



University of Jaffna

Chancellor's Lecture – 2019

On

**“Distribution of Authority and Co-existence of
Ethnic Groups-
The Kandyan Kingdom (C.1474-1815)”**

by

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I

The Distribution of Authority and Co-existence of Ethnic Groups

The Kandyan Kingdom (C.1474-1815)

The kingdom of Kandy, which existed for a period of over three centuries (1474-1815) had its origins in the central highlands but during the peak period of its development it occupied a large extent of territory spread over a major part of the Island: It was economically undeveloped and was sparsely populated. Yet, it had developed a remarkable capacity for survival despite the invasions and inimical activities of hostile powers with superior military power and technology that were established in the maritime areas of the Island. The Kandyan rulers also developed the art of diplomacy, which was considerably responsible for obstructing the designs of conquest by the first two European colonial powers until the dawn of the 19th century.

The Kandyan monarchy was not a despotism because the monarchy had no legislative competence to alter the customs and traditions of the country and there wasn't a system of centralized bureaucratic administration of the kingdom. Power and authority were distributed among a hierarchy of chiefs, who of course were appointed by the monarch.

There was considerable diversity in ethnicity and cultural distinctions were highlighted by regional variations. The core region, the *pasraṭa* and the vast lands on the sloping areas around it were predominantly occupied by Sinhalese who were also Buddhists. In the eastern littoral stretching from Pulmōṭṭai to Panama was inhabited by Tamils, and Muslims whose settlements were concentrated around ports and other centres of commercial activities. In the central highlands and the *disāvanies* of north central plains the king was looked upon as the patron and custodian Buddhist institutions and Sinhalese tradition. But in the entire eastern littoral that was divided into a number of chiefdoms the king was the patron of Hinduism and the custodian of customs and traditions of Tamil society.

It may be emphasized here that the Kandyan state was not an ethnocracy nor was it a theocracy. It was inspired by the traditional norms of *dharma* in South Asian societies, which emphasized the custodial functions of the monarch. These transcended ethnic and sectarian barriers. The traditions of co-existence, co-operative endeavour and partnership developed under the Kandyan monarchy laid the foundations for internal peace and harmony, that had become exemplary and contributed immensely to stability and solidarity among divergent groups of people within the kingdom.

In the early sixteenth century there were three kingdoms in Sri Lanka; Kōṭṭē, Jaffna, and Kandy. Among them the kingdom of Kōṭṭē was the largest and the most powerful. It had a large concentration of population and had developed commercial and cultural contacts with many other kingdoms of South Asia through many of its ports in the western and south-western parts of the Island. The Kingdom of Jaffna was the smallest of the three kingdoms, but there was a heavy concentration of population in the Jaffna Peninsula and the neighbouring islands. It had close connections with the kingdoms of South India in commerce and culture and was immune to the threats of invasion from the kingdoms in the southern parts of the island. Some of the kings of Jaffna had an inclination to support the kings of Sītāvaka and Kandy in their struggle against the Portuguese.¹

The kingdom of Kandy had its origins in a union of five chiefdoms in the central highlands. They were Gampola, Siduruvanacomprising the two divisions of Uḍunuvara, Yaṭinuvara, Balaviṭa, Pansiyaputtuva, and Matale. The hill country was considered as a politico-geographical region since the late Anurāthapura period. It was designated as *malayadesa* and placed under the charge of a prince or another dignitary appointed by the King of Anurāthapura and later in the 12th century by the ruler of Polonnaruva.

The region of *malayadesa* was never integrated as a part of any major kingdom under a centralized administration. It was sparsely populated and isolated from the centres of dynastic power in the north-central part of the island because of its geographical features.

Since the 13th century there was a growth of population and economic development, which facilitated the emergence of chiefdoms in the hilly regions of the island. Society within this region was exposed to outside influences because of a flourishing trade with the rest of island and the countries beyond it. Gampola, which was the centre of one of the five chiefdoms that had united to form the kingdom of Kandy later, had become the capital of a large kingdom. The central highlands and low-country wet zone became the component parts of this kingdom under Bhuvanēkabāhu IV (1344-1359).

A framework of administration was established in which two dignitaries who had the designation *adigārs* appointed by the king exercised wide powers and authority in the affairs of the kingdom. SenāLankādhikāra and Vēsādhikārāwere the two *adigārs* who held that position under the first king, Bhuvanēkabāhu IV. Between the two the first one had precedence and he is described as *mantri-śreṣṭhan*, "the foremost one among the ministers."⁴ He belonged to a lineage of chieftains of the *meṇavara* clan which is identified by SenaratParanavitana as one of Malayalam extraction and it is his contention that the Sinhalese name Meheṇavara is derived from the Malayalam word *mēṇāvan* (menon).⁵

In the period when dynastic power was established at Gampola the isolation of the principalities in the hill country had come to an end as avenues for intercourse in trade and commerce with the low-country and countries outside the Island were opened. This phenomenon is clearly evident from contemporary inscriptions, and particularly the extracts from a copperplate inscription quoted from the Lankātīlaka Inscription of A.D. 1344. There are epigraphic notices about commodities from many foreign countries for distribution in markets within the hilly region. The merchant guild called *Paṭiṇeṇṇiṣaiyam* otherwise called *Nānādesis* were actively involved in the process.⁶

Since the seat of royal power was shifted from Gampola to Kōṭṭē, in the late 14th century the chiefdoms of *Uḍaraṭa* were relieved from the rigid control of dynastic power and became fully autonomous regions. Contemporary Sinhalese poems credit Parākramabāhu VI to have reduced the principalities of the *Uḍaraṭa* to submission. The conquest, however was not followed by an annexation nor did it lead to an integration of the chiefdoms with the kingdom of Kōṭṭē. A bifurcation of authority between the *Uḍaraṭa* and the south-western lowlands was evident since the establishment of Kōṭṭē as the centre of dynastic power. In the highlands the descendants of the rulers of Gampola and the *adigārs* had exercised authority over the chiefdoms on the hills. The conquest of *Uḍaraṭa* by Parākramabāhu VI had led to an assertion of the claim for suzerainty but the power and authority of governing the *Uḍaraṭa* was left in hands of the traditional leaders of local chiefdoms.

That *Jōti-siṭāna* made an attempt to free *Uḍaraṭa* from its obligation to pay tribute to Kōṭṭē and refrain from sending persons to render customary services to the ruler of Kōṭṭē is attested by a contemporary poem, the *Parakumbasirita*. The uprising in the hill country,

which occurred in the 52nd year of Parākramabāhu VI (1412-1467), was however suppressed by prince Ambulāgala, the younger brother of Sapumal Kumara. *Jōti-siṭāna* had fled and many of his relatives were taken as prisoners to Kōṭṭē. In the meanwhile the government of the *Uḍaraṭa* was left in the hands of the prince of Gampola.⁸ There is evidence to suggest that *Jōti-siṭāna* was previously exercising the powers of a *mahā-adigār* in the *Uḍaraṭa*.⁹

In the late 15th century, the *Uḍaraṭa* emerged as a distinct factor in the politics of the Island under the leadership of Vikramabāhu. Two divergent views are articulated by two contemporary historians in their contributions to the *University of Peradeniya History of Sri Lanka* Volume II. Commenting on the emergence of the Kandyan Kingdom with an identity of its own :TBH Abeyasinghe says:

“It appears that Senāsammata Vikramabāhu, the founder of the Senkaḍagala kingdom, profited by the widespread, and in some areas, long drawn-out revolts in the territories of the Kōṭṭē ruler, Bhuvanēkabāhu VI (1470-78), to carve out a kingdom for himself in the central hill country of the island”.¹⁰

“The *Kandyanpasraṭa* (with the exception of Ūva) formed a distinct geographical region whose defence had to be treated as a single problem. The feudal levies drawn from the *pasraṭa* almost certainly formed a defence force, probably under a united command. This would explain why feelings of solidarity and identity came into being among them”.¹¹

“The army had been the first spokesman of separatist interests of *pasraṭa*. Such separatist sentiments persisted for a century among the *Uḍaraṭa* troops, and culminated in the foundation of the new kingdom in the fifteenth century. The new kingdom was the product of a *coup d’etat* in which the army played a major role, and the title Senāsammata (meaning approved by the army) borne by the titular founder of the kingdom and by no previous or subsequent ruler in the island’s long history bears testimony to the mode of legitimation of the ruler’s authority”.¹²

“From the role of the army as the co-founder of the kingdom and the chiefs as co-sovereigns, one would expect the subsequent history of the kingdom to have been punctuated by periodic, and debilitating, convulsions and for the crown to have become a plaything for intriguing factions, military and aristocratic.”¹³

The ideas articulated by TBH Abesinghe do not seem to be supported by empirical evidence. Besides, the notions of separatism and sub-nationalism seem to be anachronistic and irrelevant for comprehending the developments in the 15th century. The Sri Lankan state was never conceived as an ethnocracy under the monarchy and it is anachronistic to speak about nationalist sentiment in reconstructing the medieval or early modern history of a South Asian state. What is the evidence for the occurrence of a military coup d’etat? There could be room to speak of about such a phenomenon only in the event of a military revolt leading to the displacement of a ruler of the *Uḍaraṭa* by a military commander. There was’nt such a phenomenon under Sēnāsāmmata Vikramabāhu.

