

Royal history of Madampe-Chilaw



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King Parakramabahu VI is considered to be a great king who ruled during the reign of Kotte, the seventh kingdom of the country. There is a devalaya built in the Madampe area in Chilaw for his grandson, a prince named Thaniyawallabha. On the way from Colombo to Chilaw, near the town of Madampe, on the right side of the road, the devalaya is easily recognisable due to a statue of large horse. Located on the right bank of the nearby 'Thinipiti' Lake, the devalaya is dedicated to one God Thaniyawallabha.

Thaniyawallabha's wife jumped into a lake and committed suicide due to false news that Prince Thaniyawallabha had died during a war. The returning Prince Thaniyawallabha had also committed suicide due to anxiety. During a troubled period that followed, the villagers began to entrust themselves to Thaniyawallabha, marking the beginning of this devalaya, which is now called the Thaniwella devalaya.

One of the sons of King Parakramabahu VI who ruled the country during the Kotte period was Prince Ambulugala or King Veera Parakramabahu VIII. King Veeraparakramabahu VIII had two princes. The eldest prince was Prince Sakalalavallabha who lived in Udugampola and the second was Prince Thaniyawallabha. On the instructions of King Weeraparakramabahu VIII, the two sons ruled the Madampe Patuna and Udugampola areas.

It is stated that Madampa Patuna at that time included 12 villages. Although the kingdom was primarily based on this area, it appears that Prince Thaniyawallabha supported the rule of one king Dharmaparakramabahu.

Administration of Prince Thaniyawallabha

As the Chilaw area was economically important during the reign of Kotte, the king entrusted its protection to Prince Thaniyawallabha. During this time the area was also considered a centre of trade in ivory, pearls and rice. Kadirana, who came to Sri Lanka

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from Kayalapattana in India during his reign, had started looting pearls in Chilaw and capturing and selling elephants.

It is said in the Rajavali that Kadirana was killed by Prince Thaniyawallabha along with his brother Prince Sakalalavallabha who ruled Udugampola on the orders of King Dharmaparakramabahu. In addition, he captured 89 others and brought them before the King of Kotte. This shows that Prince Thaniyawallabha was a very talented warrior. Legend says that he travelled alone in an ivory carriage for the war, but he usually rode on a

white horse. The location of his palace is believed by the locals to be about one and a half miles from the town of Madampe, Chilaw, road. The queen of the king was also a beautiful princess.

Tragic fate of the royal family

Despite the beauty, his queen was a virtuous woman and the Prime Minister of Thaniyawallabha lusted after her for her beauty. The Prime Minister tried to persuade her by saying that the king had died in the war with Kadirana,

but to no avail. Moreover, believing that her husband was dead, the queen committed suicide by jumping into the Tanipitiya Lake near the present Madampe Devalaya.

On his way back from winning the war, Prince Thaniyawallabha found out about this and ordered his son to treasure the wealth he had at a place named Gal Amuna and protect it. When he learnt that the queen had committed suicide due to the Prime Minister's action, he killed the Prime Minister. Meanwhile, he found out that his son, who had been asked to protect his wealth, was destroying the wealth, so he went there and beheaded his son as well. Shocked by these events, Prince Thaniyawallabha set his sword on the ground in the grounds of Tanipiti Lake and jumped on it and committed suicide. Since then, the place has been known as 'Kadu Piti Madampaya'.

Becoming a deity

After the death of Thaniyawallabha, Madampe people went through a tragic time. Epidemics and food shortages were rampant in the area. The people of the area used to consider

Prince Thaniyawallabha as a deity and worshiped him asking God to save them from the dangers. Accordingly, the present devalaya was built between 1845 and 1850. God Thaniyawallabha is depicted in a dress similar to the original Kandyan dress and holds a stick in his hand.

There is also a wonderful story behind the construction of the statue of the white horse in front of the devalaya which can be seen even today. There was a very wealthy person in the vicinity of this devalaya and he used to ride in front of the devalaya every day in his chariot with no respect.

One day he was riding in a chariot in front of the devalaya and the two horses pulled the cart at once and jumped into the nearby Thinipiti Lake, breaking one of his legs. The foot injury worsened day by day and did not seem to heal. One night, in a dream, he was told by someone that he would make a vow to build a horse statue in the devalaya grounds.

Accordingly, he performed the relevant vows and the leg injury had also healed. He then erected a wooden white horse in front of the devalaya, which is there even today.