

On Mundukondapola: Resurrecting the History of a Defunct Kingdom

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Abstract

We are all familiar with our classic texts written in Pali, most notably the various versions of the Mahāvamsa. However, there were many small kingdoms not mentioned in the Mahāvamsa that were dominated by local rulers owing allegiance to one of the larger kingdoms such as Kotte, Sitavaka and Kandy. This paper discusses one such kingdom known as Mundukondapola, a small kingdom owing allegiance to Kotte. Mundukondapola used to stretch from near Kurunegala to the border of the Portuguese-held territory in Chilaw (Halavata). We believe that such small kingdoms existed everywhere owing fealty to one of the larger kingdoms. Unfortunately Mundukondapola is not marked in current maps and it is our hope that scholars would be tempted to document similar small kingdoms elsewhere in our nation.

Keywords: classical texts, history, defunct kingdom, Mundukondapola

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In this paper, I attempt to bring back historical knowledge in relation to an important kingdom in the Kotte period but, alas, forgotten nowadays. Many of us have been seduced by the classic Pali texts relating to the Mahāvamsa as well as Sinhala texts such as the Pūjāvaliya, written in around the 13th century, but we seem not to know, or willing to ignore or neglect the many hundreds of popular texts dealing with the history, geography and politics of the nation, at least from around the 16th century, if not earlier. These are known as *vitti pot*, “books on events,” *kadaim pot*, books dealing with the boundaries of the nation, and *bandaravaliyas*, dealing with the genealogies of aristocratic families as well as accounts of “small kingdoms,” posing a challenge as well as providing a mine of information for sociologists and historians interested in these little-known realities from the nation’s past. We are all familiar with the Kotte period but we also know that within the confines of that period there were other kingdoms in competition with it, most conspicuously Sitavaka (and for a while Rayigama), and of course the kingdom of Kandy. There was also an independent kingdom in Jaffna and by at least the end of the sixteenth century much of the eastern sea board, at least south of Batticaloa, owed formal suzerainty to the Kotte kings and later the Kandy kings after Vimaladharmasuriya I (1591-1604). We are deeply indebted for much of this information to the pioneer work of H. A. P Abhayawardhana, and also the Sinhala historical traditions of the Kandy period documented by P. M. P. Abhayasinha and the many Sinhala scholars influenced by them.

Although virtually unknown to us today, Mundukondapola was an important small kingdom in the Kurunegala period whose boundaries stretched from around Kurunegala up to the borders of the Portuguese held territory on the west coast near Chilaw (Halavata). This boundary was also important for later Lankan kings right up to the reign of the last king Sri Vikrama Rajasinha, deposed by the British in 1815. Although an unrealistic aspiration, Sri Lankan kings believed that all the territories encompassing the island was part of the Tri Sinhala, and this applied to the kingdom of Kotte. However, one must not be deluded by contemporary notions of political geography because within the larger kingdom, be it that of Kotte or later of Kandy, there were small kingdoms owing formal suzerainty to Kotte or Kandy. Thus, we know from good evidence that during the period of Vimaladharmasuriya I there was a small kingdom in the East

Coast, south of Batticaloa, controlled by a local chief or *rajah* owing allegiance to the Kandyan king, and we have wonderful evidence of the daughter of that *rajah* (a remarkable woman and one of the co-wives of the Kandyan king), leading a Dutch embassy from the Batticaloa area to Bintanna-Alutnuvara, the alternative capital of the Kandyan kings, from where other foreign embassies also stayed on their way to the capital in Kandy. Similarly, with Mundukondapola ruled by local kings owing fealty to Kotte and acting on behalf of the larger kingdom. Etymologically speaking, Mundukonda is the rounded top-knot worn by male yogis and hence Mundukondapola means “a place in the shape of a top-knot” that neatly designated its location, namely, a huge mound that rises from the town controlled by members of a clan that traces their descent from a king (among other “kings”) and designated as Irugal Bandara, and, as always, owing fealty to the king in Kotte or later in Kandy.

