

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF SITAWAKA (1521-1593)¹

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At the beginning of the sixteenth century Sri Lanka was divided into a number of kingdoms and principalities of which the most important was the kingdom which had Jayawardhanapura Kotte as its capital and was centred on the southern and south-western plains of the island. The most powerful of the rulers of Kotte, Parakramabahu VI (1412-1467) had united the whole island under his rule for a brief period of about two decades but when internal strife weakened central control after the death of this ruler, the effective power of the kings of Kotte extended only from the Malvatu Oya in the North to a little beyond the Walawe Ganga in the South and from the sea coast in the West to the foothills of the Central highlands in the East.² In the North a virtually independent kingdom of Jaffna had emerged with its capital a Nallur while in the central regions of Sri Lanka, the *Udarata* was governed by an autonomous ruler.

The kingdom of Kotte, though it still remained richest and largest of the states in Sri Lanka was weakened by two factors. Of the first was the growing decline in central authority. A number of reasons can be advanced to explain this factor but foremost among them must surely be the economic and geographical conditions in the area which formed the core of the Kotte kingdom. Unlike in the drier regions of Sri Lanka where the open country made communications relatively easy, the dense tropical jungles of the south-west made each village relatively isolated from the others. Moreover, unlike in the case of the early Sinhalese kingdoms of the northern plain where state aid for irrigation works was a key factor, agriculture in the south-west was largely rain-fed and the importance of the state in the life of the villager was correspondingly reduced. Thus it was easier to develop separatist tendencies in this

1. This article will concentrate on the political history of the kingdom of Sitawaka. Information regarding economic and social conditions in the kingdom can be obtained from C. R. de Silva, The first Portuguese revenue register of the kingdom of Kotte, 1599' in the *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, Vol. V, Nos. 1 & 2, January-December 1975. pp. 71-151.

2. For a discussion of the frontiers of Kotte in the light of recent evidence, see *ibid*, pp. 80-81.

area and strong leadership at the centre was needed to keep these tendencies in check. It was perhaps partly with this objective in mind that rulers in Kotte developed the practice of appointing close relatives as sub-kings. Thus for example in the early sixteenth century, when Dharma Parakramabahu (1489-1513) ruled at Kotte his brothers Vijayabahu, Sri Rajasinha, Taniyavalla and Sakalakovalla ruled at Rayigama, Menikkadawara, Madampe and Udugampola respectively.³ But this device arrested the declining power of the central government only temporarily. While on the one hand there was a tendency for some of these princes to develop autonomous principalities in the regions they ruled as instanced by Taniyavalla at Madampe,⁴ on the other hand the absence of a recognised law of succession led to conflicts between them for the throne. Thus for example in 1513 there was a brief contest between Sakalakovalla and Vijayabahu (1513-1521) for the throne, which the latter eventually won without bloodshed.⁵

The other factor which weakened the kingdom of Kotte was the rising power of the Portuguese. Although the Portuguese had first arrived in Sri Lanka in 1505-06⁶ and had traded intermittently since, it was only with the construction of a Portuguese fort in Colombo in 1518 that they began to exercise any real power and influence in the island.⁷ Vijayabahu as king of Kotte lost prestige in having allowed a foreign power to construct a fort in his kingdom. He was insulted when the Portuguese, soon after they built the walls of the fort to a defensible height, demanded that the king should sell them all the cinnamon in the royal store houses at a fixed low price.⁸ He was humiliated when he went to war with the Portuguese on the issue and was forced to negotiate for peace with them after severe losses to his army, once in 1518 and again after a second attempt in 1521.⁹

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3. G. P. V. Somaratne, *The political history of the kingdom of Kotte, 1400-1521*. [Colombo] 1975. pp. 163-164.
 4. C. R. de Silva, Lancarote de Seixas and Madampe; A Portuguese casado in a Sinhalese village. *Modern Ceylon Studies*, Vol. II, No. 1, January 1971. pp. 27-28.
 5. G. P. V. Somaratne, *op. cit.* pp. 175-179.
 6. C. R. de Silva, The first visit of the Portuguese to Sri Lanka, 1505 or 1506 in *Senarat Paranavitana Commemoration Volume*, ed. by L. Prematilleke and others. Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1978. pp. 218-220; G. P. V. Somaratne, *op. cit.* pp. 205-209.
 7. Fernao de Queyroz, *The temporal and spiritual conquest of Ceylon*, trans. by S. G. Perera. Colombo, 1930. p. 188; *Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register*, (hereafter CALR) Vol. IV, p. 193; *Arquivo Nacional do Torre da Tombo* (hereafter ANTT) *Manuscritos da Livraria*, 1115, f. 39.
 8. CALR, IV, p. 196.
 9. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 190-203; Genevieve Bouchon, 'Les rois de kotte du debut du XVIe siecle' *Mare Luso Indicum*, Vol. I, pp. 82, 165.

It was as a result of a division of this weakened Kotte that the kingdom of Sitawaka emerged in 1521. Vijayabahu and his brother Sri Rajasinha had had a common queen by whom they had four sons, three of whom—Bhuvanekabahu, Pararajasinha and Mayadunne—survived into adulthood. After the death of this first queen, Vijayabahu married again and his second queen bore him a son who was named Dewarajasinha. At the end of the second decade of the sixteenth century the *ekanayake* (head of the civil government) of Kotte together with the assistance of a noble named Kandure Bandara plotted to kill the three elder princes to ensure the succession for Dewarajasinha. As Dewarajasinha was a minor the major aim of the plan seems to have been to preserve and enhance the power of the *ekanayake* and his supporters in court.

The three princes, however, escaped to Negombo and Mayadunne, the youngest and the most intrepid amongst them, left his two elder brothers to rally support in the Pitigal and Alutkuru *korales* while he himself went to the hill country to secure support from its ruler. The ruler of the *Udarata* welcomed this opportunity to weaken the power of Kotte and readily gave him aid which Mayadunne supplemented with recruits from the Four Korales, an area where he and his brothers had spent their childhood.

The combined armies of the three brothers marched on Kotte. Vijayabahu's army, still smarting from unsuccessful siege of the Portuguese fort at Colombo, refused to battle against the princes and the king was forced to negotiate for peace. A violation of the truce by Vijayabahu, who attempted to have the princes assassinated as they entered the palace grounds, led to the end of their patience. The palace was sacked and Vijayabahu put to death. The eldest prince Bhuvanekabahu (1521-1551) was then acclaimed the new king of Kotte while Pararajasinha (1521-1538) and Mayadunne were installed as kings owing allegiance to their elder brother. Pararajasinha was entrusted with Rayigama made up of the Rayigam, Pasdun and Wallalawiti *korales* less the seaports. Mayadunne, who had perhaps contributed most to the successful rebellion of the three princes against their father, received a much larger area which included the Four Korales, Denawaka (or the Five Korales), half of Hewagam *korale* and six other *korales*, namely Kuruwiti, Atulugam, Panawal, Handapandunu, Beligal, and Dehigampal. On the selection of Sitawaka as the capital city this unit became known as the kingdom of Sitawaka.

The division of Kotte in 1521 has been sometimes presented as a significant factor which weakened central power and contributed to the ultimate decline of the kingdom but this seems to be a somewhat exaggerated view. It is true that the king of Kotte did lose direct control over a considerable amount of the resources his father had enjoyed. On the other hand, the portion left to him was still quite sufficient to make him the richest and potentially the most

powerful, of the monarchs of the island. If the figures stated in the first Portuguese *tombo* of Kotte are taken as a rough guide, the area allotted to Pararajasinha contained 660 villages and that given to Mayadunne not much more than 1200. If we exclude the Seven Korales, which seems to have been an autonomous unit ruled by another branch of the Kotte royal family, the extent under the direct control of Bhuvanekabahu came to some two thousand eight hundred villages, apart from which he held all the seaports of Kotte.¹⁰ Nor did Bhuvanekabahu lose much in prestige, for the Kotte sovereign was acknowledged as overlord by the kings of Rayigama and Sitawaka and the practice of assigning the power to rule over parts of Kotte to brothers of the chief king was no innovation. Much depended, therefore, on whether Bhuvanekabahu could retain the allegiance and loyalty of his brothers.

In the early stages there was no room for dissension. The position of all three princes was hardly yet secure. Since their step-brother Dewarajasinha does not find mention in the sources after 1521, it is very likely that he too met with his death before long. The opposition, however, was not completely eradicated. Within a short time of the accession of the monarchs to power there arose a formidable rebellion in the Hapitigam *korale* led by Weerasuriya or Pilasse Vidiye Bandara, a nephew of Vijayabahu VI and Manamperi, the king's equerry. A reference in de Queyroz¹¹ seems to identify Weerasuriya who proclaimed himself king of Kotte, with the *ekanayake* of Vijayabahu VI who had long been hostile to Bhuvanekabahu and his brothers. But Weerasuriya did not have much chance to gather support. The brothers moved quickly, defeated him in battle and promptly had him executed.¹² The failure of this revolt marked the end of organized opposition to the new regime in Kotte.

With the restoration of peace and order in his kingdom, Bhuvanekabahu turned to the complex issues raised by the Portuguese presence in Colombo. In the first place there was the question of the Portuguese monopoly of the export of cinnamon which the westerners had insisted upon since 1519/20. This monopoly and the construction of the Portuguese fort at Colombo had led to a three-hundred per cent rise in the price of cinnamon in Western Asia. The Mappila traders of the Malabar coast who had a representative in court must have urged the new king to make an effort to break the monopoly and Bhuvanekabahu in 1522 requested permission from the Portuguese to export

10. Fernao de Queyroz *op. cit.* p. 203-204; Joao de Barros and Diogo de Couto, The history of Ceylon as related from the earliest times to 1600 AD as related by Joao de Barros and Diogo de Couto; trans. and edited by Donald Ferguson. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch*, (hereafter *JCBRAS*) Vol. XX, pp. 71-72; *Alakesvarayuddhaya*, ed. by A. V. Suraweera. Colombo, 1965. pp. 29-32.

11. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* p. 204.

12. *Alakesvarayuddhaya*, *op. cit.* p. 32.

40 *bahars* of cinnamon on his own account to countries east of Sri Lanka in whose markets the Portuguese were presumed to have a minimal interest. The Portuguese, however, realized that this cinnamon could easily find its way to the Middle East and Europe and rejected the request and Bhuvanekabahu did not venture to do anything more in this respect other than to turn a blind eye on the considerable smuggling trade developed by Muslim merchants from the ports of Kotte.¹³

Much more important to Bhuvanekabahu was the question of the humiliation suffered by him as chief monarch of the island not only in paying tribute to the foreigner but in also tolerating an armed fortress manned by them and situated within a few miles of his own capital. Bhuvanekabahu was too well aware of the military powers of the Portuguese to try open warfare. He simply did not deliver the elephants due as tribute and paid the four hundred *bahars* of cinnamon due annually in bark of the poorest quality. Before long the Portuguese realized that if their fort at Colombo was designed to ensure a plentiful supply of good cinnamon, it certainly achieved the contrary. The new Captain of Colombo, Fernao Gomes de Lemos reported in early 1523 that unless the Portuguese objective was the conquest of the island (which in his opinion was fairly difficult task), the fort served no purpose, because the collection of tribute and the purchase of extra cinnamon could well be done with a small trading post.¹⁴ This view seemed to have gained wide support for even what cinnamon was delivered had often come too late to be loaded on to the annual fleet returning to Europe. As Antonio da Fonseca wrote to his king on 18 October 1523... "You have there a fortress with a captain, factor, and officials and men ordered thereto who are an expense due to which cinnamon goes out to you at a good price for which they would gladly give (it) and (also) better tribute if there were no fortress and when good cinnamon was not brought their ships could be prevented from going to fetch rice on the other coast of the Choromandel by your fleet which you have there..."¹⁵ Such arguments eventually convinced the authorities in Lisbon who were troubled about their own extensive commitments in the Indian Ocean and when Vasco da Gama arrived as the new Viceroy in India in September 1524 he brought with him orders to demolish the fortress. This was done in late 1524 and a

13. C. R. de Silva, Trade in cinnamon in the sixteenth century, *The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, (hereafter *CJHSS*) new series, Vol. II, No. 2, pp. 19-20; Vitorino Magalhaes Godinho, *Os descobrimentos e a economia mundial*, Lisbon, 1971. Vol. II, p. 208.

14. Fernao de Queyroz, op. cit p. 205.

15. *Documentos sobre os Portugueses em Mocambique e na Africa Central, 1497-1840/ Documents on the Portuguese in Mozambique and Central Africa*. Lisbon, Vol. VI, (1519-1537), 1969, pp. 99, 205. The translation published in this work has been amended by the author.

Portuguese factor, Nuno Freyre de Andrade was left behind with a token force of twenty Portuguese soldiers to guard the Portuguese factory.¹⁶ Bhuvanekabahu's policy appeared to have succeeded.

