

STORY OF VIJAYA-KUVENI: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH ON THE HISTORY OF PERFORMING ARTS IN SRI LANKA



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Abstract

The story of Prince Vijaya in Sri Lankan Chronicles has brought diverse aspects of Sri Lanka's history and culture to the foreground. It has also evolved several arguments regarding the socio-cultural and economic divulgements of the two countries where the unique characteristics have sometimes been dissolved or diluted in order to maintain the influence and inspiration of the great tradition of the neighboring soils. However, emerges a background to analyze the existing data and evidence to revitalize the precision of the chronicler information in terms of identifying the socio-economic and cultural background of the country during the period. A detailed survey typically highlights the nature of performing arts in the island at the time of Vijaya's arrival attenuating the established assumptions that there is an undeniable Indian influence on Sri Lanka's dance tradition. It is a proven fact that there is a transmigration of socio-economic and cultural elements from one to another society with the migration of civilizations due to climatic, geographic, and socio-economic reasons, one might not assume that it is an influence from the great tradition or a subculture of it. The same theory can be applied to the history and evolution of performing arts in the island from a broader perspective on par with the existing theories and the evidence. Thus, the present study engaged in a qualitative content analysis of the Vijaya-Kuveni story in *Mahawamsa*, *Wansaththappakasini*, *Mahawamsa Tikawa*, along with the report about the Vijayapura Research Excavation by Shiran Deraniyagala (2004) to establish facts and the basis of the history of performing arts in Sri Lanka to answer the question whether dance and music evolved with the arrival of Prince Vijaya to this island. Empirical evidence revealed from the Chronicle *Mahavamsa* informs that Princess Kuveni was the daughter of a regional leader of the island, and she was leading one territory in the country. She was spinning under a tree (more precisely using cotton yarn) and was looked after by a female watchdog that was by her side. When Prince Vijaya arrived in the country, there was a hermit who welcomed the prince to the island and informed him that this was a peaceful island where there were no humans; also mentioned that the land was fertile and that the prince could enjoy himself there. A proper examination and analysis of the particular scenario reveals that the economy, politics, culture, and the society of the island were not a sudden establishment, but a prolonged evolution of a standard government with a well-established operational mechanism. The settlement near the riverine basins, traditional clothing industry, agriculture as the main economic gain, the governance of city-states, the village customs, marriage traditions, and the festivities reveal that the island had been endowed with rich socio-cultural and economic systems that enriched the nation by considering its welfare and wellbeing at its best. To substantiate these particular assumptions, the Vijayapura Research Excavation in Anuradhapura by Shiran Deraniyagala reveals the remains of a civilization dating back to around 900-800 BCE. Thus, the present study aims at identifying the so-called Sri Lankan demographic identity allowing the readers to re-think and re-write the nature of society, culture, and performing arts in the island, by blending the empirical evidence and existing archeological findings.

Keywords

Anthropology, Dance, Performing Arts, Vijaya-Kuveni

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Introduction

The rich cultural heritage of Sri Lanka is particularly evident in its traditional dance forms and group music, both deeply tied to ancestral ceremonies. The island has encountered various cultural influences since the 600 BCE. Much of the literature on Sri Lanka's history has been dealt with after the arrival of Prince Vijaya in 600 BCE., considered as the turning point of Sri Lanka's history from primitive or tribal to a civilized society. The undenied, yet unargued, fact is that the island was inhabited and well-established at the time of Vijaya's arrival. As per the Chronicler evidence, the island had been inhabited by *yakkhas*, *Nagas*, and *Devas*, and the Gautama Buddha preached his teachings while converting some of the *yakkha* and *devas* as ardent Buddhists who also pledged to establish and safeguard Buddhism on the island (*Mv. Chap.I. vs. 32-34*). The fact behind the particular scenario is the level of understanding of the so-called natives on the island in terms of realizing and accepting the true quality of the new religion and their conversion to the novel situation. Somadeva (2022) asserts that the *yakkhas* were native to ancient Sri Lanka.

