

# THE TAMILS IN EARLY CEYLON

C. SIVARATNAM







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BY

C. SIVARATNAM

COLOMBO

1968





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Author of "Cultural History and  
Principles of Hinduism" *in 1964*

Colombo  
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## PREFACE

This book is based on notes collected by a lay reader, who during the relaxed period after active medical service, has interested himself in the study of the antiquity of Ceylon Tamils. Although the contents of this book are brought together from various historical sources, this monograph is not presented to the public as a "Book on History", fitting in with the considered opinion of Dr. G. C. Mendis that "A history is not an antiquarian study". The word "History" is complicated in modern times with different definitions, and considered decades ago as a dull subject packed with details of dates, dynasties and dissensions among people, with hardly any reference to the underlying forces whose pressures affect men and their actions, has a more interesting aspect furnished paradoxically by its own deficiencies and uncertainties. Gaps and problems of the origin of men and matters have attracted the present day scholars towards this field. It is their discussions ranging from varying interpretations to speculations which have modernised the science of history in relation to Ceylon, making it a lively and fascinating subject. Dr. A. Briggs, Professor of History and Social studies, University of Sussex remarked aptly, (1957) that some people described this subject as a conjectural science. Legends are not discarded for the one reason that they serve a useful purpose in portraying the thoughts and cultural level of those to whom they belonged. Observations of scholarly writers from the seventeenth century onwards are placed objectively in their appropriate positions without interfering with the author's right to draw his own inferences. Different versions of the same events are faithfully juxtaposed.

As to the second part of this book, the Tamils of Ceylon have left hardly any written record of their past to posterity. While the story of the Dravidian race has now been to an extent reconstructed with the aid of the present European sciences like Archaeology, Epigraphy, Ethnology, Philology etc., the Tamils of Ceylon have not so far received such attention.

The Yalpana Vaipava Malai (Y. V. M. - Garland of Jaffna History) composed in Tamil in 1736 by Mailvagana Pulavar of Mathagal, Jaffna, on the direction of the Dutch Governor of Jaffna, Jan Maccara, in spite of its shortcomings in some dates and events, is an oasis in the barren desert of Jaffna history.



Its translation into English in 1879 by C. Brito along with his own appendix, likened to a white string of pure pearls for simplicity of expression and nicety of description, has provided the writer with the background to Part II of this work.

The above record is itself based on historical literature of earlier periods, such as:-

1. "Dakshina-Kailaya-Puranam", (a religious work), "Sekerajasekeram" (a book on medicine) and "Sekerajasekera Malai" (astrology), all of them published in the reign of the powerful king, Jayaveera Aryachakravarti (1371 - 80).
2. "Pararajasekeram Ulu" composed during the period of the illustrious monarch, Pararajasekeram (1478 - 1519).
3. "Vaiyapadal" written by Vaiyapuri Aiyar during Sangili's reign (1510 - 65).
4. "Rasamurai", not extant now.
5. "Kailaya Malai" written in high Tamil in the reign of Ethirimanasingham, by Mutturasar of Uraiur. (c.1591).

As the writer went on developing his narrative, it became clearer in his mind with every forward step taken, that the Ceylon Tamils have made a greater contribution to the development of Ceylon both physically and culturally than is generally realised.

There are two parts to this book.

Part 1. Tamils who have become Sinhalese.

Part 2. Tamils who have preserved their own cultural individuality.

Finally, the author expresses his grateful acknowledgment to the following, the eminent authors mentioned in the bibliography and index, the libraries of the Colombo Museum, the British Council of Colombo, and the Colombo Public Library. Advocate S. Canagarayar. and Professor K. Kularatnam are thanked for the loan of some valuable books.

C. SIVARATNAM

Colombo.

24. June, 1968.



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# PART I

## TAMILS ABSORBED INTO THE SINHALESE RACE.

### I

#### Dravidian elements in the foundation structure of the Sinhalese race.

When Vijaya Mannan arrived in Ceylon in c 543 B. C., the inhabitants of Ceylon were 'Yakkas' and 'Nagas' (demons and dragons), both Dravidian sub-races. The Yakkas compared to the rakshasas or giants, who were evil doers and sorcerers, were considered good people. They lived in the central regions of Ceylon, as in the hills and jungles of Kerala, Kannada and North India, with whom Vijaya and his seven hundred followers got enmeshed in marriage. The stronghold of the Nagas was the northern and north western coasts of Ceylon particularly Kadiramalai in Jaffna and Mantota. The Nagas named their home country as Nagadipa (Tennent V<sub>1</sub> P 331). The offsprings of the Nagas with Jaffna princesses and people were the Lambakkanas with bored, hanging ear lobes (N 81). The Naga royal families of Jaffna and Anuradhapura were also inter-marrying. Anuradhapura was a populous and prosperous city at that time, to which the Lambakkanas and Nagas gravitated probably driven away by the poverty of the soil of Jaffna. Sir William Jones observed that "Ila Island was inhabited beyond time of memory by a Hindu race as supported by the language, letters and old monuments of its various inhabitants" (XIVIII - Brito's addendum to Y. V. M). The Tissa kings like Devanampiya Tissa, Duttugamani and Vattagamani, were partly of Naga origin. Vasabha a Lambakkana resident of the Northern Province (N. 82.) became the first Lambakkana king of Anuradhapura in about 65 A.C., two centuries after Duttugamani's reign. The illustrious Gajabahu I (112 A.C.) a grandson of Vasabha, who brought the Pattini cult to Ceylon from holy Malayalam, married a Naga princess of Jaffna, sister of Mahalla-Naga. He did not forget his home country, where he built a temple for Pattini in Jaffna. Ilanaga



married a Tamil princess, Damiladevi. Nagas ruled at Anuradhapura before and after the birth of Christ. Duttugamani was a son of a Naga princess of Kalyani and a descendant of Mahanaga, a younger brother of Devanampiya Tissa. The Lambakkana dynasty ruled over Ceylon from about 65 A. C. for over thousand years up to the time of the Chola invasions, though the later rulers were more Sinhalese than otherwise just retaining the name of the origin of their dynasty.

### Names of Ceylon

It is generally admitted that the name of Ceylon owes its philological origin to "Elu", the name of the language of the Nagas in the following sequence :- Elu - Ila - Helu - Hela - Sihala ("Si" was added as prefix in honour of the traditional lion) and finally Sinhala. Another explanation of Sihela is the commemoration of "Siha" lion, hela (destruction of) by Sinhabahu, founder of the Sinhalese race. "Lanka" again arises from Elu :- Ela, Ilam (gold) and Ilankai, both the latter according to Brito are pure Tamil words (XLVIII), which became in Sinhalese, Lanka. According to Casie Chitty the meaning of "Eelam" is 'insular kingdom' (P 29), or land surrounded by water, and that Lanka as a Sanskrit word conveyed the meaning "Holy or Resplendent" and Lanka in Ramayana may have possessed this meaning.

C. Suntheralingam's opinion, backed by philological history, is that "Ceylon" "Lanka" and Sinhalese" have a common origin in the Thamil name of this island "Eylom" (meaning gold or anything bright), and "Ceylon" is, mentioned in the Pattinapalai of the Sangam period (2 - 4 A. D.) as "Eylom".

"Ceylon" and "Sinhalese" arose with the addition of a prefix of honorific significance, S I or C I or Siri or Ciri to Eylom",

- (i) Ceylon. Eylom - C - Eylom or Sri - Eylom (wealthy or respectable) transliterated by the Portuguese of later days as Ceylam, Zeylom (Barros, Ceilam), take note here that the terminal "m" was preserved up to the last, revealing the Tamil origin of the name of Ceylon the "m" dropped for "n" in the anglicised nomenclature, Ceylon.



- (ii) **Sinhalese.** Ilam (Eylom) → S - Ilam → Sihalam → Sihala → Sinhala → now Sinhalese.
- (iii) **Lanka,** Again arose from Eylom (Ilam) with the combination of two Tamil words (Eylom) and Kai) - Ilankai, Lankai (both Tamil), at present Lanka,

**Taprobane** is a Greek name that originated from "Tambapani" (copper palmed) from the colour of the soil on which Vijaya's followers pressed their palms as support, while landing out of their boats and sat themselves. Every name has also, as you will see an alternative meaning, that Tambapani was derived from the name of the river in the Pandya kingdom, Tamparaparani, whose water is also copper coloured. Tambrapani and Langka are mentioned as equivalents for Ceylon, in Tennent's map of Ceylon (V I, P 318). Ceylon was known in the 4th century B.C. as Taprobane to Magasthenes, the Greek ambassador to the Court of Chandragupta.

**Serendib**-An Arab name (supposed to be derived from Sihala-dipa) an alternative explanation is from Seren-diva (Chera or Sera) named by the Nagas who emigrated from Chera into Ceylon, or the Arabs who came to settle down from Chera Kerala) in Ceylon.

#### Other Place Name.

1. Nagadipa is a name given by the Nagas themselves to their country situated on the north and north western parts of Ceylon (Jaffna), (Tennent V I, P 331).
2. Manipallavam (outstretched bough) is the name of the Jaffna peninsula which looked like an outstretched bough to the sight of the mariners of Palk Strait. (V p3).
3. Mannar (XXXII). Mannar took its name from the verb "mannukirathu" which means "to tuck up one's clothes" from the circumstance that the women of the place did so and got into water in their haste to follow Rama when he crossed over to the mainland of Ceylon.
4. Munneswaram, from Mun (Shrine) and Ishwara (Siva) (*Arunachalam*)
5. "Tamra-Pani" may be the origin of the word "Tamil", (Simon Casie Chitty.)



## Sri - Vijaya Civilization

"The civilization of Ceylon up to the arrival of the Portuguese was influenced by India. The early Sinhalese and Tamils came from India and the people who came to Ceylon lived more or less a type of life they had been living in India." (Horace Perera P 10) "The first point to be remembered then is that from the very beginning, Ceylon formed a unit of Indian civilisation" (Mendis, Ceylon P 28.)

The people of Magadha desired the instant death of Vijaya and his seven hundred cruel brigands, but the king expatriated them adrift on the ocean as punishment, firstly disgracing them by causing half of their heads to be shaved. People who were in this way pushed out from their country were not allowed to take their wives, children or servants with them, and were shut off from their parent country without any communication (LV). Vijaya whilst stranded in Lanka in 543 B. C. had no alternative but to marry the queen of the Yakkas in order to strengthen his position on the throne of Lanka, and when this objective was achieved he promptly chased away Kuveni to the horrible mercy of her people. According to one authority Vijaya is said to have landed at Periyathurai near Trincomalee (LIV). When the time for coronation arrived, Vijaya refused to be consecrated unless he was married to a lady of equal rank. The ministers therefore sent emissaries to the nearest kingdom, "to the city of Madura of South India (Geiger's MV 1960, P 59), for the daughter of the Pandya King and 699 noble maidens for Vijaya's camp followers." These invitees were not people of Mathura on the Ganges in North India, and the Pandys were not the Pandavas of Mahabharata. They all landed at Mahatittha, the nearest port from their country, (meaning "the great landing place" (Mv 60) which name was given to it in honour of this historic event), with 18 officers of state, 75 menial servants, horse keepers, elephant keepers, charioteers etc, male and female servants and slaves for all, their wives and children, with their jewellery and other appurtenances, a band of craftsmen, a thousand families of 18 guilds everything to maintain the princess' dignity. In other words, they brought in massive form, Madura civilization and introduced it into Lanka.



Mudlr. W. P. Gunawardhana (quoted by K. Navaratnam P 54) states "The Sinhalese are a composite race with three elements in their composition, viz., the aboriginals (Yakkas and Nagas), a Pandian contingent which was Tamil and Vijaya's contingent (Aryan) Mendis' view (P 28 is that "Vijaya's contingent was not Aryan in blood as they were totemistic, but Aryan in speech only." Geiger (P 19) referring to these Madura invitees, remarks "that a strong infusion of Dravidian blood must have taken place in the first period of colonization, from the nearest civilised country",

The Sinhalese kingdom began and ended with Madura culture, their last four kings as well, had been pure Tamils of Madura. "The Yakkas gradually lost their identity forming marriage alliances with the new settlers wherewith they styled themselves as Sinhalese and are Sinhalese now", ("Story of the Sinhalese" - John Seneveratna P 5). "Intimate intercourse and consanguinity were thus established from the remotest period". Now what about the further inflow of Tamil blood into the Sinhalese race for a couple of thousand years? "Sinhalese nation is of mixed blood in which is incorporated the remnants of the original inhabitants and a strong strain of Tamil. Tamil contribution before Chola invasions is due to subtle nature of Tamil influence", (Still P 20.) "These facts swell the number of the original Tamil colonists to at least twenty times that of the Magadhi settlers (LV), and it must be borne in mind that the way once made for these colonists was kept open, by a communication which Vijaya carried on with Madura during his whole reign of 38 years. Such a communication could not have failed to lead to a continual influx of the Tamils from the continent in his and the succeeding reigns. On the other hand there was no communication with Bihar, and for obvious reasons (Brito LV). The Sinhalese race sprang from a mixture of the Magadhi and Tamil blood, in the proportion of 1 Magadhi to 20 Tamil, and this mixed race had been receiving and absorbing into itself, for a period of two thousand four hundred years a continuous stream of fresh blood, to the almost entire exclusion of the Magadhi. Now there may be philological or other reasons to lead to a different conclusion, it is not our province to investigate." (Brito LXXXI).



After the death of Vijaya there was a small accession of Indo-Aryan blood with the arrival of Vasudeva, a nephew of Vijaya as king in 504 B.C with his 32 companions and 32 companions of his consort, These people however married within their own fold not to be polluted with local blood. A Brahmin purohita ruled for one year between the reigns of Vasudeva and Pandukabhaya, both these kings were Saivites. Vijaya himself was a Saivite who built Siva-alayams in the four quarters of Ceylon for protection of his infant kingdom (Y. V M. - P 3), so also were the ancient Yakkas and Nagas (demons and dragons), demon and Sivalingam worshippers.

Pandukabhaya (437 B.C.), grandson of Vasudeva, received Hindu education from a Brahmin called Pandula at the behest of his mother. It was he who founded the city of Anuradhapura naming it after his benevolent uncle Anuradha. "The process of coalscence once happily commenced between both the Hindu - Tamil and Magadhi settlers, continued until it was interrupted by a religious commotion when Buddhism was introduced into Ceylon", "and the Tamils from the continent came to the host country which was now foreign in religion, they consequently changed their character and became invaders (LVIII).

## II

### TAMIL INROADS INTO CEYLON

March of events in history follows a pattern and order, on the other hand if it gets into collision with difficulties or impediments, invariably frees itself from these situations by shaping itself with a sense of direction to fit in with prevailing conditions, or all these appear now to be so in retrospect.

#### Pre-Buddhist kingdom.

Saivism was the religion of the land for the full period of 236 years in the pre-Buddhist kingdom of Vijaya (LVIII),

"Upwards therefore of 200 years were spent in initiatory measures for the organization of the new state, colonists from the continent of India were encouraged by the facilities held out to settlers", (Tennent I, 339). "Intimate intercourse and consanguinity were thus established from the remotest period, adventurers from the opposite coast were encouraged by the previous settlers. High employments were thrown open to Malabars", (Tennent V<sub>1</sub>, 395). "The process of coalescence once happily commenced between the Tamil and Magadhi settlers, continued until it was interrupted by a religious commotion when Buddhism was introduced and established in Ceylon, (LVIII quotes Tennent I, 33), "and the Tamils from the continent who had hitherto been encouraged to become settlers, and who, when they arrived became easily blended with the old settlers as long as the old settlers followed Saivism, now changed their character and became invaders", (LVIII).

The designations of "Malabars", "Choli or Soli" and Damilos".

Before pursuing further on this subject, the above three terms which occur with frequency in the old Sinhalese chronicles, and copied later by the Portuguese, Dutch and British writers, require clarification. (Ref. Tennent I, P 394 and V I, 353, footnote 1 & 4) :-

"Malabars" is a general epithet of Malabars rendered in Pali as Damilos or Tamils, also were natives of places in India



remote from that now known as Malabar". They were inhabitants of the states of Pandya, Ramnad, Chera, Coromandel coast and the countries on the banks of the river Cauvery, such as Trichinapalli, Tanjore and Mysore. "The term Malabar is used in the comprehensive sense in which it is applied in the Sinhalese chronicles to the continental invaders of Ceylon, but it must be observed that the adventurers in these expeditions who are styled in the Mahavamsa "Damilos" or Tamils, came not only from the south-western tract of the Dekkan, known in modern geography as "Malabar" but also from all parts of the peninsula as far north as Cuttack and Orissa. "Chola" or "Soli" was the ancient name of Tanjore and the country traversed by the river "Cauvery" and also the Coromandal coast,

The word Damilos" in its extensive sense embraces not merely the Tamils strictly so called, but even the Malayalee, Telugu, Cannaress etc. "Dravida (Dramila) and Tamil are identical and equivalent" LII).

#### Aspects of migration.

From the point of view of immigration, the Tamils came under two major categories. (No. 1) Soldiers & (No. 2) No soldiers.

The soldiers were futher sub-differentiated into (a) invaders and (b) mercenaries. the no-soldiers comprised mainly of innocent immigrants, agriculturists, merchantmen and other such people who came not through war, settlers who migrated on summons from princes who themselves had arrived earlier and entrenched in this country. As examples, the Vanniars came to Ceylon in the 5th century on an invitation from Prince Kulakkodan and colonized Tambalakamam, because of their expertise in agriculture, the colonists of Yalpani were brought down in the 9th century because, again of their profession of agriculture, also settlements of traders along the coast and harbours of Ceylon. The 1st Aryachakravarti got down through the chieftains of south India, Saiva or pious Vellalas passionately attached equally to Saivism and agricultural pursuits. These latter people, more a conservative and less aggressive settlers, evolved in the security of their splendid geographical isolation, their own culture, religion and



language. Whereas the invaders could not cross the barrier of hate engendered in the hearts of the Sinhalese for their conquerors, the latter while able to enforce their culture could not easily for the above reason mix up in blood with their subjects or it was retarded, not so with the Tamil mercenaries who arrived with the consent of the host country and operated through a millenium, adventurous and daring, and who penetrated deep into Sinhalese villages and social structure, making marriage alliances, mixed up with the blood of the Sinhalese, lost their identity and are Sinhalese now, not conscious of their past existence as Tamils or repugnant to this notion.

The remote necessity to seek help from neighbouring countries arose from the tendency of the Sinhalese royal houses to engage in dissensions and rivalries, which were not peculiar in medieval times to Ceylon alone. Deposed kings, lawful claimants to the throne, frustrated and ambitious princes crossed over to India, some of them roamed widely ascetic like for several years, collected Tamil armies and returned to Ceylon to fight their own cause. The Tamil mercenaries were benefactors of the king whom they had put on the throne, The king who was obliged to them for his position, had to show them special favours. If he could not pay off their hire in cash and send them back home, because of the bankruptcy of the king's vault as a result of recent wars, or if the mercenaries made up their mind to stay back on their own, the king had no alternative but to accede to their demands. These mercenaries were also useful to the king in times of internal turmoil. Whilst some of these Tamils worked their way up, to the position of ministers, king-makers or rulers, others misdirected their inherent warlike qualities into a life of outlawry, living on spoils. The king who owed his position to these people had somewhat to overlook their misdeeds. Even a person like Magha, the dreadful Tamil king who descended on Lanka with a large Tamil army, could not penetrate the interior of the country because of the presence here of such Tamil marauders, remnants of armies brought in previous times.

Parakramabahu II after his victory over Magha, did not enter Polonnaruwa because of its occupation by such Tamil bandits. War, profits and pillage and not blood ties were their motto The



practice of bringing down Tamil armies from India began as early as 42 A.D. with the Naga king Elana (Tamil), Ilanaga. Mercenaries with time became a menace. Abhayana brother of the reigning king Voharika Tissa (230 A.D.) (Wairatissa), brought a Tamil army from India and ousted the ruler but as might be expected Abhayana, the new king became a slave of his Tamil soldiers. This Tamil army supported the Wytulian doctrine (Vaitulya - Vadins) against the national religion of Abhayana (LXVII). The first king of the middle ages who went over to India to fetch a Tamil army to gain his throne after deposing his brother Kasyapa of Sigriya, was Dhatusena's lawful son Moggallana (495 A.D.). Kasyapa is a Hindu name which meant "worshipper of Siva" (*Casie Chitty*).

## Chronology of Events

### Pre-Christian invasions.

The first such invaders "who changed their character as immigrants and became invaders" were Sena and Guttaka, Elara and probably Pancha-Dravidas, all of the pre-Christian era. Their principal missions were apparently hinduisation of Ceylon through influences of conquest and thereby to remove all obstacles to the free flow of settlers from one Hindu to another Hindu country. While Sena and Guttaka were successful to some extent in reimposing Hinduism, Elara in spite of his "disdain of Buddhism" was not as much successful, Buddhism having been by this time deeply implanted in the hearts of the permanent population. Elara, from a matter of policy supported Buddhism, to safeguard his precarious position and prolong his reign to the utmost possible length of time. The struggle uppermost in the mind at this time was not so much between Tamil and Maghadite, victory or defeat, as between Hinduism and Buddhism, not from doctrinal differences but for the Tamil, from consideration of material interest—immigration. This argument is amply supported by Duttugamani's pronouncements. "Before marching against Elara, he declared his object to be the restoration of the religion", and proclaimed in all seriousness and not merely to rouse the "emotions in his soldiers, "I fight not for domination but for the sake of the religion of the Buddha" LXV). His foremost



activities after victory were to erect the world famous Ruanwelle Dagoba, the monastery of the Brazen Palace and other significant Buddhist buildings. The Pancha-Dravidas who got into league with the Brahmin rebel Tiya, the ruler of Ruhuna who had chased away many Theros to the Andhra country, did invade perhaps for the same purpose, whom Walgambahu (Vartagamani) finally ousted. The latter destroyed Saivite temples and ordered the Pitakataya (oral discourses by Mahinda) to be put down in writing ( LXVI ).

### **Sena and Guttaka**

Soon after the spread of Buddhism in Ceylon, two Tamil brothers **Sena and Guttaka** ( 237 B.C. ) commonly called horse dealers, in reality cavalry leaders, invaded with their cavalry, ousted Suratisa, younger brother of Devanampiya Tissa and jointly ruled Ceylon with justice for 22 years. They were Hindus adherents to the faith "that water washes away sins" and in order to perform their sacred ablutions without going far from the palace, they diverted the Kadamba - nadi or Aruvi Aru ( the upper reaches known as Malwathu Oya ) now dried up, to run by the city of Anuradhapura. Asela another younger brother of Devanampiya Tissa vanquished these two Tamil kings and ruled for 2 years. "The early success of these usurpers encouraged the ambition of fresh aspirants", (Tennent VI, 395 ).

### **Elara or Elala (205 B. C. or 145 B C.)**

A Chola prince and a Saivite of the illustrious Uja tribe, came from Tanjore with an army from Mysore (then called Chola or Soli, Tennent I, 395 ) and Tamil speaking, wrested in turn from Asela, the kingdom of Lanka. He administered justice with impartiality to friends and foes and protected the Buddhist priests. He was so just that the elements obeyed him and so magnanimous that he disclaimed to make an attack without giving the enemy, full intimation of his intentions, ( LXIV ) quotes Knighton p 35 ). Elara's reign lasted 44 years. Duttugamani, a young prince and patriot, son of the king of Ruhuna over-ruled the advice of his father not to get into trouble with the Tamils ( that was how he earned the sobriquet (Duttha - wicked), prepared a well organized invasion of Anuradhapura from Ruhuna,



defeated the aged Elara in personal combat and recovered Ceylon for the Sinhalese. Duttugamani was chivalrous enough to cremate Elara's body with honours appropriate to a Chakravarti with an order for all music to be suspended when passing this tomb. This injunction was found to be carried out as late as 1818 (T V<sub>1</sub>, 354).

#### **Pancha - Dravidas, (102 B.C.)**

"They effected simultaneous descents at different points of the coast, defeated Tiya a young Brahmin usurper to the throne" (T. V<sub>1</sub>. 396). The Pancha-Dravidas encouraged by this victory and latter in league with Tiya, turned on Vattagamani's army and defeated it, Vattagamani being driven into concealment among the mountains near Adam's Peak (LXVI), one of the seven Tamil leaders returned home earlier satisfied with the captured Queen Somadevi as his prize, another leader went back with the Bonapatraya (bowl relic) as his share of victory. The five remaining leaders succeeded each other, each killing his predecessor and ruled in all for 24 years. Vattagamani finally reconquered the country from Dathika, the last of these Tamil rulers and restored Buddhism.

#### **Coranaga (62 B.C.)**

A rebellious son of Vattagamani was a Saivite, who destroyed Buddhist temples and reversed the good religious policy of his father. No sooner than he ascended the throne, he was poisoned by his licentious queen Anula who succeeded him, later raising to her bed and throne two Tamils, a carpenter and a Brahmin priest named Niliya among her numerous other lovers (LXVI).

### **Post- Christian Wars**

#### **Ilanaga (A.D 42.)**

During the period of the first dynastic trial of strength between the Lambakkanas and the Nagas Ilanaga a deposed king escaped from prison to India and returned back after three years of exile with a foreign army which had been mainly levied from among the Tamils by means of which he regained his ancient throne (LXVII). This is the first time that Tamil soldiers of foreign origin were employed by a Ceylonese king. His son married a Tamil princess, Damila-devi.



### 3rd Great Invasion - (A.D. 110.)

During the reign of Vankanasika (crooked-nosed) Tissa, son of the first Lambakkana king Vasabha, the Chola king Karikal (man with a charred leg due to accidental burns) invaded Ceylon took away as captives about 12,000 Sinhalese families to construct the dykes of the Cauvery river in Mysore. The king's son Gajabahu famed for the introduction of the Pattini cult into Ceylon from Kerala, avenged this outrage by leading an expedition from Jaffnapatam and brought back not only the Sinhalese but also a multitude of Choleans whom the king established in lands in Alutkuru Korale where the Malabar features are thought to be discernible to the present day (T V<sub>1</sub>, 397). This incident is said to be not mentioned in the Mahavamsa but in the Rajavali. (*Casie Chitty P 2*) considers them as "fishers" from Coromandel coast. He also populated Harispattu and Tumpane in the Kandyan district, and districts in Kurunagala with these Tamil prisoners. Gajabahu's triumph is commemorated by an yearly perahera, which is now continued by the Dalada Maligwa at Kandy, at this festival a high place has always been held by Goddess Pattini, whose worship was introduced by Gajabahu, (*P. Arunachalam-C. National Review 1906, P 52.*)

### Wytulian tenets (one form of Mahayanism).

During the rule of a mixed dynasty of Nagas and Lambakkanas, the king being Voharika Tissa, son of Srinaga (214 - 236 A.D.), the Wytulian (Vaitulya - vadins) heresy was introduced into Ceylon by a Brahmin named Wytulia who had subverted by craft and intrigue the religion of the Buddha (T I. 379 FN 2). The king consigned their scriptures to the flames. This doctrine introduced Saivite gods and rites into Buddhism (LXVII), and brought about a schism in the Buddhist religion. Abhayana (236), younger brother of Voharika returned from India with an army of Tamils, defeated and killed the latter and became master of Ceylon, but as expected here, he became a slave of his own army. The Saivite army supported the Wytulians. Wytulianism reappeared in Gotabhaya's reign (253 A.D) and succeeded in gaining a following in the Abhayagiri monastery at Anuradhapura, sixty of the monks were banished after having brand marks placed on their body. They found asylum in a



monastery at Cauveripatnam. Gotabhaya's second son Mahasena (276 A.D) was caught in the tangle of Wytulianism, supporting it in the early years of his reign, but later he reversed his religious policy and supported the orthodox religion, demolishing devales in Saivite villages, replacing them with viharas. "The schism among the Buddhists themselves, tending as they did to engraft Brahminical rites upon the doctrine of the pure faith, seemed to have promoted and matured the intimacy between the two people. Some of the Sinhalese kings erected temples to the gods of the Hindus and the promoters of the Wytulian heresy found a refuge from persecution among their sympathisers in the Dekkan", (T.V<sub>1</sub>, 398).

A long interval of repose followed and no fresh expedition from India is mentioned till 433.

#### **Kalarasars' (predatory rulers) invasion (433 A.D.)**

They were Cannarese Tamil kings belonging to the Kalabhra race of South India who in that country, made the Cholas disappear on earth and kept the Pandyas and Pallavas under thralldom for 150 years. Panduraja with five followers ruled in succession in Ceylon for 62 years. It was during Pandu's reign that the first batch of Vanniyars colonised Tambalakamam. Dhatusena, a samanera and a nephew of the now famous Venerable Mahanama, the author of the Mahavamsa, rose against, and defeated the last of these foreign kings and the kingdom was regained by the Sinhalese. "He destroyed both the government and the religion of the Tamils, degraded the Sinhalese who had intermarried with the Tamils and confiscated their property". (T V<sub>1</sub>, 397-8):- Dhatusena after his victory, seems to have made an attempt though an ineffectual one, to reverse the policy which operated under his predecessors as an incentive to the immigration of the Malabars, settlement and intermarriages had been all along encouraged, and even during the recent usurpation, many Sinhalese families of rank had formed connections with "Damilos". Dhatusena's vigorous policy could not however stem the further flow of Tamils into Ceylon as is shown in the sequel.

#### **Age of Tamil mercenary soldiers**

In spite of his benign rule of 18 years, Dhatusena met his fatal end at the hands of the son of his ordinary mahesi, while



his lawful successor should have been Moggallana, son of his consecrated queen. Parricide Kasyapa (477 A. D.) "fortified Sigiriya and shut himself there in the security of this fortress through fear of Moggallana and in fear of the other world", while Moggallana fled for the safety of his life from Kasyapa's hostility. Moggallana I roamed about in India for 18 years like an ascetic but with the single obsession for the throne of Lanka and returned back in 495, when the fortunes in Ceylon were turning against his step-brother Kasyapa, and recovered possession of the throne "with the aid of a force which he collected there" (T V<sub>1</sub> 399).

### **New pattern of Tamil hegemony**

**623 - 840**

For over 200 years from 623 A. D., Ceylon was rocked with dynastic discords among rulers, usurpers and rivals to the throne. Disappointed contenders escaped to India for asylum or fetched from there, Tamil armies to fight their cause, the local Tamils resident in Ceylon acting as liaison, supporting the new armies comprised of their own kin. The standing army consisted now largely of Tamil hired soldiers, the Sinhalese commander was now a figurehead. The future of the Sinhalese was made to hang down on the balance of power tactics adopted by the Tamils between the Sinhalese rivals. "Each claimant in his adversity, betook himself to the continent, and Malabar mercenaries from Pandya and Soli enrolled themselves indifferently under any leader, deposed or restored kings at their pleasure" (T V<sub>1</sub>, 395).

Aggabodhi III when defeated by Jetthatissa III returned from his exile in India with Tamil mercenaries and defeated the latter, regaining the throne. Dathopatissa returned from India with Tamil soldiers and ousted Aggabodhi III, who again went to India and came back with Tamil soldiers to become a king for the third time. Each drove out the other with the support of Tamil soldiers brought from India. Hatthadatha nephew of Dhatopatissa I fled to South India, returned back with a Tamil army, captured Anuradhapura, but settled down for some time in the Eastern Province as an independent ruler before becoming



King Dathopatissa II (659). Thus, Tamils brought over during the previous forty years had grown to considerable numbers living on pillage and plunder. Sinhalese kings who owed their throne to these soldiers had to shower favours on them and the Tamils became rich. The Tamil power was now on the ascendant and had attained a position just short of domination over the Island. The ministers of Aggabodhi IV were Tamils, and finally supreme power passed into the hands of the chief minister, the Tamil Pottha-Kuttha who had risen high enough to become the king maker of this time. Manavamma, a resident of Northern Province and a lawful claimant to the throne, crossed over to South India to raise, like his predecessors, a Tamil army to advance his cause, as the local people of the Northern Province as well as the powerful Tamil phalanx of Anuradhapura refused to support him. He got held up at the Pallava court becoming a general of a division under Narasimhavarman I, gaining honours, and distinctions in the Pallava-Western Chalukya war. Later on Narasimhavarman II requited him for his distinguished services with a Pallava army to conquer Ceylon. His army marched through the northern districts punishing his former Tamil enemies there, isolated separately and individually the armies of Pottha-Kuttha and Hatthadatha, defeating them one after the other and captured Anuradhapura and clipped the powers of the Tamils by removing Tamil officials from their positions. The Tamils however bided their time to rise again to greater power.

In the wake of the march in, of this Pallava army in the 8th century, along with the successive reigns of the three sons of Manavamma, who were themselves born and brought up in the Pallava kingdom, that Pallava culture, art and sculpture got disseminated among the Sinhalese, (Refer C.H.C. 269).

In A. D. 819, (LXX) quotes Rajaratnacari (P 81 - 82) - The removal of the seat of government to Polonnaruwa took place in the reign of the Saivite king Matwalassen with the avowed object of avoiding the proximity of the Tamils, who were becoming masters of all the north.



## I. Pandyan raid

This invasion was an isolated incident, unprovoked and unjustifiable that took place in 840.

Emperor Srimara Srivallabha in the exultation of a series of victories over the Pallavas and other neighbouring kingdoms, ran amok over Ceylon. This could not have been an extension to Ceylon of the dynastic principle of Digvijaya (wish to conquer for conquest's sake) which was prevalent in the old South Indian kingdoms. This raid was undertaken in all probability to refill his coffers which had run dry owing to repeated military engagements with his neighbouring kingdoms. He came through the north, captured, sacked and plundered the rich capital city of Anuradhapura for the first time, and removed spoils of great value. "He left the city in a state as if it had been plundered by yakkas". Sena I who was involved in this tragedy "had to purchase the evacuation with a payment of a handsome ransom", (*Tennent V<sub>1</sub>, P 401*).

## Formulation of a New Sinhalese military policy

Unable to brook any further the Malabar depredations on Ceylon, the Sinhalese formed a new foreign policy of keeping out of Ceylonese soil the dread of constant invasions, by transferring the scene of war to enemy territory itself, which naturally involved interference in the domestic affairs of another country which was here unavoidable. The Sinhalese adopted in an open way "the balance of power tactics" by sending their own army overland, siding and aiding the weaker power against the stronger and keeping these people's military power tied up in their own battle grounds. A golden opportunity came for "ravage" when Sena II (851-855) nephew and successor of Sena I allied himself with the Pallavas and with a pretender to the Pandyan throne, crossed the sea in person with a large army composed chiefly of Tamils, overran the Dekkan and won a grand victory by capturing and sacking the capital city of Madura. Srimara Srivallabha was killed as a result of war wounds, his son Varugunavarman was enthroned as a protege of the Sinhalese Commander-in-chief in 862 A. D. (*N. Sastri 154 and LXX*). "This



exploit served to promote a more intimate intercourse between the two people'', (*Tennent V<sub>1</sub>*. P 401).

In about 910 the Chola monarch sealed the doom of the Pandyan empire by capturing Madura. The defeated Pandyan ruler Rajasimha appealed in desperation to Kasyapa V of Ceylon for help, the latter sent an army to his aid. Parantaka defeated the combined armies of Pandya and Ceylon at the battle of Vellur and the Chola conquest of the Pandyan kingdom was completed (*Sastri* 167). While the policy of alliance paid interim dividends, it brought in the long run, danger closer to Ceylon.

## 2. Chola Invasions

The Chola invasions, unlike the Pandyan expedition was justifiable for many reasons. In about 900 A. D. the new Chola empire of Tanjore succeeded the first Pandyan empire as the mightiest power in South India. The Sinhalese had committed themselves to a league with the Pandyas and Keralas to destroy the mounting danger presented by the Cholas. This alliance formed by Kasyapa V brought disaster of the first magnitude to Ceylon. In 915, they irritated the Cholas by sending, on an appeal by the Pandya country, a Sinhalese army to assist the Pandyan King Rajasimha II against the Cholas. The Pandya - Sinhalese army was defeated at the Battle of Vellur. When Rajasimha was driven out of his country in 923, he came over to Ceylon to seek refuge and assistance. Ceylon dare not help him a second time. Rajasimha therefore left Ceylon for his mother's country Kerala, leaving behind unfortunately for Ceylon, the Pandyan regalia for safe keeping.

The presence of this regalia in Ceylon attracted four Chola invasions on Ceylon. The Cholas as victors over the Pandyan, were in urgent need of this regalia for their crowning ceremony at the Pandyan capital. The first invasion came in 947 under Parantaka II Chola, who plundered Anuradhapura and extracted a large booty, but could not recover the regalia which was taken away and deposited in Ruhuna. Another abortive wave of invasion the next year through Kayts, was also a failure.



Mahinda V was the most unfortunate king in the history of Ceylon. He was reduced to absolute impotence by the mischievous activities of the local Tamils, as well as by Tamil incursions from South India. His brother Sena had earned fame by repulsing an invasion of Ceylon by the all powerful Krishna III (958). The dismissal of the General by the king over some differences made the General overpower the king with his Tamil army. Reconciliation however took place between the two later on, the Tamils in the meantime plundered like devils the King's country as well as the property of the inhabitants. When Mahinda V ascended the throne, he found Anuradhapura full of unruly Tamil soldiers, brought by Senatipati Sena. Mahinda's Kerala mercenary soldiers also armed themselves and surrounded the palace threatening the king, saying "as long as there is no pay we shall not eat". Mahinda thereupon fled to Ruhuna with his regalia leaving behind at Rajarata a void for Tamil soldiers to do as they pleased. Under these chaotic conditions in Ceylon the illustrious king Raja-Raja Chola Deva who began his conquests, by destroying one by one the Pandya-Kerala-Ceylon confederation landed his army in the north in 993, marched towards Anuradhapura, captured, pillaged and set fire on it, "the Cholas taking all the treasures of Lanka for themselves". Rajarata was annexed as a province of the Chola empire with a Viceroy to rule over this province. It was the Cholas who made Polonnaruwa for the first time the capital of Ceylon.

Mahinda fled a second time to Ruhuna with the regalia and ruled there as king for 22 years with reduced powers until the Cholas broke into Ruhuna in 1017, captured Mahinda and his queen with the regalia and jewels, and sent them all as prisoners to South India where Mahinda died in 1029. While Raja-Raja annexed the whole of the northern half of Ceylon as a province of his empire, Rajendra became now practically the master of all Ceylon.

Ruhuna was the southern part of Ceylon made up of several principalities, refuge for defeated Sinhalese kings and frustrated princes, a country of insurrections and perpetual dissensions, armies defeated at Anuradhapura returned back to the safety of Ruhuna to regroup and recoup, before starting a retaliatory campaign towards Anuradhapura. A prince of a collateral royal



line, Vijayabahu I became ultimately sole monarch of a united Ruhuna in 1055.

There were many military skirmishes between Vijayabahu of Ruhuna and the Chola Viceroy of Polonnaruwa in the last of which the Cholas were defeated. On hearing of this reverse, Virarajendra, son of Rajendra I reacted by despatching a strong force from India which landed in Mantota and marched towards Anuradhapura where Vijayabahu I was defeated and fled for safety to the rock fortress of Vakirigala (1067).

From now on, the Cholas got tightly locked into life and death battles with the Western Chalukyas (*Kannadas*) in the mainland, and all the military resources were requisitioned for this war and Ceylon was neglected. Vijayabahu taking full advantage of the weak situation of the enemy in Ceylon struck at Anuradhapura, and entered it in triumph in 1070. He too continued to have Polonnaruwa as his capital for a very different strategic reason mentioned hereafter.

## Ancient Cholas in South India

"The Cholas like the Pandyas and Ceras are generally believed to have been an indigenous dynasty of Tamil rulers. Their origin is lost in the mist of antiquity. They are known to the grammarian Katyayana (4 B.C.) and are mentioned in the inscriptions of Asoka among the independent states outside his empire (3 B.C.) (U.H.C. 282).