It is Paul E. Pieris who first gives us insight into Mundukondapola that he describes as a secluded hollow of a few acres but apparently secure from enemies. “A majestic ring of stone encircles the great hollow; here and there rising thirty or forty feet from the surface, large caves afford a dry and secure retreat in times of peril. Artificial piles of stone helped to strengthen the natural depression in this majestic rampart, while the approach from the village of Kirimune lies over rugged ground hemmed in by enormous boulders. The entrance is through a tunnel formed by a rock, rising near a hundred feet in height, and resting against the great mass by its side” (Pieris, 1992, p. 340)¹. Pieris refers to a Brahmi inscription carved over a thousand years earlier, which states that one of the caves belonged to the monks of the four quarters (the standard Buddhist statements implying a donation to the monks of the universal Buddhist order) but in later times used as a guard post. “The top of the main rock, which can also be approached by means of some steps hollowed out in the surface of the stone, is a position of extraordinary strength, every approach being carefully protected by artificial works; and a handful of men posted here could hold a much stronger force at bay for an indefinite time. Even if the entrance were forced, the enemy would have to proceed through a passage a few feet broad between the main rock and the perpendicular side of an immense cube of stone, as smooth and as straight as if

¹ The source of Pieris’ information is not clear but it is certain that he had visited the spot himself.

prepared by a mason's chisel, where they could be easily overwhelmed from above" (p. 340). None of the maps we have consulted have a listing for Mundukondapola nor is there a place known as Nātaganē marked in current maps, and so are some towns close to our site, such as Variapola. Mundukondapola itself is in the Kurunegala district in a location known as *deva mādi hatpattuva*, "the seven districts encircled by gods or devas." My assistants, H. G. Dayasisira and Nandana Weeraratne and I have visited Mundukondapola and can confirm its difficulty of access and vouch for Pieris's account, including his finding old Brahmi inscriptions, still extant. Pieris adds that this was the place where the chiefs had placed their families and their treasures in troubled times, particularly during the Portuguese incursions into this region. Unfortunately, Mundukondapola was not invulnerable because it was destroyed by a Portuguese expeditionary force in April 1596 or 1597, and it never recovered from that onslaught (De Queyroz, 1992, pp. 516-17).

In its last days, the ruler of the city was known as Edirisuriya but as with similar sites we are confronted with the usual problems of interpretation. The Alakeśvara Yuddhaya (circa middle or late 16th century) as well as the standard version of the Rājāvaliya mentions a rāja known as Edirimansuriya "of the Irugal race, who at that time ruled the Seven Korales and resided in the city of Mundukondapola, which he had built for himself in Devamedda of the Seven Korales" and was supported by the party of the god Irugal (Gunasekara, 1900, p. 72). We will have more to say about this site later, but for now names such as Edirisuriya refer to the powerful suriya ("sun") lineage that traced its origin from the myth of the god Irugal Bandara, a descendant of the Sun, albeit not to be confused with the better known Suriya lineage of the Buddha as well as that of Manu. For much of the time, the Irugal Bandaras were the rulers of the Seven Korales, a long line stretching from Kurunegala down south to the Portuguese controlled coastline dominated by Christian settlers but as always owing formal allegiance to Kotte.

A descendant of the Irugal Bandaras appears in the crucial stage of our saga involving Vidiye Bandara, the father of King Dharmapala of Kotte and a key figure in the politics of the Kotte and Sitavaka kingdoms in the mid-sixteenth century. In this account, I will not deal with the complicated background history of Vidiye Bandara, but for now mention his fleeing with his son Vijayapala in order to escape