However, complications arose quite quickly. In February 1525¹⁷ a fleet of seven Malabar ships led by a Muslim, Ali Hassan suddenly appeared at Colombo port. Hassan's force burnt the Portuguese vessels in harbour and requested the king of Kotte to hand over to them, all Portuguese who lived in his kingdom. Bhuvanekabahu realized that this course of action would lead to a swift reprisal from the Portuguese in India. He therefore, listened to the counsel of Nuno Freyre de Andrade and despatched a force of six hundred Sinhalese troupes under Sallappu *aratchi* to aid the Portuguese to attack the Muslim contingent. The combined forces surprised the Muslims who were careening their vessels, defeated them and seized two of the ships. When Ali Hassan returned for revenge on 3rd May he was once more repulsed with the loss of four ships by a combination of Sinhalese and Portuguese forces.¹⁸

These events proved significant. They alienated the Muslim Mappila traders from the king of Kotte. De Andrade was astute enough to seize the opportunity and convince Bhuvanekabahu that these traders, an obstacle to a good relations between the Portuguese and the king of Kotte, must be expelled from his domains. When the expulsion order was ultimately issued in 1526 it greatly strengthened Portuguese control over the cinnamon exports of the island.¹⁹

Bhuvanekabahu's choice of allies may have been politic, but it was hardly popular. The Malabar merchants had developed long standing contacts with local traders. The Portuguese, on the other hand, were more inclined to rely on their military might and often acted in high-handed fashion. The decision to expel the Muslims was also opposed by Mayadunne and Pararajasinha and in fact might well have been one of the causes of the break between them and their brother, the king of Kotte. Portuguese chroniclers, of course, attribute the Kotte-Sitawaka conflict to the ambition of Mayadunne "...as he increased in age so did he in cupidity, desiring greatly to attain to the monarchy of that island..."²⁰ Mayadunne might well have been ambitious but this analysis would

16. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* p. 205.

17. The date of 15 February 1524 as given in Queyroz is an obvious error as the Portuguese fort was not demolished until after September 1524.

18. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 208-209; *CALR IV*, pp. 159-161, 190-191; *JCBRAS XX*, pp. 74-75, 77-78.

19. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* p. 210; C. R. de Silva, Portuguese policy towards the Muslims in Ceylon, *CJHSS*, Vol. IX, 1966, p. 114.

20. *JCBRAS XX*, p. 73. See also *JCBRAS XX*, p. 90.

fail to explain why such ambition was not also directed against his other brother, Pararajasinha. Mayadunne who welcomed the expelled Muslim to his territory could have been convinced that the policy of alliance with the Portuguese was a mistake. In any case Bhuvanekabahu's decision enabled Mayadunne to appear as a protector of the Sinhalese against alien domination and to use this posture to win the sympathies of many of Bhuvanekabahu's own subjects.

Mayadunne's open opposition to Bhuvanekabahu's policies could only result in war. The king of Sitawaka realized this and sought the aid of the *Samudri* of Calicut. The *Samudri*, glad to assist in any anti-Portuguese venture, sent a force of 2500 men in fifteen ships under one of his trusted commanders, Payichchi Marakkar. As soon as these forces arrived Mayadunne proclaimed himself *chakravarthi* or chief king of the island and launched an attack on the territories of Bhuvanekabahu. The campaign which ensued was typical of the pattern of warfare that prevailed between the two monarchs in the next quarter century. The forces of Sitawaka compelled Bhuvanekabahu's army to fall on the defensive and to retreat to Kotte city. The city itself, however, was sufficiently strong, being protected by mud walls, a moat and stone bastions, to resist the Sitawaka forces until Bhuvanekabahu's appeal for aid to the Portuguese in India resulted in the arrival of Martim Affonso de Mello Jusarte with an expeditionary force of ten ships in early 1528. Mayadunne promptly abandoned his pretensions and offered peace which was accepted by his brother. The Portuguese force, lavishly rewarded by Bhuvanekabahu, left Kotte soon after.²¹

If relations between Bhuvanekabahu and Mayadunne were not cordial in the eight years that followed, at least they were peaceful. However, the increasingly close collaboration between the Portuguese and Bhuvanekabahu seems to have led to increasing resentment on the part of the king of Sitawaka and his Muslim allies. The Kotte-Portuguese alliance was cemented on 15 October 1533 by a new agreement relating to trade in cinnamon. Hitherto, the Portuguese had obtained 400 *bahars* of cinnamon as tribute annually. Each *bahar* was calculated to weigh 2 *quintais* or 256 *arrateis*.²² Portuguese requirements in excess of the tribute were purchased from royal storehouse. The Kotte officials were far from being satisfied with this arrangement for the Portuguese claimed the right to reject cinnamon of poor quality and to burn it to prevent it from falling into the hands of rival traders. The Portuguese too were anxious for a new accord by which they hoped to raise the amount received as tribute and fix a low price for the quantity they purchased. Indeed the agreement of 1533 was made largely in their initiative.

21. *Ibid.* pp. 57-58, 58-59; Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 21-212.

22. *Ceylon Literary Register*, third series Vol. IV, p. 199. One *arratel*=1.02 English lbs.

The new accord specified that the annual tribute was to be fixed at 300 *bahars* of cinnamon with the proviso that each *bahar* was calculated at 3 *quintais* (or 384 *arrateis*). In effect, this involved an increase in the tribute payment from 800 *quintais* to 900. The Portuguese also obtained a fixed low price for all the cinnamon they purchased; two *cruzados* per *bahar* of good quality cinnamon and half this price for cinnamon of coarser quality, though this *bahar* was to be calculated at a lower weight of 300 or 340 *arrateis*. In return for these concessions the king of Kotte obtained a pledge that all the cinnamon he offered would be purchased by the Portuguese.²³

This agreement must have been viewed with dismay by the Muslim traders in Sitawaka. Its enforcement would certainly have made it more difficult for them to obtain cinnamon. Indeed there is reason to conjecture that their urging as well as an offer of aid by the *Samudri* influenced Mayadunne's decision to try her fortunes on the battlefield once more in 1536.

In this attempt Mayadunne was strengthened by a force of four thousand men who arrived in forty five rowing ships under Ali Abraham from Calicut. The combined forces besieged Kotte but the city held out once more until Martim Affonso de Souza, the captain of Cochin responded to Bhuvanekabahu's appeal with a force of three hundred men in eleven ships. De Souza's preparations no doubt reached Mayadunne's ears for when the Portuguese arrived at Colombo at the end of March 1537 they found that the two brothers had made peace once more. Being liberally rewarded by Bhuvanekabahu the Portuguese set off again in pursuit of the Calicut fleet which had departed a few days earlier, caught up with it off Mangalor and defeated it decisively.

The *Samudri's* resources were however, far from being exhausted. In that same year he responded to Mayadunne's fresh requests by assembling an even larger force over 8000 men in fifty one ships under Payichchi Marakkar, Kunjali Marakkar and Ali Abraham. The Calicut fleet sailed slowly southwards along the Malabar coast seizing stray Portuguese vessels on the way and exacting particular toll on the Indian Christian settlements on the Coast. When reports of this expedition reached Mayadunne he promptly broke the accord he had with his brother and took the field once more. Thus it was that Martim Affonso de Souza, resting at Chaliyam received a frantic appeal for aid from Kotte in late 1537. De Souza reacted quickly. Hoping to intercept the Calicut fleet before its arrival in Kotte he selected twenty-five swift rowing vessels in which he placed six hundred and fifty Portuguese and many auxiliary

23. *ANTT Corpo Chronologico Parte I Marco 51, Doc. 96; Simao Botelho' O tombo do estado da India, 1554' in Subsídios para a historia da India Portuguesa; ed. by Rodrigo Jose de Lima Felner. Lisboa, Academia Real das Ciencias, 1868. p. 240*

troops and followed in the wake of the Calicut fleet. On 20 February 1538 he came across his prey at Vedalai while the Calicut crew were ashore, attacked them by both land and sea and defeated them completely. On his triumphant arrival at Colombo, however, de Souza found that Mayadunne had once more received news of bad tidings in time and had secured a treaty of peace with his brother. Therefore, de Souza and his men, richly rewarded once more returned to India after a short stay in Kotte.²⁴ Within a year, however the two brothers were at war again.

The Portuguese chroniclers have failed to show convincing reasons as to why the quiescent period of 1528-1536 was followed by one of almost constant warfare between 1536 and 1539. The explanations given by the chroniclers centre on the intrigues of the *Samudri* of Calicut and the excessive ambition of Mayadunne. It is, however, more likely that the question of the succession to Kotte was a more cogent factor than both these.

According to the prevalent law of succession, Pararajasinha and Mayadunne were the heirs of their brother, Bhuvanekabahu. Pararajasinha, however, had repeatedly supported Mayadunne against his elder brother and did not seem likely to press his claims. In fact in the last few years of his life Pararajasinha seems to have abandoned the government of his kingdom to Mayadunne and settled at Mapitigama in the *Atulugam korale*, a part of Sitawaka.²⁵ Bhuvanekabahu's own health was none too robust and although he had two sons by a junior queen they were not considered eligible for succession. His only child by the chief queen was a daughter named Samudra devi. There was thus a real prospect that Mayadunne would succeed to the throne of Kotte, a prospect not viewed with equanimity by the nobility of the Kotte court, to say nothing of the Portuguese. There were those who wished to secure the throne of Kotte by marrying Samudra devi. Although direct evidence of such intrigue dates only from 1538 the schemes might have been in the air as early as 1536/7. Such a situation could well have provoked Mayadunne to pre-emptive action.

The succession question came into prominence during 1538. In that year Pararajasinha died and his lands were occupied by Mayadunne. Bhuvanekabahu did not contest the issue and indeed legitimised Mayadunne's occupation by making him a formal grant of Rayigama. This could well have been because the Kotte nobility was divided into factions on the question as to who should win the hand of Samudra devi. The eventual victor turned out

24. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 213-218, *JCBRAS XX*, pp. 75-77, 78-79, 91-98; *CALR*, IV, p.208-211.

25. *Alakeswarayuddhaya*, *op. cit.* pp. 32, 34.

to be Vidiye Bandara, a grandson of Sakalakalavalla. Vidiye, soon emerged as a powerful figure in the court and either, a little before or a shortly after his marriage, he had his chief rival, Jugo Bandara, assassinated. Mayadunne, sensing the threat to his position and hoping to profit by the division within Kotte took to the field in mid-1538.²⁶

Both Mayadunne and Bhuvanekabahu appealed for assistance from their allies in India. The *Samudri* responded first and by late 1538 a Calicut fleet of sixteen ships under Payichchi Marakkar was on its way to the island. The Malabar forces landed at Negombo and joined Mayadunne in investing the capital of Kotte. In fact the early 1539, despite a valiant campaign by Vidiye Bandara, Bhuvanekabahu had lost all his domains save the city of Kotte and a few ports.

Portuguese assistance was slower in arrival largely due to the diversion of their effort to protect Diu from Turkish attack. By February 1539, however, Miguel Ferreira had set out from Goa with a fleet of thirteen ships and three hundred and fifty Portuguese soldiers. Arriving off Colombo, Ferreira heard that the Kunjali fleet was at Negombo and immediately made a surprise attack on it and captured the whole fleet before the Calicut fighting force could return on board. Ferreira then sailed back to Colombo and burnt some of the captured vessels in full view of the populace. Mayadunne prudently abandoned the siege of Kotte and withdrew a few miles inland.²⁷

The destruction of the Calicut fleet at Negombo indicated that for once Mayadunne's intelligence sources in the Malabar coast had failed to give him adequate warning of the arrival of a Portuguese force. However, despite the defeat of his allies the king of Sitawaka seems to have decided to try his fortune in battle against the combined Kotte-Portuguese army. The decades of intermittent conflict with the Portuguese had taught the Sinhalese kings the value of firearms and the Sitawaka forces, assisted by renegade Portuguese and some Malabar Muslims, had equipped themselves with muskets and field artillery apart from the traditional Sinhalese weapons. The gap in military technology was narrowing. Thus the Kotte-Portuguese forces had to win two sanguinary battles, one at the stockade of Kaduwela and another further up the river, before the way to Sitawaka lay open and Mayadunne forced to sue for peace.

Bhuvanekabahu was ready for terms but Ferreira first requested for three hostages including Mayadunne's favourite son and then demanded

26. *Ibid* p. 23; Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 221-223; *JCBRAS* XX, pp. 99-100.

27. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 223-225; *JCBRAS* XX, pp. 100-105; *CALR* IV, pp. 210-211, 265-268; P. E. Pieris and M. A. Hedwig Fitzler, *editors, Ceylon and Portugal; kings and Christians, 1539-1552.* Leipzig, 1927. pp. 37-39.

that Payichchi Marakkar and nine other Kunjali leaders be handed over as a condition of peace. Mayadunne protested that the Portuguese "...ought to consider what a humiliation and shame it was for him to hand over the men who had come to help him..."²⁸ and offered to pay a large ransom instead, but Ferreira was adamant. The Sitawaka monarch finally had the Kunjalis killed and sent their heads to the Portuguese commander. This naturally meant the end of the Sitawaka-Calicut alliance for the *Samudri* never sent military assistance to Mayadunne again. The humiliation of the Sitawaka king was completed by making him return all his conquests and pay the expenses of the war.²⁹

One of the factors that have puzzled historians since the sixteenth century was the readiness of Bhuvanekabahu to agree to make peace with his brother even after the military situation had swung in Kotte's favour. The earlier Portuguese chroniclers were inclined to attribute this to the soft heartedness and brotherly feelings of Bhuvanekabahu. Miguel Ferreira was himself less charitable and attributed it to incompetence: "... The Emperor is an old man; and though up to certain age they are good councillors, he is past his time. His hands tremble, he lacks judgement and he talks idly like a boy..."³⁰ Writing a century and a half later de Queyroz did not entirely agree. Indeed, in a moment of insight the historians argued that Bhuvanekabahu might well have perceived the aggressive intentions of the Portuguese and wished to retain Mayadunne as a counter weight. Bhuvanekabahu, well aware of popular support for his brother and the difficulty of seeking him out in the highlands of Denawaka could not have relished the thought of a long drawn out campaign. There was always the possibility that the Kandyan monarch, intent on preserving the practical power he enjoyed since 1521, would intervene on behalf of Mayadunne simply to keep Kotte in turmoil. Finally, the anti-Portuguese stance of the Sitawaka ruler could eventually attract greater support for him even in Kotte, thus leaving Bhuvanekabahu in the position of a client of the Portuguese. Ferreira's master-stroke of demanding the Kunjali commanders as a price of peace had, however, altered the situation. Mayadunne, bereft of foreign assistance was much less of a threat and the Portuguese and Bhuvanekabahu could go ahead with their own plans for the succession of Kotte.

The marriage of Vidiye Bandara and Samudra devi in 1538 had resulted in the birth of a son in the same year. By late 1539 the decision had been made

28. Pieris and Fitzler *editors, op. cit.* p. 41.

29. *Ibid.* pp. 40-42; *JCBRAS* XX, pp. 105-107; *CALR* IV, pp. 269-273; Fernao de Queyroz *op. cit.* pp. 226-230.

30. Ferreira quoted by Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* p. 232.

31. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 226-227.

to name the infant Dharmapala Astana as heir to the kingdom of Kotte. Portuguese chroniclers and Ceylonese historians who followed them have generally attested that the initiative on this matter came from Bhuvanekabahu. On the other hand contemporary documents indicate that the Portuguese were as concerned, if not more so. The birth of Dharmapala was known in Lisbon in early 1539 and by November of that year the Portuguese king's wishes on this question of the Kotte succession were already in the hands of D. Estevao da Gama, Viceroy of India. As da Gama wrote back to the king on 11th November 1539, "... everything must be done to prevent it [the successor] being his brother who for a long time has been ill-disposed towards Your Highness and your people and it is possible that the grandson should be the one to succeed him, even though it should entail Your Highness keeping some men to assist him and maintain him in his power, it would seem to me very desirable..."³² The Portuguese Pastor in Kotte, Nuno Freyre de Andrade persuaded the Viceroy to send a supply of munitions to Kotte in late 1539 to keep the monarch and the nobles in good heart and it was probably on Portuguese persuasion that Bhuvanekabahu sent two trusted envoys to Lisbon in 1541 to have a gold statue of Dharmapala crowned by the king of Portugal as a token of Portuguese recognition of the prince as the heir to Kotte.³³

The envoys returned to the island in late 1543 after successfully accomplishing their mission but Bhuvanekabahu's problems were becoming increasingly complex. The people of Kotte were turning towards Mayadunne as their leader. In fact soon after Ferreira's force departed, Mayadunne won over many of the provincial chiefs of Kotte. By 1541 most lands and ports which owed nominal allegiance to Kotte were under the real control of Mayadunne and revenues from these areas flowed into the Sitawaka treasury.³⁴ The peace terms of 1539 were fast being eroded.

The drift away from Bhuvanekabahu was largely, if not wholly due to the conduct of his Portuguese allies. Tolerance of their highhanded acts diminished the stature of the king of Kotte. The Portuguese factors were notorious in this respect. While insisting on the higher tribute and the low purchase price of cinnamon as fixed in the contract of 1533, they continued to reject and burn all the cinnamon they did not wish to buy, thus violating another clause of the same agreement. They successfully claimed extra-territorial rights and exemption from customs duties for themselves and their subordinates and proceeded to abuse these concessions. Sinhalese subjects of Kotte were known

32. Pieris and Fitzler, *editors op. cit.* p. 47.

33. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 233-236; *JCBRAS* XX, pp. 118-119; *CALR* IV, p. 323.

34. *Ceylon sur des konigs Bhuvanekabahu and Franz Xaver*, 1539-1552. ed. by G. Schurhammer and E. A. Voretzch. Leipzig, 1928. p. 99.

to bribe the factor to be listed as one of his employees to avoid payment of fine for offences already committed.³⁵ The factor's agents were suspected of procuring exemption from customs duty for goods of many merchants by falsely claiming that the goods belonged to the Factor. Some Factors like Pero Vaz Travassos (-1539) were bold enough to openly insult Bhuvanekabahu himself.³⁶

While the Factor eroded the King's authority, Portuguese settlers enraged his subjects. Many of the thirty Portuguese settlers in the island engaged in trade. They granted advance payments to Sinhalese and sometimes entered in their accounts thrice or four times the amount actually given. When repayments by goods began, the goods were valued at low prices. As those who failed to pay their debts became slaves of their creditors according to Sinhalese custom, there were instances of Sinhalese being sold as slaves abroad. The Portuguese were also reported to have seized lands without proper title or by force of arms. Even those who legitimately purchased lands refused to make customary payments or render the services attached to the land. As resented was the Portuguese practice of forcibly cutting down trees in gardens belonging to local inhabitants to construct boats and ships for themselves. As many of these trees, especially coconut and jak, were valued for their produce, the resentment did not appreciably abate even when compensation was offered. Finally, there was the claim of Christian converts to be exempted from bondage, debts and service obligations after conversions. Stories of Portuguese misdeeds and violations of custom no doubt gained embellishments as they were passed along by word of mouth and the resentment they caused alienated many from the king of Kotte.

Bhuvanekabahu himself realized the harm done to him by his own allies and requested the king of Portugal to forbid these abuses. The Portuguese king did issue orders to this effect³⁷ but their enforcement was quite a different question. In fact, such orders from Lisbon were sometimes used by the Portuguese in Ceylon to further restrict the powers of the king of Kotte. For instance on 13 March 1543 the king of Portugal had laid down that ships could be built in Kotte only with the permission of the local king as well as that of the Portuguese governor of India. The order was aimed at preventing the king of Kotte being by-passed. By 1545 the order was being interpreted to mean that Bhuvanekabahu himself could not order any ship to be built in his kingdom without the concurrence of the Portuguese governor of India.³⁸

35. *Ibid.* pp. 99-103.

36. Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* p. 42; *CALR IV*, pp. 268, 273.

37. Schurhammer and Voretzch, *op. cit.* pp. 99-104, 113-118.

38. *Ibid.* p. 113. See also Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* pp. 42, 99, 168, 223 & 230.

Bhuvanekabahu's difficulties were further inhanced by the arrival of a group of Fransiscan missionaries in Kotte. Bhuvanekabahu himself was partly responsible for their arrival. Hearing that the Portuguese king, Joao III, set great store by his religion Bhuvanekabahu had instructed the envoys he sent to Lisbon to request for Christian missionaries to ensure that his own mission would be most favourably received. The envoys went a step further and indicated that the king of Kotte himself would be a willing convert. Thus it was that in late 1545 a group of four Fransiscans led by Joao de Villa de Conde arrived at Kotte. Bhuvanekabahu readily welcomed the missionaries and gave them permission to construct churches and preach in his kingdom. He offered to construct a monastery for them and granted the Fransiscans an annual income of 250 *pardaos*. As a special favour he decreed that Christians would be exempt from *marala* dues. However, he repudiated his envoy's promise of conversion.³⁹

The Franciscans were not satisfied. They wanted nothing less than the conversion of the monarch himself for they realized that without this their chances of success were slim. Fr. de Villa de Conde himself had several acrimonious disputes in court with leading Buddhist monks of Kotte in an effort to discredit them.⁴⁰ The Friar's harsh attacks on 'paganism' must have struck a discordant note in a society with a long tradition of religious toleration and before long he realized that there was little hope of converting the king.

The Portuguese Jesuit historian Fernao de Queyroz maintains that Bhuvanekabahu refused to change his religion chiefly because of political reasons.⁴¹ It is indoubtably true that conversion to Christianity would have lost Bhuvanekabahu what little support he retained among the Sinhalese. On the other hand in his correspondence with the Portuguese in Goa and Lisbon he never cited politics as the reason why he refused to accept Christianity. He stood squarely on his convictions. Writing to the Portuguese governor of India on 12 November 1545 he declared "... No one alike, great or small, calls anyone father save his own, and I am unable to believe in another God but only in my own..." Three years later he was as forthright in a letter addressed to the king of Portugal "... Your Governor wrote that you are displeased that I have not become a Christian as my ambassador promised in the *Regno* (Kingdom). But I did not say this and nor did your Highness write about that to me—only Fr. Joao de Villa de Conde does so. I wrote to him in reply that I would not follow a double course because there are in the world, your friendship and my

39. Schurhammer and Voretzch, *op. cit.* pp. 410-412.

40. Fernao de Queyroz *op. cit.* pp. 238-242, 258-261.

41. *Ibid.* p. 267.

God...'⁴² In fact the Bhuvanekabahu that emerges from contemporary documents is somewhat different from the weak and vacillating personality he is often depicted to have been.

In time Bhuvanekabahu became less favourable to Christian missionary activity. Many death-bed conversions were being made with the object of evading *marala*. Moreover, as the king of Kotte explained to the Portuguese governor of India "...they do not become Christians except when they kill another or rob him of his property or commit other offences of this nature which affect my crown and in their fear they become Christians and after they become that they are unwilling to pay me my dues and usual quit rents in consequence of which I am not so satisfied with their becoming Christians..."⁴³ Thus despite the embassy to Lisbon, the early 1540's were marked by a deterioration of relations between the Portuguese and the king of Kotte.

In this context it is not surprising that Bhuvanekabahu was favourably disposed towards overtures for an alliance with his brother, Mayadunne. The ostensible object of the proposed accord was the subjugation of the kingdom of Kandy, ruled by Jayavira the same king who had provided the brothers with assistance in 1521. There is no direct evidence as to why the two brothers considered going to war against their former benefactor. What we do know is that Jayavira had profited by the divisions with lowlands to make his kingdom virtually independent and that he had begun to seek Portuguese assistance in early 1542. It is possible that Jayavira's call for assistance might have been a response to a threat of attack from either Kotte or Sitawaka or both of them but this appears unlikely for there is no evidence of the lessening of Kotte-Sitawaka tension up to the end of 1542. It is therefore more likely that Jayavira had thought of obtaining the assistance of Portuguese forces to support him in a bid for complete independence and thereby provoked an immediate reaction from the rulers of the lowlands.⁴⁴

Whatever the order of events, the king of Sitawaka swiftly saw the danger of having a powerful kingdom of Kandy fortified with Portuguese support on his eastern borders. Before venturing on his own to attack Kandy, however, he sought the approval and assistance of his overlord and brother, the king of Kotte. Bhuvanekabahu was not at all displeased with a scheme by which his authority over the highlands would be restored. He also might have hoped that the task would divert the energies of his able brother away from Kotte. He therefore responded favourably to Mayadunne's overtures.

42. Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* pp. 89, 219.

43. *Ibid.* pp. 86-87.

44. Tikiri Abeyasinghe, *The politics of survival: Aspects of Kandyan external relations in the mid sixteenth century, JCBRAS, new series, XVII, 1973.* pp. 13-15; Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* pp. 74, 171.

Any doubts that Bhuvanekabahu had regarding his decision were probably dispelled by the events of 1543-1544. In response to Jayavira's appeals for aid in August 1542 an advance party of twenty to twenty five Portuguese from Negapatam arrived at Trincomalee in February 1543. The hostility of a local ruler to the Portuguese-Kandy alliance effectively prevented the soldiers from making their way to Kandy⁴⁵ but Bhuvanekabahu had received definite evidence that his Portuguese allies would not scruple to aid a rebel vassal against the king of Kotte.

