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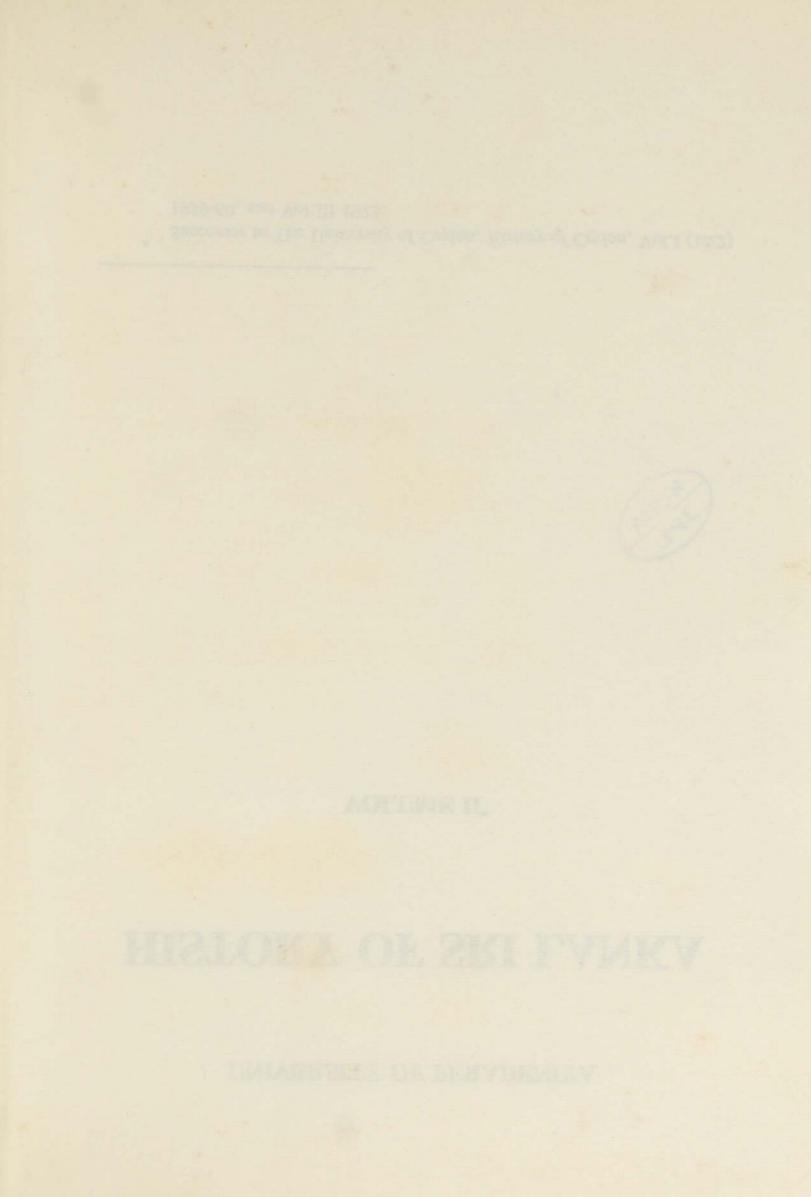
**UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA** 

# **HISTORY OF SRI LANKA**

**VOLUME II\*** 



\* Successor to The University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon, Vol.I (1&2) 1959-60, and Vol.III 1973.



#### **UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA**

## **HISTORY OF SRI LANKA**

Editor-in-Chief Professor K M de Silva, (BA (Ceylon), Ph.D, D.Litt (London)

#### **VOLUME II**<sup>•</sup>

From c 1500 to c 1800



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#### for

## The University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya

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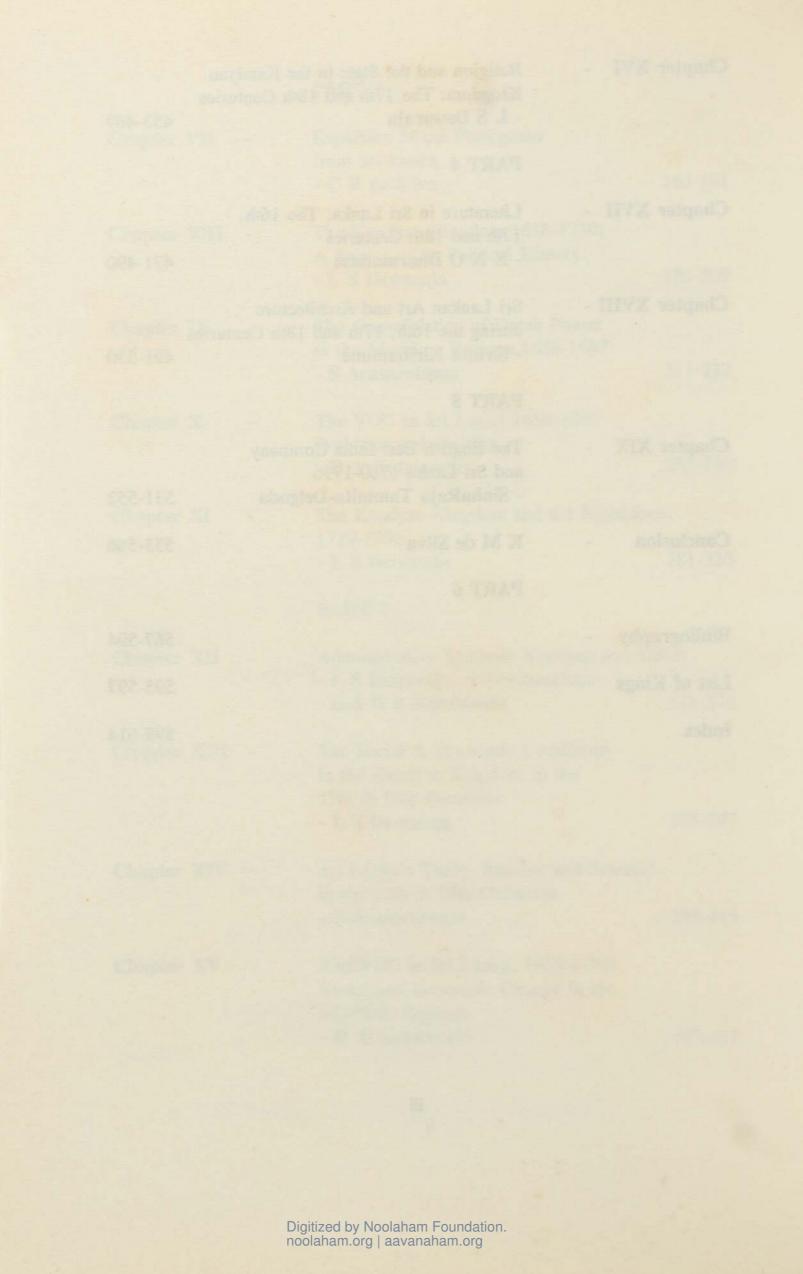
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## PREFACE

The publication of this volume completes an academic venture whose origins go back to 1954. The proposal for a much needed multi-volume history of the island was first mooted in that year by Dr G C Mendis, then Reader in History at the University of Ceylon at Peradeniya. The proposal was greeted enthusiastically by the founding Vice-Chancellor of the University, Sir Ivor Jennings, who became its principal advocate and used his international reputation as a scholar to get the Senate and Council of the University to support it. Although the project itself was accepted in principle, its structure soon became a matter of acute controversy and interminable debates. Indeed the venture ran into very rough academic waters and it took three years or more before work could commence. By this time Sir Ivor Jennings had resigned as Vice-Chancellor and returned to Cambridge University as Master of Trinity Hall, and Dr G C Mendis had retired from the University and resigned his position as editor-elect of the history. Professor H C Ray then Professor of History at the University of Ceylon was appointed Editor-in-Chief, but little progress had been made when he, in turn, retired. Eventually the first volume covering the period from ancient times to the end of the 15th century, was revived by a new editor. It was published in two parts, in 1959 and 1960, under the editorship of Dr S Paranavitana then Professor of Archeology at Peradeniya. The publication of that volume was expected to herald the appearance, shortly thereafter, of Vol. II which was originally designed to bring the story down from 1500 to 1947-8. However it was only in 1973 that the next volume appeared, Vol. III (covering the period from the beginning of the 18th century to 1947-8). Volume II was now expected to fill the gap between Vols I and III, and was planned for publication within a year or two of Vol. III. In the event it has taken just over 20 years from that date for the publication of this present volume.

The first volume bore the title "The University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon" Vol. I(1&2). The third adopted the same title although by the time it appeared - i.e. in 1973 - the University of Ceylon had ceased to exist in its original form, and the name of the country itself had changed from Ceylon to Sri Lanka. Volume III was in press at the time the two changes were made and many of the chapters had already been printed. It was too expensive and, in a world without word processors, too time consuming, to revise the text to justify matching the title of the volume to these changes. With Vol. II the title is indeed changed, to the University of Peradeniya, History of Sri Lanka

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Vol. II, with the subtitle, successor to the University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon (Vol. 1 (1959-1960) and Vol. III (1973).

Most of the chapters of this volume (indeed all save those by Professor D A Kotalawele and Dr S Delgoda) had been first written in the early and mid-1970s. There were some significant gaps that still remained. In the case of Vol. III such gaps were filled, often at very short notice, by other authors when those who originally undertook to write them were unable to complete their assignments on time or failed to do so. That was not possible in regard to Vol. II because of the need for expertise in Portuguese and Dutch, the languages in which much of the material required to fill the gaps was written. However, the fact that it took nearly twenty years to fill the few gaps that remained points to other problems as well, to academic inertia primarily, and to the complex mechanisms of University administration which generally lend themselves to delays especially in the hands of the masters of procrastination who seem to thrive in University environments.

The authors whose chapters were ready in the 1970s bore these protracted delays with exemplary patience. Occasionally their patience wore thin and after several years of waiting published them as articles in learned journals. To all of them the editorial board and I as the editor in chief wish to record our apologies for the inordinate delays that beset this present volume. To one of our authors however the apologies come too late to be of any practical use. This is Professor T B H Abeyasinghe who died in 1986. His untimely death was a grievous loss to Sri Lanka's world of scholarship. The two chapters he submitted in the 1970s are published here with minor changes of an editorial nature made by Professor C R de Silva.

This volume is principally the work of five authors. They are, Professors S Arasaratnam, C R de Silva, L Dewaraja and D A Kotelawele, and the late Professor T B H Abeyasinghe, all of whom have written two or more chapters each. Three others, Professors S Kiribamune and K N O Dharmadasa, and Dr Delgoda have a chapter each to their credit. The maps in this volume have been prepared by Professor G H Peiris of the Department of Geography at Peradeniya in consultation with me and some of the authors. We are very fortunate in having his cartographic skills placed so generously at our disposal.

To all of our authors and to Professor Peiris I am deeply grateful, especially to those who first wrote their chapters in the 1970s, and kept revising their drafts, sometimes very substantially, whenever it seemed likely that this volume would at last be published. In their case, the completion of this book, i.e. its eventual publication, is truly a triumph of hope over experience. After all Vol. II of the original Cambridge *History of India* was never published, and up to very recently there was good reason to believe that Vol. II of the University of Ceylon, *History of Ceylon*, would remain

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unpublished following the example of its distinguished Cambridge counterpart if not prototype. I am particularly grateful to Professors C R de Silva and S Arasaratnam, who now live and work in the United States and Australia respectively, for their continued support for this project, despite the exasperating postponements they had to put up with and despite the calls on their time from their own heavy administrative duties as Chairmen of the Departments of History at the State University of Indiana at Terre Haute, and the University of New England at Armidale. Without that strong commitment on their part and their readiness to revise their chapters one more time, it would have been impossible for me to persuade the other authors that all their efforts would not be in vain, and that they too could proceed with the revision of their drafts. With the exception of Dr S Delgoda, all the other authors have been either students at the University of Ceylon, at Peradeniya, or have taught there. The appeal of institutional loyalties was thus a very strong one, loyalties that prevailed over well-merited scepticism about the possibility of overcoming the obstacles to publication that had persisted through much of the 1980s and early 1990s.

The editor of the first volume of this series explained that these volumes were "not meant to embody the results of original research but to collect together and digest the material that is widely dispersed in numerous publications." As editor of Vol. III, I followed the lead set by my distinguished predecessor, and now with Vol. II that pattern has been continued. This volume is principally "an authoritative synthesis of material available in monographs, articles and unpublished works." However, while we have adhered to this original purpose, this present volume had to fill so many gaps in the study of the political history, no less than in the economic and social history, of this country, that a great deal of unpublished material was incorporated by some of the authors in the chapters they contributed. As a result this volume is likely to be, if we may say so ourselves, an important landmark in Sri Lankan historiography. Even so there are many gaps left to be filled, especially with regard to the study of the Kandyan kingdom, but that task now belongs to a new generation of historians.

We have accumulated a large number of debts, personal, academic and administrative in the compilation, and publication of this volume. I would like to begin by mentioning the names of two persons who are no longer alive, Professor E O E Pereira, who as Vice-Chancellor initiated the process of resuscitating this project in 1969-70 when it seemed all too likely that it would all stop with the publication of Vol. I, and Professor W J F La Brooy, then Head of the Department of History, at Peradeniya, whose sagacity and persistence made it possible to get work on Vols II and III started in the early 1970s.

My greatest obligation is to the present Board of Editors of the

project, for the unstinting support and encouragement they gave me in various ways in overcoming the manifold difficulties encountered in bringing this volume to publication. Two of them, Professors K N O Dharmadasa and L S Dewaraja have contributed chapters to the volume, while Professor Hewavitharane's assistance in pushing this venture through to completion was truly invaluable. Professor Dharmadasa has been a very patient and erudite guide to us in the use of diacritical marks in this volume. He should be absolved of all responsibility for such lapses in this regard that have survived his scrutiny. I would like to acknowledge also the support the board had from Professor C M Madduma Bandara, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Peradeniya, who presided over its deliberations with a sensitive understanding of the need to catch up on lost time and a determination to see the project through to an early completion.

Projects of this sort are generally very expensive. The Asia Foundation in Colombo has given this project generous financial assistance from the very outset. In the 1950s the project got off the ground almost entirely because of a large donation from the Asia Foundation. Proceeds from the sales of Vol. I (1&2) enabled us to print and publish Vol. III so that indirectly, if not directly, the Asia Foundation helped with Vol. III as well. With regard to Vol. II, the Asia Foundation has come to the aid of the University once again, with a very generous grant which has helped us to meet a substantial part of the costs of producing this volume. We would like to acknowledge our grateful thanks to the Asia Foundation and to its Resident Representative Mr Edward Anderson, and his deputy, Mr Stephen Claborne, for their support for the publication of this present volume.

At the University of Peradeniya, the Librarian, Mr N T S A Senadeera responded positively to every call we made on his time and the resources of the Library while the Senior Assistant Registrar Ms Sudharma Nandasena handled the administrative duties involved in the management of the project with a quiet efficiency and an unruffled dedication that impressed us all.

Our printer, Mr Mahendra Senanayake of Sridevi Printers, was a model of efficiency and professionalism. It is a pleasure to record our appreciation of the special interest he took in our work and scrupulous care he took to meet the requirements of the tight schedule we set him.

