

The Views of Tamil Scholars Regarding the Origin of Jaffna Kingdom

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Abstract

Sri Lanka has one of the long historical tradition in the South Asian region. There was no partiality between the two ideas regarding the specialty of north part of Sri Lanka. The Jaffna Kingdom situated in this region had highly developed state challengeable to the contemporary Kingdoms like Kotte and Kandy. It was highly developed in the fields of administration, economic and religious beliefs. Even though the contradictive ideas were seen regarding the origin of Jaffna Kingdom with Nallur as the capital city. The concepts which were seen among the Tamil historians had included more beliefs and folk tales regarding the origin of Jaffna Kingdom in the early periods. The evidences which are derived from the recent archaeological researches have paved the way to do the more re- research. It was said that origin of Jaffna Kingdom dated back to the 13th century A.D. But some scholar holds the view that this Kingdom originated by about the 7th Century A.D. Some reliable evidences are necessary to prove this view.

This research is done on the basis of historical approach. The aim of this research was to analyze the reasons for the origin of Jaffna Kingdom, the traditional ideas and modern ideas which are put forwarded by the Tamil historians. In this research, the articles and books, which were analyzed by the historians used as the primary sources and they were considered as the evidences.

Keywords: Ariyasakkaravatties, Traditional ideas, Modern ideas, Nagas, Jaffna Kingdom

Jaffna Kingdom

There is hardly any region in the world which has preserved historical tradition like Sri Lanka. The North parts of Sri Lanka including Jaffna were identified uniquely in historical literature before several centuries ago. Jaffna is a place of Historical, cultural and religious significance in Northern Sri Lanka. Nallur was the capital city of Tamil kings who dominated Northern part of Sri Lanka from the 13th century to the 17th century.

The early settlements of Jaffna Tamils took place several centuries ago. In 1970 an exploration made in Kantharodai, a place situated in Jaffna had shown that the early history of civilization of Jaffna had began at the time of the Megalithic period in South India (Begley, V.1973, pp.191-196). On archaeological research made in 1980 in places like Aanaikodai, Karainagar, and Velanai had shown that the concentrated Dravidic settlements belonging to Megalithic period were found in these places (Ragupathy, P, 1987,p.179). Nowadays the efforts of knowing the traditional history of Jaffna people are taking place in many parts of Jaffna, by the University of Jaffna.

One of the *Pali* chronicle called *Mahavamsa* describes about the history of Sri Lanka. It indicates Northern part of Anuradhapura Kingdom Naagadeepa (Geiger, W.ed.1959). The Tamil literary work *Manimehalai* has referred to Naaganaadu (Saminathair, U.V,ed1956), and the golden plate found in Vallipuram (one of the places in Jaffna Peninsula) in the period of 2nd century A.D has referred to Nagadivam(Epigraphia Zeylanica, no.29). Further the inscriptions and literary works had shown that the word Yalppanam (Jaffna) has been used for over 500 years. An inscription of the Vijayanagara Empire during the 15th century refers to Jaffna as Yalpaanayanpaddinam(Town), Sandesha literature indicates Jaffna as Yapapatuna. Both Portuguese and Dutch documents indicate Jaffna as Javanna Paddinam, Ivanaapaddinam(Pathmanathan.S,2011). But there was no reliable evidence available before 15th century A.D regarding the use of the Yalppanam.

The literary works such as *Kailayamaalai* and *Yaalpaanavaipavamaalai* which relate some aspects of Jaffna history before 16th and 18th centuries A.D do not give a picture about the authorized history of Jaffna. For this reason it is very difficult to say about history of Jaffna in detail. We can identify that Jaffna, had Nallur as the capital from the period of 13th century A.D. The following regions had come under the control of this state. They are Vadamarachi, Thenmarachi, Valikamam, Patchilaipalli, Mannar Islands, Panagamam, Mullyavallai and Thenaimaravadi. The Jaffna Kingdom originated after the invasion of Pandya Brahmin general Aryachakravarti and it has been identified as the independent Tamil state until the invasion of Portuguese at the beginning of 17th Century A.D (Pushparatnam, P. 1993). This Kingdom had it Nallur as its capital city and the fragrance of Saivasim had enlightened the reign. K.M.De Silva says this was the only strong state among the contemporary state found in Sri Lanka in 14th Century A.D. Further he says this Kingdom had expanded is the western side up to Puttalam area and it had opportunities to control the whole Sri Lanka and in this situation it was called the Vijayanagara which had supremacy in South India.