In 1544 other developments further strained relations between the king of Kotte and the Portuguese. A Portuguese adventurer, Andre de Souza persuaded Jugo Bandara, one of Bhuvanekabahu's sons by a junior queen, to embrace Christianity to enhance his claims to the throne of Kotte. Bhuvanekabahu, hearing of this, had Jugo Bandara killed but de Souza made his way to India with Jugo Bandara's brother and son of Bhuvanekabahu's sister. These princes were baptised with the names of D. Luis and D. Joao respectively and until they died of small-pox at Goa in January 1546, Bhuvanekabahu had to face the possibility that the Portuguese might decide to replace himself and his grandson with either his son or his nephew.⁴⁶

But if Bhuvanekabahu's options were limited, those of Jayavira, king of Kandy, were even more so. After many years a king of the highlands was again confronted with the combined might of the south-west lowlands and on this occasion the numerical superiority of the forces of Kotte and Sitawaka was reinforced by their experience in and the possession of firearms.

Within Kandy itself there was a knotty problem relating to the succession. Jayavira had originally married Kirawalle Biso Bandara, the daughter of his own sister and Kirawalle Maha Ralahami and this marriage had resulted in one daughter and one son, the latter being known as Karaliyadde Bandara. After the death of first queen Jayavira had espoused a princess of the Gampola royal line and had one more son who is identified as Maha Astana, Kumarsingha Adahasin and Jayavira Bandara in various sources. By the 1540's Karaliyadde Bandara was recognized as the crown prince but he suspected that his stepmother was intriguing to have him supplanted by his step brother.⁴⁷ Karaliyadde was thus becoming increasingly disaffected.

45. Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* pp. 74-76.

46. *Ibid* pp. 96-97, 101; Georg Schurhammer, *Xaveriana*, Lisbon, 1964. p. 521.

47. *JCBRAS XX*, p. 133; T. Abeyasinghe, *op. cit.* p. 14; G. P. V. Somaratne, *op. cit.* pp. 200-201. *Alakesvarayuddhaya*, *op. cit.* p. 36; Paulo da Trindade, *Chapters on the introduction of Christianity to Ceylon taken from the Conquista Espiritual fo Oriente*; trans. and ed. by Edmund Pieris and Achilles Meersman. Colombo, 1972. pp. 74-75.

rous allowances to the Portuguese soldiers and granted a further 3000 *pardaos* to cover expenses and indeed even persuaded five of his chiefs to be baptised, he himself refused to make his conversion public until forces sufficient to alter the verdict of the previous war arrived from India.

Jayavira had sound political reasons for caution. His subjects were already disaffected and rumours of his conversion scarcely improved the situation. The Portuguese in Kandy were too few to assure him even the security of his throne. Moreover, they appeared dissatisfied with their rewards and were bickering among themselves.⁴⁹ They were also alienating the Kandyans by their unruly behaviour. As Andre de Souza himself reported "They are going about here quite out of control and utterly reckless..."⁵⁰ The king of Kandy himself, could not have been unaware of moves to convert his own son and place him on the Kandyan throne. Thus when Bhuvanekabahu alleged that the Portuguese were a set of brigands who had come to plunder and destroy, he found a ready ear in Jayavira.⁵¹

The development of a closer understanding between Kotte and Kandy isolated Sitawaka once more. In mid-1547 Mayadunne tried to alter that situation by joining up with the prince of the Seven Korales to attack Kandy but intelligence of the arrival of yet another Portuguese force to Kandy caused him to postpone his plans. This expedition led by Antonio Moniz Barreto was a result of Jayavira's appeals for aid in 1546 but it was late August or early September 1547 by the time the contingent of one hundred Portuguese soldiers arrived in Kandy. Jayavira's hour of need had passed. He therefore stiffened his terms. Christian missionary activity would be allowed in Kandy only when the Portuguese obtained "the kingdom of Mayadunne and all this island up to Jaffnapatam..." for him. The king himself refused to accept baptism until the Portuguese governor of India or the governor's son arrived in Kandy in person.

Negotiations between the Portuguese and the king of Kotte seems to have led to a compromise agreement but before this could be implemented a message from Bhuvanekabahu arrived in Kandy. In effect, the message threatened the end of the Kotte-Kandy *entente* unless the Portuguese were expelled from Kandy. This decided Jayavira, who mobilized his forces and requested the Portuguese to leave his kingdom through the port of Batticaloa on the eastern coast. Barreto, who had by this time come to completely distrust the

49. Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* pp. 141, 146, 177; *Documentaco para a historia dos missoes. do padroado Portuges do Oriente*; ed. by Antonio da Silva Rego. Lisbon, 1942-1958. Volume III, p. 413.

50. Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* p. 152.

51. *Ibid.* p. 181.

king immediately burnt his baggage, abandoned his artillery and withdrew along the shorter westward road to the coast through the Seven Korales.⁵² The first attempt at a Luso-Kandyan alliance had ended.

Meanwhile the ruler of Sitawaka had had time for reflection. The Kotte-Portuguese accord which had been a stumbling block in the 1530's seemed to have been replaced by an equally vexing Kotte-Kandy alliance. Mayadunne therefore turned to his erstwhile enemy, the Portuguese, in an attempt to alter the balance of forces. Barreto's retreating force were welcomed and fed by Sitawaka officials, in marked contrast to which the inhabitants of Kotte abandoned their villages and retreated to the forests on news of the approach of the retreating Portuguese. Barreto, convinced that his failure in Kandy was largely due to the influence of Bhuvanekabahu, proved receptive to Mayadunne's overtures and even met the king of Sitawaka personally. Mayadunne proposed a Portuguese alliance with Sitawaka against Kandy. He offered to pay the costs of the expedition and to share the treasure of the Kandyan king if the Portuguese sent two hundred soldiers for the campaign. He was even ready to pay tribute to Portugal. All Mayadunne wanted was to have his son installed as king in Kandy and permission to annex the Pitigal *korale* and the port of Chilaw (both of which belonged to Kotte) to Sitawaka. Barreto agreed to take Mayadunne's envoys to Goa for further negotiations.⁵³

It did not take long before the monarchs of Kotte and Kandy woke up to the danger of their position. The king of Kotte paid twenty five *pardaos* each to the Portuguese soldiers who had been to Kandy for losses they had suffered and offered Barreto a further 10,000 *pardaos* if only he would submit a report more favourable to Kandy and Kotte at Goa. The king of Kandy in his turn, sent down the artillery left behind by Barreto. But Barreto spurned the offer of money and anti-Bhuvanekabahu sentiment was further inflamed both by disappointed missionaries who found the work of conversion increasingly difficult and by the Portuguese settlers of Colombo who resented having to pay the customs dues of Kotte.⁵⁴

Bhuvanekabahu, however, sent his own emissaries to Goa. He denied impeding conversion in Kotte. Fortunately for him the energetic Portuguese governor, Don Joao de Castro died on 6 June 1548 and his elderly successor Garcia de Sa rested content with writing letters of admonition to the King of Kotte. Bhuvanekabahu, meanwhile, tactfully suggested that he was in no hurry about the repayment of loans he had made to the Portuguese state

52. *Ibid.* pp.197-204, 207; *JCBRAS XX*, pp. 126-128, 131.

53. Pieris and Fitzler, *op cit.* pp. 210-211, 214.

54. *Ibid.* pp. 214, 216.

Nevertheless the Portuguese commitment to defend Kotte was in doubt for quite some time. For instance, Jorge Cabral, de Sa's successor as governor, threatened to support Mayadunne when Bhuvanekabahu rejected a Portuguese request for a loan of a further 30,000 *cruzados* although the king of Kotte had continued to pay tribute quite regularly.

Mayadunne was not unaware of the situation. Around May 1549 he gathered his forces and attacked Kotte. Bhuvanekabahu's forces were speedily cooped up in the environs of Kotte city. Bhuvanekabahu hurriedly collected what funds he had and sent them to Goa through Cabral's uncle, Don Jorge de Castro. De Castro's mission was successful but since it was January 1550 by the time he set sail with a force of six hundred Portuguese from Goa, the Kotte forces were shut up in the capital city for the rest of 1549.⁵⁵

Once the Portuguese reinforcement arrived, however, Mayadunne raised the siege of Kotte. By about March 1550 the Kotte-Portuguese army took offensive and stormed up the Kelani Valley capturing the forts built by Sitawaka forces on the way and then defeated Mayadunne decisively at Nawagamuwa. The capital city of Sitawaka was captured and sacked though the temples were spared due to Bhuvanekabahu's express wishes. Mayadunne retired further inland to Batugedera in Denawaka.⁵⁶ At this stage there arose a difference of opinion between the allies as to what should be done. Now that Mayadunne was defeated and suing for peace the Portuguese wanted to settle with him and turn to Kandy to avenge the humiliation of 1547. The clergy were particularly keen on this for news had arrived that Karaliyadde Bandara had risen in open revolt against his father in Uva. The chance of setting up the first Christian monarch in the island seemed too good to miss especially as it conveniently coincided with revenge against Jayavira. Bhuvanekabahu viewed the prospect of a Portuguese invasion of Kandy with alarm. He, as an ally of the Portuguese, could hardly refuse support. Yet in participating in such a venture he would subvert the Kandy-Kotte alliance which had been a cornerstone of Kotte policy since 1546. Continuation of the campaign against Mayadunne would have given Bhuvanekabahu more time to manoeuvre. Furthermore Mayadunne's almost successful bid for Portuguese support during the years 1547-1549 might well have led the king of Kotte to regard him too dangerous a rival to tolerate for long.

But, as it often happened, it was the Portuguese who had their way. Bhuvanekabahu was forced to make peace with his brother and to join in on an attack on king Jayavira of Kandy. The invasion resulted in disaster. The

55. *Ceylon Literary Register*, Third series IV, pp. 430-431.

56. *JCBRAS* XX, pp. 132-139; Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* pp. 235-236, 246.

combined army was allowed to approach within striking distance of Kandy but then it was set upon by the Kandyans. Over a third of the Portuguese force was killed in battle. The Kotte army also lost heavily. All the heavy arms and baggage was lost. The campaign had immediate consequences. In Kandy, Karaliyadde speedily reconciled himself with his father. In Kotte, Mayadunne once more gained the initiative. In fact the worst loser was Bhuvanekabahu. It was his money that had financed the expedition, the major result of which was the loss of an ally. Indeed, even the Portuguese, unable to credit their own defeat, charged him with treachery.⁵⁷

Mutual recrimination was thus the order of the day when the new Portuguese viceroy of India, Dom Affonso de Noronha, arrived at Colombo on 17th October 1550 due to an error in navigation on his way to India. The Viceroy was influenced against the king of Kotte by the reports of both Franciscan Friar Fr. Joao de Villa de Conde and de Noronha's own nephew, Diogo de Noronha who were in Mayadunne's camp.⁵⁸ According to de Queyroz he was also displeased because Bhuvanekabahu did not come promptly to see him. De Queyroz relates that when they met the viceroy's accusations so incensed the old king that he ordered him out of the kingdom and that de Noronha having but scanty forces in poor condition had no option but to leave, "keeping this insult in mind to avenge it for a better occasion".⁵⁹ Whatever be the truth of this story it is certain that relations between the two were not cordial. The viceroy requested a loan of 100,000 *xerafins* that was refused by the king of Kotte. Moreover, de Noronha did receive Mayadunne's son and heir as an envoy on board his fleet, accepted Sitawaka as a Portuguese vassal state and agreed to take envoys from both Sitawaka and Kotte to take a fresh look at the question of the disputed succession of Kotte. The viceroy was also attracted by the idea of an alliance with Mayadunne against Kandy.⁶⁰

Scarcely five months after the departure of the viceroy, Bhuvanekabahu was shot dead by a Portuguese soldier. Fighting between Kotte and Sitawaka had re-opened by the end of 1550 and Vidiye Bandara was defending the frontier against Mayadunne with some success when Bhuvanekabahu accompanied by the Portuguese Factor Gaspar d'Azevedo and a Portuguese bodyguard went to his palace at Kelaniya.⁶¹ One day "... while the Portuguese were in

57. *JCBRAS* XX, pp. 139-144; Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* pp. 236-238, 248-249.

58. *CALR* IV, p. 432.

59. Fernao de Queyroz *op. cit.* pp. 288-290.

60. Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* pp. 238-40.

61. *Ibid.* p. 258.

a very large verandah eating, he [the king] came to a window on the outer wall to see them and while there a firelock shot struck him in the head so that he immediately fell dead..."⁶²

Controversies have ranged since the sixteenth century on the responsibility for Bhuvanekabahu's death. Diogo de Conto's version, also given in the *Rajavaliya* is the most implausible of several explanations advanced "...one Antonio de Barcelos many years afterwards... told that...it was he who killed the king of Cota by pure accident while shooting at a pigeon..."⁶³. The viceroy de Noronha reported that Mayadunne was said to have bribed someone to kill his brother and that the king of Kotte though warned by both the Portuguese factor and the queen refused to take precautions and was killed.⁶⁴ Nevertheless a review of the evidence points the finger of suspicion to the Portuguese in general and to viceroy de Noronha in particular. The king was, after all, shot by a Portuguese soldier and if de Queyroz is to be believed this soldier, Antonio de Barcelos was a slave left behind by the viceroy. No inquiry or attempt to find who was responsible was made by Gaspar de Azevedo, the Portuguese factor, the suspicion grows when one finds that de Noronha had left the factor detailed instructions as to what should be done in case Bhuvanekabahu died. Certainly there was widespread contemporary belief that the Portuguese had killed the king.⁶⁵ The Mestres of Goa wrote to king Joao III on 25 November 1552 "... they [the Portuguese] killed the king of Ceyllam and robbed his treasure..... This is certain *Senhor* and the Moors are talking of nothing else..."⁶⁶ To the Portuguese Bhuvanekabahu had outlived his usefulness and his grandson, the twelve year old Dharmapala, educated by the Franciscans was probably seen as a more pliant instrument.