As anyone who directs a complex project such as this knows all too well its successful completion depends on the support staff who are called upon to prepare several drafts of chapters at each revision. Dilrukshi Herat and Iranga Athukorale of the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES), who handled the bulk of this work did so at an unusually high level of professional competence. They have considerable experience in the preparation of copy for monographs and books, but this project made

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extraordinary demands on their time and skills. The work they did in the preparation of this volume cut heavily into their normal schedule of duties, but they readily agreed to undertake it at my request. On the rare occasions when the pressure of keeping to the tight schedule set proved to be too great, Sepali Liyanamana, a former employee of the ICES, came to the rescue by sacrificing her evenings and weekends to prepare some draft chapters. Shyani Siriwardene also formerly of the ICES helped me in the laborious task of preparing a bibliography. Without her hard work at the word processor the arduous business of compiling a comprehensive bibliography would have been much more difficult than it proved to be, and would have taken much longer than it did. Kanthi Gamage, Librarian/Documentalist of the ICES took on the tedious exercise of reading proofs, and did that work with her customary thoroughness.

I began work as editor of Vol. III shortly after my appointment as Professor of Ceylon History in March 1969. Now, twenty five years later and at the tail-end of a long career, I am as relieved as I am happy that it has been possible to publish Vol. II, and to bring to a close an enterprise that began when I was in my final year as an undergraduate in the Department of History at the University of Ceylon.

> K M de Silva Kandy, February 1995

## ABBREVIATIONS

ASCAR	Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Annual Report
ASC	Archaeological Survey of Ceylon
BKI	Bijdragen van het Koninklijk Institut voor Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde.
BMAM	British Museum Additional Manuscripts Series
ВМОМ	British Museum Oriental Manuscripts Series
CALR	Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register
СНЈ	Ceylon Historical Journal
CJHSS	Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies
CLR	Ceylon Literary Register
CNA	Ceylon National Archives
со	Colonial Office, despatches series
CRO	Commonwealth Relations Office, despatches series
Cv.	<i>Cūlavamsa</i> , being the more recent part of the <i>Mahāvamsa</i> edited by Wilhelm Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, Vol.I, 1925 and Vol.II, (1927); translated into English by Wilhelm Geiger, published by the Ceylon Government Information Department, Part I and II, (Colombo, 1953).
	All references to the <i>Cūlavamsa</i> in this present volume are to the translation published in 1953.
de Queyroz	The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon by Father Fernão de Queyroz, translated by Father S G Perera, Published by the Government Printer, (Colombo, 1930).

do Cuoto	The History of Ceylon, From the Earliest Times to 1600 AD, as related by João de Barros and Diogo do Cuoto, translated and edited by D W Ferguson, $JCBRAS$ (q.v) XX, No.40, (1908).		
EZ	Epigraphia Zeylanica		
IESHR	The Indian Economic and Social History Review		
JBUC	Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon		
JCBRAS	Journal of the Ceylon Branch, of the Royal Asiatic Society		
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland		
JSLBRAS	Journal of the Sri Lanka Branch, Royal Asiatic Society		
KA	Koloniale Archief, the Archives of the former VOC (q.v) now at the General State Archives at the Hague.		
Knox (1911)	Robert Knox, An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon (London, 1681); edited by James Ryan and published in Glasgow, 1911 under the title Knox's Ceylon with Autobiography.		
Knox, Interleaved Edition (1989)	Robert Knox, An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon, revised, enlarged and brought to the verge of publication as "The Second Edition of Robert Knox Edition together with his Autobiography and all the new Chapters, Paragraphs, Marginal Notes added by the author in the Two Interleaved copies of the original text of 1681," (ed.) J H O Paulusz, 2 vols, (Dehiwala, 1989), (referred to hereafter as Knox, Interleaved Edition).		

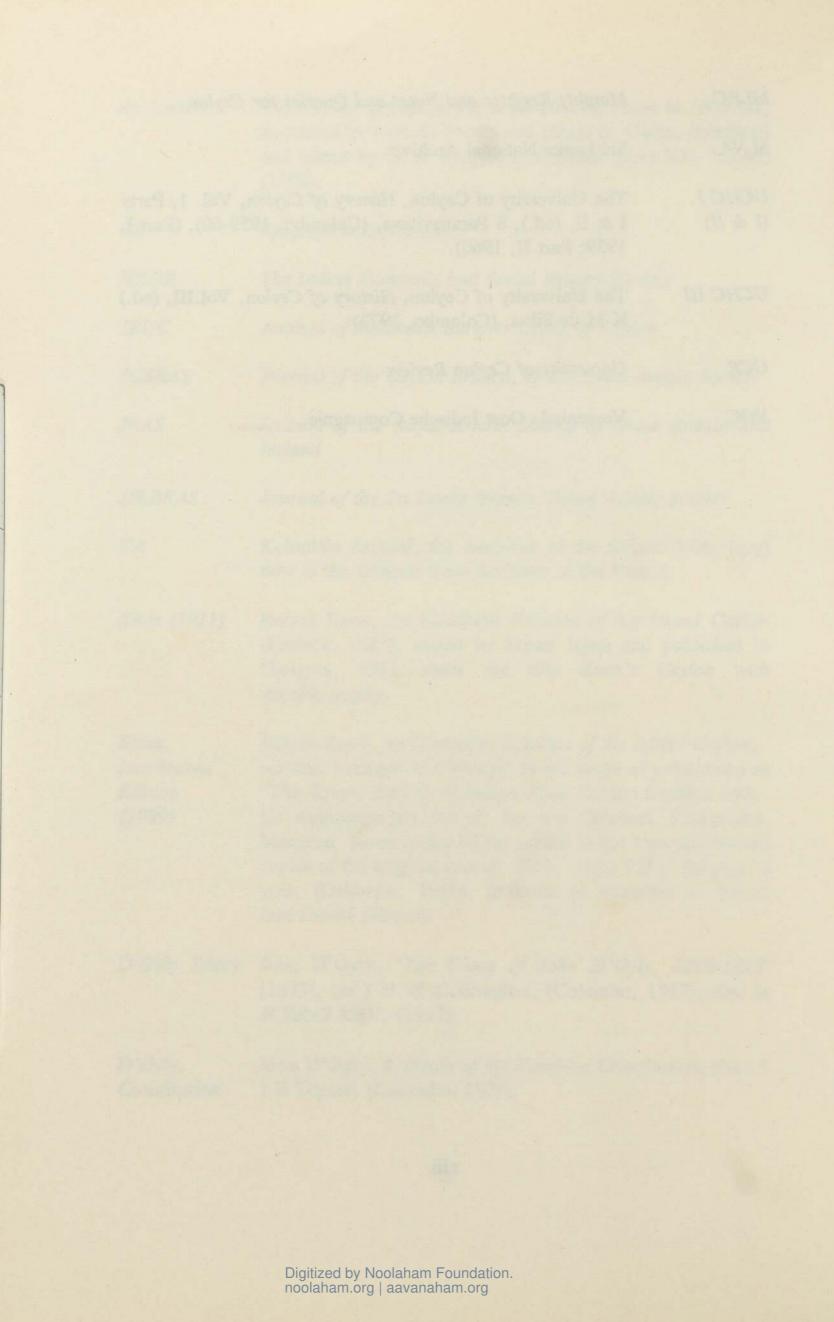
D'Oyly, Diary John D'Oyly, "The Diary of John D'Oyly, 1810-1815" [1825], (ed.) H W Codrington, (Colombo, 1917), also in JCBRAS XXV, (1917).

D'Oyly, John D'Oyly, A Sketch of the Kandyan Constitution, (ed.) L Constitution J B Turner, (Colombo, 1929).

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MLRC	Monthly Register and Notes and Queries for Ceylon
SLNA	Sri Lanka National Archives
UCHC I	The University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon, Vol. 1, Parts
(I & II)	I & II, (ed.), S Paranavitana, (Colombo, 1959-60), (Part I, 1959; Part II, 1960).
UCHC III	The University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon, Vol.III, (ed.) K M de Silva, (Colombo, 1973).
UCR	University of Ceylon Review
VOC	Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie.

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## LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

- The late Professor T B H Abeyasinghe, BA (Ceylon), Ph.D (London) was Professor of History, at the University of Colombo. He was the author, among other works, of *Portuguese Rule in Ceylon*, 1594-1612, (Colombo, 1960) and Jaffna Under the Portuguese, (Colombo, 1986).
- Professor S Arasaratnam, BA (Ceylon), Ph.D (London), formerly Senior Lecturer in History, at the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, is Professor and Chairman of the Department of History at the University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales, Australia. He is the author of a number of books and monographs, including, *Ceylon*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1970) and Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1658-1687, (Amsterdam, 1958).
- Professor C R de Silva, BA (Ceylon), Ph.D (London) formerly Professor of History, and Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya; presently, Professor and Chairman, Department of History, The State University of Indiana, Terre Haute, Indiana, USA. Among the books and monographs to his credit are *The Portuguese in Ceylon*, 1617-1638, (Colombo, 1972) and Sri Lanka: A History, (Delhi, 1987).
- Dr L S Dewaraja, BA (Ceylon), Ph.D (London), Associate Professor of History, and later, Director of the Institute of Workers Education at the University of Colombo; sometime Rhodes Fellow, St. Anne's College, Oxford and Fulbright Professor of History at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota; she is the author The Kandyan Kingdom of Ceylon, 1707-1782, (Colombo, 1988); and Sri Lanka Through French Eyes, (Kandy, 1990) among other works.
- Professor K N O Dharmadasa, BA (Ceylon), MPhil (York), Ph.D (Monash), is Professor of Sinhala, at the University of Peradeniya. Among the books to his credit is Language, Religion and Ethnic Assertiveness: The Growth of Sinhalese Nationalism in Sri Lanka, (Ann Arbor, 1992)
- Professor Sirima Kiribamune, BA (Ceylon), Ph.D (London), Professor of History at the University of Peradeniya. Her principal area of research is the history of pre-modern South Asia which has led her to the subject "Women in History" in more recent times. She has

many research publications dealing with historical themes as well as women's issues and is a co-editor of Women at the Crossroads: A Sri Lankan Perspective, (Delhi, 1989), K W Goonewardena Felicitation Volume, Special Issue, Modern Sri Lanka Studies, Vol. II, 1987. She is a joint editor of Asian Panorama: Essays in Asian History, Past and Present, (Delhi, 1990). She also edited Reconciliation of Roles: Women, Work and Family in Sri Lanka, (Delhi, 1992)

- Professor D A Kotelawele, BA (Ceylon), Ph.D (London) is currently, Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the Open University of Sri Lanka, Colombo. He was formerly, President, Vidyalankara Campus (presently the University of Kelaniya) of the University of Sri Lanka and Director, Ruhuna University College, (now the University of Ruhuna). He has published a number of articles on aspects of the history of the rule of the Dutch East India Company in Sri Lanka, in European and Sri Lankan learned journals.
- Professor S Pathmanathan, BA (Ceylon), Ph.D (London), Professor of History at the University of Peradeniya. He is the author of Kingdom of Jaffna, I, (Colombo, 1978) and has published a number of articles in learned journals. He is currently Vice-Chairman of the University Grants Commission.
- Dr S Tammita-Delgoda, MA (York), Ph.D (London), an independent scholar, is the author of *A Traveller's History of India*, (London, 1994).

#### The Editor

Professor K M de Silva, BA (Ceylon), Ph.D, D.Litt (London) has been Professor of Sri Lanka History at the University of Peradeniya since 1969. Among the books he has written are: A History of Sri Lanka, (London, California and Delhi, 1981), Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multi-Ethnic Societies: Sri Lanka 1880-1985, (Lanham, Md, 1986) and Regional Powers and Small State Security: India and Sri Lanka, 1977-1990, (Washington, DC, 1995). He has edited, the University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon, Vol. III, (Colombo, 1973), Sri Lanka: A Survey, (London, 1976), and Sri Lanka: The Problems of Governance, (Delhi, 1993).

## GLOSSARY

Accomodessan

Adigār

amuna

aňda aňda muttetuva appuĥāme also appuhāmy -

āracci

atapattu

bahar

basnāyaka nilamē bēt

bhikkhu

chank chēna also hēna Land granted in return for duties or services or offices held

One of two principal ministers of the Kandyan kingdom; the Pallēgampahē adigār ranked as the First Adigār, and the Udagampahē adigār, the Second Adigār. Under the Portuguese adigārs ranked below Disāvas, a practice continued by the Dutch

A measure of capacity which varied from six bushels of paddy, to 24,000-26,000 arecanuts; as a surface measure, about 2 acres of paddy land, i.e. a sowing area for an *amuna* of paddy. This would vary with location and fertility of soil

Share, usually one half; proprietor's portion Proprietor's land cultivated in aňda

Term of respect added to men's names; sometimes used for sons of headman

Village level officer, generally below a kōrala (q.v.); non-commissioned officer in lascarin (q.v.) force

Officer in the messenger staff of the  $dis\bar{a}va$  (q.v.)

A measure of weight used everywhere in the East in the 16th and 17th centuries generally about 400 to 500 pounds; a Dutch bahar weighed about 480 Dutch pounds, while a Portuguese bahar weighed about 384 Dutch pounds. A Dutch pound was 9% more than the avoirdupois pound

Lay head of a devale (q.v.)