Further to the above, the *Mahavamsa* records inform about King Pandukabhaya's close relationship with the *yakkhas* as guards to foster a cooperative relationship. He has assigned duties of the four corners of the city to *yakkhas*: *Kalavela* on the east side, *Chittaraja* at the lower end of the Abhaya Tank, the slave woman who was re-born as a *yakkhini* at the south gate of the city, and Maheeeja at the royal precincts (*Mv. Chap. X, vs. 84-87*). According to the same chronicler evidence, King Pandukabhaya '*on festival-days sat with Cittaraja beside him on a seat of equal height, and having gods and men to dance before him, the king took his pleasure, in joyous and merry wise.*' (*Mv. Chap. X, vs. 87-88*). Whereas the duties assigned to *yakkhas* seem to be to protect the ruler and the land, the incident is significant concerning the history of dance and music in the country as well. It is evident from the statement that the society had had a variety of performances where performers dressed like **gods** and **men** for the enjoyment of the king. The record even proves that the king enjoyed craft and art in the company of the *yakkhas*. Due to their close association with the kingship and the monarchy, they can also be identified as the successors of *Rāksha* who were meant to be the guardians i.e. King Ravana of the *Rāksha* clan, also having a dynasty on the island, according to *Ramayana* of Valmiki.

Their evolution of *yakkhas* on the island is further illustrated in the studies of indigenous people on the island, the *Veddhas*, as per Wijesekara (1982) and Seligman (1911). According to Chronicler evidence, the genre of *Pulindā*, the offspring of the two children of Prince Vijaya as a result of his elder brother taking his younger sister as the wife, making sons and daughters became the *Veddhas* (*Mv. Chap. VII. vs. 67-68: see also note 5*). Though they have mainly examined the evolution of the genre of *yakkha* on the island, what is highlighted in the cultural context is the link between ceremonies, rituals, and performing arts at the instance of Vijaya's arrival. The story of Vijaya offers insights into the performing arts, such as dance and music, and the cultural

traits inherited from the *yakkha* community. Understanding the cognitive and cultural behaviors related to ceremonies, rituals, and arts in the story of Vijaya and Kuveni is essential for realizing the island's heritage.

Cultural Advancements of the Society Reflected Through the Story of Vijaya and Kuveni

As per the Chronicler records, Prince Vijaya arrived on the island on the same day when the Lord Buddha had entered into *Nirvana*. (*Mv. Chap. VI. Vs. 47*). It is significant that he lands on the island by passing the land called *Supparaka* due to its insecurity, since it was in danger of violence and fear (*Mv. Chap VI. vs.44-46*) (As per the chronicler records, at the instance when Prince Vijaya reached the island, the Sakka ordered God *Upulvan* (*Mv. Chap VIII. Vs.5*) to settle in the island and he acted as a hermit who sat down under a tree. While conforming to the fact that the land is peaceful and not a place of danger, the hermit ensured the settling thereby draping a thread around the hand of the Prince and his fellow men.

*There are no men here, and here no dangers will arise.' And when he had spoken so and sprinkled water on them from his water- vessel, and had wound a thread about their hands **he vanished through the air.**'* (*Mv. Chp.VII. Vs. 8-9*)

The second incident in this regard is the appearance of a *Yakkhini* in the form of a female dog before the Prince

"And there appeared, in the form of a bitch, a Yakkhini who was an attendant (of Kuvanna). One (of Vijaya's men) went after her, although he was forbidden by the prince (for he thought), Only where there is a village are dogs to be found.' Her mistress, a Yakkhini named Kuvanna, sat there at the foot of a tree spinning, as a woman-hermit might." *Mv. Chp.VII. Vs. 8-9*)

Both these incidents: 1) **he vanished into thin air.**' 2) **And there appeared, in the form of a bitch, a Yakkhini who was an attendant (of Kuvanna)** indicates that the island was bestowed with supramundane powers, where religious beliefs and rituals must have persisted for the benevolence and the wellbeing of the people in the island.

Of these incidents, the later incident in particular whereby a servant of Kuveni's named *Sisapathi* disguises herself as a dog (*Kuvannaya Sisapati-namika paricarika yakkhini: VP.*), is another significant aspect of the society with super natural powers when compared to the tribal and primitive societal implications made in several studies with regard to the status of the island when the prince Vijaya arrived. In rituals and folklore, this is referred to as an *avatar* (taking an animal form). An *avatar* is a material manifestation or incarnation of a powerful deity or spirit on Earth.

This involves energy manipulation. Such protective actions are noted in folklore as anthropological behaviors within a society. In Hinduism, an avatar is defined as the incarnation of a deity in human or animal form to counteract evil in the world. Sri Lankan traditional dance is distinctive for incorporating magical practices involving the spiritual realm. However, in this context, it is possible to imagine that *Sisapathi* transformed into a dog due to the strange and insecure circumstances surrounding her which allowed her to capture all of Vijaya's men.