## Chola influences on Ceylon

Darkness shrouds the period of Chola occupation of Ceylon even when it was of a considerably long duration of about 77 years. The Cholas as well as the Sinhalese chronicles had contributed to the neglect of this part of history. It is understandable why the Sinhalese chronicles should have omitted this period of history, either out of spite for a foreign subjugation, or to avoid painful memories. Any occupation by a foreign power is bound to have created pressures and deep impressions on the social structure of the subjects of the rulers, interfering with the old order and introducing new ways of life. The Cholas had come and



gone without leaving their records, but they have left behind a long trail of events to influence the succeeding generations, dynasties and kings. Reference to these matters helps one to form somewhat a picture of what had happened during the blackout time of the Chola imperium. (Still P. 20):- "Three or four decades of peace under Chola kings must have been of vast importance in planting Cholyan influence deep in the Sinhalese race of far greater importance than war". The first Viceroy was Prince Uttama Chola, brother of King Parantaka II who held the northern districts in about 954 (*John XVIII*) with his capital at Mantota or Padaviya (N-P 96). The last Chola Viceroy was Adhirajendra who departed from Ceylon in 1070 (*John XVIII*). Both Viceroys became later Chola kings. Being skilled agriculturists and specialists in tank-building operations in their home country, they had given evidently the necessary attention and assistance to agriculture which was in any country the mainstay of the sinews of war and peace time activities. Being also the foremost people in India to cast bronzeware and statues, "Polonnaruwa was full of Hindu influences imported by its Hindu embellishers" (Farrer P 172). They built Siva Devalas by the side of Buddhist institutions, so that the Sinhalese had a common texture of culture formed by the nexus of Hindu warp and Buddhist weft. Let us pick up here and now, some superficial points.

South Indian names were for the first time introduced into Sinhalese dynasty, the name Parakramabahu is akin to Parakrama, Parakrama Pandya or Parakrama Pandya of Pandya country. Vikramabahu I came for the first time into Sinhalese royal order, contemporaneous with Vikrama Chola and Vikrama Pandya of South India. Dynasties also assumed Tamilian character, such as Pandya and Kalinga Sinhalese kings of Polonnaruwa, Pandya line of Sinhalese kings of Dambadeniya, Chola line of kings of Kotte and in the 19th century, Naika kings of Kandy from Madura.

Hinduism also followed these dynastic lines. When Polonnaruwa was in the zenith of its power which was under Parakramabahu the Great who was a "Brahmin of Hindu religion" (Farrer P171), Tamil and Hindu influences reached their apex. Parakramabahu built the city of Polonnaruwa in Dravidian style quite different from the architectural form of Anuradhapura" (Still P 77). He followed the traditions of the Cholas in improving



agriculture and expanding tank construction works etc. To mention some of the kings who had leanings towards Hinduism or were Hindus. (i) Alagakkonar V.

- (2) The Great Alagakkonar III who built four Hindu temples around Kotte for the spiritual protection of this fortress-city.
- (3) Parakramabahu VI, Rajasingha I, and other Kotte kings.
- (4) The Naika kings of Kandy. (5) The Kalinga kings of Polonnaruwa were also so, for instance Nissankamalla had strong Hindu leanings, discovered with a Brahmin thread on his shoulders in stone carvings. Tradition claims that it was he who built Siva Devale No. 1 and not Gajabahu II. He left many inscriptions in Polonnaruwa.

Tamil language also gained great pre-eminence after the Chola reign, especially in Polonnaruwa, Kotte, Kandy and among the Alagakkonars. The above deductions from the silent history of the Chola reign, did not have any valid or tangible support, until H.C.P. Bell made use of the modern science of archaeology to embowel in 1907 Mother-Earth in Polonnaruwa, and brought to the surface, some precious materials for people to see and be convinced.

These were clear evidences of the glory of Hinduism and Tamil language during the Polonnaruwa period which were, (i) The images and bronze statuettes of Saivite deities and the idols of their devotees as well. (2) Inscriptions were written in the Devales in Tamil grantha characters. The Devales which were exposed by Bell were Nos. 1 and 5. The following deities and devotees were revealed :-

- (1) Nata-Raja. (dancing Siva)
- (2) Nandi. (Siva's favourite charger or vahana)
- (3) Sivakamy.
- (4) Lingam.
- (5) Sakhti. (Yoni stones)
- (6) Surya.
- (7) Vishnu, etc.

The devotees were :- Sundaramurti, Sambandar, Chandrasekera  
etc.



Bell's discovery was made sixteen years earlier than the famous archaeological excavations of the Indus Valley by Sir John Marshall, which had added a thousand and five hundred years more to the antiquity of India, as well as to that of the Saivite religion. What Marshall exposed to the world were again, as at Polonnaruva, Saiva deities in various postures and forms, dancing Nata-Raja, Siva in various duties, Uma, Lingam and Yoni stones.

Raghavan (India in Ceylon history, Culture and Society, P 105):- We are told that thirteen temples existed in Polonnaruva, seven Siva Devalas, five Vishnu Devalas and one Kali Koyil. Five of them were constructed of stone, others in brick and mortar, No 2 entirely of stone representing Dravidian at its best".

#### Devalas.

- (i) Siva Devale No.1 is an example of the choicest of Hindu temples carved on stone "lovely jewel of stone works, more ornate and elaborate than Siva Devale No. 5, Tamil, Hindu, a small temple of Siva the destroyer" (*Parrer* 185). Tradition claims its author to be Nissankamalla, busiest builder and restorer".
- (ii) Siva Devale No. 2. This contains Lingam, Nandi etc., and strange enough Vishnu, but here understandable, in the traditions of the Chola kings at home, who before commencement of a war and after victory, paid "dharsanam" to both Vishnu of Sri-Rangam temple and Natarajah and Vishnu of the temple of Chidambaram, which also possesses a Vishnu shrine. This temple is also known as Vanavan-Madevi-Iswaram Udayar, after the name of one of the queens of Raja-Raja. Her son Rajendra I had left his inscription on its wall.

Udayar Sri Adhirajendra Deva (Parakesarivarman) the last Viceroy of Ceylon and afterwards a Chola king, wrote three inscriptions on its wall with praises of his own valour and victories,



granting at the same time a lamp and stand to give perpetual light to the temple (1067). "Chola rule in Ceylon was largely responsible for the establishment of several permanent Hindu Tamil settlements in various parts of north Ceylon, even after their expulsion. Hindu temples built during the Chola occupation were carefully maintained by the Tamil settlers and new ones were also built. Vijayabahu I, greatest enemy of the Cholas, was himself a patron of Hinduism. Some Saiva temples were named after him". (K.Indrapala - Hindu Temples of Ancient Ceylon, P 5).



### III

#### POLONNARUVA.

Polonnaruva is the name of a historic city hallowed in the memory of the ancient Tamils.

1. It thrived on a Hindu background, excavations so far showed at least thirteen Hindu temples, seven for Siva, five for Vishnu and one for Kali-amman. Bronze statuettes of Hindu deities are from time to time excavated from these temple sites. The last excavation (1960) by Godakumbura in and about Siva Devale No. 5, brought to the surface bronze statuettes of Nataraja thirty seven inches in height, Somaskandamurti ( a combination of Siva, Uma and Skanda ), Parvathy, stones of Ganesha, Vishnu with bell and two lamp posts, Balakrishna, Nandi, Linga, Siva, saints such as Karaikkal-ammal, Sunderamurthy etc, everything Saivaite.

2. Known in the Ramayana as Pulastinagara, city of Pulastiya, the grandfather of Ravana.

3. Probably Vijitapura built by Elara in 2 B. C. as a strong forward defensive citadel near Polonnaruva which Duttugamani took four months to demolish, refer ( C V 11 P 60 quotes Parker's Ancient Ceylon, P 287 ).

4. Made capital of Ceylon for the first time by a Tamil king Raja-Raja, he also named it Janatha-Mangalam (Auspicious city of the Lord of Creation). Cholas being experienced strategists of warfare, selected this city as their capital because of its military value, guarding all the crossings along the river line of Mahaveli Ganga. The Sinhalese army whenever defeated in Rajarata retreated to its southern stronghold of Ruhuna to regroup their armies before attempting to recapture Anuradhapura. Polonnaruva was therefore a strategic obstacle to armies on their way to Anuradhapura from the south. Vijayabahu I retained it as his capital for a different reason, because Polonnaruva was farther away than Anuradhapura to the Indian invasions that were coming through the northern harbours, such as Mantota and Kayts.



5. It was the last regular capital of Ceylon under another Tamil ruler, who later became the first Aryachakravarti of Jaffna.

6. "Parakramabahu built the city of Polonnaruva in a style of great magnificence as may be seen from their ruins, they were of a style very different from the typical plans observed at Anuradhapura. The country was now so greatly under the influence of India, that a style of architecture pronouncedly Hindu in type pervades the whole of Polonnaruva. He turned his attention towards Anuradhapura to build it 'not to alienate the Sinhalese party and Buddhist monks' (*Still* P 77). "He introduced Chola type of coinage from India and his successors copied it for a century or perhaps more", (*Still* P 193). "During his reign, intercourse with India was probably more free than even before, with the natural result that Polonnaruva was built on Tamil lines. Bricks very largely took the place of stone. The art of Polonnaruva is a mixture of the earlier pure style of Anuradhapura and the Tamil art of the 12th century A. D.", (*Still* P 178).

*Tennent* VI, P 408 :- "So greatly had the constructive arts declined even at that period in Ceylon, that Parakramabahu I had to bring Damilo artificers from the opposite coast of India". "Tamil letters were found as masons' marks on the stonework of some of Parakramabahu's buildings (C.H.C. 269).

This era began with Chola occupation and ended with the reign of the last Kalinga of Polonnaruva, Magha.

## Kalingas

(*Tennent* VI, 418, P. N 3) refers to Kalinga as situated in the Coromandel coast. Kalinga may have been therefore included in Cholamandalam. Cambridge history of India (VI page 545) states "How far Kalinga is to be regarded as a Dravidian province is not clear. At present Circar and southern Ganjam are mainly Telugu in speech and Dravidian physical features are popular in this population as in Orissa". "Calingha (Northern Circars) was a Tamil country according to LIV".



Pliny of the 1st century A. D. mentions that Pertalis was the capital of Kalinga at his time. This name of the capital according to him, may have been Dravidian in origin (Tamil - Per - Peria, meaning "Great", and Tali which in Tamil means "head" or office of a district official, a great head office. Nilakanta Sastri (P 15) dated 1955, says "Kalinga was throughout under the rule of the line of Eastern Gangas with no apparent connection in this period with the Western Gangas of Mysore. R 307:- The first Eastern Ganga king was Vajrahasta I (1038)". They dated their inscriptions in an era of their own beginning about A. D. 509. Sastri (P 213) :- Throughout the 13th century and later, the Gangas continued to rule the kingdom of Kalinga. The Chola king Rajaraja III (1198) was a grandson of Anantavarman Chola-Ganga, an alliance between the Eastern Gangas and Cholas. The Kalinga kingdom was reduced to impotency by the successive invasions of the Bengali and Delhi Muhammedans. This long lived dynasty ended with Bhanudeva IV (1432) who died childless.

Kalinga kings are said to belong to Gangavamsa, inhabitants of the southern districts of Kalinga (Orissa) along the northern borders of Andhra country. Owing to fluctuating fortunes in border wars between these two neighbours, the Eastern Ganga district was tossed about into Orissa or Andhra, according to the victorious position of one or the other. Gangavamsa is probably of Telugu origin. Coda-Gangas are descendants of that section of Gangavamsa who got mixed up in marriage with the powerful Chola dynasty. Coda-Gangas are a mixture of Eastern Ganga and Chola blood while the Aryachakravartis were descendants of the Coda-Gangas mixed up in marriage with the Sethupathi Brahmins of Rameswaram, with therefore Brahmin blood in them.

*This was an union of the  
Kalinga kings - Kalinga  
Angas*

It is reported that there is an isolated group of fifteen families a primitive people living at present on the east coast of Ceylon at Illangaiturai 20 miles off Trincomalee, who call themselves Kalingas, claiming that their ancestors immigrated from Kalinga of the east coast of India. They speak a language, mixture of Tamil and Kalinga. There is also in this place a rivulet named Kalinga Ela, which flows into the Mahaveli Ganga.



The theory of Paranavitana based, it is claimed on newly discovered findings, that the Kalingas and the Aryachakravartis were Malaysians needs because of its recency, further time for study and assessment.

At the time the Kalingas were migrating to the Rameswaram, Polonnaruwa and Singai-nagar settlements, the Eastern Gangavamsa appears to have been merely a house of petty kings or chieftains. They flowered out as kings of Kalinga, only in early 11th century and after, in their own country. Rajaraja III (1198-1211) a later Chola king was a grandson of Anantavarman Choda Ganga (Coda-Ganga.) The Chola dynasty had during this period dovetailed into the Kalinga dynasty to form the Coda-Ganga race. The Indian Kalinga kingdom vanished after receiving several repeated hammer blows from the Bengali Muslims and later those of the Muhammadans of the Delhi Sultanate. The last Kalinga king was Bhanuva Deva IV who died childless in 1432.

### **Kalinga and Pandya factions of Polonnaruwa (1055-1236), 181 years**

With the end of the Chola imperium, sixteen kings ruled at Polonnaruwa from Vijayabahu I to Kalinga Magha, out of whom ten at least were Kalinga kings and three of Pandyan origin.

### **Introduction of the Kalingas into the dynasties of Ceylon**

The first Kalinga to arrive in Ceylon was Ugra-Singkan in 795 who ruled the northern half of Ceylon from Singai Nagar. The next Kalinga was Sangka, a Kalingadevi, the mother of Mahinda V (956). Vijayabahu I married a Kalinga princess Tilakasundari whose son, Vickramabahu I himself married Sundari, a Kalinga princess. Vijayabahu I's grandmother also was a Kalinga princess. Manabharana was married to Ratnavali a Kalinga daughter of Vijayabahu I. Manabharana was the father of Parakramabahu I, the latter marrying Lilavati a Pandya princess. Parakramabahu I's father was either a Kalinga or a Pandya prince.



The mother of Gajabahu II, Sundari was a Kalinga. Parakramabahu I was a good representative of a blood mixture of Pandyas, Kalingas and Sinhalese. Vijayabahu I and Parakramabahu I appear to have been the originators of the Kalinga and Pandya line of Polonnaruwa kings. The name Parakramabahu appears for the first time in Sinhalese dynasty, which is a Pandya name akin to the Pandya names of India, Parakrama Pandi, Parakrama Pandya, Parakrama etc. Vikramabahu I, a Tamil royal name belonging to both the Cholas and Pandyas of India, also appears for the first time among Sinhalese kings.

### Parakramabahu I's reign (1153 - 1186)

Parakramabahu I was one of the two foremost kings of the post- Anuradhapura period, the other was Parakramabahu VI. He ascended the throne of a country when it was in a state of shambles. He conquered troublesome Ruhuna and swept away rebellions and recalcitrants from all the other parts of Ceylon by conducting a big and arduous campaign in charge of a Tamil Adhikaram, and consolidated his own position by uniting Ceylon into one kingdom. He followed the Chola traditions in developing the country by increased attention to agriculture, tank and irrigation works.

According to one source, Parakramabahu is said to have been born in Singai-Nagar in Jaffna. A person who had Tamil connections and healthy leanings towards Hinduism, was perhaps acceptable also to the Tamils of the north as their king. Parakramabahu's edict in the Nainativu Tamil inscription on stone, containing port regulations pertaining to the harbour of Kayts (R 208), bears testimony to the following two allusions that (i) Parakramabahu held suzerainty over Jaffna and its islands, confirmed further by his (ii) using with freedom the ports of Valigamam (Kankasanturai), Madduvil, Uraturai and Mantota for a planned invasion of Chola country which however did not eventually take place. He sent a punitive naval expedition to Bassein in Burma through the Andaman islands under the admiralship of another Tamil Adhikaram. He waged a long war indirectly against the



enemies of Ceylon, the Cholas, by sending a strong army through Rameswaram to Pandyan soil in support of Vira Pandya's claims to the throne against that of Kulasekera, a protege of the Cholas.

## Successors of Parakramabahu I

They were either his nephews or close relatives, belonging either to the Kalinga or Pandya clan. His Pandyan queen Lilavati ruled at Polonnaruva three times. In one of her reigns, three Chola invasions happened to have come to Ceylon. Vijaya-bahu II, a nephew was his direct successor. Others were Nissankamalla, another nephew, Vickramabahu II brother of Nissankamalla, Kalyanavati Nissankamalla's queen, Anikanga who invaded Ceylon with a Tamil army, all Kalingas. A Pandyan general invaded Ceylon now, with the help of a Pandya force and ruled at Polonnaruva.

Now landed on Ceylon in 1214 the great Kalinga Magha from Cholaland in a mood of "frenzied fury" and wrested the Polonnaruva kingdom from his Pandyan enemies and returned it back to the Kalinga faction. He did this by plucking the eyes and plundering the treasures of Parakramabahu Pandu, the last Pandya—Sinhalese king of Polonnaruva.

## Incursions of the second Pandyan, and the Vijayanagara empires

These later South Indian invasions had to tackle now not one but two kingdoms in Ceylon. These invasions were short lived ones. U. H. C 685 et al:—on the decline and fall of the great Chola Empire.

- (i) Jatavarman Sundara Pandya who brought about the downfall of the Imperial Cholas and became the founder of the second Pandyan empire, invaded Ceylon (1258) and made Parakramabahu II his vassal, ordering him to pay tributes.
- (ii) In 1263 Jatavarnam Vira Pandya, on an appeal from a minister of Lanka invaded Ceylon, when a Ceylonese king lost his life and the Pandyan flag was hoisted at Konamalai.



- (iii) In about 1284, an Aryachakravarti, probably a subruler of Rameswaram under the Pandyas, invaded and sacked Yapahuva in Bhuvanakabahu I's reign. This invasion is contested by some historians.

### **Vijayanagara Invasions**

- (i) In 1371 Kumara Kampana ii, son of the Emperor Bukku I brought all the Tamil kingdoms of the south including Ceylon, as tributaries, made easier by the previous capture of the Madura Sultanate.
- (ii) In 1377 when all the Tamil countries rebelled against the Vijayanagara yoke, Virapaksha Udayar, son of Hari-Hara II was despatched to his Southern base of operations, Madura, to bring the Tamil rebels under his control. This refers as far as Ceylon was concerned to the reconquest of the northern part of Ceylon including the Jaffna Peninsula. Virapaksha expressed his thanks to Lord Ramanatha of Rameswaram after the joint victory over Rameswaram and nearby kingdom of Jaffna, by weighing himself against gold in the presence of Lord Ramanatha of Rameswaram.
- (iii) In about 1422, during the reign of Deva Raja II, the Governor of Madura Lakanna-dandanayaka fitted a cavalry force and successfully destroyed Iyalpanam (Jaffna), Nagapattanam, and Ilam (the Sinhalese kingdom), to enforce tributes.
- (iv) In c 1422 Arikesari Parakrama Pandya a governor under Vijayanagara, was sent to restore the imperial Vijayanagara authority over the troublesome Island of Ceylon.
- (v) In 1496 when again the imperial hold on Ceylon and other Tamil countries was weakening, Narasa Nayakka the imperial general and father of the illustrious Emperor Krishnarayadeva of Vijayanagara captured Madura, conquering all the Tamil regions including Jaffna.



Tennant V<sub>1</sub> P 417:- "From the beginning of the thirteenth century to the extinction of the Sinhalese dynasty in the 18th century, the Island cannot be said to have been entirely free from the presence of the Malabars. Even when temporarily subdued, they remained with false professions of loyalty. Damila soldiers were taken into pay by the Sinhalese sovereigns, the Devalas of Hindu worship were built in close proximity to the viharas of Buddhism and by frequent inter-marriages, the royal line was almost closely allied to the kings of Chola and Pandya as to the blood of the Suluvamsa".



## IV

## VELAIKKARAS

"Velai-Karas" is the Tamil rendering for "servicemen on pay", hired Tamil Indian soldiers employed by the Sinhalese monarchs to fight their own internal wars. According to Marco Polo they were employed because the Sinhalese and Ceylon Tamils were unwarlike. From 623 onwards for 61 years, Tamil soldiers from India were a dominant factor in Sinhalese politics, till Manavamma curbed their power. Velaikkaras were increasingly used from early Polonnaruva period. These soldiers assumed the name of Velaikkaras during Vijayabahu I's times, modelled on the recruits of Rajendra Chola's army of invasion. To start with, they were trusted body guards of Sinhalese kings and protectors at one time to a charity and the tooth relic.

They consisted at different times of Tamils, Keralas, Kannadas, and Telugus. They fought for pay and not out of patriotism, a turbulent people given to plunder and oppression whenever an opportunity came their way. They gave trouble to Vijayabahu I, Gajabahu II, and Parakramabahu I. In about 1,000 A.D. the Keralas armed themselves, surrounded the palace of Mahinda V and threatened him saying, "so long as there is no pay you shall not eat". The king had no alternative but to take to flight from Anuradhapura to Ruhuna for safety where he stayed permanently. They rebelled against Vijayabahu I twice, once when he ordered them to join an expedition against the Chola country, they refused to fight against their own kith and kin, whereupon Vijayabahu I had to take to his heels towards the rock fortress of Vakirigala in the Kegalle district for safety. Subsequently the rebellion was suppressed.

They had their own chiefs called "Damiladhikarams" under Parakramabahu I, who were given authority over villages and lands set apart for the maintenance of Tamils in the king's army. The Velaikkaras under Parakramabahu I now became the nucleus of the Sinhalese standing army. These Damilo Adhikarams became permanent generals of Parakramabahu the Great. They took a very significant part in the suppression of rebellions



all over Ceylon at the time of his accession. Tamil Adhikaram Rakkha was responsible for the conquest of Ruhuna and suppression of many revolts in other parts of Ceylon. Tamil Adhikaram Adicca conducted the combined naval and military raid on Burma (*Bassein*). The Velaikkaras are sure to have taken a notable part in Parakramabahu's invasion of the Pandya kingdom, making the campaign easier by their knowledge of the Tamil language and Indian terrain.

## **Karava caste integrated into the Sinhalese race**

(With thankful acknowledgement to M.D. Raghavan from "*Karava of Ceylon, Society and Culture*", 1961). and (K. V. G. de Silva & Co., Ltd, Colombo. Publishers).

This subject is taken up earlier at this point, because the Karava people came to Ceylon for the same purpose of military service, like the Velaikkaras but during the latter part of the reign of Parakramabahu VI.

Five hundred years ago, the Karavas were pure Tamils and Hindus, who had come to Ceylon at the special invitation of the king from the Coromandel coast (Kurumandalam) to defend Ceylon against an invasion by the Mukkuvars. Their army collected together at Kanchipuram, disembarked at Mutwal (Muwatu-waram) marched to Puttalam, and after a siege of three months captured it, losing a thousand five hundred soldiers in this action. While another Mukkuvar army was waiting to swoop on Ceylon from Nagapattanam, this port was destroyed by the Karavas, the latter's casualty figure here being another one thousand four hundred men.

Their much heralded arrival in Ceylon was like the celebration of a processional festival. They marched to Ceylon, led by their Pattankattinars or Pattankattis (Sgh. Patabende), Devars (commanders,) Talaivans (leaders), Mudianses, Mohottiaras, Aratchies, Kudaikarars (umbrella holders), Tivettikarars (torch bearers), alavattam and fly whisker carriers etc. They also came with their kudumais. The Pattankattinars wore frontal plates, with inscriptions of their titles on them, tied round their foreheads, which were on palm leaves, copper or gold plates according to their ranks. "Parakramabahu inquired of their lineage and was glad".

① The first settlement of the Pattankattinars was at Kalutara.



When the war was successfully concluded, Parakramabahu got into difficulties about payment to these mercenaries, his coffers being probably depleted in the conduct of this war. The Karavas, motto in their own language (Tamil) was "Mun vaccha kal, pin vaika matane", meaning "the foot which had been placed in front will not be taken back by me". Admiring their valour, the king tried hard and managed to retain their services in Ceylon and made use of them in his internal wars of which he has had plenty. He enticed them to stay back by display of flags, gems etc., gave them fertile lands along the south-western sea coast which was congenial to them, having been used to coastal life in their own country. This king gave them eighteen harbours, tax free, for sea-going trade.

Soldiers never came with their wives. Parakramabahu VI must have levered this situation to his advantage, to strengthen his position at home by marrying these soldiers to Sinhalese brides of a rank equating the high dignity of the Karavas i. e., ladies of the Goigama caste which always formed the largest constituent of the Sinhalese people. This pleased the Karavas and they settled down in Ceylon, although the two people continued later not to misgenate, but to live separately as two parallel castes.

The Karavas belonged to three main clans, (1) Kurukulasuriyas, (2) Arasa or Mihindakulasuriyas and (3) Varnakulasuriyas.

Kurukulasuriyas belonging perhaps to a higher order would not easily mix up in blood with the other clans even if they lived in neighbouring streets, as in Negombo.

Negombo was their chief parvenu or hereditary territory. All the three clans lived in all the streets and by-lanes, within and around Negombo. From here they spread out to seek new avenues into the interior of the country like (1) Manampitiya (N. C. P.), (Kurukulams). Five families migrated from Manampitiya to Chenkaladi, Eravur and Batticaloa. (2) Ratalavava in Matale South. These Varnakulasuriyas were brought here by Rajasingha II to serve him in local wars. (3) Diddeniya (N. C. P) (Varnakulams.) (4) Udappu, Varnakulams with Draupadiamman Hindu temple.



The migrants to the interior country Sinhalacised or Buddhist, continued to preserve their Hindu Tamil traditional culture in their personal and place names and in the worship of Hindu deities. They belonged as revealed in their names to the Murugan cult of the Saivaite sect, their names generally being Kadirgama-thamby, Velan, Velati, Velappu, Kandapu, Arumugam, female names such as Valliamma, Thevamma, etc.

There appears to have existed Hindu temples in Negombo itself, before Catholicism was adopted by the Karavas, to take two place names (1) Nanchundankarai (Iswarem's beach) and (2) Kamachi-odai (Devi channel) bear the names of Siva and Parvathy respectively (N - Hindusim P 58).

The people of Munnakarai in Negombo still speak the Tamil language in its original purity of diction.

*karavak*  
The Karava people who lived along the south-western coast, the Arasakulams of Kalutara, Moratuwa etc. as in Negombo, took however a different turn. They were converted from Hinduism straight to Catholicism, during the Portuguese period. Let loose from their Hindu moorings "were caught in the net of Catholicism just before they got enmeshed into the intricate social structure of the Sinhalese race". The names also changed to Portuguese or Christian names, such as Fernandos, de Silvas, Pereras, de Mels, Diasas and so forth. They were the first to be westernised. With the possession of their own emblems, insignias and titular ranks, "suffice it to say that the Karava, whether villager or urbanised, never covers up his caste, to the contrary he is usually proud of it". (Bryce Ryan, Caste in modern Ceylon, 1953).

*Why?*  
1. Is there any blood relationship between the Karavas and Chola line of Sinhalese kings of Kotte? Is the answer found in the following line of arguments?

i. The progenitor of the Chola line of kings, a Chola Panickar as well as the Karavas came from a common ancestral land, Cholamandalam.

ii. Both parties came also during the regime of the same king Parakramabahu VI.



- iii. Both people were great warriors. Chola line of kings included such formidable fighting monarchs like Mayadunne and his son Rajasingha.
- iv. Names like Perumal, titles like Suriyas, Mohottis and Aratchis are exclusively common to both, for instance;-
  - A. Perumal in Sempahap Perumal (Bhuvanaikabahu VI) is also a Karava name.
  - B. Tamitta Suriya Bandara alias Tamitta Sampara Perumal, uncle of Dharmapala, had the Karava nomenclatures "Suriya" and "Perumal" in his name.
  - C. Nitta Muditta Perumal, a prince from the Chola country was a first cousin of Parakramabahu VI.
  - D. *malai* Manna Peruma Mohottiar alias Aritta Kivendu Perumal or Aree Juvan Wenda Perumal of Manampairy, a Tamil who came from Chola as a pilgrim, had the Karava title Mohottiar and cognomen Perumal as with the Karavas in his personal name, like the names, Periya Perumals among the Karava Mohottiar of Matara, Alla Perumal, Sinna Peruma included in the Matara Karava aratchies, Vira Peruma and Purusuram Perumal of Madampe, Velaide, Ilea and Periya Perumals among the Karavas of Negombo. Mannaperuma Mohottiar married a daughter of Raja Chetty, who had been the king's concubine and became a great favourite of Rajasingha I, (LXXVIII) - quotes Rajavali).
  - E. Mohotti and Aratchie are Karava military ranks.
  - F. Salappa Aratchi, a general of a Sinhalese army under Bhuvanaikabahu VII is probably a Karava. Salappu is like the Karava appus of Diddeniya, and Aratchi is specifically a Karava military title. There appears to be sufficient scope for research on these lines.

II. A more interesting question is, Are the Velaikkaras of Parakramabahu I's reign and the Karava soldiers of Parakramabahu



VI of Kotte period, of the same blood stock? The answer tends to be in the affirmative. An army commander of Vijayabahu I was himself a Kurukulat-tharaiyan who wore golden anklets. South Indian inscriptions had shown that there existed, Kurukulat-tharaiyans during the reigns of Virarajendra (1062), Kulottunga I (1120), Kulottunga III (1178) and Sundara Pandya Deva (1257), all Karava commanders and leaders who lived three centuries earlier than the mass arrival of Karava soldiers in Ceylon during the Kotte period.



## V

## THE STRUGGLE OF THE BUDDHIST SUBJECTS WITH KALINGA MAGHA AND THE BATTLE OF KALAVAVA

Kalinga Magha descended on Polonnaruwa directly from India with an army of 24,000 Keralas and Tamils to wrest the Polonnaruwa kingdom for the Kalingas from the hands of the Pandyan rivals. He never had the remotest idea of ever forming a separate Tamil kingdom in Jaffna. Unable to penetrate into the interior of the country, because of the activities in these parts of Tamil soldiers left over from previous South Indian invasions, he strengthened his hold on Ceylon, by establishing fortified garrisons along the seaboard regions, in the north at Kayts, Valikamam (Kankasanturai), Damalapatinam (Jaffna) and Illuppaik-kadavi, in the east at Kottiyar, Trincomalee and Kantalai, in the west at Giant's Tank, Mannar and Mantai, in the centre at Polonnaruwa, Padaviya, Kolan-Nuwera (Colombo) etc. "He reduced the hitherto independent Ruhuna and established a stronghold at Mahagam (present Tissamaharama) and thence to Jaffnapatam, every part of the Island was under his sway", (LXXIII). N-211 quotes Rajavaliya "that Magha settled Tamils in every village". He quotes again Rajaratnakara which records that even before Magha's times, in the 9th and 10th centuries, the domination of the Tamils was so complete that they were in large numbers in every town and village throughout the Island". What had happened to these Tamils in the Sinhalese areas was that, they were absorbed by the Sinhalese through the centuries.

The established tradition was that the rulers of Anuradhapura or Polonnaruwa, whether Tamils or Sinhalese should belong to the Buddhist faith. Magha, a bigoted Hindu (Codrington), deviated from this norm in attempting to impose his own religion of Hinduism on his Buddhist subjects, burning valuable libraries, plundering viharas and converting monasteries into army barracks. These acts cost him, the loss of his throne at Polonnaruwa. Sinhalese princes of Uva, Ruhuna, Yapavuva, Dambadeniya etc., rose individually against him, later all gathered as one united force round the standard of Vijayabahu III of Dambadeniya and drove Magha's forces out of Mayarata (Kurunegala) district,



"Pihiti continuing to remain as before under the Tamils. To escape the proximity of the Tamils, Vijayabahu removed the seat of government to Dambadeniya, "(LXXII). Unable to pursue the enemy into Polonnaruva, he returned back and settled down at his native home Dambadeniya, making it the capital of Kurunegala district. Although the origin of Vijayabahu is not known, he was probably a member of the Pandya faction of Polonnaruva, whose sister also was married to a Pandya prince, himself also becoming the founder of the Pandya line of Sinhalese kings of Dambadeniya.

The Cholas were always on the side of the Kalingas, while the Pandians helped the Sinhalese.

His son, Parakramabahu II claimed in his writings that he was of Pandyan stock (C H. C 278) and his Devundara inscription U. H, C. 614). Vijayabahu III revived and reestablished the Pandya section of Polonnaruva at Dambadeniya, while the Kalinga faction was able to hang on under Magha, to Polonnaruva for some more time. Before his death Vijayabahu admonished his son Parakramabahu to be in friendly terms with the Tamils, to avoid further troubles and not to wage war on them. Parakramabahu II, able soldier and patriot that he was, disregarded this advice of his father, defeated Magha at the battle of Kalavava in the jungles, on the northern fringe of Mayarata near Maho. It appears to have been a blind battle, the Sinhalese army not knowing what had happened to Magha, whether he was killed in action, taken prisoner or where he went. The Pandians are said to have vigorously helped Parakramabahu II to vanquish Magha by trapping Magha's army from the north and east. (C. H. C. 283).

The Pandians of India gave active support to their counterparts in Ceylon. Parakramabahu II's victory was not a complete one in that he could not capture Polonnaruva, because of the presence of a third force there. That force was a large number of Tamil soldiers and settlers of previous periods, ravishing Rajarata (Pihiti), doing things as they pleased, given up to plunder and devastation: What was the immediate result of this battle? Kalinga Magha retreated in haste from the battle field through



the northern highway past Anuradhapura to Jaffna, which was already in his possession as a part of the Polonnaruwa kingdom. Parakramabahu II could not prevent the establishment of the Kalinga kingdom of Jaffna (C. H. C. 287). "To escape Tamil invasions of the future, the king built Siriwardhanapura (Kandy) in the mountains of Maya 1287 (LXXIV) more as a reserve repository for the Dalada."

Time was not sufficient enough for him to return to Polonnaruwa which was about forty miles east of Kalavava, in order to damage this city. Parakramabahu himself was unable to enter this capital because of the troublesome Tamils resident in that city. Who are therefore the authors of the Polonnaruwa ruins? It was the third force of Tamil marauders who were given up to pillage and destruction in Rajarata. Magha no doubt did some damage to the buildings which he had to occupy on his entry, and therefore was not the author of the Polonnaruwa ruins.

Parakramabahu II expressed his last wish that his son and successor Vijayabahu IV should capture Polonnaruwa during the latter's life time. Vijayabahu IV, a monarch of philosophical temperament was not strong enough to carry out what his soldierly father was unable to do. Like all weaklings; he followed an easier path by merely constructing defensive forts instead, at Kurunegala, Yapahuva and Wattala. How these forts became useful however for his successors, during the invasions of the Aryachakravartis of later dates, is mentioned in the sequel.



## VI

## NEW CHAPTER ON CEYLON HISTORY

The battle of Kalavava was a pivot for a turn of events which opened a new phase in the history of Ceylon, most important end result being the establishment of the Hindu kingdom of Jaffna by Kalinga Magha.

1. Kalinga camp was dislodged from Polonnaruva, Magha settled down in Nallur and inaugurated there the Kalinga kingdom of Jaffna.
2. Parakramabahu II continued the Pandyan line of Sinhalese kings at Dambadeniya.
3. Polonnaruva was abandoned to the mercy of Tamil freebooters who had been old residents of Rajarata.
4. Although the Kalinga and Pandya-Sinhalese dynasties, who were interlocked in wars for supremacy at Polonnaruva, got disengaged after Kalavava and settled down in the two new capitals of Nallur and Dambadeniya respectively, about a hundred and fifty miles distant from each other, yet these two factions continued their traditional hostilities for another 189 years for a different reason, as under the name of Aryachakravartis and Sinhalese kings. Pandyas of India supported their counterparts in Ceylon, while the Cholas were on the side of the Aryachakravartis of Jaffna.

**Jaffna wars with the newly emerging Sinhalese kingdoms, about seven in number 1276-1467  
(189 years)**

These wars were not motivated from racial consideration as Tamils fought on both sides, neither for annexation of territory nor for supremacy of power as was at Polonnaruva. The new Jaffna kingdom appeared to have got into difficulties over the problem of maintaining itself with the poor resources obtainable from its sandy soil in a dry climate. The Tamils in desperation formulated



an easy going policy of making incursions into the richer and more prosperous Sinhalese territories, to extract tributes by compulsive force wherewith to maintain their infant kingdom. They were invariably the aggressors. When tributes were refused or dues got into arrears, the Aryachakravarti marched his armies into the Sinhalese kingdom to enforce them. In this way frictions arose between them for a hundred and eighty nine years. The Aryachakravarti struck at a time when the Sinhalese opponent was weakened by internal revolt, in many instances the Aryachakravarti himself weakened the Sinhalese kingdom by inciting these troubles before he attacked. The net result of these feuds was the flight of the Sinhalese kings from one capital further away to another capital which offered greater security. Frequent changes of capitals from Dambadeniya to Yapahuva, Kurunegala, Gampola and Kotte were due to these pressures. When the kings abandoned the lowlands for the mountain fastness of Gampola, the Aryachakravartis followed them even there, and waged three wars against the kingdom of Gampola. The former South Indian invasions now gave way for the invasions of the new Northern kingdom.

### **Jaffna war with Bhuvanaikabahu I**

According to Tamil traditions, the first war of the new kingdom of Jaffna was waged against Bhuvanaikabahu I in c 1278, over a dispute about the ownership of the pearl fishery of Marichikaddi situated on the border area between the two countries on the Gulf of Mannar. The Aryachakravarti involved was Kulottungo, a brilliant soldier of the day (N 110), who attacked when the Sinhalese king was distracted with various troubles around him, revolts from several Vanniya chiefs, and invasions from India, one led by Kalingarayar, another by Codaganga, both Kalingas, they may have been set up by the Kalinga king of Jaffna himself "and perhaps a menace was developing in the north which required greater vigilance than could be given from Dambadeniya". (U. H. C. 631).

Under these adverse circumstances Bhuvanaikabahu I fled from the rice plains of Dambadeniya to the rock fortress of Yapahuva additionally fortified earlier by his elder brother to meet such contingencies. The Aryachakravarti took this opportunity, struck hard and sacked Yapahuva winning a great victory.



The pearl fishery was annexed by Jaffna as attested by Ibn-Batuta who came to Jaffna in 1344 and noticed that the pearl fishery was in the possession of the Aryachakravarti. On an appeal from Parakramabahu III, nephew and successor of the deceased king the Pandya king intervened and persuaded the Aryachakravarti to evacuate the captured lands, himself standing personal guarantee for the payment of tribute. The loss of the pearl fishery must have been rankling in the mind of Bhuvanaikabahu I who therefore tried to negotiate an alliance with the Sultan of Egypt, possibly for a dual purpose (i) Egypt at this time was the possessor of a powerful navy with which Bhuvanaikabahu could equate the splendid naval power of the Aryachakravarti (ii) the Arabs were experienced in pearl diving, the Sultan being the master of the pearl fisheries in the Persian Gulf. The Arab pearl fishers could also displace the Tamils who were also famous pearl divers. The king died before coming to an agreement. Parakramabahu III who was raised to the throne after Aryachakravarti's departure removed the capital from Yapahuva to Kurunegala for fear of the Tamils (LXXV).

The Sinhalese chronicles state that the invader who stormed Yapahuva was an Indian Aryachakravarti "a Damila general" under the Pandya king Kulasekhara and that this incident took place just after Bhuvanaikabahu's death.

## **Bhuvanaikabahu II**

Son of the former, shifted his capital from sacked and battle scarred Yapahuva to rock enclosed Kurunegala and further previously fortified by Vijayabahu IV, on account of pressure for tributes from Jaffna. (N 128 - C. H. C. 292).

