

VIKRAMABĀHU II AND VIKRAMA SALAMEVAN

Vikramabāhu II, a son of Vijayabāhu I (1055 - 1110) by Tilokasundari, a Kalinga princess, held sway over Rajarata from Polonnaruwa for a period of twenty-one years (1111-1132) after deposing his uncle Jayabāhu, who had the consecration name *Aba Salamevan*. In medieval times it was customary for Sinhalese kings to assume one of the two alternate consecration names *Sirisangabo* and *Aba Salamevan* on their accession to the throne. Vikramabāhu for whom no ceremony of consecration was performed could not have assumed the consecration name - *abhiśeka nāma*.

In contemporary inscriptions there are, however, references to names of some temples and military units which had the expression *Vikrama Salamevan* prefixed to their names. Historians who have attempted to explain these references have been inclined to consider *Vikrama Salamevan* as an expression referring to Vikramabāhu. This identification appears to have seriously hindered scholarly investigation thus obstructing the proper understanding of events and the traditions of kingship. In the present paper an attempt is made to reconsider the relevant evidence, review the ideas that have been articulated by modern scholarship and determine whether *Vikrama Salamevan* refers to Vikramabāhu.

1. Vikramabāhu and Disputed Succession

During the latter part of the reign of Vijayabāhu his younger brother Jayabāhu was consecrated as *Yuvarāja* (heir apparent) while Vikramabāhu was conferred the rank of *Ādipāda* (heir presumptive).¹ In his capacity as *Ādipāda* Vikramabāhu was administering the southern principality of Rohana. These arrangements presuppose that Vikramabāhu's claims to the throne were duly recognized and in order of precedence he stood next in the line of succession to Jayabahu.

On the death of Vijayabahu these arrangements were put into jeopardy, in respect of Vikramabahu, by a faction at the court which promoted the claims of the sons of Mitta, the nephews of Vijayabāhu, for succession to the throne. This faction which had a commanding influence at the court and was supported by influential sections of the Sangha consecrated Jayabāhu as king and Mānābharapa as *Yuvarāja*, setting aside the claims of *Ādipāda* Vikramabāhu to that rank.² The *Culāvamsa* specifically mentions that the elevation of Mānābharapa to the rank of *Yuvarāja* amounted to a deviation from long

¹. *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon* (UCHC). pt. I, ed. S. Paranavithana, Ceylon University Press, Colombo, 1960, p. 436.

². *ibid.*, p. 438.

established custom.³

These developments inevitably led to a succession dispute which plunged the kingdom into civil war leading to a division initially into four virtually independent units. Once the formal procedures of royal consecration and rites concerning legitimation were concluded, Mānābharana and his brothers advanced into Rohana with the objective of seizing Vikramabahu. Moving out of Mahānāgakula Vikramabāhu confronted his adversaries, decisively defeated them in a number of engagements, and eventually advanced into Rajarata and occupied the city of Polonnaruwa from where he subsequently exercised authority over the northern parts of the kingdom.⁴

In the meantime Mānābharana and his brothers secured control over Dakkhinadesa and Rohana which they divided among themselves. Mānābharana took up residence at Punkhagama and assumed authority over Dakkhinadesa. The southern principality of Rohana was divided between his two younger brothers; Kittisirimegha who received the southern portion lived at Mahānāgakula where king Jayabāhu and his sister Mitta were also settled. The northern portion of Rohana known as Atthasahassaka was assigned to Siri Vallabaha, the youngest of the three brothers. He fortified Uddhanadvara which became the centre of his administration.⁵

Mānābharana and his brothers, who were not reconciled to the loss of their control over Rajarata and to the fact of Vikramabāhu's control of it, are said to have made preparations for war against him once they were securely established in power over their respective territorial units. In response to such measures Vikramabāhu conducted a raid deep into Dakkhinadesa, decisively defeated his rival cousins and pursued them up to Kelaniya.⁶ Although Vikramabāhu was compelled to withdraw hastily at this stage on account of a foreign invasion in the north, the effect of his campaign was such as to leave an indelible impression in the minds of his rival kinsmen who thereafter refrained from organizing military expeditions against him.

When Vikramabāhu was engaged in the campaign in Dakkhinadesa his kingdom was invaded by Viradeva described in the *Cūlavamsa* as 'the lord of Ariyadesa and the sole sovereign of Palandīpa'. Vikramabāhu who advanced hastily with his armies to Mannar was beaten by the invaders. Two princes and a general who had accompanied

³. *Culavamsa*, 61 : 4.

⁴. Vikramabāhu is said to have defeated his assailants at Panasabukka, Ādipādajambu, Kātagāma, Kālavāpi and Uddhandvāra. , *UCHC, Vol. 1, Pt. 1*, pp. 438 - 439.

⁵. *Ibid.*, p. 439.

⁶. *Ibid.*,

him fell in battle and his Senāpati was captured by the warriors of Vīradeva. Vikramabāhu retreated to Polonnaruwa and while doing so was pursued by the invading army. Vikramabāhu collected the royal treasures from the palace and moved out in the direction of Kōṭṭiyār. Vīradeva and his armies who followed him were forced into an encounter in the swampy wilderness of Kōṭṭiyār and were vanquished by the forces of Vikramabāhu.⁷ Subsequently, Vikramabāhu re-occupied Polonnaruwa and regained control over his kingdom which thereafter remained in his undisturbed control until his death in A.D. 1132.

Vikramabāhu was remarkable as a warrior and military leader, and, in these respects, he was perhaps the foremost among the princes who lived in the island during the twelfth century. It was primarily on account of his military skill that he was able to thwart the designs of his rivals, occupy Polonnaruwa and sustain his power in Rajarata.

