



## A study of the political connections maintained by the Pandya state with Sri Lanka (During the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D.)

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### Abstract

The objective of this study is to investigate the political relationships maintained between the Pandya State and Sri Lanka during the thirteenth century. For the first time, information about the connections between the Pandya State and Sri Lanka after the downfall of the Polonnaruwa kingdom was revealed during the rule of King Parakramabahu II of the Dambadeniya kingdom. It is an important fact that there were inscriptions found from South India to explore the connections between the Pandya State and Sri Lanka during the Dambadeniya Kingdom. Therefore, it is not incorrect to introduce this as a comparative study between Lankan chronicles and South Indian inscriptions.

Important information about one cross section of real time history is provided through inscriptions belonging to Jatawarman Sundara Pandya and Jatawarman Weera Pandya times. It is mentioned in those documents that Pandya kings had invaded Sri Lanka during the reign of King Parakramabahu II (1235-1270 AD). The South Indian inscriptions confirm that Jawakans had stayed somewhere in the parts of North Lanka. The chronicles about Chandrabhanu invasion show that he had been defeated twice. Therefore, it does not suggest that part of the island belonged to the Jawakans. This is a clear distinction shown as a result of a comparative study between Sri Lankan chronicles and South Indian inscriptions.

**Keywords:** Political relations, Pandya state, dambadeniya, Sri Lankan chronicles, south indian inscription, parakramabahu ii, chandrabhanu

### Introduction

It is more suitable to discuss about the political status of contemporary South India before analyzing the information presented in Pandyan inscriptions. Accordingly, there was a downfall of the Chola Empire in the thirteenth century due to the poor political behavior of the kings that followed. (Sastri, K.A.N.,1937) <sup>[16]</sup> Even though king Kulothunga III strived hard to strengthen the falling Chola Empire, it was not successful. Similarly, the act of Kadawa ethnic ruler Kepperugnjinga of imprisoning Rajaraja III in 1230 AD is an ideal example to show that the last strength of the Chola Empire was diminished. (Sastri K.A.N.,1929) <sup>[15]</sup> At this time Hoisala ethnic king Weera Narasinghe interfered and saved the Chola Empire but it was not remedial enough to overcome the depreciation of the Chola Empire. While this happened, he gradually gained the power of the Chola Empire to the Hoisala party by using the title of professorship. (Sastri K.A.N., 1929) <sup>[15]</sup>

Due to this, many South Indian areas owned by the Cholas were taken into the hands of the Pandyans who were gradually achieving power. The Pandyans who were under the pressure of Chola Empire for centuries now became the ultimate power holder of South India. The Pandya Empire project was initiated by the Sundara Pandya who successfully invaded the internal sphere of the Chola Empire. (Sastri K.A.N.,1929) <sup>[15]</sup> Nevertheless, the culmination of the second Pandya Empire happened with the dawn of the Jatawarman Weera Pandya in 1251 AD. The father and son have been able to spread the Pandya Empire in a large area of South India by joining hands with the Jatawarman Weera Pandya. Many inscriptions and Muslim writers have mentioned that this situation has persisted throughout the thirteenth century. (Sastri K.A.N., 1939) <sup>[17]</sup> The Chola Empire which gradually saved themselves from the pressurizing situation became the most powerful of

South India. (Sastri K.A.N.,1949) <sup>[18]</sup> Jatawarman Weera Pandya who joined hands with Sundara Pandya who was the ruler from 1253 to 1254 AD extended the fullest support to his father. It is revealed that during their reign, Pandya dominance was spread around most parts of South India. The new Pandya Empire rulers were able to convert one of the powerful South Indian states named Keralas as a state which pays extortion to their empire, to limit the provincial authority of the Hoisals who were growing in their geographical sphere and to capture the still powerful Kongu state. (Sastri K.A.N.,1929) <sup>[15]</sup> According to scholar Neelakanda, the Pandya empire has confirmed the geographical areas of it by checking the inscriptions in the book "The Pandya Kingdom".