## **3. Parakramabahu IV**

Son of Bhuvanaikabahu of Kurunegala, was compelled to leave Kurunegala to a place yet unknown, when the northern monarch brought pressure on him for tributes, at a time when his kingdom also was convulsed by an internal rebellion (C. H. C. P 292).



#### 4. (Malayalam Power in Rayigama and Gampola) Jaffna wars with Gampola

After the flight of Parakramabahu IV in 1326 from Kurunegala there was an interregnum of 15 years when a new dynasty was formed jointly by two brothers, Bhuvanaikabahu IV and Parakramabahu V, at Gampola (1345). The latter with his seat at Dedigama outlived his brother by eight years. They abandoned Kurunegala in search of a better protection from the aggressions of the Aryachakravartis and migrated from the lowlands to the uplands (N 129), the mountain fastness of Gampola.

The Aryachakravartis followed them there too, and waged three wars against the Gampola kingdom (LXXV).

When Bhuvanaikabahu settled down at Gampola, he discovered to his discomfiture, three new situations.

1. He found in Gampola a long resident with powerful influence, a Malabar grandee by name Sena-Lankadhikara belonging to the Menon (Menevan or Baron) clan from Malayalam.
2. Rayigama near Panadura was held for nine generations by independent rulers called Alagakkonars or Alageswarans of Malayalee origin. If you go backward nine generations (i. e. 360 years) you arrive at a date 982 A. D. when Kerala soldiers were serving Mahinda V. The ancestors of these warlike Alagakkonars might have been these Kerala soldiers some of whom had settled down later at Rayigama as peaceful merchants. The name of the ninth ancestor was Nisamka-Alagakkonar who came from Vanchi (Karuvur), now Tirukarur, capital of Kerala near Cochin.

**Kuruppus** — Source:— Raghavan (India in Ceylon history etc. P 141) "They belonged to a small and conservative but unique "Kuruppu Achchige" clan in Ceylon, name associated with Kurup, a section of the Nairs of North Kerala. Both people have the "Achchige" (mother) adjunct, as prename or surname revealing the matrilineal tradition imported from Malabar into the Ceylon families. There is also a local village called Kuruppumulla near



Panadura town in Rayigama Korale, the original hereditary territory of both Kuruppus and Alagakkonars. Are the Alagakkonars and Kuruppus therefore of the same or similar stock from Malayalam ?

3. That there was rivalry between these two Malayalam clans of Rayigama and Gampola into whose conflicts the king had to be drawn in, as a matter of course. Sena-Lankadhihara set up Alagakkonar II to blind Alagakkonar I by which act, Rayigama kingdom was weakened. Rayigama in retaliation is said to have set up the Aryachakravarti of Jaffna, Martandan (Perum-Alan - great ruler) to invade Gampola which he successfully accomplished, obtaining concessions, as fruits of victory. The Aryachakravarti left his Tamil inscriptions at Kotagama in praise of his own victory, (C. H. C. 297).

He planted Brahmin tax collectors and ordered tributes to be brought to Jaffna from the highlands and lowlands and from nine sea ports of the Sinhalese kingdom (1360). When Parakramabahu V fled to Ruhuna, the fortunes of Sena-Lankadhihara declined while the prospects of the Alagakkonar improved. At the time of the arrival of the Arab traveller Ibn-Batuta from Tangiers in 1344, there were three kingdoms in Ceylon, Gampola, Rayigama, the third being the oldest, the Jaffna kingdom. He came to Ceylon through Jaffna getting the help of the Aryachakravarti whom he called in Arab fashion, "the Sultan of Ceylon" controlling the pearl fishery. The Aryachakravarti's realm, Ibn Batuta observes, extended down to Mannar, who was also a powerful king in the sea, with a huge fleet of merchant vessels filled with goods consigned to Yemen in Arabia. The Aryachakravarti informed him that he had an alliance with the Sultan of Coromandel coast. The Cholas therefore assisted the Aryachakravartis in the latter's wars with the Gampola kingdom. the Aryachakravarti at this time excelled in military and naval power. This great Emperor was Martandan Singai Aryan.

### **Rise of the Alagakkonars in Gampola**

The new king of Gampola was Vikramabahu III (1357 - 1374), a son of Sena-Lankadhihara by Parakramabahu's sister, a union was thus effected between the Sinhalese dynasty and the Malayalee clan. Alagakkonar III became now a dominant figure in Gampola



politics as well. In the same way Sena-Lankadhikara was a power behind Bhuvanaikabahu IV and Parakramabahu V, Alagakkonar III succeeded the former minister as a power behind the thrones of Vikramabahu III and Bhuvanaikabahu V. Bhuvanaikabahu V and Kumara-Alagakkonar IV were sons of Alagakkonar III by marriage with a sister of Vikramabahu III (confluence of Menon and Alagakkonar blood). Alagakkonar III now decided to lift his wife's country out of the quandary into which the Aryachakravarti had plunged Gampola, paying annual tributes to Jaffna for nine years.

With patience and care Alagakkonar III prepared defensive positions so that if he was defeated in his military undertakings against the powerful Aryachakravarti, he could find perhaps safety in the coastal fortresses he had built rather than be driven into the Arabian sea. He built a fort at Rayigama and one at Kotte, (former Darugama). He is said to have built the fort of Kotte taking a number of years with workmen from Kanchipuram.

The fort was 1 mile x  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile in area defended by natural impassable marshes on all sides, with double lines of deep moats and dams, walls all round, ramparts and bastions round the city, with armour and store-houses for provisions like salt, coconut, paddy and water to stand a long seige. The ensign of the Chola dynasty "Tiger" was worked on all sides of the rampart, temples for Vishnu, Vibhishana, Subramaniam and Lakshmanan were built around for the spiritual protection of the city. This was Jayawardhana-Kotte (Fort and City of victory) that he built. Having made all these preparations and all details attended to, Alagakkonar caught and boldly hanged the tax collectors of the Aryachakravarti. "The very position of Kotte in the swamps near Colombo is a proof of the straits to which the Sinhalese had been reduced and there can be little doubt that the Jaffna kingdom was for a time paramount in the low country" (Codrington) (N 135)

The Aryachakravarti was "kindled with rage like unto a cobra", got Chola help and retaliated swiftly sending strong forces by land and sea and occupied Colombo, Negombo, Wattala and Chilaw probably with the aim of investing Kotte. Alagakkonar attacked the enemy camps, killed and drove away the



Jaffna army back, this was during Vikramabahu III's reign in c 1369. Gampola had paid tributes to Jaffna for 9 years. The Aryachakravarti involved in this war was Gunapooshana Singai-Aryan, son of Martandan. The Aryachakravarti did not rest, he sent a second and more powerful expedition to attack Gampola and Kotte at one and the same date. The land army was halted at Matale and annihilated, the other came by boats, landed at Panadura in order to surround perhaps the Rayigampura fort eight miles into the interior, third army marched towards Kotte to invest it but was caught and defeated at Dematagoda and Gorakana, the boats of re-embarkation at Panadura having been burnt. During this war Bhuvanaikabahu V fled on the approach of this invasion to Rayigama. Alagakkonar III's name was sung later in panegyrics as Sri-Lankadhisvara (Lord of Sri Lanka), after these victories. The great Alagakkonar died in 1390.

The second invasion must have occurred between 1382—1390, the Jaffna Aryachakravarti being Jayaweera-Aryan, a powerful king who ruled over an extended kingdom which comprised Puttalam and Mannar in the west, Trincomalee in the east and the seven Vanni districts in between. He was possessed of a powerful merchant fleet as well.

### The fall of Gampola

The downfall of Gompola was mainly the result of exhaustion that followed the three wars waged by the Aryachakravartis. Bhuvanaikabahu V who took fright at the approach of the Jaffna invasion and fled the country, was not permitted to re-enter any more his kingdom.

### Rise of the second Rayigama kingdom, and the return of Alagakkonars

1. Kumara Alagakkonar IV, son of the great Alagakkonar succeeded his brother Bhuvanaikabahu V, removed his seat of government from Gampola to his ancestral home Rayigama, becoming its first king.



2. Vira Alagakkonar, V (1387-1392) ousted within a year his cousin Kumara Alagakkonar IV, in keeping with the matrilineal custom of Malabar, being the son of the sister of the great Alagakkonar, and reigned at Rayigama as "de-jure" ruler.

## Hindu influence on Rayigama politics

The national revival of Hinduism in south India under the mighty Vijayanagara Empire (Sumita Kuruppu), had its repercussions on nearby Ceylon.

In the kingdom of Rayigama, there happened to be at this time two religious factions. Virabahu a Buddhist and member of the Buddhist party, joined the clergy and reacted against the inroads of Brahminism. He fought against the "hostile designs of Tamils, Moors and others" (Codrington). The ruler Alagakkonar, as a Hindu remained unacceptable to his Buddhist subjects.

T. V I, 622 - "Chinese chronicles in their description of western countries mention that the king Alagakkonar who was Vijayabahu VI was a native of Soli and an adherent of the heterodox faith", confirmed in a poem "Mayura Sandesa" where he is described as a friend of Mahesvara (Siva), (Arunachalam-C. National Review, 1906). "Chinese claimed to have made unfruitful attempts to persuade Vira-Alagakkonar to honour the teachings of the Buddha which the Maha Theros had previously failed to succeed", (U. C. H. 631). Under these circumstances Virabahu vanquished his elder brother Vira Alagakkonar V and succeeded the latter to the throne. Vira Alagakkonar fled from Ceylon to the Vijayanagara country and lived there as an exile for five years. He returned to Ceylon probably with the assistance of that mighty power, with a Tamil army, defeated Virabahu and became this time by right of conquest "de facto" king. He assumed the title of Vijayabahu VI and ruled from his native home Rayigama. Following this episode, Hindu festivals and practices became increasingly popular not only with the people of this kingdom but also in the kingdom of Kotte that followed Rayigama.

T. V I, P 413-415:- "Having learnt by experience, the exposure and insecurity of successive capitals which had been built by former sovereigns in the lowlands, Parakramabahu II



founded the city of Kandy (Siviravardhanapura) in the midst of mountains (as a reserve citadel) to which he removed the sacred Dalada. To use a simile of the native historian, "this was too late, fencing the field while the oxen were within engaged in devouring the corn". The power of the Malabars had become so powerfully rooted and had so irresistibly extended itself that one after another, each of the earlier capitals were abandoned to them and the seat of government carried further to the south. Polonnaruva arose in the eighth and ninth centuries when Anuradhapura was found no longer tenable against strangers. Dambadeniya (1235) became a retreat from Polonnaruva. This being deemed insecure was exchanged in 1303 for Yapahuva. Yapahuva was deserted owing to attack from Malabars in 1319, it went to Kurunegala and then to Gampola and in 1410 to Jayawardhanapura (Kotte). Such frequent removals are evidence of the alarm and despondency excited by the forays and encroachments of the Malabars who from their stronghold of Jaffna exercised undisputed domination over the northern coasts on both sides of the Island. The language of the north of the Island from Chilaw in the west coast to Batticaloa in the east, is chiefly and in the majority of localities exclusively Tamil".

T. V. I. P. 413-415: Having learnt by experience the exposure and insecurity of successive capitals which had been built by former sovereigns in the lowlands Parakkramabahu II



## VII

## VIJAYABAHU VI

Geiger, translator of the Mahavamsa comments in page 215 (Note 1, Culvamsa II-1953) that "the Mahavamsas have nothing to say about the events which preceded the reign of Parakramabahu VI" "passing over here a very remarkable episode in the history of Ceylon, a knowledge of which we owe above all to Chinese sources." Geiger adds, "Vira Alagesvara under the name of Vijayabahu VI seized the royal dignity in battle with his brother Virabahu." The Chinese came into conflict with the Sinhalese ruler who is called A-le-ko-na-r (Alagakkonar) and took the king away with them as prisoner. The Rajavali calls the king taken prisoner by the Chinese as Vijayabahu. Geiger further comments "here then instead of the family name the adopted name is given", (P 214. Note 2 C VII).

C. Brito (LXXV) quotes in 1879 Knighton (P 164), "that Vijayabahu VI ascended the throne in 1398, expelled several gangs of Tamils who were roaming through the country in search of pillage."

Tennent (VII, page 417 - 1860):-

"Cheng-ho, Chinese commander was waylaid together with his followers by the Sinhalese king, Vijayabahu VI." The king (whom the Chinese historian calls A-le-ko-nae-wih) Alagakkonar prepared to resist" on Cheng-ho's second visit. "Cheng-ho and his followers succeeded in seizing the capital and bore off the sovereign together with his queen and children, his officers of state and his attendants conveying on board the ship as prisoners to China. (Tennent VI, P 623 & 624):- "Cheng-ho presented them to the Emperor who out of compassion ordered them to be sent back to their country on the condition that "the wisest of the family should be chosen king". Seay-pa-nea-na (in Chinese original), Ming dynasty records show afterwards as Pu-lo-ko-ma, who was accordingly elected and the choice being confirmed, he was sent to his native country duly provided with a seal of investiture, as a vassal of the Empire under the style of Sri Parakramabahu VI, (compare Tennent VI, P 624). It is highly improbable that a



mighty emperor would have appointed to such an important post as his vassal king without interviewing him in the Chinese court and satisfying himself in person.

Ceylon from this period continued to pay an annual tribute to China. Further in the Alagakkonar family table (CV II, P 308 Geiger-1953) Vira Alagakkonar is also shown as Vijayabahu VI, also in the general genealogical table in the same edition Introduction XIV, Vijayabahu VI was inserted as the 166th Sinhalese king, with Vijayabahu V preceding and Vijayabahu VII succeeding in this time table. This shows that Vira Alagakkonar V ruled as the 166th king of Ceylon (1405-1411), firmly under the dynastic title of Vijayabahu VI. In the dynastic table of the kings of Ceylon, (Casie Chitty-Ceylon Gazetteer 1834, P 67) Vijayabahu VI or Virabahu (1398) was placed as the 158th king, Vijayabahu V was the 153th and Vijayabahu VII of Kotte as the 165th king.

Some present day historians ignore the ever existence of the reign of Vijayabahu VI, (an Alagakkonar) the 166th king and skip over in their own dynastic tables from Vijayabahu V of Kurunegala to Vijayabahu VII of Kotte (father of Mayadunne) adjusting this incongruity that ensued, by retitling the latter as Vijayabahu VI or as both Vijayabahu VI and VII,

### Paternity of Parakramabahu VI

It is recorded that it is not known who his father was.

While Parakramabahu's mother was identified as Sunetra-Devi, a Kalinga princess, on whose memory her son Parakramabahu VI had erected Sunetra-parivenu in Pepiliyana (CV 216 and foot note 3), the establishment of his father's identity became a problem as his antecedents were not mentioned in the Culavamsa, giving thereby an occasion in history for contradictions. It is not normal for any king especially a great king like Parakramabahu VI to arise from nowhere, except to have had some form of royal connection with at least one of his predecessors. It is surprising that the fatherhood of such celebrated kings as Vijayabahu I, Parakramabahu I, Vijayabahu III and Parakramabahu VI should have been in doubt, probably buried in mystery (refer U, N. C. 615, Fn 14), in promiscuous circumstances of polygamy and harems



that were prevalent everywhere in the royal families of the middle ages. The most powerful faction at the close of the Gampola period were the Alagakkonars, the first regular king of Malayalee origin was Bhuvanaikabahu V, son of Alagakkonar III.

As Parakramabahu VI was a creature of the Chinese emperor and had to supply tributes to China, the Chinese naturally had direct interest in him. Chinese chronicles therefore give us more intimate and detailed account of Parakramabahu VI's origin and ways of ascension to the throne.

### Chinese incursions and the fall of the second Rayigama kingdom

During Vira Alagakkonar V's reign the Chinese Admiral Cheng-Ho who was scouring the southern seas in search of tributes touched on Ceylon, but returned with bitter memories instead of tributes, driven away in battle by the powerful Vira Alagakkonar. Cheng-Ho returned back a second time in 1410 with stronger reinforcements, landing probably at the port of Panadura (U. H. C. P 652 Fn 56), marched interior to Rayigama defeated this time Vira Alagakkonar "caught in the Chinese stratagem through his karma in a previous birth", "took Vira Alagakkonar together with his queen and his children, his officers of state and his attendants as prisoners. He brought away with him spoils which were long afterwards exhibited at Tsing-leo monastery in Nanking", (*Tennent VI*, P 623 - reproduced from Chinese chronicles - Fn 1).

Ho's visit to Ceylon is commemorated in an inscription on a rock in Galle dated 1409 (discovered in 1911) written in three languages. Tamil, Chinese and Persian (UHC P 72) suggesting that Tamil was one of the international languages of this period and probably also the court language of the Alagakkonars as was found to be the case with the next kingdom of Kotte. The Emperor's objective appears to have been not acquisition of human personages but tributes. He therefore mercifully set free the captives, imposing on them two conditions (1) to chose a new king from among them, the most worthy member of their tribe (U. H. C. 666), (2) who should be under the Emperor's suzerainty paying regular tributes to China. Vira - Alagakkonar



who was non-persona-grata with the Chinese, because of his hostile conduct towards Cheng-Ho while the latter was in Ceylon, was naturally excluded. The unanimous choice of the captives fell according to the records of the Ming dynasty on Pu-la-ko-ma (Chinese sound name) for Parakramabahu, whom the Emperor nominated as a worthy member of the tribe. The tribe that was mentioned in Chinese writings was "Souli" probably Cera or Alagakkonar to whom according to the Chinese, not only the Alagakkonars but Parakramabahu also belonged, Parakramabahu returned with the seals of office from China (U. H. C. 669). (Tennent 1, P 417) :- "The wisest of the family Seay-pa-nea-na (Chinese original) was elected king and the choice being confirmed by the Emperor, he was sent to his native country, duly provided with the seal of investiture as a vassal of the Emperor under the style of Sri Parakramabahu VI". He continued to pay tributes to China till 1448 (T VI, P 417). Here it is seen that Parakramabahu was present in the Chinese court with the other captives where he received personally the instruments of accession from the Emperor.

Chinese had overall control of Ceylon during the period of tributes. "Cheng-Ho issued in 1430 a proclamation for the pacification of Ceylon", and at somewhat later periods edicts were promulgated by the Emperor of China for the government of the Island T VI, P 625).

Parakramabahu returned from China backed up by Chinese naval forces, crowned king in 1412 by Cheng-Ho at Rayigama, his ancestral home and seat of government of his predecessors and father, Alagakkonar V. The Chinese returned him to the place from where he was taken away as captive. The king was also called Vira Parakramabahu in conformity with the special title of his father Vira-Alagakkonar or Vira-Vijayabahu (U.H.C. 670). According to Couto the Portuguese historian and Rajavali, Parakramabahu VI was the son of the ruler taken as captive to China. It is also stated in another passage in Rajavali that "Parakramabahu VI was the son of one Vijayabahu taken as captive by the Chinese", the ruler taken captive was a king, the sixth of that line - Vijayabahu VI, the dynastic title of Vira-Alagakkonar V. Parakramabahu VI was the son of Vijayabahu by union



in marriage with the Kalinga queen Sunetra-Devi and through his Kalinga marriage "Parakramabahu VI belongs to the family of Kalinga Magha, the first Aryachakravarti of Jaffna (C.H.C.. 306). *Tennent* in VI, page 417 confirms thus :- "Cheng-Ho was waylaid by the Sinhalese king Vijayabahu VI. Seya-pa-nea-na, (the other Chinese name for Parakramabahu) was selected and his choice being confirmed, he was sent to his native country duly provided with a seal".

Further proof of this line of argument is provided in Parakramabahu's subsequent movements. Parakramabahu VI returned to Rayigama, the ancestral home of the Alagakkonars where Vira Alagakkonar his father, and also his uncle ruled, perhaps for nostalgic reasons. After ruling here for three years, he shifted his seat of government to Kotte, the citadel built by his famous grand uncle probably for the same sentimental reasons. Another matter of vital importance was that Kotte was further away from the rival and hostile kingdom of Jaffna which had given lots of trouble in the past to the previous Sinhalese kings, from where he could jump off with more security for the conquest of Jaffna which he ultimately accomplished. Another reason may be to wrest the Arabian trade from the hands of the Arabs which was centred on Kotte. The above line of approach leads one to a reasonable assumption that Parakramabahu VI was himself an Alagakkonara, son of Vira Alagakkonar or Vijayabahu VI. Some modern historians who do not agree with this theory did not include Vijayabahu VI's reign in their dynastic tables.

Codrington (P. 85, & 99) is of the opinion that Vira Alagakkonar on his return from India ruled at Rayigampura under the regular dynastic name of Vijayabahu VI. Parakramabahu is said to be the son of a king Vijayabahu and his queen Sunetra-Devi a Kalinga. Vijayabahu who was carried off by the Chinese along with his wife and children (P. 85). Codrington further remarks that Vira Alagakkonar and Parakramabahu VI are "Souli", of one race, i. e. Malabar and not the well know Cholas. In Codrington's list of sovereigns (1947) the dynastic table is shown thus:-

Vira Alagakkonar	}	1397—1409 Rayigama
"Vijayabahu VI"		



In Codrington's reference to his authorities Virabahu is called Vijayabahu and was given as father of Parakramabahu. In fact Vira Alagakkonar and Vijayabahu are known also as Virabahu or Vira Vijayabahu. (L. E. Blaze (117);- "king and queen with many others were taken prisoners to China and that the crown of Ceylon should be taken from Vira or Vijayabahu and given to the wisest of the captive kings's family". "Parakramabahu the abode of wisdom and manly virtues" (CVII, P 215), was given the throne of Ceylon.

## 5. Conquest of the Jaffna kingdom

After Parakramabahu VI had cleared his country of all rebellions and saboteurs and made Kotte a powerful kingdom, he set his heart on the annihilation of the kingdom of Jaffna once and for all. The Sinhalese chroniclers laid great emphasis on this campaign because its existence had been a perpetual menace to the Sinhalese for 112 years from 1390.

### Selection of Sempahap Perumal as C/C of Kotte army

Early in the reign of Parakramabahu VI, a Chola Panickar of princely status had come from Chola country to the king's court. The king impressed with his able qualities took him into service and married him to a Sinhalese lady of rank. By this union were born two sons brilliant in military affairs. Parakramabahu brought them up in his palace along with the Crown Prince, as adopted sons. He appointed the elder brother, Sempahap-Perumal as C/C of the Kotte army and assigned him the task of subjugating the northern kingdom, sending a message through his commander to the Aryachakravarti that it was not becoming, that there should be two rulers in Ceylon. The General's preliminary task was to bring the Jaffna kingdom to the borders of the Sinhalese territories, by removing the buffer states of the eighteen Vanniates that stood between these two countries, to make the campaign easier. The Vanniars were independent rulers who paid tributes to either Kotte or Jaffna, according to, who was more powerful at a particular time. Sempahap-Perumal succ-



essfully reduced the vanniates. According to Tamil traditions (Y.V.M.), Parakramabahu VI detecting early the great soldierly qualities of Sempahap-Perumal feared that the presence of Sempahap-Perumal at Kotte might spark off a struggle between the latter and his own descendants for the throne of Kotte. For this reason the king gave Sempahap-Perumal an assignment to be far away from the capital, distracting himself in military activities in the wilds of Vanni at the farthest end of his kingdom.

When the subjugation of the Vanniates was completed, Sempahap-Perumal was not permitted to return home. The king issued fresh orders to the General to go still further away and conquer the powerful Jaffna kingdom or get killed in this attempt, Jaffna having now become a boundary territory of Kotte. He first sent probing raids into the Jaffna villages and got valuable information about the size, disposition of the Jaffna army, and the terrain. He now marched his army along the western coast via Chilaw and Puttalam and beyond through territories which were populous villages. Tamils, Tulus and Vanniars joined the advancing column. When the army reached the edge of the mainland, it divided itself, one column pushing towards Poonakeryn, the other was directed against Javakotte (Paranthan) both on the mainland. Both armies were probably the two arms of a pincer movement to encircle Nallur.

He overpowered a strong Vijayanagara garrison stationed at Javakotte, left behind after the defeat of Yalpanam by the Vijayanagara empire (1435). The army must have been ferried now to the peninsula across Elephant Pass waters. The Tamil army started retreating to Jaffna, Sempahap-Perumal subduing all opposition along his line of advance. A northern Muslim who was conspicuous in this battle made a personal combat with the General, who lanced and killed this warrior, pinned his corpse to the point of his lance, careered his black steed through the streets, striking terror into the enemy ranks.

In spite of all these misfortunes, the backbone of the troops of the Aryachakravarti composed of Tamils and Malabars defended their capital with utmost courage in house to house fighting until the capital capitulated. "The streets of Jaffna looked like a rivulet of blood". Jaffna at this time was a populous city



inhabited by various races, with wide streets, storeyed houses, fine gardens, palaces and Hindu temples". Kanagasuriya Singai Aryan the defeated ruler escaped to India with his queen and two sons leaving behind his brother and nephew who were taken to Kotte as prisoners. While in India, the exiled monarch put his sons in a royal school at Thirukovil and went all over India on pilgrimage which included Benares and Tirukoneswaram. After a sojourn of 16 years, when Bhuvanaikabahu VI was troubled with Sinhalese uprisings in Kotte probably because he was a Tamil king, Kanagasuriyam returned back.

## 6. Reconquest of the Jaffna kingdom by the Aryachakravarti

He came back with an army offered by the Naiks of Madura, recovered his kingdom with the valorous assistance of his soldierly son Pararajasekaram, who jumped like a lion upon the Viceroy of Jaffna, Vijayabahu, and killed him. In appreciation of the signal services of his son, Kanagasuriyam handed over the throne to him during his own life time. It is an irony of fate that Bhuvanaikabahu VI who conquered Jaffna as a soldier, should have lost it in his own reign. The Aryachakravarti line of kings was now re-established and lasted another one and a half centuries. This was the last war between the Tamils of the north and the Sinhalese people.

## Amity between the Sinhalese and Jaffna people.

With the appearance of the Portuguese in Ceylon, the Sinhalese and Tamils became friends in adversity, Sangili Sekarajasekaram sent armies more than twice to the help of Mayadunne in his long drawn out struggle with the Portuguese at Kotte. Vidiya Bandara a sworn enemy of the Portuguese fled from Portuguese oppression to Jaffna as a refugee, met Sangili in Veerakaliyamman Koyil in Nallur, made a solemn pact with Sangili before the deity, to help each other against the Portuguese scourge. Vidiya Bandara was killed in an accidental explosion soon after, and Sangili



built the Pootharayar Koyil in memory of his dead friend. According to LXXVIII Vidiya Bandara retired to Jaffna with his son Vijayapala to enlist Tamil help, but at Tharakkuli both were murdered by Tamils for wealth.

In 1591 Puviraja Pandaram II who went to the help of the king of Kandy with military assistance against the Portuguese, did so at the risk of his own life and kingdom. Portuguese revenge made them invade Jaffna a second time. Gago the Tamil commander and nephew of the king was killed near Veerakaliamman Koyil. In the great battle that followed between Kandasamy and Veerakaliamman koyils, where the strong troopers and armed guards of the king took the field, they fell fighting for the cause which they held dear. A Yogi leader, and a priest of the temple also lost their lives in this action. Puviraja Pandaram sacrificed thus his life and crown of Jaffna, in trying to save the Sinhalese from the Portuguese.



## VIII

### KOTTE

This kingdom provides the reader with an interesting chapter with its undertows and crosscurrents of foreign influences. Its complexity makes the writer to break up the subject into two main heads, and different sub-heads.

1. Period of the reign of Parakramabahu VI,
2. Period of civil war and foreign interests.

#### Parakramabahu VI's reign

The following principal events took place in his reign:

1. Victory over the mighty Vijayanagara empire, which earned the king great fame in the east. The Governor of Madura under Devaraya ii made a double pronged attack against both (Ilam) Sinhalese kingdom and (Yalpanam) the Tamil kingdom. The attack on Kotte was repulsed, while the war against Jaffna kingdom was a success, and they left behind a Vijayanagara garrison at Javakotte to ensure the payment of tributes by the Aryachakravarti.
2. Prevention of the secession of the Kandyan province. The younger brother of Sempahap Perumal, (Jayaweera alias Kadaikumar) was sent to quell this rebellion. He later used tact to bring round this province within the fold of the Kotte kingdom.
3. Integration of the Karava caste into the Sinhalese race (vide Chapter IV).
4. Conquest of the Jaffna kingdom (vide Chapter VII).
5. Arrival of a Chola Panickar from India and establishment of the Chola line of Sinhalese kings.



## Social and cultural environment of the court of Kotte.

This chapter is of interest to the Tamils for various reasons. King Parakramabahu VI, who had strong leanings towards Hinduism gave equal treatment to both Hinduism and Buddhism. The upper strata of society were Hindu. According to Codrington, Tamil was the court language of the Kotte kingdom. The King built a temple for Pattini three storeys high. He gave several donations to Munneswaram temple in deeds written in Tamil. Tamils lived in Kotte sharing with others in foreign trade. Brahmins flocked to his palace and performed Homa rites. Parakramabahu IX also gave support to Munneswaram temple. Bhuvanaikabahu VII made attestation in both Sinhalese and Tamil. Rajasingha I became a Hindu king. He built the inner shrine of Kataragama Devale in 1581, and also an artistic granite Bhairava (Berenda) temple at Talduva which was destroyed shortly after his death by the Portuguese. He gave over Adam's Peak to the management of Hindu sannyasis, a devotee of Goddess Pattini for whom he built forty eight Pattini temples all over his realm. The court was influenced by Hindu ideas (Raghavan 38). The funeral obsequies of Parakramabahu VI were conducted according to Brahminical rites. (U. H. C. 677).

Sunetra-devi, mother of Parakramabahu VI was a Kalinga princess, while his father and himself were "Souli" meaning Alagakkonar or Malabar. His daughter, born in 1432, had a Tamil name Ula-Kudaya-Devi, (meaning in Tamil, Goddess belonging to this world). She further married a Tamil prince from Chola country by name Nannuru-tunayar, a scholar, (Raghavan-Karava P3). By this union they had a son who was therefore a Tamil with the Tamil name Pracuro-Pandar, who later succeeded Parakramabahu VI as Jayabahu II.

Pracuro-Pandar's sister was Manicka-Pandar, who sponsored Sempahap-Perumal as successor to her brother. This is the first time the title of Pandar or Bandara made its appearance in Sinhalese history with Pracuro-Pandar and his sister Manicka-Pandar, through perhaps their Tamil father Nannurutunayar, again the son of Sempahap-Perumal was known as Caipur Pandar;



## 10 Chola line of Sinhalese kings of Kotte.

A Chola Panickar, who came from South India early in Parakramabahu's reign was admitted into the service of the royal palace because of his "great activity and wisdom" and married to a Sinhalese lady of rank. Two sons born of this marriage were Sempahap-Perumal and Kadaikumar, who were brought up in the palace by the king as his adopted sons in the company of the Crown Prince. These two brothers became later distinguished military commanders and kings. Sempahap-Perumal who as Bhuvanaikabahu VI ruled Ceylon was resisted by a Sinhalese-peraliya (revolt) because as suggested, his father was of Malayalee extraction (U. H. C. 679).

Sempahap-Perumal and Kadaikumar ("younger prince" in, Tamil) were the progenitors of the Chola line of Sinhalese kings of Kotte. Sempahap-Perumal became later Bhuvanaikabahu VI and Kadaikumar, Vira Parakramabahu VIII. Sempahap-Perumal's lineage ended with the reign of his son, Caipur-Pandar (Pandita Parakramabahu VII) who was murdered with three other Bandaras, his supporters. Kadaikumar, brother of the famous Sempahap-Perumal, established a longer line of powerful set of monarchs through his youngest son Vijayabahu VII, who was the father of Bhuvanaikabahu VII, Mayadunna Bandara and Rayigama Bandara, while Mayadunna's son was Tikiri-Bandara (Rajasingha I, the Lion King).

Peria-Pandararn who was more popularly known by the Catholic name of Don Juan Dharmapala, was a grandson of Bhuvanika-bahu VII and the son of Vidiya Bandara, the latter a Chola or Jaffna Tamil prince (Ref. N. 161) by Samudra Devi (in Tamil, "Ocean goddess"), daughter of Bhuvanaikabahu VII. Vidiya Bandara (according to LXXVII) was the son of the daughter of the king of Madampe by a Tamil father from Chola. This Chola-Sinhalese dynasty ended in one line with Peria-Pandaram and on the other with Tikiri-Bandara.

### Pandaram and Perumal.

The Tamil rank name Pandaram, equal to the rank of a Baron, became in Ceylon Pandar, Bandar, Bandara and in its shortened



form Banda, for instance Rajasingha I was known as both Tikiri Bandara and Tikiri Banda. Pracuro-Pandar, later king Jayabahu II and Manicka-Pandar, son and daughter of Nannuru-tunayar and Ula-Kudaya-devi, were Pandarams and Tamils. The other name of Mannam Peruma Mohotilal of Rajasingha's time, was Aritta Kivendu Perumal. Nittamuditta Perumal, a Chola prince claimed to be a first cousin of Parakramabahu VI.

Sempahap Perumal's son was Caipur Bandar, the grandsons of Vira Parakramabahu VIII (Kadaikumar) were Mayadunna and Rayigama Bandaras. Mayadunna Bandara's son was Tikiri Bandara. Don Juan Dharmapala the Catholic king of Kotte was Peria Pandaram.

Vikramabahu, the first king of Kandy was a near relative of the Chola line of kings of Kotte (P-69). Bandara seems to have infiltrated among his descendants such as Karalliyadde Bandara and his daughter Maha-Biso-Bandara (Dona Catherina) and perhaps among such commoners as Virasundera Bandara and Konnappu Bandara. The Tamil suffixes, Perumal and Bandara-came into Ceylon mainly among the Chola line of Sinhalese kings. Vidiya Bandara, father of Peria Pandaram (Dharmapala) and his brother Tamitta Suriya Bandara hailed from Chola land or Jaffna. Tamitta Suriya Bandara who was minister to Dharmapala was also known as Tamitta Sambara Perumal, Tamil name (Thamothy Sithampara Perumal). Pandarams and Perumals, appear to have been interchangeable and of the same rank as shown in Tamitta Suriya Bandara) and Tamitta Sambara Perumal, being names of the same person. "Perumal" appearing among the Karava caste is discussed elsewhere. These Chola line of kings carried in their names, blood, habits and customs, Tamil Hindu culture along with Buddhist faith.

Among the rulers of Jaffna in the 16th century were Puviraja Pandaram I and II, the former son of Sangili. Pandarapillais were tax collectors in Jaffna.

Two unfortunate events rocked the Kotte kingdom and brought about its ultimate downfall.

1. The appearance of the Portuguese in Colombo (1505).
2. Civil war and foreign interests.



## The Partition of Kotte (1521)

Vijayabahu VII attempted to pass over his kingdom to an adopted son over the heads of his own three sons, whereupon the three princes unitedly rose against the supporters of this plot, the prominent part being taken by the youngest son Mayadunna who was the most daring and cleverest of the three. The father was murdered by an assassin hired by the princes. As Mayadunna played successfully the greater part in this opposition, the nobles decided to give a share of the kingdom to Mayadunna as a reward for his valuable services.

They divided therefore the kingdom among the three sons, giving Bhuvanaikabahu VII the eldest, Kotte with its littoral, Rayigama Bandara the second son was given Rayigama, while Sitavaka was presented to Mayadunna Bandara. The ambitious Mayadunna was not satisfied with his share as he wished to be the king of an undivided Kotte. Rayigama Bandara having died earlier, Mayadunna first swallowed up Rayigama. What was left now for him was to launch a civil war against his eldest brother Bhuvanaikabahu VII, to take by force Kotte to which task he applied himself boldly. When the Portuguese came to Ceylon in 1505 there were in Ceylon three kingdoms.

1. The oldest was the Jaffna kingdom (1215) under the great Pararajasekeram.
2. Next was Kotte (1412) under Parakaramabahu VIII (Sempahap-Perumal's younger brother).
3. The youngest was the Kandyan Kingdom (1475) under its first king Vikramabahu.

## Portuguese and Moors

The Portuguese came in contact with the Moors for the first time in early mediæval period, in the former's own country which the Moors overran and imposed their yoke. The enmity between these two races took roots in Portugal soil itself. It is from their Arab masters that they heard first of the flourishing spice trade in the Indian ocean. In the process of fierce wars to free themselves from Arab oppression, the Portuguese developed



a hardy and adventurous spirit, which made them round the Cape of Good Hope, to come in contact with the Arabian sea centuries later, "and confront their old traditional enemies the Arabs, in the reign of Dharmaparakramabahu IX. (LXXXVI):- Francisco de Almeida whom the Portuguese sent over unknown seas in search of the Moors, their enemies in the carrying trade, arrived in Ceylon and built a fortress at Colombo. The Moors laid siege to it in 1517 and again in 1520 but were unsuccessful". (LXXXVII) :- "Mayadunna courted the alliance of the Zamorin of Calicut and other Tamils and brought a greater number of people belonging to the tribe of Wadak Caros (Malabars) from Colilak (Calicut) and with the assistance of the Moorish chiefs, Cudely and Paichi Marikkar invaded Kotte, but the Wadak Caros were totally defeated".

The Portuguese swept off the Arabian sea, the Moor fleet and captured their trading posts of Goa, Calicut, Colombo, etc., the Arabs as well as Malabars were thus reduced to abject penury and desperation.

## Malabars and Moors

As the story goes the last of the Cheruman Perumals (a Zamorin of Calicut), Bhaskaran Ravi Varman dreamt one night of "the splitting of the moon". Uddin, head of a party of Muslims who travelled to Travancore from Ceylon explained the meaning of the dream which was "a change of religion" whereupon Perumal became a Muslim, changing his name to Abdur Rahaman Sauri, went out and settled in Mecca. From there, he sent further Arab settlements and built eleven mosques in Malabar. Such was the friendship and partnership in pepper trade between the Arabs and Malabars. Pepper was in great demand by the Greeks and Romans as preservative of meat during their winter months. The Arabs therefore brought lots of money to Malabar by this export trade, so they were very welcome and were encouraged by the rulers to marry local women and settle down in the Malabar coast.

The Zamorins went so far as to order each Mukkuva family to make one or two of their members to become Muslims. The



products of the union of Moor husbands with Malabar women were called Mapilas (bridegrooms), the Mopla race.

## Colombo

Colombo is a Portuguese name not in any way connected with Columbus. This word was derived from the Arab name of Colombo, "Kolamba, Kalambu, Kolombo and Colombo which meant in Arabic "a splendid harbour". Many years before the arrival of the Portuguese in the east, Colombo was a Moor town, inhabited by descendants of Arab pirates and mariners, grown out of Galbokka (present Galle Buck) with a safe anchorage. There was an Abyssinian garrison of five hundred men maintained at this time by a Moor pirate. The majority of the population were Moors, engaged in cinnamon trade, Colombo being famous for quality cinnamon. The Portuguese found on arrival, a mosque, a Muslim cemetery and a court of justice administering Muslim law. "Maradana was said to be the name of a Muslim religious dignitary". There is also at present a "Maradana" in the Moor townlet of Beruwela. "Colombo is now a city resultant of European colonial enterprise".

There were bangasalas (store houses) in the premises of the present Bankshall street, the latter name derived from the former. With the Portuguese, arose Pettah, Fort, Kayman gate, Kayman is not the name of a Portuguese gentleman but a corruption of a Red Indian word for crocodiles, that the Portuguese deposited in the moat for protective purposes against enemy trespassers. St. Stephen, St. Sebastian and St. Thomas (Santupitiya, present Gintupitiya), were Portuguese hill bastions. When Ibn Batuta an Arab traveller from Morocco came to Ceylon in 1344, he found Colombo one of the biggest and most beautiful towns in Ceylon. The Moors evacuated the city during the Alagakkonar-Jaffna wars of the Gampola period, to return back when the storm blew off.

