



Sri Lanka after the Fall of the Kingdom of Polonnaruwa

6

The major feature in the history of Sri Lanka after the fall of the kingdom of Polonnaruwa is the rise of several kingdoms that lasted for short durations. In addition to the rise and fall of many principal kingdoms such as Dambadeniya, Yapahuwa, Kurunegala, Gampola, Kotte consecutively, we also see the rise of a provincial kingdom in Jaffna during this period.

In this chapter we are going to study the activities of these kingdoms. Our ancestors built tanks as large as oceans in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa during the Rajarata period. Why did they build so many tanks? The political economic and social life of our ancestors were closely connected to the tanks. Society at the time was based on the concept of “Tank and the Dagaba”. The duty of each king was to protect and maintain the tank and the dagaba.

But Magha who invaded Sri Lanka destroyed the irrigation system. This resulted in disappearance of the concept of the tank and dagaba .

Magha’s destructive policy

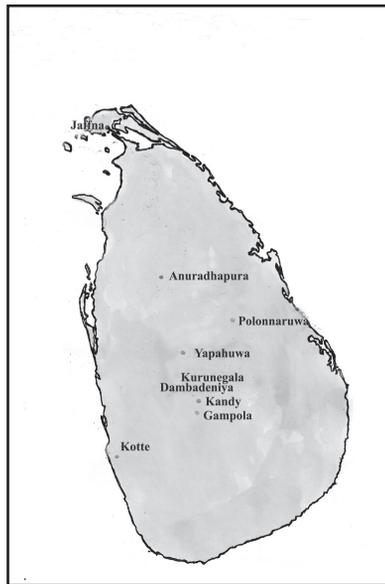
- Maga defeated and destroyed the members of the ruling families.
- Caused confusion in administration.
- Ruined the economy of the country by plundering and wealth and destroying the tanks and canals.
- Destroyed the temples and burnt valuable books.

National leaders who attempted to save the country from foreign invasions established themselves in safe locations. Accordingly priests and the ordinary people were also attracted to areas around these places for protection.

Certain leaders selected places with natural protection such as hills, jungles and water ways.

Several such leaders were,

Yapahuwa	-	Subha Senpathi
Minipe	-	Sanka Senpathi
Govindahela	-	Adipada Buvanekabahu
Dambadeniya	-	Prince Wijayabahu



6.1 Polonnaruwa

Kingdom of Dambadeniya 1232 - 1270 A.D.

Among the outstanding leaders was Wathhimi Wijayabahu who was earlier a Vanniar. He ruled Dambadeniya as Wijayabahu III. Since he was associated with Vanni he was also known as “Vanni Nirindu” He had the support of the priests and the people.

Dambadeniya is the first kingdom established after the fall of Polonnaruwa. It was considered as a safe place to organize the fight to drive away Magha from Polonnaruwa.

Even though Wijayabahu III could not drive Magha away, he is honoured as the king who established Dambadeniya as a strong hold against the enemy.

King Wijayabahu brought down the sacred Tooth Relic from Kotmale where it was hidden and placed it in a palace built at the top of Beligala hills in Kegalle. Thus he established his sovereignty by being the guardian of the sacred Tooth Relic.

His son Parakramabahu II succeeded him in 1270 AD. He ruled for 35 years and is considered the greatest ruler of kingdom of Dambadeniya.

Achievements of King Parakramabahu II

- Driving Magha away from Polonnaruwa with the help of the Pandyan army in 1255 AD. was one of his victorious deeds.
- He defeated Chandrabahu a Javan invader with the help of the Pandyans.

Being a learned scholar he did a great service towards Sinhala literature.

(For further details refer to the section on language and literature in this chapter).

King Parakramabahu II was succeeded by his son Bosath Wijayabahu who ruled for only two years. He was known as Wijayabahu IV. He was murdered by a servant who was bribed by a chief called Miththa who ascended the throne in 1272 AD.

But since Miththa was of no royal lineage unrest prevailed in the kingdom of Dambadeniya. Accordingly, Miththa was dethroned by Buvanekabahu I a brother of Wijayabahu IV who was of royal blood.

Kingdom of Yaphahuwa 1272- 1300 AD.