The tragic death of Bhuvanekabahu was mourned all over Kotte, even by the Sinhalese who were critical of his policies. As a mild and liberal ruler he had won the regard of many of his subjects despite the unpopular alliance with the Portuguese. Bhuvanekabahu was certainly less able and energetic than his brother. Nevertheless he was not as lacking in wit, intelligence and resolution as some contemporary Portuguese (and the historians who follow them) make him appear to be. Once when Antonio Moniz Barreto was eloquently describing the pains of hellfire in an effort to convert the King, Bhuvanekabahu gently asked him whether Barreto himself had actually experienced them; a question which provoked the Portuguese soldier to rise in great anger

62. *JCBRAS* XX, pp. 146-147.

63. *Ibid.* p. 148.

64. Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* pp. 258.

65. *Ibid.* pp. 256-257.

66. *Ibid.* pp. 283.

dash his bonnet on the floor and walk out of the reception chamber.⁶⁷ To the end of his reign Bhuvanekabahu managed to obtain Portuguese assistance regularly against his brother, despite Mayadunne's best efforts and to his credit Bhuvanekabahu unlike Jayavira of Kandy did not think his kingdom "well worth a Mass".⁶⁸

The death of Bhuvanekabahu brought the question of succession to a head. Mayadunne proclaimed himself king of Kotte and advanced down the Kelani River. The Portuguese and the Kotte nobility in the other hand, acclaimed Dharmapala as king with his father, Vidiye Bandara, Regent. Vidiye Bandara was able to repulse the Sitawaka forces and drive them back from Kotte. The viceroy de Noronha, hearing of these developments set out for Sri Lanka from Goa in September 1551 with a large fleet and three thousand Portuguese soldiers.

De Noronha's army was the largest Portuguese force ever to land in the island but his primary ambition does not seem to have been to capture Sri Lanka but rather to seize the Kotte king's treasure. Bhuvanekabahu's frequent loans to the Portuguese had fostered a legend of his riches, riches that de Noronha considered well worth seizing to finance his own schemes for the expansion of Portuguese power in India. On arrival at Colombo therefore the Viceroy declared that Dharmapala's accession to the throne was invalid as he had not accepted Christianity. When it was pointed out to him that it was hardly a politic moment for conversion for the Sinhalese Buddhists were already going over to Mayadunne in great numbers, he agreed to defer it until Mayadunne's power was eliminated on condition that the privileges that the Christians had hitherto enjoyed in Kotte were maintained and the late king's treasure handed over to the Portuguese. De Noronha was, however, disappointed at the quantity of treasure eventually delivered. In effort to gain more he had several chieftains and attendants tortured and he eventually persuaded Vidiye Bandara to share in the plunder of the rich royal temple of Kotte. Finally, the delivery of a further 80,000 *xerafins* and the promise of another 120,000 *xerafins* later induced de Noronha to take the field against Mayadunne.

De Noronha's Portuguese forces were accompanied by a much dwindled Kotte army of 4000 men. They advanced along the Kelani both on land and in rowing vessels destroying several stockades on the way and defeated Mayadunne in a battle before Sitawaka city. The city itself was captured and sacked by the Portuguese contingent of the army and Mayadunne fled to Deraniyagala. De Noronha realized that a difficult campaign in mountainous country

67. Fernao de Queyroz *op. cit.* p. 272.

68. T. Abeyasinghe, *op. cit.* p. 15.

lay ahead especially because Jayavira of Kandy was likely to give refuge and assistance to Mayadunne and demanded the rest of the money promised. Since Vidiye Bandara was unable to comply the viceroy abandoned the campaign, returned to Colombo and embarked for India. However, he left behind a force of 400 Portuguese soldiers and 10 rowing vessels to defend the domains of Kotte.⁶⁹ Even from the Portuguese point of view, apart from the seizure of the Kotte King's treasure, de Noronha's expedition was singularly devoid of positive results.

The decade ending in 1557 had been one in which political alignments in Ceylon south of Jaffna had changed with almost bewildering rapidity. The four main protagonists, Kotte, Kandy, Sitawaka and the Portuguese had aligned and re-aligned themselves with one or more of the others in an effort to gain advantages in the balance of power but at the end of a decade of strife there was no radical alteration of the situation. The power of Sitawaka which had spread over Rayigama in the 1530's and gained *de facto* control of part of Kotte seemed to have been kept in check by periodic Portuguese assistance to the Kotte sovereign. The balance of power within Kotte itself had altered in favour of the Portuguese but they were more unpopular than even with the bulk of the inhabitants of the kingdom. Kandy remained a vassal state in theory but continued to enjoy virtual independence. By 1551 the pattern of conflict had also reverted to that of 1536-1539; a Kotte-Portuguese alliance against Sitawaka with Kandy sitting on the wings.

But the picture was to alter decisively in the 1550's. In the first place there was a change of monarch in the highlands. The aging Jayavira had been more inclined to view Mayadunne favourably after the Portuguese attack on his domains in 1550. In late 1551, however, his elder son, Karaliyadde Bandara raised the standard of revolt once more, seized and executed his rival step-brother and expelled his father from Kandy. Jayavira Bandara found refuge in Sitawaka. The resultant clash between Mayadunne and Karaliyadde was indecisive but from then on Sitawaka in its struggle against the Portuguese had always to take into account the presence of a hostile Kandy on its flank.⁷⁰

The developments in Kandy, however, were more than counter-balanced by those in Kotte. After the death of Bhuvanekabahu the Portuguese unabashedly went ahead with their project of converting the kingdom into a Roman Catholic client state. Two measures were taken early in to achieve their result. In the first place the missionary effort were stepped up in the churches at

69. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 299-305; *JCBRAS* XX, pp. 146-154; Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* pp. 262-273.

70. *Alakeshvarayuddhaya*, *op. cit.* p. 36; Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 314, 704; Paulo da Triniteade, *op. cit.* p. 75.

Negombo, Kotte, Colombo, Panadura, Maggona, Beruwala, Galle and Weligama. Some twenty five thousand converts were claimed in the early 1550's.⁷¹ Secondly steps were taken to eliminate the power of Vidiye Bandara who was viewed by the Portuguese as the only threat to their undisputed control over the youthful Dharmapala.

It was the second measure that boomeranged. Vidiye, who had diplomatically left Kotte to spend some time with his cousin, the Prince of the Seven Korales was enticed back by a request from his son and immediately imprisoned. Not even Vidiye Bandara's ready conversion to Christianity in late 1552 served to reduce the rigour of his confinement. Bitter at the treatment given to him Vidiye Bandara escaped from prison in 1553 and launched an anti-Portuguese and anti-Christian crusade which immediately struck a responsive chord among the people of Kotte. Mayadunne, himself, sent a contingent of six hundred men to assist him and Vidiye seized the whole coastal belt south of Colombo, destroyed all churches in that area and established his headquarters at Palenda. By 1554 he was strong enough to launch attacks on Kotte city itself. In the north his ally, the Prince of the Seven Korales seems to have been as successful. Dharmapala's kingdom was swiftly reduced to an area round Kotte and Colombo.

The Portuguese, now in dire straits, turned to Mayadunne for assistance. The king of Sitawaka proved receptive to the idea of an alliance against Vidiye Bandara. Mayadunne had found that despite the assistance he provided, Vidiye Bandara did not recognize him as the legitimate ruler of Kotte but rather considered himself as regent on behalf of Dharmapala. Vidiye also refused to assist Mayadunne in his campaigns against Karaliyadde Bandara. The king of Sitawaka, well aware of Vidiye's prowess in the field of battle had ample reason to fear his rapid success in Kotte.⁷²

The Sitawaka-Portuguese alliance of 1555, however, reflected the politico-military realities of the day. It was the Portuguese who were in need of assistance and they had to make extensive concessions to detach Mayadunne from Vidiye Bandara. According to the agreement given in de Queyroz Dharmapala's kingdom was henceforth to be confined to a coastal strip from Colombo to Welitota together with the Salpiti and Rayigam korales. The rest of Kotte was to go to Sitawaka in exchange for which Mayadunne agreed to be a Portuguese vassal and pay the traditional tribute in cinnamon. Three key nobles in Kotte who were regarded as hostile to Mayadunne were to be arrested and tried by the Portuguese ostensibly for being in league with Vidiye Bandara.⁷³

71. *JCBNAS XX*, p. 124; Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* p. 278.

72. *JCBRAS XX*, pp. 157-159, 161; Fernao de Queyroz, *ip. cit.* pp. 306-318.

73. Fernao de Queyroz *op. cit.* pp. 318-319; *Alakeshvarayuddhaya*, *op. cit.* p. 37; C. R. de Silva, Lancarote de Seixas and Madampe, *op. cit.* p. 28.

Vidiye Bandara's forces were no match for the Sitawaka veterans commanded by Wickramasinha *mudali*. The Sitawaka army seized the stockade built at Molkawa in the Pasdun *korale* and then, reinforced by three hundred Portuguese soldiers, decisively defeated Vidiye Bandara at Palenda. Vidiye retired southwards with his depleted forces and found refuge in the Kandyan kingdom whose monarch had been at war with Mayadunne since 1552, but his efforts to invade Sitawaka and establish himself in the lowlands once more failed so completely that the Kandyan king accepted the offer of a separate peace from Mayadunne and expelled Vidiye from his kingdom. Vidiye's final effort to re-coup his fortunes from the Seven Korales also ended in defeat and with his flight and ultimate death in Jaffna the Sitawaka forces occupied the Seven Korales and Pitigal *korale* assigned to them by the treaty of 1555. Sitawaka had by now emerged as the largest and strongest kingdom in the island.⁷⁴

The revolt of Vidiye and the concurrent rise of Sitawaka power did not deter the Portuguese from their ambitions in Kotte. Churches in the coastal districts were rebuilt in 1556 and sizeable numbers of Sinhalese, especially from the *karava* caste were baptised.⁷⁵ Conversions were valued partly because they gave the Portuguese a local base of support but as many converts tended to fall away in times of adversity the Portuguese had to rely largely on their own armed forces. In this respect their position was somewhat strengthened after the construction of a new fort at Colombo on the orders of Viceroy Affonso de Noronha. As the viceroy explained to his sovereign on 16 January 1551 "... once the fort is built it will be possible to interfere in the government of the country and with its kings and to increase the tribute paid to you and to secure there a revenue which will maintain the fort and its expenses..."⁷⁶

The defeat of Vidiye encouraged the Portuguese to prevail on king Dharmapala to announce his conversion to Christianity in early 1557.⁷⁷ On embracing his new religion the eighteen year old monarch not only adopted the Portuguese name Dom Joao, but also took the unprecedented step of confiscating all temple lands and gifting them to the Franciscans. The temple of the Tooth (*Daladūge*) of Kotte and the well-endowed Maha Vihara of Kelaniya were immediately handed over to the missionaries.⁷⁸ Such a step did not go unchallenged. In Kotte city itself a group of Buddhist monks led by Rev.

74. *JCBRAS XX*, pp. 170-177; Fernao de Queyroz *op. cit.* pp. 318-325; *Alakeshvarayudhaya, op. cit.* pp. 37-40.

75. Fernao de Queyroz *op. cit.* p. 296; *ANTT, Maunscritos do convento da Graça*, Tomo III, caixa 15, p. 376.

76. Pieris and Fitzler, *op. cit.* p. 240.

77. *JCBRAS XX*, pp. 171-172; *Documentacao para a historia das missoes, op. cit.* Vol. VII, p. 361. *Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon*, 49-V-50. Luis Frois to the College of Goa, 24 January, 1559.

78. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 330-331.

Buddhavamsa roused the people who attacked the king's bodyguard with sticks and stones. The riot was quelled only after Portuguese reinforcements arrived from Colombo and in retaliation thirty Buddhist monks were seized and put to death.⁷⁹ From then on Dharmapala became dependent solely upon the Portuguese and a small minority of Christian converts in Kotte.