Medicine; bēt-gē, royal dispensary; bētgē muhandiram nilamē, chief physician to the king

A member of the sampha (q.v.), the Buddhist order

- Mother of pearl
  - Forest burnt and cultivated at intervals;

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		generally sown with fine grains and vegetables
dāgäba	-	Also cetiya; dome shaped monument
		containing relics of the Buddha, and of other
		luminaries
Daladā Māligāva	-	
dēvalē	-	0
Disāva	-	Administrative head of a province (a disāva or
1		disāvany)
disāvany	-	Also disāvanē, province or district under a Disāva
Divavadana nilamā		Principal lay officer of the Temple of the
Diyavadana nilamē	-	Tooth; Chief of the King's bath
dhony, or dhoney		Toolin, Chief of the King's buth
also thony	-	A vessel with one mast, derived from
		Portuguese 'tone'
fo, fos	-	folio, folios
gabadāgama	-	A royal village; gabadāgam, villages
		belonging to the royal storehouse.
gamasabhāva	-	Village council, or tribunal
gaminnāse	-	Quasi-monk of 16th and 17th centuries in
		Kandyan kingdom, genually resident in a
		vihāra; not admitted to the order as a
		sāmanēra (q.v.) and was not necessarily
Kinded of theirs the		celibate
goyigama	-	Caste of farmers
gravets	-	Gate or fence used to block roads; generally of
Heeren XVII		thornbushes Board of Directory of the VOC
hēna		Board of Directors of the VOC See chēna
karāva		Caste of fishers
kōrāla		Chief of territorial unit known as korale
kōralē	-	Unit of administration, generally part of a
		disāva or disāvany
larin or ridī	-	A coin from Portuguese times (see also real)
lascarin	-	Indigenous soldiers. The term was first used
		by the Portuguese and continued by the Dutch
lēkam mitiya	-	(pl. lēkam miti) register of lands, cadastral
Contraction of the		registers
madigē	-	Pack-bullock or transport department of the
		kings of Kandy
mahā	-	Principal paddy harvest of the year; harvest
		season

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mahā gabāva		Dours! store
Mahā Mudaliyār		Royal store Chief headman of the Governor's
	-	
		establishment in Dutch times; the title was
Mahā Nilamē		continued by the British
Mudaliyār	unik	The First Adigār (q.v.)
	-	Military officer of the <i>lascarin</i> force; also an honorific
muhandiram	0.0	officer of the lascarin force below the rank of
sentabilitev services	-	mudaliyār
muttettu	_	Paddy and high lands set apart for a exclusive
		use of grantee of a village
nilamē	_	High official; chief
nikāya	_	A fraternity of the sampha
Ōla	-	Palm leaf
pangu, pamgu	_	Part of share of land in a village; the holder of
1 .0 /1 .0		a pamgu was known as pamgukāraya
pattu	-	Sub-division of a koralē
perahära	-	Ritual or religious ceremonial procession
placcaats, also plakkaats	-	Proclamations of Dutch government
pravēni (alt. paravēni)	-	Hereditary holding of land
quintal	-	One-third of a bahar
radala	-	
rājakāriya	-	Pertaining to chiefs or nobles Duty to the king; any service to the king, a bio chief or vihāra (q.v.)
		chief or vihāra (q.v.)
ranchu	-	detachment of lascarins under an āracci
rața	-	District or province
ratē ätto	-	Persons of the goyigama caste
ratē mahatmayā	-	Chief of a rata or district
real, plural reis	-	Portuguese money in Kötte
		5 reis = a fanam
		100 reis = a larin
		300 reis = a xerafim
B. Ferning and strong foreign		$400 \ reis = a \ cruzado$
regimento	-	Standing order
sabhā	-	Tribunal or assembly
salāgama	-	Also halāgama, caste of cinnamon peelers
sāmanēra	-	A Buddhist novice, preparatory to entry to
1		sampha after higher ordination
sampha	-	The Buddhist order
sannasa (pl. sannas)	-	A royal grant usually inscribed on copper plate
topass (also topus)	-	A person of mixed Portuguese indigenous
		percentage or descent; sometimes also a

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tombo undiyā valavva Vanni

Vanniyār vidānē vihāra

person who speaks two languages

List or register of persons or lands

-Collector of royal revenues

Dwelling of a chief -

- Région between Portuguese and Dutch territories in the north and northeast and the Sinhalese kingdom
- Ruler of a vanni province
- Village official with constabulary services
- Buddhist temple

## MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

#### MAPS

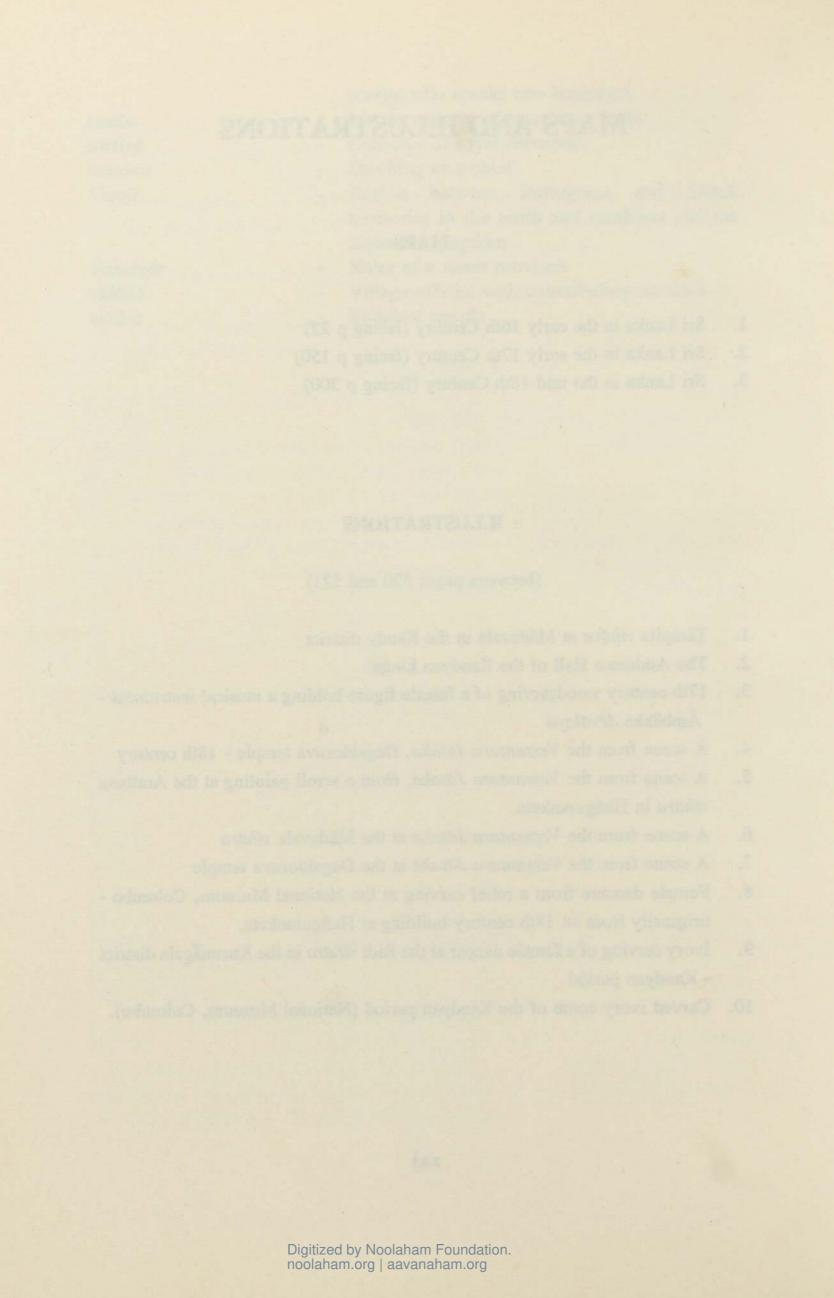
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## **INTRODUCTION**

## K M de Silva

This volume surveys the main trends in the history of Sri Lanka over four centuries from around 1500. We begin our survey just over 30 years after the death of Parākramabāhu VI (1412-1467), the last Sinhalese king to rule over the whole island. In 1796 - the point at which our survey is concluded - the British had already established themselves on the coasts of the island. In just over 20 years from that date (1815-1818) they had secured control over the whole island, in a series of events analyzed in the early chapters of Vol III in this series.<sup>1</sup> Between these two periods when a single power had control over the whole island, the story is one of the principal Sinhalese kingdoms, Kotte, Sītāvaka and Kandy, in turn, struggling in the face of internal strife, generally succession disputes, and external threats. The latter was often the greater danger. The external threats no longer came from southern India or from any other part of the subcontinent, but from the western powers, from Portugal first of all and then from Holland. It is also a story of their survival against heavy odds, a story of stubborn resistance, and a classic study in the emergence and development of anti-colonial resistance movements. Indeed the student of such movements has few better examples for examination than the record of the Sinhalese kingdoms of Sītāvaka and Kandy, which succeeded in keeping the Portuguese and Dutch at bay for nearly three centuries. Even in the coastal areas of the country under colonial rule there were frequent episodes of violent opposition, stemming as much from political grounds - the visceral hostility to the foreigner, especially the Portuguese - as from social and economic factors - as seen in the agrarian disturbances which erupted so often in demonstrations of popular unrest under the Dutch.

What happened in Sri Lanka over the fifty years from the death of Parākramabāhu VI could be described as a series of avoidable political calamities, avoidable because most of them were self-inflicted. While it is

UCHC III, chapters I & II, pp 1-33.

true that the political legacy of Parākramabāhu VI was being spent by his immediate successors it was by no means exhausted by the time the Portuguese arrived in the island in 1505-6. That legacy could have been replenished by an astute ruler or set of rulers, but in the early sixteenth century Kōtte was literally torn apart in one of the most vicious episodes of internal rivalry - a struggle for the succession to the throne - in the history of Sri Lanka. Quarrels within the ruling house soon absorbed energies that could have been better spent in limiting the scale of the Portuguese intrusion into the island's affairs. As it was these internecine conflicts and internal divisions allowed the Portuguese to convert a foothold into a bridgehead, and a bridgehead into political control over large parts of the littoral and the south west. Sri Lanka's maritime regions shared the distinction with the Zambezi river valley in Africa of being the only two regions in Asia and Africa in which the Portuguese extended their control over territories well beyond their coastal forts.

Even so the two rulers of the short-lived kingdom of Sītāvaka, Māyādumē and, his son and successor, Rājasimha I, were the dominant political figures in the island in the sixty years ending in 1593. Without the Portuguese in the island it is quite conceivable that a Māyādumē or a Rājasimha could have emulated Parākramabāhu VI, and imposed Kōtte's rule over the whole island. Between them they inflicted several defeats on the Portuguese and only the latter's access to assistance from Goa at critical moments saved them from expulsion on more than one occasion. When Sītāvaka collapsed so dramatically in the last decade of the sixteenth century it was from causes that had little to do with the strength - such as it was - of the Portuguese. With its collapse the Portuguese became heirs to the kings of Kōtte, but while they succeeded, in 1619-20, in bringing the Jaffna kingdom under their rule, every attempt on their part to subjugate the Kandyan kingdom failed dismally.

From the early seventeenth century onwards large extents of Sri Lanka's coastal territories became parts of the Portuguese colonial empire, and then of the colonial empire of the Dutch. Neither the Portuguese nor the Dutch succeeded in their efforts to bring the whole island under their rule, but their control over the coasts and the external trade reduced the political manoeuvrability and sapped the economic strength of the kingdom of Kandy, the last of the independent Sinhalese kingdoms. Nevertheless the kingdom of Kandy maintained its hold over much of the larger part of the island throughout its history and regarded itself not merely as the heir of Kōṭṭe and Sītāvaka but also heir to the predecessors of Kōṭṭe, going back to ancient times when the core of the Sinhalese kingdoms was located in the northcentral plains of the island. The history of those kingdoms has been reviewed

in Vol. I of this series.<sup>2</sup>

The generation of Sri Lankan historians who grew up in and did much of their writing in the final phase of British rule in the island, were accustomed to dividing the last five centuries of its history into the Portuguese, Dutch and British periods. This periodization prevailed virtually unchallenged for about 15 years after independence, till a younger generation of historians demonstrated how fallacious such notions were, at least as regards the Portuguese and Dutch who never ruled anything more than the island's coastal regions and some parts of the interior in the periphery of the principal Sinhalese kingdom. These revisionist views first propounded by K W Goonewardena and S Arasaratnam have now become the orthodox version. Unlike most orthodox versions this one has every prospect of long survival because it is based on what is virtually a self-evident truth, that despite their importance in Sri Lankan history, and although they controlled parts of the littoral, the Portuguese and the Dutch were seldom the principal force operating within the island. That distinction lay quite clearly with Sītāvaka, and, later on, with the Kandyan kingdom. There is, however, greater justification for treating the years from 1815 to 1947 as the British period of Sri Lanka's history.

The historian of the Sinhalese kingdoms of Kōṭṭe, Sītāvaka and Kandy, and indeed the historian of the much smaller and more vulnerable kingdom of Jaffna alike, has to overcome the handicap of a paucity of indigenous sources. The paucity (sometimes, indeed, the total absence) of such sources, is for the most part, due to the prolonged warfare that these kingdoms engaged in their struggle against the Portuguese and the Dutch. The city of Kandy, for instance, was sacked and burnt by invading Portuguese and Dutch armies on several occasions. Among the items consumed by the fires were the official records, the archives, of that kingdom. The same would be true of the cities of Kōṭṭe and Sītāvaka. The historical imagination, the analytical skills and critical insights of these historians face a formidable challenge as they endeavour to reconstruct the history of the country, and to put together a history of the colonized peoples during these centuries from the records, official and administrative, and the literary works including histories, left behind by the colonisers.

Thus the historians of Sri Lanka writing on the affairs of the Sinhalese kingdoms have to rely, to a very great extent, on the colonial archives and Portuguese and Dutch sources for much of their data. This reliance is even greater in the case of the Tamil kingdom in the north of the island, the kingdom of Jaffna. The records of the colonial powers are

<sup>2</sup> UCHC I, (1 & 2).

preserved in Lisbon and the Hague and, especially with regard to the Dutch, a substantial portion of the records "inherited" by the British at the time of their conquest of the island are preserved in Colombo. No one writing on Kötte and Sītāvaka could do without Portuguese sources, just as much as anyone writing on the Kandyan kingdom would be heavily dependent on Dutch sources and on the material accumulated by British officials in the early days of British rule in the island. This accounts for the frequency with which the works by de Barros and do Couto<sup>3</sup> and de Queyroz<sup>4</sup> are cited in the chapters of this volume dealing with the Kötte and Sītāvaka, or Dutch sources in those dealing with later periods. And, of course, the study of the Kandyan kingdom relies heavily on British sources, whether they be contemporary literary works, such as Knox's well known study of the island,<sup>5</sup> for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or nineteenth century writers such as Cordiner,<sup>6</sup> Davy<sup>7</sup> or D'Oyly.<sup>8</sup> This is quite apart from official records of the British colonial administration in Colombo and London. Some contemporary Sinhalese sources, principally literary works and a few records belonging to or relating to Buddhist institutions, and grants and donations of property to officials and religious institutions have survived and have been used in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> Fernão de Queyroz, *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon* (1687) translated and edited by S G Perera, 3 Vols, (Colombo, 1930).

<sup>5</sup> Robert Knox, An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon (London, 1681). The edition principally used by the authors of some of the chapters of this volume is the one by James Ryan published in Glasgow in 1911 with the title Knox's Ceylon with Autobiography. In 1989 a more comprehensive edition by J H O Paulusz was published in the Ceylon Historical Journal, Monographs series, in two volumes. This carried the title, An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon, revised, enlarged and brought to the verge of publication as "The Second Edition of Robert Knox - together with his Autobiography and all the new Chapters, Paragraphs, Marginal Notes added by the Author in the Two Inter-leaved copies of the original text of 1681." (Referred to hereafter as Robert Knox: The Interleaved Edition).

<sup>6</sup> James Cordiner, Description of Ceylon, 2 Vols, (London, 1817).

- <sup>7</sup> John Davy, An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants, (London, 1821).
- <sup>8</sup> John D'Oyly, "The Diary of D'Oyly, 1810-1815," [1825], H W Codrington (ed.), (Colombo, 1917), also in JCBRAS, XXV, (1917) and A Sketch of the Constitution of the Kandyan Kingdom, L T B Turner (ed.), (Colombo, 1929).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> "The history of Ceylon from the earliest times to 1600 AD as related by João de Barros and Diego do Couto" translated by D W Ferguson in *JCBRAS*, Vol. XX, 60 (1908), pp 1-455.

The chapters of this volume dealing with Portuguese and Dutch colonial administration and policy are based, for the most part, on contemporary official records in the archives in Lisbon and the Hague, in Goa and Colombo. Neither the Portuguese nor the Dutch records have been used to anything near exhaustion; on the contrary - and this is more true of the Dutch records - there are administrative records, such as *tombos* (registers or lists of individuals and properties) as distinct from the governmental correspondence and minutes of decisions taken, which have not been exploited to any great extent by scholars. The recently published two volume study of the Dutch *placcaats* (laws and regulations) by Hovy<sup>9</sup> is an example of what could be done through the systematic use of administrative records.