However, it is noteworthy that the prince saw the **woman hermit** who was spinning under a tree (*Her mistress, a yakkhini named Kuvanna, sat there at the foot of a tree spinning, as a woman-hermit might- (Mv. Chap.VII vs.11)*), was attracted to her at first sight, and made every effort to attract her by his deeds. The term '**might**' is significant here, because it connotes the fact that she was a well-behaved, disciplined character who embarked on a spiritual journey and may have possessed magical abilities. It is also a deemed fact that she might have been of a majestic appearance with all her attire and beauty. On the other hand, the hermits functioned as intermediaries in settled societies, serving as a conduit through which the dominant religious and cultural practices were embedded. They led a "wandering solitary life, remarkable for chastity, renouncing all the pursuits of the world, and all care of property, and contented with the support of piety amidst the extreme poverty." (Percival, 1805. P. 216).

The same majestic and generous nature is evident in the incidence of providing food to the hungry men of the prince because she was so benevolent as to offer a shipful of food to the Prince's crowd with all condiments: "*She showed them rice and other (foods) and goods of every kind that had been in the ships of those traders whom she had devoured.*" (*Mv. Chap.VII vs.24-25*), despite the fact that she was threatened and charged by the Prince (*Slave ! give me back my men, or I slay thee ! -Mv. Chap.VII vs.21*) divulging herself to serve as a servant of the prince ("*Spare my life, sir, I will give thee a kingdom and do thee a woman's service and other service as thou will*" (*Mv. Chap.VII vs.22-23*).

Further, the same incident proves to us how she was also pleased to accept the mild approach by the prince when he offered the first portion of the food given to him by his fellow men. The Chronicle informs us: "*She was well pleased, and assuming the lovely form of a sixteen-year-old maiden she approached the prince adorned with all the ornaments.*" (*Mv. Chap.VII vs.26-27*). The connotation implicates the feminine qualities of all females, therefore this act of Kuveni's can show parallels to what other females do: that of exemplifying feminine characteristics particularly when conforming to male dominancy. This also proves that the females during the period wore

beautiful attire supplemented by ornaments attesting to the fact that the island had a well-established society and cultural affinities representing a high quality of life and a social hierarchy.

The best example is the setting up of the place under a tree to spend the first night with the prince.

“At the foot of a tree she made a splendid bed, well-covered around with a tent, and adorned with a canopy. And seeing this, the king's son, looking forward to the time to come, took her to him as his spouse and lay (with her) blissfully on that bed; and all his men encamped around the tent.”

Translation:

“විජය කුමරු විසින් දෙවන ලද අග්‍රභාගය කා පිතෘ ගියා වූ යකිනී නොමෝ සොළොස් හැවිරිදි සිත් ගන්නා රුවක් මවාගෙන සොහරනින් සැරහූ රජ කුමරු වෙත එළඹියාය. රුවක් මුලෙක තිරයෙන් මොනවට හාත්පස අවුරණ ලද්දා වූ වියනින් මනාව අලංකෘත වූ මාහැඟි යහනක් ද මැවීය. රජ කුමරු ඒ දැක අනාගත අභිවාද්ධිය බලන්නේ ඇත හා මා සමඟ වාසය කොට යහනෙහි සැප සේ හොත්තේය. පිරිවර සියලු මිනිසුන් තිරය සිසාරා හොත්තේය.”

(Mv. Chap.VII vs.27-29).

The incident reveals the life customs of the society demonstrating the need for privacy in marital relations, and the beauty of the marriage customs, though it was not pre-planned or pre-arranged.

The observation highlights both the food culture and industrial advancements of the society surrounding Kuveni, as well as the social customs embraced by its people. Of particular significance is her engagement in cotton thread weaving, which serves as a notable symbol of the society's technological progress. This advancement, linked to prehistoric developments like stone tool crafting, also reflects societal practices at its best. Kuveni, described as a hermit, may have had the ability to change her form and surroundings, as suggested by her creation of a well-decorated bed and her wearing of jewelry. These actions indicate the society's knowledge of shelter-making and the role of jewelry in expressing identity, status, power, and personality. Jewelry is portrayed as a manifestation of imagination and creativity, symbolizing ethnic culture and heritage, with some communities believing it could grant supernatural powers or attract others. Text references by Satpathy, 2017 and Rev. Manawe (2001), discuss the cultural significance of jewelry, particularly in the *Yakkha* tribe, where it was worn as a tribute to figures like Mahapali or Kuveni.