from Rajasinha I and his father Mayadunne ruling from Sitavaka. In 1552 he sought the help of his close kinsman, Edirimannasuriya (a classificatory brother to him) and ruler of Mundukondapola. Vidiye had earlier agreed to marry his son Vijayapala to a sister of the ruler. This we know is his younger son because the older son (the future king Dharmapala) was being groomed by Bhuvenekabahu VII as his heir and was living in the palace of the king. Vidiye Bandara defied all canons of hospitality when he ordered his cousin Edirimannasuriya killed and then tried to establish himself as ruler of the Seven Korales, fortifying and “making himself master of the palace, house, and the treasure of the prince.” “This tyrant seeing himself in power and master of Urungure [Irugal nuvara] determined to get possession of the whole of the Seven Corlas [kōrales], which was a large dominion, and in which neither the Portuguese nor Madune (Mayadunne) could do him harm, it consisting entirely of high mountains and narrow and difficult passes” (Do Couto, 1909, p. 175)² But because the population was incensed at Vidiye’s treachery, neither the Portuguese nor Rajasinha I had any difficulty in penetrating this fastness. Vidiye was compelled to flee to Jaffna with his son Vijayapala and both were killed during a skirmish with a Jaffna chief (pp. 176-177).

Diogo do Couto’s account in his *History of Ceylon I* have just recorded is pretty much confirmed in the Sinhala account in the *Rajāvaliya*. It confirms that Edirimannasuriya gave permission to Vidiye Bandara to reside in the neighboring village of Bogoda, a mile from the base of the mountain range of Nathagane (nātaganē) and there Vidiye sowed discontent between his troops and those of the king. This led to a fight and when the king Edirimannasuriya (aka Edirisuriya) interposed to quell the fight, he was killed on Vidiye’s orders by one of his henchmen, Velāyudha Āracci (who soon after was impaled by the troops of Rajasinha I when he recaptured that kingdom) (Suraweera, 2000, pp. 80-81).

After Edirimannasuriya’s death another king by that name took his place. This is the famous, or infamous, Domingos Correa. The life

² This work has been edited and translated by Donald Ferguson as *The History of Ceylon from the Earliest Times to 1600 AD as related by Joao De Barros and Diogo do Couto*, in *JRAS*, CB, Vol. XX, no, 60, and first published in the Government Press, 1909, and reprinted 1993.

Do Couto, Diogo. 1909 (1993). *History of Ceylon*.

and work of this man is found in Fernao de Queyroz, *The Conquest of Ceylon* and in this case Queyroz had it right because the Portuguese knew him well. Domingos Correa was born around 1565 and raised in Colombo as a Catholic in a family of “Colombo Modeliares of renown.” The wicked character of Domingos was emphasized by Queyroz, especially a failed attempt to kill his father and an apparent fantasy of marrying one of the many wives of Rajasinha I (De Queyroz, (n.d)). Domingos had friends and relations among the Portuguese; his sister was married to one of them and two of his cousins were also married to Portuguese men. In his early career, he served Vidiye Bandara’s son, Dharmapala aka Don Juan (1551-1597) later to become the first Christian king of Kotte. Domingos served his Portuguese allies well and was given the cognomen or nickname “Mal degolado” or “the ill-beheaded” owing to his valor and brutality. In recognition of those dubious virtues he was also given the title of “Bicarna Singa,” that is, vikramasinha, “the warrior lion,” commander of the local soldiery known to us now as lascars or lascarinns. He was especially favored by the Captain-General, Don Jeronimo de Azevedo (1594-1612) who entrusted him to engage in warfare with the Prince of Uva, the son of Vimaladharmasuriya of Kandy (1591-1604). But on 17 November 1595 at age 30 he changed sides, and became an implacable enemy of the Church. That morning, says Queyroz, he fled to Atulugama (in Rayigam Korale) to be crowned there (although we are not told how such a crowning was possible) (p. 500). He changed his name to Idrila Bandara (sic Edirille Bandara) and was “soi disant King” (p. 510). As a deadly foe of the Portuguese, Edirille Bandara, alias Domingos Correa, invented, says Queyroz, “new forms of cruelty” such as cutting off the noses of Portuguese captives or their right hands while he threw some elephants at them and these animals would hurl the victims up in the air. Contrary to Queyroz, these forms of cruelty were practiced in good measure by the Portuguese themselves. Domingos Correa burnt churches, just as the Portuguese did in respect of Hindu and Buddhist temples, and bragged about such actions. In armed conflicts of this sort, then and now, the brutality of the one side is mimicked by the other such that the burning and destruction of shrines and torture as well as the cruel modes of execution mirrored each other’s realities. A beautiful example (if one wants to call it that) comes from the Portuguese writer, Ribeiro, from his own experience in Sri Lanka, when around 1654 he mentions that the normal process of war with Kandy “was to cut off the