There were some notes in *Yaalpaanavaipavamaalai* regarding the 9 Kings who ruled Jaffna before the

conquest of Senpahaperumal on Jaffna by A.D 1450, as follows,

1. Vijeyakoolankai Sakkaravatti
2. Kulasekara Singayaarian
3. VickramaSingayaarian
4. Varothaya Singayaarian
5. Maarthaanda Singayaarian
6. Kunapooshana Singayaarian
7. Jeyaveera Singayaarian
8. Kunaveerasingayaarian
9. Kanaga Sooriya Sigayaarian

The Aryachakaravatties had created the administrative style needed to this Kingdom. The social structure, social behavior and property rights which were related with Tamils had been stressed during their period. Aryachakaravatties, a general of the Pandiyan emperor played a significant role in this and he became the founder of a royal dynasty here with Nallur as the Capital of the Kingdom (Sivasamy,V.1988, p.54). The King administrators, the residence of officers, worshipping places of Kings, the premises of Brahmins, the soldiers' divisions were seen in the parts included in this region. Further the King's palace, flower gardens, Yamunaari, Courts complex were created in Nallur. And the temples were constructed in four parts of Nallur(Kunarasa, K.2001,P.20).

The Views regarding the Origin of the Jaffna Kingdom

One can observe that there are some differences among the writers regarding the origin of Jaffna Kingdom. The differences are seen not only among the Sinhala – Tamil historians but also among the Tamil historians and these have happened with certain space differences. Most of the Sinhala historians had considered the period of the origin of Jaffna kingdom as 13th Century A.D and at the same time most of the Tamil historians moved forward the period of the origin of Jaffna Kingdom on the basis of archaeological evidences. Generally it is stated that there was no Tamil reign in the Northern part of Sri Lanka before 13th Century A.D though some scholars date. But the recent researches discoveries have brought out it before the 13th Century A.D new evidence regarding the history of Tamils and their traditions.

Mudaliyar Rasanayagam has that the origin of Tamil Kingdom was occurred in northern part of Sri Lanka in before the Christian era. Here he had taken *Mahabarata*, *Manimehalai* and the *Paali* literature *Mahavamsa* as the evidences for the independent reign of *Nagas* in the 15th century B.C. He has further said that a place called Manipuram far away from Kalingam, where Arjuna had got married a princess. (Rasanayagam, S.1926). This Manipuram was identified as Jaffna by him. Some Tamil books written in the 14th Century A.D refer to Jaffna as “Manavai”. Here Rasanayagam comes to a conclusion that Manipuram was the other name of Manavai.

The *Mahavamsa* refers to the arrival of Buddha to Sri Lanka for the second time to solve the political disputes between the two Naga Kings regarding their right and at the same time this reference it found in *Manimehalai*. The author also refers the Northern part of Sri Lanka as Nagadivam. He has clearly stated about the Nagas' independent Kingdom in northern part of Sri Lanka and the of Buddha's advent to Sri Lanka.

Mudaliyar cites the foreigner Cosmos's notes to show that the Jaffna Kingdom as continuing as an independent states after the Christian Era also. The notes of Cosmos, the foreigner who came to Sri Lanka in 7th Century A.D refers to two kings as ruling in Sri Lanka. On this basis Rasanayagam pointed out that was the Jaffna kingdom and the other as the Sinhala kingdom in the South.

The Scholar who told the views that the origin of Jaffna Kingdom in A.D 8th Century use the *Yaalpaanavaipavamaalai* as their evidence. some descriptions were seen about the king Ukirasingan in *Yaalpaanavaipavamaalai*. There were some references in *Yaalpaanavaipavamaalai*. as follows, he was the descent of vijayan's brother and he ruled a part in northern part of Sri Lanka in the 8th Century A.D. So *Mudaliyar* Rasanayagam accepted and argued that this King had ruled in northern part of Sri Lanka and he belonged to the Kalinga dynasty. The late Anuradhapura King Mahinthan IV and the kings who came after him had maintained a matrimonial relationship with Kalinga dynasty. So in his conclusion he says, the Sinhala kings had maintained the matrimonial relationship with Kalinga dynasty who ruled the Jaffna Kingdom(Rasanayagam, S.1926).

The Jaffna Kingdom existed since the 11th Century A.D. Here Rasanayagam has put forward his ideas with the help of South Indian inscription. The inscription belonging to A.D 11th Century says, that the northern part of Sri Lanka was under controlled by Cholas from 993 to1070 A.D. At that time the Southern part of Ruhuna had some small kingdoms which waged a war against the Cholas. As a result small kingdoms were defeated by Cholas. This is known from the 11th Century inscription. The three names of them are referred to the *Culavamsa* as the same. Here Rasanayagam says that these three rulers as contemporaries in Jaffna.