For better or for worse the three centuries of Portuguese and Dutch rule over some parts of the maritime regions of Sri Lanka had a profound impact on the society there, even if we reject the notion of Portuguese and Dutch periods of Sri Lanka's history. The fact is that for over three centuries some of the coastal areas of the island were units of a world-wide Portuguese empire (and from 1580 to 1640, parts of a Hapsburg empire)<sup>10</sup> and later of a similarly expansive empire of the Dutch East India Company. In planning this volume we have always been conscious of this fact and especially the linkage between the external trade of the island and the European economy of early capitalist enterprise. In this process Sri Lanka was linked to a wider world than merely the Indian Ocean state-system. In its own way this volume is a contribution to the study of the political and economic roots of Portuguese and Dutch imperialisms. It is also a contribution to a study of indigenous societies and states engaged in a battle for survival against these imperialisms, and a contribution therefore to the literature on resistance movements, the roots of modern nationalism.

The complexities of western colonial expansion in the countries covered by this volume, and the responses that latter process evoked in the Asian societies ruled by the Portuguese and the Dutch, or in the periphery of those colonial territories, have been handled with great sensitivity by the British scholar Professor C R Boxer in a number of magisterial volumes.<sup>11</sup> Some of the authors of the chapters of this volume are his students. For their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> L Hovy, Ceylonese Plakkaatboek, 2 Vols, (Hilvershum, 1991).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> This was because of the union of the crowns of Portugal and Spain during this period.

See particularly his The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415-1825, (London, 1969) and The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800, (London, 1965).

part a generation of South Asian scholars<sup>12</sup> have built on the foundations laid by C R Boxer and have provided fresh insights into the nature of Portuguese and Dutch imperialism in South and South East Asia, especially in demonstrating how the Portuguese and the Dutch became part of the history of the Asian territories over which they ruled. The authors of the chapters of this volume go well beyond the conventional treatment of the Portuguese and Dutch as benevolent agents of modernization or as merely aggressive intruders in Sri Lankan affairs whose rule would be forgotten in decades to come as an irrelevance in Sri Lanka's long history. Instead we have a skilful demonstration of how they were enmeshed in the island's affairs, and very soon, and almost unbeknown to them were, if not indigenized at least, compelled to accept indigenous institutions and administrative structures as their own. Many chapters of this volume, and in particular, chapter XII written jointly by Dewaraja, Arasaratnam and Kotelawele dealing with administrative systems, illustrate the operation of these forces. This volume, then, is a conscious attempt to study colonial rule as part of the indigenous history of the societies over which that rule was imposed and at the same time to underline the importance of the reverse process, of the indigenous states and societies, being absorbed into the wider Asian and extra-Asian world. Two of our authors, S Arasaratnam<sup>13</sup> and C R de Silva<sup>14</sup> have earned a reputation for their scholarly contributions in linking the history of Sri Lanka in the centuries covered by this present volume with the wider Indian Ocean context and with the study of the economic and political roots of European imperialism in its earlier phases. The chapters they have contributed to this volume reflect this interest and concern as much as many other works of theirs.

In designing the structure of this volume and in our choice of authors we have been concerned that the duality which runs through this volume - the interaction between the indigenous and the colonial - is viewed from as many angles and from as many sources as possible. The concern for this duality suffuses the chapters on the 16th century and the early part of the seventeenth although the focus in them was Kōṭṭe, Sītāvaka and the early years of the Kandyan kingdom, and on the last days of the kingdom of Jaffna. Naturally

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> See particularly Sanjay Subrahmanyam, The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500-1700: A Political and Economic History, (London, 1993).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> For example, his Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, (Delhi, 1986).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> See his study of the "Portuguese East India Company, 1628-1633" in the Luso-Brazilian Review II(2), 1974, pp 152-205.

the Portuguese strand gains greater prominence with the collapse of Sītāvaka. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries present greater difficulties in maintaining a balance in the analysis of this duality. Many of the problems are viewed from two angles, the Kandyan and the Dutch, but, quite often, through the use of much the same sources, generally colonial sources. As a result there has been some repetition. Indeed in a volume such as this repetition is unavoidable; sometimes it is even necessary as in the case of the events of the 1760s analyzed by Kotelawele and Dewaraja from virtually the same sources but with a different emphasis if not focus.

The complexities increase once the English East India Company, through its Madras "government," begins to show an interest in the affairs of Sri Lanka from the latter part of the eighteenth century. Three of our authors have looked at this problem, Kotelawele, Dewaraja and Delgoda, the first from Dutch sources, the second from a mixture of Dutch and indigenous sources, and the third from an exhaustive study of the records of the English East India Company. Their contributions form an enriching academic exercise as they unravel the complexities of an interaction between the indigenous and the colonial on the one hand, and between the rivalries of competing colonialisms on the other, as the British move in to dislodge the Dutch from the island.

This volume is divided into five parts, the first of which deals with the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth, with the selfdestructive factionalism in the Kōṭṭe kingdom which gave the Portuguese so many opportunities for intervention in the affairs of the island, opportunities which they exploited so assiduously and ultimately so successfully. The seven chapters that constitute the first part of the volume have been written by C R de Silva and the late T B H Abeyasinghe with S Pathmanathan joining de Silva in an analysis of the last phase in the history of the Tamil kingdom in the north of the island. Between them de Silva and Abeyasinghe have provided the reader with as comprehensive a picture of the Kōṭṭe kingdom and, its rival and successor, the Sītāvaka kingdom, as we are ever likely to get for many years to come, till another generation of scholars would build on their work as they have built on the earlier studies of Paul E Peiris<sup>15</sup> and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> See particularly his, Ceylon, the Portuguese Era, 2 Vols, (Colombo, 1913), Ceylon and the Portuguese, 1505-1658, (Tellipalai, 1920), and Ceylon and the Hollanders, 1658-1796, 3rd ed (Colombo, 1947).

Fr S G Perera.<sup>16</sup> In chapter III of this volume C R de Silva surveys the short, tempestuous and tragic history of the kingdom of Sītāvaka with a mastery of sources, Portuguese and Sinhalese, that few others have shown in dealing with that episode in the island's annals. With the collapse of Sītāvaka, the Portuguese come into their own, proclaiming themselves as heirs of the kingdom of Kōtte; at last they became, effectively, *de jure* rulers of parts of the Sri Lankan littoral and made an unsuccessful bid to establish control over the whole island. Those parts of the island which they controlled and ruled became constituent units of Portuguese rule in Kōtte in Chapter V, and in Chapter VI surveys the early years of the Kandyan kingdom as it survived the efforts of the Portuguese - emulating the Kōtte rulers and claiming to be their heirs - to bring it under their control, and eventually prevailed as the sole surviving Sinhalese kingdom and the heir to the tradition of resistance that was the essence of Sītāvaka's history.

The core of the second part of the volume is the survival of the Kandyan kingdom and its consolidation under Rājasimha II and his heirs as they succeeded in securing the expulsion of the Portuguese with the help of the Dutch and then finding themselves confronting the uncomfortable reality of having exchanged one colonial power for another. Thus the duality in Sri Lanka's history which began with the arrival of the Portuguese continues, the symbiosis between the indigenous and the colonial, the Kandyan kingdom representing the one, and the Dutch the other. Neither strand can be studied in isolation, the interconnection being too close for anything of the sort. The three authors who deal with the century and half of the history of Sri Lanka from the mid 17th century to the end of the eighteenth, S Arasaratnam, L Dewaraja and D A Kotelawele, are keenly aware of that. The emphasis in the second part of this volume is on the history of the Kandyan kingdom as it struggles for survival and engages in a long, gruelling effort to remind the Dutch that while they may rule parts of the littoral they could not ignore the interests of the Kandyan kingdom or its influence on the people of the maritime regions.

In 1739 the Sinhalese dynasty that began with Sēnāsammata Vikramabāhu comes to an end in the male line, and a South Indian dynasty inherits the throne of Kandy through marriage ties that had been built over the decades. That a succession from one dynasty to another could have been effected so peacefully, especially when it was a succession by a group from

<sup>16</sup> Apart from his translation and edition of the 2 volume work of de Queyroz referred to in footnote 4 above there was his *History of Ceylon from 1505-1911 for Schools*, first published in Colombo in 1932. This went into several editions.

a part of the world long regarded by the Sinhalese as the traditional enemy, is grimly ironic. Throughout the long history of Sri Lanka, the moment of greatest vulnerability of a ruling family or dynasty had been at the point of succession from one ruler to another. Succession disputes have been the bane of the Sinhalese ruling houses. One of the most striking features of the history of the Kandyan kingdom is that at long last the Sinhalese had learned to handle a transition from one dynasty to another without the destructive rage that so gravely weakened the kingdom of Kotte in the early sixteenth century and enabled the Portuguese to expand their bridgehead into territorial control. As the authors of the chapters in part two of this volume show, the Dutch governors of the littoral hoped and believed that history would repeat itself on this occasion. They were disappointed. The Nāyakkars were altogether more astute, and quickly consolidated their hold on the Kandyan kingdom, becoming in the process more Buddhist than the Sinhalese rulers they had succeeded, and all the while exploiting divisions in the ranks of the Sinhalese aristocracy to sustain themselves in power.

The third part of the volume deals with the economy of the island from the accession of Rājasimha II to the arrival of the British. There the duality which we have reviewed in its political aspect persists, with the difference, however, that the island's economy was linked to that of the wider world, to the trade of the Indian Ocean and to that of Europe much more securely than before. We have much more documentary evidence, much more data on this aspect of the island's economy, than on the economy of the Kandyan kingdom. While Arasaratnam's chapter [Chapter XIV] shows how this linkage was effected, and how it progressed, Dewaraja deals with the economic structure of the Kandyan kingdom, and Kotelawele on the impact of Dutch rule on the people of the maritime regions of the island.

The religious and cultural history of the period is reviewed in the fourth part of the volume by three authors, Dewaraja, Kiribamune and Dharmadasa. There the emphasis is on the indigenous, reflecting the sources available for study. Very little of the Portuguese contribution to architecture, domestic and public, has survived unlike that of the Dutch. The introduction of Roman Catholicism to the island, and of Protestantism is reviewed in a number of chapters in the volume as a whole. In Chapter XVI Dewaraja concentrates on the fate of Buddhism in these centuries.

One of the legacies of the colonial experience is the confrontation between Buddhism and Christianity and the intrusive western culture and civilization with which the latter was linked. In Sri Lanka that intrusion and its inevitable tensions with the indigenous religions began in the middle of the sixteenth century, with Portuguese influence and, later, Portuguese rule in the littoral. Portuguese colonialism was very much the child of the Counter Reformation. Its emphasis on the principle of *regio illius religio* perpetuated

a central feature of the Sri Lankan political system, the link between the state and religion which had its origins in the Anurādhapura kingdom. Dewaraja's chapter illustrates the operation of this principle in the Kandyan kingdom. Nevertheless, the zealotry and harsh intolerance which characterized the imposition of Roman Catholicism in Sri Lanka were something new and unfamiliar in a society which seldom confused the obligation to encourage adherence to the national religion with suppression of other faiths.

Converts to Christianity - under the Portuguese and the Dutch - came to be treated as a privileged group. Severe restrictions if not penalties were imposed on the practice of the traditional religions - Buddhism primarily, and Hinduism and Islam,.<sup>17</sup> These were most severe under the Portuguese. Once the Dutch widened the scope of these restrictions to include Roman Catholicism<sup>18</sup> as well,we have an excellent example of the battles of the European Reformation and Counter Reformation being fought on Oriental soil.

The last part of the volume deals with the arrival of the British. Sinharaja Delgoda's chapter deals with the English East India Company's interest in the affairs of Sri Lanka, and its decision to supplant the Dutch in Sri Lanka as part of a process of consolidating their expanding power in the Indian sub-continent. It was the replacement of a declining and outdated version of imperialism by a more dynamic and powerful one. Delgoda's chapter is an essential link between this second volume, and the third published twenty years ago which deals with the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> See C R Boxer, "Christians and Spices: Portuguese Missionaries in Ceylon, 1518-1658," *History Today*, VIII, 5 (1958): 346-354; and "A Note on Portuguese Missionary Methods in the East: 16-18th centuries," CHJ, Vol.10, (1960-61), pp 77-90.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> S Arasaratnam, "Oratorians and Predikants: The Catholic Church in Ceylon under Dutch Rule" in CJHSS I (1958), pp 216-22, R Boudens, The Catholic Church in Ceylon under Dutch Rule, (Rome, 1957).

PART 1

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# **CHAPTER I**

### SRI LANKA IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY: POLITICAL CONDITIONS

### C R de Silva

At the dawn of the sixteenth century the island was still dominated by the kingdom of Kötte.<sup>1</sup> This kingdom was not only the largest in size but the richest and most powerful of the island's political units. The area under the authority of its ruler varied from time to time but in the early sixteenth century it theoretically covered all of Sri Lanka, although the northern kingdom encompassing the Jaffna peninsula and the adjacent coast up to the island of Mannar in the west and to the environs of Trincomalee in the east refused to accept this claim from about the 1460s. However, to understand the realities of political power in sixteenth century Sri Lanka one has to distinguish between ritual sovereignty and actual political control. The maximum extent of direct political control of the rulers of Kotte extended from about the Malvatu Oya in the north to beyond the Valavē Ganga in the south and from the sea coast in the west to the mountainous core of the island in the east. A major part of the population of the island lived within this area and agriculture and trade too were most developed within this region. Even within this region, however, provincial rulers appointed by or legitimized by the centre enjoyed varying degrees of autonomy. The kings of Kotte also claimed and received the allegiance of the autonomous ruler of the Udarata or the central highlands, which later became the kingdom of Kandy. Furthermore, a number of petty chieftains called the vanniyars, ruling small

The kingdoms in Sri Lanka are usually named after their capital and thus the kingdom with its capital at Jayavardhanapura Kötte is called the kingdom of Kötte. The exception is the kingdom of Jaffna with its capital at Nallūr.

principalities along the eastern coast and in the Vanni region, also accepted the sovereignty of Kötte. Some of them were so far removed from the reach of Kötte that their motivations for the acceptance of the sovereignty of Kötte must have included the desire to strengthen the legitimacy of their own position by establishing relations with an anointed ruler. Some of the vanniyārs of northern Sri Lanka seem to have alternated between recognizing the overlordship of Kötte and that of Jaffna and indeed, might well have acknowledged both simultaneously.

By the early sixteenth century, the political power of the ruler of Kōtte was visibly in decline. The kingdom, founded in the early fifteenth century, had expanded under the powerful Parākramabāhu VI (1411-1467)<sup>2</sup>, who eventually united the whole island under his rule for about two decades. After his death, however, although the rulers of Kōtte continued to regard themselves as *cakravartis* or emperors of the whole island and indeed did occasionally enforce their sovereignty in areas south of the kingdom of Jaffna, in practice, their authority outside the limits of Kōtte proper was very restricted.