It did not take long before Sitawaka and Kotte were once again at war. The evidence in the *Rajavaliya* suggests that the conflict might have arisen to the efforts of Kotte to seize the Matara *disava* while the main Sitawaka force were pursuing Vidiye Bandara from the Seven Korales. Mayadunne was in no mood to tolerate this breach of the treaty of 1555. He sent a strong force under Kirawalle Obberiyē Ralahamy to drive out the Kotte forces which were led by Manamperi *mudali*. The presence of a strong Portuguese contingent in the Kotte army enabled them to fight a drawn battle at Denipitiya and retreat in orderly fashion to Matara but with the arrival of reinforcements from Sitawaka under Danture Ekanayake *mudali* the whole of the southwestern coast up to the environs of Colombo fell into the hands of Mayadunne.⁸⁰

There is little doubt that warfare would have resumed even if the Portuguese had not made a pre-emptive strike. The 1555 had not been regarded by either party as a lasting settlement and there was widespread feeling that with his conversion to Christianity Dharmapala had forfeited whatever claims he might have had to kingship. Mayadunne could now appear as the champion of the Sinhalese and of Buddhism over foreign and Christian influence. In November 1557 a large Sitawaka force, estimated at 50,000 by de Queyroz, marched westwards towards Kotte to eliminate the last strongholds of Dharmapala's kingdom on the lower reaches of the Kelani.⁸¹

The task proved to be somewhat more difficult than Mayadunne anticipated. In the first place the Sinhalese forces of Kotte had but a few square miles of territory to defend and had the advantage of interior lines of communication. Thus though their numbers were small and declining—from perhaps eight thousand in 1557 to less than a tenth of that number by 1560—they were able to fight defensive actions and withdraw within the fortified cities of Kotte and Colombo. Moreover, the Kotte army was regularly reinforced by considerable numbers of Portuguese soldiers. For instance, in 1557 three hundred men arrived with Affonso Pereyra de Lacerda, the new Captain of Colombo and two years later two hundred Portuguese accompanied his successor Dom Jorge de Menezes. Smaller contingents of Portuguese with arms, ammunition

79. *Ibid.* pp. 335-338.

80. *Alakeshvarayuddhaya*, *op. cit.* p. 41.

81. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 335, 339.

and food supplies arrived at various times between October and April each year. Although some Portuguese soldiers returned to India after serving for a period in Kotte, the inflow was sufficient to maintain Portuguese strength despite a high casualty rate.⁸² The technical skills brought in by the Portuguese proved to be as useful as their arms and their tenacity as fighting men. Their wide experience in fort building and siege warfare dating from their campaigns against the Moors in the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa in the European Middle Ages helped to strengthen the fortifications of Kotte while artillery from Portuguese ships defended both Kotte and Colombo. Even the Portuguese naval expertise was put to use not only in obtaining reinforcements when hard pressed but in the actual battle field. Light vessels armed with artillery accompanied Portuguese forces marching along the banks of the Kelani river and similar vessels on the Kotte lake helped in the defence of the capital city.⁸³

On the other hand, the Sitawaka forces, though much larger in number and well supplied with muskets and small cannon had relatively little experience in siege warfare and still had a majority of the soldiers armed with bows, spears and swords. At least in the initial stages they missed the expertise which had been supplied by the *Samudri's* forces in the late 1530's. Neither did they possess cannon sufficiently large to batter down the walls of Kotte and Colombo and in the first few years they were inhibited in their siege of Kotte by the presence of strong Portuguese forces in Colombo. Moreover, at least in the first few years Sitawaka seems to have had difficulty in maintaining its huge army in the field of considerable lengths of time. Though the number of 50,000 given in de Queyroz was almost certainly an over-estimate, the maintenance of even half that number in battle readiness must have taxed the administrative and economic resources of Mayadunne's kingdom. On occasion the Kotte forces were able to surprise their enemies while they were fishing or hunting and they could always hope for a relaxation of pressure during the ploughing and harvesting seasons.⁸⁴

The campaign of the late 1550's and early 1560's also brought to the fore the military skill of Tikiri Bandara, Mayadunne's youngest son. Tikiri Bandara had, of course, seen battle before. While hardly sixteen years of age he had been the nominal commander of the army that defeated Vidiye Bandara at Palenda and had been known by the name of Rajasinha since that victory. He had also participated in the campaigns that drove Vidiye out of the Four and Seven Korales but it was in the campaigns of 1557-1565 that he established himself as a commander of courage and ability. He was fortunate in having able ins-

82. *Ibid.* pp. 338, 339, 396; *JCBRAS* XX, p. 205.

83. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 339, 341, 345.

84. *Ibid.* p. 345.

fructors in the experienced commanders of the Sitawaka forces, notably Wickremesinghe *mudali* and Danture Ekanayake *mudali*, both of whom had already made their repute in earlier conflicts.

Signs of a long struggle were evident from early on. The Sitawaka forces besieged Kotte from November 1557 to November 1558 without success and from then on built a series of stockades along the Kelani Valley to keep the Portuguese penned in within a small area. The Portuguese effort to break through these barriers in 1559 failed decisively for although they seized two stockades at Kelaniya, they were repulsed at Mapitigama and lost a pitched battle in the same area soon after. By 1560, the initiative appeared to have passed to the Sitawaka forces. They were able to camp within striking distance of both Colombo and Kotte and to switch their attacks from one to the other as they wished. They also impeded communications between the two ports. Even more effective was their tactic of devastating the villages that still owed allegiance to Dharmapala. In 1560 the villages of Wattala, Peliyagoda, Telangipata, Mutwal and Weragoda were pillaged. This struck at the heart of Kotte's military power for the area round Colombo and Kotte had become its sole recruiting ground for Sinhalese forces. The Portuguese were thus forced to venture out of their forts to try to protect the villages; an effort which ultimately ended in disaster.

In July 1562, the Portuguese heard that a small Sitawaka force under Ekanayake *mudali* was attacking villages under Kotte rule. The captain of Colombo marched out with 250 Portuguese and 800 Sinhalese to protect the villages of Mulleriyawa and Kolonnawa but when the Portuguese committed their troops to battle at Mulleriyawa, Rajasinha brought up the main Sitawaka army and surrounded them in such a manner that almost all the Sinhalese and half the Portuguese in the Kotte army were killed before the remnants secured their retreat to the capital.⁸⁵

The battle of Mulleriyawa gained great prestige for Rajasinha. After the date both in Portuguese and in Sinhalese sources Mayadunne recedes to the background and Rajasinha appears as the *de facto* ruler of Sitawaka. His eldest brother had already died and the only other brother, Timbiripola, though he is mentioned in campaigns from time to time appears to have lacked the vigour and military skill of Rajasinha.

The battle also demonstrated the value of a trained war elephant corps against Portuguese musket men in open battle. Although the use of war elephants against fortified cities was less successful, the formidable corps of 200 war elephants developed by Rajasinha soon after, made his army very difficult

85. *Ibid.* pp. 338-350, 396-409; *JCBRAS* XX, pp. 205-209.

to match on level ground. The Kotte Sinhalese army had been decimated and the Portuguese were left holding on to Kotte and Colombo with great difficulty. Indeed, when reinforcements failed to arrive from Goa in September-October 1563, the fall of Kotte seemed imminent. Dharmapala and the Portuguese were, however, spared this disaster partly by assistance sent directly from the newly established fort of Mannar and partly by the intervention of Karaliyadde Bandara, the king of Kandy.

Karaliyadde had been watching the rise in the power of Sitawaka since 1557 with some trepidation. He doubtless felt that once the Portuguese were dealt with, his turn would soon follow and was thus inclined to renew his old contacts. His doubts regarding the ability of the Portuguese to assist him were partly resolved with the construction of the fort at Mannar in 1560. Sometime between 1562 and 1564 therefore Karaliyadde embraced Christianity and obtained a force of Portuguese soldiers to assist him against Sitawaka. In 1564 when the Portuguese were hard pressed by Rajasinha, the Kandyan king sent a force of 5000 Sinhalese and thirty Portuguese to raid the Seven Korales. This army marched up to Chilaw and burnt the port but failed to divert Rajasinha from Kotte.⁸⁶

Kotte held out in 1564 but the war of attrition was taking a toll of the limited Portuguese manpower in Asia. Since there did not appear to be any immediate prospect of the reconquest of Kotte the Portuguese viceroy Antao de Noronha ordered that Kotte city be abandoned and all forces concentrated in Colombo. Despite great opposition from Dharmapala and his Sinhalese followers this order was carried out in July 1565.⁸⁷

The abandonment of Kotte damaged Portuguese prestige in the island but it was a tactically wise decision. No longer burdened with the defence of Kotte city the Portuguese were able to adopt the former Sitawaka tactic of harrying the villages in enemy territory. Thus the years after 1565 saw Portuguese attacks on Attidiya, Gorakana, Kalubowila, Panadura, Moratuwa, Kolonnawa, Peliyagoda, Telangipata, Mattumagala and Hendala. When the Sinhalese built stockades to protect their lands the Portuguese either launched surprise attacks on them or used their command of the sea to outflank them. Denied power in Kotte the Portuguese tried to utilize their command of the sea to establish new centres of influence. A proposal to build a fort in Galle

86. *JCBRAS* XX, pp. 215-235; Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 409-420; C. R. Boxer, Dom Jorge de Menezes Baroche and the battle of Mulleriyawa, 1560, *Mare Luso Indicum*, Vol. III, 1976, pp. 85-97.

87. *Asgavetas da Torre do Tombo*, Lisbon, 1960 +, Vol. II, p. 710; *JCBRAS*, XX, pp. 236-242; Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 420-421.

was not put into effect but sometime between 1571 and 1582, the Portuguese began to obtain regular tribute from the chieftains of Trincomalee and Batticaloa. The *vanni* chief of Puttalam was also a tributary by 1582.⁸⁸

The ruler of Sitawaka seems to have used the period that followed the abandonment of Kotte to re-organize the kingdom. The vast stretches of land that fell into Sitawaka hands in the late 1550's had to be assessed for revenue and the areas depopulated by war had to be taken note of. The Portuguese revenue register of 1599 records that the dues collected from the *korales* were raised "in the time of Raju". If by this phrase is meant not merely the actual reign of Rajasinha (1581-1592) but the period of his rule, the revenue reforms may well date to this period. Rajasinha was also the first Sinhalese ruler to successfully exploit the revenue potential of cinnamon. He had the cinnamon collected and sold it from royal warehouses to traders at market prices. He is even credited to have followed the Portuguese practice of burning excess cinnamon to keep price high. The rise in the price of cinnamon was quite spectacular. In the second decade of the sixteenth century the Portuguese had purchased cinnamon in Kotte at about 133 *reis* per *quintal*. In the 1530's the official price was somewhere between 266 *reis* and 400 *reis* per *quintal*. In the period between November 1564 and March 1575 the lowest price at which the Portuguese obtained the product was 1980 *reis* per *quintal*. Often it was up to four or five thousand *reis* for the *quintal* and on rare occasions even double this price. Cinnamon had become a key source of revenue to the king of Sitawaka.⁸⁹

Despite the virtual limitation of Sitawaka activity to defensive operations in the period 1565-1573, the Portuguese did not relent. They spurned any suggestion of a truce and in 1574 after the death of Dharmapala's first queen, they obtained for him a Kandyan princess whose hand had already been sought for by Rajasinha. This insult provoked a Sitawaka attack on Kandy in 1574 but on the news of the reduction of Sitawaka troop strength round Colombo due to the Kandyan campaign, the Portuguese under Diago de Mello Coutinho went on to the offensive. The Sinhalese stockades at Kelaniya and Kaduwela were destroyed by raiding parties and though these were soon rebuilt Coutinho utilized his sea-power to attack the ports and coastal settlements under Sitawaka rule. Particular efforts were made to inhibit the growing trade of Sitawaka and ships sailing from Sitawaka—controlled ports were attacked at sight. Between 1574 and 1576 Negombo, Kammala and Alutgama were attacked and sacked thrice. Other ports that felt Portuguese wrath included Chilaw, Kalutara, Maggona, Beruwala, Alutgama and Chilaw. In the course of these

88. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* p. 422; T. Abeyasinghe, *editor and translator, Portuguese regimentos on Sri Lanka*, Colombo, 1976. pp. 8-9.

89. C. R. de Silva, *CJHSS*, new series, Vol. II, pp. 21-22, 24; C. R. de Silva, *CJHSS*, new series, Vol. V, p. 98.

years the Portuguese also destroyed the Raja Maha Vihara of Kelaniya, the viharas of Negombo, Salpe, Alutgama and Rayigama and the Hindu temple at Munneswaram.⁹⁰

The Sitawaka forces were handicapped by the war on two fronts. By the 1570's the Sitawaka army was capable of defeating either the Kandyan or the Portuguese contingent in Sri Lanka or even a combination of the two in open battle. But open battle was the one thing it was difficult to obtain and Sitawaka did not appear to have sufficient resources to mount a successful attack across difficult terrain on the Kandyan kingdom while simultaneously providing adequate protection for its own ports. This was partly because Sitawaka did not possess a defensible natural frontier either on the west or the east. Efforts by Rajasinha to wed a Kandyan princess in the period 1569-1573 and the Sitawaka decision to open its ports to Portuguese traders around 1576-1577⁹¹ could be regarded as attempts to disrupt the effective Luso-Kandyan *entente*. Both efforts ended in failure.