heads of all on both sides.” Yet Ribeiro adds a qualifier, namely, that in the previous year the Kandyan king (Rajasingha II) had decided “not to kill the Portuguese who had been captured in battles, assaults or by their *bagueas* [brigands?] but to bring them to him alive without killing them” (Ribeiro, 1948, p.178). This was not from altruistic motives because the Kandyan kings always planted foreigners in their territories as servants, informants and curiosities; and perhaps to impress on the local population the prowess of their sovereign. Earlier, around 1652, Ribeiro had already given us a fine example of the custom of killing enemies under the leadership of the Portuguese captain, Gaspar Figuera de Cerpe, exemplifying what might be called “the magic of large numbers”³ “In this encounter our men cut off the heads of more than three thousand, the rest escaping through the thick forest or each as he could” (p.163). On the Kandyan side these numbers are matched in the various *haṭan kavi* that celebrated their triumph over their enemies. Violence in war carries with it a relentless incremental dialectic, the one side, in reality or in fantasy, mimicking and outdoing the other.

To get back to Domingos Correa: pursued by the Portuguese commander de Azevedo, Domingos Correa fled to Kandy and was welcomed by the king who, in addition to vast properties endowed to Domingos by him, also “gave him the kingdoms of Cota [Kotte] and Ceytavaca [Sitavaka],” the latter an easy but meaningless endowment because these kingdoms were at various times under the control of Dharmapala (and the Portuguese) and Mayadunne and his son, Rajasingha I (De Queyroz, (n.d)). Not to be outdone in his seeming generosity, the king gave Domingos in marriage to the beautiful daughter of Vidiye Bandara, Prince of the Seven Korales who resided in the Kandyan court. This does not refer to the Vidiye Bandara mentioned earlier or that of Pilasse Vidiye Bandara, another important figure in those times, because both those personages by now were dead. This forces us to bear in mind that the term “Vidiye Bandara” is not a personal name but a title given to a chief or a notable personage in charge of the four “streets,” the conventional term given to the control of the main streets of a city and their resources. We know that after Domingos Correa died he was succeeded by another member of the same dynasty and it is not improbable that this person also had the title Vidiye Bandara. It is likely that owing to the constant wars in the

3 I borrow this term from my friend Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006

Seven Korales, the young woman married to Vidiye Bandara was in the court of Kandy and moreover, in my opinion, was a relative of its king, Vimaladharmasuriya, who belonged to the same suriya dynasty as the latter part of the king's name (*sūriya*) signifies. The marriage to the second Vidiye Bandara's daughter was celebrated in grand style, described at length in Queyroz and neatly summarized by Paul E. Pieris (Pieris, 1992, p.303)⁴. "The grandees of the kingdom assembled from all parts in their festive robes. Very early in the morning there appeared at the gate of the palace three caparisoned elephants, covered with cloth of silver and gold, accompanied by a magnificent palanquin inlaid with ivory and gold; in the last went the princes while the new king rode on the middle elephant wearing a crown of gold laid on his head. On the two sides rode two of the great Mudaliyars of the court, one carrying a white *sesat*, with which he kept off the sun, while the other with a *chamara* [fly-whisk] drove off the flies which are the invariable companions of elephants. The princess went first accompanied by her chief maids of honor (sic), and the *perahera*, with its endless line of musicians and dancers, made the circuit of the city, halting at the chief temple in its progress. The happy occasion was further marked by a lavish distribution of titles" This account gives us a rare insight into the kinds of ostentatious displays of Kandyan kings on special occasions.

