

INFLUENCE OF HINDUISM DURING THE GAMPOLA KINGDOM - A STUDY BASED ON THE INSCRIPTIONS

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After the demise of its two illustrious capitals, Sri Lankan politics and culture faced a bit of a setback. Among the kingdoms that moved to south-west from Polonnaruwa after the King Kalinga Magha invasion in 1215AD, the Gampola Kingdom shifted from Kurunegala by king Buwanekabahu IV was a period of re-building of culture. In the 14th century, the construction of temples was revived again during the Gampola period. In general, the history of Sri Lanka can be seen, where the political changes that took place from time to time in South India influenced the politics and culture of Sri Lanka. Thus, after the Pallavas and Cholas, Sri Lanka came under the influence of the Vijayanagara Nayaks in the 14th century AD. During this period the influence of Hinduism was reflected in Buddhism and culture. The tradition of worshiping Hindu deities along with viharas also originated during this period. A good example of this is the Lankatilaka and Gadaladeniya Viharas was built in 1344AD. Gampola Kingdom was existed for a short period of time and the administrative bodies were formed fully with the Hindu institutions like Brahmins Sect, Tamil Language with Royal status, the Brahmin's settlements (after the Cholas rule Kantalay caturvedimangalam) Art & Architecture of the period was based Hinduism and Azhakak Konar's relations with Jaffna Kingdom etc. Inscriptions of the Gampola period indicate the influence of Hinduism and Brahmins during this period. The Lankatilaka Tamil inscription is outstanding among such inscriptions. Professor Senarath Paranavithana was the first to read this inscription and translate it into English. In the Lankatilaka inscription, which tells about the worship of the guardian deities of Lankatilaka and the donations given to the Vihara, there is a reference to the donation given by the merchant called 'Pathinen Vishayam'. Also Niyamgampaya inscription, Medawala inscription, Alavala Amuna rock inscription of Buwanekabahu IV, Sagama inscription etc. show the influence of Hinduism and Brahmins in Gampola period. Gampola Kings were Brahmins of Kasi Gothra and they had good religious contact with the Aryachakkaravarties of Nallur Kingdom and North Indian Brahminical institutions at the time. So far no one indicated the second Brahminical settlements were erected at Gampola Kingdom. But, Sinhalese historians have explain the Gampola Kings were the Buddhist so as the culture is Buddhism. In that way, my hypothesis is to establish that the Gampola Kingdom was a Hindu Kingdom which was built on Hindu Dravida culture as architecture of the Gampola period reflects. As primary data for this research Inscriptions, literatures, books, and research articles related to this research topic have been used as secondary data. This research has been carried out on the basis of historical descriptive and analytical research approach. However, cultural reconciliation between the Sinhala and Tamil can be seen during the Gampola Kingdom through the inscriptions

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