The book *Cholamandela Chathakkam* says that the Kingdom of Jaffna as independent in the 12th

Century A.D. Here Pararaasingaperumaan might be the King. So *Mudaliyar* Rasanayagam he strongly said and came to a conclusion that the northern part of Sri Lanka had a Kingdom for a long time.

Gnanaprakasas puts forward *Mahavamsa* as the evidence regarding the origin of Jaffna Kingdom in A.D 7th Century and it was strengthened as another Kingdom in the A.D 8th Century. A note was seen regarding the King Seelamehavarman who had ruled the Kingdom of Anuradhapura. During that period a person called Srinaga had brought the Tamils who went to the other side and tried to capture the place situated in the North part of Sri Lanka called Uththarapirathesha. Here Gnanaprakasas says that Srinaga was a Tamil and he tried to form a Tamil Kingdom in the Northern part of Sri Lanka (Gnanaprakasas, S.1920).

Most people use the story about “Yaalpaadi” as an evidence to an independent kingdom in Jaffna in that 11th Century A.D. This story is found not only in *Yaalpaanavaipavamaalai* but also in the other Tamil historical literatures. Even though this story is a questionable one regarding its reliability. The story of “Yaalpaadi” was written to illustrate the name of the place Jaffna by using folk tale traditions. Gnanaprakasas uses the South Indian inscription as an evidence to prove the independent kingdom of Jaffna in the 11th Century A.D. According to the inscription the Paraanthaha Cholan I entered into the Sinhala kingdom in 947 A.D to kill the King. At the same time a Sinhala King ruled the Sri Lanka called Uthayan III was not murdered by another King and he further says that the murdered King might be the Jaffna King (Gnanaprakasas, S.1928). Generally Gnanaprakasas had accepted an idea put forwarded by *Mudaliyar* Rasanayagam regarding a Kingdom in Northern part of Sri Lanka in 11th and 12th Centuries A.Ds.

One can see the ideas of *Mudaliyar* Rasanayagam and Ganaprakasas were opposed by professors K.Indrabala and Professor S. Pathmanathan who had released their ideas on the basis of the evidences available. Professor Indrapala had put forwarded the ideas regarding the origin of Jaffna Kingdom in his work “The formation of Jaffna”.

Rasanayagam put forwarded his ideas by using *Manimehalai* and *Mahavamsa* as the evidences to show “Naga” Kingdom but Professor K.Indrapala, former Professor of History, Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka says the evidences were not enough for Naga Kingdom and the “Nagars” were the highly developed people. He rejected the Cosmos’s note used by Rasanayagam, said that a Kingdom had existed in the 7th Century A.D Indrapala more over says these two Kingdoms indicated by Cosmos were the Anuradhapura Kingdom and Uruhuna Kingdom (Indrapala, K.1972). Gnanaprakasas says, that Srinaga was a Tamil he tried to form a Kingdom in Northern part of Sri Lanka. The idea was rejected by Indrapala and he says these names were seen among the Sinhalese and they also had got the aid for war from South India.

Indrapala rejected the story of Ukirasingan, who ruled the Northern part of Sri Lanka, used by Rasanayagam as an evidence and he says that the story of Ukirasingan contained the fables and it was the description of displacements. Rasanayagam says that Ukirasingan belongs to Kalinga dynasty where as Indrapala rejected his ideas by saying that the *Pali* books clearly points out Kalinga Kings’ native country was located in Sri Lanka and he further rejected the ideas of Rasanayagam that is, this was the Kalinga dynasty which was ruled by the Jaffna Kingdom.

He says that one cannot consider this story of Yaalpaadi as the evidence to show the continuity and specialty of the Tamil state in 9th Century A.D and this story was interwoven to denote the name of the place. Ganaprakasas says on the basis of South Indian inscription, there was a Tamil Kingdom in Northern part of Sri Lanka in 10th Centurys A.D. So the King who was killed by Paraanthaha Cholan I might be the Jaffna King and it was rejected by Indrapala by saying that the inscription of Paraanthaha Chola indicates the news of the arrival of Paranthaka Chola to Sri Lanka. But it did not show the news regarding the killing of that King. At the same time Indrapala rejected the ideas of Ganaprakasas and *Mudaliyar* Rasanayagam. Here they have said that the 3 Kings who had been defeated by Cholas in the battle field might be the Jaffna Kings. But Indrapala says the inscription of Rajendran I found out in Jaffna fort in 1970, confirms that in this period the Northern part of Sri Lanka was in the under control of Cholas (Indrapala, K.1972).

Indrapala rejected the ideas of Rasanayagam and Ganaprakasas. They say, before 13th Century A.D a Tamil state was seen in Northern part of Sri Lanka and Indrapala further emphasized they had done their research during the period of which the scientific historical research had not highly developed. So we cannot accept their ideas. Continuously he had pointed out an independent Tamil state had originated in the north part of Sri Lanka in 13th Century A.D.