It is possible to advance a number of reasons to account for the decline of the power of Kotte but foremost among them were economic and geographical and administrative factors. The political unification of the island in the centuries preceding the fall of the Polonnaruva kingdom had been based on a complicated system of irrigation works on the northern plain for whose maintenance state patronage was a decisive factor. This irrigation system had not only provided the economic base for royal power but had predisposed those benefitting from it to accept a strong central administration. The outlying areas which were not directly connected to the irrigation system had a great deal of autonomy but were often too weak and too undeveloped to resist the claims of suzerainty put forward by the centre. With the disruption of this hydraulic economy in the thirteenth century, the situation changed. Successor kingdoms were largely dependent for income on lands cultivated with either rain-fed agriculture or with independent systems of irrigation. The inhabitants, less dependant on the centre were also less ready to accept central control. Thus, unless there was strong leadership at the centre, political fragmentation became part of the prevalent (if not the accepted) political scene. The economic factor thus largely explains why political division

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The regnal dates of kings given in this chapter are those proposed by G P V Somaratne in *The Political History of the Kingdom of Kōție* 1400-1521, (published by the author, Colombo, 1975). The alternative chronology proposed by Mendis Rohanadheera has not been accepted as the authenticity of his major source is open to question. See Mendis Rohanadheera (ed.), *Asgiriyē Talpatin Alutvuna Lanka Itihāsaya*, (published by the editor, Gangodavila, 1969).

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became a major feature of the island's history after the thirteenth century. Even Parākramabāhu VI seems to have realized the limits imposed by these economic constraints. Although he unified Sri Lanka by conquering the northern kingdom of Jaffna and by subjugating the central highlands he did not attempt administrative centralization. He merely entrusted the governance of these areas to those loyal to him and when internal strife weakened central control after his death, local rulers had little difficulty in regaining autonomy.<sup>3</sup>

The geographical conditions prevailing in most of the south-western plain - the heart of the Kotte kingdom - also provided obstacles to the development of a strong centre. Unlike in the drier regions of the island where the open country made communications relatively easy, the dense tropical jungles of the south-west tended to isolate villages or groups of settlements. In this context, it was easier to develop separatist tendencies and to foment revolts against the ruler. King Bhuvanekabāhu VI (1469-77), better known as Prince Sapumal, faced a formidable rebellion soon after his The inhabitants of Pitigal and Alutkūru korales who revolted accession. against Vīra Parākramabāhu VII (1477-89) were subdued only in the reign of his successor Dharma Parākramabāhu IX (1483-1513). There was also the problem of continuing administrative decentralization. None of the rulers of Kötte in the last quarter of the sixteenth century seem to have displayed exceptional ability. They were unable to resist the further diminution of power at the centre and its decentralization. The custom of appointing close relatives of the ruling monarch as sub-kings in different regions of Kotte came to be an accepted administrative practice. Thus, in the reign of Dharma Parākramabāhu, four of his brothers ruled different portions of Kotte although they all remained subordinate to the chief ruler. Of these, Srī Rājasimha ruled the Four Korales and Sakalakalavallaba the Seven Korales while Taniyavallabāhu was placed in charge of the Pitigal and Alutkūru koralēs and Vijayabāhu (also called Chakrāyudha) ruled the Rayigam koralē. This practice was perhaps originally aimed at satisfying princes who had some claims to the throne and in preventing the development of local principalities hostile to the court. In these respects, it did have some success. For instance Taniyavallabāhu evidently kept the restless Pitigal and Alutkūru koralēs in control. Furthermore, when the Muslim chieftain of Palayakayal seized Chilaw, and began to violate the Kötte king's rights in the hunting of elephants and in fishing for pearls off that port, it was Taniyavallabāhu who, on the orders of his brother and sovereign, attacked and defeated the invader.

<sup>3</sup> UCHC I, pp 663-83.

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Nevertheless, in the long run, the policy of decentralizing power led to a further weakening of the power of the chief monarch. Princes who could do so gradually transformed the areas they administered into virtually autonomous hereditary principalities. The Seven Korales, for instance, appear to have achieved and retained an autonomous status in the first half of the sixteenth century and Taniyavallabahu and his heirs certainly controlled Mādampē until the turbulent events of the mid-sixteenth century. In addition, control of autonomous bases of power by potential claimants to the throne encouraged succession disputes. There was no clear accepted law of succession. Even the nomination of an heir-apparent or yuvarāja did not necessarily ensure a peaceful succession. Thus, in 1513, on the death of Dharma Parākramabāhu IX, the yuvarāja Sakalakalāvallaba was challenged by his brother Vijayabāhu and it was only the graceful withdrawal of Sakalakalāvallaba that averted civil war and ensured a peaceful start to the reign of Vijayabāhu I (1513-21). The withdrawal of Sakalakalāvallaba did not apparently end opposition to Vijayabāhu because it is reported that, around 1518, a brother of Vijayabāhu had requested the Portuguese for aid to seize the throne.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the growing political fragmentation of Kotte and the gradual decline of its power, the kingdom of Kötte remained by far the strongest power in the island. Its strength is well illustrated by the failure of the rulers of the central highlands to obtain independence. The Udarata had the disadvantage of being relatively undeveloped and scantily populated. On the other hand, its location and physical features rendered the subjugation of the area a somewhat difficult task. In the 1470s Sēnāsammata Vikramabāhu (1469-1510) seems to have taken advantage of the rebellions in the lowlands against Bhuvanekabāhu VI to make himself the autonomous ruler of the highlands.<sup>5</sup> However, Vikramabāhu himself had to agree to send a number of his subjects to perform customary service to the king of Kotte as well as to pay annual tribute in return for recognition of his status as ruler of the highlands. Vikramabāhu was not allowed to sit on a throne or to mint coins. Whenever he violated these conditions he was brought to heel by the rulers of Kötte. Vikramabāhu did make two subsequent bids for independence. One was made soon after the landing of the forces of the chief of Palayakayal at Chilaw. On this occasion he was comprehensively defeated by the sub-king Srī Rājasimha and forced to pay an indemnity of 3 elephants and 300,000

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Gaspar Correa, Lendas da India, Vol.II, p 548.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> UCHC I, p 679; T B H Abeyasinghe, et.al., Udarata Rajadhāniya, (Colombo, 1985), pp 11-2.

fanams to Kōtte besides giving his daughter as wife to Kīravällē Ralahāmy who had commanded the Kōtte forces. Towards the end of his reign Vikramabāhu made his final bid but was again decisively defeated by the Kōtte forces led this time by Sakalakalāvallaba. Vikramabāhu's son and successor, Jayavīra (1511-51), continued this policy of seeking to expand power but he too eventually failed to establish the independence of the highland principality.

Nevertheless the *Udarața* emerged as a distinct factor in the politics of the island. The ruler of this highland region commanded the traditional five *rațas* (districts) grouped round the old royal capital of Gampala and the new capital of Senkadagalanuvara (Kandy). The kings of Kōtte had virtually no voice in the succession in the *udarața* and had to be alert to frequent challenges to their power from the highland kings. With the gradual decline in the effectiveness of Kōtte, some of the *vanniyārs* on the east coast seem to have begun to acknowledge the overlordship of the ruler of the highlands.

The northern kingdom of Jaffna had reemerged as a separate state soon after the death of Parākramabāhu VI. It is possible that the new Çinkaiariyan rulers of Jaffna secured the protection of the Vijayanagara empire in neighbouring South India. Vijayanagara forces under Saluva Narasimha reached Ramēswaran by the 1470s.6 However, Jaffna's new rulers, having secured control over the peninsula and the neighbouring areas did not challenge the authority of Kotte south of Mannar. The kings of Kotte, in turn, being preoccupied with their own problems, made no attempt to regain the north although they continued to assert their theoretical claims over The northern kingdom, inhabited largely by Tamils who were Jaffna. followers of Saivite Hinduism, had a cultural identity distinct from that of the Sinhalese Buddhist kingdoms to the south. However, it was small and weak and though it did receive the allegiance of a few chieftains who ruled the lands adjoining the Jaffna peninsula itself, its own independence was continually under threat from the rulers of the neighbouring regimes in South India.

A number of petty principalities extended from the border of the Jaffna kingdom along the eastern coast to Yāla and Pānama in the south. These were the *vanni* chieftaincies ruled by the *vanniyārs*. The term *vanniyār* appears to have embraced a wide category of persons ranging from direct appointees of the kings of Kōtte who ruled outlying districts of the kingdom to autonomous rulers of large though somewhat undeveloped and sparsely populated areas.

Burton Stein, Vijayanagara, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), p 55.

The arrival of the Portuguese introduced a significant new element into this divided polity of Sri Lanka. Since the activities of the Portuguese had a crucial impact on the history of the island at least from the second decade of the sixteenth century, their early relations with the kingdom of Kotte are worth reviewing in some detail.

The Portuguese, who first reached India by sea in 1498, were primarily interested in securing trading products - chiefly spices - for sale in Europe. In order to maximize their profits, they wished to trade directly with the areas of production. It was therefore a matter of time before they arrived in Kötte and the Gulf of Mannar the well known sources of cinnamon and pearls respectively. However, during the first few years of the sixteenth century the Portuguese were occupied with another task they had set themselves; that of eliminating their trade rivals and of cutting off supplies to Europe via the trade routes through western Asia.

On their arrival in the Malabar coast, the Portuguese had found the trade in the Indian ocean dominated by Muslims. The traditional enmity between Christian Portugal and the adherents of Islam compounded trading rivalry and the Portuguese proceeded to use force to attack and seize the ships of their trading rivals. In this task, Portuguese ships had an overwhelming advantage in that they were built sturdily enough to mount cannon unlike the light, though more easily maneuverable, ships of the Asian traders. Nevertheless, the small number of Portuguese vessels made it very difficult for them to intercept all Muslim vessels taking cargoes of spices to ports in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Moreover, the experienced Muslim traders soon began to avoid the Malabar coast where the Portuguese cruised around in force and sailed directly from ports in Southeast Asia to the Middle East around the southern coast of Sri Lanka. It was to counter this move that Don Françisco de Almeida, the first Portuguese Viceroy of India, sent a contingent of ships southward under the command of his own son, Lourenço. According to the Portuguese historian, João de Barros, Lourenço de Almeida was also requested to check on the location of Sri Lanka and of the Maldives, the latter being a group of islands for long famous for its coir ropes. Lourenço failed to find any Muslim vessels but was driven by adverse winds to the western coast of Sri Lanka and made his way to Colombo. The available evidence does not permit us to be certain as to whether the first visit of the Portuguese was in November 1505 or in August/September 1506, but the main events after the arrival, are clear. The Muslim traders of Colombo and even the Sinhalese monarch must have already received many reports of the aggressive and ruthless actions of the Portuguese on the Malabar coast and in the Arabian Sea. Both Portuguese and Sinhalese documents indicate that the local inhabitants were greatly alarmed at the appearance of the newcomers. As the Alakēśvarayuddhaya records with some exaggeration, the Sinhalese immediately reported on the visitors to their sovereign at Kötte that they "...eat stones and drink blood, they give two or three silver coins for one lime or one fish, the sound of their cannon is louder than that of thunder at the end of the world and the cannon balls fly many leagues and shatter forts of iron and stone..."<sup>7</sup>

Dharma Parākramabāhu IX promptly summoned his brothers from their provincial capitals and, on their advice, tried to negotiate with the powerful foreigners. Lourenço de Almeida, on his part, glad to have discovered the fabled source of cinnamon and of precious stones, proved rather accommodating and sent envoys to explain his position to the ruler of Kotte. The two parties swiftly reached an accord. The nature and terms of the accord, however, are shrouded in doubt. Three Portuguese historians, Castanheda, do Couto and de Queyroz, maintain that there was a formal treaty between the Portuguese and the ruler of Kotte by which the latter agreed to vassalage and tribute. The amount of annual tribute agreed to was 150 bahars of cinnamon<sup>8</sup> or according to both do Couto and de Queyroz. The Portuguese, including their king, considered the cinnamon obtained by de Almeida as tribute paid by a newly acquired vassal. On the other hand, several sources including the Alakēśvarayuddhaya and the mid-sixteenth century chronicle of Gaspar Correa claim that all that occurred was an exchange of presents and an accord of friendship and it does seem likely that this was a more accurate version of what actually happened. Even Castanheda admits that the Portuguese failed to obtain any cinnamon directly from Sri Lanka in 1508. Yet they did not, at this time, allege a violation of treaty obligations. Moreover, when Lopo Soares de Albergaria arrived in 1518 with a fleet much larger than that of Lourenço de Almeida, he did not, at first, demand either vassalage or tribute but merely permission to build a fort at Colombo. It does seem that a gesture of goodwill was misunderstood by the Portuguese (wilfully or otherwise) and that some later chroniclers writing years afterwards, projected the events of 1518 back to the occasion of the earliest Portuguese visit.9

A V Suraweera (ed.), Alakēśvarayuddhaya, (Colombo, 1965), p 25. (hereafter, Alakēśvarayuddhaya).

<sup>8</sup> For a definition of bahar see glossary.

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<sup>9</sup> Fernao Lopes de Castanheda, Historia do descobrimento e conquista da India pelos Portugueses, P de Azevedo (ed.), Coimbra, 1924-1933, 9 Vols, Vol. II, p 262; "The History of Ceylon from the Earliest Times to 1600 AD as related by João de Barros and Diogo do Couto," trans., D W Ferguson, JCBRAS, Vol. XX, p 72, Fernão de Queyroz, The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon, trans., S G Perera (ed.), Colombo, 1930 p 181; Gaspar Correa, The Portuguese in Ceylon in the first half of the sixteenth century: "Gaspar Correa's Account," trans., D Ferguson, CLR, Third Series, Vol. IV, pp 141-9, 156; Rājāvaliya, p 214; Alakēśvarayuddhaya, pp 28-9. During the years which followed the departure of Lourenço de Almeida Portuguese ships occasionally called at Colombo to purchase cinnamon. Indeed, de Queyroz maintains that they had a trading factory in Colombo as early as 1507.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the indications are that the Mappila traders of Malabar contrived to regain their control over the overseas trade in cinnamon and that the Portuguese were forced to purchase the bulk of their requirements of Sri Lanka cinnamon at Malabar ports.

The relative slowness of the Portuguese in exploiting the opportunities opened by their discovery of the route to Sri Lanka was not due to any lack of interest. Rather it was that they were forced to divert all their energies in an effort to stabilize their position in the Malabar coast and to meet an Egyptian challenge to their naval supremacy in the Arabian Sea. The samudri of Calicut, now a steadfast opponent of Portuguese attempts to control trade on the Malabar coast had appealed for naval assistance to the Mameluk ruler of Egypt. The Egyptian ruler, alarmed by the fall in his revenues caused by the decline of trade through the Red Sea owing to Portuguese depredations, had responded by sending a powerful fleet in 1507. From the time of the arrival of the Egyptian fleet off the Indian coast to its eventual withdrawal after two sanguinary battles in 1509, the Portuguese in the East were kept on the alert to face the naval threat of a rival fleet armed with artillery. Even after the Egyptian threat faded, the Portuguese under the new Viceroy, Don Affonso de Albuquerque (1509-15) were kept busy in trying to capture strategic points in the Indian Ocean to strengthen their control over trade in this region. Thus they seized the island of Sokotra in 1509, Goa in 1510, Malacca in 1511, and Ormuz in 1515.