At one stage the Muslims were driven out of Colombo by Bhuvanaikabahu probably on orders from his Portuguese masters. Muslim quarters were burnt by Brito, the Portuguese captain of Colombo. Many of the Muslims founded settlements outside



Colombo, whole villages of them in Sabaragamuwa, Matara, Kalutara, Alutgama and Beruwela. The hills of Hultsdorf, Wolfendhal, and Bloemendhal were Dutch additions. Colombo became the capital of the Portuguese in 1554. Before the 15th century, Colombo was only a pirate station, Mantota being the main port of Ceylon.

## The civil war and foreign pressures

The civil war in Kotte presented a grand opportunity for foreigners to take sides in order to promote their own self-interests. Bhuvanaikabahu who gave shelter to the Portuguese when they were driven by winds and waves into Colombo, had to beg for help from the Portuguese against Mayadunna, and the Portuguese became now the king's masters, tightening their squeeze on Kotte and increasing gradually their own hold on the land. Mayadunna pleaded with the Colombo Muslims to invoke the assistance of the latter's friends, the Malabars, who were only too ready to seize this opportunity, splendid from their stand point, to carry out their hostilities against the Portuguese. As Goa was converted into a great naval base of the East by the Portuguese in proximity to the Malabar coast, the Zamorin's fleet was bottled up into inactivity along the Malabar coast.

It therefore became imperative for the Malabars and Moors to make Kotte their main base of military operations to drive the Portuguese away from the East. So the civil war just suited all the participant parties. The Zamorin of Calicut started sending captains and generals to Mayadunna, along with several expeditionary forces. At one stage in 1537 they sent a large fleet of fifty one ships, five hundred guns and two thousand men. The Zamorin's fleet also assisted in interrupting the Portuguese supply line from Goa to Colombo. This civil war went on with all fury during a period of 64 years from 1524 to 1588.

With all this profuse aid from Malabar and the military skill of Mayadunna and Rajasingha, the Zamorin's navy interrupting additionally the supply sea lane of the Portuguese from Goa to Colombo, the father and son were only able to seize some peripheral territories of Kotte and the capture in the end of the fort of



Kotte after a hard fought struggle. Colombo was now the only prize. He, who took Colombo became the possessor of the Kotte Kingdom. Rajasingha tried his last gamble with two sieges of two years duration each, to capture Colombo, both of them ending in fiasco.

After the conquest of Kandy he made a final and determined attack on Colombo with long and thorough preparations and great hopes of success. Rajasingha was a monarch who was the first to practise in Ceylon the modern type of scientific warfare. He conducted the war with all attention to details and engineering skill, deploying all the forces and resources at his command from all his territories, Muslims, Kaffirs, and Tamils joined in the fray. He was a military engineer who used locally made guns, laid land mines, drained the Beira lake which was a natural moat round the fort of Colombo, for the safe passage of his infantry.

His army took its stand on high ground among the marshes of Dematagoda, Maligakanda and Maligawatte and made four separate assaults, ramming the hill forts of St. Sebastian, St. Stephen, and St. Thomas which defended the port of Colombo. The city held out because of the superiority of modern fire power and new reinforcements from Goa. Rajasingha was forced therefore to raise the siege and retire to Kandy as a defeated king to face the last of his misfortunes, the loss of the kingdom of Kandy, and his death in 1593.

### **Don Juan Dharmapala (Peria Pandaram)**

**1551—1597 (46 years)**

When the city of Kotte fell to Rajasingha I in 1562 after a long drawnout struggle, the Portuguese abandoned this war torn place for Colombo, taking with them Dharmapala. The latter was given a gorgeous palace to live in Colombo, with all the trappings of a showpiece-king, westernised like a Portuguese king and spoke Portuguese, while his position was becoming however worse and worse over the remaining 30 years of his reign, receiving a pension grant from his masters, supplementing it with a private



cinnamon trade of his own, with the permission of the king of Portugal.

Everything was done for this puppet by others. His father and later on, his uncle as regents looked after the state for him under the overall control of Portugal. He heard the rumblings of Kotte wars from the ring side, the Portuguese themselves managing the military and civil affairs of the country. He was a vassal king. His fortune lay on his face and gait which he inherited from his grandfather, King Bhuvanaikabahu. This remarkable resemblance made him a favourite of his grandfather who settled during his own lifetime, the question of succession in Dharmapala's favour. He was crowned king in 1543 in a strange manner while Bhuvanaikabahu VII was himself alive, eight years in advance of Dharmapala's physical ascension to the throne. Dharmapala did not stir for a moment from his abode for this most important event of his life his coronation taking place, in absentia, in a far away country across the ocean.

A golden effigy of his and his crown were taken to Lisbon and crowned in the presence of the nobles of Portugal, with much eclat.

A General of Kotte, Salappu Aratchi was sent with the effigy to pay honours from Ceylon and represent perhaps the army of Kotte at this coronation. Dharmapala had not yet become a Catholic, therefore a Brahmin priest by name Radharaksha Pandita, accompanied the effigy to do perhaps native Brahminical rites and give a Ceylonese touch to the coronation ceremony in Lisbon. He became a Catholic as late as seven years after his accession to the throne. He was left behind for a longer period as a Buddhist by his Portuguese mentors for a political purpose, to equate him in the eyes of the people as a Buddhist king with his rival to the throne, his grand uncle Mayadunna, who was a champion of Buddhism.

When he was baptised in 1557, his uncle Tamitta and other relations and people of Kotte followed the royal example by themselves becoming Catholics. (LXXVII):- "And from this day the women of the principal people of Cotta, also those of the lower caste for the sake of Portuguese gold, began to turn



Christian and lived with the Portuguese, and the priests of the Buddha repaired to Sitavaka and Kandi'' (Rajavali P 291 quoted). Before Dharmapala's conversion the people of Ceylon along the coast from Puttalam to Dondra had already become Catholics. Dharmapala had "heart and soul faith" in his new religion. Sitavaka kingdom became a part of his empire on Rajasingha's death (1593). He was popular with the people chiefly because of his royal blood and pleasing to the Portuguese whom he stooged, therefore on his death in 1597, a grand funeral service took place for him. He left a will called the "Donation of Dharmapala" written 17 years before his death by which instrument the whole kingdom of Kotte passed under the Portuguese empire. This was the end of the Kotte kingdom. Dharmapala was the last of the Chola line of Kotte kings.

### **Rajasingha vs. Konappu Bandara, the founder of the second Kandyan kingdom**

After the failure of his first siege of Colombo in 1581, Rajasingha derived some consolation by turning his attention to Kandy, and defeating the Kandyan king Karaliyadde Bandara at the battle of Balana Pass with the help of a Chieftain of Peradeniya, Virasundera Bandara, who turned traitor to his own king.

Karaliyadde Bandara fled with his queen to Trincomalee where they died of smallpox. Their nephew Yamasingha (later Don Philip) took Dona Catherina to the safety of Puviraja Pandaram's court in Jaffna (N 160), from where the Portuguese removed them to Mannar to be brought up in a monastery of Franciscan Friars. LXXVIII (quotes Rajavali 307):— "Rajasingha defeated Jayaweera king of Kandy (Karaliyadde) and pursued him through Dumbapattoo until he took refuge in the jungle near Jaffna, but Dharmapala went to his assistance at the head of an army consisting of Portuguese and Sinhalese soldiers, disembarked at Mannar, went to Jaffna and brought away the king and his court, his queen and his daughter. On their way the Raja and the Queen died of smallpox, and the court and princess (Dona Catherina) remained in Mannar where she was educated by the Franciscan Friars"



Between the capture of Kandy and his final siege of Colombo, people had become war weary and showed disaffection towards their king. Virasundera, suspected of treason was executed by Rajasingha. Buddhist monks who were suspected of conspiring with the Portuguese received condign punishment. Rajasingha turned his back on Buddhism and embraced Hinduism.

CV II, P 225 :- "Rajasingha addressed this question to the Buddhist priesthood. "How can I undo the crime of my father's murder? They answered, "To undo the committed crime is impossible". The adherents of Siva said it was possible, which he received like ambrosia, smeared his body with ashes and adopted the religion of Siva".

Konappu Bandara, son of Virasundera Bandara, on the execution of his father, fled from Kandy to Colombo with grief and vengeance in his heart, got into the good graces of the Portuguese by changing his religion to Catholicism and adopting the Portuguese grand title "Don Juan of Austria", entered their army and took a distinguished part in the defence of Colombo against Rajasingha's siege.

Defeat in the battle for Colombo, increased the despair of the king and added fuel to the bitterness of the people. Udarata revolted. Under these favourable circumstances, the Portuguese fitted up an army under their intrepid general Konappu Bandara, who met and defeated Rajasingha at the battle of Ganatenne (Kukulbittrawelle near Kadugannawa Pass), captured Kandy and put on the throne Don Philip on the orders of his Portuguese masters, against his own secret ambition to gain the throne. Philip died soon after under suspicious circumstances probably brought about by the machination of Konappu, whereupon the Portuguese tried to put Philip's son Don Joao on the throne. Konappu Bandara prevented this by damaging the Portuguese garrison of Kandy at Gannoruva, the Portuguese thereupon retreating tamely to Mannar.

Konappu proclaimed himself king of Kandy under the Sinhalese name of Vimaladharma Suriya I, returning back to his traditional religion, Buddhism. The Portuguese, in bitterness, persisted in their hostile policy against Konappu Bandara by putting



on the throne Dona Catherina in defiance of Vimaladharmasuriya, but this attempt was foiled by the defeat of the Portuguese again at the second battle of Gannoruva, by Vimaladharmasuriya who further secured his position safe on the throne by marrying Dona Catherina, "to give his reign a semblance of legitimacy".

Vimaladharmasuriya became ever after the sworn enemy of the Portuguese over ten years of his reign. He kept them at bay and away from Kandy. He was the saviour of the Kandyan kingdom from Portuguese domination. He was succeeded in 1605 by his cousin Senerat.



## IX

## THE KANDYAN KINGDOM

The Kandyan Kingdom is of a complex nature. Its narrative is therefore simplified here by dividing it into three periods. Portuguese and Dutch involvements are omitted, as they do not come within the scope of this book.

### The first Kandyan kingdom 1540 - 1593 (53 years)

An offshoot of the Kingdom of Kotte founded as an independent state by Vikramabahu Senasammata whose origin is not known but said to be a near relative of the Kotte king (P - P 60), the Kotte king at this time being Bhuvanaikabahu VII, belonging to the Chola line of Sinhalese kings.

### Karaliyadde Bandara (Don John 1582).

The next ruler on record was Karaliyadde Bandara followed by his daughter Maha-Biso-Bandara (Dona Catherina), both baptised already as Catholics and were under Portuguese protection. Rajasingha defeated Karaliyadde Bandara at the battle of Balana-Pass (1582) and chased him through Dumbarapattu until he took refuge in the jungle near Jaffna, but Don Juan Dharmapala, king of Kotte went to his rescue with an army of Portuguese and Sinhalese soldiers. He set sail from Colombo, disembarked at Mannar, went to Jaffna and brought away the king, his court, his queen and daughter. On their way the Raja and his queen died of smallpox, and the court and princess Dona Catherina remained in Mannar, (Rajavali and LXXVIII). N - P 160;- "Before the king died he entrusted his daughter to his nephew Yamasinha who after taking her to Jaffna left her under the guardianship of the Jaffna king Puviraja Pandaram II. She was sent later to Mannar where she was bought up in Catholicism in a Franciscan monastery. She, like her king Vimaladharmasirimise, spoke Portuguese fluently, lived, dressed and dined in the Portuguese fashion (P - P 96). She was estranged from Senerat for some private reasons, and died a penitent Christian (P - P 10.).

### Rajasingha I (1582 - 1593).

Defeated finally by Konappu Bandara. The first Kandyan kingdom terminates with his death.



## Second Kandyan kingdom (Peradeniya dynasty) 1594 - 1739 : 145 years

- (i) Vimaladharma Suriya, I (Konappu Bandara), son of Virasundara Bandara of Peradeniya (1594 - 1604 - 10 years), mounted the throne after his defeat of Rajasingha I, at the battle of Ganatenne.
- (ii) Senerat, a brother or cousin of the above and a samanera (1605 - 1635) - 30 years.
- (iii) Rajasingha II (1635 - 1687) 52 years.
- (iv) Vimaladharma Suriya II (1687 - 1706), son of Rajasingha II 19 years
- (v) Narendra Singha (1706 - 1739) 33 years. Son of the above. The mothers of IV and V were Nayakkar queens from Madura.

## Third Kandyan kingdom - Nayakkar period (1739 - 1796) 57 years.

### THE NAYAKKARS.

"Although this new dynasty is spoken of, under the generic term of Malabar, it is necessary to observe that they were not of the Tamil race, who had been the ancient invaders and enemies of Ceylon, but Telugus, of the royal family of Madura with whom the Sinhalese kings had intermarriage". (T II 61 Fn 3)

### Origin in India of the Nayakkars

Ref:-Nilakanta Sastri, History of South India (1955) PP 211 - 255.

The Nayakkars arose first in the Telugu (Kakatiya) kingdom in the south east of India when its king Rudradeva (c 1295) reformed the administration by dividing his kingdom into 77 (nadus) or Nayakships each under a Nayakkar ruler. When in about 1323 Rudradeva's kingdom was overrun by the Muslims, some of these Nayakkars and their successors played a heroic role in their resistance to Muslim rule, later sharing equally with the Kannadas, the task of building up the powerful Karnataka - Telugu Hindu empire (Vijayanagara), hostile to Islam. One of the greatest Nayakkars was the formidable warlord and king of Vijayanagara, Krishnarayadeva (1509), son of the imperial general Narasa Nayakka (1491) who happened to have invaded successfully Tamil regions of the south, including Jaffna.



The Vijayanagara Empire followed the Kakatiya model in appointing Nayakkars as sub rulers of the scattered districts of their vast empire, like the Nayakkars of Madura, Tanjore, Gingee, Vellore etc.

After the annexation of the Madura sultanate to the Vijayanagara empire by Kumara Kampana II, son of Emperor Bukku in about 1371, Nayakk rule was set up also in Madura which somehow or other survived the fall of its parent, the Vijayanagara empire, and maintained its independence with the assistance of political tactics and other fortunes, up to the 18th century. The Nayakkars may have blended with the Tamils of Madura, that was how the Nayakkars of Kandy were Tamil speaking. It was during this period of transition that the Tamil officers when displaced by Telugu personnel, left India in frustration and settled down in Jaffna.

#### **The four Nayakk king of Kandy.**

- (i) Sri Vijayarajasingha (1739 - 1747) 8 years. Brother of the queen of Narendrasingha who died without issue or brothers.
- (ii) Kirti Sri Rajasingha (1747 - 1782) 35 years, brother-in-law of Vijayarajasingha.
- (iii) Rajadhi Rajasingha (1782 - 1798) 16 years, brother of Kirti Sri Rajasingha.
- (iv) Sri Wickramarajasingha (1798 - 1815) 17 years, a nephew of Rajadhi Rajasingha's queen.

All were pure Tamils. It may be noticed that Nayakkars had appropriated to themselves the sole power to change the traditional rules of succession to suit their own convenience from brother-in-law to brother-in-law of the reigning king.

### **Preamble**

Two fundamental principles of Kandyan politics governed the selection of a candidate to the throne of the capital.

**Firstly** - Profession of Buddhism.

**Secondly** - Possession of the blue blood of royalty. These two demands have got to be fully satisfied before the election was completed. The aspirants to the throne of Kandy in the 18th



and 19th centuries were such candidates whose birth did not give them, that much assurance as was demanded. They therefore artificially improved their status and position in relation to the throne by making use of these two demands of the people to their own advantage as props to climb up the steps to the throne.

## I. Buddhism

Catholic and Hindu rulers were forced to give up their own religious faiths to satisfy this first requirement. They were not only to become Buddhists but were compelled by circumstances to display to the people their belief in Buddhism by taking part in Buddhist activities in a conspicuous manner.

**I. Vimaladharmasuriya I** - discarded the Portuguese and Catholic high sounding name and title of Don Juan of Austria, "and abjured Christianity to secure the support of the priesthood and availing himself of the faith of the nation in the sacred tooth relic of the Buddha, installed it in its newly built Dalada Maligawa as a palladium of the nation, the possession of which was inseparable from royalty" (T II P 22).

**II. Senerat** - He had no religious problems as he had been a samanera himself before accession to the throne.

**III. Rajasingha II** - Son of the previous king and his two brothers were educated by Franciscan friars who taught them the accomplishments of European princes of the age (P - P 101). He could write, read and speak the Portuguese language. Owing to this mixed education he was personally a sceptic and infidel and rejected the ordinances of Buddhism (LXXX), favoured Christianity (P - P 101) and unpopular with the subjects (P - P 142). After the people's early revolt, he changed his capital from Senkadagala to Nilambe and thence moved to Hanguranketa (P-143). From public policy he however permitted full sway to the practices of Buddhism.

**IV. Vimaladharmasuriya II** - Son of Rajasingha II and the latter's grandson Narendra Rajasingha followed as successors, but being indifferent to everything except the revival of Buddhism,



they gladly accorded peace to the Dutch who in return placed ships at their disposal, to bring from Arakan, Burmese priests for the upasampada (TV II, 61). This king sent an embassy to Siam (1697) and is said to have built a three-storeyed temple for the Tooth Relic at Kandy (H. P. 96)

V. Narendrasinha - is also known by the place name of Kundasale, because he loved and lived most of the time here. Cv. II P 241 gives the eulogistic appellation to him as Siriviraparakkamanarendrasiha, the length of his name is a measure of his popularity with the priests for the support of the Buddhist church, and with the people to whom he gave peace and plenty by keeping in good terms with the Dutch. The latter gave him occasional presents to keep him in good humour (Cv II 245).

VI. Vijayarajasinha - was the first Nayakkar king with no trace of Sinhalese blood in his veins, a brother of Narendra's queen, Narendra dying without a son or brother to succeed him. He had to make good his deficiencies and weakness in position by adopting many devices to please the people. He was a pure Hindu and Tamil and a perfect stranger to the country, therefore his accession did not pass undisputed. A strong party (Cv II, 246) at the court supported the claims of Unambuva, a son of Narendra by a concubine, who however made things ultimately easier for the state by voluntarily renouncing his claim. To please his subjects he took the Sinhalese name of Sri Vijayarajasinha and the Sinhalese place name Hanguranketa. He and his mahesis from Madura embraced Buddhism. Cv II 246 - "The mahesis gave up the false faith to which they had long been attached and adopted in the best manner possible the true faith which confers immortality, worshipping the Tooth relic by day and night with sacrifices". They also strove to please the Buddhist subjects by repairing and building temples and vihares, erecting image houses and conducting peraheras (Hindu in thought and practices) and by celebrating religious and social festivals, and went further and made efforts to procure monks this time from Siam. To display his new-born zeal for Buddhism, he expelled the Catholic priests from Kandy, even ordered the churches of Puttalam and Chilaw to be destroyed. The Catholics eventually found a home in Vahakotte (P - Pp 166 - 167).



## II Royal blood stock

Possession of royal blue blood, native or foreign, Sinhalese or Tamil, was as precious as ringing gold in the estimation of the Sinhalese people, preferably if that belonged to ruling houses. There happened to be a shortage of royal blood in Lanka during this period. The people had already lost by the Malvana Convention the right and claim to elect a king of their own nation when Kotte passed under the realm of Philip I of Portugal in 1597, the last of the royal native blood was Dharmapala. The last traces of royal blood also disappeared from Kandy with the demise of Dona Catherina in about 1605. The rulers therefore were forced to go to the nearest fountain of royal blood, to the kingdom of Madura, just a repetition of what their first ancestor Vijaya had done two milleniums earlier. It is apt to quote here Tennent on this point, "And the acquiescence of the Sinhalese to the rule of the Tamils, is ascribable possibly to the fact that they recognised to some extent the pretensions of the Tamils as founded in their relationship to the legitimate sovereignty of the Island", (LXII). Casie Chitty puts it in a more lucid manner, "The superstitious deference that had always been paid to Tamil blood became at later times an article of political faith and it has prevailed to the latest period of Sinhalese sovereignty." (Casie Chitty's Gazetteer P. 229).

Vimaladharmasuriya I had in normal circumstances established his claim to the throne by force of arms, defeating his predecessor Rajasinha I, he was also besides, a scion of a royal family, but these qualifications were found to be substandard because of the petty chieftainship of his father. In order to strengthen his claim, he married Dona Catherina, an idol of the Kandyan people and the last of the royal house of Kandy. Senerat, his cousin-brother married the queen dowager Dona Catherina to attain the same end. Senerat went further to secure the kingdom to his sons by marrying Rajasingha II a son by Dona Catherina; to Madura princesses, the other two sons to Jaffna princesses (N. 206). Rajasingha's son Vimaladharmasuriya II and his grand son Narendrasinha followed the royal tradition of marrying Nayakkar princesses.



## Nayakkar kings

In Culavamsa II, page 241, special mention is made of the high respect and honour paid to Madura royalty. "In order to protect the royal dignity in Lanka, Narendrasinha fetched princesses from the town of Madura and made them his first mahesis", which stresses that the salvation, prosperity and dignity of the realm of Kandy lay in marriage connections with the royal house of Madura, and the exalted position in which the latter was held in the estimation of the people of Ceylon. Again, "to establish his own dynasty (CII 246) Vijayarajasingha fetched princesses from the town of Madura and made them the chief Mahesis".

1. Vijayarajasingha being a full blooded royal personage, could have stood solely on his own rights and claimed the throne of Kandy but it appears he fetched his queens from Madura in order to reinforce the Nayakkar dynasty in Ceylon with a fresh infusion of such blood

2. Kirti Sri Rajasingha, brother-in-law of Vijaya Rajasingha had come to the court of Kandy with his sister as a young boy and was educated in Buddhism and therefore was a convert to Buddhism by conviction and passionately attached to it. He ascended the throne when he was aged 14, the affairs of the state were managed in his youth by two able chiefs, Dumbara and Mampitiya. During the reign of Narendra (1701) the institution of Sangha along with Upasampada (ordination of priests) had completely died out and in its place, a short lived new order called Ganinnanse (Sarathchandra P 7) arose, who were not celibate and did not dress in orthodox monks' robes, but lived in temples covering the role of monk and priest. A scholarly samanera by name Velivita Saranankara who lived at this time enjoying the patronage of Kirti Sri, had lot of influence with the king. Saranankara who remained very long as a samanera, because there were no Mahanayaka Theros in Ceylon to carry out the upasampada for him, persuaded Kirti Sri to get down chief priests from Siam to revive the Sangha. Twenty priests were brought in 1753 from Siam in vessels obligingly loaned out by the Dutch, who were at this time friendly with the Kandyans and who both together, were against Catholic proselytism. Kirti Sri got into trouble over the ceremonial arrival of the Siam Nikaya, as some of the Kandyan chieftains felt jealous and ashamed that a foreign Nayakkar king should have inaugurated this celebrated event, and



that his Hindu relatives should be lording over a Buddhist country, and plotted to do away with Kirti Sri Rajasingha from the throne. The revolt was however quashed. Saranankara was now ordained priest by the Siamese Mahanayakas and was made Sangharajah of Ceylon. So, Kirti Sri, a Tamil and Saranankara Sangharajah were jointly responsible for the establishment of the present Siamese Nikaya in Kandy. 'The Siamese monks were quite shocked to find Hindu temples like the Natha, Saman and Vishnu devales in the capital of a Buddhaist country. The insignia of the gods were carried in procession and peraheras with pomp and majesty, introduced by Sri Vijaya Rajasingha while the Buddhist temples were neglected, Buddhist ordination extinct and religion decaying. To satisfy these theros, Kirti Sri Rajasingha directed that henceforth the insignia of the Dalada and some Buddhist emblems should have the place of the honour in the Perahera ( P - 167 & 195 ).

3. Rajadirajasinha-He had come to Ceylon also in his boyhood, his breeding and education therefore wore Kandyan and Sinhalese. The English took over forcibly the Dutch possessions in Ceylon during his reign.

4. Sri Wickramarajasinha (C VII 302) - "He is described as a tyrant in the Culavamsa. He embraced Buddhism and did sacrifices to the Tooth Relic." All the above four and their mahesis were of pure Nayakkar blood from Madura, and all these kings and queens were Buddhist converts.



## X

## LOW COUNTRY AND KANDYAN SINHALESE

When Kandy separated from the Kotte kingdom in the 15th century under Bhuvanaikabahu VI, this secession connoted merely a politico-geographical division. People of both kingdoms belonged to the same ethnic group. The first king of Kandy, Vikramabahu Senasammata was a near relative of the Chola line of Sinhalese kings (P - P 60). Mayadunne obtained a Kandyan princess as his wife through Vikramabahu. Marriages were contracted between both royal houses. Bhuvanikabahu VIII for instance married a Gampola princess. Karaliyadde Bandara and his daughter Maha-Biso-Bandara, even Virasundara Bandara and Konappu Bandara probably belonged to the Bandara stock of Kotte.

Some historians are of the view that the Kandyan people kept aloof and apart from the Low country Sinhalese puffed up with pride and with a sense of contumely, solely by virtue of their supposed superiority in valour and power of resistance with which European powers were kept at bay from Kandyan soil for a much longer period. While it's so to an extent, it should not be overlooked that it was Mayadunne and Rajasinghe of Kotte, who in the initial onslaughts, tired the Portuguese in a series of gallant battles for 64 years from 1524. Vikramabahu I, the first king of Kandy was one of the foremost to submit to Catholicism and ally himself with the Portuguese in spite of remonstrances from Bhuvanaikabahu of Kotte not to do so. It is the range of Kandyan hills that secured all the defence for the Kandyan people. The gradual divergence and detachment between the Low country and Upcountry people were due to some other newly arisen circumstances enumerated below. Two newly arrived powers, both foreign to Ceylon, tended to pull apart and asunder the Low country people from the Kandyan Sinhalese, the Portuguese influences working on the side of the inhabitants of the Low country and the adjacent littoral, and the tug of the Dravidian social structure on the Kandyans.



## Low country Sinhalese

These were inhabitants of the coastal area and adjacent plains of the south western area of Ceylon from Puttalam to Dondra, a separate social group geographically called "Low country Sinhalese". (B. H. Farmer Ceylon 1963, P 20) states, "one of the most far reaching ethnic effects of Portuguese intervention in Ceylon was the beginning of the process of differentiation between Low country and Kandyan Sinhalese. Low country people inhabited the territory which was under direct control of the Portuguese from Chilaw to Matara (wet zone). The Kandyan Sinhalese on the other hand were those living in lands the Portuguese never held (dry zone). The social system of the Kandyans therefore was unaffected by European contact and they despised the Low country people as corrupted by the West, considering therefore, themselves as guardians of Buddhism and the Tooth Relic. "Low country Sinhalese were drawn by the Portuguese and their successors into the main stream of world commerce (Farmer P 19).

## Portuguese culture and Catholicism

- i. Most of the Low country Sinhalese had already been Catholics at the time Dharmapala, his uncle Tamitta and other nobles embraced Catholicism in 1557. Their example gave further stimulus to the Catholic movement. During Dharmapala's long reign of 54 years from 1543, the customs and manner of the natives turned to Portuguese fashion. Food habits included beef and pork eating, ladies were attired in blouses and petticoats, sometimes with hats and shoes on, houses built on Portuguese architectural designs with verandahs and inner courtyards to give more ventilation, light and coolness, furnished with western furniture like almirahs with drawers, chairs and tables etc.
- ii. Portuguese words were integrated into Sinhalese language like sapattu (shoe), kamisa (shirt), alpeniti (pin), lensua (handkerchief), tinta (ink), kadadasi (paper), pan (bread), viduru (glass), annasya (pineapple), janeliya (window), and so on and so forth.
- iii. Integration of the Karava caste into the Sinhalese race gave fresh impetus to these new tendencies and changes. The Karavas let loose from the moorings of Hinduism were caught



in time into the net of Portuguese culture through Catholicism "before being entirely enmeshed into the intricacies of the social structure of the Sinhalese race". Karaya titles like Mudianses, Mohottiaras, Aratchies and Mudaliyars were incorporated into the Sinhalese ranks. The people gave preference to Portuguese names like Fernando, de Fonseca, de Silva, Perera and host of other similar names all in use at present. B. H. Farmer Ceylon P 19:- "They took these Portuguese names partly no doubt because of the prestige thereby acquired, partly to conceal caste which is nearly always given away by traditional names."

### Kandyan Sinhalese

Two new separate forces arising under different circumstances crept into the Kandyan kingdom one following the other, during the reigns respectively of kings Senerat and his son by Dona Catherina, Rajasingha II. These two forces were :-

- i. The influx of Tamil power and influences into the Kandyan court.
- ii. The rise of a new Kandyan aristocracy built up by the Kandyan chieftains, under a Tamil dynasty:

It was mainly the conflict between this aristocracy and Dravidian power which brought about eventually the downfall of the Kandyan kingdom.

### Dravidian influences in Kandy

Senerat who succeeded his cousin Vimaladharma Suriya (Don Juan) strengthened his position to the throne of Kandy by marrying like the latter, the queen Dowager, Dona Catherina, highest symbol of Kandyan nobility. Senerat went further to strengthen the position of his sons, by marrying them to princesses of ruling houses rather than to ordinary Sinhalese princesses, in order perhaps to equate them to the high status of Dona Catherina. Rajasingha II was married to Madura princesses while the other two sons, Kumarasingha and Vijayapala, queen's sons by her first marriage, were married to Jaffna princesses (N. 206).



This new adjustment laid the first foundation for Tamil influence in Kandy. Rajasinghe's son Vimaladharma Suriya II married a Nayakkar princess, his mother also was a Nayakkar. The kings thereafter became with the passage of time, more and more Nayakkar in blood. Rajasinghe II, Kumarasingha and Vijayapala all had been educated by Franciscan friars, who taught them the accomplishments of the European princes of the age (P-101).

Vimaladharma Suriya II's son was Narendrasingha who married Sumitra, again a Nayakkar princess. When this king died without issue, his brother-in-law, Sri Vijaya Rajasingha ascended the throne in 1739. He was the first pure Tamil king, a Hindu, Tamil in speech and a perfect stranger to his new subjects and surroundings. The last four kings of Kandy were pure Tamils. Sri Vijaya Rajasingha's brother-in-laws, Kirti Rajasingha and Rajadhi Rajasingha succeeded one after the other, because there was no issue to Sri Vijaya Rajasingha.

The last king of Kandy was Sri Wickrama Rajasingha (Kannasamy) a nephew of the queen of Rajadhi Rajasingha. They all ruled together for 76 years. By this time Dravidian cultural influences had completely engulfed the Kandyan court. The kings set examples to their subjects in customs and manners. When a prince or a royal bride came from Madura to Kandy they did not come alone. They were accompanied by their parents, brothers and sisters, kith and kin and a whole heap of retinue. They were accommodated in mansions in Kumararupe Vidya (present Malabar street). Narenappu Nayakkar, father-in-law of Sri Vijaya Rajasingha became the foremost counsellor of the king. Swaminathan and Hemanathan came from Madura with the queen, as Narendrasingha's ministers, (N224). Other Nayakkars held posts of honour for which they received nindagams. They all introduced new elements of Dravidian culture. Kings were hedged round by "a foreign ceremonial code of formalities" (P-165), unknown to previous Sinhalese kings, such as abject prostration by ordinary subjects as well as by nobles and foreign ambassadors. No one was allowed to ride a horse or be carried in a palanquin within the royal city. The Disavas and Ratemahatmayas copied these customs and practised them among their own smaller circles.



The subjects followed the king's example. Processions (peraheras) pilgrimages and festivals were emphasised. The Kandyan dance and music was Dravidian in origin. Rajasingha I, a Hindu king built the present inner shrine at Kataragama (1581). He handed over the management of Sivanoli - Patham (Sri - Pada) to Hindu ascetics. He built the granite Bhairavan Koyil in Talduva. It is reported that 2,000 men worked at it for 20 years, which as usual was destroyed by the Portuguese after the royal builder's death. He followed the Pattini cult and built over 48 Pattini Koyils. Rajasingha II rebuilt the shrine of Koneswaram which was destroyed by the Portuguese. He was a pious devotee of Skanda. He heard of the miracles connected with Muttulingasamy and rebuilt the Kataragama temple in about 1635, out of veneration for these holy events.

Kirti Sri Rajasingha rebuilt that part of Munneswaram temple destroyed by the Portuguese and executed deeds of grants of land to this temple. The annual Kandy perahera was more in the nature of a Hindu festival with the taking round of only Hindu deities, Natha, Vishnu, Skanda, Saman and Pattini. He also handed back Sri-pada to the Buddhists after its possession by the Hindus for 150 years. Tamil language held an honoured position in the Kandyan court. Prince Vijayapala wrote letters to his brother king Rajasingha II in Tamil. A collection of sixty six Tamil correspondences of the Kandyan kings were later discovered, one of them being from Kirti Sri Rajasingha II to Louis XVI of France (N. 260). The Kandyan convention of 1815 is said to bear signatures in Tamil and Sinhalese.

### **Dance and Music in Ceylon**

I. "Knowledge of music was derived from the Hindus" (Tennent-VI 470).

II "A certain chief Thero (according to Mr. Mahawalatenne-Bandar in a Sinhalese manuscript on music), in ancient times sent messengers with rich presents to one Achariya, a teacher of music at Nagapatuna and obtained from him a book on music which the thero is said to have translated into Sinhalese verse (N 263). The "pada" in this book are almost all in the Tamil language, with a mixture of Telugu words, and words of other Indian dialects.



III. The following is mostly taken with thankful acknowledgement from "The Sinhalese folk play and the modern stage - Dr. E. R. Sarathchandra 1953".

*Handwritten note: 1. Sthakkiar song. 2. Sinhalese folk play. 3. Tamil folk play.*

*Handwritten note: 87. This is a Tamil song.*

**Nadagams** - Dance-drama, lyrical plays in verse and song. The songs are in Tamil metres. All the melodies are of South Indian origin but the Sinhalese singers dropped the Tamil intonation and method of voice production. Nadagams came into vogue about the beginning of the 19th century, one Philipu Sinno, a blacksmith of Colombo and a street verisifier who lived about the time of Kirti Sri Rajasingha of Kandy (1770), was the first translator and producer of the Sinhalese Nadagam. He was a Roman Catholic who translated the "Sthakkiar" of Jaffna from Tamil to the Sinhalese "Sthakki". Philipu Sinno must therefore have known well both the Tamil and Sinhalese languages. His name also sounds Tamil. "The language of Philipu Sinno was a peculiar mixture of Sinhalese and Tamil words with a large proportion of pseudo-Sanskrit in it."

The early Nadagams we may infer from the evidence of the text themselves, as well as the existence of a prototype in the Tamil language was translated into the Sinhalese language from Tamil originals. Sinhalese Nadagams originated from a variety of South Indian plays called Terukkuthu of Tamiland, Veethinadagams in Andhra (both meaning street dramas), and Nattukuthu (village dance of Jaffna).

**Vannams**— They are songs used by the Sinhalese dancers celebrating events in the life of the Buddha. The mode of measuring time, links the Vannams with a variety of Tamil folk music and dance. What seems to have happened therefore is that Sinhalese folk music came in contact during the Kandyan time and perhaps earlier, with the music of South India and derived inspiration from it, and it developed on its own lines (P 13). The Vannams do not seem to have appeared very much earlier than the times of the Kandyan kings judging from their language, their rhythm and their strength in which they were sung, one might easily infer that they sprang up as a result of some strong Tamil influence during that period.

**Viraha music** (a body of songs) - "It arose again, no doubt, as a result of the contact with Tamil music that came through the



medium of the Nadagams. "The beginnings of an indigenous tradition in music took place as far as the evidence shows only during the times of the Kandyan kings ( P 11- 13). The contact with Tamil culture as well as patronage, religious and scientific, brought about some interesting developments in Sinhalese music besides those we have mentioned above."

**Dalada Sinduwa** - For the first time we find in the Kandyan period the beginnings of a Buddhist religious music attached to the ritual of the Sacred Tooth. It is well known that a large number of Hindu rituals were incorporated into the worship of the Tooth relic ( P 5 ). Buddha Stotras (songs in praise of the Buddha), Varananas (Jataka story in songs), Bhajanamis ( Sinhalese songs for Hindu gods), all appeared to have come from Tamil originals.

Sandesa poems resemble the Tamil "Thoothu Kavyam" and some have Tamil flavour in description" (K. Navaratnam P 57 ).

## Dances

**Kolam** - By itself is a Tamil word for masquerade. It is a mask dance as in Kerala.

**Kandyan Dance** appears to have developed far beyond the primitive level of Low-country dance. There is evidence of the incorporation of some elements of the Katha-kali of Kerala, some poses and sounds of steps of the Bharatanatyam of Tamilnad and the use of the Bharatanatya terminology in the science of the Kandyan dance.

## II. Rise of the Kandyan aristocracy

Rajasingha II spent most of his time in the battle field, away from the capital, fighting the Portuguese along with the Dutch and later fighting the Dutch alone, domestic affairs of state being left in charge of his bureaucratic officials. Later on, he got addicted to opium and all powers including now, foreign affairs also passed into the hands of the chieftains, so much so the Portuguese and Dutch began to deal with the chieftains directly.



With the arrival of the Nayakkar kings, the ascendancy of the powers of the Kandyan aristocracy became more and more pronounced. The Nayakkars were foreigners, unacquainted with the ways of their new country, young and inexperienced in statecraft, and did not know the Sinhalese language. Policy making and administrative affairs therefore slipped easily into the hands of the chieftains. The Nilames, Adigars, ("ministers") Disavas, (chiefs of provinces)—Palmer Ceylon-P37, Ratemahatmayas, Korales, Athukorales and Vidanes on the civil side, the Mudaliyars, Muhendiram, Aratchis and Kanganies on the military side formed one solid phalanx of a new aristocracy endowed with royal powers.

### ADIGAR.

Office of Adhikaram, Tamil dhikari or Adigar came into Ceylon with the Tamil mercenaries during early Polonnaruwa times, and appears to have been restored later in Kandy by Tamil kings of the Nayakkar line, who applied it to the first two Chief ministers of their kingdom. The office of Demala-Adhikari is mentioned in an inscription of the last decade of the 9th century (U. H. C. 433). Paul Peiris in his "Kingdom of Jafanapatam" P 62 refers to the title of Adigar as applied throughout in South India and Ceylon to various officers, after the shift of the Sinhalese court to Kandy, the title was applied to two Chieftains, probably, invested with judicial power which they continued to exercise (not used in Pata-rata after 1725), though continued among the Tamils. "The British abolished this office, the last officeholder was Mahawallatenne Adigar. They allowed it however to continue as a native rank of honour, titular ranks being abolished finally after the attainment of independence.

### Pilima Talauwe and Sri Wickramarajasingha

Pilima Talauwe, the first Adigar of Rajadhirajasingha continued to be the first Adigar of Sri Wickramarajasingha as well. To illustrate the Adigar's nature, he sneaked to the Dutch intruder a defensive treaty Rajadhirajasingha was trying to arrange with the French. The power of the Kandyan aristocracy rose eventually so high that the first Adigar became not only the first Sinhalese citizen of the land, but also the king maker. He also nursed in his breast



a secret but lawful ambition to acquire the Kandyan throne to his own person. Pilima Talauwe elected Sri Wickramarajasingha as king against the claims of Muttusamy, the brother-in-law of the predecessor and as such a lawful successor to Rajadhirajasingha. Muttusamy fled to the north with the late king's queen and was protected there, where he was popular in the north and east. Governor North put Muttusamy on the throne against the claims of Wickramarajasingha, whereupon Muttusamy was beheaded by Sri Wickramarajasingha. To come back to Kannasamy (Sri-Wickramarajasingha), he was selected by the Adigar not because of his merits, but because of his many disqualifications to the throne, which suited the planned designs of Pilima Talauwe.