Nor was his emergence a result of an uprising against the chieftains. Sēnāsāmmata Vikramabāhu no doubt had charismatic qualities with which he was able to unite the chiefs in the hill country and mobilize the military resources of the chiefdoms under his command for his confrontation with the ruler of Kōṭṭē. The other chieftains in the *pasraṭa* were probably the co-founders of the Kingdom of Kandy. It is preposterous to claim

that they were co-sovereigns. Vikramabāhu himself was not allowed to exercise sovereign authority over his kingdom.

In comparative terms, Chandra Richard de Silva presents a sober and realistic description of the Kandyan Kingdom under Vikramabāhu. He says:

“In the 1470s Senāsammata Vikramabāhu (1469-1510) seems to have taken advantage of the rebellions in the lowlands against Bhuvanēkabāhu VI to make himself an autonomous ruler of the highlands. However, Vikramabāhu himself had to agree to send a number of his subjects to perform customary service to the king of Kōṭṭē as well as to pay annual tribute in return for recognition of his status as the ruler of the highlands. Vikramabāhu was not allowed to sit on a throne or to mint coins”.¹⁴

Vikramabāhu's efforts to secure independence were thwarted on two occasions by the king of Kōṭṭē whose armies were able to gain decisive victories against the ruler of Uḍaraṭa. The kingdom on the hills, however, emerged as a strong factor in the politics of the Island. With the emergence of Kandy in the central highlands, the rulers of Kōṭṭē lost their tenuous hold over the eastern part of the island. The *vanniyars* in the entire eastern littoral from Kaṭṭukkuḷampattu to Panāma soon transferred their allegiance from the king of Kōṭṭē to the ruler of Kandy and this process had already begun under Vikramabāhu. The local rulers of Nuvarakalāviya, Tammankaḍuva and Vellassa also came under the influence of Kandy. Such a situation provided avenues for the Kandyans to conduct trade with foreign countries through the ports of Kōṭṭiyāram and Batticaloa. Under the successors of Vikramabāhu, Kandy was vulnerable to attacks through the western frontiers of the kingdom. The ruler of Kōṭṭē would seek to impose his suzerainty over the Uḍaraṭa and the growing power of Māyadunne of Sitāvaka was a cause of alarm as he had designs for the conquest of Kandy. The ruler of Kandy had to devise means for the security of his kingdom through diplomacy. He had the option to seek Portuguese assistance by making substantial concessions to them. He was also prepared to embrace Christianity.

The Kandyans offered the most attractive terms to the Portuguese: a factory site at Trincomalee, an annual tribute of 15 tusked elephants, 300 oars for galleys and payment of all Portuguese soldiers sent to Kandy. Besides, the King of Kandy offered to be converted to Christianity.¹⁵ Yet for all this the Portuguese assistance could not be obtained in time because of the hostility of the *vanniyar* of Trincomalee to the arrival of the Portuguese army.¹⁵

In 1545 Māyadunne launched a full scale attack on Kandy with the support of the forces from Kōṭṭē. But his effort was foiled because of the withdrawal of support from the ruler Kōṭṭē on the persuasion of the Kandyans. In the 1570s the power of Sitāvaka was at its peak and Rājasimha conducted three invasions to subjugate Kandy (1574, 1578, 1581-2). In the third attempt he was eminently successful. Karaliyadde Baṇḍāra and his army were routed at Balana and consequently Kandy was occupied in 1581-2.

The kingdom retained its identity and there was no effort to convert it as an integral part of the kingdom of Sitāvaka or develop a centralized administration under the direction of its ruler.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Rājasimha was drawing revenues and levying imposts on Kandy, which was resented by the Kandyans and alienated their sympathies. The rebellion against Rājasimha led to Portuguese intervention and the installation of Dom Felipe, the nephew of Yāmasimha Baṇḍāra, as the new ruler of Kandy.¹⁷ “The vigorous policy of conversion to Christianity in the highlands had roused opposition to Dom Felipe”, who soon died under suspicious circumstances.

Don Juan of Austria, a son of Virasundara Baṇḍāra, who was baptized earlier by the Portuguese under whom he had sought refuge, seized power in Kandy. He renounced Christianity and assumed the name Vimaladharmasūriya. He legitimized his claims to authority as ruler by conquest and also by marrying Kusumāsanadevi (Dona Catherina), daughter of YamasimhaBaṇḍāra, a nephew of and heir of KaraliyaddeBaṇḍāra.

The Portuguese were hostile to the new king of Kandy as he was, in their view, an apostate and although Vimaladharmasūriya was concerned about peace they would not allow him to have it. A Portuguese army of invasion was completely routed at Danture a few miles away from Kandy by the Kandyans in 1594.¹⁸ The Portuguese Captain-general Lopez de Sousa was among those who perished in the battle. The spectacular triumph at Danture had enormously increased the reputation of the Kandyan ruler who lost no time in consolidating his power in the kingdom.

"The principal objective of Kandy's foreign relations under Vimaladharmasūriya (1591-1604) and Senarat (1604-35) was not different from that of the earlier rulers who had presided over that kingdom's destinies-survival from external attack". So, the king's foreign relations "postulated a three power presence in the island: Jaffnapatnam in the north, the Portuguese in the western seaboard lands and Kandy in the central hills".¹⁹ The ruler of Kandy could count on the support of anti-Portuguese elements in the Sinhalese population under Portuguese rule in western and southwestern lowlands. He maintained close contacts with rebel leaders and occasionally sent troops to keep the Portuguese preoccupied and it was the support of the Sinhalese of the low country which enabled Kandy to hold its own.²⁰

"A second source of support for Kandy was the Madurai area in South India, with which Sri Lanka had long established connections." The King of Jaffnapatnam provided transit facilities for South Indian troops to reach Kandy. The ruler of Jaffna, Pararājāsēkaran who was raised to the throne by the Portuguese, however, realized that the survival of Kandy insured his own, and took some measures to strengthen Kandy. He was accused by the Portuguese to have negotiated with the South Indian rulers on behalf of Kandy.²¹ The king of Kandy also explored the possibilities of obtaining help from the Dutch.

The Kingdom of Kandy was in a state of siege in the reign of Senarat. It was ravaged continuously by groups of Portuguese soldiers who penetrated deep into Kandyan territory and destroyed cultivation lands and villages. The Kandyans countered these activities by fomenting rebellions in Portuguese territories. Nevertheless an agreement was concluded in 1617. The Portuguese recognized Senarat as king of Kandy as he was married to Dōna Catherina, "the legitimate Queen of the kingdom of Kandy". Senarat in return recognized the authority of the Portuguese in the "lowland kingdoms". In a schedule to the treaty Kandyan boundaries were laid down and according to it Kandyan boundaries on the east coast "reach the port of Koṭṭiyār, and Batticaloa up to Panama."²² Despite this agreement the Portuguese built a fort at Trincomalee on the site of the famous Kōṇēśvaram temple. In 1638 they seized and fortified Batticaloa.

Rājasimha II (1635-1687) who succeeded his father Senarat was undoubtedly the greatest among the Kandyan rulers and he was one of the ablest monarchs in the annals of Sri Lankan history. He introduced remarkable changes in Kandyan policy towards the Portuguese. He claimed that he was the king of all the people of the country and rejected the Portuguese claims of legitimacy to rule any part of the Island. He also rejected the goal of co-existence with Portuguese power and was convinced that there could not be any peace and

security in the island as long as they continued to occupy any part of the Island. He signed a treaty in 1638 with the Dutch for eliminating Portuguese power. Although it was achieved, the Dutch had come to stay in the Island. Rajasimha also had improved the combative power of the Kandyan army by introducing modern techniques of warfare. He was resolute in the pursuit of his goal and undeterred by occasional revolts against his authority. On the fall of Portuguese power, Kandy had gained possession of large areas previously held by them. These included Sabaragamuva and the Seven Korales.

In 1739 the Nāyakkar dynasty was established in power by the Kandyan chiefs. The last part of the *Mahāvamsa* is a panegyric on KīrttiSriRājasimha (1747-1782) largely because of his contribution to the revival of Buddhism. In the 16th and 17th centuries Buddhism was on the decline in the hill country. When the Nāyakkar dynasty had secured power in the Kingdom, it was found that the Mahāsangha as an ecclesiastical organization had disintegrated, and there were no monks who had undergone the ceremony of higher ordination. Under the Nāyakkars who had adopted Buddhism there was an upsurge of Buddhist activity under active royal patronage. In consequence of the missions sent to the king of Siam, senior monks were brought to Kandy and the ceremonial ordination of monks was conducted.²³ The SīyamNikaya was established with the creation of the Malvatte and Asgiriya chapters.

The Nāyakkar rulers, Kīrtti Sri Rājasinha in particular, made extensive grants to monasteries in all parts of the kingdom. The DaladaMaligāva that was located in the vicinity of the royal palace became the focal point of veneration and religious activities. The kings made extensive grants of lands, which were widely distributed in *theraṭas* and *disāvanies*. They were designated *maligāgam* and were placed under the *diyavadananiṭame* who received his appointment from the monarch. In like manner the *devales* of the four guardian gods, Nātha, Vishnu, Kandakumara and Pattini were richly endowed with extensive properties. In the *ratas*, the core regions of the kingdom these dignitaries were appointed by the monarch and in the *disāvanies* by the *disāvas*.