In the eyes of many Portuguese, Colombo was as important as these ports in terms of both commercial and strategic value. Dom Françisco de Almeida himself, in a letter written to his king on 5 December 1507, argued for a Portuguese fort in Sri Lanka on the ground that all vessels sailing from the western coast of India to Malacca, Sumatra, Bengal or Pegu and vice versa had to sail within sight of the island.<sup>11</sup> De Almeida's correspondence reveals that he attached a high priority to the construction of a fort in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> de Queyroz, op. cit., p 183.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Biblioteca da Academia das Ciencias, Lisbon, Serie Azul 64. f. 309.

Colombo.<sup>12</sup> De Albuquerque, on the other hand, seemed to be less convinced of the need to establish a fort on the island but he did not lack critics in this regard. On 15 December 1513, António Real wrote to his sovereign complaining that though de Albuquerque attempted to conquer remote and inaccessible areas he did not venture to exploit the riches of the island.<sup>13</sup> The authorities in Lisbon displayed little hesitation in deciding this question. Orders were sent to de Albuquerque to fortify Colombo at the earliest opportunity.

It was however, only in the time of his successor Governor Lopo Soares de Albergaria that the Portuguese in India found themselves able to spare the time and the resources to turn to Sri Lanka. In September 1517, the Governor himself set out from Cochin with a fleet of seventeen vessels, mostly galleys and foists. His expedition was joined by another unit of ten vessels from Goa - and the Portuguese force in the combined fleet came to about 700 to 1000 soldiers, a large proportion of the Portuguese fighting strength in the East.<sup>14</sup> De Albergaria also brought along a contingent of nairs from the Malabar coast to serve as an auxiliary force. After a short stay at Galle, to which port they had been forced by adverse winds, the Portuguese made their way to Colombo and requested permission from King Vijayabāhu to build a fort to protect their trading interests. They informed the King of Kötte that cooperation with the Portuguese had already brought prosperity to some rulers of the Malabar coast like the rāja of Cochin. It was also apparent from the size of the Portuguese armament that the king's refusal would not deter them and that refusal would certainly lead to armed conflict. Vijayabāhu, after ascertaining that the Portuguese Governor wished for no other concessions, agreed to the construction of a fort.

The Portuguese promptly began constructing a triangular fort of stone and clay at a point off the township of Colombo. For de Albergaria, however, the fort was not an end in itself but stepping stone towards Portuguese control over the export trade of Kōṭṭe. Therefore, once the walls of the new fort had reached a defensible height, de Albergaria sent an envoy to the monarch of Kōṭṭe with gifts of cloth and horses requesting that all the cinnamon in the royal storehouses be delivered to the Portuguese at the

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p 77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Genevieve Bouchon, "Les Rois de Kotte au debut du siecle XVI," Mare Luso - Indicum I, 1971, p 76.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Archivo Nacional do Torre do Tombo, Manuscritos da Livraria 1115 f. 39; de Queyroz, p 188, Documenta Historica Ultramarina I, pp 341-2.

current price of one gold *portuguez* for every four *bahars*. To Vijayabāhu, this must have seemed a violation of the original understanding that permission to build a fort to protect their trade was all that the Portuguese required. There is little doubt that the Muslim traders who had so far kept the export trade of Kōtte in their hands encouraged the king to refuse the Portuguese request. It is said that one of them, Mamale of Cannanor, offered to obtain assistance against the Portuguese from Malabar. The king of Kōtte also perhaps consulted his two surviving half brothers, Sakalakalāvalla and Taniyavalla. Eventually, the decision was made. The Portuguese were to be attacked and driven out of the country.

The first clash between the Sinhalese and the Portuguese established a pattern of military history that was to recur many times in the island for the next century and a half. The Sinhalese forces, aided by the Muslims, attacked the Portuguese fort and built a stockade alongside it but the Portuguese, making effective use of their ships' artillery successfully withstood the assault and eventually drove off the besiegers in confusion. When the Portuguese tried to pursue them across unfamiliar terrain, however, the roles were soon reversed. The Sinhalese laid an ambush and, according to de Queyroz, the Portuguese were able to withdraw to the fort only because a solar eclipse momentarily disconcerted the local forces.<sup>15</sup>

By this time, King Vijayabāhu was sufficiently alarmed to reverse his policy. The use of Portuguese cannon and muskets against Sinhalese bows and swords had led to disproportionate losses to his forces. Despite Portuguese withdrawal into their fort there was hardly any doubt that an attack on the capital city of Kōtte was well within their reach. Moreover, a prolonged conflict in the lowlands could well encourage the restive ruler of the Udarata to make a further bid for independence.

De Albergaria too was ready for peace. He was no doubt anxious to return to India where he had already been superseded as Governor by Diogo Lopes de Sequeira who had arrived from Portugal in 1518. Nevertheless, he held out for harsh terms. After much negotiation, the king of Kōtte was forced to agree to be a vassal of the King of Portugal and pay an annual tribute of ten elephants, twenty rings set with gems and four hundred bahars of cinnamon.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> de Queyroz, pp 190-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> As Gavetas do Torre do Tombo, Vol. V, p 143; Bouchon, Mare Luso Indicum I, p 78, Vitorino Magalhaes Godinho, Os Descobrimentos e a Economia Mundial, Lisboa, Editora Arcadia, 1965-71, 2 Vols, Vol. II, p 40; Documents on the Portuguese in Mocambique and Central Africa 1497-1840, Vol. V, 1517-1518, pp 597-9; de Queyroz pp 195-6.

Once peace was signed, Lopo Soares de Albergaria sailed away leaving two ships under António de Miranda de Azevedo to secure supplies for the fort and a hundred and twenty Portuguese soldiers and some Indian auxiliaries under Dom João de Silveira to defend it.<sup>17</sup> But relations between the Portuguese and the local inhabitants remained rather tense. The onset of the southwest monsoon which curtailed Portuguese communications with India frequently signalled the outbreak of open fighting. In June 1518, for instance, a seaborne force from Calicut launched an unsuccessful attack on the newly built fort. Exactly one year later, a trade boycott provoked the Portuguese to attack the trading settlement of Colombo. Moreover, trade at the port of Colombo had declined sharply because Muslim traders feared to bring their ships within the reach of the Portuguese stronghold.<sup>18</sup>

The Portuguese themselves were far from being content with the situation. Their fort, named Santa Barbara, was not strongly built and the structures within the walls, like the chapel and the storehouses, were roofed with cadjan (the dried and woven leaves of the coconut palm) which could be easily set aflame by a firebrand thrown over the walls. The walls themselves began crumbling in the southwest monsoon of 1519 and the Portuguese captain of Colombo, Dom João de Silveira reported that only a conflict between Vijayabahu and the ruler of the Udarata deterred the Sinhalese forces from attacking the Portuguese fort. Worse still, the new Portuguese Governor of India, Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, had his sights set on the Red Sea and neglected to send adequate funds and supplies to Colombo. Food ran short and soldiers began to desert. In 1519, António de Miranda de Azevedo was instructed to sail along the coast and try to persuade Asian vessels to resume trading operations in Colombo. The king of Kotte was probably aware of the plight of the Portuguese and made use of the opportunity to delay tribute payments. By November of 1519, de Silveira had received only six elephants and 150 bahars of cinnamon and the quality of the latter was so bad that his successor was ordered to hold an inquiry on it.<sup>19</sup>

In late 1519, however, the Portuguese Governor of India was at last roused to action. Lopo de Brito supervised the construction of a much

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> As Gavetas, Vol. V, p 143.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Bouchon, Mare Luso-Indicum, Vol. I, p 163; de Queyroz, pp 197-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> As Gavetas, Vol. V, p 143; Alguns Documentos do Archivo Nacional do Torre do Tombo acerca das Navegacoes e Conquistas Portugueses, Lisbon, 1892, p 436.

stronger fort of stone and lime, the lime having been obtained from the nearby pearl fishery.<sup>20</sup>

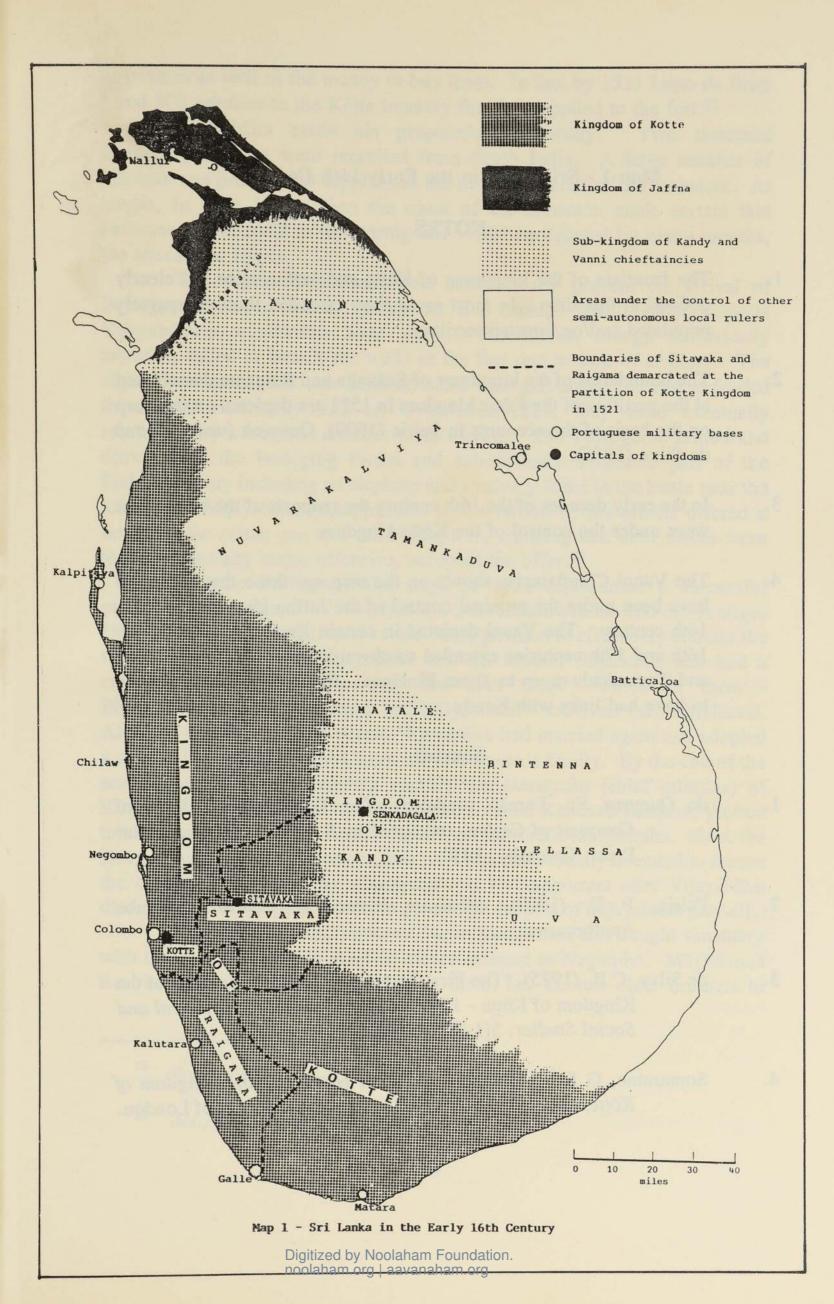
It is possible that the reconstruction of the fort was not due to appeals from Colombo alone because contemporary evidence indicated that Governor de Sequeira had received further orders on Sri Lanka from Lisbon at least by the end of 1520. He was instructed to secure a total monopoly of the export of cinnamon and to levy a tax on every elephant exported from the island.<sup>21</sup> If these orders had been received in late 1519 they could well have been a decisive factor in persuading the Governor to strengthen the Portuguese military position in the island. He must have been aware that any attempt to carry out these orders would lead to renewed fighting in the island.

Both proposed measures seemed ill-advised. Although the Portuguese had some difficulty in obtaining the promised tribute in cinnamon they had experienced no difficulty in purchasing cinnamon at current prices from the royal storehouses. Thus, the only advantage of the measure seemed to be the denial of supplies to rival traders. Yet, such a denial would have been difficult to enforce. It was impossible to control the numerous ports in Kotte from a single fort at Colombo. Two or three vessels stationed off a coastline of over 250 miles, which was all that the Portuguese could manage would have been inadequate for the task. The proposal regarding the export duty on elephants appeared even more unrealistic. As Christovão Lourenço Caração informed his king in early 1522, the number of elephants exported was not large enough for the Portuguese to gain any considerable revenue at the rate of tax proposed. On the other hand, the compulsory transport of elephants to Colombo to have them assessed for taxes could well cost each trader much more than the profit he hoped to obtain from their sale. Caração concluded that the eventual result would well be the stifling of the export trade in elephants.

More significantly, both measures represented further encroachments on the prerogatives of the ruler of Kōṭṭe. Vijayabāhu, who in 1518 had agreed to vassalage most reluctantly, was in no mood to acquiescence in further humiliations. He had already alienated his three elder sons -Bhuvanekabāhu, Pararājasimha and Māyādunnē - by plotting to exclude them from the succession. He may well have considered that only a victory over the powerful foreigner would enable him to regain his lost prestige and he was certainly encouraged by the knowledge that the Portuguese were short of

<sup>21</sup> Bouchon, Mare Luso-Indicum, Vol. I, pp 165-6.

de Queyroz, p 198; As Gavetas, Vol. V, p 142.



### Map 1 - Sri Lanka in the Early 16th Century

#### NOTES

- 1. The frontiers of the kingdoms of Kötte and Jaffna were not clearly defined at this time. In most areas they extended through sparsely populated and/or forested territory.
- 2. The boundaries of the kingdoms of Sītāvaka and Raigama demarcated at the partition of the Kōtte kingdom in 1521 are depicted on this map on the basis of the accounts in Peiris (1909), Queyroz (undated) and de Silva (1975).
- 3. In the early decades of the 16th century the seaports of the south-west were under the control of the Kōtte kingdom.
- 4. The Vanni Chieftaincies shown on the map are those that appear to have been under the nominal control of the Jaffna kings in the early 16th century. The Vanni depicted in certain European maps of the 16th and 17th centuries extended southwards across Nuvarakalāviya and Tamankaduva up to about Bintänna. Some of them are known to have had links with Kandy.

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- 4. Somaratne, G P V, (1969), A Political History of the Kingdom of Kotte, circa 1410-1520, Ph.D. Thesis, University of London.

wed 800 pardaos to the Kotte treasury for rice supplied to the fort.<sup>22</sup>

Vijayabāhu made his preparations carefully. Two thousand nercenary soldiers were recruited from South India. A large number of auskets was procured to supplement the traditional arms of the Sinhalese. At length, in May 1521, when the onset of the monsoon made certain that ssistance from India to the Portuguese would be delayed by many months, he attack was begun.

