

## THE DOWNFALL OF THE ANURADHAPURA KINGDOM AND SOUTH INDIAN INFLUENCES

# 3

Do you remember we studied about the Anuradhapura Kingdom in Grade Six. We will recall the factors that we learnt about the Kings such as Devanampiyatissa, Dutugemunu, Elara, Velagamba and Mahasen. We also learnt about the introduction of Buddhism to this country and large scale irrigation schemes implemented during the period.

Next, let us learn the downfall of the Anuradhapura Kingdom and the influence of South Indian Kingdoms.

### Reasons for the downfall of the Anuradhapura kingdom

The Anuradhapura kingdom which was established about the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC by King Pandukabhaya remained the capital city of Sri Lanka for a long period of about 1400 years. However, by about the 10<sup>th</sup> century AC, with the invasions from South India the decline of the Anuradhapura kingdom set in. Apart from these invasions there were a number of other reasons which led to the fall of the Anuradhapura kingdom.

They are :

- \* The assistance given to the South Indian invaders against the Sinhala kings, by the South Indian soldiers who had settled down in Sri Lanka (they were employed by Sinhala kings to establish their authority.)
- \* Weak kings to ward the end of the Anuradhapura period.

- \* The decline of the economy due to the invasions and downfall of the irrigation systems .
- \* The inability of the kings who ascended the throne to take necessary steps to develop the economy, other than taking action to preserve the throne.
- \* The Anuradhapura kingdom finally collapsed during the reign of king Mahinda V with Rajaraja I's invasion. The abandonment of Anuradhapura which had been the capital so far, and making Polonnaruwa their capital by the Cholas who conquered Sri Lanka also contributed to the downfall of Anuradhapura. This was the decisive as well as the immediate cause.

### **The Establishment of Chola Supremacy**

By about 993 AD the Chola kingdom of South India had become very powerful under King Rajaraja I. Under King Rajaraja I a Chola army invaded Sri Lanka and subdued the northern part and captured it. By this time King Mahinda V had abandoned Anuradhapura and fled to Ruhuna, due to internal conflicts. The Cholas captured the northern part of Sri Lanka, which was in an anarchical state, named it Mummudi-Chola-Mandalam and began to govern it as a province of the Chola Empire. They gave up Anuradhapura which had been devastated and chose Polonnaruwa as their capital and called it 'Jana Natha Puram' (Jana Natha Mangalam). Anuradhapura which had been the capital city of Sri Lanka and an administrative centre for over fifteen centuries was thus abandoned, and thereafter Polonnaruwa became the capital of Sri Lanka.

### **Period of Chola Rule**

Information about the system of Chola administration of Sri Lanka though meagre can be obtained from historical sources. The following are some information about the manner in which the Chola administration was carried out.

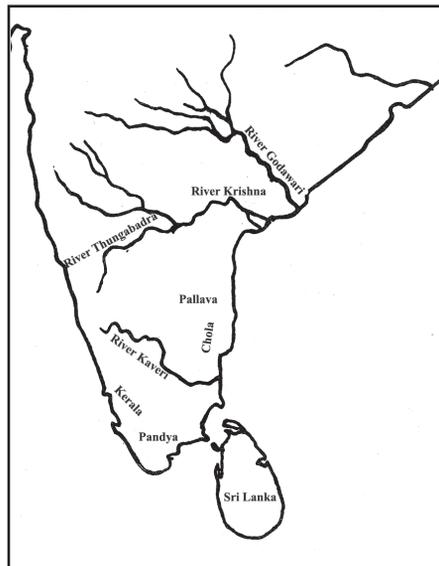
- \* The Cholas who made Polonnaruwa their centre of administration carried on military rule.
- \* The Chola Empire was divided into administrative districts called mandalam, and the area in Sri Lanka which was under their rule named Mummudi Chola Madalam was ruled as one such unit or mandala.
- \* The region of Sri Lanka under Chola rule was administered by a general who was appointed by a Chola ruler.
- \* Appointment of Cholas to high ranks in the administration.
- \* The collection of taxes in a systematic manner.
- \* Allocating the taxes from some villages in Sri Lanka to a temple in Tanjore, the capital of the Chola Empire.
- \* Tributes, gifts and donations collected from Sri Lanka were sent to the Chola country as revenue.
- \* The officials of the Chola Empire, carried on the administration of Mummudi Chola Mandalam, according to their wishes, free from the control of the administrative centre of the empire.