### Methodology

This research is mainly based on qualitative research methods. Several research methods that can be used for historical studies in the qualitative research method were also used in this research. Numerous methods, diplomatic (the examination of historical records and papers), chronology (the arrangement of events in chronological order), and epigraphy (the study of historical inscriptions), are used in this qualitative historical inquiry. In this data collection, data was mainly collected through library access and in addition the internet was also used. The Mahavamsa, which is considered to be the main primary literary source, was used in the study of Sri Lankan history, especially related to the period under discussion. Also, information was gathered from another major literary source, Poojawaliya, which was written during the kingdom of Dambadeni, especially during the reign of king Parakramabahu II. In addition to these literary sources, Indian epigraphical documents related to the contemporary Pandyan state were also used as primary data as they were

issued from the press. Apart from this primary data, research studies and journal articles carried out by scholars in both countries on the 13th century in South India and Sri Lanka were used as secondary data. The data collected in this way was used to reach conclusions in the end using the methods mentioned above.

### Results and Discussion

This Pandyan Empire which was risen in South India also directly impacted the political activities in the aforementioned political background. As mentioned earlier, the Cholas invaded the country in end of the 10<sup>th</sup> A.D century and there was special attention from rising empires of South India towards this country through the invasions which lasted for almost a century in the Rajarata area. As a result, this country was also included as one of their achievements. (Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy (A.R.S.I.E.),1906) As conformed through the Cholas who ruled the country for half a century, there had been many wars extended against the Anuradhapura kingdom by the Rajawansa and the Pandyans in their first reigning period. Through the inscriptions which mention that the second Pandya Empire also invaded Sri Lanka as their successors, it is revealed that they made an attempt to spread their dominance in Sri Lanka which is situated inside the Indian peninsula.

It is said in inscriptions belonging to Jatawarman Sundara Pandya (1251 A.D) and Jatawarman Weera Pandya (1253 A.D) that Sri Lanka has won, and it reflects that the neighboring island was under their rule. These inscriptions are important because they reveal information which are not mentioned in Pali chronicles.

There is an issue which arises when using these documents. Even Professor Neelakanda has shown that it was problematic in determining the Nakshatra times of the Pandya documents. (Nicolos C.W., Paranavithana S.,2000, 78-82pp) <sup>[12]</sup> Thereby it is quite challenging to present the exact timelines mentioned in the inscriptions. Yet the mentioning of timelines related to Sri Lankan incidents is satisfactory. Due to the difficulty in determining the exact timelines, it is difficult to give meaning to the particular incidents.

In the praising belonging to the seventh state year of Sundara Pandya (1258 A.D), it is mentioned in the said documents that there had been extortion happening in terms of gems and elephants from the Lankan king. (Liyanagamage A.,1968,) <sup>[11]</sup> It is stated as "Thulangoli maniyug- juli welayum illangei kaawalanei irayi kondaruli." Sundara Pandya had been praised in an inscription from the Jambukeshwara devala in the Rangam Thrichinapoli district as "Lankan Luntana Dhweethiya Rama also known as Raja the second who invaded Sri Lanka." (E. Hyltzech.,1872-1933, Vol. XXI, 1985, 121-122 pp, 307p) <sup>[8]</sup> In addition to these, there are documents about the invasions made against Sri Lanka belonging to the era of Weera Pandya. It is mentioned in an inscription belonging to the tenth state year of Weera Pandya (1263 AD). There is more elaborative information in a lengthy praise found from the area of Kudumiyamalai belonging to the eleventh state year of the king. (A.R.S.I.E., No. 356, 1906, Sastri K.A.N.,1949,92p) <sup>[18]</sup>

All the inscriptions belonging to the reign of Weera Pandya up to this state year had been released. (Liyanayagage A.,1968,155-159pp) <sup>[11]</sup> Yet nothing of the Sri Lankan

achievements have been presented before the tenth state year. (Liyanayagage A.,1968,142-144 pp) <sup>[11]</sup> The document belonging to the ninth state year found from the Shendamalam area has also not presented about invading Sri Lanka. (A.R.S.I.E.,1930, No.480) Though information about Sri Lanka had been abundantly stated in documents belonging to the eleventh state year, it lacks information about how Sri Lanka won through wars. According to Professor Neelakandi, Kudiyamalai praising which includes most of the information is illegible in most sections and some content cannot be comprehended. (Sastri K.A.N,1939, 113-119 pp) <sup>[17]</sup>