The familiar pattern of conflict thus continued in 1577-1578. The Portuguese raided Negombo and Chilaw in August 1577 and Kalutara, Beruwala and Alutgama in early 1578. In the latter year, however, Sitawaka decided to concentrate on its Kandyan opponent and launched an attack that resulted in the capture of the key position of Balana, a scant twelve miles from the Kandyan capital. The highland kingdom, however, was saved by Portuguese intervention. Seaborne Portuguese forces promptly attacked Chilaw, Madampe, Negombo, Kammala, Kalutara, Alutgama, Welitota, Maggona, Beruwala and Gintota forcing the retention of numbers of Sitawaka soldiers to defend coastal settlements. A hundred and fifty Portuguese soldiers made their way to Kandy to stiffen the *Udarata* army. The Kandyan defence held and Rajasinha was thwarted once more.⁹²

In 1579 Sitawaka switched its main effort towards the Portuguese. In April that year the main Sitawaka army of about 25,000 fightingmen with a formidable elephant corps and some artillery began moving towards Colombo. By June the fort was closely invested and the siege lasted till February 1581. Colombo fort had not faced direct attack by Sitawaka forces since 1565 and despite the construction of a new wall round it, was not in very good condition. Moreover, the active defenders were limited to about three hundred Portuguese and about a thousand Sinhalese *lascarin* troops. Rajasinha successfully drained the lake that protected the eastern walls of Colombo. This not only immobilized the low-draught vessels on which the Portuguese had mounted

90. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 424-427.

91. *Ibid.* p. 429.

92. *Ibid.* pp. 427-430.

small cannon but enabled the Sinhalese army to come right up to the walls. The refugee population within the fort resulted in a scarcity of food. Still the fort resisted stubbornly. Rajasinha did not have artillery powerful enough to breach the walls and the Portuguese had learnt how to counter the attacks from his elephants on the fort gates with a combination of artillery, firearms, fire-arrows and molten-metal. In the end it was the Portuguese command of the sea that proved decisive. It enabled the Portuguese to ravage the sea coast almost at will and dispirit the besiegers. Occasional seizures of food stores by marauding parties also proved most welcome but it was in the inflow of assistance in the form of men, arms, munitions and supplies that seapower proved to be crucial. Urgent messages sent to Negapatam, Cochin and Mannar brought an inflow of men and material just before the southwest monsoon of 1579 set in. In late 1579 a further reinforcement of two hundred Portuguese soldiers was sent from Goa. The arrival of food supplies from India enabled the avoidance of the famine conditions that had prevailed at times during the sieges of Kotte 1562-1565 and although the major part of the fleet sent to succour Colombo in August 1580 was wrecked off the coast between Negombo and Chilaw, a total of two hundred and eighty Portuguese soldiers arrived to strengthen the defenders in the second half of 1580. Thus when Mathias de Albuquerque landed with a further four hundred Portuguese on 18th February 1581 the Portuguese force in Colombo had more than quadrupled since the beginning of the siege. In these circumstances a bold sally from the fort was all that was required to force the weary Sitawaka army to abandon the siege.⁹³

The raising of the siege, however, was not followed by any other notable Portuguese victory. The Portuguese shortage of manpower in the East did not permit the concentration of large forces in Colombo for long and once the siege ended most of the reinforcement departed for other areas. Rajasinha meanwhile kept the Portuguese confined to Colombo and its immediate environs by establishing the Sitawaka military headquarters at Biyagama, just twelve miles from Colombo.⁹⁴

Nevertheless, the failure to capture Colombo must have been a disappointment for Rajasinha. In the same year, 1581, his father, Mayadunne, died. Diogo de Couto and the author of the *Culavamsa* have asserted that Mayadunne was murdered by Rajasinha himself.⁹⁵ Modern historians have generally been reluctant to accept this charge. Mayadunne was about eighty years of age, and might well have died a natural death. Since Rajasinha had been the virtual ruler of Sitawaka for many years one cannot credit de Couto when he

93. *Ibid.* pp. 431-439; *JCBRAS* XX, pp. 262-263; *Biblioteca Publica de Evora*, codice CXV-1-13, ff. 34-37v.

94. *JCBRAS* XX, p. 94.

95. *Ibid.* p. 271; *Culavamsa*, XCIII vv. 3-4.

states that the murder was done to gain possession of the kingdom. De Couto's own account is so biassed against both Mayadunne and Rajasinha that he would have had few qualms about accepting adverse reports against either. Nor was the author of the *Culuvamsa*, a Buddhist monk, unbiassed, for Rajasinha in later life abandoned Buddhism for Saivite Hinduism. The story that Rajasinha killed his father was certainly current in India at the end of the sixteenth century for both van Linschoten and van Spilbergen record it. However, Fernao de Queyroz who was no defender of Rajasinha, explicitly states that Rajasinha received the news of the death of his father on his return to Sitawaka after the siege of Colombo 1579-1581.⁹⁶

But even if Mayadunne died a natural death there are indications that Rajasinha's succession was not entirely unopposed. The evidence in the Portuguese land register of 1614 indicates that Prince Timbiripola also died in 1581 and this seems to support de Couto's assertion that he was killed by Rajasinha himself to remove the danger of a rival. According to de Couto the plotting continued and at various times the conspirators included "Timbiripola's own son Rayigam Bandara, the *sanghanayaka* of Sitawaka and Rajasinha's close relatives. In all these cases Rajasinha's reaction was swift, merciless and effective.⁹⁷ Although the picture thus drawn by de Couto regarding Rajasinha's ruthlessness and the atmosphere of fear and suspicion at the Sitawaka court might well have been overdrawn the Sinhalese sources seem to support his general contention that for those who were powerful or potentially so, life was somewhat precarious at Sitawaka. It is not known whether the opposition of the Buddhist *sangha* was a cause or a result of Rajasinha's conversion to Hinduism but in the end the effect was to reduce the enthusiasm of the subjects for the ambitious enterprises of the Sitawaka monarch. Rajasinha's policy of higher taxes and ceaseless warfare also could well have been resented by several sections of Sitawaka society. As yet, however, Rajasinha's military power was still growing. Realizing that an immediate attack on Colombo had scant chance of success he turned towards the highlands. An attack mounted with a large force found the Kandyan divided. A section of the nobility led by Weerasundera Bandara supported Rajasinha against their king Karaliyadde Bandara. The Kandyan king's depleted forces were decisively defeated in a battle near Balana and Karaliyadde forced to flee towards Trincomalee where he died after a vain effort to rouse the *vanni* chiefs in his cause. His nephew, Yamasinha Bandara, who was designated his heir and his daughter, Kusu-

96. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* p. 438; *Ceylon Literary Register*, VI, p. 332; J. H. van Linschoten, *The voyage of John Huyghen van Linschoten to the East Indies from the old English translation of 1898*; ed. by A. C. Burnell and P. A. Tiele. London, 1885. p. 78.

97. *JCBRAS*, XX, pp. 271-273, 277-278, 284-286.

masana devi, finally found refuge with the Portuguese at Mannar where they were baptized under the names of Dom Felipe and Dona Catherina respectively.⁹⁸

The conquest of Kandy relieved Sitawaka of its anxieties on the eastern frontier. It also provided Rajasinha with valuable additional resources in men and material. Rajasinha was now in direct control of a greater extent of territory in Ceylon than any king since Parakramabahu VI. It was an index to his strength that unlike in 1574 the Portuguese failed to divert Sitawaka forces from Kandy by attacks on Sitawaka territory in 1582. In fact 1582 the Portuguese were busy rebuilding the walls of Colombo in anticipation of another siege.⁹⁹

This attack, however, took a further five years to materialize. Rajasinha had learnt the value of both artillery and seapower during his previous abortive attempt on Colombo. He sought assistance and technical aid from both the Kunjali admirals of Calicut and the rising new Sumatran trading power of Aceh. Gunpowder, gunners and technicians were obtained from abroad and a strong effort made to develop a navy. In 1586 a few Sitawaka rowing ships equipped with sails tried to seize two *dhonies* bringing supplies into Colombo fort. Although the *dhonies* managed to elude the Sitawaka fleet and put to Colombo, the Portuguese vessels within the port did not feel strong enough to sail out and challenge their opponents. The Sitawaka fleet also cruised off Mannar, impeding shipping in that area. By 1587 Rajasinha's fleet amounted to 22 ships and eighteen large *dhonies*. The Portuguese took the threat seriously and in 1586 sent Thome de Souza Aronches as Captain Major of the coast to combat the Sitawaka fleet.¹⁰⁰

The delay in the attempt on Colombo was not due to the time consumed by military preparations alone. Opposition from within his kingdom continued to plague Rajasinha. In 1585 there was an attempt to poison him and soon after some army captains including a son of Kidanpalageyi Hidda Nayide of Hewagama fled to the Portuguese. About the same time there was a movement in the *udarata* to oust Rajasinha and replace him with Weerasundara Bandara. Although Rajasinha acted first and had Weerasundara Bandara killed, his son, Konnappu Bandara, escaped to the Portuguese and was baptised as Dom Joao of Austria. In fact Rajasinha's domestic problems seem to have been so pressing that at one stage he requested for a safe conduct to send his envoys to Goa.¹⁰¹

98. Fernao de Queyroz *op. cit.* pp. 438-439.

99. *Ibid.* pp. 439-440; *JCBRAS* XX, pp. 262-263.

100. *JCBRAS*, XX pp. 275-276, 280, 285, 297-298; *Archivo Portugue-Oriental*, ed. by J. H. da Cunha Rivara. Nova Goa, 1857-1877. Vol. III, p. 253.

101. *Archivo Portugue-Oriental, op. cit.* III, p. 72; *Mandarampurapuwatha*, ed. by Labugama Lankananda. Colombo, 1958. stanzas 66-68.

A truce between Sitawaka and the Portuguese seems to have been concluded sometime in 1585. The Portuguese used the breathing space to rebuild the walls of the fort, to strengthen the bastions and to dig a moat connecting th Beira Lake with the sea on the north-west. But the truce was not destined to last for long because the Portuguese continued to welcome and give refuge to anti-Portuguese elements from Sitawaka. The threat of an attack seemed so imminent in April 1586 that aid in men and supplies was rushed to Colombo but it was only in May 1587 that Rajasinha finally launched his all-out attack on Colombo.¹⁰²

Rajasinha's last siege of Colombo (May 1587-Feb. 1588) has long remained the best known of the Sinhalese attempts on the Portuguese fort largely because of the detailed description of the struggle provided by the Portuguese historian, Diogo de Couto.¹⁰³ It was a contest in which the Sitawaka forces came close to victory, but were eventually thwarted by their inability to prevent the arrival of Portuguese reinforcements from India.

Estimates of Rajasinha's army given by both de Couto (50,000 soldiers and 60,000 pioneers and servants) and de Queyroz (60,000 soldiers) seem exaggerated but it is possible that its total strength exceeded thirty thousand men. Perhaps a third of the number were armed with muskets. Hundreds of pack elephants and thousands of pack oxen provided supply trains for this huge army, the like of which had not been seen in the island for at least over a century. Most important of all were over a hundred cannon of various sizes by which Rajasinha hoped to open a breach in the walls of the fort.

This formidable force led by Rajasinha himself and his most experienced generals, Wickremasinha *mudali*, Senerat *mudali* and Wijekoon *mudali* moved in slow stages from Biyagama and encamped in front of Colombo by the 29th of May 1587. Such extensive preparation for conflict could not be concealed and the Portuguese were able to clear the land around the fort walls by cutting down some six hundred coconut palms so that their artillery could have full play.

The outcome of the siege, however, depended largely on whether the small force of some three hundred and fifty Portuguese and a few hundred Sinhalese *lascarins* could manage to send out an appeal for aid and then hold on till assistance arrived. In this sense Rajasinha had timed his move well for when he attacked the south-west monsoon was in full force and communications by sea virtually at a standstill. However, the Portuguese had a counter to this for one day in July when the wind had dropped somewhat two *dhonies* slipped

102. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* p. 440; *JCBRAS XX*, pp. 274-275, 279.

103. *JCBRAS XX*, pp. 288-387.

out of the harbour and made for Mannar. Rajasinha's fleet, sheltering in the Kelani river was caught unawares and failed to overhaul them despite a long chase. Once the news reached Mannar the Portuguese had won half the battle, for Rajasinha then had to race against time to reduce the fort before substantial assistance arrived.

He did appear to have a chance to do this. The Lake which provided some protection to the fort was drained into the sea within a month, thus rendering the Portuguese vessels stationed on the lake ineffective. When the first assault on the fort was launched on 4th August the only reinforcement that had reached Colombo was some forty men from Mannar. Rajasinha had gradually inched his wooden stockades forward till they were but a few paces from the fort walls themselves and in his first assault he gained temporary possession of two of the weaker bastions on the lake side. Yet both this attack and a subsequent one on 20th August which involved a naval conflict were ultimately repulsed by some desperate fighting on the part of the Portuguese.