## **South Indian Kingdoms and their influence**

It is important to know the historical facts about South India in studying the history of the Anuradhapura period. During this period some important Indian States exerted their influence over Sri Lanka. Among them, the Kingdoms of Chola, Pandya and Kerala are important. These states which became powerful from time to time maintained different types of relations with Sri Lanka during the Anuradhapura period. These relations were greatly influenced by the location of Sri Lanka in close proximity to India. This chapter attempts to find out the manner in which these kingdoms have influenced the political, economic, religious, cultural and social spheres of Sri Lanka.

The South Indian kingdoms which influenced Sri Lanka in various ways are :

- Kerala
- Pallava
- Pandya
- Chola



3.2 The South Indian kingdoms

### ● The Kerala Kingdom

- \* The Kerala kingdom which was on the west coast of South India is situated close to Sri Lanka.
- \* The Kerala kingdom was not as large an empire as the Chola or Pandya kingdoms.
- \* However it is clear from the sources that the kings of Sri Lanka maintained various types of relations with Kerala.

### ● The Pallava Kingdom

- \* The Pallava kingdom is situated North of the South Indian kingdoms of Chola, Pandya and Kerala.
- \* The Pallava kingdom had a large area between the river Pala in the South and river Krishna in the North.
- \* It was the Pallavas, who established a large empire in South India, for the first time.
- \* They established their empire making the city of Kanchi their capital.

- \* According to the Prakrit copper plates the first ruler to establish power in the city of Kanchi was one Bappadeva.
- \* The power of the Pallavas lasted from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D to the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD.
- \* The extent to which Pallava power had grown in the 7th century is clear from the fact that King Manavamma obtained the assistance of the Pallavas to seize power in Sri Lanka.

## **The Pandya Kingdom**

- \* The Pandya kingdom was situated close to the eastern coast of South India in very close proximity to Sri Lanka.
- \* The city of Madura or modern Madurai was the capital of the Pandyan kingdom.
- \* By the latter half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, the Pandyans gradually became powerful.
- \* During the time of the Pandyan Emperor Srimara Sri Vallabha the political power of the Pandyans spread throughout South India.
- \* Srimara Sri Vallabha invaded Sri Lanka and attempted to establish his dominance here.

## **The Chola Kingdom**

- \* The Chola kingdom is situated close to the east coast of South India, north of the Pandyan kingdom.
- \* The Cholas established their power in South India after the Pandyan Empire.
- \* The Cholas who were under the Pandyans and Pallavas during the early years, spread their power making modern Tanjore, near river Kaveri their capital city.
- \* In the 9<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of King Aditya they began to rise politically.
- \* By the time of King Parantaka I, the Cholas expanded their kingdom and it was made an empire by the kings Raja Raja I, Rajendra I.

- \* King Parantaka I, who captured all the regions belonging to the Pandyan and Pallavas attempted to invade Sri Lanka too and spread their power.



### **Student Activity**

Collect information about the south Indian kingdoms that exerted their influence on Sri Lanka.

## **The nature of the relations with South India**

As a result of the close location of Sri Lanka to India, there had been various types of relations between Sri Lanka and India from the pre Christian era too.

These relations can be analysed under three aspects. They are

- \* diplomatic relations
- \* religious and cultural relations
- \* economic relations

## **Diplomatic Relations**

The diplomatic relations that took place between India and Sri Lanka can be discussed in relation to several main headings.

Sri Lankan kings obtaining the assistance of South Indian kings to establish their power.

On several occasions the kings of Sri Lanka sought the assistance of neighbouring India, to safeguard their authority and establish their power, when there were threats to their kingship. This is a significant diplomatic relationship. Given below are several occasions when Sri Lankan kings maintained such relationships.

- \* King Ilanaga escaped from the Lambakarnas and fled to India and later with the help of an Indian army defeated the Lambakarnas and seized power.

- \* King Abhayanaga brought forces from South India and deposed his brother Voharika Tissa and secured the throne.
- \* King Mugalan who escaped to India in fear of King Kashyapa, brought forces from India, killed Kashyapa and seized power.
- \* Towards the latter half of the Anuradhapura period when clashes occurred between the dynasties for the throne, these kings went to India from time to time to obtain armed forces to secure power. Eg. Aggabodhi III, Datopatissa I, Datopatissa II
- \* King Manavamma with the help of the Pallava kingdom terminated the South Indian domination and restored local administrative authority.