A major development in Buddhism was the revival of the *perahera*, an annual festival conducted in relation to the worship of the Tooth Relic, in a modified and elaborated form by Kīrtti Sri Rājasimha. It became a national festival in which most dignitaries of the state and divergent groups in society participated. It became the principal means for promoting cohesion and solidarity in Kandyan society. It raised the prestige of the monarch and encouraged the feelings of loyalty to the king among his subjects. The images of guardian gods were paraded along with the casket containing the Tooth Relic. The celebration was a supreme manifestation of phenomenal Buddhism that was cherished by the royal court, the nobility and the peasants and artisans alike. There were remarkable developments in Buddhist literary activity.

In constructional activity the major landmarks in Kandyan history were the reconstruction of the Temple of the Tooth Relic and the Kandy lake which evoke the aesthetic sensibility of the lovers of art. These were constructed in the days of the last king of the island, Sri Vikrama Rājasimha.

By seeking British intervention for deposing their king, the Kandyans achieved their political doom. In 1815, the whole Island was occupied, for the first time by an alien power. This was inevitable as British political and military power had by then become predominant in the South Asian sub-continent and their naval power was supreme in the Indian Ocean.

II

Kingship and Administration

There were three groups of territories in the Kandyan Kingdom before the treaty of 1766, which had deprived it of the littoral parts and had reduced it to the state of a landlocked kingdom. The core region of the Kandyan state comprised the five principalities in the mountainous part of the country.

The *disāvanies* surrounding the core region that were placed under the authority of chieftains who had the designation *disāva* were substantially large in extent but were, comparatively, sparsely populated²⁴. These two categories of lands were occupied predominantly by the Sinhalese who were mostly Buddhists. A long stretch of the eastern littoral from Pulmōṭṭai in the north to Pānama in the south, which came under the orbit of Kandyan influence since the 16th century were occupied predominantly by Tamils who were the followers of Saivism. Besides, in the vast region there were pockets of Muslims chiefly along the coastline and around the ports, which had become the principal outlets for commerce and Kandyan intercourse with the outside world. As attested by literary and epigraphic notices the inhabitants of the eastern littoral had looked upon the Kandyan monarch as the custodian of their religion and cultural traditions. All available evidence suggests that there was considerable diversity in the kingdom when it was at the peak of its power and it may be emphasized that all groups of inhabitants supported the monarch in his efforts to defend the kingdom from the incursions and invasions of successive European powers who had entrenched themselves in the western and south western parts of the Island.

The monarch was at the apex of the system of Kandyan administration as in any other kingdom. Although in details it had origins in earlier traditions of the country, the Kandyan administration had certain peculiar characteristics at the highest levels of organization. The kings had the ingenuity to device arrangements for integrating the five chiefdoms that formed the core region of the kingdom into a single entity that was centrally administered. Such an arrangement enabled the King to direct military operations for the defense of the kingdom. It also provided avenues for asserting the claim for over lordship over large territories extending to the sea coast in the east and the north-west.

There are some contemporary descriptions of the administration of the Kandyan kingdom by European authors who wrote on the basis of their observations. The idea of a monarchy functioning under a code of agreement or a constitution with provision for elected assemblies was unknown to the South Asian tradition. There never was an agreement like the *magna carta* outlining the rights of the nobility and limiting the powers of the crown. An institution like the parliament of England that could challenge the abuses of authority was unknown. Naturally, British authors who made assessments of the Kandyan monarchy formed their impressions on the background of their experience in their home country.

The diffusion of power and authority in the hierarchy of administration and on a regional basis were effective deterrents against the development of monarchical absolutism. It was a phenomenon that seems to have been overlooked by European authors and commentators.

Commenting on the character of the Kandyan monarchy John D'oyly makes the following observations:

"The power of the King is supreme and absolute."

"The ministers advise, but cannot control his will."

"The King makes peace and war, enacts ordinances and has the sole power of life and death."

"He sometimes exercises Judicial authority, in civil and criminal cases, either in original jurisdiction or on appeal."²⁴

He further states that the acts of his government are presumed to be guided by the institutions and customs of his kingdom.²⁵ The same impression is recorded by Robert Percival who says:

"The Government of Kandy is an absolute despotism, and any resistance to the will of the King without power will be attended with immediate destruction. In spite of these circumstances, however, the natives look upon certain fundamental laws and regulations existing among them from time immemorial, as the real depositories of supreme power; and they maintain that if the King ventures to be amenable to the justice of his country as well as the meanest subject".²⁶

The tendency towards arbitrary government was restrained by the council which the king was obliged to consult in making decisions on matters of great importance such as the succession to the throne, the declaration of war and the preparations for defense. There were instances when the king had to change his decision because of strong opposition from the council. "If on any occasion the members of the council made a unanimous representation to the king, it was laid down that the king should, uphold their point of view".²⁷

The king's council consisted of the *adigārs*, the *disāvas*, the *mahāmohottālas*, *raṭa-rālas* and the *vanniyars*. The imagined, sacerdotal character of the monarch was indicated by a façade of ceremonials. He was inaccessible to the ordinary folk of the realm. No one even of the highest rank dares to approach the king without prostrating himself three times before the throne, each time repeating a string of his Majesty's titles with the utmost fervor. Every one remains silent before him. The solemn gravity of his nobles when admitted into the royal presence, altogether corresponds with the greatness of the occasion.²⁸

The chief Adigar or chief minister was the only person who was permitted to stand in the royal presence; and even he was obliged to be some steps lower than the King. The business of government was transacted between the king and the Adigar in low whispers, so as not be overheard by any one present, and any message from the King to the others was conveyed in the same manner by the Adigar.²⁹ It is no wonder that Europeans who witnessed proceedings had formed the impression that the Kandyan government was a despotism.

The Adigars

The highest officers of state were the two Adigars called *Pallegampahe* and *Uḍagampahe*, and between them the first one had precedence. They had equal powers within the areas of their respective jurisdiction. They were referred to as *Maha Nilame* by all the chiefs of subordinate rank and the inhabitants of the kingdom. "Up to the time of Rajasimha II there had been only one *adigār*, Rajasimha added the second and the last King of Kandy added still another". The multiplication of office-bearers was perhaps a contrivance to divide the authority and reduce their power.³⁰

As the highest officials in the administration of the kingdom the *adigārs* had extensive powers. They had administrative, judicial and military functions. They were

consulted on all important matters. They had a general jurisdiction over all the Kandyan provinces. The northern and eastern parts were under the first Adigar while the other one had exercised some form of control over the provinces and districts in the south and west. They heard appeals from their respective parts of the kingdom. In times of war they led the armies and the first Adigar had the title *agrasenādhipati* or commander-in-chief.³¹

Those who held position of ranks in the Kandyan administration were not paid salaries. For the services they rendered they were given land assignments. All incomes and services due to the monarch from such lands became the emoluments of the assignees.³² Five villages were set apart as the perquisite of office of each *adigār*. These villages were occupied by three groups of people: *Katupulla* or messengers, *rakavallu* or gail guards and the *kasakara* or whip crackers. The *katupulla* people were messengers who convey the orders of the king and the *adigārs*, and summon persons required to attend them. They were constantly on duty, part at the palace and part at the *adigār's* house, and were relieved every fourteen days with their headmen called *koraleāccile*.

The *kasakāra* people were those who crack whips before the king and the *adigārs* when they move about in the country. They are of the same class with the *katupulla*, and sometimes perform either duty, two went on duty at a time, and were relieved in like manner with the *katupulla*.³³

The *rakavallu* were the guards of the great jail in Kandy and they executed those who were condemned to death.³⁴ They worked in shifts organized under their headmen called *duryas* and all of them were under the authority of two prison officers called *hiragekankāṇam* appointed by the *adigārs* who were responsible for the administration of the city of Kandy.³⁵

The authority and power of the monarch were diluted by the extensive powers conceded to the *adigārs*. The security and survival of the monarchy depended on the loyalty and cooperation of the *adigārs*, although they were appointees of the King. They were the normal channel of communication between the King and the traditional ranks in the hierarchy of administration and also between the King and the inhabitants of the realm. The King's orders to all of them were communicated by the *adigārs*. The *adigārs* paid, on appointment, five hundred *ridi* to the King and the same amount annually as a gift in return for the privilege conceded to them while in authority.³⁶

The *adigārs* were particularly charged with conducting the public festivals and repair of temples, the catching of elephants in Kandy, and superintended these and other public works. They were responsible for the maintenance of streets and the cleanliness of the city of Kandy. They had power to imprison and punish any headmen of the provinces for neglect of duty or disobedience, except persons belonging to the King's houses hold or court, and those only upon representation to the King.³⁷

It was in the presence of the *adigārs* that all cases of importance were heard by the King or by the great court of Justice. *mahanaḍuva*. They also held the first seats in that court and took a leading part in its proceedings, and were the principal reporters to the King, and gave the decision in writing on palm leaves. All sentences of corporal punishment by the King's order were executed in their presence. In suits of land they had power to sequester lands and crops. They had the exclusive power of causing punishment to be inflicted with the cane. Grants of land by the King's orders were signed by one of the two *adigārs*. They were consulted by the King upon the appointment of all the chiefs, upon the appointment of chief priests, and upon the grants of lands or rewards for services.³⁸

Divisions of the Kingdom

The Kandyan Kingdom consisted 21 major divisions of which the 12 principal ones were called *disāvanies*, and the majority of the rest *raṭas*, which may be denominated as districts. The *disāvanies* were each placed under the orders of a chief or governor called *disāva* and were as follows:

The 4 Korales	Wlālpana
The 7 Korales	Uḍapalāta
Uva	Nuvarakalāviya
Matale	Vellassa
Sabaragamuva	Bintana
The 3 Korales	Tammankaḍuva

The other 9 districts were respectively under the authority of chiefs who were distinguished by the name of *raṭēmahatmaya* and were as follows:

Uḍunuvara	Hewaheta
Yaṭṭinuvara	Kotmale
Tumpane	UdaBulatgama
Harispattu	PataBulatgama
Dumbara. ³⁹	

The Power and Jurisdiction of the Disavas

Each *disāva* had his own administrative staff consisting of minor chieftains in the *disāvany* who were appointed to their positions by him. There were three principal headmen appointed by the *disāva*; the *disāvamohaṭṭala*, *atapattumohaṭṭala* and *Koḍituvakkumohaṭṭala* all of whom resided at the capital.⁴⁰

The *disāva*'s orders to his subordinate officers were transmitted through the *disāvamohaṭṭala*. The *disāvas* had jurisdiction over all persons and lands within their respective *disāvanies*, except those attached to the king's court or his household or to the department of another chief appointed by the King, and they rarely exercised it over these also only upon the application of the proper chief and sometimes by their own right, when upon extra-ordinary emergencies any such village or departments were specially placed under their authority.⁴¹

The *disāva* could hear and decide all civil cases without limitation of value except in the case of specified limitations. The *disāvas* could hear cases regarding land subject to *disāvaniservice* between any persons whatsoever. They also had the power to grant lands with deeds bearing their signature.⁴²

The *disāvas* could award corporal punishment, imprisonment and fine without any fixed limit and degree upon persons subject to their jurisdiction. But, in this matter they had to pay regard to the rank and condition of the parties according to rules established by usage.⁴³

Corporal punishment was not inflicted on persons of noble families, nor on the *atapattudisāva* or *koḍituvakkulekms*, Korales of high family, the *vanniya*, the *valavuvamohaṭṭalas* and *atapattuārāccis* of the four Korales, nor in general upon persons who had held those offices.

Korāles of low family, *ārāccis*, *vidanes* and ordinary *Govigamas* could be punished with rods called *ipal*.⁴⁴

The persons of the above-mentioned categories were exempt from corporal punishment and not imprisoned in *mahāhirage* (the great prison in Kandy). If the offences are of a more serious nature deserving punishment by the king, the offenders were imprisoned in a Kaṭupulla village.⁴⁵

The *disāva* most frequently and properly heard the cases himself while seated in the court of his residence. During the proceedings he was surrounded by the headmen of his *disāvany* standing in his presence. Generally, in making decisions the principal headmen of the *disāvany* had their say. For purposes of administration each *disāvany* was divided into Korales and each Korale into *pattus*. The *disāvamohottala* had his subordinates. Each *pattu* was under an officer who had the designation Korale. His principal function was the collection of the *kaḍarājakāriya* and a number of *atukorales* assisted him in this work.⁴⁶

Each caste in a territorial division was under the charge of a chief who had the designation *muhandiram* under whom there were *vidanes* who were responsible for particular castes in the villages. All appointments to all positions of subordinate ranks were made by the *disāva* and they were confined to those of the *govigama* caste. The lowest rank was that of the *vidane*. The headmen of non *govigama* castes had the designation *duraya*.⁴⁷

The duties of the *atapattumohottala*, the chieftains who were of the second highest grade in the administration of a *disāvany* were generally of a ceremonial character. They performed duties that were essential for maintaining the status of the *disāva*. He was the chief of the *disāva*'s body-guard, which kept watch at *atapattumaḍuva* or guard room in front of the *disāva*'s residence in Kandy.

In the Kandyan Kingdom the officers were not paid salaries as there was no monetisation of the economy in any appreciable manner. Instead they received land grants commensurate with the position of the ranks in the hierarchy of administration. In such grants the rights of the monarch were transferred to the donee and these were sources of substantial income and labour resources. When the King granted a royal village (*gabaḍagam*) to a chief it became a *nindagam*. In this land there were two categories: *mutteṭṭu*, the proprietor's share and units called *pangu* that were allotted to the cultivators. The *mutteṭṭu* became the share of the grantee and shareholders of the other category of lands had to pay dues and perform services due to the chief, who had received the grant from the king. The chief, in this instance, the *disāva*, had usufructuary right over the land and authority over the tenants and cultivators. Apart from the *nindagam*, the benefice sometimes granted to the *disāva* lands of the category of *praveninindagam*, which effectually became the inheritance of his descendants.⁴⁸ The *disāva* also had some monetary income in the form of payments by chiefs of subordinate ranks on their appointment by him. From this monetary collection he gave a portion as a gift to the monarch when he had annual ceremonial audiences with the grantees and chieftains of his realm.⁴⁹

The Powers and Functions of the Raṭe-ralas and the Chiefs of Departments and Temples

The Raṭe-ralas and chiefs of departments had a civil and criminal jurisdiction over all persons subject to their orders, and over others. They can hear and decide all civil cases

arising amongst them, without limitation of value. "They can hear and decide all criminal cases with the exception of the high crimes... but they usually represent to the Adigars". "They can award corporal punishment, imprisonment and fine without fixed limit against persons subject to their jurisdiction paying regard to their respective rank and conditions." "Corporal punishment is not inflicted by them on the principal headmen, Korales and *ārāccis*⁵⁸ except on occasions of urgent public service or for great offences with open hand, nor on the principal officers of temples". They could punish ordinary *govigamas* with open hand, and persons of low caste with rods. They could imprison any of the headmen or any other person in the *mahā-hīragē* or in their own house and impose a moderate fine upon payment of which they were usually released. The fine usually imposed, by any of the chiefs usually did not exceed 7½ *ridi* in the upper districts. When either party in a dispute does not accept the punishment the chief was obliged to bring the matter to the notice of the *adigār*.⁵⁸

The power and authority of the *Mohaṭṭalas*, *Korales* and other headmen of the *disāvanies* were similarly defined by the customs and traditions of the country.

The *atapattu*, *koḍituvakku-mohaṭṭalas*, the *korales* and *ārāccis* of the *disāvanies* had a limited jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters over all persons subject, to their authority respectively, but they exercised it mostly, when the *disāvawas* in Kandy.⁵⁹

Their power was confined in civil matters to disputes regarding the limits of gardens and fields and the extent of the grounds for *chena cultivation*. They had the power to give decisions in writing without signature. They could deliver lands and sequester lands and crops. In criminal matters, their power extended to robberies of cattle, paddy, fruits and other items of property. They had the authority to inflict slight corporal punishment to those who had committed the offences. They could also keep in detention robbers until the recovery of lost property.⁶⁰

There was a limitation on the amount of the fine imposed by the minor chieftains. The three principal *mohaṭṭalas* cannot impose a fine exceeding ten *ridi* and the *korales* and *ārāccis*, not exceeding five *ridi*.⁶¹

The *mohaṭṭalas* of the seven Korales, Uva and Sabaragamuva see to have assumed greater powers, because of the long distance from the capital. They have been in the habit of deciding land cases of greater value. The *atapattu* and *disāvanymohaṭṭalas* of the seven Korales are said to have even granted documents (*siṭṭu*) with their signature. The *atapattu* and *Koḍituvakku* of Sabaragamuva had done so without signature. In both provinces they had issued *divisiṭṭu* or written oaths for swearing by oil.

Throughout the kingdom the headmen acted as police officers, and it was their duty to arrest offenders of every description.⁶²

Apart from the system of territorial administration there was branch of the administration comprising divisions called *badda* the chief of which had authority over non-*govigamacastes* in the population, and arranged on an extra-territorial basis. The *badda* is defined as "a caste group organized for purposes of revenue and service to the state". It was an arrangement for mobilizing people for public services and for the collection of non-agricultural products for the royal household and for the requirements of the various grades of chieftains holding positions of authority. The authority of the *badda* over the respective caste group and its services was all embracing and extended to the boundaries of the *disāvanies*.⁶³ They were under a centralized system of control but during the last stages in the history of the kingdom the *disāvas* had assumed control of the *baddas*.

The character of the Kandyan administration was determined by the mode of production and the system of social organization based on the caste system. It was dominated by the *govigamas* who formed the largest segment of the population. They were an agricultural community of two distinct grades; chieftains and peasant cultivators. It was the upper class of the community that had a monopoly of all positions of high rank in the territorial administration. Yet, the position of the artisans and other non-agricultural groups in the population was not one of depression or oppression. They had their respective chieftains appointed from amongst them in lower levels of territorial administration and in the *badda* form of organization.

Overall, there was stability, harmony and co-existence among all groups and inhabitants within the kingdom. The officers were not paid salaries and there was no monetization of the economy, and instead they were given land assignments. The incomes and other benefits due to the crown were transferred to the donors.

III

The Vanni Principalities of Eastern Sri Lanka

Unlike the central highlands and the plains in the north-central part of the island, the coastal region in the east from Kattukulampattu in the north to Pānama in the south was occupied predominantly by Tamils.⁵⁸ The Muslim settlements were concentrated around the ports and areas of commercial activities. In this long and narrow stretch of territory about 12 chiefdoms had developed in the medieval era. They had their origins in the minor chiefdoms that were established by the chieftains of Nāga lineages in the Early Historic period. By the 13th century, when traces of Nāga domination had faded out the chieftains of the principalities were referred to by the designation *Vanniyaṇaror Vanniṇipamb* because of the impact of South Indian influences.