The Status of Performing Arts in the Society Reflected Through the Story of Vijaya and Kuveni

The best evidence to support the nature of the performing arts on the island and its prolonged evolution is the story of Vijaya and Kuveni. It also reflects the unique identity of Sri Lanka's performing arts as well. The *Mahavamsa* informs:

As the night went on he heard the sounds of music and singing, and asked the yakkhini, who was lying near him: 'What means this noise?' And the yakkhini thought: 'I will bestow kingship on my lord and all the yakkhas must be slain, for (else) the yakkhas will slay me, for it was through me that men have taken up their dwelling (in Lanka).' And she said to the prince: ' Here there is a yakkha-city called Sirisavatthu; the daughter of the chief of the yakkhas who dwells in the city of Lanka has been brought hither, and her mother too is come. And for the wedding there is a high festival, lasting seven days; therefore, there is this noise, for a great multitude is gathered together.

(Mv. Chap. VII. vs. 30-35)

30. රත්තිං කුරියසද්දං ච සුත්වා ගීතරමං ච සො
අපුච්චි සහ සෙමානං කිං සද්දෙ ඉති යක්ඛ

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32. ඉති වින්ති යක්ඛි සා අබුච්චි රාජනන්දනං
සිරිසවත්ථුනාමෙතං සාමි යක්ඛපුරං ඉධ

33. තත්ථ ජෙට්ඨස්ස යක්ඛස්ස ලංකානගරවාසිනී
කුමාරිකා ඉධානිතා තස්සා මාතා ච ආගතා

34. ආවාහ මංගලෙ තත්ථ සන්තාහං උස්සවො මහා
චන්තතේ තත්ථ සද්දෙය මහාහෙසසමාගමො - (Wp. Chap.VII. vs. 30-34)

The following factors are highlighted;

Sirisa Vattu Pura

As the Chronicle describes, the island of Sri Lanka might have been administered as a 'city-state' where the entire island has been geographically demarcated as cities and ruled by regional rulers. When we focus on the particular incident of Prince Vijaya and Kuveni, she is a ruler who has the most willpower 'It was through me that men have taken up their dwelling (in Lanka).' And with her command only, the city dwellers have come to the city called 'Lanka.' They have come to the

city called *Sirisa Vattu* to celebrate the marriage ceremony of the daughter of the ruler of the city of Lanka to the son of the ruler of the *Sirisa Vattu Pura* ‘*Here there is a yakkha-city called Sirisavattu; the daughter of the chief of the yakkhas who dwells in the city of Lanka has been brought hither, and her mother too is come.*’ (Mv. Chap. VII. vs. 32-34)

Now, as per the above information, it is clear that the island has been well administered. There had been established customs and practices which are continued even to date i.e. when the marriage takes place, the mother of the female party comes to the groom’s house and respectfully hands over her daughter to the new family. Such prolonged customs were deep-rooted in the island even when the prince Vijaya arrived on the island. As per archaeological revelations, *Sirisa* and *Vattu* denote a ‘city on the top of the mountain’ (Somadeva (2022)). He describes that the *yakksha* community and their descendants, the *Veddah* was based in high mountain areas. According to the *Kohomba Kankariya* ritual, there are eighty-four mountain areas where the *yakkhas* lived.

“අතලාගල කොතලාගල කොත්ගාගල වැද්දනෝන්
සදහිරිගල මලුහිරිගල මුල්කිරිගල වැද්දනෝන්
රූනසිනේ දොඩන්වතුටල බුදුලු ඔයේ වැද්දනෝන්
උග්ගල්ගේ මැඩුමේගලේ කලුගලයේ වැද්දනෝන්
උඩුවේ යන රංගලගේ වැසිගලයේ වැද්දනෝන්
හිලීමලේ බඹරබොටුව කළේවානේ වැද්දනෝන්
ඔපල්ගල ඇතුගල යක්දෙස්සාගල වැද්දනෝන්
යකුවසිගල දෙවිහිරිගල වැසිගලයේ වැද්දනෝන් ” (Somadeva, 2022)

As per *Vansattappakasini*, Maha Kalasena was the leader of the *Yakksha* (*Jettassa Yakkhassa*) who lived in the city of *Sirisa Vattu* and married Polamitta from Lanka Pura.’ ‘*Tassa Matha cha Agatha*’ Polamitta’s Mother (yakkha woman) brought dowry. ‘*yakkharajapasadhanan*’ means the yakkha leader Kalasena’s jewelry.