### **South Indian kings obtained assistance from Sri Lankan kings**

In the same way that Sri Lankan rulers expected the assistance of the forces of the Indian kings to establish their power, South Indian kings too sought the help of the Sri Lankan kings to safeguard their royal power and establish their authority. Given below are some such instances.

- \* When the Pandyan King Srimara Sri Vallabha's son came to Sri Lanka to get military assistance against his father, King Sena II sent forces to the Pallava kingdom under commander Kuttaka, and defeated Srimara Sri Vallabha and helped his son Varagunavarman II to ascend the throne.
- \* During the reign of Kashyapa V, a grandson of Srimara Sri Vallabha, Maravarman Rajasimha II came to Sri Lanka to obtain assistance against the Chola King Parantaka I, and Kashyapa V sent an army to the Pandyan kingdom under commander Sakka.
- \* The Pandyan king Maravarman Rajasinha II, who having lost a battle with the Cholas came to Sri Lanka with his regalia, during the reign of king Dappula IV, seeking assistance. Having being unable to secure help he returned to Kerala leaving his regalia in Sri Lanka.

- \* In the war, which Pallava ruler Narasinha Varman waged against the western Chalukyas, he obtained the assistance of a Sri Lankan prince Manavamma.



#### Student Activity

Make a list of the kings of the Anuradhapura period who sought the assistance of Indian forces.

### Recovery of Prisoners

In studying the diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and India, sources state that prisoners captured during invasions were taken to their country.

- \* It is stated that during the reign of King Vankanasika Tissa, the Chola King Karikalan invaded Sri Lanka and took away 12000 Sinhalese, as prisoners.
- \* It is mentioned that King Gajabahu, King Vankanasika Tissa's son in retaliation, with the assistance of the Kerala King Chenkuttuvan invaded the Chola country and brought back the 12000 Sinhala prisoners, as well as another 12000 of Chola prisoners.

### Intermarriges

During the Anuradhapura period several kings of Sri Lanka brought down South Indian princesses and married them. Some kings married south Indian princesses in response to the assistance provided to them. It appears that these kings entered into matrimony with South Indian kingdoms in order to maintain their power. When drawing attention to the matrimonial relations between Sri Lanka and the South Indian states the following instances stand out.

- \* King Vijaya married a princess called Vijayi from the city of Madhura.

- \* King Ilanaga who defeated the South Indians, got his son Chandramukha Siva to marry a South Indian princess Damiladevi.
- \* King Mihindu IV got down a princess from the Kalinga country and married her.

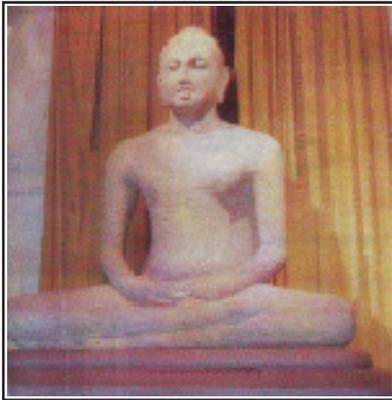
## Religious and Cultural Relations

In the first half of the Anuradhapura period it was North India which influenced Sri Lanka in all aspects including religion and culture. However it was South India which influenced Sri Lanka to a great extent during the latter part of the Anuradhapura period.

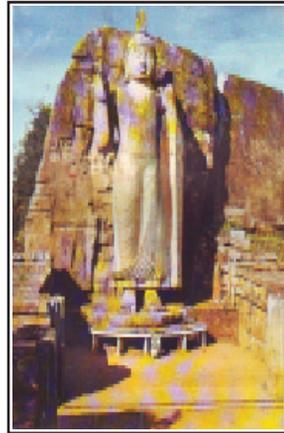
From the religious point of view the connection between Sri Lanka and South India too stands out. Among the religious and cultural relations that existed between Sri Lanka and South India the following events are important.