Vikramabāhu's dealings with Buddhism were hostile, at least during the early years of his rule, as testified to by the Pali chronicle. It was in anticipation of reprisals against the Sangha and other Buddhist institutions by Vikramabāhu that Thera Mugalān of the Uṭuruḷmūḷa fraternity of monks and the ministers of state made arrangements to place the Tooth Relic Temple at Polonnaruwa under the custody of the army of the Vēḷaikkārar for protection and maintenance after the death of Vijayabāhu.⁸ Although subsequent events proved that these arrangements were ineffective against Vikramabāhu they had the effect of securing the Tooth Relic from falling into his hands. The Relics were later secretly taken by the monks to Rohana.

Vikramabāhu is said to have taken possession of the monasteries, dislodged the monks, and given them over to soldiers as residences. He revoked the land grants made by previous rulers to monasteries and temples and distributed them among his soldiers. The golden images, jewels and other precious items in the temples were appropriated and used for his own requirements. Under these circumstances the monks attached to the principal vihāras in Polonnaruwa moved out of the city and sought refuge in Rohana.⁹

During the period between the deposition of Jayabāhu and the accession of Parakramabāhu I in A.D. 1153 there were no consecrated kings in Lanka. Vikramabāhu and his son, Gajabāhu (1132-1153), had ruled from Polonnaruwa without the performance of the ceremony of consecration. Therefore, there was no possibility of conferring on them an *abhiśeka nāma*, one of the two alternate consecration names.

⁷. *Ibid.*

⁸. S. Pathmanathan, "The Vēḷaikkārar in Medieval South India and Sri Lanka", *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya Campus, Vol. II, No. 2.

⁹. CV., 61 :

There had been no consecration ceremony for the younger brothers of Mānābharāṇa. Mānābharāṇa, of course was consecrated as *Yuvarāja* on the accession of Jayabāhu to the throne of Polonnaruwa. Parākramabāhu is said to have had the ceremony of consecration performed as *Mahādīpāda* when he assumed control of the administration of Dakkhinadesa. A *Yuvarāja*, however, was not entitled to assume the consecration name reserved for kings.

It is significant that all inscriptions set up in Rajarata and other principalities under two generations of rulers were dated in the regnal years of Jayabāhu, the last consecrated king. The existence of an inscription dated in the 43rd year of Jayabāhu suggests that this practice was continued until the accession of Parakramabāhu I in A.D. 1153¹⁰ The unusual practice of dating epigraphic records in the regnal years of a king even several years after his death is generally considered as one that was adopted on account of the fact that the two successors of Jayabāhu at Polonnaruwa were not consecrated kings.

2. Epigraphic Notices on Vikrama Salamevan

The expression *Vikrama Salamevan* is found in a slightly altered form in three inscriptions: (1) The Palamōttai inscription of the 42nd year of Vijayabāhu, (2) The Pillar inscription from Budumuttāva of the eighth year of Jayabāhu and (3) the Pillar inscription of the eighteenth year of Jayabāhu from Mayilankulam. The first of these inscriptions contains a reference to a military unit called *Vikrama Calāmēkatterinta Valankai Velaikkarar*. The inscription records an endowment of gold, ornaments and money to the shrine of Vijayarāja-īsvaram at the Brahmadeya of Kantalāy by a Brahmin widow called Nāṅkai cāni for the merit of her deceased husband Yajñīya krama vittan. The endowment was placed under the custody of a unit of the Vēḷaikkāra army which had as part of its name the expression *Vikrama Calāmēka*.¹¹ Although the inscription refers to the regnal year of the king, Vijayabāhu, there is no evidence to suggest that the king had anything to do with the transaction recorded in the text of the inscription. Nor does the inscription provide any hint as to the point by whom it was caused to be engraved. As the person who made the endowment and those under whose custody it was placed are referred to in the third person it would appear that it was set up by a

¹⁰. K. Kanapathipillai, "Mankanai Inscription of Gajabahu II", *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 12; S. Pathmanathan, "The Tamil Inscription from Māṅkanai", *Pavalar Thuraiappahpillai Nurrantu Vila Malar*, Jaffna.

¹¹. S. Paranavitana, "A Tamil Slab Inscription from Palamottai", *Epigraphia Zeylanica (EZ)*, Vol. III, No. 33, p. 302 - 312; S. Gunasingham, *Trincomalee Inscriptions Series - No. 3*, "A Tamil Slab - Inscription from Mayilawewa (Mayilankulam)", Peradeniya, 1980, pages 32.

group of persons not referred to therein. On the basis of ascertained knowledge about procedures relating to temple inscriptions it could be inferred that the text of this inscription was drafted by the temple authorities or a committee of the assembly of the Brahmadeya of Kantalāy that was concerned with temple affairs. Such an impression seems to be confirmed by the fact that the inscribed pillar was found in close proximity to the site where the architectural remains of the temple referred to in the epigraph have been found.¹²

The relevance of this inscription for the present discussion is on account of the reference found therein to the *Vikkirama Calāmēkat terinda Valaṅkai Vēlaikkārar*. S. Paranavitana who edited this inscription construed the reference to *Vikkirama Calāmēka* in this epigraph as a reference to Vikramabahu although he identifies the king mentioned in this inscription with Vijayaḅāhu in deference to the considered opinion of K.V. Subrahmanya Aiyar. He says:

"Mr. K.V. Subrahmanya Aiyar, however, the former Superintendent for Epigraphy in the Indian Archaeological Survey, whose knowledge of Tamil epigraphy is probably unrivalled and to whom I had the good fortune to show the estampage of this inscription, is of the opinion that what is now left of lines 2 and 3 warrants the reading of the royal name as 'Vijayabāhu' rather than as 'Jayabāhu', and that the regnal year, given in figures, is undoubtedly 42. The symbols for 42 are fairly clear on the estampage and if the regnal year be read as such, the epigraph should date from the reign of Vijayabāhu I (1048-1114). For this reason and also because I am influenced by the regard which must naturally be paid to the opinion of Mr. Subrahmanya Aiyar, I have adopted his reading of the King's name and the regnal year"¹³

Any lingering doubt entertained about the reading of the name of the king referred to in the Palamōttai epigraph has to be dispelled on account of following considerations. In the recently prepared estampages of this inscription the characters indicating the name of the king at the end of line 2 are distinctly clear even to one without a specialist knowledge of epigraphy and the name could be deciphered as Vijayabāhu - *dēvar* without any difficulty. Paleography is another important consideration in determining the date of the inscription and on that account the name of

¹² S. Gunasingham, *Trincomalee Inscriptions Series - No. 1* - "Two Inscriptions of Cola Ilankesvara Deva", Peradeniya, 1974, p. 2, 5. Both the inscriptions, "The Palamōttai Inscription" and the inscription dated in a regnal year of Chola Ilankēsvaran are found amidst the ruins of the Sivan Temple at unit 2 of the Pērāru Colony at Kantalay.