Domingos was made king of the Seven Korales, and was conferred the title of the former king of Mundukondapola, Edirimannasuriya Bandara, all these honors being given to him by Vimaladharmasuriya himself. The marriage to Vidiye Bandara's daughter was very likely to legitimize Domingo's claim to the vast district of the Seven Korales that included the important districts of

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Kurunegala, Dambadeniya and Madampe. For purposes of convenience I will label him “Domingos Edirimannasuriya.” It is not clear whether Domingos Edirimannasuriya, the adopted scion of Irugal Bandara, lived like his predecessor on Mundukondapola itself or whether he lived somewhere down below in Bogoda or in the larger district of Devamädda or elsewhere in the Seven Korales.

Domingos Edirimannasuriya’s fame and good fortune was short lived. His mortal enemy was Dom Fernando, alias Samarakon Rala, a highly able and disciplined Sinhala officer, loyal to Dharmapala and the Portuguese. This was in 1596, when Samarakon Rala was in Uduvara and Domingos Edirimannasuriya came upon him with a large army but he was routed. Queyroz mentions that most of his army was destroyed but Domingos managed to escape and sought shelter in a poor woman’s hut. There he was given food but the woman betrayed him to the Portuguese who captured him and brought him to Colombo in heavy chains and escorted by Samarakon Rala. De Azevedo, a greedy man, delayed the execution for forty days hoping to get information on the treasures Domingos Edirimannasuriya had supposedly amassed, but to no avail. What is interesting is that knowing his death was imminent, Edirimannasuriya apparently reverted to his former name as Domingos Correa and, under the influence of the Catholic priests returned to his old faith. Or so we are told, although that did not help him much, at least politically, even though he might have been “saved.” According to Queyroz, Edirimannasuriya, alias Domingos Correa, made a long public confession: “the enormity of my sins, that if I had a hundred lives, with them all I should not be able to pay for the least of my sins.” He asked a general pardon from all for his wickedness. And in the memorable European style of the time, he suffered the fate of those guilty of treason when he was quartered on 14 July, 1596. “Forthwith his hands were cut off, and afterwards his head, and his body quartered and placed in public places ...where it remained for some days till the boys played their games with his skull” (Queyroz, F. (n.d)). Quartering was common practice in Europe at this time and especially meted out to traitors and it is analogous to the Sinhala and Indian custom of impaling criminals and traitors, though the latter punishments were much less brutal and less theatrical than quartering (Obeyesekere, 2005)⁵. Nevertheless, these kinds of brutalizing spectacles are found in

5 For a discussion of quartering see my chapter “On quartering and cannibalism and the discourses of savagism,” in Gananath Obeyesekere, *Cannibal*

many places, the most dreaded and well-known to all us is the Roman custom of crucifixion, followed in similar spirit to the public fear of the terrifying intimations of brutality expressed in some forms of the Inquisition. So is it with mutilated bodies left on the road, a spectacle to create terror and practiced with impunity then and in our own sad times of a few years back. A beautiful example (perhaps not such a beautiful one) is recorded by Diogo do Couto about the actions of a Portuguese ex-captain, Antonio Moniz Barreto, who had “a sudden and fortunate idea” namely, “to cut off the legs of the modeliar whom they held prisoner, who was a leading personage; and to leave him on the road, in order that the enemy should occupy themselves with him, which they did” (Do Couto, 1909, p. 130). Such kindnesses were everywhere in those unkind times.