It is stated about a Sri Lankan minister (Mandiri) in the Kudiyamalai document. It describes that he (Thirunda Mandiri Sharanamalai) expected support from the Pandya king. (A.R.S.I.E., No.356, 1906) As reported, such donations have been expected to solve a dispute between two kings of Sri Lanka. Here, the intention of the Pandya King had been to protect the tradition of the statehood. (Arashiyal wallakkam nerippadu naattujakurippinul). It has been later reported that one of the two kings died in the fields of war. His special troupe attempted to abduct all valuables and pottery and ceramics of the king and there were two fish (Liyanayagage A.,1968,142-144 pp) <sup>[11]</sup> on flags which were assumed to be the motto of the Pandya state in the areas of Konamalai and Thrikumagari (Amaradasa Liyanagamage mention those places as Piduruthalaga mountain and Trincomalee) It states that a Sri Lankan king had to give away elephants as a means of extortion. Professor Neelakandi showed that the next phrase is unclear. (Ibid) Yet he has assumed some of the facts to be as follows. Shawaka's son (Shawakan Maingan) had been presented an anklet (weerakkalal) and sent in a procession on an elephant. Afterwards, king Weera Pandya had thought that it is suitable to give the authority of the country ruled by the father to his son and had given the consent for Shawaka's son to go to Anuradhapura (Anurapuri). (Sastri K.A.N, 1939, 113-119 pp) <sup>[17]</sup>

According to the document, it is evident that the intention of the Pandya king had been to protect the tradition and maintain political stability by providing solutions to the problem. (This can even be considered as a retrospection of the Pandya invasion planned by the king Great Parakramabahu in Polonnaruwa.) (Nicolos C.W., Paranavithana S.,1972,470-481pp) <sup>[13]</sup> During this invasion, one king had died and the other has had to give away his elephants as extortion. However, it is also mentioned that the son of the king whose life was saved was given the crown. (Liyanayagage A.,1968,155-159 pp) <sup>[11]</sup> Yet it is more important to explore the ancient truth about the information in these documents than directly accepting them.

According to Professor Paranavithana, the information in these texts suggest that donations were requested from the Pandya king in order to save Sri Lanka from the threats from Chandrabhanu who owned the control of the North of the country. (Nicolos C.W., Paranavithana S.,1972, 595p) <sup>[13]</sup> The professor has explained how Jawaka Putra was given the state after coming out of his stubbornness and agreeing with the Pandya Empire. (Ibid) It is thereby clear that a ruler belonging to a different ethnic group was defeated through a convention between rulers of Sri Lanka and the Pandya region. Professor Paranavithana has predicted that he can be Jawaka Chandrabhanu. Amaradasa

Liyanagamage suggests that it if king Weera Pandya invaded Sri Lanka in order to help Parakramabahu II, extending the power to the main enemy Chandrabhanu's son to rule his father's state is an unbelievable fact. (Liyanagamage A.,1968,151-152 pp) <sup>[11]</sup> Breaching the standard state ethics and conducting such an act in the Weera Pandya procedure is definitely taking the situation for granted. Such political tactics had been prevalent even in the Indian history. The comments of Paranavithana should also be taken into consideration here. That is, the Pandya did not want to build a powerful Sinhalese state within a united Sri Lanka but to befriend two parties and keep them under their authority who were once enemies to them. (Paranavithana S.,1959, 01-42 pp) <sup>[14]</sup> This can even be considered as a situation which can be explained through contemporary political theories.

Paranavithana has stated that some time before 1258 AD Jatawarman Sundara Pandya had invaded Sri Lanka. (Nicolos C.W., Paranavithana S.,1972, 595p) <sup>[13]</sup> It is believed that Maga and his troupes left Polonnaruwa due to this invasion. The prediction of Paranavithana is that Pandya armies have landed from Trincomalee and the North region and Maga and the troupe must have departed from the West, and they must have been destroyed after the capture by the Sinhalese troupes. It is stated there that Parakramabahu II in the chronicle literature has even attracted foreign kings, but the chronicle writers have become silent as king Parakramabahu has defeated Maga with the help of foreign aids.