The eastern littoral had developed as a distinct ethno-cultural zone because of its geographical features and historical circumstances. It was isolated from the central highlands by vast stretches of thick jungles. There was a surplus of rice production and adequate marine resources. There was an abundance of cattle, poultry and citrus fruits. The Portuguese chronicler Fernao de Queyroz records that in the Batticaloa region essential commodities were cheap and found in abundance.⁵⁹

Elephant tusks, honey, wax and timber of high quality were obtained from the jungles and these were highly priced items. There was a demand for them in international trade. The chieftains were obliged to give some of these items in specified quantities, annually, as tribute to the rulers whose claims for suzerainty they had acknowledged. The ports of Kōṭṭiyār and Batticaloa were the principal outlets in the east for the Kandyans in sustaining intercourse with the outside world.

These were of vital importance for the flow of Kandyan trade and contacts with foreign countries. Rice, Cloth and other commodities required in the highlands were supplied by caravans of Muslim traders and *Ceṭṭis*. Arecanuts, cinnamon and pepper produced in the hill country were carried by these groups to the eastern ports for export. The appearance of the Portuguese navy on the eastern coast led to an increasing mutual perception of inter dependence among the Kandyan rulers and the *Vanniyaṇars*. The *vanniyaṇars* became dependent on the Kandyans for military support for their security and for the Kandyans on

the other hand a firm hold on the eastern littoral had become indispensable for safeguarding their political and commercial interests.

In such circumstances, the chieftains of the littoral accepted Kandyan claims for suzerainty and agreed to pay an annual tribute and by doing so they sought to protect the security of their politics from Portuguese incursions. The process led to an expansion and consolidation of Kandyan power and influence over the entire eastern littoral.

In the treaty of 1617 between the ruler of Kandy and the Portuguese the eastern littoral was acknowledged as forming a part of the Kandyan Kingdom. In a schedule to the treaty Kandyan boundaries were identified. According to this document the Kandyan boundaries on the east coast "reach the port of Kōṭṭiyār, and Batticaloa up to Pānama".

The Kandyan position on the controversial question of the ownership of Trincomalee and Batticaloa was accepted.⁶⁰ This was a significant concession by the Portuguese who had, in the late 16th century, sometime between 1571 and 1582, begun to obtain regular tribute from the chieftains of Trincomalee and Batticaloa.⁶¹ Since 1582, the Koṇēśvaram temple at Trincomalee was paying protection fees of 1280 *fanaman* year to the Portuguese. The Portuguese were also collecting a duty on Kandyanarecanut exported through the ports of Trincomalee and Batticaloa.⁶² They were obliged to abandon these claims by the treaty of 1617. But, the Portuguese on their part violated this treaty by occupying Trincomalee and Batticaloa and it led to the renewal of hostilities between them and the Kandyan monarch.

The Powers and Authority of the Chieftains

There were in all 12 chiefdoms:

- 1) Kaṭṭukkuḷampattu
- 2) Tirukōnamalai,
- 3) Tampalakāmam
- 4) Kōṭṭiyāram-pattu
- 5) Kōraḷaip-pattu,
- 6) Erāvūr,
- 7) Maṇmunai (Batticaloa)
- 8) Paḷukāmam
- 9) Pōratīvu
- 10) Nādu kāḍu
- 11) Sammāntuṛai and
- 12) Pānama

The first four among these were in the Trincomalee region and broadly conform to the four respective revenue divisions of the Trincomalee District during the British period. This arrangement had continued up to 1972. The other eight divisions were in *Maṭṭakkaḷappu-tecam*, more or less corresponding to the entire Batticaloa district in the British period, excluding the electoral division of Ampārai;

The *vanniyars* exercised autonomous powers. They administered their principalities and appointed all officers of subordinate ranks. They had judicial powers and armies of their own. They were represented in the king's council, which met in Kandy, whenever decisions had to be made on important matters like the succession to the throne and the declaration war and peace. When the king of Kandy was seriously ill in 1613, the king's council was summoned to make decisions about the succession. The king decided to appoint a prince as his successor and to form a committee of the chiefs to conduct the government on an interim

basis. It is noteworthy that the chieftain of Koṭṭiyāram-pattu was asked to invite the prince to the king's presence to convey him the decisions of the council.⁶³

Sometimes, the mutual conflict between some chieftains and their loyalty to the monarch have been the cause of anxiety at the royal court.

Around 1611 hostilities had arisen between the *vanniyar*s of Palukāmam and Pōratīvu because of a dispute over the Paḷukāmam ferry. In order to resolve their differences the king held a council at the Kandyan royal court. On receiving instructions Idele, the *vanniyar* of Koṭṭiyāram, SellaBaṇḍāram of Palukāmam, KumāraBaṇḍāram of Batticaloa, DharmaSankari, the *vanniyar* of Pōratīvu and Samaravāy, the chieftain of Panama participated in the proceedings of the council. The dispute was settled and the two *vanniyars* were warned and ordered to refrain from acts of hostility.⁶⁴ In the following year these chieftains were summoned to the council because of another reason.

An envoy from the "king" of Palukāmam went to the court of Kandy with the information that his brother Dharma Saṅkari who was the "king" of Porativu had combined with the Portuguese giving them access into all the sea ports and was further helping them to organise war. The ruler of Pōratīvu was summoned to court. He deputed his envoy on the appointed day, when the envoy of Paḷukāmam had not only demonstrated his master's innocence but also showed the treachery of the "king" of Paḷukāmam who had murdered his elder brother while sitting at table with him without any cause. It was, however, decided to have an investigation on the matter.⁶⁵

Punitive action against the Chieftain of Pānama

"In September 1613 there arrived tidings that the 'king' of Pānama had thrown off his allegiance and joined the Portuguese and that the king of *Cotiarum* was also plotting a revolt against the Imperial crown when they were instantly summoned with letters dated 23rd September to make their appearance before the Emperor within 16 days under pain of confiscation of property and banishment".⁶⁶

"The king of *Cotiarum* being indisposed at the time deputed his nephew to ascertain the cause of his being so summoned at court. That envoy arrived in Kandy on the 4th of October and he so ably vindicated the case of the king, that latter was exonerated from all blame and the envoy was permitted to depart."⁶⁷

"But the king of Panama from a consciousness of his guilt did not make his appearance and it was resolved to compel him to do so by an attack on his kingdom... On the 1st of January 1613, the princes of Migonne and ove (Ūva) started off with an army of 35,000 men direct towards Panama, with instructions to attack and lay waste the place if necessary, but the inhabitants on hearing that such a strong force were advancing against them sent their messengers with large presents entreating that they might be heard in their defence, which request was readily accorded (to) them, so that it was ultimately agreed, that independent of the annual tribute, the king should make good the payment of two months wages for the whole army, which amounted to 457,000 lareens and that the king himself should make his appearance at court within 5 or 6 days the latest-with these conditions the king undertook to comply."⁶⁸

The chieftain of Panama arrived in Kandy and was received with honours. Yet the charges were investigated and the chieftain of Pānama was accused of treason and sentenced to death and executed on the 24th of March⁶⁹ 1613. On the 28th of the same month Samaravāy, the nephew of the deceased king was raised to rank of chieftain and thereafter he proceeded to Pānama with a strong force of 5,000 men and on reaching his principality, overawed all opposition and consolidated his power.⁷⁰

The Military Power of the Vanniya

The *Vanniya* chieftains had considerable military power. They did not maintain standing armies but they could raise levies according to circumstances and the as striking forces their troops were rather in effective in the field. Philippus Baldaeus, who was serving as a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, in the latter part of 17th century provides some statistical information about the military support provided by *vanniya* to the rulers of Kōṭṭē (Portuguese) when they attacked Kandy in 1594. The following details are recorded by him:

- The king of Kotiar: 7890 men, 600 workmen, 1000 oxen, 30 war elephants and 25 alias.
- The King of Paḷukamam: 5890 men 1,000 workmen, 25 alias and 3 war elephants.
- The King of Batticaloa: 9800 men of war, 2000 workmen, 25000 oxen 4 war elephants and 30 alias.
- The king of Panama with other princes brought 58,896 men, 2140 workmen, 630 alias and 16,000 oxen.

Baldaeus also says that the grand army led by Lopes de Souza marched to Kandy setting up as they went on for security's sake defences at Menikkadavara, Māṭṭigama and Ganetenna.⁷¹

The numbers of soldiers and other items as given by Baldaeus are doubtless exaggerated. This great army was destroyed by Vimaladharmāriya at Danture.

The Chieftains of Trincomalee

The *vanniya* of Tirukōṇamalai who had precedence among chieftains of the four principalities in the northern part of the eastern littoral belonged to the *pūpālakōttirām*, which traced its descent from a chieftain from Madurai. He had probably come to the Island in the 13th century and attained the rank of *vanniya* in the days Pāṇḍyan ascendancy in the region.⁷² Tradition claims that he was appointed by a King called Kulakkōṭṭan otherwise called Cōḷakaṇkan. He had the responsibility of administering the principality and the temple of Kōṇesvaram by upholding traditional norms and customs. It is highlighted by the following exhortation that is ascribed to Kulakkōṭṭan

"The PāsupataBrāhmins should be treated with respect and reverence. Those who molest them shall earn the wrath of the gods. Among others those who violate the law shall be beaten or imprisoned according to the nature of the offence. Murderers shall be condemned to death; the *tevaraṭṭiyār* shall be condemned to hard labour the drawing of water, whenever they violate the laws; other women shall be punished for their offences with lashes and should be ordered to carry burdens. In all matters concerning justice let the laws of Manu prevail. dAnother's wife shall be treated as one's own mother. Always be in pursuit of truth and refrain from deceit and falsehood. Be generous and compassionate to the poor and honour the elders and learned scholars. Thou shall always endeavour to promote the regular worship of the God of Kōṇamalai."⁷⁴

As there is no element of exaggeration in this account it may be considered as an authentic tradition about the ideals and principles of administration cherished and practised in the principality.