¹³ S. Paranavitana, "A Tamil Slab Inscription from Palamottai", *EZ*, IV, No. 24, p. 192.

the king referred to in the record. The recently discovered pillar inscription dated in the 18th year of Jayabāhu and found at Mayilankulam represents a much more advanced state of development than the palatography of the Palamōttai inscription.¹⁴ In case the Palamōttai inscription was indited in the 42nd year of Jayabāhu one would expect it to represent a stage of development comparable to that of the epigraph at Mayilankulam set up in the 18th year of Jayabāhu. That it is not the case and that the Palamōttai epigraph was indited several decades earlier than the other record is clearly indicated by a comparative examination of the two inscriptions.

Moreover, the use of the expressions *Kō* and *Utaiyār* in the inscription at Palamōttai may also be conceded to be of some significance in the consideration of its date. These are reminiscent of the usages characteristic of Cōla inscriptions and suggests the chronological proximity of this inscription to the Cōla inscriptions found in the island.¹⁵ It may also be noted that these expressions are not recorded in the inscriptions dated in the regnal years of Jayabāhu.

The expression *Vikkirama Calāmēkan* occurring as the initial component of the name of a military unit in an inscription of the 42nd year (1097) of Vijayabāhu cannot be considered as having any association with Vikramabahu. He was not even a *Yuvarāja* under Vijayabāhu. It was towards the end of his father's reign that Vikramabāhu was raised to the rank of *Ādipāda* (heir presumptive). It is also significant that in this particular inscription the expression *Vikkirama Calāmēka* occurs as the component of the name of a military unit and not in any manner suggesting a connotation signifying any connection with Vikramabāhu or the ceremony of royal consecration.

The Pillar inscription from Budumuttāva, Nikawaratiya, which is dated in the 8th year of Jayabāhu records the donations made by Cuntamalli, a consort of Mānābharana, to the Saiva shrine called *Vikkirama Calāmēka-iṣvaram* at Mākal otherwise called *Vikkirama Calamekapuram*. The circumstances under which the town

¹⁴. S. Gunasingham, *Trincomalee Inscriptions Series - No. 3* - "A Tamil Slab - Inscription from Mayilawewa (Mayilankulam)", p. 45.

¹⁵. That the Palamōttai Inscription employs the expressions *Kō* and *Utaiyār* to describe Vijayabāhu may be conceded to be of some significance. It provides an indication of the fact that those who formulated the text of this inscription were adopting the traditions of Cōla epigraphy. These expressions are used in connection with all Cōla kings up to the reign of Kulottunga I (1070-11-22). They are also found in the inscription of Cōla Ilankēśvara at Kantalāy. Since the beginning of the 12th century they disappear altogether in the Tamil inscriptions set up in Sri Lanka and instead of them the expressions *Cakkaravartikal* was employed with reference to kings. In all the Tamil inscriptions dated in the regnal years of Jayabāhu, he is described as *Cakkaravartikal*.

of Māgala and a Saiva temple located within the town had acquired the respective names Vikkīrama Calāmēkapuram and Vikkīrama Calāmēka-īsvaram is not clear from the text of the inscription. It is probable that these names had come into vogue before the inauguration of Mānābharaṇa's rule in Dakkhinadesa. The possibility that these names had prevailed since the days of Vijayabāhu is suggested by the occurrence of the expression *Vikkīrama Calāmēka* as part of the name of a military unit in an inscription of his 42nd year.

Vikramabāhu, of course, was ruling a part of the island when the pillar inscription at Budumuttava was set up in the eighth year of Jayabāhu. He was ruling over Rajarata from Polonnaruwa whereas the inscription concerned was set up at Māgala which was in Dakkhinadesa under the control of Mānābharaṇa, his rival cousin. There is no evidence to suggest that Vikramabāhu had ever occupied and administered any part of Dakkhinadesa. Although he had raided deep into Dakkhinadesa during the earlier part of his career as ruler at Polonnaruwa, there is no indication that he had engaged himself in any activities other than military operations conducted hastily in that region. The fact that a town and a temple in Dakkhinadesa had been named after *Vikrama Salamevan* suggest the *Vikrama Salamevan* as an expression cannot have any connection with Vikramabāhu.

The third inscription which contains a reference to Vikrama Salamevan has been found recently in a strip of jungle land at Mayilankulam in the Trincomalee district. The fact that it is dated in the 18th year of Jayabāhu which corresponds to the 17th year of Vikramabāhu and the circumstance that it was set up in a locality which could be expected to have been included in his dominions does not necessarily imply that this inscription has any reference to Vikramabāhu.

In order to appreciate the true significance of the contents of the inscription from Mayilankulam it is necessary to consider here its full text which translates:

"In the 18th year of Apaiya Calāmēka Cakkaravarttikaḥ, Sṛī Jayabāhudēvar the Commander of the army (Dandaṇātha) called Kanavati, who had lands of his own on life-tenure (*jīvitām*) summoned the army called *Vikkīrama Calāmēkan nārpatai* stationed at Uttutturai and placed (the temple) under the protection of the sacred *Vēlaikkāraṇ* after having named it as *Vikkīrama Calāmēkan perumpallī*".¹⁶

This inscription provides the interesting information that an army unit of the *Vēlaikkāraṇ* and a Buddhist shrine had the respective names *Vikkīrama Calāmēkan Nārpatai* and *Vikkīrama Calāmēkan Perumpallī*. The shrine was so named by the military leader Kanavati as it was placed under the protection of an army unit of the

¹⁶. S. Gunasingham, *Trincomalee Inscriptions Series* - No. 3 - "A Tamil Slab - Inscription from Mayilawewa (Mayilankulam)", p. 32.

