation.

Recent agreements with regard to economic cooperation have bolstered the friendship between India and Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has become an important economic partner of India. Its strategic position in the path of the Indian Ocean shipping lanes will continue to make it a serious area of power projection for India's competitors. India has no option but to make its relationship with Sri Lanka even closer and as political instability in the island becomes even more important to India it will have to do more to settle the ethnic conflict on a permanent basis.

Nevertheless, Sri Lanka has encouraged other countries to invest in the island. China has obtained a contract to build a coal-based power plant at Norachchulai in the Puttalam District. Perhaps even more worrying for India is the Chinese involvement in the development of a harbour at Hambantota in the South of Sri Lanka. The harbour will be close to the main shipping lanes linking South and West Asia and will be ideally situated for the berthing of Chinese shipping.

Meanwhile India continues with its plans to create a navigable channel between it and Sri Lanka reducing the travelling time between its east and west coasts by up to 36 hours. In addition to boosting the economy of the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu it is claimed that this Sethusamudram Shipping Canal would boost the economy of the coastal areas of northwestern Sri Lanka.

The National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency in Sri Lanka has carried out a modelling exercise, which confirmed that the canal would result in an increase in the flow of water between the Bay of Bengal and the Gulf of Mannar. This could disturb the inland water balance in Sri Lanka. The canal

would also have an adverse effect in that less international traffic would use the Colombo Port.

The plans have run into legal snags mainly due to protests by Hindu groups who claim that the Canal would lead to the destruction of the mythical 'Hanuman Bridge'. Recent NASA satellite photographs have shown evidence suggesting a submerged line of rocks that believers claim is proof of a prehistoric bridge, which is recorded in the epic *Rāmāyana*.

There has been a great increase in the immigration to Tamil Nadu from the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka and more people are attempting to go there because of the recent increase in military activity. By September 2006 there were 12,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in India and a new camp was opened in Coimbatore to accommodate the exodus. Although India has the resources to cope with these refugees it has also recently had to accommodate refugees from Nepal and Bangladesh. These are further reasons that should encourage India to help find a solution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka on a permanent basis.

India having confronted its own internal ethnic problems by devolving power with some success, has offered to extend its legal expertise to help Sri Lanka solve its problems on a similar basis. There is strong opposition from Sinhalese, Buddhist nationalists for any form of separatism, which they feel would contradict two of their basic tenets. They consider Sri Lanka a sacred land and the Sinhala people protectors of Buddhism. If India wishes Sri Lanka to continue as a multi-ethnic society it will have to get the support of not only the Sri Lankan Government but also the Muslims and Tamils, including the LTTE, for a form of devolution that is meaningful for both sides.

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SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

அ	அ	a	ஐ	ட	ḍa
ஆ	ஆ	ā	ஃ	-	ḍha
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ஐa	-	r̄	ப	-	pha
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ஃa	-	l̄	ப	-	bha
ஏ	எ	e	ம	ம or உ	ma
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ஊ	ஐ	ai	ர	ர	ra
஋	஋	o	ல	ல	la
஌	஌	ō	வ	வ	va
஍	஍	au	-	ழ	la
ஞ	ஞ	ka	-	ள	ḷa
ஐ	-	kha	-	ற	ra
ஊ	க (medial)	ga	-	ன	na
஋	-	gha	ச	ச	śa
஌	ங	ṇa	ஷ	ஷ	ṣa
஍	ச	ca	ஃ	ச or ஸ	sa
ஞ	-	cha	ஞ	க or ஹ	ha
ஊ	ஜ, ச	ja	ஞ	-	ḷa
஋	-	jha	ஃ	ஃ (anusvāra)	m̄
஌	ஞ	ña	ஃ	ஃ (anunāsika)	ṃ
஍	-	jña	ஃ	ஃ (visarga)	ḥ
ஞ	ட (when doubled டட)	ṭa	-	ஃ (avagraha)	,
ஐ	-	ṭha	-	-	

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Publisher's Note - Chronology of Events since the last Edition

- 1) On May 21, 2009 LTTE Leader Prabhakaran and many of his LTTE cadres were killed in a final confrontation with the Army. Over 70,000 civilians who were being held by the LTTE were able to escape. The majority of them were put into IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) camps and have been gradually released, except for some hardcore LTTE members.
- 2) On July 15, 2009 General Sarath Fonseka, Army Commander, was promoted to Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS).
- 3) On August 5, 2009 Shanmugam Kumaran Tharmalingam (alias Selvarasa Pathmanathan, alias Kumaran Pathmanathan, or simply known as KP), the chief procurer of arms for the LTTE, was arrested in Malaysia and brought to Sri Lanka.
- 4) On November 12, 2009 General Fonseka resigned and announced that he will be contesting the presidential election. He left office on November 16.
- 5) On January 26, 2010 the Presidential Election was held and President Mahinda Rajapaksa won the contest by polling 6,015,934 votes (57.88%) while Sarath Fonseka received 4,173,185 votes (40.15%).
- 6) On February 8, 2010 General Fonseka was arrested by Military Police, and the Government announced that he will be subject to a Court Martial for committing "military offences".
- 7) On April 8, 2010 the Parliamentary Election was held, and a re-poll was held in two districts on April 20 due to irregularities. The UPFA headed by the President obtained 144 seats.
- 8) In June 2010 KP decides to cooperate with the government and establishes a NGO to help with the rehabilitation. He appeals to the Tamil Diaspora to assist in the educational field in the North and East.
- 9) On August 13, 2010 the first Court Martial stripped Sarath Fonseka of his ranks and medals.
- 10) On September 8, 2010 with a 2/3 majority, Parliament approved the 18th amendment to the constitution through which the terms of the restriction on the number of times the President can contest was changed.
- 11) On September 30, 2010 Sarath Fonseka was moved to Welikada Prison, after being convicted in a second Court Martial.

This is the fascinating story of the island from shadowy primitive man to the stark reality of the present. Continued migration from the mainland in ancient times displaced the Stone Age culture and established a hydraulic civilization based on an intricate system of irrigation. This civilization flowered for over a millennium and then disintegrated within a few centuries not only due to invasion from South India but also to internecine battles that allowed a decadent and divided society to develop. The weakness was soon exploited by Western nations seeking wealth and power. The Dutch followed the Portuguese and were, in their turn, ousted by the British. Sri Lanka became an integral part of the British Empire. The euphoria of Independence from Britain in 1948 was soon marred by a self-inflicted ethnic problem that continues to devastate the country and demoralise its people.

The book maintains an easily comprehensible style for the general reader as well as providing the factual details required by the more serious researcher. The third edition has been updated by the Publisher's Note to include events up to September 2010.

The author, who was born in Sri Lanka, is a retired surgeon educated at St. Thomas' College, Mt. Lavinia and the University of Ceylon. Having trained and practised as a Vascular Surgeon in England, he now lives in the United Kingdom.

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