Domingos’s brother, Simao Correa, had joined him to become a Kandyan warrior and in recognition of his successes against the Portuguese he was conferred the title of Edirimannasuriya Bandara by Vimaladharmasuriya, that is, he also became an adopted scion of Irugal Bandara of the sūriya dynasty (De Queyroz, 1992, p. 516). It was however only a title because he did not actually rule the Seven Korales. Later, long after the death of his brother and his retraction, and I suspect owing to the guilt he felt in betraying the faith of his parents, he also reverted to Catholicism, rejoined the Portuguese, became a doughty warrior on their behalf, and died along with Constantine de Sa and most of the Portuguese army in the famed battle of Randenivela. As for the beautiful wife of Domingos Edirimannasuriya, one can only hope that she eventually formed a happier marriage, a difficult proposition in those harsh and brutal times. The standard Rajavaliya has a much more simplified version of the events following the death of Domingos Edirimannasuriya. “Thereafter, Dharmapala reduced the low-country to subjection, seized the family of Edirillerala [Domingos], and, having put the males to death, took the women and Edirillerala’s younger brother and sent them to Goa” (Suraweera, 2000, p.95).

After the death of Domingos Edirimannasuriya, the prince of the Seven Korales, in Portuguese accounts, was known as Ithukal Bandara (Irugal Bandara), sometimes referred to as Jatuapala and Sotopala (probably Jotipola or Sotopala Bandara), without doubt a member of the same Irugal lineage. My guess is that this person Talk: The man-eating myth and human sacrifice in the South Seas, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, 223-54.

also had the cognomen of Vidiye Bandara and it is his daughter who married Domingos. Because of the defeat of the more famous Vidiye Bandara who was a kinsman of his, Jotipala/Sotopala/Irugala seemed to have harbored a hatred for Rajasinha of Sitavaka and was a supporter of the Kandyan king Vimaladharmasuriya. According to Queyroz, Jotipala, “refusing to bear the oppression of that Tyrant [Rajasinha I] ... at once came to the Portuguese Captain, begging his support as a vassal of King D. Joaõ [Dharmapala]” (De Queyroz, 1992, p.443). A large Portuguese force assisted by Jotipala’s followers, routed Rajasinha’s army and “Raju abandoned for the while the attempt on the Seven Corles [korales]”(p. 444). Rajasinha, apparently undeterred by current adversity, later attacked the Seven Korales with a great deal of violence, “killing those who were concerned in the rebellion of Jatupala Bandara,” who then fled to Mannar where he was baptized as Don Manoel. However, on the death of Rajasinha he returned to the Seven Korales and became “a great enemy of the Portuguese,” beautifully illustrating the pragmatic and unstable nature of some of these conversions and alliances. Queyroz adds with some belated insight that this “usually happens when one receives Baptism out of respect, force, or self-interest”(p. 444).

The Portuguese accounts of the later Jotipala are flimsy, but we do know that he was back in the Seven Korales, probably residing at Mundukondapola. King Vimaladharmasuriya of Kandy persuaded him to attack the Portuguese in the lands now in their control, very likely the Four Korales, part of the old Kotte kingdom. Unfortunately, the Portuguese Captain [de Azevedo] soundly defeated him and destroyed much of Mundukondapola in 1596. The Captain “seeking out the Prince of the Seven-Corlas, he attacked him with such determination that he took to a shameful flight through the woods, the Portuguese going in pursuit....” (p. 516). Jotipala still remained a liege of the king of Kandy and assisted the prince of Uva, oldest son of Vimaladharmasuriya, in the wars against the Portuguese, the most important being the Portuguese attack on the Seven Korales, under two redoubtable captains, the Portuguese Simao Pinhao and the famed Sinhala general, Samarakon Rala aka Dom Fernando. Paul E. Pieris who discusses these events mentions that Samarakon Rala was popular with the people of Devamädda in the Seven Korales. Unfortunately, a smallpox epidemic created havoc in the camp and Sotopala/Jotipala established friendly relations with Samarakon, but with the ulterior intention of killing