Vēlaikkāṛar called Vikkīrama Calāmēkan Nārpaṭai. Similar instances are known from the inscriptions of the Vēlaikkāṛar at Polonnaruwa and Padaviya. The Tooth Relic Temple at Polonnaruwa was named as *Srī Vēlaikkāran Daḷadāy Perumpallī* after it was placed under the custody of the Vēlaikkāṛar.¹⁷ A Sanskrit inscription of the late thirteenth century from Padaviya records a similar arrangement. The Daṇḍanāyaka called Lokanātha is said to have constructed a lofty Vihāram, placed it under the protection the Vēlaikkāṛar and named it as *Vēlaikkāra Vihāram (idam Vihāram Vēlaikkāra nāmāṅkitam)*.¹⁸

The name *Vikkīrama Calāmēkan nārpaṭai* is reminiscent of that of *Vikkīrama Calāmēkatterinta Valāṅkai Vēlaikkāṛar* referred to in the Paḷamōṭṭai inscription of the 42nd year of Vijayabāhu I. As there was a military unit named after Vikrama Salamevan in the reign of Vijayabāhu there is no need to associate with Vikramabāhu another military unit named after Vikrama Salamevan. Although the reference to such a unit is found in an inscription of his period of rule in Rajarata. The possibility is that the army unit of the Vēlaikkāṛar mentioned in this inscription had acquired its name in an earlier period just as in the case of their counterparts referred to in the inscription from Paḷamōṭṭai.

It is also significant that there is no reference at all to Vikramabāhu in the epigraph from Mayilāṅkuḷam. The general Kaṇavati who was responsible for the transactions recorded in that inscription was acting independently on his own initiative. It may also be observed that the reference to *Vikkīrama Calāmēkan perumpallī* in this epigraph cannot be considered as evidence that contradicts the *Cūlavamsa* account about Vikramabāhu's activities against Buddhism. Whether the general Kaṇavati acknowledged the authority of Vikramabāhu remains to be ascertained and at present there is no adequate information to resolve this issue.

For the sake of clarity the institutions and localities associated with *Vikrama Salamevan* as found in epigraphic notices may be listed here in the following order:

1. *Vikkīrama Calāmēkat terinta Valāṅkai Vēlaikkāṛar* - army unit at Kantaḷāy (A.D. 1097)
2. *Vikkīrama - Calāmēka-puram* - otherwise called Mākal (A.D. 1118)
3. *Vikkīrama - Calāmēka-īśvaram* - Saiva shrine at Mākal (A.D. 1118)
4. *Vikkīrama-Calāmēkan-Nārpaṭai* - army unit of the Vēlaikkāṛar at Uttuturai.

¹⁷. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. III, No. 1393.

¹⁸. S. Paranavitana, "A Sanskrit Inscription from Padaviya", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (Ceylon Branch), NS, Vol. VIII, pt. 2, p. 261 - 264.

(A.D. 1128)

5. *Vikkirama-Calāmeṅkan-Perumpalli* - Buddhist-shrine at Mayilāṅkuḷam (A.D. 1128).¹⁹

3. Vikrama Salamevan and Modern Scholarship

Epigraphists and historians have commented on Vikrama Salamevan either in their editions of inscriptions or in discussions of themes on kingship and consecration. In the present inquiry it becomes necessary to consider in detail some of their comments on this matter. The following are some of their observations:

"On the other hand, it must be pointed out that in the 42nd year of Vijayabāhu, Vikramabāhu had possibly not yet become heir-presumptive, and in that case it would seem strange to find him referred to by the throne name Calāmega. No similar instance has been found elsewhere. *If the record was dated in a regnal year of Jayabāhu then Vikramabāhu was the actual ruler of the northern part of the island when this inscription was indited, and it would be perfectly natural for a regiment to be named after him, as it is in this record, and for his personal name to have the throne name appended to it.*"²⁰

"*The name Vikrama-Calāmegapura was presumably given to Māgala in honour of Vikramabāhu who was at this time ruling at Polonnaruwa ... Not only the town of Māgala, but the Saiva shrine at the place was also named after Vikramabahu, and it is possible that he was its founder ... It also appears from this record that Vikramabāhu had the throne name Aba Salamevan*"²¹

S. Paranavitana

"The practice of naming cities and temples after rulers who founded or patronized them is quite common in both South India and Sri Lanka.

¹⁹. The dates indicated are those of the inscriptions wherein these names occur.

²⁰. S. Paranavitana, "A Tamil Slab inscription from Palamottai", *EZ*, Vol. IV, p. 143.

²¹. S. Paranavitana, "Two Tamil Pillar Inscriptions from Budumumuttava", *EZ*, Vol. III, p. 310.

The only contemporary king with the Vikrama name was Vikramabāhu and if he is the ruler referred to as Vikrama Calāmēga, it would appear that he enjoyed some measure of recognition in this region".

"Close to our period we have an inscription dated in the 24th year of Jayabāhu which records a grant made to the Brahmanas of Jayākoṅṭa Calāmēka Caturvēti - maṅkalam ... *This institution was no doubt named after Jayabāhu who is known to have had the Salāmēgha title ... From this evidence it would be patently clear that Vikrama Calāmēka Tśvara and Vikkrama Calāmēgapura were named after a ruler who had the Vikrama name and the Calāmēga (Salamevan) title.*"
"The identification of Vikkrama Calāmēga with Vikramabahu necessarily means that he was entitled to use the Salamevan title".