According to the inscriptions which talk about the two invasions headed by the two aforementioned kings, it is quite important to investigate whether the two Lankan invasions are the same. If a Lankan minister attempted to ask for donations from a Pandya king, the problem of who that person who lived in the Dambadeniya kingdom arises. It is mentioned that there had been a consensus between Sri Lanka and Pandya region to send away the foreign ruler Kalinga Maga who ruled the Rajarata area during the reign of king Parakramabahu II in Dambadeniya. The text of Kudumiyamalai (A.R.S.I.E., 1906, No. 356,) presents the issues of who stole the possessions of a king when he dies in the war field, who is the king who ordered to give away his elephants as extortion and who is the Shawakan's son who was appointed to establish statehood again in this country. By exploring these issues, it gives a clear understanding about the nature of the political relationship between Sri Lanka and the Pandya region in this era.

Among the chronicles which mention about Lankan invasions king Weera Pandya's documents carry majority of the information. According to the documents belonging to the rule of Sundara Pandya around 1258 AD, there is an opportunity to act against the ruler of Sri Lanka in accordance with his state distribution. It is evident that king Weera Pandya gave support to king Sundara Pandya in the project of capturing countries and Sundara Pandya has taken leadership than Weera Pandya in capturing Sri Lanka. Yet due to the fact that Weera Pandya's invasions were descriptively explained, and the Sri Lankan invasions had been described in two different ways, it can be said that Weera Pandya was more active in a later invasion. Therefore, it is more suitable to consider these two as different invasions. (Liyanagamage A.,1968,151-152 pp) <sup>[11]</sup> Also, as this is written to appreciate the king, it is not fair to arrive at a conclusion by considering only this praise.

Therefore, when exploring this document, it should be compared with local sources as well. Accordingly, it is worthy to investigate the fact of Paranavithana which says that king Parakramabahu II of Dambadeniya in extending the invasion against the main troupe of Angam Padi Kerala Kalinga Maga has taken donations from the Pandya. (Nicolos C.W., Paranavithana S.,1972, 647-649pp) <sup>[13]</sup> This means that according to the military agreements signed with Pandya, king Weera Pandya from the North, king Parakramabahu II and his troupe from the South have waged war against Maga. The information about this war in the local source Mahawamsa is not true. (Mahavamsa; 83 Chapter" 01-35 stanzas) As it is phrased as a praising which does not carry truthfulness, information about planning the fights and main military officers have been lost. (Nicolos C.W., Paranavithana S.,1972, 647p) <sup>[13]</sup>

According to the lengthy description about the wars and the troupes who participated in the wars, Paranavithana has stated that there was support from a non- Sinhalese troupe from the North to defeat Maga's troupe (Nicolos C.W., Paranavithana S.,1972, 648-649pp) <sup>[13]</sup> The statement of how the troupe of Maga retreated (Ibidib) and how they were defeated in the inscription of Sundara Pandya, the reference to the invasion against Sri Lanka can be considered as the invasion against troupes of Maga in Sri Lanka. As it is accepted that the defeat of Maga happened in 1255 AD, it is not difficult to agree with the fact in the Kudumiyamalai praising, which was in 1258 AD, sometime after the principal incident. The war waged by a powerful leader as Sundara Pandya must have weakened Maga and his troupes. This war can be a result of a consensus happened due to the will of king Parakramabahu II or even without the willingness of the king where Maga was defeated, and the king must have taken advantage of it.

Maga has been strongly defeated even according to the information in Mahawamsa and Poojawaliya. (Mahavamsa; 83 Chapter" 22-26 stanzas; Poojawaliya: 845p) According to these sources, all the possessions belonging to Maga in Polonnaruwa have been abducted. It is said that the Sinhala troupes became wealthy after owning them. Even though this seems like an exaggerated fact, it is quite impractical to think that Maga who ruled Polonnaruwa for nearly 40 years did not have any wealth. Therefore, there is a chance for other parties to own that wealth after his defeat. Although king Parakramabahu II had taken steps to create an orderly rule in Dambadeniya by this time, it is not affirmed whether they had adequate resources to face Maga's forts and troupes. As there were not enough resources, the fact that king Parakramabahu II joined through some kind of force can be considered. Also, there could be a consensus or agreement between king Parakramabahu II and king Sundara Pandya due to the economic status of that time. Thereby, the Lankan king who gave elephants and valuable gems as extortion to Sundara Pandya can be king Parakramabahu II. (Sastri K.A.N., 1929,174-189 pp) <sup>[15]</sup> Due to the extreme connections developed between the two states, it can be believed that appreciation coins were shared while the execution of embassy services happened. The statement in the praising of king Parakramabahu II of the Mahawamsa that Surya and Chandra ethnic kings have sent accessories and foreign rulers have been attracted towards the king can be predicted as a result of an agreement between North Indian Pandya state and the Chola Empire.