With the abating of the monsoon winds reinforcements began to flow in. Fifteen soldiers arrived from Negapatam on 15 August and fifty from Goa on the 23rd of the same month. Rajasinha's navy on which he had lavished considerable attention failed to prevent their arrivals and had the worst of an indecisive conflict with a Portuguese fleet on 7th September. With the arrival of seven ships carrying 250 Portuguese on 15th September the garrison of the fort rose to over a thousand Portuguese and the immediate danger of capture seemed averted.

Rajasinha, however, did not give up. He used his immense labour force to dig mines to enter the fort under the walls but the Portuguese were sufficiently alert and lucky to discover the mines in time. His navy lost another engagement on 10 October 1587 but continued to cause the Portuguese some anxiety. As time went on, however, further inflows of troops and supplies strengthened the Portuguese and when the Sitawaka assault of 5 November failed and a further one hundred and fifty soldiers from India arrived a month later, the Portuguese felt confident enough to begin offensive operations.

A Portuguese naval expedition of seventeen small vessels with thirty Portuguese and one hundred and fifty *lascarins* successfully raided Beruwala, Welitota and Weligama. Soon after another force of one hundred and ten Portuguese and sixty *lascarins* in ten ships set out from Colombo. It raided Kosgoda and Madampe and soon after destroyed the Sinhalese fort at Galle in a surprise attack. This small force sailing on sacked Weligama, Matara and Devinuwara before returning to Colombo. Among the buildings it destroyed was the beautiful Hindu temple at Devinuwara picturesquely described by

de Couto “[It] was very great, all vaulted above, with much workmanship and around it many most beautiful chapel and above the principal gateway it had a very high and strong tower with the roof all of copper, gilt in many parts, which stood in the midst of a square cloister, very beautifully and finely wrought with its verandahs and terraces. . .”¹⁰⁴

Rajasinha made his final efforts in January. A great assault on 10 January was repulsed with loss and the Sitawaka artillery failed to do substantial damage despite being concentrated on a few weak bastions. Another general assault on 27 January met with so little success that when Manoel de Souza Coutinho arrived at Colombo with a fleet of eighteen ships and six hundred men, Rajasinha thought it prudent to raise the siege and retire to prepared positions a few miles from the fort. Nevertheless, the failure of the siege did not change the military balance to any great extent. Although the Portuguese had well over 2000 soldiers and a few auxiliary troops they did not pursue Rajasinha beyond the Kelani river for they still feared to meet the Sitawaka array in open battle. Thus Rajasinha could return to his capital leaving his forces encamped within a few miles of Colombo fort and the prospect of another attempt on Colombo did not appear unlikely.¹⁰⁵

What changed the situation was a revolt in the highlands. The reasons that provoked this rising are not clear but Kandy seems to have been restive ever since it came under Sitawaka rule in 1581. The execution of Weerasundara Bandara on suspicion of treachery would have reduced Rajasinha’s support in Kandy while his levy of men and material for his campaigns against the Portuguese might well have been resented. Some of Karaliyadde Bandara’s supporters lived on in Kandy and provided a focus for the opposition while the Saivism of Rajasinha could not have inspired enthusiasm among the predominantly Buddhist population of the highlands. Thus, when in 1590 a Christian of royal blood called Dom Fransisco *mudali* raised the standard of revolt there was considerable support for him in the *udarata*.

From the Portuguese point of view, the revolt in Kandy opened up attractive possibilities of embarrassing Sitawaka. Indeed, Yamasinha Bandara (Dom Felipe), the heir to Karaliyadde had been urging intervention by the Portuguese in Kandy on his behalf for several years. With the news of the revolt the Portuguese governor Manoel de Souza Coutinho agreed to this proposal and in 1590 four hundred Portuguese soldiers and two hundred *lascarins* led by Joao de Mello de Sampayo, a former captain of Mannar, accompanied D. Felipe

104. *Ibid.* p. 372.

105. *Ibid.* p. 288-387; *Rajavaliya* ed. and trans. by B. Gunasekera. *Colombo*, 1920. p. 92; *Fernao de Queyroz, op. cit.* p. 440-442.

effective in 1592. Rajasinha was therefore able to mount an attack on the Seven Korales and subjugate it in person. Sotupala Bandara fled to Mannar where he embraced Christianity as Dom Manoel.

But the difficult task of re-conquering Kandy remained. Rajasinha himself set out for this task with his new commander in chief Aritta Kivendu Perumal, also known as Manamperuma *Mohottala* but Wimaladharmasuriya successfully defended Balana pass against the Sitawaka forces. Rajasinha, disappointed at his failure retired to Petangoda leaving the defence of the Four Korales to his commanders. A festering wound caused by a bamboo splinter in his foot refused to respond to treatment and Rajasinha died soon after returning to his palace at Sitawaka.¹⁰⁹

The death of Rajasinha left a power vacuum in Sitawaka. According to the *Rajavaliya*, Rajasinha's eldest son Rajasuriya was proclaimed king and his brother made the ruler of the Beligal *korale* but in reality the power belonged to the person who controlled the powerful Sitawaka military machine and for the time being this was Manamperuma. Within a brief period Rajasinha's two sons were disposed of and Rajasinha's sister's grandson, the five year old Nikapitiye Bandara was set up as king. Two Sitawaka chieftains, Pannikki *mudali* and Kuruppu *mudali* who had been rivals of Manamperuma deserted to the Portuguese with seven hundred of their followers.

As long as the alliance between Manamperuma and the Queen Regent lasted, however, Sitawaka was able to hold its own. When the king of Kandy sent a punitive force to the Weudawili *korale* it was routed by Manamperuma. The commander also pacified the port of Chilaw and defeated two Portuguese detachments that sought to subjugate the Alutkuru *korale*. But Manamperuma was not content to be merely the commander-in-chief. After his successful clashes with the Portuguese he sought the hand of the young king's sister. The Queen Regent saw this move as a first step in an attempt to supplant her grandson and from then on Manamperuma fell out of favour. He therefore moved towards the outskirts of Colombo and offered to conquer all of the old kingdom of Kotte for Dom João Dharmapala on condition that he was made its *de facto* ruler. Sitawaka was being betrayed from within.

Manamperuma had over-estimated his capabilities for although the Portuguese and Dharmapala accepted his terms and conferred on him the name of Jayavira Bandara, he soon found his armies melting away and retired to

109. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 444, 468-469, 707; *Archivo Portuguez Oriental*, *op. cit.* III, pp. 425-426; *Rajavaliya*, *op. cit.* pp. 93-94.

Colombo fort in September 1593 with a few elephants and a few hundred *lascarins*. Moreover, on his return, his rival, Panikki *mudali* changed sides and became the new commander of the Sitawaka forces.

On the other hand the damage to Sitawaka *morale* by the desertion of Jayavira Bandara was considerable. He was easily their best surviving general and with his desertion Sitawaka soon lost its hold over some of the coastal area. Already by August 1593 the Alutkuru *korale* had been subjugated by a force centered in a newly built Portuguese stockade at Negombo. In the last three months of 1593, the Kelani valley west of Kaduwela was subdued by a force of 1200 *lascarins* under Jayavira Bandara supported by a few hundred Portuguese. New recruits from recently conquered territory were enlisted to strengthen Jayavira's army which in early 1594 attacked and seized the Sitawaka stockades of Kaduwala and Malwana. By March 1594 the lower Kelani valley was lost to Sitawaka and Jayavira's army swollen by about 3000 recruits. The arrival of a further two hundred Portuguese from India about this time enabled the Portuguese captain to place 500 Portuguese on the field and this combined force challenged the Sitawaka army at Hanwella. On the eve of battle the Sitawaka commander Panikki *mudali* crossed over to the Portuguese side and the demoralized Sitawaka army was routed after a six hour battle. This was virtually the end of the resistance. The Queen Regent captured while flying to Denawaka died soon after and the young Nikapitiye Bandara was shipped to Goa and thence to Lisbon where he died in 1608 as Dom Felipe, the converted prince from Ceylon. By May 1594 virtually the whole of the old kingdom of Kotte acknowledged the sovereignty of Dom Joao Dharmapala and the authority of the Portuguese.¹¹⁰

The rise of Sitawaka had been largely the result of the efforts of a number of able men—Mayadunne, Rajasinha and their ministers and generals of whom the most notable was Wickremasinha *mudali*. Its growth was a relatively slow process requiring two generations of intense struggle against the superior resources of the Kingdom of Kotte and the superior military technology of the Portuguese. Even after these factors had been countered, the Kandyan support of the foreigner led Sitawaka to fight a two front war which greatly hampered its efforts.

In literature the age of Sitawaka cannot compare with the preceding age of Kotte,¹¹¹ of its art and architecture there is virtually no survival from which a judgement could be made. The economic base of the kingdom changed

110. Fernao de Queyroz, *op. cit.* pp. 469-477; *Rajavaliya*, *op. cit.* pp. 94-97; *Archivo Portuguez Oriental*, *op. cit.* III, p. 486, *Biblioteca Publica de Evora*, codice CXVII-I-13, ff. 80, 87-90.

111. *University of Ceylon. History of Ceylon*, Vol. I, Part II. Colombo, 196: pp. 771-778.

little in the sixteenth century though perhaps trade gradually provided a greater part of state revenue than before. It was in military exploits that Sitawaka proved exceptional. Portuguese forces many times the size of those which freely devastated Kandy in the seventeenth century were successfully cooped up in the fort of Colombo by the armies of Rajasinha. It was no coincidence that the successor but one of Wimaladharmasuriya took upon himself the name of the second ruler of Sitawaka.

If the personal factor played a vital part in the rise of Sitawaka it loomed even more significantly in its precipitous downfall and in this respect Rajasinha in his last years played a key role. His conversion to Hinduism dulled the enthusiasm of his Buddhist subjects. His suspicion of plots against him led Rajasinha to eliminate all possible strong successors. His impatience of opposition in the last years of his rule served to elevate a number of self-seeking adventurers to key positions in the armed forces. When Rajasinha died he left his army intact but there was no one capable of inspiring its loyalty and no vision to inspire its courage. Thus it was that a Portuguese Kotte rose on the ruins of a Sinhalese Sitawaka.

It could well be argued that the kingdom of Sitawaka was in essence a rejuvenated Kotte. It had the same administrative structure and depended largely upon the same economic base in south-west Sri Lanka for its power. Its literary and cultural traditions were the same as those of Kotte and in the second half of the sixteenth century, particularly after 1562, the frontiers of Sitawaka were almost identical with those of Kotte after the death of Parakramabahu VI (1411-1467). Even the royal line of Sitawaka was a branch of the royal family of Kotte and certainly after 1551 the monarchs at Sitawaka considered themselves legitimate rulers of Kotte and *chakravarthis* or emperors over the whole island. Indeed, Mayadunne, king of Sitawaka (1521-1581) might well have shifted his capital to Kotte when it fell into his hands in 1565 had it not been for the threat of a Portuguese counter-attack, either from their base in Colombo or by a seaborne expeditionary force.

Nevertheless, modern historical writing has generally tended to consider Sitawaka as a kingdom quite distinct from Kotte. This was partly because historians relying largely on Portuguese chronicles for events of this period perhaps unconsciously adopted the Portuguese viewpoint that Bhuvanekabahu and his grandson Dharmapala (1557-1597) were the only *de jure* rulers of Kotte. The contemporary monarchs who ruled from Sitawaka were looked upon, at best, as recalcitrant sub-kings and at worst, as rebellious subjects. Yet there were other and more cogent reasons for regarding the kingdom of Sitawaka as a separate entity. Territorially distinct units ruled from Kotte and Sitawaka, each recognized by the other had existed from 1521 to 1551.

Moreover, in distinguishing between kingdoms, the Sinhalese popular tradition has ascribed more importance to the location of the palace and the capital city than the dynasty of the ruler or the territorial extent of the kingdom. Thus Mayadunne (1521-1581) and his successor Rajasinha (1581-1592) were thought of essentially as monarchs of the *Sitawaka maha-wasala* or the palace of Sitawaka. Also, even if the truth of the matter be slightly more complex, the rulers of Sitawaka developed a different image from that of the latter day monarchs at Kotte. They were generally reputed as having made a determined and heroic, though ultimately unsuccessful bid to combat the Portuguese threat to the island as distinct from the weak and vacillating policies adopted by Bhuvanekabahu and Dharmapala who gradually became figurehead rulers under Portuguese protection.

Finally, even if Sitawaka was merely Kotte reborn, it was Kotte reborn into a different environment. The military strength of the Portuguese had introduced a new factor into the island's politics. Although the economic base did remain largely unchanged the state revenues from trade, especially the revenues from cinnamon were becoming increasingly significant. A formidable challenge to the established religions was soon mounted by a strong Christian missionary effort. The rulers of Sitawaka had therefore to evolve a somewhat different set of priorities and policies.