"In these circumstances the only possible explanation is that an unconsecrated ruler could use one or the other of the official titles, provided it was the one that was last recognized. This would suggest that that the title was in some way linked with the official chronological scheme. Current regnal periods were perhaps considered in terms of either the Siri Sangabo era or the Salamevan era and the rulers who were not entitled to the royal consecration although unable to announce a fresh era and a fresh title accompanying it, were expected to continue recognising the Salamevan or Siri Sangabo era, whichever was current at the time of their accession. With this perhaps was linked the possibility of using the current official title. *It is only in these terms that one can explain the possible use of the Salamevan title by Vikramabāhu I. Such an assumption must, however, remain tentative until we have direct evidence to show that Vikramabāhu I in fact used an official title*".²²

Sirima Kiribamune

"... The epithet 'Calāmēga' when appended to, was always connected with Vikramabāhu, and nobody else. This may tend to show that the throne name 'Calāmēga' when used in the form of an appendix to a name was for the first time introduced as a symbol of recognition accorded to Vikramabāhu I".

"In the light of the above conclusions, it may be said that the

²². Sirima Kiribamune, "The Royal Consecration in Medieval Sri Lanka : The Problem of Vikramabahu I and Gajabahu II, 'The Sri Lanka Journal of South Asian Studies, Vol. I, No. 1, June 1976, University of Jaffna (p. 12 - 32), p. 14, 19.

Vēḷaikkāṟar who in an independent manner took over the charge of the grant recorded in the Paḷamōṭṭai inscription themselves for protection and maintenance, conferred on themselves the sacred name of Vikrama Calāmēgat terinda Valankai Vēḷaikkāṟan probably with a view to seeking some form of recognition for their act of protecting the grant made."

"... It is probable that this close association won for Vikramabahu some form of recognition from the Vēḷaikkāra army which also involved itself in administrative activities including the conferment of names and titles on persons and institutions etc. *It is because of this recognition, it may be inferred, that the Calāmēga title had been conferred on Vikramabāhu.* The title could not, in accordance with the prevailing law, be conferred on an unconsecrated prince in the form of a prefix to his name. This would have been a violation of the law. However, *the army could without violating any law confer recognition on Vikramabāhu by appending the tile to his name...*"²³

S. Gunasingham

There is a consensus among all these authors with regard to the identification of Vikram Salamevan with Vikramabāhu. Parānavitana, who initially expressed the view that Vikram Salamevan is identical with Vikramabāhu and was therefore primarily responsible for its adoption by others has advanced arguments that are contradictory and inconsistent in respect of this issue. Instead of clarifying the issue they have resulted in greater confusion and serious misunderstandings.

When he observes: 'If the record was dated in a regnal year of Jayabāhu, then Vikramabāhu was the actual ruler of the northern part of the island when this inscription was indited'. Parānavitana contradicts his own position in respect of the name of the king (Vijayabāhu) and the regnal year (42) which he has adopted in deference to the opinion of K.V. Subrahmanya Aiyar, as seen earlier. Moreover, his argument is misleading for the reason that there is an interval of almost 21 years between the last date of Vikramabāhu and the 42nd 'regnal year' of Jayabāhu.²⁴ It is also interesting to find that while claiming that "The name Vikrama Calāmēgapura was, presumably, given to Māgala in honour of Vikramabahu, he apparently contradicts himself by stating that "Manābharāṇa, the ruler Dakkinadesa in which Māgala was situated, had several contests

²³. S. Gunasingham, Trincomalee Inscriptions Series - No. 3 - "A Tamil Slab - Inscription from Mayilawewa (Mylankulam), p. 12, 16, 19.

²⁴. Vikramabāhu was not the actual ruler of the northern part of the island in the 42nd year of Jayabahu which corresponds to the 21st year of Gajabāhu II, his son and successor.

with Vikramabāhu to deprive the sovereignty of Ceylon and at last succeeded in confining his authority to the northern half of the island". He has failed to recognize that a town and a temple in Dakkhinadesa could not have been named after Vikramabahu as he had never exercised authority over that region. Nor is there any evidence to show that Vikramabāhu's authority even in Rajarata was ever formally recognized by his rival cousins, Mānābharaṇa and his brothers who were established in the Southern part of the island.

In assuming that Vikramabāhu had the throne name Aba Salamevan, Paranavitana equates the expression Vikrama Salamevan with the consecration name Aba Salamevan without providing any satisfactory explanation for this assumption. In this instance he does not exhibit the ingenuity, imaginative understanding and penetrative insight which have been characteristic of his remarkable scholarship. He has invested *Vikrama Salamevan* with a connotation which, as will be seen subsequently, it does not seem to have had during the period when it was used. However, two generations of academics have tended to subscribe to his views on this matter.

The identification of *Vikrama Salamevan* with Vikramabahu could be challenged by formulating the following questions:

1. Is there any inscription or other document which describes Vikramabāhu as Vikrama Salamevan?
2. Has it been ascertained that the expression *Vikrama* which forms the initial component of the expression *Vikrama Salamevan* stands for Vikramabāhu?
3. Are there instances where royal epithets or titles similar to *Vikrama Salamevan* were conferred on junior princes?

In the absence of satisfactory affirmative answers to these questions the identification of *Vikrama Salamevan* with Vikramabāhu may be dismissed as one without any foundation. If the identification is found to be wrong the deductions and conclusions based on such an identification are also bound to be wrong.

In her reluctance to assert positively that *Vikrama Salamevan* was Vikramabahu Sirima Kiribamune is on the side of caution, but seems to relax the rigidity of her methodology when she observes: "From this evidence it would be patently clear that Vikrama Calāmēka Tśvara and Vikrama Calāmēkapura were named after a ruler who had the Vikrama name and the Salamega title". It would rather appear that these names were formed by prefixing to them *Vikrama Salamevan* which was used as an epithet by one of the predecessors of Jayabāhu.