Donald Obeyesekere (History of Ceylon P 287) :—"Deeming it unseemly to propose to his fellow chieftains that he himself be placed on the throne, he proposed that one Kannasamy, a youth of 18 years of age, a son of a sister of the Queen-Dowager be enthroned. In doing so, he hoped that the chieftains would disagree with his choice and invite him to ascend the throne. They all out of jealousy, unitedly agreed to have a foreigner as sovereign".

The Adigar had also a secret but lawful ambition to obtain the Kandyan throne to himself. Sri Wickramarajasingha was young and uneducated, nephew of the last queen by an undesirable marriage, unlike Muttusamy who was a brother-in-law of the late king and as such the real heir. The Adigar's scheme was that whenever a favourable opportunity arose, the Adigar could with facility cut the weaker links of Sri Wickramarajasingha to the throne without much opposition, and proclaim himself as king. Pilima Talauwe initially "wrapped up the king's mouth so that he might speak only through Pilima Talauwe's mouth, and had his limbs fettered so that he might not go about without the Adigar's permission". In the early part of the king's reign a minor rebellion was suppressed by Pilima Talauwe with the assistance of his son-in-law, Ratwatte. Pilima Talauwe met with three obstacles on his path to the throne: :-

- i. The biggest was from the other chieftains each aspiring to the throne. They would prefer a foreign king rather than help the advancement of a fellow chief. This attitude of the chieftains helped Sri Wickramarajasingha to strengthen his hold on the throne.



- ii. Dravidian power was the other impediment.
- iii. British designs on Kandy was the third obstruction

Pilima Talauwe, the astute politician that he was, took the easiest path of parleying with the British so that at least he might be appointed as a sub-king under British suzerainty. With this end in view he tried different stratagems to bring about a war between the British and the Kandyan kingdom, by inciting one against the other.

He was successful in this attempt to some extent, but the British expedition to Kandy under Governor North collapsed, Pilima-Talauwe appearing nowhere in the scene of battle, whereupon the British lost all confidence in the man. Pilima Talauwe now relied on his own personal mental abilities, bribed a Malay Muhandiram to assassinate the king in his palace. This plot was found out and the Adigar was decapitated in 1811 by the king. On the home front, Pilima Talauwe had unsuccessfully carried on propaganda and whispering campaigns against the king, raising communal discord by stating that the king was a foreigner. Good deeds done by the king were played down. When the king was building the Kandy lake, Pilima Talauwe debated that it was an utter waste of the tax payers' money, and the extraction of forced labour on this account, was an iniquitous act and so forth. Pilima Talauwe was an able trier and there was nothing wrong in him to have made all possible efforts to possess the throne on his own right, as the highest Sinhalese nobleman of Kandy.

### **Ehelapola and Sri Wickramarajasingha**

Ehelapola, a nephew of Pilima Talauwe and second Adigar, was promoted as first Adigar of the realm on the death of his uncle. Ehelapola carried on his new duties satisfactorily for a time, but the itching to become king drove him into the same groove of mischievous activities as that of Pilima Talauwe. The king thereupon transferred him to distant Ratnapura as Disava, away from Kandy considering him as a dangerous character. He lived in Ratnapura in a palace situated on a hill where the present water reservoir is sited. The second palace is said to have been the present G. A's residency. One of the things to the credit of the king was,



that he never tolerated oppression of the middle and lower classes by the chieftains, probably because he derived his support mostly from these strata of society.

Ehelapola carried on a rule of oppression and corruption in Sabaragamuwa and therefore was summoned to Kandy to answer charges of misconduct. Ehelapola who knew the nature of Sri Wickramarajasingha fled to Colombo, and obtained British protection. The Ehelapola family was sent to Sri Wickramarajasingha's court to plead for mercy on behalf of the Adigar.

The insubordination of the Adigar put the king in a state of rage, whereupon he ordered the male members of the family to be decapitated, and the females to be drowned in the Kandy lake. The most horrid part of the affair was that the decapitated heads of Ehelapola's sons, aged 11 and 9 years and that of an infant in breast, be pounded in a mortar with pestle by their mother, which she was forced to do. This act aroused a furore in the country.

### **The last days of Sri Wickramarajasingha**

The turn came now for Ehelapola to take full revenge on the king. He was the architect of the second British expedition to Kandy in 1814. Five British columns marched on Kandy, one each from Colombo, Negombo, Galle, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. The first Adigar Mollegoda who was sent to oppose the British advance crossed over and joined the enemy. There was no opposition in the capital. The king was found out, hiding in a cave in Dumbura by Ekeligoda Disava who kicked the royal personage and dragged him before the British authorities, who deported the monarch to his native land Madura, from where for security reasons he was transferred to Vellore where he languished in prison for about 16 years and died at the age of 56 of dropsy.

After the capture of the king, they found in his palace, bottles of Hoffman Cherry Brandy (Donald Obeyesekera P 306), that was what he drank. In his last testament, the king is said to have stated "that he had restless nights and worries owing to the perfidy of his chieftains. The villainous friends who hemmed round me averred



that to resort to intoxication was the ideal cure for the malady of mental agony. The foe of liquor I think embraced me solely for spelling the doom of our kingdom''. The king was surrounded by calumniators, inciters, traitors, and tale bearers. One chieftain would carry tales against his foe till by dint of constant repetition of this tale, the king became a tool for the destruction of that chieftain's enemy.

In this way the king began to lose popularity and got detested by the people. As for Ehelapola, he would not get the throne. The British became masters of Kandy in 1815. Ehelapola took part later in another rebellion this time against the British in 1818 and was deported to Mauritius where he died in 1829. A Britisher who lived in Mauritius at the time of Ehelapola's exile observed that Ehelapola had a calm mien with a quiet disposition, fond of children and one would think, that he was not the man to take part in rebellions or public affairs. "From the date of the first Tamil invasion, their story records a long struggle in which ultimately worsted, they retreated slowly through the centuries, south from capital to capital until they finally rested in Kandy in the middle of the hills", (Still P 27).

"The Damilas must have left their impress deeply on the blood and breed of the Sinhalese whilst their influence on the architecture and especially on its ornamentation is very noticeable (Still 26).



## EPILOGUE — PART I

Tamils who had arrived in Ceylon from south India as kings, royal brides and high personages, conquerors, mercenaries and minor settlers, mendicants and merchants, agriculturists and artisans, refugees, castes and sub-castes such as Karavas (champions of war), Chaliyas (weavers of fine cloth) (13 C), who were forced by the Portuguese to take up to the more irksome work as cinnamon peelers as a punishment for their disobedience, Udayas, Wadugas (Telugus), Oliyars, Paduwas (surmised to be Pandyan prisoners of war), Durawas (connected with coconut plantations and their produces including toddy in the South West), Mukkuvars (15 c) etc. shared in common in the activities and life of the Sinhalese, marrying Sinhalese ladies and through several generations disappeared into the Sinhalese population in Sinhalese areas.

John Still (P 20). "Many Sinhalese kings married Indian princesses, and there can be no doubt that not only were the religion, customs, arts and crafts of the Sinhalese people greatly modified and influenced by India, but the perpetual influx of foreign blood must have materially altered the physical characteristics of the race, this would apply no less to the aristocracy than the lower classes". "So that after a century or two of invasion, marriage alliances and counter invasion, the original Sinhalese strain existed no more. 'Sinhalese nation is of mixed blood in which is incorporated the remnants of the aboriginal inhabitants and a strain of Tamil'".

Farrer (P 170 — 171) "Every family by this time" just after Pandu's invasion "through intermarriage was as much Tamil as Sinhalese and the purity of the race was lost."

Geiger (Culture of Ceylon in medieval times, P 20).

"Nevertheless it is obvious that owing to the continuous influx of Damilas both soldiers and non-soldiers, the Sinhalese must have been considerably influenced by the Dravidian race not only culturally but also physically and mentally. But a complete amalgamation of the two races never took place in Ceylon. The two people are still conscious of their differences as they were in ancient times and during the medieval period". The latter remark of Geiger is applicable more to the Malabars called now "Jaffna Tamils" whose advent into Ceylon took place in the 13 C not through war, but by the invitation of the first Aryachakravarti of Jaffna and formed a separate colony of agriculturists (Velame)



made easier by geographical isolation and proximity to their old homes in the Dekkan. The larger bulk of Tamils who came as invaders and soldiers from immemorial times were continuously kept first in a position of minority, till they finally disappeared into the Sinhalese race and religion. The long intermixture of this category of Tamils with the Sinhalese population encouraged the worship of Hindu gods which had become part and parcel, and a permanent feature peculiar to Ceylon Buddhism. From Duthugamani to Kirti Sri Rajasingha, the one passion and anxiety of kings and subjects was to conserve and maintain Buddhism supreme in the country, even more than the earnestness to preserve the purity of the blood of the Sinhala.

Dr. G. C. Mendis (Early History of Ceylon 1948, P 9) "Another stock of people who helped to form the Sinhalese race was the Dravidians. There is no evidence to show when they came to the Island but they undoubtedly came from the Christian times onwards, either as invaders or peaceful immigrants. Most of them gradually adopted the Sinhalese language as some of them still do in some of the coast districts and were merged in the Sinhalese population. There is evidence to prove that in the early centuries of the Christian era the Dravidians helped to form the Sinhalese race but nothing has so far been discovered to show that during their time, that they made noteworthy contributions to the civilization of Ceylon. The Dravidian influence became considerable after the invasions and the occupation of Ceylon by the Cholas and it grew stronger with the Pandyan invasions. It is difficult to gauge the extent of Tamil blood among the Sinhalese, but there is no doubt that it is considerable, otherwise it is difficult to explain why the Sinhalese language not only in its vocabulary but also in its structure shows the influence of Tamil so strongly, and why the Sinhalese caste system is so similar to the caste system of South India."

M. D. Raghavan (India in Ceylon culture etc. P 57) expands thus on Mendis' theme that the Dravidians helped to form the Sinhalese race which signifies nothing less than their assimilation with the Sinhalese both social and cultural, an imperceptible process over ages of coexistence and contact in the island under the aegis of Buddhism".

"That historians find it hard to assess Tamil contribution to ancient Ceylon is due to the subtle nature of Tamil influences which are hard to isolate or discover, whereas Tamil contributions to Ceylon in later centuries, in the days of Pallava, Chola, Pandya and Vijayanagara dynasties are so conspicuous."



## PART II

THE TAMILS WHO HAD PRESERVED  
THEIR OWN INDIVIDUALISM AND  
CULTURAL INDEPENDENCE.



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THE TAMILS WHO HAD PRESERVED  
THEIR OWN INDIVIDUALISM AND  
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# I

## GEOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIAL CONNECTIONS OF JAFFNA WITH SOUTH INDIA.

Though Jaffna is separated from South India by a sheet of water about 21 miles wide between their nearest points, that sea on the other hand joins these two countries by three pathways.

1. Through the calm waters of Palk strait by boat, unruffled throughout, by change of monsoons.
2. By bridges, ferries and land across the Gulf of Mannar, over-land by the Islands of Mannar, Rama's bridge, Rameswaram and Pamban bridge.
3. From the shores of Jaffna through a chain of hopping grounds from the islands of Leyden, Delft, etc, outstretching towards India. The climate, terrain and landscape, fauna and flora, palmyrah palms, cattle and sheep are of the same type on both sides. "Geography of Ceylon is a continuation of India, the plateau of the north resembling that of South India" (A.L. Basham P 2). Mendis (Ceylon P 28):- "Ceylon is geographically a projection of the Deccan with two zones corresponding to the Malabar and Coromandel regions."

Through these passages, pilgrims to Kataragama, Adam's Peak and Keerimalai, like North Indian sadhus and such like people visited Ceylon. Guru Nanak visited Jaffna. "Even deities like Ayanar came on a white steed from Malayalam to Ceylon through Jaffna to be worshipped here, with twigs and sprigs of leaves" (Raghavan).

Rama came through Adam's bridge. Arjuna and Nala Chakravarti came and bathed in the Keerimalai waters. Travellers, invaders and mercenary soldiers, adventurers, wanderers, traders, peaceful settlers, new castes and sub-castes, princes and royal brides poured freely through these passages. North Ceylon became a passage ground and base of attack on Anuradhapura through the port of Mantota which was connected with Anuradhapura by a highway and the Kadamba-Nadi.



Armies repulsed at Anuradhapura retreated to the safety of North Ceylon either to make retaliatory attacks or settle down as remnants of retreated armies and backwashes, adding to the number of resident Tamils already left behind by previous invasions. The Greeks during the early Christian era traded with the Tamils and Greek names like Oryza for rice (Tamil - arisi) Zingiber (Tamil-inchiver) and Karpion (Tamil - karuva - cinnamon), were derived from Tamil words.

When Vijaya came to Ceylon, the inhabitants of Ceylon were the Nagas in Jaffna and Yakkas in the central regions of Ceylon. "The Nagas gave their country the name of Nagadipa" (T.V.I. 371, FN 9), identified with the peninsula of Jaffna. Another name for Jaffna was Mani-pallavam (meaning outstretched bough), the Jaffna peninsula appearing like an outstretched bough to the sight of mariners plying the Palk-Strait (V 93). Nagadipa had its capital at Kantherodai, chief port being Mantota, which continued to be the chief harbour of Ceylon up to the 16th century when it was replaced by Colombo.

The Nagas came to Ceylon from the coasts of Malayalam, the present Nairs were said to be the descendants of the Nagas.

One of the three Magis, "wise men of the east" who travelled to Bethlehem at the birth of Christ is said to have been a Naga from Jaffna.

The Nagas married among the Jaffna Tamil princely families as well as among the Sinhalese royalty of Anuradhapura. "The progeny by the marriage of Nagas with the Jaffna Tamils were the Lambakkanas (people with large hanging bored ear lobes)". (N81).

The Nagas and Lambakkanas had migrated later to Anuradhapura as it was a more prosperous place. The Nagas ruled at Anuradhapura in the pre-Christian and post-Christian eras. Mahodara ruled in Jaffna in 6 B.C. The early Tissa kings of Anuradhapura like Devanampiya Tissa, Duthugamani and Vattagamani were of Naga origin. In a struggle between the Nagas and Lambakkanas for the throne of Anuradhapura, Ila Naga (35-44 A.C.) fled to India and brought a Tamil army and regained the throne. Ila-Naga's son and successor Candamukha Siva married a Tamil princess, Damila-Devi.



The most important king was Vasabha (65 A.C.). He was the first Lambakkana king, a resident of Jaffna who left a gold plate inscription at Vallipuram (U.H.C. 67). He was the progenitor of the first Lambakkana dynasty which ruled the whole of Ceylon including Jaffna from Anuradhapura, from 65 A.C. to 993 A.C. for about 900 years, until the Chola conquest of Ceylon. King Gajabahu I, who introduced the Pattini cult into Ceylon, did not forget his native home where he built a Pattini temple in Kantherodai.

He married a Naga princess of Jaffna and was a grandson of Vasabha. The next king was Gajabahu's brother-in-law, Mahallaka Naga. Several Nagas succeeded Mahallaka Naga to the throne of Anuradhapura. The first Srisanghabodhi was a Lambakkana. The Lambakkana rulers of Ceylon were of Jaffna Naga origin. Some of the postulates of Ceylon history are :-

1. The kings whether Sinhalese or Tamil who ruled from Anuradhapura or Polonnaruwa, reigned also either directly or indirectly over Jaffna, the bridge having been built between Anuradhapura and Jaffna by the Nagas and Lambakkanas in prehistoric times.
2. Tamil invasions of Ceylon invariably took place through the north at a moment when there were internal dissensions among the Sinhalese or when the king was a Tamil, semi-Tamil or one who was favourable to the Tamils.
3. Wars between the Jaffna Tamils and Sinhalese were conducted not on racial basis as Tamils fought on both sides nor for territorial annexations but for tributes, probably because the resources from the soil of Jaffna were not sufficient enough to maintain their own kingdom.

### **Prehistoric Establishment of Maha - tit - tha (SGH : & Pali)**

Maha-tit-tha means "a great landing place" named in commemoration of the arrival of Vijaya's consort from Madura (Mv 60). History points to one conclusion, that a kingdom thrived in primeval times centered on Mantai (alias Matota, Mantota (Tamil),



“the great garden”. The Sanskrit word Maha-thirta from which Sir. P. Ramanathan considers its Pali name was derived, meant (great water or river) originally meant a city on the sea along with the annointed river Palavi. This site was selected by the ancients because of its proximity to the Island of Rameswaram and the south eastern ports of India, a door-step to India. For this reason according to Tennent (V 1,413), Jaffna peninsula was infested with Malabars. Social and commercial intercourse developed between India and Ceylon through this outlet. Goods to the wide world were first sent from here to the Indian ports from where they were further transhipped to the west and east.

The inhabitants were the great Nagas who lived in the northern and western coasts of the Island and Yakkas in the interior, (TV 1,331), Dravidian sub races. Belonging originally to the Australoid element, they were also early emigrants to Ceylon from India with a colithic (agricultural) and maritime culture. Being coastal people they were like the Karears of a later period great navigators and clever pirates, were also skilled in fine arts and irrigation works. The great Naga king Mahodara reigned in 6 B.C. at Nagadipa in the north, his nephew Culodara near Rameswaram, and his uncle Maniakkika ruled at Kelaniya (Kalyani). These inhabitants were a self contained colony with their own civic administration. They were Siva-lingam worshippers, they had their own temples, Thiru-Kethu-Ishwaram, Thiru (holy) Kethis (serpent or Naga race) Ishwaram (Siva's abode). Praises for it were sung later by the Nayanars who visited it, with a tank and irrigation facilities, Giant's Tank built by the Rakshas (giant race), who were their slaves or servants. They communicated with their kith and kin of Nagadipa, a great kingdom by itself. They built their own port, they were skilful artisans. They wove their own cloth of cotton as “fine as vapour of milk.” The art of writing Deva Nagari script was learnt by the Aryans in India from them, testifying to their great civilisation (N. P 43). Their language was (Elu) from which the Tamils derived the name of Ceylon as “Ilam” which means “gold” also. The Sinhalese name of Ceylon was derived from Elu, Helu, later Si-hala, by prefixing the Sinhalese name of lion, to “hala” whose one meaning was “destruction of the troublesome lion”. Clough, author of the Sinhalese dictionary thinks that Elu was the language of Lanka prior to Sinhalese conquest. “Ilam” according to Brito (XLVII) is a pure Tamil



name. According to Casie Chitty, the meaning of Eelam is "insular kingdom," or land surrounded by water. Vijaya himself was a Hindu (Y.V.M.18), who built four Sivalayams as protection for the four quarters of his infant kingdom. Vijaya's 700 ladies and retinue who came from near Madura landed at the port of Mantota.

Pandukabhaya (4 B. C.) grandfather of Devanampiya Tissa, and great grand nephew of Vijaya was a Hindu whose mother arranged his education in Hinduism at the hands of a Brahmin by name Pandula. It was Pandukabhaya who founded the city of Anuradhapura naming it after his uncle Anuradha. Mantota continued to be the port of this great city as well, connected by a highway and also through river traffic by the Kadamba Nadi which ran by the side of Anuradhapura, and fell into the Gulf of Mannar, now dried up. Mantota was the chief military and civil harbour of Ceylon up to the occupation of Kotte by the Portuguese in the 16th century, when Colombo became the port of Ceylon. "Mantota was the landing place of the innumerable expeditions which sailed from Chola and Pandya for the subjugation of Ceylon". (T. V. I, 413)

Bertolocci (12- 18) and Bennet (212, 225) in their accounts of Ceylon enumerate several facts which tend to show that the Tamils of India knew and colonised Ceylon long anterior to the Vijayan conquest. The notices of Ceylon contained in the Ramayana and Mahabharatha favour the same. (XLIX). The commercial intercourse of the Romans with Ceylon was confined to the northern and north western parts of the Island where the Tamils had a kingdom of their own with Mantota as its capital ( J.R.A.S CB P 73 - 1848), a kingdom which was more ancient than founded by Vijaya. There was a Brahmin settlement with a Brahmin rule here at one time (R 297), a place where the Brahmin Visvakarma and five classes of artisans lived.

Ruins of a Roman building, copper and gold coins of the period of Claudius Caesar (1st century A.D. ) found, indicated that at this time there was a Roman trading agency in this port (N.24).

Sir William Jones is of opinion that the Island was "beyond time of memory inhabited by the Hindu race, and he refers to the



languages, letters and old monuments of its various inhabitants" to support it (XLVIII).

Codrington (Thirukethiswaram papers - Vaithianathan P 71)

"There was a steady stream of immigrants from South India through the port of Mahatittha with the result that the neighbouring country became entirely Tamil. It is noteworthy that while many Sinhalese place names remained more or less disguised in the Jaffna Peninsula and the Eastern Province now Tamil, this is not the case behind Mannar, there these are fully Tamil".



## Tamil

To understand who a Tamil is, one has to go back to immemorial times, and study the three component parts of the Dravidian race : -

1. Pre-Dravidians (a) Negroids from Africa (b) Proto-Australoids probably from Palestine.
11. Proto-Dravidians came from the Eastern Mediterranean region. The above three races migrated into India about five thousand years ago in the above time order, and their amalgam, formed the Dravidian stock. The Proto-Dravidians form the core of this amalgam, while the earlier arrivals became accretions.

**Proto-Australoids.** Although with an aged civilisation, they possessed special high qualities of their own, good enough to be admired. Themselves agriculturists with a colithic culture worshipped the "digging fork" an agricultural implement as "Lingam" (phallic-cult), in other words they worshipped this instrument whose constant use gave them food and prosperity. The rice and the variety of vegetable curries and condiments we use today in our culinary, are their introductions, also turmeric, vermilion and "tambula" an austic word for betel, used in rituals and social life. As totem worshippers they worshipped Ganesha (Elephant headed god), Naga, (serpent spirits), monkey god, had vague notions of incarnation etc. They practised magic, "baran" for removal of evil eye. The world learnt first from them the enumeration of days, "Tithis" by the phases of the moon. They voyaged through the sea in outriggers revealing the superiority of their culture over the Negroids who paddled in primitive dugouts.

**Proto-Dravidians.** — (Civilised or Advanced Mediterraneans and Armenoids) There are two theories of their origin:-

1. Autochthones, India their original home.
2. Immigration theory, with equal support from scholars for both. They are considered an Eastern Mediterranean or Aegean race with their original home in Crete, the doorstep to Asia and Europe, with whom they continued having trade relations.



They gained the Asian mainland at Asia Minor where they were called Lycians from where they traversed through High Asia, i.e. Anatolia, Armenia, Iran and Baluchistan into India leaving behind in their trail, traces of their blood and civilisation. In Crete they were known by the name which the Greeks wrote as Termilai, in Asia Minor as "Trimmili" or Trimalai (Sastri P60), and in India as Dramiza, Dravida, Dramila and finally Tamil. Their deity was "Mother-Earth" who gave them grain, vegetables and food. The "Mother Goddess" cult belonged exclusively to Crete where it was known as Durgha (compare Trqqas mentioned in Lycian inscriptions in Asia Minor) as "Uma" or Parvati. (Sastri 61) They probably brought along with them to India this Mediterranean or Aegean Saivism, Mother Goddess with her consort Siva. The blood, beliefs and culture of the proto-Australoid and proto-Dravidian were incorporated into the general Dravidian stock. The Nagas, Yakkas, Rakshas were sub-Dravidian races with a greater amount of Australoid taint.

(Sources (1) Vedic Age. (1951) and (Vol. I 1965 (Ps. 144, 145, 157, 161, 164, and 165).

(2) Nilakanta Sastri K. A. - A History of South India 1955-P 60.

The North Dravidians who came into conflict with the Aryans, separated themselves very early as Dasa-Dasyus people and were never Tamils.

The Portuguese and Dutch followed the example of Ceylon chronicles in calling the Tamils of India and Jaffna loosely as Malabars, Malabar proper is known as Kerala or Malala. Of all the Dravidian languages it is Tamil that has exerted the greatest influence on Sinhalese (U. H. C. 40). Sir Grierson, an authority on Indian linguistics mentions "that Tamil was the oldest, richest and most highly organised of the Dravidian languages, plentiful in vocabulary and cultivated form a remote period". Tamil was the language of the Telugu, Canarese and Malayalee people earlier, Telugu separating from Tamil into a separate literature in 10 A. D. Cannarese in 850 A. D. and Malayalam lastly in 14-A. D. It is held by some that Tamil or some variant of it must have been the language of the prehistoric inhabitants of Ceylon in the 2nd century B. C. (U. H. C. 42),



To quote Sir. P. Arunachalam from page 80 of his admirable Census Report of 1901, Tamil is so old that its words have passed into the Old Testament of the Hebrews (refer 1 Kings X-P 22). The Hebrew words for peacock, apes and ivory are Tamil. From a very early period they have cultivated their language with such earnestness and assiduity that in the opinion of Bishop Caldwell (the grammarian of Dravidian languages), "it is impossible for any European who has acquired a competent knowledge of Tamil to regard otherwise than with respect the intellectual capacity of a people among whom so wonderful an organ of thought has been developed. Its literature in its best period is characterised by enthusiasm for Tamilic purity and literary independence".

In the same census report, "Mannar and Puttalam were Tamil districts and that, there is a large admixture of Tamil blood and speech in the Sinhalese districts of Chilaw and Negombo."

"Numerous Tamil place names which have displaced the earlier Sinhalese names are met with in the present Anuradhapura and Kurunegala districts. But most of these with Tamil names are at present inhabited by Sinhalese who had migrated about 300 years ago from the Vanni Hatpattu, the Tamils who occupied them in 13 C. or so having abandoned them. (U. H. C. 714). Many Tamil words occur in the Sinhalese inscriptions from the ninth century onwards, particularly words connected with administrative functions and land tenure (U. H. C. 433).

There was a register of Tamil clerks in the reign of Vijaya-bahu I which shows that in his reign certain amount of official business was conducted in Tamil..... Vickramabahu I and Gajabahu II preferred Tamil in their documents (U. H. C. 543).

Inscription No. 12 of the second century B. C. found in Periya-Puliyankulam mentions a corporation of Tamil merchants in Anuradhapura of which the captain of a ship "navika" was the head. Tamil inscriptions have been found in different parts of Ceylon, although only a few have been published. Some Tamil inscriptions of the period ranging from the eighth to the eleventh centuries have been discovered at Anuradhapura and other places in the North Central province. Lankatilaka vihara in the Kandyan district has a Tamil inscription of the fourteenth century side by



side with Sinhalese inscriptions. This shows that the later Sinhalese kings made use of Tamil also in respect of these inscriptions in some places. The majority of the records left by the Sinhalese rulers between the death of Vijayabahu I and accession of Parakramabahu I (1153) are in Tamil (U. H. C. 45).

"Tamil influence is most clearly discernible in Sinhalese works on astrology and medicine". Sarajotimalai, a Tamil work on astrology written by a Brahmin, Posa-Raja was placed before Parakramabahu IV of Kurunegala for approval (1310).

A Tamil poet from Ceylon, Ilattu Putan Tevanar contributed his poems to the Madura Sangam in the 1st century B. C. Navaratnam (P 43) states that Putan Tevanar was a Naga poet and comments that this was an indication that the Nagas were ancient Tamils.

Titles such as 'Ilangakkon', 'Tennakon' and 'Perumal' as well as official designations such as 'Mudaliyar' and 'Aracci' are pure Tamil words. (U. H. C. P 44.).

Tamil influence was strong in the courts of Polonnaruwa, Rayigama, Kotte and in the final stages in the court of the last four kings of Kandy as shown in the sequel.

"We find that the study of Tamil formed a feature of Pirivena education from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. (Chief source U. H. C, P. 41-45).

The prevalence of the Tamil language was such in early times as to dominate the language of the Sinhalese. Mudlr. W. F. Guna-wardhana (to quote from K. Navaratnam P 52 - 53) states, "It must be said that Sinhalese is essentially a Dravidian language, its evolution too seems to have been on a Tamil basis .... The structural foundations of the Sinhalese language are Dravidian, while its superstructure, i.e. the vocabulary is Aryan".



## II

### KULAKODDAN, KONESWARAM, KANTALAI, TAMBALAKAMAM AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST BATCH OF VANNIARS (439) (Y.V.M. 4 - 7)

During the state of convulsion at Anuradhapura following upon the death of Mahanama, a Tamil Buddhist Cannarese king by name Pandu-Raja and his camp followers invaded Ceylon and captured Anuradhapura and ruled for 46 years. Pandu-Raja was a member of the Kalarasar tribe (Kalabhra race of India - a predatory tribe). That Pandu had sovereignty over Jaffna is attested by this event, he had gone on a royal visit to Jaffna and encamped at Maviddapuram to settle complaints and petitions from his Tamil subjects. The inhabitants of Keerimalai complained to him of the defilement of the holy waters of Keerimalai by the fishing activities of Mukkuvars. The king ordered the Mukkuvar chieftains, Usuman and Santhan to quit the area for Batticaloa where they went and settled down at Panaki and Valaiyiravu. The places from where the chieftains left were known as Usumanthurai and Santhankalam.

It was during Pandu's reign that Kulakoddan, a prince of Kaveri-pum-pattinam came to Lanka to pay homage to the shrine of Koneswaram, himself personally interested in it as his father Mananiti-kanda-Cholan or Vararam-devar, probably a sub-king of Choland had previously come on pilgrimage to this shrine, and on his return his queen conceived Kulakoddan, (Kulang-tank, koddan temple), builder of a temple and tank. He found Koneswaram in ruins and repaired it. Further he resolved to establish an endowment for the maintenance of the temple, by converting seven tracts of land at Tambalakamam into "fruitful groves and fertile fields". For the fulfilment of this undertaking, he lacked water and cultivators. He therefore converted sixty four small tanks into one large tank of 20 miles circumference at "Kantalai", which means "eye cure". Christie, Inspector of Hospitals who came to this place in 1821 remarked that the tank was built with well directed labour by someone who was acquainted with the general laws of mechanics.

XLIV :- The tank was built at Kantalai by Putharaja and 6 small



puthams in 9 days (Putham - giant). On completion, this tank was given in charge of a Vedda chieftain by name Virasuriya Udaiyar''.

“**Kan-thalai (eye cure).** There was a fight between the servants of Trincomalee temple and some Buddhists, in which the latter were defeated. When the king heard of it, he was highly enraged and marched with his army with the intention of destroying the temple. On the way the king lost his eye sight, but Siva appears to him in the form of an aged Brahmin and restores his sight, hence the place where he experienced this miracle is called Kanthalai up to the present day. The king becomes a devotee of Siva and enlarges the privileges and income of the temple(XXX).

Kulakoddan's queen visited the tank and found the bund depressed at one spot (XLIV). She ordered some women to raise this part of the bund and the latter was therefore known as Pendugal-kaddu, (women's bund). As for cultivators, he got down fifty one tribes of Vanniyars, a caste of agricultural experts from the Pandyan coasts. Kulakoddan was an Aryan Tamil, a follower of the laws of Manu, for whom anger was sin, neighbour's wife his mother. He advised the people to follow truth and eschew falsehood. “Do no evil, help the poor, do not give way to pride”.

The doings of Kulakoddan and his prophecies are inscribed in the Koneswaram-kalvettu, ( stone inscription). ( XL ) :- “After exhorting the people to keep up the services to the temple, Kulokoddan went deep into the holy of holies and was absorbed into the deity, according to others, he is said to have returned to India.



### III

#### KEERIMALAI

Siva and Parvathi came to Thiruthampalaippathi near Keerimalai bringing Kandakithirtham for Parvathi to bathe and therefore Jaffna was referred to as "Punniya Bhoomi" (Land of Merit). (S. H. T. Taylor - Ceylon National Review, January 1907).

Nagulamuni (Nagula means mongoose, Muni a Yogi), a mongoose faced Muni was meditating and practising austerities at Kovilkadavai, present Ma-vidda-puram, on a hill called Nagula Malai. Nagula had a mongoose face. This deformity was cured by a bath in the miraculous waters at the watersmeet of the fresh water spring with salt sea water at Keerimalai (Mongoose hill). The name Thiru-Thampalai or Thiruthambaleswaram was changed to Nagulamalai or Keerimalai. Keerimalai was visited by Arjuna to bathe in prehistoric times. Nala Chakravarti possessed of the evil planet of Saturn bathed here to get rid of Saturn.

## II Beginnings of Jaffna Kingdom.

### 1st Kalinga Dynasty (Ps. 8 - 13, Y.V.M.)

#### I. Ugra Singkan. (about 8th century), Kantherodi (Kadiramalai), Singai Nagar (probably Vallipuram).

Ugra Singkan alias Wickrema Singkan a prince of the Kalinga dynasty, a devotee of Karthekeya (Mootootamby Pillai and C.N.R. 1907), the first Kalinga to descend on Lanka came from Cauveri and went to Manaltidal and took possession of the northern half of Lanka with Kantherodai (Kadiramalai) as capital and later transferred his capital to Singai-Nagar near Vallipuram. He was lion faced which in a holy bath at Keerimalai was turned to human face. Just before Ugra-Singkan's invasion of North Ceylon, the district chiefs of the northern province had already rebelled, refusing to pay tributes to Anuradhapura. These rebellions were quelled twice by Mahinda II (C. H. C. 145). Force having however been found



unprofitable, Mahinda changed his policy to one of pacification of the Tamils, by himself displaying leanings towards Hinduism, restoring decayed Hindu temples, granting benefactions to Brahmins and presents to Tamils. It was during the later period of this distraught and unsatisfactory times that Ugra Singkan descended on the northern half of Ceylon, either to bring relief to the Tamils in distress in this area, or capture power for himself.

#### **IV. Mathura-Pira-Vika-Valli and Ma-Vidda-Puram**

Eight years after the descent of Ugra Singkan, a Chola princess named Maruthap-pira-vika-valli came to Keerimalai, having heard of the healing properties of Keerimalai waters from an ascetic, Santha-Lingan. The Princess had the face of a horse and was suffering from emaciation due to an incurable gripe. She was blessed with the bath cure at Keerimalai, her equine face changed to real beauty and the gripe also quitted her. The name Kovil-Kadavai where she encamped was changed by her into Ma (horse), vidda (left off) puram (city) (Maviddapuram), in commemoration of this cure.

“A Chola princess of Tanjore desirous of being freed from a horse’s head with which she had the misfortune to be born, arrived in Ceylon in search of a spot of holy waters to bathe and get rid of her monstrosity”. (Tennant I. P 539 fn.).

Y. V. M. XXX :- (Thirukonasalapuranam) “Maruthappiravika Valli went on, visiting place to place for holy waters, Mantota, Thiruketheschuram, Palavi, Kanniya, Mahaveli, Verukal, Manika river, Nagulamalai etc., in which last place she was cured of her deformity by the holy waters she sought after.”

#### **V. Maviddapuram Kandasamy Temple and Kankesanthurai**

Marutha-Pira-Vika-Valli went further with a resolution to build a Kandasamy temple at Maviddapuram as a memento of her gratitude to this holy place. She called for her father, king Thisai-Yukkira-Cholan of Thenthesam who supplied all the requirements, men, material etc. but a difficulty arose over the finding of



a Brahmin to go across the seas out of India. The king sent a messenger to the chief of the three thousand Brahmins of Thillai, to send a Brahmin to officiate at his daughter's new temple. The Brahmins were shocked at the prospect of losing their caste by crossing the sea. They shut themselves within the temple with abstinence of food for three days. The Chief Brahmin Periyamanath - thullar got a vision which encouraged him to go to a holy place where Nagulamuni was already there and that the distance was so short that he could have his morning pooja in India and the evening one at Jaffna. The Aryachakravarti sent later daily offerings of milk from Delft and flowers from Kachchaitivu to Rameswaram temple (N.P. 277). He arrived with images of Kandasamy, Theivanaiammal and Valliamma besides a lot of utensils and furniture for the use of the temple, the port where the image of Kandasamy was landed was Kasathurai now called Kankesanthurai after the image of Kankeyan (Kandasamy). At this time Ugra Singkan made his third visit to Manaltidal and was so struck with the beauty of princess Maruthap-pira-vika-valli that he entered her apartment and carried her away through the line of her guards and soldiers. He helped the queen in the completion of her temple, attended the thusarokanam (first flag hoisting ceremony) under the asterik of Ani-uthiram, their marriage taking place later at Kantherodai. The Brahmin priest unable to get a bride for himself from conservative Thillai, married Valampan, a daughter of Sambasiva Aiyar of Kasi and thus a union of Thillai and Kasi races of Brahmins was effected. The Brahmin changed his wife's name to Thillai-nayaki-valli because of his nostalgia for his home shrine, Thillai.

## 2. Jayatunga Vararasa Singkan

Jayatunga Vararasa Singkan or Balasingham Pararajasekeram alias Narasingka Rasa (because he inherited his father's leonine trait in some part of his body) succeeded his father Ugra-Singkan in C 831 with his capital at Singai-Nagar. During this time Sena I of Ceylon is said to have been converted by Manikka-vachakar Swamy to Saivism curing the dumbness of the king's daughter. The Pandya king Varaguna was also converted by him from Jainism to Saivism. This is the period when a Pandyan



army under Srimara Sri Vallabha invaded through the northern province and sacked Anuradhapura. Jayathunga lost his life in this invasion. Jayatunga married Samathuthi, a Pandyan princess who came to Ceylon with a retinue of sixty Vanniars of Tanipurkulam in Pandya country. They left no issue and with Jayatunga's death ended the first Kalinga dynasty of Ugra -Singkan which lasted about 48 years.

## Yal — Panam (13)

### The Blind Minstrel

Vira-Raghavan or Andaka-kavi-Vira Raghavan Mudaliyar, a blind Vellala quarelled with his wife over her delay in giving his food at the proper time and forsook his village of Urhalur in the Chingleput district of Tomdaimandalam, came to Jaffna and sought an audience with Jayatunga Rasa. It was inauspicious for a king to see a blind man, however a curtain was put before the throne and the king dressed himself first in his archer's unifom, then in his kingly uniform, and lastly in the queen's uniform. The blind minister interpreted all these changes in dress in songs accompanied by music played on his lyre. His Majesty was immensely taken up and presented him with an elephant and a piece of sandy wasteland, Manaltidal, which became Yalpanam after (Yal - lyre) pannam-poet). The Yalpani settled several new families from Vadathesam in various part of Jaffna. There were some conflicts between these Tamils and Sinhalese, and some Tamils returned back to India, this colonisation ending in partial failure.

## Vayapadal

While the Yalpana-Vaipava- malai confined itself mainly to the Vellala mudalis brought down by the 1st Aryachakravarti, Vayapadal written two centuries before the Y.V.M. Makes mention of 18 classes of kudis which probably refer to Vellala colonists, and adds to its list, a large number of people of different other denominations who, it is suggested had come from Madura, Tinneveli, Ramnad, Kerala, and occupied Jaffna.



They are :-

(1) Malayalathars. Rasanyagam opines that these people, the second batch of Malayalathars colonised Jaffna before the Chola invasions and during the first Kalinga dynasty of Jaffna, i.e., Ugra Singkan - Jayatunga period. This coincides with Yalpadi's colonisation. The first batch may have been the Nagas or Nairs of early history, the third being the remnants of the defeated Kerala soldiers who accompanied Kalinga Magha on his retreat from Polonnaruwa to Nallur.

(2) In the same way the people of Varuna-kula descent may have been the first batch of Karears. This fits in also with the recorded colonisation by Yalpadi of Manaltidal which is located by some authorities as Karaiur and Passaiur, gifted by Jayatunga to Yalpadi, (vide R 211).

(3) The second batch of Vanniars, sixty Vanniars who formed the retinue of Samathuthi, Queen of Jayatunga came from Pandyan country.