Professor S.Pathmanathan, former Professor of History, Department of History, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, Department of History, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, has put forward idea that there was independent kingdom in the Northern part in 13th Century A.D. Later, he has changed his ideas due to recent researches and he was accepted that there was a Tamil state originated in the Northern part of Sri Lankan Island. This was contemporaneous to the period of Sangam era (Pathmanathan, S.2011).

On the basis of recent researches of scholars Prof.S.K Sitrapalam, Prof.S.Kirishnaraja and Prof.P.Pushparatnam the formation of state in the Northern part of Sri Lanka would have take place before the 13th century A.D.

Dr.V.Sivasamy, former Head and Professor of Sanskrit, University of Jaffna says that Originally there would have been small state or petty chieftaincies all over Sri Lanka including the North. Those in the North maintained cordial cultural, religious and commercial relation with rise to the other parts of Sri Lanka and South India.

Some of them in the North were those of the “Nagas” as known from *Pali* chronicles and Tamil literary works with the rise of the Anuradhapura kingdom. These chieftaincies were now and then came under the control of the Anuradhapura rulers with the Chola conquest of the Island these would have become united. But either the full of the Cholas this part of the Island was under the control of the stronger Polonnaruwa rulers. Thereafter this part of the Island was conquered by Kalinga Magha and thereafter Candrabhanu his son from Java at the about the same times (about the 13th century A.D) the Second Pandya Empire had become very powerful in South India. Generally in the Tamil areas. Aryachakravatti a general of the Pandya Emperor conquered some major parts of Sri Lanka including Yapakuwa. Which was Capital after Polonnaruwa. He is praised by the author of the *Culavamsa* probably because he returned the forth Relic which he took away and recognized the independence of the Yapahuwa ruler was probably this Aryachakaravatti who established an independence kingdom in the Jaffna area with the help of Pandya overland. He and his successors ruled here till when the Portuguese finally annexed this with their other territories.

Professor S.K.Sitrapalam former Head, Department of History, Professor of History, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, says that the structure of civilization in the Northern part of Sri Lanka and the formation of state were seen as other parts before the Christian Era (Sitrapalam, S.K.1993).

Professor.S.Kirishnarajah Department of History, Professor of History, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, says that the Kings of “Naga” ruled in Jaffna. The origin of Northern part state was formed and developed with of Kathiramalai, as capital later it was shifted to Nallur .The ancient place Kathiramalai was nowadays indicated as “Katharodai”. These were put forward with the support of Naga coins which were found in Kantharodai (Kirishnaraja,S.1998).

Professor .P.Pushparatnam Head, Department of History, Professor of History, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, had put forward his ideas about the Tamil state and it was in A.D 13th Century A.D, by using inscriptions and coins. Moreover he says a Tamil state was found in Northern part of Sri Lanka in 7th Century A.D, and some of the “Naga” Kings were seen as pioneers. He says that the evidence of Kathiramalai denoted by Tamil literatures was a state. According to his view a Tamil Kingdom was seen under the capital of Kantharodai from 7th Century A.D to A.D 10th Century, and after the invasion of Paraanthaha Cholan it was transferred to Singanagar which is located in Poonakari(Pushparatnam, P.1993).

Dr.M.Gunasingam says that the Jaffna kingdom has revolved from the historical period . It had been a petty state till the 13th century A.D. It was included the Anuradhapura and Polanaruwa kingdom during various periods known from various sources. The Chola conquest of Sri Lanka paved the way for the foundation of a Tamil kingdom in the Northern and Eastern parts of Sri Lanka. There is no doubt this . As it was evolving as a small or large kingdom Magha form Kalinga conquered of and brought under his control. Thereafter Chandrabhanu from Java and subsequently his son held sway over this area. It was at this juncture that the second larger empire arose in South India. The Pandya forces invaded Northern Sri Lanka under the Brahmin general Aryachakravati. He established an independent Jaffna kingdom thereafter (Gunasingam,M.2008),.

Conclusion

Different views in relation to the origin of Jaffna Kingdom have with put forward by Tamil historians. There were some variations between the ideas prescribed in the period when the archaeological research had not highly developed and the ideas presented in the high contemporary archeological period. Generally researcher some ideas put forwarded for a long time about the origin of Jaffna Kingdom in the 13th Century A.D. But there are some evidences to prove that this Kingdom had originated before this period. There is a necessity to do the intensive research still to confirm this. The research about the history of ancient Jaffna must be done not only from the Tamil scholars but also by all the other scholars. The state patronage is very essential for this.

Notes

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