him. Jotipala sent five hundred of his men with bundles of treated palm leaves that were used as tents by the Portuguese. Samarakon suspected a plot and found arms concealed under the palm leaves (pp. 547-48). He killed all Jotipala's men. Jotipala/Sotopala made another attempt to attack Samarakon, but this too failed. Unfortunately, nothing further is known about Jotipala aka Irugal Bandara in the Portuguese sources. The Sinhala sources are also silent regarding this interesting character (Pieris, 1992, pp. 343-48). As far as we know there were no more rulers of the Irugal lineage in the Seven Korales, but they remained a powerful and influential clan. Their clan name persists to this day among their purported descendants while the *sūriya* cognomen itself went into popular usage evident in such names as Jayasuriya and Amarasuriya and dozens of imitations⁶. We know however that the son of a fisherman and a "renegade Christian" became the ruler of the Seven Korales as Kuruvita Rala, the dread of the Portuguese as well as that of Senerat of Kandy. He was killed in 1620⁷.

6 We are now reminded of another imposter in the scene at Mundukondapola. His rule was even shorter and I will simply refer to him with his baptismal name as Manuel Gomez, a handsome, fair-complexioned native of Goa, a captain of the Moorish lascarins. He also deserted the Portuguese army with a few lascarins and made his way to our now famed fortress in the Seven Korales. He rejected his Christian faith, gave up his Goanese identity (how he passed the language barrier is not known), bored his ears and let his hair grow, and pretended he was a Brahmin, a ruse that Sinhalas easily fall prey to. The local chiefs angry with the Portuguese supported him, put him in command of a thousand men and conferred on him the title of Vikramasinha Mudaliyar, although it is not clear whether he was given the designation of Edirimannasuriya. He was a brutal terrorist who plundered the villages in the area. He had some initial successes with the Portuguese but he was eventually captured and beheaded. "The populace of Colombo accompanied the head in procession till it was placed on a pillory, there to be exposed to public ridicule." See Pieris, *Ceylon and the Portuguese*, vol. 1, 354. I am indebted to Pieris for this account of Manuel Gomez. The reader should note that it was during this period, c. 1600, that the Portuguese razed to the ground the famed Hindu shrine of Munnesvaram although it was later repaired. The disavani of Devamadda continued to be occupied by Kandyan chiefs, the last being Ratvatte Disava who was executed by Sri Vikrama Rajasinha in 1811 or 1812 for treason.

7 Antonio Barreto aka Kuruvita Rala was one of the most remarkable persons to emerge during the Portuguese period and surely foremost leader to emerge from a coastal fishing community, very likely of the karava caste. He was a lascarin in the Portuguese army under the commander Samarakon Rala

How does one interpret the significance of the several Edirimannasuriyas, some of them known even in the time of Parakramabahu II (1236-1270)? There seems to be several Edirisuriyas or Edirimannasuriyas at Devamadda-Mundukondapola in the Seven Korales, all belonging to the lineage of Irugal Bandara, a god propitiated in several villages in the Kurunegala District, in the Vanni and in Bintanna, and perhaps beyond that in some villages in Uva and Vellassa. He is one of the many Bandara gods, most of them deified ancestors, but Irugal Bandara was an especially powerful figure and the head of the lineage of the rulers of Mundukondapola. A well-known myth recorded in the Kurunegala Vistaraya and elsewhere, says that Irugal Bandara's father was the sun and his mother Biso Bandara was born of long-leaved dunuke flower (*Pandanus foetodus*), outside of normal bodily processes (known in Buddhist and Sinhala literature as an *opapatika* birth). In this case the likely mythic scenario is that the sun impregnated the dunuke flower. The myth also says that the prince obtained milk from a stone, the name Irugal, literally meaning "sun-stone." It adds that when Irugal was ruling in Mundukondapola he brought down his queen mother from Kurunegala and that he stopped the sun's movement, a feat attributed to other notable kings in Sinhala myth. Because of Irugal's connection with the sun, his descendants were given the title suriya or sun. Some of Vidiye Bandaras who appear in this text also belonged to the lineage of Irugal and might have had but, according to Father S.G. Perera he fell out with Samarakon and killed his brother Dom Manuel Mudaliyar and became a foe of the Portuguese. "He mastered the two Portuguese disawanis of Sabaragamuwa and Matara and made Kuruwith his headquarters" and hence his name Kuruwita Rala. Senerat made him commander of his forces and afterwards made him Prince of Uva "while his nephew was made admiral of the Kandyan fleet according to Baldaeus. He was at Dona Catherina's bedside at the time of her death and was entrusted by her with the guardianship of her children, along with the Dutchman Marcellus de Bochouwer (Bald. 692-694)." When Senerat made peace with the Portuguese 1617 Barreto, with the support of Kandyan chiefs "rose against the king, drove him away from his capital, sacked the palace, and uniting the rebels, Kangara Arachchy, the pretender Nikapitiya and the Vanniyars, in a general rising against the Portuguese, invited Mayadunne from India to become king of Kandy" and the failure of this plan is found in Kostantinu Hatana. The Mayadunne here is a descendant of the great Mayadunne and a cousin of Dona Catherina." He ended up in India after the failure of his plans. See pp. 29-32 in Kotantinu Hatana, S.G. Perera's translation. For Barreto's caste see Paul E. Pieris, 1: 384n, 1. For details of his death see PEP, 2:133.