The winds of the southwest monsoon did prevent the arrival of Portuguese reinforcements for almost five months but in other respects Vijayabāhu's calculations went awry. His forces, though numerically superior, failed to breach the walls of the fort due to lack of artillery. The eighty Portuguese and two hundred *nairs* who garrisoned the fort defended themselves stubbornly and on 4 October 1521, they were eventually reinforced by a hundred soldiers from Cochin. The Portuguese rallied and drove away the besieging forces and subsequently overcame part of the Sinhalese army including an elephant and a calvary force in the battle near the township. Vijayabāhu, disappointed at the failure of his efforts offered a return to the *status quo* and the Portuguese, realizing that their forces were too small for any major offensive, accepted the offer.<sup>23</sup>

For the Portuguese the siege of 1521 represented a successful parrying of a challenge. To Vijayabāhu it foreshadowed the end of his reign. Discredited by military defeat, he was in no position to effectively counter the rebellion of his sons. Vijayabāhu and his brother Rājasimha had had a common queen by whom they had four sons. Three of them -Bhuvanekabāhu, Pararājasimha and Māyādunnē - survived their childhood. After the death of his first queen, Vijayabāhu had married again and adopted a child called Dēvarājasimha from the new queen's family. By the end of the second decade of the sixteenth century the *ēkanāyaka* (chief minister) of Kōţte, with the assistance of another noble called Kandurē Bandāra, plotted to kill the three princes to ensure the succession for Dēvarājasimha. Since the Dēvarājasimha was still a minor, this plan was undoubtedly intended to secure the continued power of the *ēkanāyaka* and his supporters after Vijayabāhu died. The scheme appears to have gained the support of Vijayabāhu himself.

The three princes, however, were forewarned and sought sanctuary with the *samgha* and with their assistance escaped to Negombo. Māyādunnē the youngest and most intrepid among them, left his two elder brothers to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p 165.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p 82, de Queyroz, pp 199-203.

rally support in the Pițigal and Alutkūru kōralēs while he himself went to the hill country to secure support from its ruler. The ruler of Udarața welcomed this opportunity to weaken the power of Kōțțe and readily gave him assistance which Māyādunnē supplemented with recruits from the Four Kōralēs, an area where he and his brothers had spent their childhood.

The combined armies marched on Kōtte. Vijayabāhu, finding that his army refused to battle against the princes negotiated for peace. The princes demanded that the two nobles who had planned their assassination should be handed to them for justice. This was agreed to but the *ēkanāyaka* successfully sought sanctuary with the *saṃgha*. A short time later, a violation of the truce by Vijayabāhu, who attempted to have the princes assassinated as they entered the palace grounds for negotiations, led to the end of their forbearance. The palace was sacked and Vijayabāhu put to death. The eldest prince, Bhuvanekabāhu (1521-51) was enthroned as the new monarch of Kōtte while the other two princes were allocated tracts of land over which they were to rule as sub-kings. Thus Pararājasimha (1521-38) became king of Rayigama and Māyādunnē (1521-81), king of Sītāvaka. The last was soon to exceed his sovereign and brother in power and prestige.

By the early sixteenth century, the rulers of the island had developed a rather complex system of administration. Although the bulk of the evidence available on the subject relates to the Kōṭṭe system, it is likely that this system was replicated, though in a in less complex form, in the smaller political units in Sri Lanka. In general, administrative systems were characterized by three essential features, a monarchy which was absolute in theory, but which faced a constant struggle to retain authority and legitimacy, a ruling official-nobility chosen largely on the grounds of caste and a bureaucracy maintained by land grants.

Rulers were almost invariably males, although the Queen-Mother wielded power for a short while after the death of Rājasimha of Sītāvaka in 1592 and Dōna Cätherinā or Kusumāsana Dēvi was briefly enthroned as puppet ruler of Kandy by the Portuguese in 1594. Theoretically, the ruler had access to a great deal of power. The ruler was the supreme political, military and judicial authority. A numerous retinue and an elaborate ritual which surrounded the ruler's daily life and public appearance seem to have strengthened the concept of the 'divinity' of kings.<sup>24</sup> Rājasimha of Sītāvaka was known in popular tradition as *deiyo* (deity). The person of the king was regarded as so sacrosanct that the Sinhalese forces refused to harm the old king Vijayabāhu in Kōtte in 1521 and a foreign assassin had to be hired to kill

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> For details see UCHC I, pp 727-30, 740.

him. On the other hand, it is important to remember that 'divinity' in the Sri Lankan and Indian contexts, unlike during some periods of time in Christian societies, does not imply perfection and the absolute. Prominent local leaders were also deified, (most often after their death), and traditions of village deities living on trees were common. In any case, the supposed 'divinity' did not save many rulers and heirs apparent from death at the hands of their opponents.

Rights over the distribution of land grants gave the ruler a powerful instrument of patronage. The rulers of Kōtte and Jaffna had large extents of land granted in lieu of services rendered, which were theoretically available for redistribution on the death of the grantee. In reality though, the hands of the ruler were often tied by the need to retain the loyalty of certain families, and it is likely that land outside the core areas of the kingdoms was granted by local chieftains with the formal assent of the ruler. The ruler, thus, had to be alert about the erosion of royal prerogatives and to be conscious of the need to retain the loyalty of provincial and local leaders.

There were other powerful constraints on the exercise of royal power. The king was supposed to rule according to custom and could deviate from it only at the risk of opposition from powerful officials and of popular displeasure. Such defiance of custom could prove dangerous in the absence of a large standing army as Vijayabāhu found to his cost in 1521. Moreover, the system of defense based on militia forces provided provincial rulers with ample opportunities of organizing rebellions against a weak or unpopular monarch, opportunities which were enhanced if the areas they ruled were separated from the capital by jungle or mountainous terrain. Such rebellions were most common at or near the transfer of power from one ruler to another. As political links were conceived in personal terms, they needed to be continuously reaffirmed and any successor had to defeat or win over potential challengers and ensure that ritual authority was restored. The ruler was also expected to canvass opinion in the royal council before reaching any important decision.<sup>25</sup> Dharma Parākramabāhu, for instance, consulted his council before taking any steps on the occasion of the first arrival of the Portuguese in the island.<sup>26</sup>

The royal council, however, was not merely a limiting factor on the king's power. It was also an instrument of the royal will. Information regarding its membership and working is scanty but it is known that all its

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> For a more detailed survey of the analogous position of the Kandyan kings see below, Chapter XII, part I.

<sup>26</sup> Alakēśvarayuddhaya, p 28; A V Suraweera (ed.), Rājāvaliya, p 214. (hereafter Rājāvaliya).

members could bear the title of ämati or amātya (minister). The two most powerful ministers seem to have been the sēnāpati and the ēkanāyaka. The post of sēnāpati or commander of the forces appears to have been held by a trusted confidant of the sovereign. It was a position of great prestige. In the mid- sixteenth century Bhuvanekabāhu of Kōtte appointed his son-in-law Vīdiyē Bandāra to that post. The ēkanāyaka was probably the head of the civil establishment and there are indications that the ēkanāyaka was a major power in Kötte in the reign of Vijayabāhu VI. Other ministers of the King's council in Kötte included the bandaranayaka or bandagerala, the minister in charge of royal store houses, the mudalnāyaka, the minister in charge of the royal treasury, the gajanāyaka or minister in charge of the royal elephants, the badunāyaka who probably collected the revenues, the adhikarananāyaka, the chief judicial officer and the arthanāyaka whose duties are unknown. The council is also known to have included several senior palace officials and the disāvas or provincial rulers. On occasions of crisis, even the sub-kings who ruled various regions of Kotte are known to have been summoned for advice. The mahaveleňda-na or the chief of the merchants also had a place in the king's council and this may partly explain the influence of Muslim traders in the court of King Vijayabāhu and that of the Portuguese representative in that of his successor.<sup>27</sup> We do not know whether any of the Queens attended Council but all office bearers were men.

Either the *sēnāpati* or the *ēkanāyaka* also held the position of *agamāti* or chief minister. The chief minister also normally held other positions which strengthened his authority and increased his powers of patronage. For instance, Vickramasimha Samaradivākara, who was chief minister (*adikāram agamāti*) of Sītāvaka during the late sixteenth century was not only *sēnāpati* but *bandāranāyaka* and *disāpati* of Sabaragamuva.<sup>28</sup> The above mentioned officials were, of course, those of the royal council of Kōtte. However, although practically nothing is known of the royal councils of Jaffna and Kandy, it is possible to conjecture that their composition must have been very similar.

The secretaries to the King's Council called *mukavätis* in Kötte performed the vital tasks of maintaining a record of the revenue due to the state. They also transmitted the decisions of the council for implementation to both the territorial and the departmental administrative organs. In Kötte, both those types were organizations of some complexity. The key unit of territorial administration in Kötte was the *korale* or district. Each of the forty

<sup>27</sup> Hansa Sandēsa, stanzas 48-54; BMOM Or 6606 (55), Sītāvaka Vasale Radala Lekhanaya.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> BMOM Or 6606 (130), Vickramasinha Adikāram Varnanāva.

korales was organized as an administrative unit but in certain areas two or more of them were placed under a single head for purposes of administrative convenience. Thus were created units like the Seven Korales, the Four Korales and Matara. Such areas were sometimes placed under the close relative of the King of Kotte. The sub-rulers so established was given the title of raja or king and some of them, in time, acquired a great deal of autonomy. More often, however, these collections of korales were called disavas or provinces and placed under an official known as the disāva or disāpati. There are indications that the chief minister normally acted as the disāpati of the korales adjacent to the capital. Other areas of Kotte governed by disapatis during this period included the Four Korales, the Five Korales, Matara and Nuvarakalāviya. Jorge Frolim de Almeida, writing at the end of the sixteenth century, recorded that the Five Korales was so unruly that its disapatis were invariably chosen from the royal house.<sup>29</sup> The kingdom of Sītāvaka too adopted the system of disāpatis, at least by the mid-sixteenth century, because the records of that kingdom include mention of the disāpatis of the Four Korales, the Seven Korales and Sabaragamuva. Appointments to posts of disāpati do not seem to have been limited to an exclusive section of the nobility though it seems probable that the goyigama caste, as a whole, dominated the higher reaches of the administrative structure. The Siyana kōralē for instance provided ten disāpatis during the sixteenth century but only two of them came from the same village.30

The powers of the *disāpati* were extensive. He was responsible for the general peace and well-being of the province under his charge. He mustered and led the militia force of his area in time of war. He had extensive judicial powers as is indicated by the title *adhikāri* often attached to the post. He was a member of the King's Council. It is likely that the *disāpati* had a great say in, if not the control of, the allocation of lands which had reverted to crown ownership and the appointment of subordinate officials within his territory.

In each of the kōralēs under the disāpati or the sub-king there were two categories of officials. In the first place there were the civil officials led by the kōralē vidanēs. The kōralē vidanē was responsible for the revenue and judicial administration of the kōralē and in this task he was assisted by other officials known as atukōralēs, mohottālas and various kinds of headmen. The precise function of the atukōralē is not clear but the mohottālas were chiefly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Archivo National do Torre do Tombo, Manuscritos do Convento da Graca, Tomo 6 D, p 407.

<sup>30</sup> BMOM Or 6606 (55), Sītāvaka Vasale Radala Lekhanaya.

concerned with the maintenance of land and revenue records. Information about the various kinds of headmen is scanty. Some, at least, do not seem to have had any specific territorial area within the  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}$  to which their duties were limited. Moreover, a great variety of tasks were performed by them. They collected state revenues and ensured the performance of services due to the Crown. They provided food and lodging for higher officials on circuit. They protected the royal store houses and organized the maintenance of village tanks, canals and footpaths. They also settled minor disputes and apprehended those who violated the law. The duties of some headmen were apparently limited to one of two of these functions. On the whole, however, this class of official was responsible for the many administrative tasks that had to be performed at the village level.<sup>31</sup>

The second category of officials under the *disāpati* was that of military officials. Thus included the *kōralē mudaliyārs* who commanded the troops of each *kōralē*. The troops themselves were untrained levies armed with bows, swords, shields and similar equipment. They were organized under officers called *āraccis*, each of whom led a contingent of twenty-four soldiers. According to the seventeenth century Portuguese writer João Ribeiro, these soldiers reported for duty with weapons and food and served in the army for fifteen days after which they had to be allowed a further fifteen days to rest and go back home to replenish supplies.<sup>32</sup> This arrangement however must have been subject to modification in the case of unusual military requirements because Sinhalese armies are known to have fought prolonged campaigns during the sixteenth century.

In some of the major ports in Kötte, a special official called the *shahbandar* appears to have assessed and collected the customs dues while in the minor ports a *vidanē* performed the same task. The Portuguese *tombo* of 1599 claims that in the times of the kings of Kötte all the port areas were placed under a separate *disāpati*. The title *karunāpatirāja* mentioned in the *Alakēśvarayuddhaya* has also been construed to refer to an official in charge of the seaports.<sup>33</sup> The foregoing could imply that the ports formed a distinct territorial organization on their own and that the revenue of these areas did not pass through the hands of the *kōralē vidanēs* but rather reached the royal

<sup>32</sup> Ribeiro, p 104.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> de Queyroz, p 1014; T B H Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, (Colombo, 1966), pp 70-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Archivo Nacional do Torre do Tombo, Manuscritos do Convento de Graca, Tomo 6D p 344; Alakēśvarayuddhaya, p 31.

treasury directly through a special official. However, the evidence available at present seems insufficient to reach a firm conclusion on this question.

departmental administration supplemented the territorial A administrative organization described above. Each department or badda was designed to ensure that the labour services of a particular group of people were secured for the state and the authority of each department in respect of the people who came under it extended throughout the kingdom. Thus, separate departments organized the services of the potters (badahälayo), the washermen (rajakayo), the mat weavers (kinnarayo) and the cinnamon peelers (salāgamayo). Departments were thus often confined to one caste group but not always so. For instance, the elephant department embraced three distinct groups, the panikkayās who caught the elephants, the kuruvē people who tamed them and the pannayās who provided the animals with food. The department of gem mining and the department for the administration of Bulatgama were other examples of baddas which were not confined to a single caste group. In some instances, a department would not consist of all members of a specified caste but only those engaged in the occupation relevant to the department. Thus, for example, the cinnamon department did not have authority over those of the salāgama caste who were palanquin bearers.<sup>34</sup> Whatever its scope, each department was generally headed by one or more vidanes aided by mohottalas, kanakapulles and headmen.

The distinction between the territorial and the departmental systems of administration, however, could well be overemphasized. The territorial system had functional divisions from the  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}$  level downwards. Similarly, authority within the departments was also often delineated according to territorial units. Thus, the elephant department had one vidanē at Devinuvara and another at Mātara, each responsible for the men attached to his department in his own area.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that the two systems complemented each other and together provided an effective organization for the administration of the kingdom.