When investigating the political relationship between Sri Lanka and the Pandya state through the text of Kudumiyamalai, there is another point which is worthy of attention. That is according to the text Weera Pandya has invaded Sri Lanka to protect the tradition of the statehood. (A.R.S.I.E., 1906, No.356) This also suggests that Weera Pandya has invaded Sri Lanka and wanted to fulfill his political agendas in the guise of providing war resources to king Parakramabahu II. Yet it connotes that by helping king Parakramabahu II who was the legal heir, he has gone against a ruler who was ruling in the North. The idea of Amaradasa Liyangamage who also analyzed this text is that this statement carries a hidden intention. (Liyanayagage A.,1968, 141-145 pp) <sup>[11]</sup> By using inverted commas to highlight this statement, it says that the Pandya ruler had the intention of invading Sri Lanka even in the guise of supporting king Parakramabahu II through donations.

The chronicles state that king Parakramabahu II has arrived in Polonnaruwa after defeating Maga nor in the 26<sup>th</sup> state year (1262 AD). (Mahavansa; 87 Chapter" 29 stanzas; Poojawaliya: 845p) The king had to face another invasion before that. That is when king Chandrabhanu invaded Sri Lanka for the second time.(Paranavithana S., J.R.A.S. (CB) (NS), Vol. VII, Part I, 1959, 01-42pp) <sup>[14]</sup>

Some South Indian inscriptions belonging to kings Marawarman Sundara Pandya and Jatawarman Weera Pandya should be considered in this case. A set of people belonging to a market grade named Thennilankei Valnjiyar has paid religious devotions to religious institutions in Chola and Pandya countries during aforesaid timelines. *වනනිලකේටි වලඤ්ජිඨාරී* has been translated to English as Valanjayar of South Ceylon while in South Lanka it is mentioned as *වලඤ්ජිඨාරී* in Sinhala. (University of Ceylon Review, vol. xvii, 158-159 pp) The North Indian merchants in Sri Lanka has categorized themselves as South Lankan merchants rather than Lankan merchants. Professor K. Kanapathipillai has explained the meaning of the phrase "Theknilankeyin" as the ruler situated in the south of Indian peninsula of the Southern Lanka. Liyanagamage too has affirmed this fact in his book of Mid Era of Lankan History. (A.R.S.I.E., No. 505, 1922, A.R.S.I.E 1915, 101-102 pp, No. 406-407, A.R.S.I.E 1914, No. 598, 1921, 27, 92-93 pp)

The statement which says he has taken the throne of the Shawaka and the head (A.R.S.I.E., 1916, No.588) which wore that throne in the document which belongs to the tenth state year of king Weera Pandya should be investigated again. The chronology between chronicle of the reign of king Parakramabahu II and the inscription of Weera Pandya is very close. Therefore, as there is no large gap between the two, it is easy to establish a similarity between them. Therefore, this is not a random incident and according to Paranavithana it is a result of a peace reconciliation that happened between the Sinhalese and the Pandyans. (Paranavithana S., J.R.A.S.(CB) (NS), Vol.VII,193p) This can also be taken as an extension of the peace reconciliation that happened between the Sinhalese and the Pandyans during the anti- Chola protests in the Anuradhapura era. (Sastri, K.A.N., 1937, 417-438 pp; Gunawardhana R, Liyanagamage A.,1996, 275-278pp) <sup>[16]</sup>