The *vanniyanār* had his own staff including the *tāṇamand varippattu* who had responsibilities relating to the collection of revenues and temple services.

The Temple of Konesvaram

There were elaborate arrangements for the administration of temple affairs. The *vanṇiyanār* of the province of Trincomalee was vested with the responsibility of administering the temple and its endowments.⁷⁴ He was assisted in the performance of his functions by the *vanṇiyanār* of Kaṭṭukkuḷamparru who was charged with the responsibility of maintaining temple records. These were somewhat comparable to the *thombos* of the Portuguese and Dutch periods. There were in them details pertaining to land grants, monetary contributions and service obligations of the inhabitants. They were in the form of a vast compendium referred to as *periyavaḷamaippattati*. Some of the notices on temple administration as found in the *KōṇecarKalveṭṭu* and the *Tirukōṇācala-purāṇam* of a later date seem to have been derived from this compendium.

Whenever problems or doubts arose about temple administration it was customary to convene a meeting of Śaiva devotees who were the principal inhabitants of the land in those days and make decisions after deliberations. The meeting was jointly presided over by the chieftains of Trincomalee and Kaṭṭukkuḷam-parru. The latter had the epithet *Kanakacuntarap-perumāl*. The chief priest of the temple sat along with them as an honoured guest, but his presence was a formality that highlighted the solemnity of the proceedings.

The *vanṇiyanār* of Kaṭṭukkuḷam-parru had to be invited through emissaries. He was taken in procession with all honours. In the process, foot-cloth (நிலபாவாடை) was spread on the ground as a mark of honour and musical instruments (*nātaśvaram* and *tārai*) were played during the course of the procession. On his arrival at the temple premises he was received ceremonially by the *vanṇiyanār* of Tirukōnamalai and the chief priest of the temple. He sat by the side of his counterpart on a seat decorated with precious stones.⁷⁶

The *vanṇiyanār* of Kaṭṭukkuḷam-parru answered the queries relating to the deposits of treasure, lands and temple services in the presence of a large gathering of devotees. These arrangements had been made in the distant past to maintain transparency in the administration, which was deemed as a religious duty.⁷⁷

The day to day affairs and the monthly and annual festivals were managed by two groups of functionaries called *tāṇam* (தாணம்) and *varipparru*. The authority of the *tāṇattār* was circumscribed by the fact that the *vanṇiyanār* had supreme authority over all the functionaries who were subordinate to him and carried out their duties under his direction.⁷⁸

The *vanṇiyanār* of Kottiyaram-parru had a custodial function in relation to the temple of Murukan at Verukal, which was one of the temples referred to as *tēcattukkōyil*. The *cittiravēlāyutarkatil*, written by VīrakkōṇMutaliyār of Tampalakāmam was recited by the author before a congregation of the inhabitants of the principality, assembled at the main hall of this temple. The chieftain of the principality, Iḷaṇcīṇkavannipam had conducted the proceedings. Another chieftain, Kailāyavannipam had constructed one of the walls of this temple in the previous century.⁷⁹

Spilbergen and the King of Batticaloa

Contemporary European writers refer the chieftdom of Maṇmuṇai as a kingdom (*regnum*) and indicated in similar form as *regnum* Batticaloa in the maps published in their books.

An interesting account of the visit of the Dutch Admiral Spilbergen and the reception accorded to him by the chieftain is quoted by S.O.Kanagaratnam in the Monograph of the Batticaloa District.⁸⁰

It runs:

"The Dutch Admiral Spilbergen entered the harbour of Batticaloa on May 29, 1603; on May 31 he despatched a messenger to Batticaloa, in order to speak to the king, DharmaJangadan (Dharma Gangataran). On the 1st of June the Sinhalese went on board with a Portuguese interpreter, who informed them that they might obtain a sufficient supply of pepper and cinnamon and that the Mudaliyār, who at that time conducted the king's affairs, had desired that the admiral would pay him a friendly visit on shore"

"About the same time the messenger who had been sent to the king returned with news that he had experienced a favourable reception. The admiral presented the Sinhalese and their interpreter, who had gone on board his ship, with some beautiful glass and other articles before they returned to the shore".

"On the following day Spilbergen landed with three or four attendants. As he reached the shore five elephants stood ready to receive him. By kneeling and other signs these noble animals had been taught to testify their respect for the Dutch admiral..."

"Spilbergen was received with great cordiality by the Mudaliyār, and at his departure promised on the following day to pay a visit to the king of Batticaloa. He accordingly landed again on the 3rd of June, when he took with him not only a variety of presents for the king but also a band of musicians with different instruments. On the 5th in the evening Spilbergen repeated his visit to the king, whom he found attended by a guard of 1,400 men. His Majesty's bodyguard all stood in a line with drawn swords as the admiral approached and the king also welcomed him with a naked sword at his hand. Spilbergen testified his respect for the monarch by many beautiful presents, and by the performance of some sweet music, at which he expressed great delight. He afterwards directed Spilbergen to be conducted to the house of the Mudaliyār, where he and his suite were sumptuously entertained. The king suspecting him to be a Portuguese increased troops on the coast. The admiral was repeatedly disappointed in the completion of their lading and suspected treachery, until eventually he visited Kandy, where he received a gracious reception. Permission to build a fort in any part of his dominions being granted by the king, he started from Batticaloa".

The foregoing description is a sober account of the reception that was accorded to admiral Spilbergen by the *vam̃ṇiyanār* of Batticaloa and his staff of employees. It was at once cautious and dignified and accompanied with an elaborate display of the ruler's strength and military power. It also reveals that a *mudaliyār* was in charge of the administration of the principality. The encounter between Spilbergen and the *vam̃ṇiyanār* opened the avenue for Spilbergen to reach Kandy where he was cordially received and the objective of his mission proved successful. The account highlights an element of co-ordination between the Kandyan authorities and those of the coastal chiefdoms in conducting foreign affairs.

Glorification of the Kandyan Monarch in Tamil Poetry

There is a eulogistic description of King Rajasimha, the King of Kandy, who had made a substantial grant of lands and ornaments to the temple of Verukal. The

following description of the king is found in the *Cittira-vēlāyutarKātal*, a poem on the temple of Verukal that was produced by VīrakkōṇMutaliyār of Tampalakāmam:

King Rajasimha, the ruler of Kandy.

Who was born in the lineage of the solar dynasty.

That is praised in the whole world.

The glorious monarch who granted fields and gardens

To the Lord of Verukal along with a *patakkam* of gold studded with brilliant gems,

The King of Kandy who wears the golden crown.⁸¹

According to the *Tirukōṇacalapurāṇam* the temple of Tampalakāmam was established by (Vara) Racacīṇkan, the ruler of Kandy (*ceṅkatakanakar*). It records the following description of the king's activities:

Having installed the images of Siva, the Goddess and of Vinayākarhe appointed learned Brāhmins for conducting worship. He deposited gold and made other provisions for conducting rituals and worship daily and on special occasions. Besides, provision also was made for the annual car festival. He donated houses and gold to the Brahmins, to the people of the *thetāṇam* and *varipparru* and to *perumālpulavan*, the specialist who conducts the recitation of sacred hymns and made arrangements for them to reside at Tampalakāmam. He conferred ranks and honours upon them and prescribed their duties. Having made arrangements for conducting regular worship of Siva in accordance with the rules laid down in the texts, he returned to his city.⁸²

The foregoing account presupposes that Vararācacīṇkan, the king of Ceṅkataka-nakar (Kandy) had displayed a keen interest in the establishment of the temple of Tampalakāmam as a successor of the Konesvaram temple. In the east, the Kandyan monarch was perceived as a custodian of Hinduism and his conduct evoked the administration of the inhabitants as attested by notices in Tamil poetry.