#### People of other categories.

(4) Agampadiars, cultivators by profession, some of whom in Sinhalese territory turned to be soldiers.

(5) Musicians, dancers, drummers, flutists, cymbal players, Parayas with primitive drums and players of other instruments,

(6) Other occupational groups - Chetty-vanis (oil mongers) Paravars (fish merchants), Kollars (blacksmiths), Kannars (brass founders), Tachchars (carpenters), Maravars (robbers), Ottars (quarriers of stone and sinkers of wells) Koviars (temple attendants), Mukkuvars etc.

(Refer page 51-53 "India in Ceylon history, society and culture (M.D. Raghavan 1964).

### A long night of C 362 years in Jaffna history

This long gap started with the incomplete success of the colonising efforts of Yalpadi and the extinction of the Kalinga dynasty of Ugra-Singkan on one hand, and ended with the



establishment of the greater Hindu kingdom of Jaffna by another Kalinga prince, Magha in 1215. This vacuum is filled up here. Jaffna relapsed back for ninety one years under the old order, the overlordship of Anuradhapura in the reign of the strong king Sena II of the 2nd Lambakkana dynasty who sacked Madura, (853-934), thereafter under the paramouncy of the Chola regnum in Polonnaruva (944-1070) for 126 years, followed by the Kalinga kings of Polonnaruva (1075-1215) for another 145 years, a sum total of about 362 years. Two instances are quoted here to prove that Tamils had lived in Jaffna during these periods, in 777 under Mahinda II when the district chiefs of the Tamil inhabitants gave trouble to Mahinda, the other proof was the Nainativu Tamil inscription of Parakramabahu the Great of the 12th century.

### **Singai - Nagar of resounding waters**

**[Ref: R 307 - 315]**

According to Rasanayagam, Singai-Nagar, the capital of the first Kalinga kingdom of Jaffna was situated on the borders of a boisterous sea called even now in Tamil "Moorkam" (which means angry) in the north eastern fringe of the Jaffna peninsula near Vallipuram. It was founded in the eighth century as a capital of the Kalinga kingdom of Jaffna by Prince Ugra-Singkan, the first Kalinga to arrive at the shores of Lanka. Singai-Nagar seems to have been named after Sinhapura or Singa-Nagara, the capital of the parent Kalinga country in India. This kingdom vanished with the death of Ugra-Singkan's son Vara-Rasa-Singka who died without leaving issues. As the kingdom was not subjected to any power, the Kalinga princes, their offsprings and colonists associated with Ugra-Singkan made a quiet settlement here, turning it into a Kalinga principality ruled by petty kings, independent sometimes or under the authority of the central Government of Lanka at Polonnaruva, as is revealed in the sequel. The city may have continued its life with suspended animation and seems to have irrupted into lively activity during the Chola and Kalinga periods of Polonnaruva with whom the Kalingas of Singai-Nagar must have been tied up with blood and social intercourse. There existed an ancient trunk road (R 320) starting from this city running along the eastern coast of the peninsula through



well built cities, Kudattanai, Ampan, Nagarkoyil, Kudarappu, Chempianpattu, Maruthankerni, Vettilaikerni, Mulliyan and other places, penetrating into the Vanni country and connecting Singai-Nagar with Polonnaruva. Vestige of old ruins like pottery, flat tiles and broken bricks unearthed periodically testify to the antiquity of these villages. The Kalinga royalty of Polonnaruva appears to have drawn their princesses in marriage and at times, their kings from the Kalinga blood-stock of Singai-Nagar, rather than from distant Kalinga of India. Jaffna "was in constant touch with the Eastern Gangas and possibly had commercial relationship with Kalinga and Orissa (R 310 - 311)", and with Polonnaruva during its Kalinga period, Nallur during the reign of the Aryachakravartis, and also with Rameswaram. The find at Haragama of gold fanams of the Eastern ganga king Anantavarman Coda-ganga of Kalinga is evidence of the trade between Ceylon and Kalinga of India, in early 11th century. (U.H C. 552). Tilakasundari whose name and those of her parents were not known in Polonnaruva, was a princess of the Kalinga house of Jaffna who married Vijayabahu I (1084) (R 315). Sundari who accompanied Vijayabahu's queen to Polonnaruva married Vickramabahu I son of Vijayabahu I, she too was therefore a Kalinga princess of Jaffna. Ratnavali, wife of Manabharana was a daughter of Tilakasundari and a sister of Vikramabahu I. Vikramabahu I "not a Buddhist, but educated as a Hindu by his mother very likely established that religion in Polonnaruva. (Still P 61 & R 277). He ejected the monks from their viharas and turned the buildings into barracks for foreign mercenaries" (C. H. C. 200) that is for the Tamils. "There is little doubt that the dynasty was inclined to favour the Hindu religion (Still 61). Manabharana father of Parakramabahu I was a Tamil, being the son of a Pandu-raj, Manabharana was also known by his Tamil name Viraperumal (U. H. C. 441). "Manabharana itself was a title taken by rulers of Jaffna too" (U.H. C. 690). Manabharana lived and ruled at Singai-Nagar (R 319).

Jayagopa, father of Nissankamalla by Parvati, and his other son Sahasamalla lived and ruled at Singai-Nagar (R 311 & 323). Jayagopa must have been a descendant of an earlier settler at Singai-Nagar as his name was unheard of in Polonnaruva, nor "known in Indian history". (U. H C. 509).



## Tondaimanaru

Karunakara Tondaiman, a general of Kulottunga Chola (1070) came to Manal-tidal to collect salt at Karanavai and Vellaiparavai by building a canal to reach these salterns. This canal is now called Tondaimanaru. Tondaiman lived in Uduvil for some time, when he built the Karunkara pillayar temple in the Urumpirai district. This event appears to have taken place during the flourishing period of Singai-Nagar. (C 1070). "Tondaiman became famous by his successful expedition into Calingha (Cambridge history of India Vol I P. 149)"

## Parakramabahu the Great (1153 - 1186 - 33 years)

Parakramabahu I was born in Singai-Nagar attested by a copper plate inscription near Giant's Tank (R 311 and 318), and ruled here and rebuilt, enlarged and embellished Singai-Nagar, before going to Polonnaruwa and fight his way to the throne (Rasanayagam 311).

**Strife for Kingship**—"The hand of the Tamils was strong in Lanka, Parakramabahu I himself a Brahmin and chiefly of Tamil blood, made his conquest largely through Tamil aid. Indeed he would not have been king of Lanka but for his Tamil allies" (Still P 177).

Farrer, P 50 - "By grace of his Tamil ancestry and Tamil alliance, Parakramabahu became master of all Ceylon".

Suffice to say Parakramabahu, a Brahmin of the Hindu religion, of foreign blood fought his way at last to the sovereignty of all Lanka ..... "By cunning balance between Cinghalese and Tamil he contrived to secure for himself a strong position". (Farrer P 171).

**Parentage and patronage of Hinduism.** - Still (P 62), who studied the genealogical tree of six generations of Parakramabahu, came to the conclusion that he was 42/64 Tamil, 42 of his ancestors were Tamil and 22 Sinhalese. Parakramabahu gave patronage to Brahminism, himself of Hindu religion (Still P 76),



He belonged to the Brahmin-Kalinga blood of Jaffna (R 319).

Farrer (P 172) :- "Parakramabahu, a Brahmin of Hindu religion and that from tolerance and policy, he supported the religion of the land and also for this purpose he rebuilt the former capital of Anuradhapura". Saiva "Couchant Bull", emblems of Jaffna kings were carved on several stones built by Parakramabahu. The Kalingas disappeared from the Sinhalese royal house both in name and blood with the exit of the last Kalinga king Magha, from Polonnaruwa. The Kalinga dynasty followed Magha to Nallur, the Sinhalese building up now a Pandya-Sinhalese line of kings in Dambadeniya. There now took place in Jaffna probably a fusion of the Kalingas of Nallur and Singai-Nagar, the latter city overshadowed by Nallur, began now to lose its lustre. Some authorities are of the opinion that Singai-Nagar continued to flourish as the Aryachakravarti capital until Sempahap-Perumal invaded and destroyed this capital city and built his new capital at Nallur. This is contrary to the recorded history of much honoured works as Y. V. M. and K. M. "University of Ceylon History" (P 674) mentions that "Yapa-Patuna (Jaffna) was the city that Sempahap-Perumal captured, which is undoubtedly Nallur. Further, that Sempahap-Perumal's military strategy was directed towards Nallur and not against Singai-Nagar, can be observed in the following event. His army did not march along the eastern coast of the peninsula, where there was already existing a great highway with relay of several towns along it. He advanced his army along the western coast to Puttalam, from where the army went as far as the edge of the mainland, when it bifurcated into two columns, one of them going to Pooneryn in the extreme west, other directed in the centre towards Paranthan, the two columns forming two arms of a pincer movement to encircle Yapa-patuna., i. e. Nallur, and evidently not Singai-Nagar situated as it was in the extreme east end.

Reverting to Parakramabahu, "There is no idea he ever renounced Hinduism, and his Hindu buildings at Polonnaruwa are beautiful as anything there, but not only no doubt, from tolerance but from policy he showed the greatest consideration and munificence towards the religion of the land. Perhaps his very position as



an alien and an outsider made it easier for him to embark that thorniest of all paths as a peace maker in ecclesiastical quarrels". (Farrer P 172).

Nissankamalla and Parakramabahu had leanings towards Hinduism and were found wearing the sacred thread on the trunks of their bodies in stone carvings. Nissankamalla built the choicest of Hindu temples, Siva devale No. 1 in Polonnaruwa (1198). Parakramabahu went through like all Hindus, the Hindu ceremonies of Chandikarmam (hair cutting), Annaprasanam, (rice feeding), ear boring and Upanayana (wearing the sacred thread across the shoulders). Brahmins flocked to his palace and did vedic rites. "Nandi" emblems of Jaffna kings were carved on several stones on instructions during Parakramabahu's reign. "Parakramabahu is credited in the Culavamsa with the erection of 13 Hindu temples and the restoration of 103 decayed temples". (K.Indrapala "Hindu Temples of Ancient Ceylon" 1962).



## IV

## THE GREATER HINDU KINGDOM OF JAFFNA.

Kalinga Magha alias Kulankayan Singai-Arya or King Seka-rasa-singkai Aryan, son of Seliya Sekaran alias Kalinga Vijayabahu (XLV Appendix to Y.V.M.) Ruler at Polonnaruva, 1215-1240

Direct Aryachakravarti of Jaffna, 1236-1240 (died 1240)  
dates are approximate.

C.S. Navaratnam's view that Kalinga Magha, ruler of the kingdom of Polonnaruva which at this period comprised of Jaffna also, was the first Aryachakravarti of Jaffna (P 187), is based on substantial grounds. (LXXIII) :- Magha came from Kalinga with an army of 24,000 Tamils. He reduced Ruhuna, established his stronghold at Mahagam and went thence to Jaffnapatam. Every part of the Island was under his sovereignty (V 1 Tennent P 412-413). He was a Chola prince who was studying state craft in Madura. Culavamsa, according to S. Natesan, "mentions that while Magha ruled at Polonnaruva, there was another king Jayabahu who conjointly with the former held sway over a large part of the Island presumably also the north. The above twains were Damilas. Culavamsa 11 repeatedly emphasises (P 132-136) that Magha's soldiers were Keralas and Damilas. Magha and Jayabahu were called Tamil kings (CVII P 149). Jayabahu probably was the sub-king or Viceroy of Jaffna. However, he took part jointly with Magha in the battle of Kalavaya. Magha became direct ruler of Jaffna after he was pushed out from Polonnaruva by Parakramabahu II. What happened to Jayabahu thereafter is not known. According to Y.V.M the first Aryachakravarti was called Kulang-Kayan because he had a defect in one arm. Rasanayagam and Fr. Gnanapragasam were of the view that Kulang-Kayan Chakravarti was Kalinga Magha and were also of the view that "Kulangai" was a misreading in Tamil for Kalinga. Kulangai is a Tamil sound word for Kalinga. John, in his history of Jaffna 1930 P XXIII, states that according to the opinion of certain authorities, Kalinga Magha is identified with Kulang-Kayan (Singai-Aryan) and that Kulangai is not a mutilated arm but a mutilated name for Kalinga. So Kalinga Magha had many confusing appellations.



Further light is shed on the connecting links, that Kalinga Magha was the first Aryachakravarti of Jaffna :-

1. Navaratnam (P 61) states that his other name was Kalinga Vijayabahu,
2. In Y.V.M (P 14), one of his names is Visaya Kulangai-Chakravarti.
3. Confirmed in a Sinhalese work "Nikaya Samgraha" (U.H.C. 614) where it is found that the other name of Kalinga Magha was Kalinga Vijayabahu.
4. G.C. Mendis (Ceylon today and yesterday, P 99). "And when Magha of Kalinga at the beginning of the 13th century established an independent kingdom in the north, it developed into a Tamil kingdom.
5. "The independent kingdom in Jaffna peninsula arose which Parakramabahu II was powerless to prevent (C.H.C. 287)". This confirms the date of the establishment of the Jaffna kingdom as round about 1236, by Parakramabahu II's contemporary and enemy, Magha.

Kalinga Magha alias Kulankayan Aryan or Kalinga Vijayabahu. We have already described in part I concerning his exploits when he was king of Polonnaruva, his blunder in attempting to impose Hindusim on his Buddhist subjects, which cost him his throne. (C.H.C. 281) :- The Sinhalese did not know what had happened to him after his defeat at Kalavava, whether he was alive or killed, or taken prisoner, where he went and what had happened to Polonnaruva. Polonnaruva was abandoned by the Sinhalese kings, for fear of the rampage that was being caused by Tamil soldiers left over from previous invasions and not by Magha's soldiers. Vijayabahu III formed a new kingdom at Mayarata with his home town Dambadeniya as his capital and not Polonnaruva which he was unable to enter.

In far away Jaffna where Magha retreated, he was monarch of all he surveyed and could do things as he pleased without



molestations from the Sinhalese kings, as during his reign in Polonnaruwa, he had struck terror into their hearts, in fact Vijayabahu III admonished his son not to meddle with the Tamils but to live in amity with them.

According to one version (Y.V.M. 13), when the colonisation of Jaffna by Yalpani ended in fiasco, many Tamils unable to bear any more the persecution by the Sinhalese, left for their homes in India, Jaffna just now relapsing again under the Lambakkana rulers of Anuradhapura. A bold colonist of Jaffna, and a high caste Vellala by name Malavan, son of Selvaraja of Pompattiyur of Pandya went over to Madura and prevailed upon Magha who was studying statecraft in a Royal College in this city of learning, to take up the vacant throne of Yalpanam.

On Singai-Aryan's arrival, Malavan handed over the crown of Yalpanam to the new king with much joy, giving away at the same time free gifts of land and gold to Brahmins, poor were fed, and had taken the king on an elephant ride round the streets for people to see and pay homage to their new king. (Y.V.M.)

### **Ceremonial arrival of Singai—Aryan at Nallur (14)**

Singai-Aryan set out with his Brahmin Prime Minister Nilankanda Aiyar (Puvaneka-Vaku) and a priest by the name of Kangathara-Aiyar, a Brahmin of Kasi race and entered without any opposition and founded the fortress - city of Nallur with all the ramparts, gates, mansions, palaces, towers, flower gardens, baths, stalls for elephants and horses, dwellings for Brahmins and warriors, and an akkiraram for Kangkathara and his wife Anna Purani Ammal. He dug a well to which he brought holy waters from Yamuna. He built temples on all the four sides of the city, on the east, Veyiluvantha Pillaiyar Koyil, on the west Veerakali-amman-koyil, on the south Kayilai-Vinayakar Koyil, on the north koyils of Saddanathasuran, Thaiyalnayaki amman and Salaivinayakar. He made a triumphant entry into the city with his queen Thilaka-Vathiyar under happy omens and benign stars and celebrated the occasion with great joy and splendour (XLV). He bathed and arranged his hair, applied sacred ashes and worshipped the gods, He wore an overcoat, a silk cloth, shawl, earrings, a head cloth,



rings for wrists, ankles and fingers, necklace with pathakkams, a golden waist string of many folds, a pair of epaulettes and all the other ornaments specially one on his forehead which was a gift from Malavan. There were various kinds of instruments of music which set forth the voice of thunder, there were moon coloured umbrellas, chowries and torches, the waving of camphor lights, sprinkling of perfumes and the hums of Brahmins uttering blessings. The king gave that day alms of land, gold, virgins, cows, rice and elephants''. (Kailaya Malai). He wrote to kings of Tamil countries in India for colonists, accordingly a number of families came over with all their slaves and dependants. He appointed four athikarikals to the four quarters of the earth. Virasingkan was given the command of the forces. Kandasamy temple of Nallur, with its outer walls and towers was erected on his orders by his minister Puvaneka-Vaku. He went thereafter to Keerimalai and met the Brahmin priest Sinna-Manath-Tuller, a descendant of Peria-Manath-Tuller the first priest of the Maviddapuram temple, and son of Sithampara Thatchathar, who gave him such a grand feast, which made the king remark that it was not necessary for Vishnu to have churned out of the ocean, the sweet nectar.

#### Ceremonial arrival of Singai-Aryan at Nallur (14)

Singai-Aryan set out with his Brahmin Prime Minister Nallankanda-Aiyar (Puvaneka-Vaku) and a priest by the name of Kandasamy-Aiyar, a Brahmin of Kasi race and entered without any opposition and founded the fortress - city of Nallur with all the ramparts, gates, mansions, palaces, towers, flower gardens, baths, stalls for elephants and horses, dwellings for Brahmins and warriors, an akkiram for Kandasamy and his wife Anna Perumal Ammal. He dug a well to which he brought holy waters from Yamuna. He built temples on all the four sides of the city, on the east, Veylavancha Pillayar Kovil, on the west, Veerakanni-ammal-Kovil, on the south, Kailaya-Vinayakar Kovil, on the north, Koyil. He made a triumphal entry into the city with his queen Thilaka-Vathiyar under happy omens and benign stars and celebrated the occasion with great joy and splendour (XIV). He bathed and arranged his hair, applied sacred ashes and worshipped the gods. He wore an overcoat, a silk cloth, shawl, earrings, a head cloth.



## V

# COLONISATION OF YALPANAM BY THE JAFFNA TAMILS (15 - 18)

At the time of the arrival of Kalinga Magha in Jaffna there were Tamil inhabitants already living in Jaffna, Kalingas in Singai-Nagar, Vanniyaas, and Tamils left behind by previous invasions of Ceylon. To these may be added the Kerala and Tamil soldiers of Magha's army who would have naturally retreated with their leader to Jaffna, these latter people belonging to military avocation were not suitable for agricultural pursuits. The Aryachakravarti appears to have had two objectives in his mind on arrival at Jaffna, one was to develop his new country by converting the barren sand waste of Jaffna into fruitful fields, the other was to establish and promote his own religion, Saivism in Jaffna. For this dual purpose, he required people who were well versed in agriculture and devoted to Saivism. He therefore summoned from the Chola country people who had these double qualifications, :- Saiva Vellalas to establish his agricultural and Saiva kingdom of Jaffna. "A branch of Vellalas, the old ruling caste of Tamil land, claimed to have received grains and instruction on its cultivation from the Earth-Goddess, Parvathi, hence Vellalas were called Pillais (children of Parvathi), kings also drove the plough" (Arunachalam - Sketches of Ceylon history). He expected the colonists to have five attributes. (1) High caste, on the level of Mudalis who could therefore be able administrators. (2) Vellalas or skilled agriculturists. (3) Ardent Saivaites. (4) With Urumais (wealth and possessions to start life in the new country. (5) They must also come with their feudal system, that is, with Kudumais (dependants or assistants) and Adumais (slaves) to help the Vellalas in their agricultural undertakings. They all came crowded in ships with hardly any accommodation for the wives of the dependants and slaves. For instance, the barbers when they reached Jaffna were permitted to take Vellala wives, the washerman had to be his own cultivator and be his own Brahmin priest.



## The colonists

(From Y. V. M. 15 - 16, and K. M.) This chapter is dealt with in some details as it represents the ancestry of the present Jaffna population. The following is an account of the Tamil settlers of Jaffna, their places of origin and the twelve villages of settlement in Jaffna.

### 1. Tirunelveli

Pandimalavan of high Vellala family of Pompattiyur of great generosity, and bounteous feeder his cousins Chempakamalavan with his two brothers.

### 2. Myllidy

Narasinga Devan of Kavariyur of Tuluva clan of Vellala division, a nobleman of wide fame and love of learning.

### 3. Tellipalai

A great place of fertility, with never failing water supply, of unique distinction.

(a) Champakamappan.

(b) Chantirasekeram Mappanan, a Vellala of Vayinakur.

(c) Kanakarayen Chetty.

### 4. Inuvil

Land of sugar cane, plantains, arecanuts and rice fields. Perayiramudaliyan, Vellala of Kovalur, of influence, learning and charming appearance.

### 5. Pachilapalli

Nilakandan, handsome, liberal, valorous and of great wealth with great devotion to Siva. He came with his four brothers from Kachchur.

### 6. Pallavarankaddu

Three noblemen of Kanchipuram.



## 7. Koyilakkandi

Tevarajendra, Vellala of Pullur with crown of gold with stones, Arjuna in archery, Bhima in war, Karuna in liberty, Dharma in fame and forbearance.

## 8. Puloli

Kanakamalavan and his four brothers, Vellalas of Chikaramanagar, with intelligence, truthfulness, industry, full of resourcefulness and commanding appearance.

## 9. Tolpuram

Town, beautiful without compare.

Kupakarajendran and Punnya Pupalan of Kupanadu, wealthy patrons of learning with plough flag.

## 10. Irupalai

Tondai - Mandallatu - Mana - du - Konla - Mudali.

## 11. Neduntivu (Delft)

Tani-Nayaka-Mudali, Saiva Vellala of Ceyyur as rich as Indra

## 12. Velinadu

Pallava of Vanchi with other chiefs.

## Later Settlements

1. In about 1001 when Muhamud of Ghazani destroyed the famous sea shore temple of Somanath, some of the terrified Hindus fled and settled in various parts of Ceylon (Tennent).
2. In about 1310, Tamils of South India fled before the waves of Muhammedan invasions that reached as far south as Madura and Rameswaram, and settled down in Jaffna (N 14).
3. When Kumara Kampana II (1348 - 1371) the Vijayanagara Governor of Madura was reorganising his administration, displacing Tamil officers with Telugu personnel, the Vellala



Tamil malcontents left their country and settled down in Jaffna during Gunapooshana's reign (N 115). The Muhameddan invasions and later the establishment of the Vijayanagara empire, both in South Deccan, had serious repercussions in Ceylon with the problem of Tamil refugees and displaced people.

4. Even during Portuguese time, Braganza the Viceroy of Goa on his way to invade Ceylon in 1558 sent messages to the residents of St. Thomas to settle down in Jaffna rather than be under the oppression of the Cannarese (Vijayanagara) officers (N. 153)
- 5 During the Dutch period, a great commotion having arisen in South India, various races of its inhabitants left their homes in Karaikal, and sought peace and comfort in Vadukkoddai, Karaithivu and other islands. Many Brahmin families both of the Vishnu and Saiva samayams settled here, also many Pallars of Chollaland came in such large numbers seeking employment in the fields of the Vellalas of Jaffna, that some of them had to return back for lack of jobs while others took to climbing the Palmyrah palm (Y.V.M. 56).
6. The Dutch also recruited Indian labour for reclamation and agricultural works in Jaffna.

### **Descendants of Tani - Nayaka - Mudali.**

From "Uttar-Uraivinar in Tamil language" (My own lineage,) by the late Dr. K. Casinathan of Sittankerni, Jaffna (Vivekananda Press, Jaffna, 1963), and translated for me by Mr. A. Homer.

It will be interesting to know if any of the present inhabitants of Jaffna could trace his genealogy to any of the above lists of early colonists. The writer came across by chance a large book titled "A historical record of the arrival in Ceylon of Thondaimandalam - Ceyyur, Elam Nedunthivu Iramarapum Thooiya Thaninayaka Mudaliyar and his twelfth descendant Muthali Nainar. I am availing of this book as a specimen for descriptive purposes and presenting it without comments on dates etc. Its author describes his lineage with its branches, sub-branches and bunches of branches which all got dovetailed by marriages with members,



of the branches of descendants of other primary colonists detailed below, forming a wide net work across the history of the people of Jaffna, up to Muthali Nainar, the twelfth descendant of Tanainayaka Mudaliyar, a rich Saiva Vellala who emigrated to Ceylon during the Muhameddan invasions with his feudal retinue, in eighteen boats and settled with his followers in Nedunthivu after Singai-Aryan's time. His eleventh descendant Kathirgama Mudali crossed over to the mainland of Jaffna and married in Navaly, a daughter of Veeriar. By this marriage he had a son, Mudali Nainar and a daughter Mudali Amma who was married to Ulaga-Kavala-Mudali who claimed to have been a Prime Minister of Kamapana when he was ruling at Kanchipuram. It is narrated here that Ulaga-Kavala-Mudali proposed to marry Kampana's daughter which was turned down whereupon he left India for Karaithivu in disgrace. The Dutch who invaded Jaffna landed at Karaithivu through Kayts. The Mudali helped the Dutch to capture the Portuguese fortifications through his cunning on 1. 6. 1618. The son of Kathirgama Mudali as stated above was Mudali Nainar, head of the treasury under the Portuguese. On the death of Mudali Nainar his son-in-law, Poologa Mudali succeeded him as treasurer with added powers.

According to Y. V. M. (P 51) one Ulaga-Kavala-Mudali of Karaithivu came to Dutch aid. He was a considerable Vellala from Cholanadu and having been implicated in his own country in treasonable transactions against his king, he had been obliged to save his life by flight. He founded a settlement which he named Kalapumi in the island of Karaithivu and lived among his dependants with great wealth and splendour. He managed to help the Dutch by a clever stratagem. The Dutch rewarded their helper Ulaga-Kavala-Mudali with immense riches and made him Mudaliyar of the Gate and married him to a sister of Mudali Nainar (Marapaliyarntha-Mudali (54). They confirmed Mudali Nainar in his office of head of the treasury which he had hitherto held under the Portuguese. When Mudali Nainar died, his son-in-law Poologa Mudali was raised to be the head of the treasury and the dignities attached to this office, while Raya-Thungo Mudali succeeded his father Ulaga-Kavala-Mudali as Mudaliyar of the Gate (54).



## Muthali Nainar

According to Dutch records, Muthali Nainar lived in Annaicottai at "Muthali Nainar Valavu". "Pootharayer Koyil where he worshipped and the madam, are yet in existence. People come and rest at this madam and partake of the temple pukkai (milk rice). The adjoining temple is therefore known as Pukkai-thinni-Pillayar Koyil. Muthali Nainar's samadhi (burial place) and Muthali koyil are at Sandiripay. Muthali Nainar's eldest son Marutha Nainar lived in Annaicottai where there are four compounds bearing his name. He built Maruthanamadam where Ramanathan College is now situated, also Muniapper koyil in Innuvil. Muthali Nainar's second son Kathirgamar reclaimed a jungle in Navaly and converted it into a paddy field which is even now known as Puthu-Vayal (new field). He is also the builder of Kalai-udai-Amman Koyil of Navaly which attracts even now a large crowd for its annual festival.

## Jaffna Culture

Most of the present inhabitants of Jaffna were of Chola origin. By the time these colonists of Jaffna came from Chola country, the latter had been thoroughly aryanised so much so, the Cholas of this time were called "Aryan Tamils" by their neighbours, the Pandiyans. Their Jaffna offshoots arrived in Jaffna with this "Aryan culture" and continued to conserve it, purity of race, language and Hindu dharma. Tamil words of Sangam age and "old Tamil" words like Mutisam (inheritance) and Thetiyathetam (earned income) continued to be used in Jaffna to this day, while forgotten in South India, being replaced by Sanskrit words.



## VI

PROPAGATION OF SAIVAISM IN JAFFNA BY THE  
FIRST SINGAI - ARYAN (PP 17 - 18 & LXVI)

Kalinga Magha on arrival in Jaffna discarded the sword in favour of the ploughshare and the propagation of Saivaism. He was personally interested in agriculture and religion, his devotion to Saivaism was demonstrated by his previous and subsequent religious activities, his unsuccessful attempt to impose Hinduism on his Buddhist subjects in the Polonnaruwa kingdom resulting in the loss of his throne there. Himself with Brahmin blood, he entered Nallur in the midst of Brahminical ceremonies and celebrations, in the company of a Brahmin Prime Minister Nilakanda Aiyar and a Brahmin prelate, Kangathara Aiyar and his wife Anna - Purani Ammal. He dreamt one night, while he was sleeping in his sappiramangcham that Siva declaring himself to be Kayilaya Nathan, appeared before him with Parvathi and requested him to build a temple for them. He built the temple Kailasanatha Koyil at Nallur under his personal direction, and used it as his private shrine where he worshipped day and night, and Nallur was known as another Kailayam on earth (18), the first Kailayam being Mt. Kailasa, the second being chidambaram and the third was Dakshina Kailayam (Koneswaram (N 33)). He ordered his Brahmin Prime Minister to build four other temples round this main shrine, they were Vailakunthar, Saddanathar, Kandasamy and Veerakaliyamman temples. He got down from Cholaland ardent Saivites to promote Saivaism in his new kingdom, He wore the sacred Brahmin thread on his shoulders, signifying not only his attachment to Saivaism but also his blood ties with the Sethupathy Brahmins. The Brahmin thread or Upavita consists of 96 strands representing 96 tatvas, constituents or categories of the universe (Sir P. Arunachalam). He also had the impress of "Sethu" on his coins, (the insignia of Rameswaram). The crest of the Jaffna kings and Rameswaram was "Nandi" (Couchant bull). "Nandi" is the bull form of Siva's energy, the bull form of Siva's energy was sent to earth as an incarnation in the form of a Cannarese Brahmin by name Bassava



(bull - force), the Prime Minister of the Jain king Bijjala of Mysore (12 C). Bassava assassinated the king because of his Jaina faith, in other words Siva's bull force destroyed Jainism in that country and re-established Sivalingam worship among the Cannarese people. These Vira-Saivas or Lingayats, worship both the Lingam as well as Nandi (Siva's energy). The bull became now the favourite charger, vahana or vehicle of Siva. Nandi represents the soul in Saiva Siddhanta philosophy, Pasu = soul.

**Thiru - neeru.** The Jaffna Tamils are ardent devotees of Saiva deities and continue to distinguish themselves from others by drawing three horizontal stripes of holy ash across their foreheads, the forehead which is the sacred abode of Shaiva-Sakthi. Thiru-neeru (Sanskrit Vipoothee) is the gift of Saivism. It is the image of the love of God, Parasakthi (K. Vaithianathan). The three holy lines are constituent parts of Saiva-Siddhanta philosophy. The worshipper dips the three middle fingers of his right hand into the ash and draws them across the forehead from left to right uttering Siva-Siva. Thiru-neeru is the purified ash obtained by burning the dirt, cowdung. The impure unburnt cowdung represents the three impurities of the soul. (1) Anavam (egotism or uppishness) (2) Karma (sins). (3) Maya (illusion). These three strands form the rope (Pasam-desire of this world) that binds the soul to the world. When this rope Pasam is burnt, the soul is set free to identify itself with Siva or God. Pathi is Siva or God of Sacrifice, Pasam is desire and Pasu is self or soul. When Pasam is burnt, Pasu - self, joins with Pathi - God. This is the doctrine of Tripadarthi of Saiva Siddhantam, the philosophy of the Tamils. Some ardent Saivites of Jaffna wear round their necks, "strings of Rudrakhas (a species of dried berries) as beads which represent the solidified tears of Siva at the sight of the iniquities inflicted by the demons on the devas", (Sir P. Arunachalam).

## **I. Kailayanathar and Kailayanayaki Amman Koyil of Nallur (C 1215), private royal shrine of Singai-Aryan. (Kailayamalai - 18)**

While Kulangkai Maha Rasa was sleeping in his sappiramangcham, he dreamt one night that Siva and Parvathi appeared requesting him to build a temple for them. He built three halls for images, granaries,



alms houses and other akkirarams, streets for cars, monasteries halting houses for travellers and other like establishments, surrounding the area with walls and towers. He sent for the Kethara-Lingam of Kasi which Manmathan (God of love) worshipped and invited the priest Kangathara Aiyar of the Kasi race through Sethupathy the chief of the Ramanathapuram group of Brahmins. The king worshipped Kailasanathar day and night calling Nallur a Kailasam on earth and reigned long over Yalpanam from the city of Nallur. When the Portuguese were getting ready to destroy the temple in 1620, the chief priest took the idols of the "Lingam" and "Devi" to his native place Madduvil, and dropped them into temple ponds in two different places. During the later and liberal period of Dutch rule, a peasant was directed in a dream to take the image of 'Lingam' from the pond, and now it became the image of the Madduvil Sivan temple (N. Hinduism P 57).

### **Kailayanather Sivalinga Koyil becomes Kailaya Pillayar Koyil**

The Dutch later destroyed this shrine and made use of its debris to build fort Hammenheil at Kayts. The inhabitants later discovered a Vinayaka idol belonging to this temple on a sand heap, removed and kept it under a vilva tree and did pujas. Arumuga Navalar put a cadjan shed over the image of Pillayar in about 1850, and the people made use of it as a shrine. T. Kailasapillai, a local resident and a nephew of Navalar converted the shed into a stone building under his trusteeship. This temple now goes by the name of Kailaya Pillayar or Vinayagar Koyil, under the trusteeship of Mr. P. Ramalingam belonging to the line of Navalar family, the present Kurukal being K. Sharma Aiyar, son of the late Kurusamy Aiyar.

To the court of the famous king Pararajasekeram (c. 1498) son of Kanagasooriya Singai Aryan and father of Sangili came Supaththidamuni who made a prophecy about the future decline of the Aryan royal line and the destruction of the temples by the Portuguese, which was found inscribed in the Koneswaram Kalvettu and seen by de Sa Menezes. Among what he said was that "from motives of acquiring fame, there would be many that will make



the attempt to renew these edifices, but they will merely ruin themselves and find all their efforts prove ineffectual. The restoration of the most important of the temples, Kailasanathar Koyil will be undertaken and accomplished by persons favoured by Kailasanathar" (29).

### **The First Kumbha-Abhishekam of Kailasanathar Koyil by Kulangai Singai-Aryan, founder of the greater Hindu kingdom of Jaffna (1215)**

(From Kailaya Malai as presented by A. Mootuthamby in the National Review of January 1907). "The temple in and outside the walls were tastefully decorated with booths constructed on sandal posts and ceiled with variegated cloths of artistic designs in different colours and finished with fringes of cloth and flower garlands and with tassels of pearls at regular intervals. The booths were adorned with numberless hoisted flags and the fronts with bunches of plantains, arecanuts and Kew pine fruits. The streets were decorated on both sides with plantain, arecanut and sugarcane trees with cords hung with garlands. The floor of the temple was smeared with fragrant sandal paste and there, a throne of great splendour set with rubies, blue sapphires, cat's eyes, diamonds and pearls were placed. The Brahmin priest drew the figure of a bull on the floor and over it heaped rice brought from all the eight quarters and spread it in the shape of a lotus ..... afterwards chanting mantrums, he set there the images of Siva and Uma..... He heaped like hills with piles of mangoes, jak fruits, plantains and other sweet fruits. He made offerings of coconuts, honey, ghee, fruit juice, milk and curd and finally betel and nuts in beautiful trays. At last the priest took the golden pot filled with holy water and poured over the images and consecrated them in the midst of great roar of musical trumpets, drums of various kinds, praises, songs and hymns and called Siva by the name of Kailayanatha and invoked him to the image.

And God Siva, who is not visible even to Devas, holy sages and to those who renounced the world, who cannot be perceived by the mental faculty, who cannot be described by words or



even Vedas, who has no beginning, no end, and no middle, who is all pervading though invisible even to the great Vishnu or Brahma..... who shines within the mystic syllable A. U. M. , who formed the soul of all the letters..... who still is not affected by happiness or sorrow..... who is existence and non-existence, graciously pleased to take Nallur as his third Kailasam, as one of his favourite abodes and accordingly came down with his divine following to dwell in the image and to grant his devotees their wishes,

## 2, Nallur Kandasamy Koyil (1215 or 1450) (17 etc)

According to Y. V. M. this temple was built in the 13th century by Puvaneka-Vaku (Nilakanda Aiyar), Prime Minister of Kulangai Arya Chakravarti on the latter's orders.

According to John's history of Jaffna (XIX) the date of erection is given as 1248 A. D., built by the first Aryachakravarti's minister, the date when Sinna-mana-thular gave a feast to the Aryachakravarti and his Prime Minister Puvaneka-Vaku, both dates are identical and proof of each other's accuracy.

According to Navaratnam and Rasanayagam the founder and the date of origin of this temple are different, the latter give a later date 1450, giving the credit to Bhuvanaikabahu VI (Sempahap-Perumal) the only evidence being the inclusion of Bhuvanaikabahu's name in the "kattiyam", recited during festival occasions at this temple. It is probable that Sempahap-Perumal merely restored the two hundred and fifty years old temple as had happened several times to other temples, or it may refer to Puvaneka-Vaku, Prime Minister to Singai-Aryan, founder of the city of Nallur. This school also maintains that it was Pararajasekeram, father of Sangili Sekarajasekeram who built the four temples on the four boundaries of the city, Vailakunthar, Kailayanathar, Saddanathar and Veera-Kaliyammam temples. It was at Veera-Kaliyammam koyil that Sangili and Vidiya Bandara made a pact to fight the Portuguese, where Vidiya Bandara was killed in an accidental explosion. Braganza plundered in 1560, the whole city, villages and temples, (Y. V. M. 47-48). When Pararajasekeram was dead, the Parangis began to destroy all the remaining temples, a Brahmin by name Parasu-pani-ayyar anticipated the emissaries of the Parangis and threw all the images and furniture



of the Keerimalai temple into a deep well for safety and covered them over with earth. A Pandaram employed as a servant in Kanthasuvami Temple ran away to Batticaloa carrying with him the copper inscription relating to the origin and formation of the temples of Nallur and the rules and directions for their management. The descendants of the Brahmin Kangkatharar quitted Nallur and went to live in Nirveli and Vadamaracchi.

Pararajasekeram the famous Tamil king got down "Thirtham" water in "kavadis" in 1478 from the Yamuna and deposited it in an "Eri" (pond) dug out for this purpose near the present Christian church. This pond is yet seen and is known as Yamuneri. The other historical places round about Sangilithoppu are Pandaramallikai, Pandaram-Padda-Valavu and Rajavinthodam. The temple was levelled to the ground in 1620 by Philip de Oliveira after Sangili-Kumara's defeat in the battle of Vannarponnai, leaving no traces of its foundation. During the Dutch rule in 1749 by the grace of Muruga, Ragunatha Mappana, a shroff Mudaliyar in the service of the Dutch Government and enjoying their favour got permission to instal a madam for the regular chanting of Kandapuram, which was later turned into a temple for Kandasamy. The first officiating priest during the Dutch period in 1793 was Krishna Aiyar of Nallur, who resided in Koyil Kurukal Valavu. He did ceremonies to a "cot and silver Vel" given to him, who placed it in the shrine. His son Subbiah Aiyar was given by Lord North in about 1798, document and sword of authority. The linear descendants of the union of Subbiah Aiyar's daughter Lukshmiammal with Ragunatha Aiyar are officiating priests of today. Don Juan Ragunatha Mudaliyar, shroff of the Jaffna Kachcheri built the present temple in 1807. The present trustee of the temple, Kumaradasa Mappana Mudaliyar is the descendant of Ragunatha Mappana Mudaliyar, right of trusteeship finally settled by verdict of law in 1929 in a conflict between the trustee and the Brahmin priests about the right of ownership. Arumuga Navalar in the 19th century placed the image of Murugan as the principal deity in its rightful place in the "adimoolam". He abrogated the sacrifice of animals and the traditional nautch dance performance of devadasis in this devasthanam.