As mentioned earlier, there had been donations done for religious institutions in Pandya region by some Sri Lankan merchants during the Weera Pandya era. (A.R.S.I.E., 1922, No. 505; Liyanayagage A.,1968, 136-138 pp) <sup>[11]</sup> Though it does not directly relate to the political convention between

the two countries, it can be stated that close connections had been prevailing within the two countries through the information. There are many instances of close connections between the countries in terms of cultural and commercial relationships despite the conflicts in political connections. Even though the stay of Lankan merchants in the Pandya area of South India or supporting some areas is not a powerful factor to affirm that there was a political convention between king Parakramabahu II and the Pandyans, it showcases the close bond within the two countries. There are facts to prove that during the reign of the Chola ruler king Kulothunga III (1178- 1216 A.D) and the Pandya Marawarman Sundara Pandya (1216 A.D) Sri Lankan groups of merchants had stayed in South India and participated in certain activities. (Sastri K.A.N., 1929, 420-438 pp; Liyanayagage A.,1968, 124-129 pp) <sup>[15, 11]</sup>

The investigation of certain facts ascertains that there had been a mutual political consensus or integration between Lankan rulers and Pandya ethnic rulers. That is, it has been noted through chronicles and other resources that there were relationships in terms of marriage between these two state dynasties from the past. (Kulasuriya A., J.R.A.S (CB), 1976, 17-42 pp) <sup>[10]</sup> When discussing the main issue of the study, it is revealed that king Parakramabahu II, who held power in Dambadeniya era-maintained relationships with the Pandyans. As to Paranavithana, the Pandyans who engaged in state activities of this country as invaders were appreciated in the chronicles. (Nicolos C.W., Paranavithana S.,1972, 647-649pp) <sup>[13]</sup> The reason behind this should be the respect for the Pandyans despite their ethnicity. Also, during this era, reverend Buddha Putra of Dambadeniya (author of Poojawaliya) and Reverend Sumangala had proudly mentioned that their students come from a well-educated and intellectual generation. (Poojawaliya;825p) This connotes that although there had been mismatches and conflicts between the Lankans and Pandyans, it can be affirmed that some kind of mutual bond also prevailed between the two parties from the past. It can be also stated as a change of the relationships of the two parties in this era.

## Conclusion

According to the Kudumiyamalai praising, there is a note on an attempt made by a minister to ask for donations from the Pandya king. The facts such as who this the minister of Sri Lanka is and the reasons for asking for help can be evaluated by exploring the political situation of that time. Chronologically, this minister who asked for help can be someone who belongs to the reign of king Parakramabahu II. Thereby, some Sri Lankan sources has discussed about one of the ministers who existed during the reign of king Parakramabahu II a several times. It can be believed that it is none other than Devapathiraja, one of the main ministers during the king's era. Information about this minister has been written in the Sidath Sagarawa and Poojawaliya belonging to the era of king Parakramabahu II. Professor Paranavithana also believes that this minister is the one who has been explained in the South Indian praising. It can be predicted that this minister asked for donations from the Pandyans due to a need during the war waged against Maga and his Kerala troupes. Sidath Sagarawa also describes how this Pathiraja minister destroyed the Kerala troupes. This minister has assisted the religious services of king Parakramabahu II, taken the help of foreign sources to invade the Keralas from the country and can be considered

as a main driving force in this regard. Therefore, this minister can be seen as a key figure in the relationship maintained between Pandya and Sri Lanka during this time.

The investigation of these documents shows that there has been a descriptive revelation about Lankan invasions in the documents of Weera Pandya. Except for the phrase Rama the second who plundered Sri Lanka, it is mentioned in Sundara Pandya's documents that precious gems and elephants were taken as extortion from the Lankan king. Documents belonging to the seventh state year (1258 AD) of Sundara Pandya talk about the aforesaid achievement while documents belonging to the tenth state year (1263 AD) talk about the Lankan victory of Weera Pandya for the first time. The Kudiyamiyalai text elaborately refers to this achievement in the next year or the eleventh state year (1264 AD). It is a specialty that the documents of Sundara Pandya carry nothing about Shawaka. It should be remembered that the very first documents to mention the Lankan victory of the two Pandya kings have a time lapse of five years. As a collection of these facts, it is stated in 1258 AD or some time before that Sundara Pandya has been able to reprimand the Lankan king. Sundara Pandya must have been satisfied with obtaining extortion or subjecting under his dominance. As Weera Pandya has supported Sundara Pandya in capturing countries, it is not inappropriate to think that Weera Pandya has also been involved in the invasion. It can be Sundara Pandya who was in the forefront than Weera Pandya in this Lankan invasion.

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