It is also difficult to endorse the claim that *Jayaṅkoṇṭa Calāmēka Caturvedimankalam* was named after Jayabahu who had the consecration name *Aba Salamevan*. The expression *Jayaṅkoṇṭa Calāmēka* has been formed by combining the

two words *Jayaṅkoṅṭa* and *Cālamēka*. The expression *Jayaṅkoṅṭa* which means 'the one who achieved victory' is known to have been used as a royal epithet by the Cōla kings Rājārāja I (985-1016) and Rājādhirāja (1018-1054). There were many brahmadeyas and other institutions in South India which had names to which this epithet was added in the form of a prefix. The inscription at Mahakiridegama undoubtedly suggests that this epithet was assumed by either *Jayabāhu* or his predecessor. As *Jayabāhu* is not known to have had military successes to his credit and because his predecessor, *Vijayabāhu* had adequate reasons for making such a claim, one may be justified in assuming that *Jayaṅkoṅṭa Cālamēkan* was an epithet of *Vijayabāhu*. The fact that he had the consecration name *Siri Sanghabodhi* cannot be cited as a valid argument against this assumption as will be seen later. The elucidation of the expression *Jayaṅkoṅṭa Salamevan* suggests the untenability of the explanation that the title *Vikrama Salamevan* belonged to a king who had the *Vikrama* name and the *Salamevan* title. In fact it highlights the need to look for an alternative explanation.

In asserting that "the epithet *Calāmega* when appended to was always connected with *Vikramabāhu* and nobody else", and in claiming that the title *Vikrama Salamevan* was conferred as a symbol of recognition on *Vikramabāhu* by the *Vēlaikkāra* army S. Gunasingham violates the fundamental norms of rational inquiry and historical methodology. His explanations are based on inconsistent and inherently contradictory arguments and a misunderstanding of epigraphic usages.

His claim that "the throne name '*Calāmega*' when used in the form of an appendix to a name was for the first time introduced as a symbol of recognition accorded to *Vikramabāhu* shows a serious misunderstanding of the traditions of kingship. It is also strange that he advances his claim after adducing convincing arguments to show that the Palamottai inscription which contains the earliest reference to *Vikrama Salamevan* was set up in the 42nd year of *Vijayabāhu*. The need for according a recognition to the claims of *Vikramabāhu* for the succession to the throne, by agencies outside the court, could not have arisen at such an early date as the 42nd year of *Vijayabāhu*. It is particularly so on account of the fact that it was not anticipated at that time that *Vikramabāhu*'s claims to the throne would be disputed. His elevation to the rank of *Adipada* (heir presumptive) towards the end of his father's reign presupposes that *Vikramabāhu* was expected to ascend the throne in due course and in due order according to the customs of the country. Under such circumstances there was no need for the *Vēlaikkāra* or anybody else to resort to the unusual step of according recognition to *Vikramabāhu* by appending a royal title to his name during the life time of his father. The unlikelihood of such an event in practical terms in the peculiar Sri Lankan context during the period under consideration exposes the absurdity of this claim.

The inscription at Palamōttai does not mention the name of *Vikramabāhu*. The mere reference to a military unit which had a name of which the initial component was *Vikkirama Cālamēka* cannot by any stretch of imagination be construed as implying that the *Vēlaikkāra* had conferred a title on *Vikramabāhu*. Gunasingham has been persuaded to adopt this untenable position owing to a wrong interpretation of the text of the

inscription.

Commenting on the reference to the *Vēlaikkārar* in the epigraph concerned he says: "... The *Vēlaikkārar* who in an independent manner took over the charge of the grant recorded in the *Paḷamōṭṭai* inscription for protection and maintenance, conferred on themselves the sacred name *Vikrama Calāmegat terinda Valankai Vēlaikkāran* probably with a view to seeking some form of recognition for the act of protecting the grant made." That this explanation is false is borne out by a careful consideration of the relevant portion of the inscription which runs:

"... *Brāhmaṇan kārāmbaccettu yajñīya Karmavittan dharmma Patniyana Nankaiccāni tan bhārttāvana yajñīya kramavittan maritta pinpu avanai nōkkic ceyta dharmamavatu... Ippati ceyyappattā iddharmmam alivu vāramal nilai nirutuvārāka Sī Vīkkirama Calāmēkat terinta Valankai Vēlaikkāran enṅu tirunāmam cāttiyatu.*"

"These endowments were made by Nankai Cani, the devoted wife of the Brahman *Kārāmbaccettu yajñīya* *knamavittan*, for the merit of her husband *Yajñīya Kramavittan* after his death ... The 'sacred' *Vīkkirama Calāmēkat terinta Valankai Vēlaikkārar* have been named as the custodians of this endowment so that they could secure its maintenance and prevent any loss".²⁵

The text does not lend itself to an interpretation suggesting that the Vēlaikkārar at Kantalāy had conferred on themselves the name Vīkkirama Calāmēkat terinta Valankai Vēlaikkārar. Nor was the epigraph intended to record the activities of the Vēlaikkārar. The expressions tirunāmān Cāttiyatu occurring in connection with the name of a military unit of the Vēlaikkārar in the Paḷamōṭṭai epigraph which records the endowments made to a temple and the arrangements for their proper maintenance has to be construed as one employed to denote the custodial function vested in the Vēlaikkārar in respect of the

²⁵. It is relevant to consider here the translation and the comments given by S. Paranavitana, who edited this inscription on the passage concerned. His translation runs: "In order that this charity, performed in this manner, may continue without any loss, the glorious name of the *Vēlaikkāras* of the left-hand (composed of) the selected troops of *Sri Vīkkirama Calāmega*, is given to it". Moreover, he observes: "In order to ensure the maintenance, without any hindrance, of the charitable endowment registered in this record, it was given the name of *Sri Vīkkirama Calāmegat - terinda Valangai Vēlaikkāran* In other words, the charity was placed under the protection of that regiment. *EZ VI, No. 24, p. 194.*

endowments that had been made.²⁶

It is therefore apparent that the military unit of the *Vēlaikkāṟar* had already acquired their distinctive name *Vikkirama Calāmekat Terinta Valaṅkai Vēlaikkāṟar* before the text of the *Palamōṭṭai* epigraph was drafted. By whom and when this name was conferred on the *Vēlaikkāṟar* are matters that remain to be investigated.