King Buvanekabahu I shifted the kingdom to Yapahuwa a location more secure than Dambadeniya. It was originally a fortress used by Subha, a chieftain who was planning a counter attack on Magha. The chiefs of Vanni who favoured Bosath Wijayabahu of Dambadeniya, rose against the king. In addition he had to face the Tamil invasions of Kalingarayar and Chodagangadeva, the challenges. He faced these challenges successfully.

During this time a ruler by the name of Sendamain had been in the North according to the traveller Marco Polo. He is considered to be a Tamil king who received the support of the Pandyan. Accordingly Buvanekabahu I had to be prepared for any possible attack from the North as well.

Buvanekabahu I had tried to engage in trade relations with Egypt. He had sent an envoy to the Sultan of Egypt in 1283 informing the resources available in Sri Lanka and the type of trade activities that could be developed. After the king's death there was unrest in the kingdom. Buvanekabahu II, son of Buvanekabahu I ruled for about seven years before he shifted the kingdom to Kurunegala thus ending the kingdom of Yapahuwa.



6.2 Kingdom Yapahuwa

Kingdom of Kurunegala 1300 - 1341

King Buvanekabahu II established Kurunegala as a kingdom around 1300 AD. His son succeeded as king Parakramabahu IV. His activities made this period famous in many ways. Specially his services towards Buddhism, education and literature had made him known as “Panditha Parakramabahu”.

His authority and services were felt even beyond Kurunegala as far as Kandy, Kegalle, Colombo, Ratnapura, Kalutara, Galle, Matara almost the whole of the southern region.

The political situation of the country was obscure during the next 15 years after his reign.

Kingdom of Gampola 1341- 1415

King Buvanekabahu IV established Gampola as a kingdom in 1341 A.D. According to Arabic traveller Ibn Batuta, an Arabian traveller had been a weak king. But his successor Buvanekabahu V had built Lankathilaka and Gadaladeniya Viharays, and Embekke Devayala, which is famous for its wooden carvings.



6.3 Lankathilaka Viharaya

King Parakramabahu V succeeded him, but in 1360 AD he was ousted by Wickramabahu III. During his period, Aryachakravarthi in the North was harrasing people and plundering various parts of his kingdom. Therefore it was necessary to shift the kingdom to a more protected center.



6.4 Ambekke

Now let us study the invasions of Aryachakravarthi.

- By this time Aryachakravarthi in the North had started extending his power towards the south.
- He collected taxes after many a successful attacks on the Gampola kingdom.
- He built fortresses in Chilaw, Negombo, Wattala and Colombo and derived the income from imports - exports from the ports of the western coast.

Nissanka Alagakkonara also known as Alakeshvara who was the commander of the army and a chief of Wickramabahu III constructed Sri Jayawardhanapura Kotte for the purpose of defeating the Aryachakravarthi of the North. This fortress was constructed in a marshy land with natural protective system of water ways.

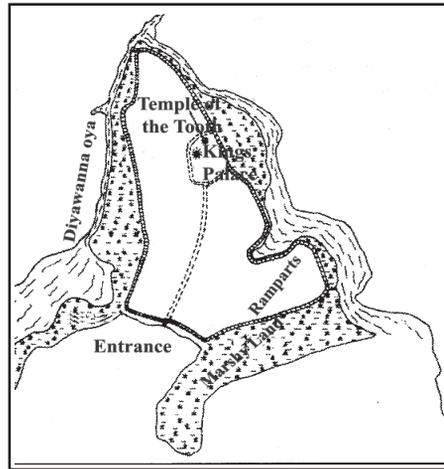
Using this fortress Alakeshvara was able to drive away Aryachakravarthi, regain all ports and to establish the powers of king Wickramabahu.

Buvanekabahu V who ascended the throne after king Wickramabahu III was also a weak king. During his reign the powers of Alagakkonara were felt superseding those of the king, king Weerabahu ruled from Gampola after Buwanekabahu. It is said that a certain Weera Alakehvara had ruled Raigama during king Weerabahu's time. Accordingly it is clear that the Alakeshvara family had ruled regions that came under Gampola from his kingdom of Raigama. Accordingly at the same time there were rulers at Raigama And Gampola. Making use the weak situation, the Chinese Emperor had intervened with the affairs of this country in the following manner.

- Cheng-ho, the Chinese General was sent by the emperor Yung-lo of China to Sri Lanka in 1405 A.D.
- He had sent offerings to the sacred places of worship as well as to the king and the chiefs.
- Ruler of Raigama had not welcomed him.
- The Chinese General had returned after offering the gifts to Devinuwara devalaya.