Foot Notes and References

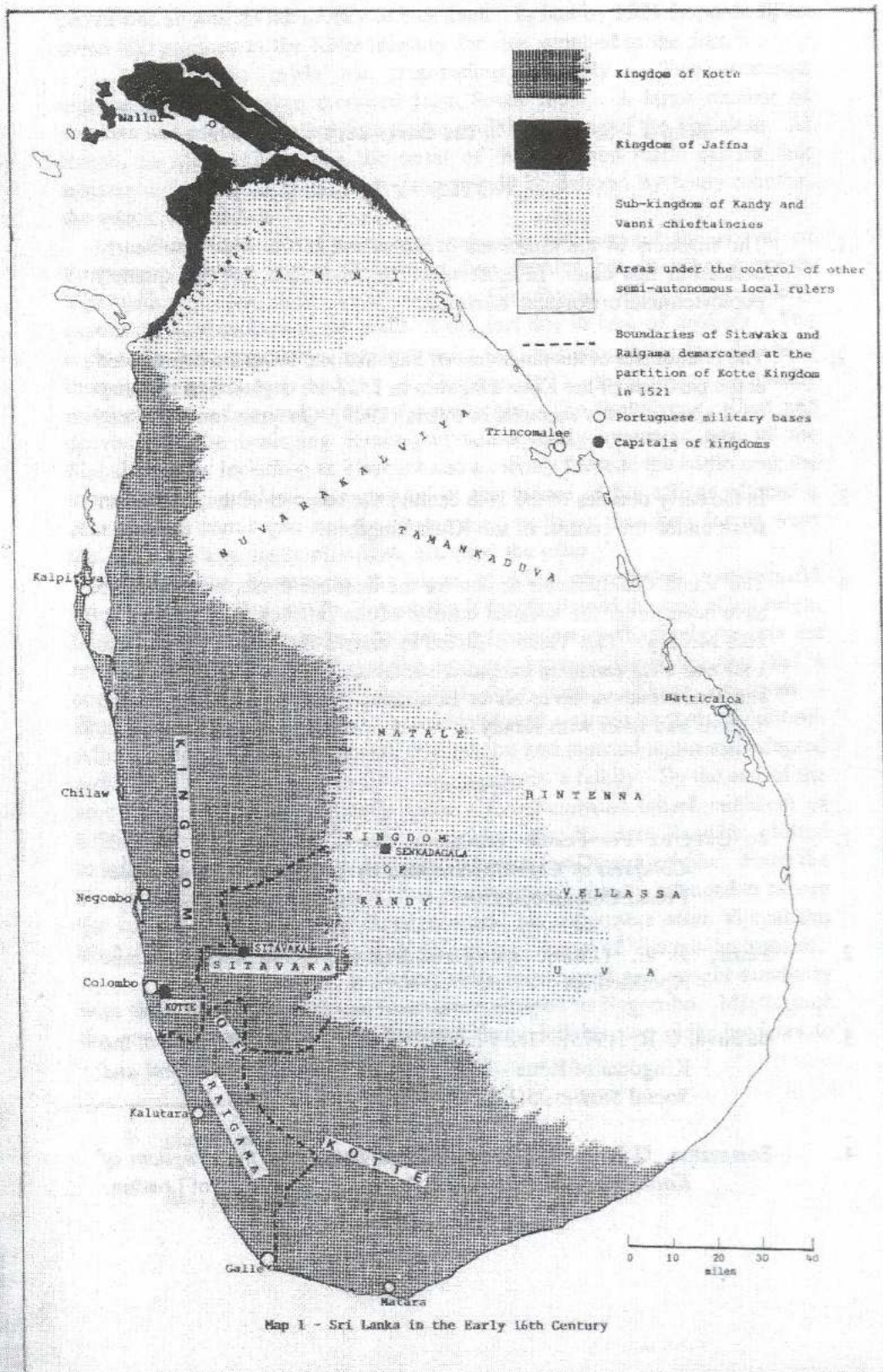
01. Fernao de Queyroz states that Cankili I (1619-1661) had urged Mayadunne of Sitavaka to continue the war against the Portuguese in order to safeguard Buddhism and promised military support for the venture. Later, towards the end of the 16th century another king of Jaffna as stated here later, had provided avenues for the Kandyan monarch to establish contacts with south Indian rulers.
02. *University of Peradeniya History of Sri Lanka (UPHSL)*, volume II, 1995, p.140.
03. In the early 12th century during the period of Gajabahu's occupation of Polonnaruwa Malayadesa was attached to that kingdom as an autonomous region. Parakramabahu, however, won over to his side the dignitary who was holding authority over Malayadesa.

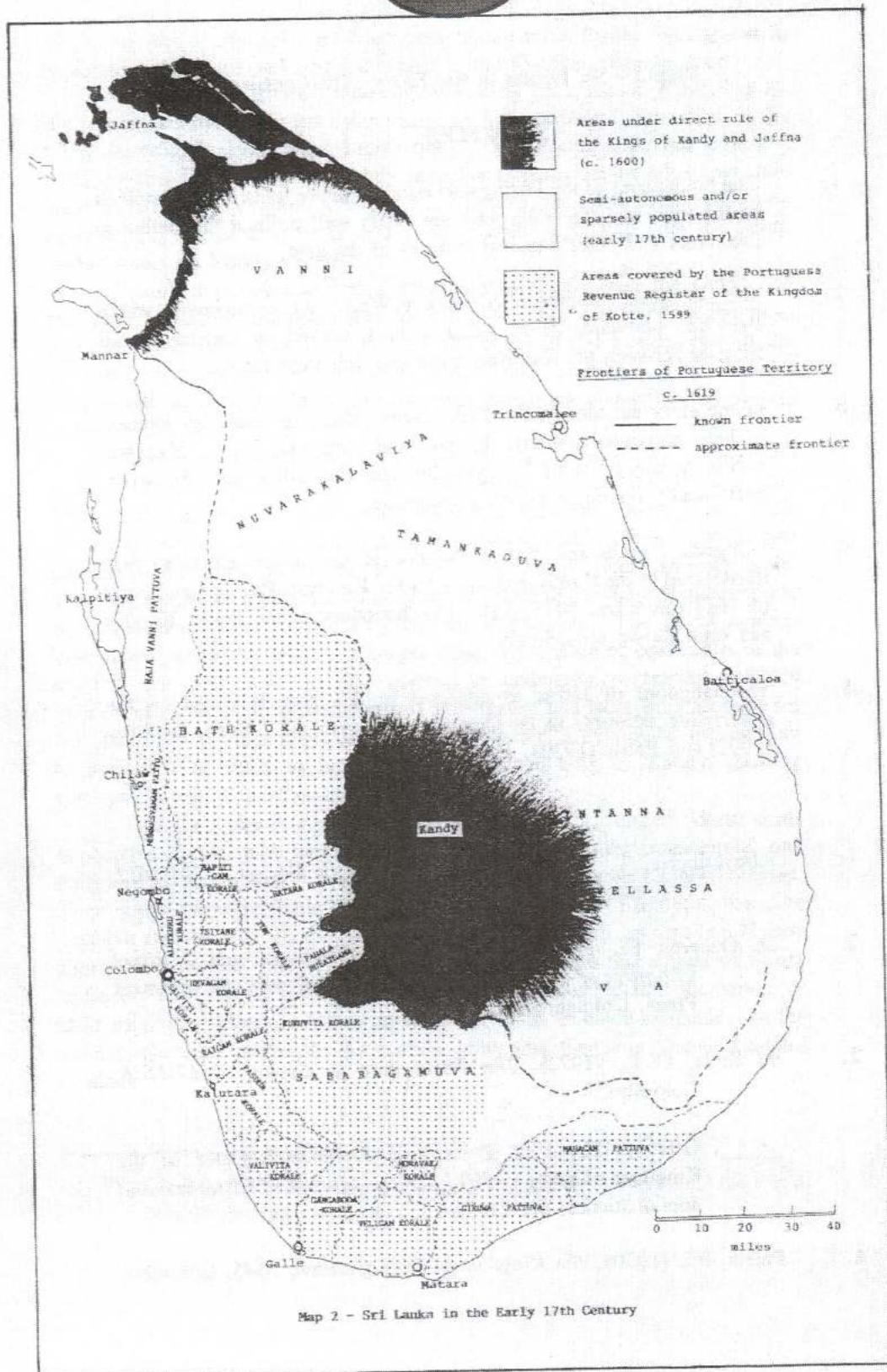
04. S.Paranavitana, *Lankatilaka Inscriptions*, UCR 18(1 & 2), Peradeniya, 1960, Pp.6-45; S.Pathmanathan, *IlāṅkāṭṭamiḻCācaṇāṅkaḻ* volume II, Department of Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs, Colombo, 1913, p.205, line 42.
05. University of Peradeniya History of Ceylon volume I, Part II (reprint), 2008, p.640.
06. S.Pathmanathan, "The Lankatilaka Temple Inscription of a Merchant community", *Ancient and Medieval Commercial Activities in the Indian Ocean* Edited by Noboru Karashima, Taisho University, 2002, Pp.36-47.
- 6a S.Paranavitana, "The Lankatilaka Inscriptions", UCR18(1 &2)
S.Pathmanathan, The Copperplate Inscription of a Tamil Merchant Community", *Ancient and Medieval Commercial Activities in the Indian Ocean* ed. Noboru Karashima, Taisho University, 2002.
07. UPHC volume I, Part 2, P.670.
08. Ibid, Pp.675, 676.
09. "This Jotiya-situ or sitana figures in the Madavala inscription of the forty-fifth year of Parakramabahu, where he attests a grant made to a private individual. In the body of the grant itself the names of two attesters are given as DantotavatureDevan and Divanavatte *Lanka Adtikara*, while the signatures on the left hand top corner of the record are respectively of āpāṇa and Joti-siṭana. It therefore, follows that the latter had the title of *Lanka Adhtikara*. The personage called DantotavatureDevan who signs *asāpā*, was no doubt the Gampala prince. He receives precedence in the grant, due to his royal birth, for the effective power in the Uḍarata was probably wielded by Jotiya-siṭana alias Divanavatte *Lankādhikāra*". Ibid, p.676.
10. *University Peradeniya History of Sri Lanka (UPHSL)* ed.K.M.de Silva, p.138.
11. Ibid, p.141
12. Ibid,
13. Ibid, p.142
14. Ibid, p.15
15. Ibid, p.76
16. Ibid, p.145
17. Ibid, p.100
18. Ibid, Pp.147-8
19. Ibid, p.149
20. Ibid,
21. Ibid, p.151
22. Ibid, p.154
23. "In order to demonstrate his enthusiasm for his new faith Sri VijayaRajasimha, embarked enthusiastically in efforts to restore valid ordination to the Saṃgha in Sri Lanka, and had maintained close cultural contact with the Buddhist centres of South East Asia for this purpose. The first attempt made by the king in 1741 to invite *bhikkhus* from Pegu ended on a mishap when the yacht provided by the Dutch foundered off the coast of Pegu. In 1747, three envoys were sent to the court of Siam on the same mission".
"In May 1753, *Upālithēra* arrived with a retinue of monks and 5 Siamese envoys sent by King Boromokot (1732-587 of Siam. In July of the same year in the presence of Kīrthi Sri Rājasimha and at his request six novices were admitted to the *upasampada* with Upali as their teacher and after this the great ordination