4. Vikrama Salamevan - a Royal Epithet

The attempts made by scholars to recognize the name *Vikramabāhu* in the word *Vikrama* incorporated into the expression *Vikrama Salamevan* has imposed a serious limitation on academic investigations as to its true significance. A reconsideration of the relevant evidence and a review of the explanations that have been offered by scholars suggest the need for a fresh and a more plausible interpretation. Such an attempt should necessarily take into account the traditions of kingship.

Generally all consecrated kings had two names, a personal name and a consecration name or *abhiśeka nāma*. These two types of names are of two distinct categories and are mentioned in inscriptions dated in the regnal years of consecrated kings. In epigraphic records the personal name of the king is always preceded by his consecration name. *Siri Sangabo* and *Aba Salamevan* are the two alternate consecration names assumed by *Sri Lankan* kings on their accession to the throne in medieval times. The king's personal name is never incorporated either fully or in part into a consecration name during the period under consideration. The consecration names lose their particular significance once their initial components *Siri* and *Aba* are detached and would acquire a different connotation when combined with other expressions. This seems to have been a tendency peculiar to the 11th and 12th centuries. Moreover, it is contradictory to argue that a prince was denied the consecration ceremony as he was not a Buddhist and at the same time persist in claiming that he was allowed to use the consecration name of his predecessor. In this respect the fact that the consecration names had a particular Buddhist significance cannot be overlooked.

Besides, it was customary to refer to some kings by their epithets. The royal epithets were so formulated as to project the distinctive qualities, characteristics and achievements of rulers. Functionally they were different from personal and consecration names. In other words, in their connotations the royal epithets had an association with royal charisma, both perceived and manifested. It was also not customary to incorporate a king's name either fully or in part into an expression which had the function of an

²⁶. These expressions could also be interpreted as having the connotation that they were registered under the name of the military unit of *Vēlaikkāṟar* in a register containing the particulars of the endowments made to temples in the *Brahmadeya* of *Kantafāy*.

epithet. A king may be referred to by his personal name or his epithet for the purpose of identification, or else he may be referred to by both, the personal name and his epithet. A combination of a part of the personal name and a royal epithet into a compounded expression is not known to have been effected in the local tradition.

The references to royal epithets in chronicles and epigraphic records are incidental. Many of them have been lost to posterity as they had not been recorded. These were in most cases attached to the names of towns, shrines, buildings, corporate organizations, feudatories and officials. It is mostly from epigraphic notices on such names that royal epithets have been identified through the ingenuity and labours of modern scholarship.

For an elucidation of the expression *Vikrama Salamevan* it is necessary to consider its structural and functional characteristics. It is a compound of two words, *Vikrama* meaning prowess and *Salamevan*, which is usually encountered in inscriptions as the final component of the consecration name *Aba Salamevan*. In this compound expression *Vikrama* assumes the character of a qualifying expression, an adjective. Construed in this manner the expression would mean 'the Valiant Salamevan' and in that sense it could be, and in fact was, used as a royal epithet. Functionally, it was different from the consecration name *Aba Salamevan* and reminiscent of *Vīrasalamevan*.²⁷

That epithets similar to *Vikrama Salamevan* had belonged to some rulers of the 11th and 12th centuries is suggested by the evidence from the *Cūlavamsa* and some inscriptions. When the northern part of the island was occupied by the Cōlas Jagatīpāla of Ayodhya is said to have reached Rohana and seized power after putting to death *Vikrama Paṇḍya* who had exercised authority there for a brief period.²⁸ In the Cōla inscriptions Jagatīpāla is referred to as *Vīra Salamevan*. The Manimañkalam inscription (A.D. 1046) of Rājādhirāja gives the following account of this ruler:

"With a single unequalled army (Rājādhirāja) took the crown of *Vikramabāhu*, the king of the people of Lanka on the tempestuous ocean, the beautiful golden crown of the king of *Simhala*,

²⁷. The origins of the consecration names *Sirisangabo* and *Aba Salamevan* are a matter for separate investigation. It would appear that they had their origins in the names of kings of the early Anuradhapura period and were inspired by Mahāyāna influences and closely connected to the conception that the king was a bodhisattva. We should also take into account the fact that there were two kings who had the names *Sirisanghabodhi* (A.D. 247-249) and *Silamehavanna* (A.D. 619-628). However, the two names *Sirisangabo* and *Aba Salamevan* had become established as the alternate consecration names and were never used as the personal names of kings since the 8th century.

²⁸. *UCHC*, Vol. I, pt. 2, p. 418; *Cūlavamsa*, 55 : 1 - 17.

Vīracalāmēkan, who believing that Īlam surrounded by the ocean was superior to the beautiful Kannakucci (Kanyākubja) which belonged to him, had entered (the island) with his relatives and (those of) his countrymen who were willing (to go with him), and had put on the brilliant crown...²⁹

As this account of *Vīra Calāmekan* closely resembles, in its details, that of Jagatīpāla as found in the *Cūlavamsa* it may be assumed that both sources refer to the same ruler. The inconsistency between the two accounts with respect to the name of the ruler concerned may be explained as one that arises from the fact that the chronicle refers to Jagatīpāla by his personal name while the Cōla inscriptions refer to him by his title or epithet *Vīra Salamevan*. In this instance it would be obviously wrong to assume that the expression *Vīra Salamevan* was used in respect of a king who had the name *Vīra* and the title *Salamevan*.