In 1411 AD. Cheng - ho had come back to Sri Lanka with a large army. WeeraAlakeshwara was prepared to face this attack. However he was defeated and taken prisoner to China.

Kingdom of Kotte 1415 - 1521 AD.



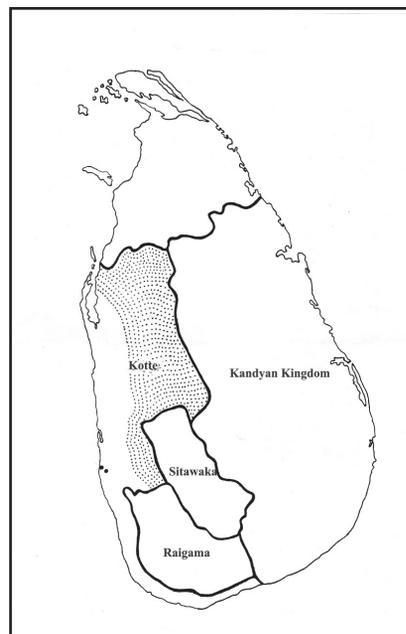
6.5 Sri Jayawardanapura Kotte

City of Kotte which was started as a fortress and a military centre by Alakeshwara was later established as the Capital of the kingdom of Kotte. Prince Parakramabahu of Raigama was crowned in 1415 AD. as the first king of Kotte under the name of Parakramabahu VI. He is the greatest king in the kingdom of Kotte. There had been several petty regional kingdoms at the time of his ascension. Jaffna was under Aryachakravarathi while the hill country was under the authority of a noble called Jothiya Sitana. They were independent rulers. In Vanni too there had been several petty independent states.

Unification Sri Lanka under one banner by the king Parakramabahu VI

1. He established his power after defeating Vanni rulers.
2. In 1450, sent his adopted son Prince Sapumal to defeat Jaffna and he was later appointed to administer the affairs of Jaffna.
3. Prince Ambulugala, brother of Prince Sapumal was sent to the country to suppress the rebellion of Jothiya (Jothiya Sitana). Once defeated the hill country was annexed to kingdom of Kotte.
4. He was the last king who united the whole of Sri Lanka under one banner.

His reign can be considered as a period where peace and prosperity prevailed. He died without an heir - therefore his successor was the son of his daughter Prince Jayabahu. Prince Sapumal who was in Jaffna came to Kotte and killed Jayabahu and became king of Kotte as Buvanekabahu VI. He was able to defeat his opponents. After his death the country was divided into parts. Parakramabahu VII succeeded him. Before long Prince Ambulugala defeated him and was crowned as Parakramabahu VIII alias Weeraparakramabahu. During his reign again the hill country and Jaffna became independent. The advent of Portuguese took place during his time. His successor was Dharmaparakramabahu. After him it was Wijayabahu VI who ascended the throne. His three sons conspired against him, killed him and divided the kingdom of Kotte among three of them. This incident is known as “Wijayaba Kollaya”.



6.6 Kotte after
Wijayaba Kollaya



Student Activity

1. Compile a booklet giving details of each ruler after the fall of the kingdom of Polonnaruwa.
2. Make a chart giving the foreign and local invasions against the kingdoms after the down fall of Polonnaruwa.

The life style of the people during the period after the fall the of kingdom of Polonnaruwa

Changes occurred in the economic system

Civilization of Rajarata was based on irrigation so that it was a hydraulic civilization. With the shift of kingdoms the people too had to migrate into other areas. The protection of the kingdom was a priority and the places which were difficult to reach were selected as kingdoms. The life span of those kingdoms was short. Hence kings could not attend to the maintenance of the tanks and the irrigation system. People had to depend on the rainfall for their agricultural activities.

Main crop was paddy. In dry zones chenas were cultivated. Home gardens produced coconuts, jak, arecanuts, betel, pepper etc. The major change which took place in the field of agriculture was the emphasis on commercial crops.

Accordingly, coconut was grown along the coastline areas such as Kalutara, Bentota, Thotagamuwa, Moratuwa, Kelaniya and Kurunegala. Cinnamon, which was grown in the wild became a major export and commercial crop. Further arecanuts, pepper, cardomom, cloves were exported thus enhancing the export trade. Accordingly the priority of place enjoyed by paddy cultivation during the Rajarata Period was reduced; instead commercial crops and foriegn trade became very important. Pearls, precious stones, elephants, tusks were some of the items which were exported. Sri Lanka traded with India, Arabia, China, Persia and Egypt. The king held the monopoly of foriegn trade.