ritual roles in the cult of Irugal. We mentioned earlier that the Buddha as well as Sinhala kings (and many South Indian kings) claimed solar descent, but what we have here is a new myth of solar origins from a minor dynasty that did not have to compete with established royalty.

The Sitavaka Hatana in verse 838-39 refers to Edirimannasuriya, the ruler of Mundukondapola, as a cousin of the Vidiye Bandara who betrayed him thus: “That king [Vidiye Bandara] took leave, went out of that city and went to Sat Korale, where he met the king Ediriman Suriya. That king who descended from the lineage of Irugal royal line was ruling in the city of Demada-Undakondapola [Devamādda Mundukondapola].” In verse 842, he is referred to as “king Suriya” and in 926 as “King Irugalsuriya.” But just as “Irugal” could be affixed to any person belonging to the same clan, so could “suriya” or the combination “Irugal-suriya.” Irugal’s descendants sometimes have ediri as part of their name. Ediri means “wrathful” or “vengeful,” perhaps another attribute of the deity Irugal. When the Alakēśvara Yuddhaya says that Edirimannasuriya belonged to the “party” of Irugal, it meant he was a direct or indirect descendant of the deity. Note that although several chiefs among Veddah hunters had Irugal as part of their name, they did not usurp the title suriya, which seems to have been a signature of the direct descendants of the god; or those descendants who were viewed as royalty. The case of Domingos Edirimannasuriya indicates that one could be adopted by the party of the god and thus legitimized. Further, it is entirely possible and likely that there were many more of the “party” of the god prior to the ones mentioned in our texts, but we have no idea how far back we can push this genealogy.

Conclusion

This paper brings back historical knowledge in relation to an important kingdom in the Kotte period primarily through the sources other than the most commonly used historical-mythological texts. Mundukondapola was an important small kingdom in the Kurunegala period. Although a very small kingdom, Mundukondapola lasted for a long time with allegiance to the Kotte king or the Kandyan kingdom until it was destroyed by the Portuguese in 1596 or 1597. Like the larger and more known kingdoms of the period, Mundukondapola too experienced internal strife and had no escape from power struggles. The rulers of these kingdoms had their good times but suffered indescribable brutalities at the hands of the Portuguese when they were

pursued and conquered. The study of this kingdom brings to light not only the interesting but cruel skirmishes between those loyal to the large kingdoms and the Portuguese but also the pragmatic and unstable nature of some of these alliances. The chiefs changed their loyalties and even religion to suit the circumstances. The Irugal Bandara lineage, people who belong to a particular clan in Kurunegala, was an important feature of the existence of Mundukondapola.

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