Vīra Salamevan and *Vikrama Salamevan* appear to be compound expressions formed by adding respectively the words *Vīra* and *Vikrama* as prefixes to *Salamevan*. Like the word *Jayaṅkoṇṭa* attached to *Jayaṅkoṇṭa Salamevan* it would appear that the terms *Vīra* and *Vikrama* attached to *Salamevan* were qualifying expressions with connotations associated with valour, chivalry and martial prowess.

That Parākramabāhu I (1153-1186) who had the throne name *Siri Sangabo* had the epithet *Rājavesibhujanga Silamegha* is suggested by information recorded in the *Cūlavamsa*. Lankapura who led his armies into South India during the intervention in the war of Pāṇḍya succession is said to have conferred on a certain Ilankiyarayar, a local chieftain in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom, the title *Rājavesibhujanga Silamegha*. The relevant verse in the *Cūlavamsa* runs:

Ilankiyarājassatha datva nāmam abhichitam
Rājavesibhujangādhi - Silamegho Vissutam.³⁰

"But on Ilankiyarayar he conferred the well-known and coveted title *Rājavesibhujana-Silamegha*."³¹

The consideration that this epithet had been formed by combining the expressions *Rājavesibhujanga* meaning 'the paramour of the mistresses of inimical kings

²⁹. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. III, p. 56; *UCHC*, Vol. I, pt. 2, p. 419.

³⁰. *Cūlavamsa*, Vol. II. ed. Wilhelm Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1927, 76 : 192.

³¹. *Cūlavamsa*, trans. Wilhelm Geiger Vol. II, 1930 (Reprint, Colombo, 1953), 73:91.

and *Silāmegha* and the fact that it is described as one which had attained the position of being a well-known and coveted one (*abhichitam*, *Tivissutam*) suggest that it had in fact belonged to Parakramabāhu I. Such an impression is confirmed by the fact that the royal pavilion at Polonnaruwa and a suburb of the enlarged city of Polonnaruwa were named after his epithet *Rājavesibhujanga*.

The *Cūlavamsa* describes the construction of royal pavilion in the following terms:

Jatāmaṇḍala Samkāsam Naralokaka pālino
Rājavesibhujangāvham rammam kāresi maṇḍapam.³²

This verse translates : He caused to be constructed the superbly ornamental pavilion called *Rājavesibhujanga* like unto the crest of the matted locks of Hair of Siva, the protector of the world of men.³³ In this poetic description Parākramabāhu, the *Rājavesibhujanga*, is compared to the serpent on the *jatamaṇḍala* of Siva. The royal pavilion which is the sporting ground of Parakramabahu is compared to the *jatamaṇḍala* of Siva which is the sporting ground of the serpent (bhujanga) on his crest.

In conferring on Ilankiyarāyar the title *Rājavesibhujanga Silāmegha*, which was an epithet of Parakramabahu, the general Lamkapura was apparently endeavouring to promote the claims of Parakramabāhu for custodial suzerainty over the chieftains in the Pāṇḍya country who had come under his influence. The practice of conferring the names and epithets of kings on feudatory princes and subordinate chieftains was common in the kingdoms of South Asia for a long period of time and the examples are too numerous to be cited here.

The fact that Parakramabāhu I, who had the consecration name Siri Sangabo, had

³². *Cūlavamsa*, ed. Wilhelm Geiger, 73: 91.

³³. This translation is based on the opinion expressed by Prof. Anuradha Seneviratne whom the author consulted as he found Geiger's translation of this particular verse to be inaccurate. This interpretation is also endorsed by Prof. P.B. Meegaskumbure and Rev. Dheeranaanda. Geiger's translation reads: "Further he had a fair manadapa erected which bore the name *Rājavesibhujanga*. It was like unto the hall of the gods, called Sudhamma, which descended to earth, just as if the good deeds of all the people were accumulated at one spot. The second sentence in this paragraph which is intended to be a translation of the first line of the verse is apparently based on his misunderstanding of the text. The *jatamaṇḍala* is usually applied as a term of description in respect of the matted locks of hair of Siva or Umā. There is no reference at all to Sudhamma in the text. Geiger is in this instance reading into the text connotations which are alien to it.

borne the epithet *Rājavesibhujanga Silamegha* is of particular relevance for the elucidation of the expression *Vikrama Salamevan*. It shows that the word *Salamevan* when attached to a qualifying expression other than *Aba* did not have a connotation signifying any connection with the royal consecration and that it could in fact be assumed by a ruler who had the consecration name *Siri Sangabo*.

It now remains to ascertain the identity of the ruler to whom the epithet *Vikrama Salamevan* had belonged, particularly in the light of the strong objections against identifying the ruler concerned with *Vikramabāhu*. As the names of institutions and organizations which had the expression *Vikrama Salamevan* attached to their names in the form of a prefix were to found in both *Rajarata* and *Dakkhinadesa*, it may assumed that the ruler who had this epithet was *Vijayabāhu I*. The fact that the earliest occurrence of the epithet is to found in an inscription dated in the 42nd year of *Vijayabāhu* seems to confirm such an impression. Just as the *Brahmadeya* at *Kantaḷāy* and the *Saiva* temple there were renamed after his personal name as *Vijayaraja caturvētimankalam* and *Vijaraja-isvaram* respectively, the town of *Magala* and the *Saiva* shrine there could have been named after his epithet *Vikrama Salamevan* and described as *Vikrama Calāmēkapuram* and *Vikrama Calāmēka-isvaram* respectively.³⁴

The fact that *Vijayabāhu* had the consecration name *Siri Sangabo* cannot be cited as a valid objection against the identification of *Vikrama Salameva* with *Vijayabāhu* as *Siri Sangabo Parakramabahu* had the epithet *Rājavesibhujanga Silāmegha*. On account of his career and achievements *Vijayabāhu* had justification for assuming an epithet which had association with chivalry, valour and martial prowess.

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³⁴. The inscription dated in the 10th year of *Cōla lankēśvara Tēvrat Kantaḷāy* records the transactions of the executive committee of the assembly of the *Brahmadeya* called *Rājarāja - Caturvedimāṅkalam*.

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