## VII

## (WHO ARE THE ARYACHAKRAVARTIS?)

They were chiefs who ruled a district in Rameswaram under Pandyan kings. They were the products of the union of (1) Brahmins of Rameswaram (Sethupathy Brahmins) with (2) Codagangas. The Brahmin component of their blood probably belonged to the Pasupathy goitre thoroughly versed in the four Vedas who had migrated earlier from Kasi to Rameswaram. They were therefore known as Arya (northern) Chakravartis (rulers). According to Sekarajasekeramalai, the Arya kings of Jaffna belonged to the Kalinga Eastern Gangavamsa. The first Aryachakravarti of Jaffna belonged to this dynasty. That section of the Eastern Gangavamsa who made matrimonial alliances with the Cholas were known as Codagangas.

According to Yalpana Vaipava Malai (Y. V. M.) the first Aryachakravarti was a Chola prince which fits in with his being a Codaganga. The Kalinga ruler who was defeated by the Chola king Kulottungho I in the Kalinga war was a Codaganga being a grandson of Virarajendra, the Chola king of Tanjore. Some Codagangas appear to have come and settled down at Rameswaram (U.H. C. 691) and married among the Sethupathy Brahmins assuming the title of Arya or Singai-Aryan, indicating Brahmin origin. It is noteworthy to mention here that all Brahmins either of North or South India or Jaffna are of Aryan origin. Early Jaffna Brahmins belonged to the Chidambaram and Rameswaram groups. Singai Aryans also are of northern origin. This Codaganga-Brahmin alliance gave rise to (1) the Sethukavalars, protectors of Sethu (Rameswaram) and (2) Kalinga Aryachakravartis of Jaffna, the coins of both having the impression of "Sethu". The Eastern Gangas were in turn Telugu people who lived in southern Kalinga in the northern outskirts of the Andhra country. This part of the border area owing to fluctuating fortunes of boundary wars between the above mentioned two kingdoms became the southern part of Kalinga country at one time, and the northern districts of Andhra country at another time. The Aryachakravartis were therefore of mixed blood belonging to Telugus, Cholas and Brahmins.



## Aryachakravarti king of Jaffna (Y.V.M.15, K.M and Natesan U.H.C.691)

(1) **Kalinga Magha or Kulangai Singai Aryan.** (Kulang-Kayan) alias **Kalinga Vijayabahu.**

The epithet Kulang-Kayan was given to him because he had a defect in one arm. He was the founder of the greater Hindu kingdom of Jaffna in about the year 1215, his successors ruled the Tamil kingdom. The kings were known as Aryachakravartis or Singai-Aryans. Most of them succeeded their fathers alternatively as Segarajasekerams and Pararajasekerams, Kalinga Magha being the first Segarajasekeram. They ruled over Jaffna for 403 years from 1215-1618. Dates are approximate. The first twelve kings were independent rulers for 376 years up to 1651, the last five kings were only subrulers under Portuguese suzerainty for 57 years (1561-1618), until Jaffna became a complete Portuguese possession. All the kings carried on unremitting hostilities against the Portuguese. The peace of Jaffna was disturbed twice from outside by Jatavarman Vira Pandya's invasion in 1253 and by Vijayanagara Empire in 1385.

(2) **Kulasekhara Pararajasekeram (1240-1256), son of Kalinga Magha.**

He was probably captured in the Pandyan invasion of Ceylon by Jatavarman Sundara Pandya. Bhuvanaikabahu moved his capital from Dambadeniya to Yapavuva during this reign.

(3) **Kulottungo (1256 - 1279)**

A powerful king and a great soldier who according to Tamil traditions defeated Bhuvanaikabahu I (described earlier under Jaffna wars), he extended his sway over the major part of Ceylon.

(4) **Vikkirama (1279-1302)**

Conflict between the Tamils and Sinhalese subjects. Many Sinhalese were either put into prison, executed or expelled from Jaffna, Marco Polo's visit.



**(5) Varothaya (1302-1325)**

Peace between the Sinhalese and Tamils of Jaffna, with all round happiness and plenty. Most outstanding Aryachakravarti according to Natesan, patron of arts, letters, medicine, music and dancing, and an ardent Saivite.

**(6) Martanda Perum-Alan (great ruler 1325-1348)**

He defeated Parakramabahu V, who fled to Ruhuna and settled down there while Martanda planted his tax collectors all over the Gampola kingdom, in the highlands, lowlands, and nine ports. He left the Kotagama inscriptions in Tamil, in praise of his own victory.

### **Impressions of travellers of this period**

Foreign travellers who called on this part of the world during these times were specially attracted by the three countries of Malabar, Coromandel and Jaffna, on account of their widely known coastal ports and centres of commerce.

Baldaeus travelled to Malabar and Coromandel country on military duty, before he settled down in Jaffna for seven years.

Marco Polo the Venetian traveller visited Jaffna in 1293, coming through the smooth waters of Palk Strait when Vikkirama Singai Aryan was the Aryachakravarti. He had also like Ibn-Batuta travelled in Malabar and Coromandel. He mentioned in his travel tales, that the Aryachakravarti was "Sandemain", probably denoting Singai Aryan or Sethuman, ruler of Sethu as well (Rameswaram), that the people ate rice, oil of sesame, milk and flesh, they drank wine tapped from certain trees (palmyrah toddy), ate rice seated down with fingers, from clean palm leaves and wore spare in their dress. This probably refers to the people of Jaffna whom he met. (C. H. C. 320). Ibn-Batuta of Morocco another traveller who called on Jaffna as well as the other two countries in 1344, observed in his book that the people of all the above countries ate rice on banana leaves". "He himself ate rice sumptuously to be choked with it." Jaffna was at this time perhaps a country of rice fields and rice eaters. He gives an account of his audience with the Aryachakravarti who was a great ruler, Martandan



Perum-Alan whom he called in his Arabian custom "the Sultan of Ceylon" holding sway also over Mannar and the pearl fisheries. The king presented Ibn-Batuta with pearls. The Aryachakravarti was all powerful over the surrounding seas and that he had seen the ruler's fleet of a hundred merchant ships fully laden with cargo consigned to the Port of Yemen. The Aryachakravarti told him that he had an alliance with the Sultan of Coromandel, which suggested that he had the ever ready support of the Chola king. He also mentions that the king had a good and liberal education and knew the Persian language. The Aryachakravarti was very hospitable to him and fulfilled the Dervish' desire to go to the "Foot of Adam" by helping him with a palanquin and bearers, four Yogis, three Brahmins, an additional ten persons as companions along with 15 provision carriers. The traveller went by the western road passing through Mannar and Chilaw and last through the City of rubies of many colours which suggests that he took the Ratnapura footpath to Adam's Peak. Ibn-Batuta says that there were at this time two routes to Adam's Peak, one was called Baba route which was a more difficult one, the other one was known as Mama route less difficult, which is probably the Ratnapura path. A sort of stairway was cut on the mountain fixed with stanchions on it, to which they attached chains for climbers to hold by. The traveller was robbed of the stones presented by the King of Ceylon, by pirates on his way to Ma'bar peninsula (South India) (Ibn-Batuta P 258-259).

#### (7) Goonapooshana (1348-1380)

He settled weavers from Kanchipuram and Andhra country in Vannarponnai.

#### (8) Virothaya (1371-1380)

Riots between Sinhalese and Tamils, and uprising of the Vanniars, all quelled. The chief Vanniar of Omantai who was on his side made chieftain of all the Vanniars, indicating that the Vanni country was at this time under a Jaffna king. He helped Saiyaism. Alagakonnar III caught and executed his tax collectors in Gampola. The first unsuccessful retaliatory war on Gampola was during Vikramabahu III's time.



**(9) Jayaweera (1380-1410)**

The Jaffna kingdom, which included Puttalam and Mannar in the west, Trincomalee in the East, with the seven Vanniates in between, was very powerful. The king had a powerful fleet and a personal share in the cinnamon trade. He was interested in Koneswaram temple.

**(10) Gunaveera (1410-1446)**

Promoted Saivism. As trustee of Rameswaram temple, he built its main shrine with stones taken from Trincomalee by sea. Patron of Tamil assemblies. "Pararajasekeram" a book on Siddha system of medicine was written.

**(11) Kanagasuriya in exile in India-Jaffna under Kotte kingdom (1450-1467) Kanagasuriya's 2nd reign on return from India (1467-1478).**

Recovery of Jaffna by Kanagasuriya after his return from exile with the help of an army offered by the Naiks of Madura and by the great military exploits of his son Pararajasekeram, to whom during his lifetime, he handed over the crown of Jaffna, out of recognition for his splendid war service.

**(12) Pararajasekeram (1478-1519)**

He married a Chola princess, Rajaluxmi-ammal, to whom two sons, Singhabahu and Pandaram were born. The second wife was a Vellala, belonging to the line of Pandimalavan of Tinnevely to whom were born Paranirupasingam and four other children. Sangili was his son by a third wife called Mangathammal by an irregular marriage. The king was ardently devoted to Saivism, went on pilgrimage to Kumbakonam and according to one source was the builder of the four temples around Nallur Kandasamy Koyil. "Pararajasekera ula", a chronicle of Jaffna was written. His brother Sekerajasekeram, a great scholar stimulated and re-established Tamil learning which had become defunct under the Sinhalese. Supathidamuniver who came to Pararajasekeram's court, made a prophecy to the king of the evil days that are to come to the Jaffna dynasty and the temples, the



verse was found on the temple stones of Koneswaram and was seen by Constantine de Sa before its destruction in 1624.

**(13) Sangili Sekarajasekeram (1519-1564.)**

Sangili's struggle with the Portuguese began in 1543 when a Tamil king was forced to pay tributes to the Portuguese for the first time. The immediate cause of Sangili's hostility was the expanding proselytism in Mannar where Catholicism was spreading like prairie fire under the passionate preaching of Father Francis Xavier. Sangili's fear was that the ever increasing population of Catholics might topple his crown, giving preference to Portuguese direct rule. It was for this reason that he exterminated six hundred Christians including Father Xavier in 1560 in order to reduce the Catholic population, whereupon Braganza, Viceroy of Goa invaded Jaffna, plundered and destroyed Hindu temples as a reprisal, and captured Jaffna and Mannar. The struggle of the Jaffna kings with the Portuguese is a long story requiring separate treatment. Sangili was made a fief under the Portuguese and allowed to rule paying handsome tributes to Portugal, ever since this time all the succeeding kings developed a virulent hostility against foreign rule and maintained it to the very end. Sangili sent a Vadagar army to help Mayadunne in the latter's struggle with the Portuguese in 1547. Vidiya Bandara an uncompromising enemy of the Portuguese fled to Jaffna for safety, met Sangili and made a solemn vow before the deity of Veerakali-  
 amman Koyil to help each other against the Portuguese. Sangili made two further attacks on Mannar without success, the third attack by Periapulle was also unsuccessful. Mannar occupied in the annals of the Tamils, what Kotte was to the Sinhalese. Vidiya Bandara a Jaffna or Chola prince by his father met his fatal end in an accidental explosion in the above mentioned temple, and Sangili built the Pootharayya Koyil in memory of his friend. According to LXVIII - "Vidiya Bandara came to Jaffna with his son to enlist the support of the Tamils against the Portuguese, but at Tharakkuli both were murdered by the Tamils for wealth".



## Decline of the Jaffna kingdom

From 1560 to 1621 for sixty years, six vassal kings ruled under the Portuguese, all of them displaying persistent resistance and enmity to the foreigners, whenever an opportunity came their way, in spite of internal rivalries.

### (14) Puviraja Pandaram Pararajasekeram I (1561-1565)

He was Sangili's son.

### (15) Cunchi Nayinar (1565-1570)

Cunchi Nayinar or Casie Nayinar of unknown origin who seized the kingship, was imprisoned by the Portuguese.

### (16) Periya Pillai Segarajasekeram (1570-1582)

Nothing is known of his ancestry. He made a third attempt to capture Mannar with the help of a Naik force from Tanjore, which was repulsed.

### (17) Puviraja Pandaram II (1582-1591).

In his reign, Rajasingha I became king of Kandy. Dona Catherina was sent by her cousin Yamasinha for safety to the palace of Puviraja Pandaram II, king of Jaffna from where she and her cousin were shifted to Mannar by the Portuguese to be brought up by the Franciscan Friars in their monastery. The fourth and fifth attempt on Mannar for its recapture also ended in fiasco. Puviraja Pandaram II being a friend of the Sinhalese king of Kandy, gambled his own position and that of the Jaffna kingdom by giving help to the Kandyans against the Portuguese, which act brought about on the Portuguese tremendous losses, whereupon in 1591 the Portuguese invaded Jaffna, made a surprise landing at Colombothurai instead of Arali, captured Nallur with the blessings of the Catholic priests, after a bloody battle where the Tamils displayed great gallantry. The king was killed near Veerakaliamman Koyil, the heroic band of arm guards and the cream of the storm troopers took the field between this and the Nallur Kandasamy temples. They all met their deaths fighting for the cause which they held dear. Their leader a Yogi, and a priest of the temple were also killed fighting. The victorious enemy plundered and destroyed everything



he came across. Gaga, nephew and C. I/C of the army was killed in action along with the king's eldest son. Two queens with five children, the wife of Gaga, two princesses, Sangili Kumara and his twin brother, and two sons of Cunchi Nayinar were taken prisoners. Ethirmannasingam the son of Periya Pillai was saved by a Portuguese Major from death, to be appointed as the next king.

**(18) Ethirmanna Singa Pararajasekeram (1591-1615)**

His position in Jaffna was like that of Don Juan Dharmapala of Kotte, who had to stand the insults of the Portuguese, he was at heart an enemy of the Portuguese. The Portuguese in turn were always suspicious of him. Three hundred Yogis who were on their way to Adam's peak were arrested at Karaitivu and deported to India on the orders of his Portuguese masters, the Portuguese suspecting them as soldiers disguised in the garb of ascetics to assist the king of Kandy. The king was suspected of hostile intentions against Mannar, persecution of his Christian subjects, he was also accused of helping the Sinhalese by collecting for them soldiers from the Coromandel coast. "Kailaya Malai" was written in his reign by Muturasar.

**(19) Sangili Kumara (1615-1618)**

He was made subruler with the half hearted approval of the Portuguese, allowing Jaffna affairs to take their own course, the Portuguese being very tightly involved in their wars in Kotte and India. Sangili Kumara aroused the suspicion of the Portuguese, because of his attempts at alliances with Tanjore, the Sinhalese and the Dutch, withholding payment of tributes, whereupon Captain-Major Oliveira was sent to fight the Tamils and take complete charge of Jaffna. Sangili Kumara was defeated at the Battle of Vannarponnai. The king was captured and taken to Goa where he was first baptized and then beheaded in 1623. He refused his hands to be tied and bowed his head gracefully to the executioner, to be decapitated. Members of the remaining Jaffna royal family were baptized in Colombo and Goa, most of them living the rest of their lives in Goa.

S. H. T. Taylor's social laments as expressed in 1907, in the Ceylon National Review is quite apt for quotation here, as a truism applicable even now to present day unreformed attitudes.



"We have indeed to confess that our admiration of the past consists in the main of an idle boast of the purity and highness of certain families who are said to have come from South India. We do not take sufficient pride in the valour of the Tamil kings who reigned in Jaffna, in the good things they did, in the excellence of the administration of most of them. We fail to be inspired by the courage of our forefathers, and the great lives of many worthy sons of Jaffna who lived in the past. We only talk glibly of our ancestors in point of caste and family connections, This will not do".

We must use of the past as our guide to the present, in order to shape the future on a proper understanding.

## Origin of Caste in India

(From Vedic age 1921)

When the Indo-Aryans came into India, they were a casteless lot. "Caste" (quality of race) is a Portuguese word introduced into India in the 16th century to describe a rigid caste-conscious society with practices of untouchability and debilement. The Indo-Aryans when they reached the Indus Valley, came across the original inhabitants of north India (the Dasas - Dasas people). The dark north Dravidians, who gave violent resistance to the Aryan advance.

Caste system arose therefore out of physical conflict, hatred and difference of colour and culture. The conflict began between two colour Arya-Aryans (pale colour) and Dasas (dark colour) of the north Dravidians. Caste system in India was based primarily therefore on colour as is the case in modern times in Africa and America. The Aryans in order to get rid of the black people and save their own skin and survival, had to increase the tempo of their aggression by turning to regular warfare when a large portion of the north Dravidians met their own extinction. The Aryans could not continue this wholesale elimination for ever, therefore they made friends with the remnants, admitting some of them within their society, throwing others outside their pale into "Aparihata" villages as Sudras. This warfare made a split among



## VIII

### CASTE

All societies in the world are gripped with a caste feeling approving an arrangement in society tinged with some form of snobbery and grades of social distinction. The British of whom we know most among the westerners, are so keen observers of these distinctions, that they carry their restrictions wherever they go abroad and establish them in some form or other in their own isolated circles. Members of a lower group are often black-balled when proposed for admission into higher and exclusive social and sports clubs.

## Origin of Caste in India

(From Vedic age 1951)

When the Indo-Aryans crept into India, they were a casteless lot. "Caste" (purity of race) is a Portuguese word introduced into India in the 16th century to describe a rigid caste conscious society with practices of untouchability and defilement. The Indo-Aryans when they reached the Indus Valley, came across the original inhabitants of north India (the Dasa-Dasyus people), the dark north Dravidians, who gave violent resistance to the Aryan advance.

Caste system arose therefore out of physical conflict, hatred and differences of colour and culture. The conflict began between two colours Arya-Varna (peach colour), and Dasa-Varna (dark colour) of the north Dravidians. Caste system in India was based primarily therefore on colour as is the case in modern times in Africa and America. The Aryans in order to get rid of the black people and save their own skin and survival, had to increase the tempo of their aggression by turning to regular warfare when a large portion of the north Dravidians met their own extinction. The Aryans could not continue this wholesale elimination for ever, therefore they made friends with the remnants, admitting some of them within their society, throwing others outside their pale into "Aparthied" villages as Sudras. This warfare made a split among



the Aryans themselves into two classes (1) Brahmins who had brilliant intellects, great feats of memory and poetic imagination were given in charge of the fire-altars and sacrifices. (2) Kshatriyas took upon themselves to warfare and kingship.

The refusal to the Sudras of the sacraments and upanayana ceremonies (initiation to be twice born with the vestment of the sacred thread) was the beginning of the integration of the caste system into Hindu religion. If a Sudra uttered a vedic chant his tongue was to be uprooted, if he hears them, his ears were filled with molten wax, if he remembers them, then his body was cut asunder.

### **Creation of Caste by the Aryan Law giver, Manu.**

Manusastra describes the divine creation of caste in this way. The gods divided Purusha into four castes, his mouth represented a Brahmin, who used it for teaching and recital of mantrums. His arms were Kshatriyas (kings, nobles and soldiers). Vaisyas were his thighs, the Vaisyas sat down on their thighs in shops and did trade, usury and agriculture, the feet represented the Sudras who stood on their feet and did menial services for the first three castes. This was a scientific division of labour when particular skills were developed through passage of time and progeny, competitions and squabbles were eliminated and efficiency of work assured.

### **Caste among the South Dravidians.**

Circumstances did not permit the Southern Dravidians to adopt the Aryan caste system because they lived in splendid isolation, cut away from North India for at least two thousand years from the time of the advent of the Aryans to the time of Katyayana 4 B.C, by the horizontal ranges of forest clad hills and rivers that ran across the waist of India. Aryan usages flowed down in reality, only during the Gupta period (4 A.D.) through the marriages of the Pallavas with the Gupta dynasty. There was also no occasion for conflict between the south and the Aryans, although the Brahmin Munis had peacefully infiltrated into South India in prehistoric times to establish their fire altars and sacrifices, but in isolated and



scattered lonesomeness. The South Dravidians living an independent life in the splendour of their isolation, developed their own tradition and caste system based on geographical conditions, occupation and personal inclination. They could not come under the Aryan label of Sudras owing to the above reasons. The Tamils were never Sudras. The South Dravidians had no caste system, it was an Aryan conception. The south Dravidians initially spread themselves into five different geographical tribes (1) Hill tribe (Kurunchi people) (2) Forest tribe (Mullai people or shepherds. (3) Those who lived in the sea board (neydal), the Paradavas. (4) Desert and barren land (Palai). (5) The most important caste, the Velirs or Vellalas (the cultivating people) settled down on the luxurious plains and banks of rivers (Mathuram people). The above five divisions became castes by geography and occupation. During the Satavahana Empire of the Andhras new sub-castes were formed such as golikas (shepherds) and halikas (ploughmen), in the same manner during the Sangam age - 4 A.D., hunters became Eiyinars, robbers became Maravars, Parayans or Pariayenars were also formed, all based primarily on occupation. The caste system had its usefulness at certain periods of Indian history when it acted as a protective barrier of the Indian people against foreigners like the Arabs, Greeks, Sakas, Persians, Muhamedans etc, who entered and became residents of India, whereby foreign blood and ideas were shut out of Hindu society. Caste therefore played an important role, in the growth and preservation of Hindu society and culture, minimising class rivalry and enmity, developing a feeling of solidarity, improving skills with perfected techniques. Casteism is only an instrument of society and not a dogma, if the instrument has to be changed to suit new social requirements it has got to be done. Caste arises from inner feelings and herd instincts handed down by birth, and had lasted 5300 years in India against odds and reformist zeal, and social stratifications are likely to continue in some form or other in the world as long as the sky lasts. You may be able to remove the present type of casteism, but another kind of social gradation is bound to fill the vacuum. Buddha, Mahavira, Nayanars, Alvars, the Vaisnava philosophers like Ramanuja and the Calcutta school of religious thinkers of the 19th century were not able to settle the caste question inspite of all their anticaste movements.



Ananda Coomaraswamy's point of view on caste (1946) "Mahatma Gandhi universally regarded as a great spiritual force in the world, would like to resolve the untouchable problem but still believes in the theory of caste system. To do away with caste, to reduce all men to the condition of the modern proletarians, who have no vocations but only "jobs" would not be a solution but rather a dissolution".

## Castes in Jaffna

There were forty different castes during the Portuguese period.

### 1. Vellalas

These were the landed agricultural aristocrats associated with kings and nobles in blood, preserving Aryan culture, the "Aryan Tamils" in contradistinction to the "true Tamils" (Jungle and hill folk). According to Pattinappalai of the Sangm age, the six great virtues of the Vellalas were abstinence from (1) killing. and (2) stealing. (3) propagation of religion. (4) hospitality. (5) justice. (6) honesty. There are also a class of priests known as Saiva Vellala Kurukkals, remnants of the ancient Andanars, strict vegetarians who settled down in Navaly probably round Kurukkal koyil, Varani, Chulipuram and Vannarponnai. Passage of time had merged their rivals the Madapallis, and the Vanniars solidly into the Vellala caste.

### 2. Artisans

The five Artisan classes, goldsmiths, carpenters, braziers sculptors and blacksmiths consider themselves Brahmins, descendants of Visvakarma the Brahmin architect of gods, some of whom wear the sacred thread even today. A local legend carries the story that when Hanuman set fire to Lankapura, Visvakarma on the orders of Ravana, repaired the damage. The Devas were angered at his response, and cursed Visvakarma's progeny to earn their living by the efforts of only their hands.



### 3. Dhoby and Barber

A Mullaitivu dhoby communicated to the writer that he had three karmas (duties) in the day, he was a washerman in the sunny hours from 10 a. m to 4 p. m, a Vellala from 6 to 10 a. m in the morning, he was a Brahmin in the evening. Owing to the overcrowding of the transport ships they could not bring their own cultivators wives and priests. The barbers who came with the first migrant Tamils, for the same reason of overcrowded boats were permitted to marry Vellala women in Jaffna. To this day barber women feel it below their dignity to grace other Vellala functions. These points more or less show, that these two castes probably had some Vellala connections. The Vellalas came for settlement in Jaffna with their "Kudumais" (dependants) and "Adumais" (slaves).

The following three classes, Koviars, Nalavars and Pallars were automatically downgraded, cause being the destruction of temples by the Portuguese. They may have been before, "Kudumais" (dependants of Vellalas), rather than "Adumais" (slaves).

### 4. Koviars

#### Kovilar, servants of temples (56)

They are a virile lot. When the temples were destroyed in large numbers by Braganza (1560) and Oliveira in (1620) the Koviars lost their jobs and had to become the field assistants of the onetime Vellala temple managers. Later on, Vada-siraik-koviars, a poor but good class people came from India and joined the earlier Koviars. According to Rasanayagam Mudaliar the Koviars were Sinhalese Govias who lived in Jaffna when Sangili switched on his fury from the Portuguese on to the Sinhalese inhabitants of Jaffna. Some of them fled to the Kandyan and Vanni districts, while those who remained behind, became Tamil Koviars and slaves of the Vellalas.

### 5. Nambis, Nambimars or Naluvars, Nalavars and Sanars (34)

The Nalavars were formerly Nambis. They were the swordsmen and archers of the Vanniars, Sixty Nambis were in the pay of Karaippidi Vanniar of Kantherodai, one of the Nambis is said



to have killed the Vanniar. When the law avenged them, they fled to the shelter of the Sanars who were climbers of trees, from whom they learned the art of climbing palmyrah palms, displacing the latter from their traditional occupation. These Nambis were degraded to Naluvars, meaning people who slipped down from their caste or it gave a description of the slippery way these people climbed down the palmyrah trees, they are now known as Nalavars. The Sanars dispossessed of their jobs took to new occupations as fishermen using nets, and servants to the white man.

### 6. Pallars (56)

The Pallars were to the Vellalas in the same way Nambis were to the Vanniars. Pallars of Choolaland accompanied their aristocrats as their field assistants. As they were too many for the country, some of them returned to their homes. Those who stayed back became later climbers of palmyrah trees on being displaced by the Koviars as field labourers. Verkuti Pallars were collectors of dye roots for cloth dyers or Chayakarans, who came from the Coromandel coast and settled in the Nallur and Chundikuli areas. With the increase of the population of lowgrade castes, the Portuguese and Dutch started a money making slave trade, when these people were sold to the Vellalas.

### 7. Maravars (35)

A depredatory tribe that came from Ramanathapuram and settled down at Maravanpulam from where they were driven away to the jungles of Pandyalantavu, because of their stealing habits.

### 8. Sirais or Slaves

The Nalavars were originally Nambimars or Nambis, trusted swordsmen and archers of the Vanniars. The Pallars were field assistants to the Vellalas. The Kovilar were temple attendants. These three may have traditionally belonged to the "Kudumais" and not "Adumais" (slaves), mixing up physically and freely with the Vellalas in their common task in the fields. They were therefore not "untouchables". Three circumstances contrived to degrade all the above people to the status of slaves ;-



- (i) The uncharitable propensity of the Vellalas to degrade all other castes, even Vellalas other than themselves, not excluded.
- (ii) When the Portuguese destroyed temples, Kovilars lost their occupation and applied to the Vellala temple managers for new jobs. The managers installed them as their field assistants, displacing the Nambis and Pallars. The Kovilars now became "Kovias" (cultivation labourers). The Nambis and Pallars now sought the help of the Sanars, who taught the former, their own trade of tree-climbing. The Nambis now became Nalavars (tree climbers), Pallars also became so. The Sanars deprived of their traditional occupation took to new jobs of fishing with nets and as servants to the white man.
- (iii) When these people increased in numbers, the Portuguese and the Dutch started a profitable money-making trade by selling them to Vellalas as slaves.

Koviar who became Kovias (field labourers), Nambis who became Naluvans (tree climbers) and Pallars, all ultimately became degraded as Sirais or slaves of the Vellalas.

### **Caste in retrospect.**

Caste was working to some extent in a satisfactory manner due to the co-operation of all concerned, because of the common veneration of the Jaffna Tamil for ancient traditions. Although the Vellalas are credited to observe the six qualities mentioned in Pattinappalai, there are many faults in them. (1) Vellala A, pronounces himself superior to Vellala B. B contests and says that he is superior to A, when C poaches in and proclaims that he is superior to both the others. Who is to be the arbitrator? (2) His other fault is hunger for power and overlordship ending in jealousy, squabbles, "valavu" rivalries and factions. (3) Another point for comment is their love for public display of casteism in action and conversation. (4) A propensity of a Vellala is to nickname down other Vellalas, sometimes resulting in the latter's ruin. For example, a Vellala had tied a donkey in his compound for a period for some reason or other, that Vellala became a



donkey Vellala, his house was called donkey house, and a decade hence, his village assumed the name of donkey corner. It is the same with people who sell eggs, milk etc. (5) On the other hand at the present time, if a low grade Vellala girl had immense dowry or a man in the same low grade had education and a secure employment in Government service, the elders threw all their ideas of caste to the limbo of forgotten things, and the marriage is consummated with all éclat. A wedding is a grand occasion, to pay off old grudges or to start new bones of contention. In this way there are several stratifications and degradations within the Vellala fold so that in one family, there are at present fine caste distinctions among the son-in-laws and daughter-in-laws. (6) The Portuguese and Dutch collected revenue by the sale of lower orders like the Koviars and Pallars as "sirais" (slaves) to those whose sole virtue and title to greatness in the caste set up today, was the possession of Sirais in number and kind, rise of a new upgraded Vellala. The display of "sirais" in present day weddings does not therefore certify that the host is necessarily of a higher breed.



## IX

### REGIONAL TAMILS OF JAFFNA

#### I. Vanniars

(With thankful acknowledgement to C. S. Navaratnam- "Vanni and Vanniars" 1960)

The first batch of fifty one families of Vanniars with their seven chieftains came from Pandya coast on the invitation of Kulakoddan in c 493 for the noble purpose of cultivating the land at Tambalakamam. They were experts in agriculture and known also as Palli in South India, who claimed to be Kshatriyas. Another batch of sixty Vanniars are known to have come from Tarunipuram. kulam of Pandya along with Samathuthi a Pandya princess who came to marry Jayatunga, son of Ugra Singkan. These Vanniars increased in number and populated the Vanni districts between Kalpitiya and Punakari in the west, Kottiyar and Mullaitivu in the east. The Vanniars from Trincomalee spread out towards Batticaloa and Badulla districts, from the central Vanni districts they gravitated downwards through Anuradhapura to Kurunegala and Nikaweritiya to become Sinhalese Vannis in these Sinhalese districts. Vanni became the land of Pillayars and Aiyansars, tank and temple ruins, elephants, Parangi and malaria.

#### Clans

The headquarters of the Vanniars were at Omanti, Mullaitivu, Tambalakamam, Kalpitiya and Punakari the last under Pandara Vannia. One of their great principalities was Pannankamam in Tunukai district, where Nichchinga Senadirayan (1765) and his daughter Katiri Nachchan held sway. Don Philip Nallamappan and his son Gasper Nichchinga Senadirayan were masters of the hunt at Punakari. The Adigars were non-Vanniar chieftains created by the Dutch to force the Vanniars to procure the elephants which these people neglected to give. During Dutch times, Saravanamuttu Mudaliar who built the Tholpuram Amman Koyil was chief magistrate of Valigamam, while his brother Shanmuga Nayaka Mudaliar was the head of the land registry office at the Jaffna



Kachcheri. Punnya Nachchy built a madam at Chidambaram and gave to it, her name. Nallamappan Vannya was arrested in 1790 by the Dutch for treason and imprisoned. Vaithilinga Chettiar of Vannarponnai secured his release after paying a fine. This Vannya showed his gratitude by supplying him all the palmyrah timber to build the Vannarponnai Sivan temple bequeathing also at Punakari, land for its maintenance.

## Life of Vanniars

They lived in straw thatched houses and when some one died the Vanniyar abandoned his house for a new one. No wedding can be completed without the presence of the dhoby and barber, a tali is worn round the bride's neck and a piece of cloth given as "kurai" while the bridegroom received a buffalo as his dowry. The chieftains kept up their royal dignity and would not attend the Dutch durbar in Jaffna unless the invitation was accompanied with tom-toms. They were a turbulent people, and to keep them in good behaviour the Dutch always held a Vanniar chieftain in the Jaffna fort as a hostage, changing him every three months for a new one. He owned arable land which was his kingdom and he cannot be persuaded to work for hire. They were a hospitable, conservative and agricultural race. Men wore ear-rings but not of gold for fear of being stolen. They lived like the Tamils and "Thesavalamai" was introduced to them by the Dutch. Ten thousand Jaffna Tamils used to migrate to the Vanni temporarily, during the agricultural season to earn by helping the Vanniars in their cultivation. They intermarried with the high caste Saivite families of Araly, Moolai, Chulipuram, Tholpuram, Navaly, Chankanai, Kopay, Irupalai, Tellipalai, Maravanpulam, Udupiddy and Koilkandy.

## 2. Mullaitivu People

This Vanni district was peacefully colonised in the latter part of the 18th century by a large number of Tamils from the Jaffna peninsula, particularly from the villages of Alaveddy, Udupiddy and Navaly.



### 3. Batticaloa People (N 181)

Rikloff Van Goens the Dutch Governor wrote in 1675, "Since all the inhabitants of Batticaloa in custom, religion, origin and other characteristics together with those of Jaffnapatnam, Kottiyar and westward right over to Calpentyn and the northern portion of Mangul Korale inclusive, have been from the remotest times and are still now Malabars divided into their tribes and very unwilling to mix up with the Sinhalese, Veddas and other outsiders, the latter are also loathe to mix with these people, and they are to be considered no otherwise than they form with those of Jaffnapatnam and Kottiyar as a people separated from the Sinhalese and have till now remained practically within this freedom".

### 4. Sonakars of Jaffna (Y. V. M. 55)

Sonakars came to Jaffna during the Dutch times from Kayalpattanam etc., and settled down in south Mirusuvil which name they changed to Usan. They were originally pure Tamils of South India by race converted to Islam by one Santhachchaivu. They traded from fair to fair at Mirusuvil, Chavakachcheri, Kodikamam and Elluthumaduval. From Usan they migrated to Nallur where their presence was not welcome to the Hindu inhabitants of this holy city. By different stratagems of the Hindus, they were forced to leave Nallur extracting a pact from the Hindus to be allowed to come back to Nallur for the purpose of worship any time they wished, even if a new Hindu temple was put up. They went and settled down in east Navanturai, also round Periakadai and Moor street whose inhabitants they are today.

### 5. Colombo Chetties (LXXXIII)

They are a branch of the Tamil race who came in the middle of the 16th century from Tinnevely, a place different from the origin of most of the Jaffna Tamils. They belonged to a subdivision of the Vaisya caste. They have had trading connections with Ceylon earlier.



The women did not come with them as it was against their caste to do so. The men married among high caste local women and settled down in Colombo, Thoppu and Munneswaram, where they kept up their national religion, dress, customs, language and caste. They came to Ceylon probably as Indian Catholics, this religion saving them from Portuguese persecution. Owing to a famine in their country, a second wave of Chetties came about the end of the 16th century, this time with their wives and daughters who married among the former set of Chetties. As Catholics, the Chetties withstood firmly the persecution of the Dutch for 150 years. Alli Arasani daughter of a king of Pandu had a number of Paravas to fish pearls (247 A. D.).

Virarasan Chetty of Madura was a wealthy man and the only Hindu who was in a boat with several Paravas. When the ship was wrecked off the shores of Ceylon, they landed at Kuthiramalai, Silavathurai and Chilaw, where under the auspices of the wealthy Chetty they built these cities. Virarasan Chetty finally settled down at Chettikulam which was named after him. This chetty was probably not a Colombo, but an ordinary Chetty,

## 6. Madapallis

Simon Casie Chitty Mudliar in his "Ceylon Gazetteer" (P 229) describes them "as an extraordinary race of people found in Jaffna alone, comparable to the Bandaras among the Sinhalese". He is not off the mark when he states that the etymology of the word "Madapalli" is disputed. At the moment no one in Jaffna knows whether one is a Vellala or Madapalli. The Vellalas in malice interpret "Madapalli" in its literal sense as temple kitchen, and that their mothers attended to kitchen work.

### Madapallis and Kalingas.

The Madapallis on the other hand claim that their clan name emanated from "Madappan" - five hundred small villages and from "Ali", a ruler, ruler of five hundred villages in Kalinga and that their ancestors were the Kshatriya chieftains of these villages, this is said to be confirmed in the Nigandu. The chieftains were the Raja and Kumara Madapallis found only in Jaffna.



### **Madapallis and Sangili Senior.**

"They are the descendants of the offsprings of the Chakravartis, not by their queen consorts but by the ladies of their harems" (Casie Chitty). Another view is that this title was created by Sangili to appease the disappointed heirs to the throne. To quote one instance, Y.V.M. P 37 :- "Sangili proposed to bribe Paranimuruppa-Singhan, a step-brother with a more legitimate claim to the throne, by conferring on him a title of honour as Muthaliyar, an artifice to turn away the attention of the people from his rival's royal descent, by reducing him to a position of a common nobleman. This offer was of course declined, whereupon Sangili tried to satisfy this contestant by endeavouring to elevate him to a still higher and attractive rank as Madapalli which too was unequivocally rejected.

### **Pararajasekeram and Madapallis (A.Mootuthamby Pillai).**

King Pararajasekeram married Rajaluxmi of Chola kingdom. He had like all other kings of that time other wives, Valliammal and Mangathammal, latter of lower status. The high class Madapallis claimed to be descendants of these princesses.

### **Ethirimanasingam and Madapallis**

During his reign seven members of the Madapallis with the suffixes "Mudali" attached to their names, were made chieftains of seven villages, Nallur Atchuvelli, Mallakam, Sandirupai, Araly, Udupiddy and Kachchai. They were all called Mudalis. All the seven names are given by Navaratnam in his book "Tamils and Ceylon (P. 168)".

### **Rasanayagam (P 385- 390).**

Kalinga was the original home of the kings of Jaffna and their near relatives were called Madapallis. The Raja and Kumara Madapallis connected with royal blood increased in number along with the increase of the members of the Jaffna royal house. Those belonging to the Madapalli class but not connected with the royal house were termed Sangu Madapallis. The Charaku Madapallis are those people who bought these titles from the Portuguese for money, to elevate themselves in society. Rasanayagam



goes deeper and backward into history to trace the origin of these people in India. Madapallis were called so, after their original home "Madapalli" in Kalinga. Madapalli is said to be a village in the district of Nathavadi in the Kakatiya (Telugu) kingdom of the 13th century in ancient south Kalinga. Nathavadi was ruled by petty kings, one of them was Rudradeva Raja of Madapalli in Nathavadi and nephew of Kanapati, both became later famous kings of Kakatiya. Rudradeva's daughter Bayyala Mahadevi lived in Madapalli (inscriptions of Bezvada and Amarawathy). Parनाविताना :- "After the conquest by the Muslims of the Kakatiya kingdom which was called "the kingdom of Motupalli" by Marco-Polo, the Madapallis migrated southward and joined forces with the Aryachakravartis of Rameswaram and ultimately found their way to Ceylon".

### **Madapallis and Dutch**

Although the kings of Jaffna married among the Vellalas, the Madapallis considered themselves higher than the Vellalas and their struggle for supremacy continued for a long time, and became so troublesome that the Portuguese and Dutch had to secure peace by treating them alike, in the matter of honours and offices. Governor Van Rhee writing in 1697 had to explain, "I think it is necessary to state that a bitter and irreconcilable hatred had always existed in Jaffna-patam between the caste of Vellalas and Madapallis, so that these may not be elevated in rank and offices of honour, one above the other. For these reasons the two writers of the commander are taken from each, so that one of them is a Vellala and the other Madapalli, (R.390). Finally the Madapallis lost themselves into the Vellala caste, as in the case of the Vanniars. Rasanayagam traces the blue blood of the Madapallis not only to the Aryachakravarti kings, he goes backward to the Kakatiya kingdom of the twelfth century where some of the Madapallis had royal blood and were relatives of the kings of Kakatiya, one of the last of the South Indian kingdoms captured by the Muhameddan invaders.