Main Features of the Life Style

- A caste system which was based on different professions was prevalent. Caste was a decisive factor in marriages.
- Existence of Patriarchal society.
- There were also women, were involved in religious and social activities.
- Existence of folk games such as swings and ball games.(Pandukeliya)
- There were customs traditions and rituals pertaining to various occasions in folk life such as naming new born babies, partaking of first solid food, weddings and funerals.



Student Activity

Write an article to a wall paper on the life style of the people, after the fall of the Kingdom of Polannaruwa.

Religious development

We learnt how Magha's invasions destroyed the Rajarata Civilization. Religion and the state were inter connected in the Rajarata Civilization. Therefore Magha's destructive policy affected Buddhism too. He harassed Buddhist monks, destroyed religious buildings, places of worship and burnt religious books. The monks either migrated to foreign countries or fled towards the south western parts of the island together with the lay people. The rulers who ruled even for short periods had to pay special attention protect Buddhism and the monks. Accordingly king Wijayabahu III who established the first kingdom in Dambadeniya after the fall of kingdom of Polonnaruwa rendered a great service towards Buddhism.

Religious Activities of Wijayabahu III

- Brought down the sacred Tooth Relic from Kotmale where it was hidden and placed it in a Dalada Maligawa built at the top of Beligala hills in Kegalle.
- Brought down the Buddhist monks who had migrated due to Magha's invasion.
- Built a temple in the capital and named it Wijesundararamaya.
- Renovated the temples and viharas at Attanagalla and Kelaniya.
- Held the Upasampada and cleansed the sangha sasana which was in the decline.
- Learned men were employed to rewrite the religious books destroyed by Magha's invasion.
- Worked towards the revival of the Sangha and the religious activities.

Religious Activities of King Parakramabahu II.

- King Parakramabahu II who succeeded his father Wijayabahu III was equally engaged in activities towards the betterment of religion and culture.
- One of the greatest services of the king was his patronage of the preparation of Dambadeniya Kathikawatha, a work which laid out rules and regulations on the discipline of monks and the management of temples.
- At Dambadeniya a suitable temple was built for the sacred Tooth Relic.
- Upasampada was held annually at a place called Dasthota on Mahaveli river.

Kurunegala Period

- A number of books were written on Buddhism. Among them are the Pansiya Panas Jathakaya Sinhala Bodhi Vamsaya, Anagatha Vamshaya, Dalada Siritha are of importance.
- King Parakramabahu IV was able to spread his religious activities even beyond his kingdom as far as Kandy, Kegalle, Ratnapura, Colombo, Kalutara, Galle and Matara.

- He had constructed Sri Ganananda pirivena of Veedagama.

Gampola Period

Most important religious places of worship in the Gampola period are Lankathilaka, Gadaladeniya and Embekke devalaya. South Indian architectural influence is seen on the statues of Gadaladeniya and Lankathilaka Viharas.

Similarly the “Theravada” Buddhist theories and customs and rituals were influenced by the teachings and rituals of Mahayana Buddhism as well as Hinduism.

For Example :

The Upulvan Devalaya adjoining the Gadaladeniya viharaya and Upulvan, Saman, Vibheeshana, Skandha and Ganesh Devalas adjoining the Lankathilaka viharaya.

Kotte Period

A large number of religious buildings have been built. Sunethradevi pirivena was built by Parakramabahu VI in honour of his mother.

Buddhist centres like Ganananda pirivena of Veedagama; Padmawathie pirivena of Keragala, Irugal Kulathilaka pirivena of Devundara are some of the other pirivenas constructed during Kotte period.



Student Activity

Fill in the following chart on the period after the fall of the Kingdom of Polonnaruwa.

Period	Religious Activity	Sponsor

Language and Literature

After the fall of the Polonnaruwa Kingdom Dambadeniya and Kotte were the main periods which show a great revival in the fields of language and literature. The reasons for this revival were the assistance given by the kings, and the rise of educational centres, which resulted in the birth of a learned generation.

Literary revival began with king Wijayabahu III the first king of Dambadeniya. He is said to have invited foreign and local scholars to write Buddhist books.