Wedding Ceremony at the City of *Sirisa Vattu*

According to *Vansattappakasini*, the *Tika* to the *Mahavamsa*, Kuveni further describes the wedding ceremony and she names it as *ආවාහ මංගල නන්ථ සන්තාහං උස්සවො* (*ආවාහ විවාහ මංගලය*). As per the Chronicler's evidence, it had continued for seven days, full of dance and music, food and condiments, the mother of the girls came [with the dowry] as customary, and there was a gathering of relatives, and neighbors of both the cities. The entire incident explores the characteristics of a traditional Sri Lankan wedding ceremony which has been continued across the generations to date. The traditional wedding ceremony is full of dance, music, and other customs that transmit socio-

cultural and anthropological aspects. Sinhala culture had focused on the system of giving a dowry when a daughter gets married. That is why Polamitta's mother brought a dowry on behalf of her daughter. This is a significant occasion in history that symbolized our rites that are still prevalent in society.

According to Rev. Manawe (2001), considering the historical background of marriage, it appears that the form and shape of marriage are different in ancient traditional and modern complex societies. As the marriage is conducted on a socio-cultural and religious basis, it takes on different forms according to the respective social context. Due to this, three types of marriages that match the three main stages of human development have been shown by Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). Group marriage for the barbarian man, promiscuity for the cultivated man, and monogamy (and casual concubinage and prostitution) for the civilized man. More or less, these three types of marriage correspond to the three main stages of human development (Engels, 1979. 76-77).

It is less highlighted that the island has been dwelt by the *yakkhas* and that they were the guardians, and rulers who had worked hand in hand with the *yakkhas*. According to the folklore of the region, '*Sirisa vattu pura*' was established by *Yakshadhipa*, the husband of the *yakkhini* named Chetiya, a woman from the *yaksha* tribe. It is stated in the temple commentary that Juthindara was a person who escaped Vijaya's *Sirisa vattu* massacre and lived in Dumrakkagala. King Pandukabhaya also made a place of worship for the demon Juthindara near the lake "*Thumbariangana*." *Vansatthappakasini* mentions that before Prince Pandukabhaya left for Ritigala, he went to Chetiya's cave and stayed there for seven days and then introduced her to his friends (*Wp. Chap.IX. vs. 53-63*).

Sirisa Vattu Pura Music and Singing

Music and dance performed during the wedding ceremony at *Sirisa Vattu Pura* is a significant fact with regard to the performing arts on the island. One of the most important factors reflected in the incident is its unfamiliarity to Prince Vijaya, though he comes from a land where dance and music were a predominant socio-cultural phenomenon. As the Chronicler describes: '*And for the wedding, there is high festival, lasting seven days; therefore there is this noise.*' *Vamsatthappakasini* illustrates the 'nature of the noise' as a blend of music explicitly endowed with *panchangika turiya nama: Atatang, Vithathang, Atatavitatang, Susirang, Ghananthi*' attesting to the high standards of music during the period. The people, not only enjoyed music but also knew the proper classification of musical instruments, creating a joyful atmosphere.

එන්න පවංගික තුරියා නාම - ආතනං විතනං
 ආතන විතනං සුසිරං - සනන්ති පඤ්චවිධො
 තත්ථ ආතනං නාම - චම්ම පරියොනද්ධෙසු
 භෙරි මුදිංගාසු ඒක තල තුරියං
 විතනං නාම උභයතලං - ආතන විතනං නාම
 තන්ති බද්ධ පණවාදී- සුසිරං නාම වංසාදී
 සනං නාම සම්මාදි - ඉමේහි වජ්ජමානෙහි
 පසාංගික තුරියෙති - චමත්තාගතො හුත්වා
 නික්ඛන්තො අධිප්පායො....

(Wp. Chap.XXIX. vs. 23-28 and the notes)

The definition of *Thuriyasaddang* ('තුරියසද්දං') is so vital with regard to the dance and music on the island. According to the Sumangala Glossary of *Pali- Sinhala* terms (1963), *Thuriya* (තුරිය) is the attractive sound generated by playing instruments. The connotation indicates that the dance was intrinsically combined with music for which there were five main instruments, or categories of instruments, as revealed in *Vansatthapakasini*.