## 7. Kareara Community or Kurukulams of Jaffna

The Kurukulams trace their ancestry to the Kshatriya house of Kurus of Kurushetra (Kuru-nadu), the rich doab between the Yamuna and Ganges. The Karears according to their own view are "Kurus and Kshatriyas", defeated Kuru exiles of the Mahabharata war. A strand of animus runs in Kareara literature against the Vellalas because the latter consider the Karears (in Tamil, a coastal people) with spite, as fishermen and therefore of lower status. The Karears with injured feelings taunt the Vellalas in return as Sudras, lowest of the Aryan four-fold castes, a people who stood on their feet and did menial service to the other three nobler castes, one of them being themselves as Kshatriyas.

Oriental people have an inclination to trace their origin to legendary times and distant places. In the light of modern studies, the significance of Vellalas as Sudras, Karears as Kshatriyas, Kurus and fishers, calls for dispassionate examination, legend betraying at one time or other its own weakness.

(i) The Mahabharata, facts or fiction or both, written (200 B.C.-200 A.D.) deals with a war that had happened at least 900 years earlier. It was composed by a sage for a more sacred purpose as the very name implies, Maha (great) Bharata (weighty), a great and weighty treatise on the principles of material welfare, righteous conduct and spiritual realization—an epic addendum to Hinduism, disguised in a war theme.

(ii) The Dravidians were inhabitants of all India before the arrival of the Aryan tribes. They were cut off by the physical features of India in the form of forest clad hills of the Vindhya (Thiru-kuda-nadu) and the Sapti and Tapti rivers in the Northwest, the Mahadeo and Maikal Hills with the Mahanadi river in the Northeast, impassable barriers running across the waist of India separating the Dravidians into two different nations Dasa-Dasyus people or North Dravidians and South Dravidians (Tamils) without communication and intercourse between both tribes up to the time of Kautalya 3 B.C., more precisely the Gupta period 4 A.D. North India was a different and distant constellation to the South



Dravidians who were the Tamils. The Tamils with this splendid geographical isolation and shelter undisturbed by any Aryan attack from the north, preserved the purity of their blood and evolved their own caste system to suit their immediate environment, based on occupational and geographical conditions. Even during the peak of aryanisation of the Tamils during the Sangam age, the only article the Tamils did not accept was the Aryan four-fold caste system. They were never Sudras, as provided in the Aryan caste system for the North Dravidians.

(1) Velirs or Vellalas lived in rich banks of rivers and fertile plains, cultivators of arable paddy lands (Marutham people).

(2) People who lived on fishing in the sea coast areas were known as Neydal people. The Jaffna people who migrated from Cholaesam were therefore never Sudras. It was neither possible for the Kuru exiles to cross over a combination of formidable mountains, forest and water obstruction and settle down in the south, in the primeval times of the Mahabharata war.

(3) It stands simplified to state that the Kurukulams were named after their home country Kuru-kula-desa or Kuru-mandal (Coromandel coast) of South India. As their warlike qualities were similar to those of the Kshatriyas, they were labelled Tamil shatriyas (Kshatriyas). Kurumandalam may have been transported by legend to Kurushetra. For instance, during the height of their military glory, the Cholas though not of Kshatriya blood, presented themselves in imitation as Kshatriyas solely on merits of military results.

(4) When the Aryans entered North India or Aryadesa, they found the original inhabitants to be a dark skinned people with a strange culture offering fierce resistance to the Aryan advance. The Aryans therefore started exterminating the latter people in long wars, but could not continue to do so for ever. The Aryans therefore sought their friendship, accepting some of them into their fold, and throwing others outside their pale into prohibited villages as the Sudra caste. These Sudras were the Dasa-Dasyus people, who were the North Dravidians, quite different from the Tamils (South Dravidians). The question of "fishers" is discussed later.



## A Great Maritime and Martial race

From a study of all aspects in history, one comes to the conclusion that there existed from times immemorial in Kurumandal (Kuru-kula-desa) along the eastern coast of the present state of Madras which comprised Kanchipuram, Kaveripattanam and Tanjore districts on the Kuru-mandal coast or Kodikari, and Keelakari (Pandyan coast) a great martial race, an amphibian tribe of brave soldiers, living as they did on the seaboard, were also able navigators and navy commanders, without perhaps any special designation, an amorphous race or group of Vamsams. In about Madras, they were loosely known in early times as Ariyars, Kuru-kula Vamsas and Varna-kula Mudalis. Portions of them in the very south of India and the Eastern province of Ceylon are still called Kauravars. There existed Kareara commanders named Kuru-Kula-Rayans, Kuru-Kula Talavans and Kurukulat-tharayains during the reigns of Virarajendra, Kulathungo I, Kulathungo III and Sundara Pandya Deva (11-13 centuries). These Kurukulams were skilled in military deeds and naval action and adventurous enough, not only to change profoundly the history of south Indian kingdoms but also the course of events in Ceylon.

### Changing phases of these warlike people

(i) In pre-Christian times it is likely, that it was the Kurukulam people who kept up the trade and communications between the Jaffna and Indian ports. Fa-Hien a Chinaman, who visited Ceylon in C 411 records that Ceylon was an accepted trading centre before Vijaya, with incursions of adventurers from India for booty and trade.

(ii) Two Tamil brothers, Sena and Guttaka, powerful in their cavalry and navy, sons of a boatman, came with a great army and reigned together at Anuradhapura for 22 years with justice and fair play. They were horse-seafarers who came in boats (177 - 165 B.C.).

(iii) Again, a Tamil of noble descent and said to be a native of Tanjore, Elala (connected with voyages in the sea) came from



Chola country and ruled for 44 years at Anuradhapura (145 - 101 B.C.) with even justice towards friend and foe on occasions of dispute of law. In times of distress in the sea, Tamil seamen even today invoke Elala's aid for relief, singing the chorus of a song ending with "Elelo".

(iv) Kurumandalam was a potential reservoir of military man power of the first magnitude from which Pallavas, Cholas and Pandyas used to draw from time to time, their soldiers for dynastic wars and oversea invasions of Ceylon. The appearance in Ceylon of Pallava coins with emblems of sailing ships and products of the sea such as fish, chanks, chouris and crabs, tortoise etc., all testify to invasions with the help of Kurukulams. It was the sailing vessels of the Kurukulam captains and commodores, that transported military men and material to the different theatres of war of the kingdoms on the Indian coast and sea borne invasion of Ceylon. Makara (sea monster) embossed on Kuru flags and pearl umbrella emblem exclusive to the Kurus are also products of the sea.

(v) During medieval times these Kurukulams had turned out to be professional soldiers and mercenaries. They were probably responsible for the establishment of a new pattern of Tamil hegemony in Ceylon (623-684), the kings employing hired soldiers from India to defeat the many rival claimants to the throne. This sort of affairs prevailed, until a Tamil leader became ultimately a kingmaker, when Manavamma returned back to Ceylon with another Indian army, defeated the kingmaker and curbed Tamil power for a time.

(vi) The core of Rajendra Chola's army which conquered in one blow, nearly the whole of Ceylon in the 11th century was made up of these military people who had become in medieval times hired soldiers. Vijayabahu I and Parakramabahu I copied this model. Parakramabahu I got valuable assistance from these Indian soldiers called Velaikaras under their Tamil Adhikarams, to conquer Ruhuna and suppress rebellions in other parts of Ceylon in order to become king of Ceylon. He also sent a naval expedition to Burma under the admiralship of a Tamil Adhikaram. The Kalinga princes who came from South India and ascended



the throne of Polonnaruwa, did so probably with the assistance of these Tamil soldiers. Sahasamalla came to Polonnaruwa from Thiruchinapalli, Kurumandalam.

## The story of the Jaffna Kurukulams

"Kurukulams" in Jaffna is synonymous with the entire Kareera community which covers up not only the Kurukulam proper, but also the Varnakula vamsam. You will see the labels of two vamsams combined in one name, one such example is, Varnakulasuriya Arasa Nilayitta Kurukula Suriya Mudaliyar. Tradition current among the Kurukulams of Jaffna is that they came from Kaveripatanam, Keelakari and Kanchipuram on the Kurumandal coast, brought under their Kurukula and Varnakula chiefs in the times of the Tamil and Sinhalese kings. They spread out from Karaiur and Passaiur which was like Negombo to the Sinhalese Karavas the Tamil parvenu, from where they spread along the coast to Navanturai, Mathagal, Myliddy, Varuni, Valvettiturai, (strongly Hindu even now), Pt. Pedro, Trincomalee, Mantota, Mullaitivu and Batticaloa districts. The tradition of the local people of Mathagal is that they came to Ceylon carrying the Bo-tree with Sangamitta, who travelled through South India and landed in Mathagal. The Batticaloa Kauravars were probably the descendants of the five families of Kurukulam proper who migrated from Manampitiya to Chenkaladi, Eravur and Batticaloa, their ancestry rooted in remote times, in Negombo. The Karears arrived in Jaffna as sailors, soldiers and pure colonists. The Pattankattis of Jaffna were guardians of the king's coast and collectors of taxes of 'dhonys' (boats) that touched on Jaffna ports.

Vayapadal, a history of Jaffna written in the 16th century mentions for the first time of a group of colonists of Jaffna as that of Varnakula descent, this settlement had taken place probably before Chola invasions and in the first Kalinga dynasty of Jaffna about the 9th century. This assessment fits in with the recorded colonization by Yalpadi of Manaltidal, (sand heap of Karaiur and Passaiur) which was presented to Yalpadi by Jayatunga Rasa, the second king of the first Kalinga dynasty. Fr. S. G. Perera and Navaratnam make passing references to the Karears in connection with Sangili Kumara's period (1616-1624). Karears



were already living in Jaffna at his time and fought for the lawful claimants to the throne against the usurpation of Sangili Kumara. Sangili Kumara thereupon sent an appeal to the Naik of Tanjore who sent a fresh army of Karears under their Commander Varuna Gulata (Cem Nayque) one of kingly status and an enemy of the Portuguese, who helped Sangili Kumara to capture the throne of Jaffna. According to Telugu works (R 386) Sangili-Kumara, when dispossessed of his kingdom, went on a begging voyage, with his family and dependants and obtained from Achayuta Naik of Tanjore, the necessary troops with which he was able to recover his throne. The Karears invariably fought on the side of righteousness against injustice, like their Karava counterparts who fought with loyalty for the Sinhalese kings against the Portuguese, placing the interest of the country before their religion which was the same as that of the Portuguese, (Karavas and Portuguese both being Catholics). They fought for the lawful claimants to the throne against the usurper Sangili-Kumara. They were a loyal and patriotic people, when they fought later for their ruler Sangili-Kumara against the Portuguese and finally in Sangili-Kumara's last battle of Vannarponnai, where they were defeated, and when Jaffna as a result passed into the possession of the Portuguese, they were the people who kept up several rebellions to drive the Portuguese away. Jaffna Karears appear to be preponderously of the Varnakulavamsam (Varna - God of the Sea).

### **The Sinhalese Karavas and Jaffna Karears**

- (i) Both these groups came from a common blood stock in their original home in India, Kanchipuram, Kaveripatanam and Keelakarai.
- (ii) Both came to Ceylon from the same locality, Kurukuladesa. They were both invited by the Kotte and Jaffna kings for their military qualities to assist the latter in difficulties of local wars.
- (iii) Both were earlier, Chola Hindu Tamils.
- (iv) They both settled down in the coastal areas to which they were used to, in their home country.



(v) Both were trapped early on arrival into Catholicism, the Sinhalese adopting Portuguese personal names, but the Tamils changed their names to those of Catholic saints like Nichola Pillai, Sebastian Pillai, Celestin, Xavier, Anthony and so forth.

(v) Whilst the Karavas adopted the Sinhalese language and were ultimately assimilated into the Sinhalese nation, the Tamil Karears continued their own language, customs and traditions, in a previously established Tamil country. There were many clans of Karears who were strongly Hindu.

### Naval Affairs

It is uncharitable to call a people who distinguished themselves so well in military and naval traditions by the lower attributes of a fishing occupation. These people were primarily and foremost a soldierly and naval race and merchant-shipmen. Rajendra Chola sent a naval expedition to far flung Sumatra in the 11th century, 40 years before the Norman conquest of Britain by a similar expedition, probably by the same people. Parakramabahu I sent in 1165 a sea borne invasion of Burma through the Andaman Islands under the command of a Damila-dhikaram. The Karears were ship builders, go-down owners, navigators and rich merchants in rice and timber. Some of them were guardians of the king's coast. The Karears kept alive the commerce and communications by boat service between the Jaffna ports and those of the Coromandel coast. Their sea-going ships visited not only the coasts of India and Ceylon but carried trade to the ports of the Arabian coast and Persian Gulf, as well as to the remote Coral Islands of the middle of the Indian Ocean Still says, "The sailing ships were of eastern rig, with two or three masts, of eastern build, manned and owned by eastern men. A good part of the Karears formed the kings's navy under Kuru-kula commodores. During peace time, the Jaffna boats formed the merchant fleet. They were seasoned meteorologists and astronomers who could forecast accurately the change of winds and weather, and guide their ships in mid-ocean by the observation of stars and flight of birds.



## “Fishers”

“All fishermen are not Karears and all Karears are not fishermen.” The Vellalas caught fish in inland waters, paddy fields, lakes and nearby rivers. There are Vellala fishermen in Batticaloa. Thousands of acres of paddy land in 21 villages in Mantota are cultivated even today by Karears. Kareara society was known as a “caste of fishermen” from Portuguese times. The latter called them “Pescadores”, but made a fine distinction as Karears who did no fishing and Kareara-Pescadores, who did catch fish. The Dutch called them “Visseren” while the English later used the word “Fishers” for them. Father Miranda (1707) recognised them as “a caste of fishermen”. The British were a nation of fishermen before they built up their mighty imperial navy.

According to a research student on Tamil studies, C. Nagalingam, (“The Hindu Organ 14.7.67”), a part of Kulakodan’s colonists of Tambalakamam and the villages surrounding it were Rayans (Kurus or Karears) from Marunkur, South India. Their descendants are even now agriculturists and not fishers. Along with the above, came not only Vanniars but also Vellalas and Pandarams.

## Kareara Society and Culture

The Karears and Vellalas are two parallel races of Jaffna who do not mix in blood through marriages. They are a people with high heritage, titles and emblems. Their culture, tradition and customs are based on a common Tamilian heritage, except for few modifications of details in ceremonies. Kareara nobles moved about in palanquins carried by bearers, with drum beats and nila-pavadai (white cloth spread out in front of their pathway), a symbol of the dignity of the person riding in the palanquin. They had their own slaves. As soldiers, they captured prisoners of war who became their own property by right. They had the word “Kurukulam” inserted in their land deeds and thombus. Their Kudimakkals had peculiar functions allotted to them in a wedding house. A Marayan brings the koorai, i. e. the first vestment present by the bridegroom to the bride to be worn at an auspicious moment of the wedding. The Ambattan (barber) sang a song of blessings to the bridal couple, meaning in English “You shall flower like the banyan tree, take root like



the kusa grass, you shall shoot up like the bamboo and live without end". When the arrangement for the feast is completed the host asked the dhoby, Can we eat ?" The dhoby looks round to see if there are any outsiders, Vellalas or not : if there is even one present to be a Vellala, the dhoby will name him and say, "There is one person". Then this person is taken out to a separate place and given food.

## Melonkies and Keelonkies

The above two terms of classification are derived from the words Mel-anky (upper vestment) and Keel-anky (lower vestment) Melonkies had the wherewithal to wear an upper arment in addition to the lower one, while the Keelonkies could provide themselves with merely a lower garment. The distinction is one of means.

During the Dutch period the Karears separated themselves gracefully into two orders :-

(i) Melonkies - Upper class. These capitalists, ship owners and merchants were elevated by the Dutch to higher ranks as captains of armies, Mudaliyars, Maniagars, Adigars and Moopus of churches. Their present representatives are the different clans with their names ending in 'Singha', and some others. There were also several Hindu Karears, Vairavanatha Velautha Adappan, was at one time a headman of the port of Valvetturai.

(ii) Keelonkies - Lower class. With the arrival in Jaffna of the railway in 1905, the Indo-Ceylon railway connection in 1914 and the introduction of steamers to ply round the coast of Ceylon weekly, the transport trade in Kareara hands dwindled and with the coming of buses and lorries, "the last nail of their commercial coffin was driven and they have taken to other occupations and professions". The poorer among them have resorted to fishing as Fr. Gnanapragasam observed, for want of a better occupation. Fishing like hunting, was in ancient times a royal sport and sea-faring was considered in keeping with the hardy and adventurous character of a warrior race.



## Yalpana - Pattanam "Town of the Kurukulams"

Pattanam takes its etymology from Pattavanans, a community of Karears who dwelt in coastal towns like Chennapattanam (Madras), Nagapattanam and Kaveripattanam on the sea board of Kurumandalam, and Peria and Chinna Kareara-pattanams in the town of Mannar.

The old kings of Jaffna had allocated to the Karears the western portion of their palace which was Karaiur, much larger in area than at present, bounded by Nallur in the east, Chundi-kuli in the south and Vannarponnai in the north east, occupied at present by the Cathedral, Seminary, St. Patrick's College and running through Parangiterru (Main Street) to the court houses, Central College and Fort. Jaffna Pattanam is therefore doubly a Kareara town. Karaiur and Passaiur were said to be the "Manal tidal" (sand heap) that was presented by king Jayatunga of the first Kalinga dynasty to Yalpadi in the 9th century, who colonised it with the first batch of Karears of Varnakulam.

Rasanayagam (P 211) is of opinion that Yalpani and his followers settled at Passaiur and Karaiur, the port of Jaffna was probably Pannai-thurai, Pannai derived from Pani (the minstrel). This was a Karara port of the city of Jaffna, "the port where the navy of the Aryachakravarti always manned and officered by the Karears, the descendants of the Pani settlers collected. Ibn-Batuta arrived at Jaffna through this port. The Portuguese army which was the first to invade Jaffna under Braganza landed at this port on 20th Oct. 1559.

The author acknowledges with thanks for most of the above material to a brochure "Who are the Kurukulams of Jaffna"? published by the North Ceylon Maritime Association-(1956).

### 8. Mukkuvars

(Main source :- Simon Casie Chitty's Ceylon Gazetteer (PP 276 - 280)

This subject is inserted here with the materials so far available to the writer on the separate suggestions of two scholars, themselves authors of books.



**Legendary origin:** — Mukkuvars claim their origin to the Ramayana in the way Kurukulams trace theirs to the Mahabharata, Mukkuvars designated themselves as Mukugars (Kuga, a ferryman in the Ramayana) who had ferried Rama and his army from Ayodhya across the Ganges southward, and arrived in Lanka along with Rama.

Raghavan in his "India in Ceylon history etc P. 21", mentions that in the earlier stages "they occupied large areas round about Batticaloa and in course of time spread over the Jaffna Peninsula establishing sovereignty over the Island of Delft and a number of principalities in the hinterland of Jaffna", such as Navaly, Navanturai etc.

According to Vayapadal they were one of the many tribes who were got down by Yalpani for settlement in Yalparam, in early 9th century. According to Y. V. M. (P 5) Pandu-Maharaja, when ruling over Ceylon from Anuradhapura in 433 had come on a royal visit to Manaltidal and encamped at Maviddapuram, the inhabitants of Keerimalai submitted a petition to the king against the defilement of the holy waters of Keerimalai by the fishing activities and exposure of fish to dry etc. by the Mukkuvars. The king ordered the Mukkuva chieftains Usuman and Senthana along with every individual member of the Mukkuva caste, whose hereditary occupation was fishing, to quit the sacred neighbourhood, whereupon these people migrated to Batticaloa and settled at Panakai and Valaiyiravu. Few however remained behind and formed new settlements on the sea coast, far removed from Keerimalai. The place from where the Mukkuvars left, were known as Usuranthurai and Senthankalam or Allith-thudai. Keerimalai seems to have therefore been their earliest settlement in Ceylon.

In the 15th century during the reign of Parakramabahu VI of Kotte, there was an impending threat to capture Ceylon by a large Mukkuva army from Punnala. One army had already invaded and had taken possession of Puttalam, while another army was poised at Nagapatnam ready for its swoop on Ceylon. The king after consultation with his council invited a Karava army from Coromandel, who debarked at Mutwal, marched north to Puttalam, and after a siege of three months over-powered



the enemy, captured the Puttalam fortress, losing a thousand five hundred soldiers in this encounter. Next they destroyed Nagapatnam losing here another one thousand four hundred men.

We learn from Indian history that the Arabs who brought lots of money into Malabar by the export trade of pepper, were encouraged to marry local women and settle down in the Malabar coast. The Zamorins of the ninth century went further in ordering one or two males of each Mukkuva family (fisher folk) to embrace Islam, the last of the Zamorins (or Cheruman Perumals), Bhaskara Ravi Varma setting an example personally by becoming a Muslim, changing his name also to Abdur Rahaman Sauri. Casie Chitty is of opinion that the Mukkuvars derived their origin from the Nairs with whom they resembled in manners, customs and ways of living. These Mukkuvars in order to avoid islamisation, migrated to Ceylon to establish their residence in the Malabar province of Ceylon, first at Kuduraimalai and thence to different parts of Puttalam and several other areas.

#### **Mukkuvars vs. Karavas (XXXII)**

The Thulukkars (Muhameddans) under their leader Mera, and the Mukkuvars under their chief Vedarasan infested the seas and committed piracies. The Cholas despatched an expedition under a Kurukula captain to go to Ceylon. This captain defeated the Mukkuvars and Thulukkars of whom, the first went to Batticaloa and formed a Mukkuva colony at Ilanthaikkadu, and the other founded the present Moor settlement of Vidathaltivu.

#### **Mukkuvars defeat Karavas**

Sometime after the arrival of the Mukkuvars, their chief Vedarasan picked up a quarrel with Manicka-thalavan, the leader of the Karavas who possessed a settlement in the southern section of the district, the former flatly refusing to give his daughter in marriage to Manicka-thalavan. Vedarasan with the help of an Arab crew of a vessel that was lying on the sea in Calpenty point, defeated the Karavas. In consequence of the help received by the Mukkuvars from the Arabs, the former out of comradeship in battle and gratitude for this assistance embraced Islam. However in a later period, they could not escape the imposition of Catholicism on them by their Portuguese masters.



### Mukkuva principality

On arrival at Puttalam, they sent an embassy to the king of Sitavaka, to get his patronage and good will which was readily given. The king granted them large areas of land in Calpenty as parvenu or Koppumuri. They continued to maintain these lands under their chiefs and enjoyed them, establishing an aristocratic government with their Royal Tribunal of eighteen members at Puttalam known in their Tamil language as Mutrakudam. With the subsequent conquest of Ceylon by the Dutch, this tribunal was displaced by the Dutch Land Waad, the number of members of this institution being reduced to twelve, with special remission of taxes in favour of the Mukkuvars. Later on, Indo-Moors emigrated to Puttalam as peaceful intruders, bought properties and land from the Mukkuvars for easy money and today Puttalam is a strong Moorish settlement. Some of the Mukkuvars were taken to Kandy and raised from being fishers to a higher status as elephant keepers.

### The people

The Mukkuvars were divided into seven distinct "Vageis" (a Tamil word for 'kinds' or tribes), after the name of the founder or the particular occupation held by him. They are an industrious and peaceable lot. They are partly Christian and partly Muhammedan. They are now owners of coconut and tobacco plantations and small farms. Some are working as labourers in the Puttalam saltern, while the poor are living on fishing. Many of them are educated and had taken up to the professions, mainly as lady teachers and school masters. The writer takes special delight in mentioning here that in about 1909 one of his teachers was a Christian Mukkuvar lady teacher in the Naval mixed Tamil American school.

### Social characteristics.

Casie Chitty observes that the Mukkuvars were derived in India from the Nairs, possessing a common social system. They are Tamil in speech, follow the same customs and manners, and bear close resemblance to the Tamils in physiognomy, manners, and gait. Like the Moors they do not generally bore their ears, wear turbans in the Muslim fashion and dress their verti like the Sinhalese. They are very sensitive to their caste status.



### Domestic culture.

They tie the thali in marriage, celebrate the attainment of puberty of daughters, use thambulam and betel, nilapavadi and pandal in functions.

### Mukkuva law of inheritance.

It is as in their parent country (Malayalam), matrilineal. The acquired property goes equally to both daughters and sons, while the Muthisam (inherited property) is transferred to the sons of the sister of the father. If there is no one extant in this line, the property devolves on the father's sister's children, if there are no heirs in this line, the property then goes back to his own children.

## Resume on Mukkuvars

Stripped of legendary features, Casie Chitty narrates (P 275) that the Mukkuvars in their original country, Malayalam, were at one time off-springs of the Nair caste brought down later to a lower status by becoming fisher folk. Some of them had transported themselves to the Malabar province of north Ceylon landing first at Kudiramalai point, spreading out therefrom to Puttalam and Calpentyn (Kalpitiya or Kalpitty), a Tamil rendering for stone heap, for fear of persecution and conversion to the doctrines of the Koran, by either the Muhammedans who invaded South India, or by the Zamorins who desired to help their Arab benefactors, who had by the export trade of pepper brought lots of money to Malabar, by ordering one or two members of each Mukkuva family to change their religion to Islamism. In the process of settlement in these areas the Mukkuvars succeeded in ousting the Karears with the help of some Arab sailors belonging to a vessel that was at anchor in the Calpentyn harbour. In return for this assistance and comradeship in battle, the Mukkuvars showed their gratitude by embracing Islam. This explains for the two classes of Mukkuvars, Muhammedan Mukkuvars and Christian Mukkuvars, Catholicism being imposed on some of them later by the Portuguese. The Mukkuvars secure now in their lands, sought the patronage and goodwill of the Emperor of Sitawake who readily lavished on them all the territories of Puttalam and Calpentyn as their parvenu or "Koppumuri" (a Tamil word for breaking



branches of trees to fence the boundary of their newly acquired land allotments.) The king went further to organise for their benefit a Muttrakudam (a tribunal), an aristocratic administration with petty rulers or Vidane Odayars directly in charge of smaller groups of people, all under a pro-consul or Dissave. When the Dutch came, they displaced the Muttrakudam with the Dutch "Land Waad." Later on Indo-Moors, a different lot from the earlier Arabs, peacefully penetrated into the principalities of the Mukkuvars by buying up land and properties from poor Mukkuvars for easy money, and that is how Puttalam became as now, a strong Moorish settlement.

Bryce Ryan (Caste in modern Ceylon Pp 141 - 142) 1- The Mukkuvars are mainly a Catholic and Muslim Tamil speaking group found in Puttalam area and also in the east coast, undoubtedly descendants of the Malabar coast fishermen, several thousands of them along the Puttalam coast, majority Muslims. They consider that they are of a higher caste and have a notion that they are superior in status to their Sinhalese neighbours.

## Thimilars

**Thimilars**, a seafaring class - (Thimil: - sailing vessel) are said to have come from Sind, the hereditary Thimilar chieftain who attends the annual festival of a historical Hindu temple at Verugal in the Batticaloa district being greeted by the high priest as Sindu-nadu-chieftain. Navanturai has connections with Thimilars, (Navai, denoting again a sailing vessel). When banns are published by the priest at the Roman Catholic chapel at Navanturai, the Thimilars are saluted by the Catholic priest as "Iramarapunk Thooiya Sindu-nadu". (John VI).



## X

## YALPANA PEOPLE 300 YEARS AGO

Rev: Philippus Baldaeus, a learned theologian and an able and pious Christian priest was the Dutch prelate in Jaffna for seven years (1658-1665) and the military chaplain to Van-Goens the Dutch Governor. He accompanied the latter's expedition from Mannar to Nagapatanam in 1658 and Malabar in 1661 against the Portuguese. He introduced in 1658 Irreppramathu Sathia-vetham (Dutch reformed Christianity) in place of Sathia-vetham (the Catholic religion) at Tellipalai which was his first centre. Jaffna at that time consisted of 159 villages with 34 churches replacing Portuguese churches with a priest and a church and school in each centre. Travelling in the peninsula was computed by hours and not by miles. It was 12 hours journey across and 6 hours in vertical distance. He describes vividly in his own language a keen observer's account of the Jaffna people, their villages, fauna and flora etc., as summarised below. His book was first published in London in 1703 and translated in 1747 from Dutch into English. He studied Tamil and Hinduism. He counted 329 Hindu temples in existence in the peninsula.

## People

"The Tamils are endowed by God with good understanding and judgment, sober and neat, clean about their persons, not quarrelsome, great prattlers, know how to use their tongue and superstitious. They are litigious, law for every trifle, jealous people, for jabbering, arguing, wrangling no equal, their fondness for profligacy ended in failure of conjugal consummation. They used to complain to him about this malady. Lawyers are Mudaliyars acquainted with local laws. They harrangued for half an hour and yet not begun their case. People of Chavakacheri, Neduntivu (Delft), Vaddukkodai, Myllidy, Pandatheripu, and Chankari, were good listeners of the Gospel, while Nallur, Vannarponnai, Manipay, Chundikuli, Atchuvely, etc, were indifferent to Christianity.



**Vellalas ;** - "Their cloth hung from the navel caught up round the legs like a pair of trousers, wore seripou of leather soles under their feet neatly fastened with leather straps, leaving the feet almost bare to prevent sweating. A "maddi" is made out of their front cloth at waist in the form of a pouch for betel and arecanut, ola and style, knife and whetting stone".

"**Cheviars** at Chundikuli, bad listeners of the gospel, wood cutters, water carriers and palanquin bearers."

**Chetties**, arch and cunning people, dealers in piece goods who knew how to earn their coin.

There were smart artisans and clever craftsmen dealing in ivory, gold and silver wares, jewels, ebony, also doctors, lawyers, weavers and dyers.

**Nalavars**. Toddy tappers who get stone drunk, nasty and dark people who smelt at a distance.

**Pariahs**, disagreeable, dirty, despised and vile people, who ate mice and rats and bowed towards the earth. They behave as if the husbands were of a separate caste who ate alone away from their wives.

## Places

**CHANKANAI**. Grapes, coconuts, sweet potatoes, Portuguese fig trees and bananas.

**MANIPAY**. Pagoda (Pillayar temple) with a tank in front of the church, indifferent to Christianity and a malicious sort of people, Madapallis.

**VANNARFONNAL**. Vannans (washermen).

**NALLUR**. Pagoda, people wore holy ashes and beads, some are cloth dyers from the Coromandel coast,

**ATCHUVELY**. Apes and monkeys.

**VARANI**. Water melons and lemons.

**MATIUVIL**. Pagoda, peacocks and elephants.



**POINT PEDRO.** Callang woman dance, blowing a wonderful sound into earthen pots, (callangs).

**PUNGUDUTIVU.** Tall men.

**NAINATIVU.** Jackals. Three hundred church auditors (church listeners)

**NEDUNTHIVU.** Cows, poor people, Dutch converts, schools etc. There were Christian establishments in all the four districts, Vallegamam, Vadamarachi, Thenmarachi and Patchilapalli.

### Husbandry

Cattle, sheep, goats, buffaloes and cows. Good and neat dwellings with large compounds attached to them, with betel creepers, wells to water plants.

His book "Great Island of Ceylon" was translated into English in 1960 from the Dutch language by Pieter Brohier, from where acknowledgingly the above information was gathered.

Tennent V II, P 535 :- "Close by the beach there is still standing" (in 1860) "the tall tamarind tree commemorating Baldaeus, who preached under its shade to the first protestant converts of Ceylon". This tree was blown off by a gale in 1956.

### A picture of the Jaffna Tamils a century ago with impressions of Tennent.

V I, 413 — 415 (1860).

"The Tamils of Jaffna and the extremity of the Island north of Adam's Bridge, owing to its proximity to the Indian coast was at all times the district most infested with Malabars. Jaffna has been peopled by Tamils for at least 2,000 years, the original settlement being of date co-eval with the earliest Malabar invasion 204 B. C. (T V II, 539).

The Tamils have a tradition that prior to Christian era, Jaffna was colonised by Malabars and a Chola prince assumed the government A. D. 101 (Mahavamsa). Thence they extended



their authority over the adjacent country Vanni, as far south as Mantota and Chilaw (T I, 413). "The successive bands of marauders arriving from the coast had thus on every occasion a base for operations, and a strong force of sympathisers to cover their landing (T I, 413). During Elara's period the chief and most powerful kingdom was Pibiti or Rajarata which was under the Tamils (LXIV) "The first appearance of the Tamils and their agricultural economy was calculated to convey a most favourable impression of their industry and capabilities". (T V 2, 513-514) :- Cultivation in the district is carried on by small tanks one of which is attached to almost every village. The pursuit of these people are exclusively agricultural and their gardens are kept in nicest order, thickly planted with jak trees, mango, coconut, oranges, and limes. "Here too the beautiful Palmyrah palm which abounds over the north of the Island begins to appear" (TV II, 514).

Jaffna is almost the only place in Ceylon which it might be said that no one is idle or unprofitably employed, the bazaars are full of activity and stocked with a greater variety of fruits and vegetables than is to be seen in any other town in the Island. Everyone appears to be more or less busy (T V 2, 542). The whole district is covered with a network of roads with regular markets."

#### Deficiencies of the Jaffna race.

Among many demerits mentioned by Tennent, "sensuality and gain are the two passions of their existence" (V 2, 544,) "the belief in sorcery is strongly entertained." No mention is made by Tennent however of the people's servitude to astrology. The fate of the Jaffna man hangs on astrological calculations and deductions, movements of the moon and stars, the sun and the planets. Marriages that ought to have flowered out into success and prosperity are hacked at the very beginning of talks by consultation of the horoscope. All these are done in the name of Hinduism which has nothing to do with planets. "Among crimes, burglary is foremost, characterised by daring and combination". (Tennent V II 548.)

Women, their dress and duties (V II 543). "Disproportionate share of the labour, is borne by the women, who always seem



to carry the heaviest burdens and take the most toilsome share in the business of the day. (V 2, 536) "In figure and carriage, the Tamil women are much superior. This is shown to advantage in their singularly graceful and classical costume, consisting of a long fold of cloth enveloping the body below the waist and brought tastefully over the left shoulder leaving the right arm and the bosom free. This, together with the custom of carrying vases of water and other burdens on their heads, gives them an erect and stately gait and disposes their limbs in attitudes so graceful as to render them, when young and finely featured, the most unadorned models for a sculptor".

Casie Chetty in his "Works of Simon Casie Chetty, the caste, customs, manners and literature of Tamils" with a foreword by Dr. S. C. Paul 1934, observes:- That Tamils are an active and enterprising race, as for their character - many kind fathers, attentive and tender mothers, obedient and dutiful children, chaste wives, sincere friends, honest traders, industrious husbands and faithful servants.

As for women, "well looking, often handsome, and quotes Mr. Cordiner, who speaks of the women of the country around Trincomalee as follows:- "Their gait is elegant, their countenances are pleasant and homely, exhibiting that species of beauty and placid dignity in which Raphael's paintings are so much celebrated".

## Epilogue — Part II

The writer considers this book not completed without inscribing on its pages the names of the two foremost and illustrious sons of Jaffna of the recent past.

### I. Sri-La-Sri Arumuga Navalar 1822-1879(57years).

He was born in the historic city of Nallur on 15.12.1822, the youngest son of a government official named Kardar, a Karakarather Vellala belonging to the high caste Poo-vellala division (Velame cultivators). He studied under Rev: Peter Percival, while the latter was the first Principal of Central



College, Jaffna. Percival recognising his native abilities, made him to teach Tamil in the higher classes and English in the lower classes. He also appointed Sri Arumugam as his Munshi and both jointly translated the Bible into Tamil which enabled Sri Arumugam to have a clearer knowledge of Christianity. This undertaking on the other hand, made him appreciate all the more the grandeur of Hinduism through Christian perspective. Under the same circumstances in which Ram Mohan Roy of the Calcutta school was placed in India, Arumugam began to stem Christian proselytism which action in his opinion was a righteous undertaking.

1. He was an orator, and in recognition of this gift, he won the title of 'Navalar' from the Thiruvathurai Mutt.
2. He burst out as a passionate Saiva revivalist and reformer (refer the accounts on Kailasanatha and Nallur Kandasamy Koyils).
3. Father of modern Tamil prose, and editor and commentator of Tamil classics.
4. A great educationist, who established Navalar schools and a printing press in Jaffna, and later Saivite Tamil schools at Madras and Chidambaram. (Main source: Madras Hindu 1962 Sunday Magazine).

## 2. Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, Q.C. 1851 — 1930 (79) years

Sir Ramanathan hailed from a distinguished Mudali family of brilliant intellectuals, from the enlightened village of Manipay. Jaffna. "Maniampathy" a Tamil genealogical account of the families of Manipay, traces his origin up the lineal tree to Dutch times. His father was Ponnambala Mudaliyar, son of Arunachalam. Thillaiambalam, the father of the latter was the son of Kathirgama Canakkar, whose brother was Casie Canakkar, progenitor of another line of Mudalis, to which the author's mother Rasammah belonged. The latter's mother was Valliammal, a daughter of Cornelius



Saravanamuttu alias Sinnacuttiar, the then Supdt. of Surveys Jaffna, under Sir William Twynam. Cornelius was a son of Sinnathamby whose father was Casie Canakkar.

Ramanathan was a versatile figure who held the public scene in Ceylon for about 56 years.

1. Law. The agility and subtlety of mind possessed by him well suited the legal profession which he cleverly chose and where he achieved distinctions of rare value. He was appointed as the first Ceylonese Solicitor General and Actg. Attorney General and in 1903 when Queen's Counsels were first appointed in Ceylon, his name was in the list of those appointed. Industry, patience and hard work went hand in hand with brilliant intellectual capacity, he became a pioneer in law reporting and preserved for posterity many valuable reports of Supreme Court judgments of the beginnings of the British period, which would have been otherwise lost to the legal profession of Ceylon. Soon after he took his oath as an advocate, he began work at the age of 23 on a plan to fill the gaps in the existing reports and to provide the profession with a complete series of the decisions from the earliest date at which they were then to be found in the Supreme Court registry. Ramanathan reports of the period 1820-1833, 1843-55, 1860-62, 1863-68, 1872, 1875, 1876, and 1877, prove so useful to lawyers and judges that the Government appointed him Editor of the first official set of law reports, "The Supreme Court circular containing reports of cases, decisions, orders and minutes, issued by the Supreme Court with Digest, Volume I of which was published in 1879. These details of dates are entered here to give a picture of his diligence and hard work. When this series was discontinued, he was again appointed Editor of the next official report, "The New Law reports published by the Government from 1896- a series which is now in its 70th volume, (communicated to me by a lawyer friend on my request).

2. Author of books on different other subjects. In 1907, he wrote a thesis on the "Culture of the Soul among western nations". In 1914 he edited and translated into Tamil with



notes, the 'Bhagavat Gita' and translated from Sanskrit the same subject with notes and commentaries. In 1927, he composed "Sentamil Illakkanam" Part I, letters and words.

3. A lawyer, Government servant, legislator, scholar, statesman and silver-tongued orator, which gift he deployed with a natural ease in defence of justice and fair play. As the first and only Educated and Elected Ceylonese member of the Legislative Council, he braved the risks of submarine infested seas during the first World War, and reached London to fight with success the cause of the innocent victims of the Martial law of 1915.
4. Above everything, he was a Hindu philosopher and an ardent Saivite devotee, who built the granite stone-cut Ponnambala-Veneswara-Koyil of Kochchikade Colombo, for Lord Siva.
5. A worthy educationist and philanthropist who left behind for posterity as his lasting memento, two big institutions in Jaffna, Ramanathan College and Parameshwara College, for girls and boys respectively.



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