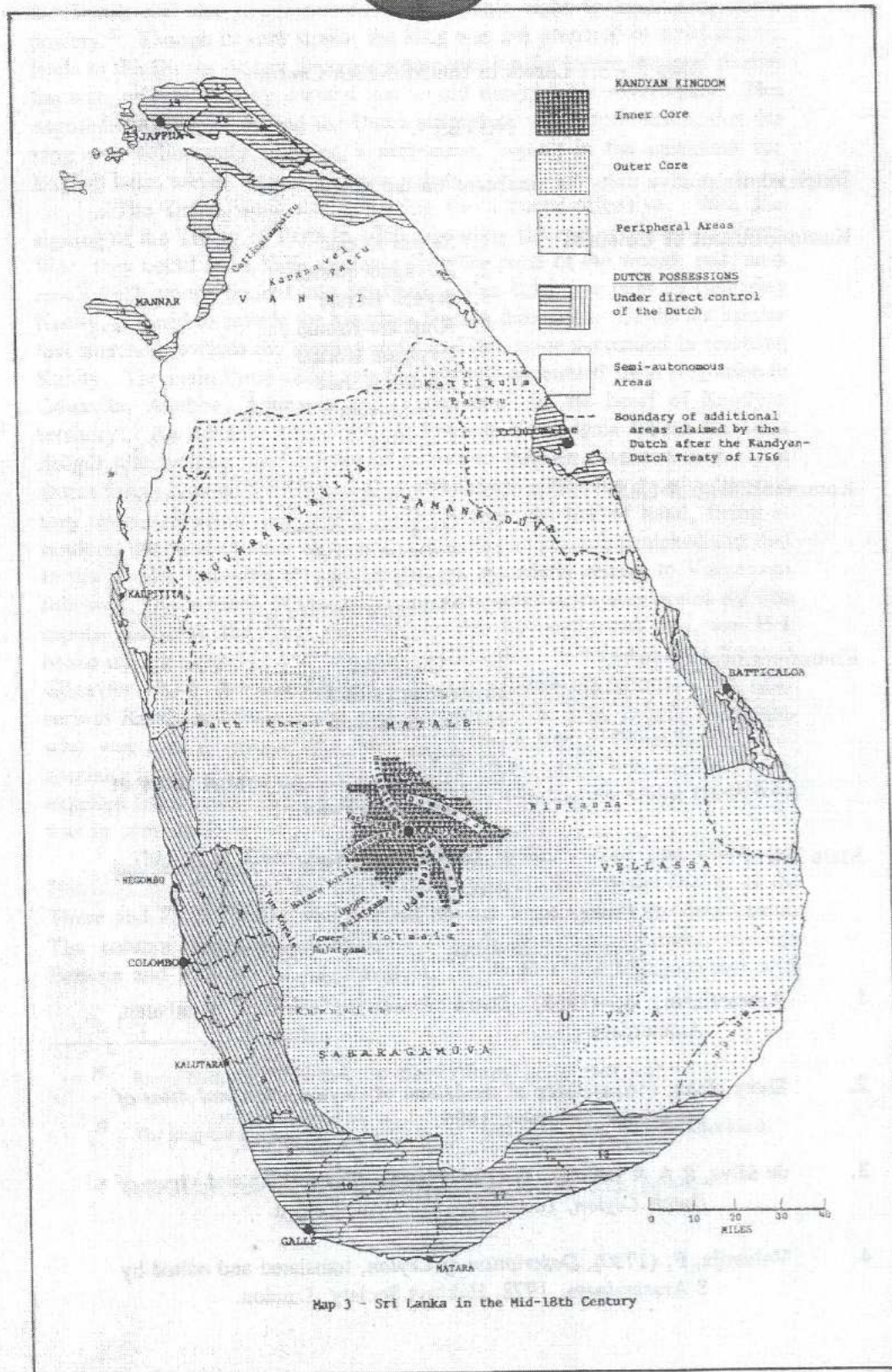
which for so long had been neglected in Lanka was re-established once more".
Ibid, Pp.288, 290.

24. The disāvanies were the following:
(1) the Four Korales, (2) the Seven Korales, (3) Ūva, (4) Matale, (5) Sabaragamuwa, (6) the Three Korales, (7) Valapana, (8) Uḍapalāta, (9) NuvaraKalāviya, (10) Vellasa, (11) Bintana and (12) Tammankaḍuva. *A sketch of the Constitution of the Kandyan Kingdom by Sir John D'oyly, The Ceylon Historical Journal*, Volume Twenty four, Dehiwala, 1975, p.1
25. Ibid, p.1
26. Robert Percival, *An Account of the Island of Ceylon*, London 1803 (Reprint) Asian Educational Services, Delhi-Madras, 1990, p.248.
27. *University of Peradeniya History of Sri Lanka (UPHSL) Volume II (C1500 to C1800)*, Editor: K.M.de Silva, 1995, p.322.
28. The presence of some of the *vanniyar* chiefs of the eastern littoral in the king's council is attested by PhilippusBaldaeus, a contemporary Dutch missionary and scholar who had served in the island.
29. Robert Percival, *An Account of the Island of Ceylon* London 1803, Reprint Asian Educational Services, Madras 1990, p.252.
30. *UPHSL* Volume II, 1995, p.325.
31. Ibid, p.325
32. Ibid,
33. *A Sketch of the Constitution*, p.3
34. Ibid, Pp.2-3
35. *UPHSL*, Volume II, p.236.
36. *A Sketch of the Constitution*, p.8
37. Ibid,
38. Ibid, p.9
39. Ibid, p.10
40. *UPHSL*, Volume II, p.333
41. *A Sketch of the Constitution*, p.36
42. Ibid,
43. Ibid, p.37
44. Ibid,
45. Ibid, p.38
46. Ibid,
47. *UPHSL*, Volume II, p.333
48. Ibid,
49. Ibid, Pp.334-5
50. *A Sketch of the Constitution*, p.38
51. Ibid, p.39
52. Ibid, p.37
53. Ibid, p.40
54. Ibid,
55. Ibid,
56. Ibid, p.41
57. *UPHSL*, Volume II, p.335
58. PhilippusBaldaeus, *A True and Exact Description of the Island of Ceylon*, a new and unabridged translation from the edition of 1672, *Ceylon Historical Journal*, Vol. VI, Nos.1-4, Maharagama, 1958, Pp.266-7; R.Pieris "Administration of Justice and Revenue in the Island of Ceylon under the Dutch Government"

- Journal of the Ceylon Branch* of the Royal Asiatic Society (JRASCB), New series Vol.3(2), Colombo, 1954, Pp.125-160.
59. Fernao de Queyroz, *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon* (Herein after referred to as Queyroz) Trans. Father S.G.Perera, 1930, Book.2, p.64.
 60. *University of Peradeniya History of Sri Lanka (UPHSL)*, Volume II, 1995, p.154.
 61. Ibid, p.92
 62. Ibid, p.112
 63. Baldaeus, p.68.
 64. Ibid, p.14
 65. Ibid, Pp.54, 55
 66. Ibid, p.60
 67. Ibid, p.62
 68. Ibid,
 69. Ibid, p.63
 70. Ibid, p.64
 71. Ibid, p.16
 72. *Koṇāḍēcar Kalveṭṭued*, Panitar R. Vadivel, Department of Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs, Colombo, 1993.
 73. *KK*, Pp.24-25
 74. Ibid,
 75. S.Pathmanathan, *The Temples of Tirukkōṇēsvaram and Tampalakāmam*, Kumaran Book House, Colombo-Chennai, 2018, p.43.
 76. Ibid,
 77. Ibid, p.44
 78. Ibid,
 79. S.Pathmanathan, *Ilankait Tamil Cācanāṅkaḷ* Volume II, Department of Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs, Colombo, 1913, Pp.375-383
 80. S.O.Canagaratnam, *Monograph of the Batticaloa District of the Eastern Province, Ceylon*, H.C.Cottle, Government Printer, Ceylon, Colombo, 1921, p.9.
 81. S.Pathmanathan, *The Temples of Tirukkōṇēsvaram and Tampalakāmam* 2018, Pp.89, 92-93.
 82. *Tirukōṇācalapurāṇam* (2nd impression, Department of Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs), Colombo, 1997, *Tampainakarp-paṭalam* verses 35-42, Pp.360-362.









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