- \* There is evidence from sources that Sri Lankan monks maintained connections with the Amaravati and Nagarjuna Buddhist centres in South India.
- \* About the mid - Anuradhapura period, Mahayana Buddhism had spread in South India and through these relations Mahayana Buddhism began to spread in Sri Lanka. For example, it can be pointed out that about 918 A D Mahayana scholar by the name of Vajrabodhi, came to Sri Lanka from South India and stayed for sometime at the Abhayagiri vihara.
- \* Among the arts and crafts that still remain in Anuradhapura there are some works which show the influence of the Pallava, Amaravati and other styles. From these creations it is evident that Sri Lanka had relations with these kingdoms.

## Examples of the Amaravathi Style



3.3 The Tholuvila Statue



3.4 The Avukana Statue

\* In addition, it is clear from the sources that, the Hindu religion too spread in Sri Lanka through the relations with South India. There is evidence to show that temples of God Shiva were found in Manthottamai (Mantai) and Thirukkonamalai (Trincomalee).



3.5A picture of a Shiva temple

- \* Similarly according to the ruins of some Hindu temples discovered in the North of the old Anuradhapura city, belonging to the late Anuradhapura period it can be surmised that the Hindu religion was widespread at the time.
- \* It is believed that King Gajabahu obtained the assistance of the Kerala king to invade the Chola kingdom and that on his return he brought the anklet of Goddess Pattini. It is stated in sources, such as the Rajavaliya that the worship of Goddess Pattini in Sri Lanka began after this incident.



### **Student Activity**

- \* Make a list of monuments which were influenced by the arts and crafts of South India.
- \* Collect information about the Pallava influence on Sri Lanka with the help of library books, magazines etc.

### **Economic Relations**

Historical sources reveal that from very ancient times, in the economic sphere, especially in trade activities Sri Lanka had relations with various countries in the world. From ancient times Sri Lanka was a well-known exchange center on the trade route between East and West. There is evidence that there was exchange of goods between the ports of South India and the ports of Sri Lanka.

- \* Accordingly there were constant relations between the port of Mahatittha in Sri Lanka and Kaveripattanam and Tamralipta in South India. Sri Lankan spices, and precious stones were exported to countries like Rome via Sri Lanka.
- \* It is mentioned in the sources that a thousand people belonging to eighteen different classes of artisans accompanied the princes who came from Madura in South India, to be married to king Vijaya. It is said that among them there were artisans belonging to the merchant class. Perhaps they were the founders of the trading class of the early period.
- \* During the reign of King Vankanasika Tissa, Karikalan who invaded Sri Lanka from the Chola kingdom carried away 12000 Sinhalese. They were taken to South India, where they were made to work on the project of constructing a dam across the river Kaveri to obtain water necessary for agriculture.
- \* Towards the end of the Anuradhapura period the Chola Empire spread across the whole of South India. During this period the

Cholas, spread their commercial supremacy in the whole area around Bay of Bengal. For this purpose, they brought the Northern area of Sri Lanka under their control and derived economic benefits by treating Sri Lanka as a part of their empire.



### Student Activity

Complete the following table based on the relations that existed between Sri Lanka and South India.

Matrimonial relationships	Instances when Sri Lankan kings obtained the assistance of South Indian kings	Invasions	prisoner of war	Instances when Indian kings obtained assistance from Sri Lanka

## South Indian Invasions

### The reasons for South Indian invasions

It is clear from historical sources that from the early stages of the Anuradhapura period until its end Sri Lanka had to face many South Indian invasions. The reasons why Sri Lanka was subject to such invasions can be analysed in the following manner.

- \* The location of Sri Lanka very close to South India.
- \* The South Indian Empires which became powerful from time to time, instead of expanding their power towards North India tried to spread their authority over Sri Lanka, which was a fertile country and was easily accessible.

- \* The location of Sri Lanka in a central position in the Indian Ocean.
- \* As mentioned earlier the Indian mercenaries who were brought here to help the rulers in their internal conflicts settled down here and subsequently supported the invaders.
- \* The intention of the Indian kings to plunder the wealth of Sri Lanka.
- \* The accession of weak rulers to the throne towards the latter part of the Anuradhapura period.
- \* During the latter part of the Anuradhapura period, Sri Lanka and the anti-Chola states developed a friendship which resulted in the Cholas becoming antagonistic towards Sri Lanka.



### **Student Activity**

Describe the causes that led to the South Indian invasions of Sri Lanka.