Parakramabahu II is considered to be the pioneer in the development of literature during the Dambadeniya period. He is known by the honorific title “ Kalikala Sahithya Sarvagna Panditha”. It is during his time that a large number of books had been written.

- Two of the most important books written during his period were Sadhdharma Ratnavaliya by Venerable Dharmasena and Pujavaliya by Ven Buddhaputhra.
- Kavisilumina - the great epic poem supposed to have been written by king Parakramabahu II himself.
- The oldest book on Sinhala grammar, Sidath Sangarava was written by Ven Pathiraja Parivendthipathi.
- “Elu Sandes Lakuna” is a book on the rules and regulations regarding the composition of poetry. In addition, many books were written in Pali,

Kurunegala is also a period which displayed a development of Sinhalese prose. Ummagga Jathakaya, Pansiya Panas Jathakaya, Dalada Sirita, Sinhala Bodhi Vamsaya, Dalada Poojawaliya are a few prose works written during this period.

Taking a bird as a messenger, a new type of poetry called Sandesha Kavya was written for the first time in the Gampola period. The oldest sandesha kavya - Mayura Sandeshaya belongs to the Gampola period. Thisara Sandeshaya too was composed during this period.

There were many learned persons during the Kotte period.
Eg. Ven. Thotagamuve Sri Rahula Thero
Ven. Keragala Vanarathana Thero
Ven. Weththewe Thero

The numerous centres of education in Kotte too helped the revival of literature during the Kotte period.

Wijayaba pirivena of Thotagamuwa.

Padmawathie pirivena of Keragala.

Hirigal Thilaka pirivena of Devinuwara.

Sunethradevi pirivena of Pepiliyana.

Sri Ganananda pirivena of Weedagama.

are some of the educational centres during this period.

There are also a number of works of poetry during this period.

Eg. Parakumba Siritha

Kavyashekaraya

Budugunalankaraya

Guttala Kavya

Loweda Sangarawa

Hansa, Parevi, Selalihini and Gira Sandesha Kavya.

The following stanza depicts the glory that was in the Kotte kingdom (Jayawardanapura Kotte).

ජයවද්දන පුර වැනුම්
 පොහොසද්දන ඇති තුනුරුවන බැති පෙමා
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 ජය වද්දන කරුමෙන් සුසැදු තම නමා
 ජය වද්දන පුරවර දනු මිතුරුකුමා

There were books written in Tamil, too.

Eg. Sarajothimalai
 Segarajasekhara malai
 Raghuvansham



Student Activity

Fill in the chart with reference to historical after the fall of the Polonnaruwa kingdom.

period	Literary Work	Author

Kingdom of Jaffna

According to available sources Jaffna began to function as an independent state at the end of the 13th or the beginning of the 14th century. There are only two sources that can be used for the study of the history of the Jaffna kingdom. They are Yalpana Waipavamalai and Shegaraja Sekaramalai. Out of these Yalpana Waipavamalai is written around 1736 AD. Lack of sources leave an uncertainty on the beginning of the kingdom of Jaffna.

According to Yalpana Waipavamalai, the first king of Jaffna was Wijaya Kulankai, an Aryachakravarti king. From then onwards twelve kings had ruled Jaffna until king Sankili who was in Jaffna at the time of the advent of the Portuguese.

Rulers in Jaffna

Wijaya Kulankai

Kulashekhara, Wikkirama, Warodaya

Marthanda, Kunapooshana, Werodaya

Jayaweera, Kunaweera, Kanakaguriya

Pararajasekaran, Sankili

However during the reign of king Buvanekabahu VI (1469-1480) Jaffna became independent again.

Kingdom of Jaffna ceased to exist after it was captured by the Portuguese in 1619 AD.



Student Activity.

Write an article to a wall journal on this
“The Development of Jaffna”.

Summary

- Hydraulic civilization in Rajarata was destroyed by Magha, thus causing the shift of kingdoms towards the South West after the fall of the kingdom of Polonnaruwa in the 13th century.
- The shift started from Dambadeniya and went on to Yapahuwa, Kurunegala, Gampola and Kotte.
- Main feature of these kingdoms was their short duration.
- Duration was short due to the fact that the rulers had to seek more protected places.
- Jaffna rose as an independent state during this period.
- All petty states were conquered and the country was brought under one banner by king Parakramabahu VI of Kotte.