According to Kumarathunga (2019), the “*yakumpideema*” ritual is the first healing ritual in Sri Lanka. The “*yaksha*” tribe assumed that by conducting these rituals they appease the dead spirit of powerful tribesmen who have been attributed with godly status: those who are alive can obtain many benefits as well as protection from harm. Remarkably, the Sinhalese have inherited these *yakkha* rituals that are essentially connected with classical dance traditions in the country i.e. *Yakkhannuma*, in *Kohomba Kanriya* is a prominent classical dance item in the Kandyan dance tradition whereas the 18 *Sannis* representing 18 *Yakkhas* are very much popular in Low country dance. Sabaragamuwa Dance Tradition represents its own pantheon of deities called *yakkhas*, also having a thorough relationship to the *Veddah* community on the island, indicating the prolonged socio-cultural lineage on the island. According to the literature, the *Veddah* are believed to be descendants of Kuveni’s community. This connection is reflected in the inherited correlations observed in their dance, music, and cultural rituals. These rituals, often involving dance and music, symbolize the enduring link to Kuveni’s descendants, highlighting a strong anthropological and cultural solidarity within the Sri Lankan lineage. Furthermore, this connection supports evidence of a pre-Vijayan civilization, as indicated by the Vijayapura Excavation in Anuradhapura, conducted by Shiran Deraniyagala, which unearthed significant archaeological proof of early societal development before Prince Vijaya’s arrival. Rituals according to Deraniyagala (2004), the beginning of the historical period in Sri Lanka does not commence with the reign of King

Devanampiyatissa but rather about 250 years earlier. He highlights the uniqueness of discovering such an ancient history in Sri Lanka, which has not been found in any other South Asian country. The results obtained from these excavations conducted between 1984 and 1988 are as follows:

- The scientific dating of Anuradhapura was achieved through forty-five radio-carbon and revealed that a developed civilization existed from around 900 BCE, and that there was an urban civilization in Anuradhapura by 700 BCE, and that Brahmi script existed by 500 BCE.
- An urban civilization had been emerged simultaneously in northern India and Sri Lanka. The revelation proved that it was not a one-way importation from Northern India to Sri Lanka, but, a two-way intercourse between Northern India and Sri Lanka (but this notion has now been addressed).

By around 400 BCE, there were cultural connections with Northern India. Pottery fragments belonging to the Ganges civilization in Northern India, dating back to around 400 BCE, were found in the excavation site. This suggests that Buddhism might have spread in Sri Lanka before the arrival of Mahinda Thero (Wijetunga.2002).

Conclusion

The historical evidence that supports the history of performing arts in Sri Lanka reveals diverse aspects of socio-economic and cultural affiliations of the island which are unique to Sri Lanka's culture. The performing arts in any society merely does not only represent its artistic aspects but also the overall capacity of the particular society to evolve such creative art practice as a solid medium of communication, expression, and entertainment as well. In the Sri Lankan context, performing arts have been playing a pivotal role in demonstrating the social hierarchy, status as well and dignity of people. Therefore, it is not just a medium of art, but also a prime medium of expression as well. What we find in *Mahavamsa*, *Vamsattappakasini*, and other chronicles texts, is a clear indication of its establishment on the island, with its clear and scientific classification of instruments. It is remarkable that the earliest reference regarding the term '*panchathurya nada*' in the South Asian context is found in these texts. From the particular epithet, it is clear that Sri Lanka has had a strong tradition of performing arts, prior to its interactions with India and it was unique to the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, any incorporation of Indian dance and music would be a later intervention, even after Vijaya's arrival. The clues found in the Chronicles inspire scholars to explore the cultural and anthropological continuity of Sri Lanka, spanning the pre-historic, proto-historic, and historic periods. This encourages researchers to examine both tangible and intangible

evidence as crucial factors in re-examining and potentially re-establishing Sri Lanka's historical lineage, particularly from before the arrival of Prince Vijaya.

The evidence revealed with regard to *Sirisa Vattu Pura* (City of *SirIsa Vattu*) proves that it had a well-developed society with rich cultural aspects that bring to light the pieces of evidence found by the present study about the civilization, sexuality, living styles, housing and settlement, food and festivities, religion and rituals, marriage customs, dance and music, etc., that must have evolved centuries before the establishment of so-called culture and society from the time when Vijaya arrived in Sri Lanka. The Vijayapura excavation report, led by Shiran Deraniyagala, provides substantial archaeological support for this notion, revealing that settlements on the island date back to the 4th and 5th centuries BCE. Evidence from the excavation suggests the presence of iron technology, pottery use, and transportation systems, which point to a sophisticated level of societal development during that period.

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