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SUMMARY

A Historical Analysis of Sri Lanka -Pallava Cultural Relations (4th Century-8th Century A.D.)

Sri Lanka's relations with India, which go back to Pre-historic times, is a subject which has evoked great interest among South Asian historians. It is a field in which fresh historical evidence has come up from time to time and a field in which new interpretations have been attempted more recently. From the earliest times Sri Lanka's connections with India have gravitated towards the southern region of the sub continent, geographical proximity being the most important reason. It is within the broad context of Sri Lanka-South India links that the present study "A Historical Analysis of Sri Lanka - Pallava Cultural Relations (4th century -8th century A.D)" has been attempted.

Politically the 4th to the 7th century A.D. was a turbulent period in Sri Lanka -South Indian relations. As for Sri Lanka - Pallava relations, a question that one needs to discuss in the present study is whether the interconnections between the

dynastic struggles of Sri Lanka and the power dynamics of the Pallavas have been coloured by the balance of power concerns of these rules. By the end of the 7th century A.D. political relations of Sri Lankans with South India, appear to have been stabilized under king Manavamma (684-710 A.D.) who established his power with the help of the Pallava rulers. The cordial relations between the two kingdoms from this time onwards raise the issue of Pallava political hegemony over Sri Lankan affairs, and issue, which invites careful scrutiny.

Despite political tensions between Sri Lanka and South India during this period, cultural links between them were extremely harmonious. An important subject area of this investigation relates to the use of the Pallava grantha script in the Island and the spread of Sanskrit literature and Language from Pallava cultural centers. Scholars who examined the art and architectural tradition of Sri Lanka have decided that Sri Lankan Art must have been affected by the Pallava art and architectural tradition.

The interconnections between Pallava and Sri Lankan Buddhist centers were extremely important and Mahayana Buddhism, which had a strong presence in the two countries, created a common bond embracing many aspects

of culture. Hinduism and Hindu culture, strongly patronized by Pallava rulers, did not fail to make a mark on Sri Lankan religions and religious practices. However, a hypothesis, which will be tested in this study, is that the flow of culture was not always a one-way street. One needs to look at the possibility of a reverse flow, as well as the South - East Asian dimension in the cultural diffusion of this period.

The main objective of this study has been to present a realistic perspective of Sri Lanka - Pallava cultural connection during a crucial period of South Indian History. It is important to emphasize that relations between these two regions were not always adversarial as sometime made out. Perhaps the most fruitful outcome of these inter-connections was the exchange of cultural ideas, with Sri Lanka being the greater beneficiary.