## **Nature of the South Indian invasions of Sri Lanka**

From the beginning to the end of the Anuradhapura period there occurred a number of South Indian invasions. These invasions can be categorised in the following manner according to their nature.

1. Invading when the opportunity occurred and later taking over the administration.
2. To obtain economic benefits.
3. To gain political supremacy.

## **Invading when the opportunity occurred and later taking over the administration.**

The early invaders of Sri Lanka did not have the intention of capturing the island. The South Indians who came for trade took advantage of the situation prevailing in Sri Lanka and usurped throne. The security of the country had weakened, due to the presence of weak kings and the fact that they paid more attention to religion than to the security of the state. The South Indians who exploited these opportunities seized the throne.

- \* During King Suratissa's reign, two horse-dealers named Sena and Guttika killed King Suratissa and seized the kingdom and reigned for 22 years.
- \* During the reign of King Asela, a prince named Elara from the Chola country invaded Anuradhapura, killed king Asela, seized the kingdom and reigned for 44 years.
- \* During the reign of King Valagamba seven Dravidians including Pulahattha invaded the Anuradhapura Kingdom. Two of them returned to India with Somadevi and the Bowl-relic. The remaining leaders Pulahattha, Bahiya, Panayamara, Pilayamara and Datika exercised power in Sri Lanka for 14 years and 7 months each one killing his predecessor.
- \* In the reign of King Vankanasika Tissa, a Chola invader named Karikalan took 12000 Sinhalese captives and escaped to India.
- \* During King Mittasena's reign, 6 Tamils named, Pandu, Parinda, Khuddaparinda, Tiritara, Dathiya and Pithiya seized the throne and ruled in succession for 27 years.

## Invasions carried out to gain economic benefits

South Indian rulers invaded Sri Lanka on certain occasions with the intention of seizing wealth.

- \* During the reign of Sena I, Srimara Sri Vallabha the Pandyan emperor invaded Sri Lanka and seized a vast amount of wealth.
- \* Towards the end of the Anuradhapura period, the Chola king Rajaraja I, invaded Sri Lanka with the intention of expanding the kingdom southwards .

## Invasions carried out to gain political supremacy.

Pandya, Chola and other rulers who established vast empires in South India, invaded Sri Lanka with large armies, during the periods when Sri Lankan kings were weak, and captured Sri Lanka with the idea of expanding their political dominance.

### Examples:-

- \* King Maravarman Rajasinha II came to Sri Lanka to obtain assistance during the reign of Dappula IV. However King Dappula IV was unable to provide this assistance. Hence the Pandyan king left his regalia with King Dappula and went back to Kerala. During the reign of Udaya IV, the Chola king Parantaka I demanded the regalia but King Udaya refused to give them to him. Therefore the Chola king sent an army to invade Sri Lanka and King Udaya IV fled to Ruhuna. The Cholas plundered Anuradhapura and returned to India.
- \* During the reign of King Mahinda IV, King Krishna III, ruler of the Rashtrakuta kingdom in the northern part of South India invaded Sri Lanka. Mahinda IV's General defeated him.

- \* During the reign of Mahinda V, Rajaraja I who was the Chola emperor invaded Sri Lanka. By this time the king had already fled to Ruhuna. Forces of King Rajaraja were able to conquer the northern part of Sri Lanka and bring it under their rule.
- \* In the reign of Mahinda V, once again a Chola army came to Sri Lanka under Emperor Rajendra II. They proceeded upto Ruhuna and captured the king and members of the royal family. Later they were taken to the Chola country as prisoners.



### **Student Activity**

- \* Prepare an article for a wall newspaper describing the causes for the downfall of the Anuradhapura Kingdom.
- \* Collect information about the Chola administration that existed in Sri Lanka.

You may understand the following facts based on the relationships Sri Lanka maintained with South India.

- \* Sri Lanka and India maintained cordial relationships from ancient times.
- \* Each party obtained assistance from the other whenever necessary.
- \* Sri Lanka's culture was enriched through South Indian influence.
- \* The great rulers of the Anuradhapura period had friendly relations with their neighbours.

## Summary

- \* The nature of the relations between Sri Lanka and the South Indian kingdoms.
- \* The influence of South India on Sri Lanka.
- \* The causes for the downfall of the Anuradhapura kingdom.
- \* The nature of the Chola rule in Sri Lanka.