The Kandyan administrative structure must have been such less developed than that of Kötte though perhaps constructed on similar lines. The more formidable geographical barriers to be overcome and the thinner population density of the region also perhaps made central control even less effective than the lowlands. The Kandyan monarch, nevertheless, appears to have retained firm control over the original five *ratas* which gave the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> T B H Abeyasinghe, The Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, 1594-1612, (Colombo, 1966), pp 136-7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> P E Pieris, The Ceylon Littoral - 1593, (Colombo, 1949), p 96.

kingdom of the kanda-uda-pas-rata, its name. According to inscriptional evidence of the early sixteenth century, these five districts were the following: Denuvara or Gampala and Siňduruvāne comprising of the modern Udunuvara and Yatinuvara; Balavita consisting of Hārispattuva and a part of or the whole of Tumpanē; Pansiyapattuva or Dumbara; Ūva and Atasiyapattuva or Mātalē.<sup>36</sup> There is no contemporary evidence regarding the administrative structure of this region but there are indications that the Kandyan king claimed and sometimes secured the allegiance of areas ruled by vanni chieftains outside the boundaries of his own kingdom.

The region under the direct rule of the monarch of the Jaffna kingdom, which consisted of the Jaffna peninsula, a slice of mainland Sri Lanka and the neighbouring islands appears to have been divided into four units Välikamam, Vadamarachchi, territorial Tenmarachchi and -Pachchilaippalai. The revenue collection of these areas was entrusted to officials known as adigars. Like the vidanes of Kotte, the adigars of Jaffna were collectors of revenue not only of territorial entities but also of caste groups. They were aided in the task by caste headmen called talaiyars and mudaliyārs. The adigārs remitted the dues collected through the mudaliyārs. who were the officials in charge of civil administration in the four territorial divisions. The powers entrusted to mudaliyārs in Jaffna seem similar to those enjoyed by the disāpati of Kotte. They formed an elite group among the nobility and appear to have increased their power after the mid-sixteenth century.37

The administrative systems that had developed in the island proved much more stable than the political structures that were built upon them. The Kōṭṭe system, for instance, contained the basic elements of the system of government that had prevailed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and even earlier. It also constituted the model on which the later administrative structure of Kandy was based. Moreover, many of the administrative practices and institutions of Kōṭṭe survived the fall of the Kōṭṭe kingdom and were in evidence under Portuguese and Dutch rule in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Of course, this stability was also a product of the ability of the system to adapt to changing socioeconomic conditions. The rise of the head of the elephant department to the position of a minister in the king's council was a reflection of the pecuniary value of the elephant trade. An even more

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> EZ, Vol. IV, p 20.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, 1617-1638, (Colombo, 1972), p 170;
 S Pathmanathan, The Kingdom of Jaffna, circa 1250-1450, (Colombo, 1978), pp 351-65.

striking example would be the organization and expansion of the *mahābadda* in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to collect cinnamon in order to supply the rising demand from foreign traders for the community. Especially in Kōtte and Sītāvaka, the relatively steady immigration from South India and the political turbulence of the time seemed to have shaken the *goyigama* monopoly of high office.

However, it might be inaccurate to create the impression that sixteenth century administrations in Sri Lanka were merely instruments of a "mobilizing centre." While, at the best of times, the administrative system worked well to channel resources to the centre, its operations depended in large measure on the cooperation of a host of officials located far from the capital, whose loyalty depended partly upon their perception that the ruler was using resources for culturally sanctioned objectives. The effective operation of the whole system, thus also depended on a return flow of symbolic and other rewards.

Buddhism retained its position as the religion of the vast majority of the people in the island. Since the order of nuns had died out centuries before, the mainstay of Buddhism was in the order of monks or the bhikkhu sampha. The bhikkhus were hierarchically organized under a chief bhikkhu or samghanāyaka. We do not know how the samghanāyaka was chosen at this time. However, allegiance to the three mulas or fraternities which had survived until the fifteenth century, seems to have become less important. In its place there are a series of religious centres to each of which was attached a number of lesser temples whose monks received ordination and training from the centres. It has been argued that the principal divide among bhikkhus during this time was the distinction between vanavāsī (literally, forest dwelling) and grāmavāsī (literally, village dwelling) bhikkhus.38 By this time very few of the vanavāsī monks actually lived in the forest. The Padmavati pirivena at Käragala was a major vanavāsī centre. On the other hand, the Vijayabā pirivena at Totagamuva, the Rāja Maha vihārayas at Kälaniya and Kotte and and vihares at Kälaniya, Väligama, Attanagalla and Devinuvara were centres of grāmavāsī monks.

Conventional wisdom has had it that vanavāsī monks concentrated on vipassanā meditation and other-worldly religious concerns while in contrast, the grāmavāsī monks considered the temple as a repository of information which would be useful to the villager. On the other hand, recent research has indicated that these were not rigidly separated categories but two ends of a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> A H Mirando, Buddhism in Sri Lanka in the 17th and 18th Centuries with Special Reference to Sinhalese Literary Sources, (Dehiwala, Tisara Prakasakayo, 1985,) pp 7-18.

continuum along which we could place *bhikkhus* and temples attached to both fraternities. Thus, student *sāmanēras* at the *vanavāsī* pirivena at Kāragala learnt astrology, medicine, poetry and drama as well as Buddhist texts. Even the *vanavāsī bhikkhus* lived in temples which had extensive endowments in land and part of the function of the temple was the supervision of agricultural activities in the lands donated to it. However, it is probably fair to say that the *grāmavāsī* fraternity concentrated more on study of the texts, preaching and attending to the ceremonial needs of the people.<sup>39</sup>

Some of the temples were large and had extensive resources. For instance, Portuguese records of the late sixteenth century maintain that there were about five hundred bhikkhus at the Vijayabāhu pirivena40 at Totagamuva and a similar number to the Srí Nānānanda pirivena at Rayigama. According to the Portuguese tombo of 1614 the vihāragama (temple village) attached to Srí Ñānānanda pirivena, Totagamuva, alone yielded an annual income of well over two hundred and fifty xerafims.<sup>41</sup> The Sunetrādēvi pirivena at Päpiliyāna may have been a somewhat smaller institution because the annual revenue of Päpiliyāna vihāragama was later estimated at some eighty-five xerafims. There were, of course, other temples which were better provided for. The Navagamuva temple, for instance, derived the equivalent of two hundred and sixty xerafims from Navagamuva village while the well-known temple at Kälaniya held lands which were later estimated to be worth four hundred xerafims a year.42 When allowance is made for underestimation of village revenues in the recording of Portuguese tombos, the extra income generated from alms donated by pilgrims and other devotees and the labour service due to the temples from the villagers, it seems clear that the principal vihāras and pirivenas were well provided for.

Some of these revenues were used to construct elaborate image houses and large buildings for the residence of monks. A Portuguese sketch of the temple at Devinuvara indicates that the Sinhalese sandēsa poems did

<sup>39</sup> H B M Ilangasinha, Buddhism in Medieval Sri Lanka, (Delhi, Sri Satguru Publications, 1992), pp 56-66.

<sup>40</sup> The term '*pirivena*' in this period meant a residence of monks.

<sup>41</sup> Some idea of the purchasing power of the *xerafim* might be obtained by considering that in the late sixteenth century a *xerafim* could purchase 6000 arecanuts or 270 coconuts or 18 measures of pepper. See C R de Silva, *The First Portuguese Revenue Register of Kotte*, 1959 in *CJHSS*, n.s. pp 75-133; see particularly p 80.

<sup>42</sup> Archivo Historico Ultramarino, India Caixa, 37 A Document No. 131; P E Pieris, The Ceylon Littoral, 1593, pp 56-9. not exaggerate when they mentioned three-storied structures at the famed pilgrim centre.<sup>43</sup> A Portuguese friar reported in the mid-sixteenth century that the *vihāras* in the island were richer than the churches of Lisbon.<sup>44</sup> The Lamkātilaka and Gadalādeniya temples in the Kandyan kingdom also had ample, if not comparable, resources. These large ritual centres were supplemented by smaller *vihāras* with one or more resident monks in every sizeable village. On the other hand, the wealth of the temples does not seem to have reached the point at which it would have interfered with the growth of royal revenue. The evidence in Portuguese records suggest that *vihāragam* made up only around five per cent of the villages of Kōtte.

The sampha itself, drew its strength from two main sources. In the first place, the bhikkhus were honoured and patronized by rulers. The Buddhist kings of Kotte and Kandy, whatever their personal beliefs and inclinations may have been, were impelled by the Sinhalese monarchical tradition to appear as benefactors of the sampha. Religious endowments were often confirmed by and added to by successive monarchs. In fact, the support of religious ceremonies and the construction of religious edifices were regarded as culturally approved goals for which state revenues could be expended. Astute patronage could not only develop the capital city as a ceremonial centre but also contribute to the individual status of the ruler. King Dharma Parākramabāhu of Kotte repaired the stūpa, the image house and other buildings of the Kälani vihāra. The Rājaratnākaraya records the numerous temples and monasteries constructed by King Vikramabāhu of Kandy. Vikramabāhu also granted land to a bhikkhu who copied religious texts. The kings of Kotte also played a prominent part in the ceremonies connected with the Tooth Relic. By the early sixteenth century, a clear connection between the possession of the Tooth Relic and the right to sovereign power over the island had been established in the minds of the Sinhalese Buddhists. The kings of Kotte enshrined the sacred tooth in a special building known as the Daladā Māligāva (Temple of the Tooth) which was built within the inner walls of the capital city close to the royal palace. Bhuvanekabāhu VI (1470-78) is said to have presented a new casket for the Tooth Relic.45

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> See Portuguese Maps and Plans of Ceylon, 1650, Colombo, 1920.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Schurhammer and Voretzch (eds), Ceylon sur des konigs Bhuvaneka Bahu und Franz Xavers, 1539-1552, (Leipzig, Verlag der Asia Major, 1928), Vol. II, p 631.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Mirando, Buddhism in Sri Lanka, p 21, Ilangasinha, Buddhism in Medieval Sri Lanka, pp 112-5.

The traditional privileges of the sampha included the right to grant sanctuary within temple property to anyone who sought it and this privilege appears to have been exercised impartially and respected by all parties. According to the Alakēśvarayuddhaya, the three princes of Kōṭṭe escaped their enemies by invoking this right while on their triumphant return the ēkanāyaka of Kōṭṭe, in his turn, successfully sought and obtained protection from the samgha.<sup>46</sup> Bhikkhus also occasionally intervened to advise the monarch on affairs of state. De Queyroz claims that it was a bhikkhu who persuaded Bhuvanekabāhu of Kōṭṭe to give his daughter in marriage to Vīdiyē Bandāra. He also records that the amicable settlement in 1537 between Bhuvanekabāhu and his brother Māyādunnē was arranged by the samgha.<sup>47</sup>

These instances represented the continuation of the traditional role of the sampha in crucial matters of state.

The authority of the samgha also depended on the respect and adherence gained from the people at large and, in this respect, there are no signs of a decline. Although many temples were well endowed, *bhikkhus* had not forgotten their mendicant tradition and the Portuguese who visited the island found them begging for alms.<sup>48</sup> Bhikkhus taught the villagers the rudiments of reading and writing.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, many bhikkhus played an important role in ceremonies connected with the cultivation cycle. The strong hold that popular religion had on the people is attested to by the heavy pilgrim traffic. Buddhist pilgrims continued to visit shrines in Anurādhapura<sup>50</sup> until well into the sixteenth century. Duarte Barbosa writing in the early sixteenth century picturesquely depicts the difficulties of the pilgrim in his way to worship the footprint of the Buddha at Adam's Peak. He describes how the pilgrims got rid of the leeches "... which are so many that they would kill them if they did not do so." He continues "when they reach the mountain

<sup>47</sup> de Queyroz, pp 214, 221-2.

- <sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p 115, Schurhammer and Voretzch, Ceylon, op.cit., Vol.II, p 649.
- <sup>49</sup> de Queyroz, pp 116-7.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p 115.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Alakēśvarayuddhaya, pp 30-1. Rājāvaliya, pp 215-6. An inscription at Kappagoda temple records that Vijayasimha Ekanāyaka Perumal granted lands to rebuild the temple in the reign of Vijayabāhu VII. If this was the chief minister, it indicates that he was a patron of Buddhism while the name Perumal suggests recent immigration from Kerala.

they go up but they cannot ascend the peak by reason of its steepness save by the ladders of very thick iron chains which are placed there...<sup>51</sup>

Many monastic institutions of the period were also centres of education. Among the best known of these were the Padmavati *pirivena* at Käragala, the Vijayabāhu *pirivena* at Totagamuva and the Srí Ñānānanda *pirivena* at Vīdāgama (near Rayigama). In general, the curriculum of these educational establishments concentrated on Buddhist texts and the training of Buddhist monks but the *Girā Sandēsaya* records that there were *brahmin* students who learnt the four *vēdas* as well as Buddhism at Vijayabāhu *pirivena*. Sanskrit and Tamil as well as Pali and Sinhala were studied at that centre. Logic, politics, grammar, astrology and medicine were also taught although these subjects might have been taught largely to lay students.<sup>52</sup>

While Buddhism apparently maintained its hold over the Sinhalese, the early sixteenth century saw the increasing impact of Hinduism on popular Buddhism. The adherents of Hinduism were not confined to the Tamil kingdom of the north but lived in many centres in Kotte as evidenced by the Hindu temples in that region. Devinuvara, for instance, had a Siva kovil to which a benefaction was made by a captain of king's guard in the reign of Vijayabāhu VI.<sup>53</sup> Another famous Hindu temple was that at Munnēsvaram. Portuguese documents of a later date indicate that the temple possessed sixty four devalagam <sup>54</sup> and its revenue may well have exceeded those of the Buddhist temple at Kälaniya. Smaller shrines were found in many of the coastal settlements of Kotte. Vijayabahu VII is said to have donated lands to the Mottapalliya kovil.55 The north and parts of the east coast were peopled chiefly by Hindus. A large Hindu temple flourished on the east coast at Tirukkovil while de Queyroz describes the Saiva temple at Trincomalee (Tirrukkonamalai) as 'one of the most venerated in India.'56 Most Hindu shrines were devoted to the worship of Siva but Ganesha or the god of

- <sup>54</sup> P E Pieris, The Ceylon Littoral 1593, pp 4-6.
- 55 Mirando, Buddhism in Sri Lanka, p 24.
- 56 de Queyroz, pp 65-6.

<sup>51</sup> Barbosa, The Book of Duarte Barbosa, II, p 118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Ilangasinha, Buddhism in Medieval Sri Lanka, pp 136-56.

<sup>53</sup> UCHC I, p 768.

learning also had a share while Skanda Kumāra or the god of Kataragama too appears to have gained a wide following by this time.<sup>57</sup>

Most Buddhist and Hindus also appears to have placed much faith in astrologers and their predictions while at least among the Sinhalese, the *kapuvas* or those who claimed the power to exorcise demons and thus heal certain types of ailments, enjoyed great prestige.<sup>58</sup>

Islam was the only other organized religion which existed in Sri Lanka but its followers were few and do not appear to have been inclined to challenge the other established religions. Indeed, the religious scene in the island was characterized by a high degree of tolerance, Buddhist and Hindu temples standing side by side and often catering to the same pilgrims. It was not that the growing influence of Hindu practices lacked critics among Buddhist scholars but the critics preferred to use methods of persuasion. It was the arrival of the crusading Christians that changed the atmosphere.

58 *ibid.*, pp 1085-6.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, pp 120-1.

# **CHAPTER II**

# SRI LANKA IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

### C R de Silva

The economic structure of Sri Lanka during this period was essentially based on subsistence agriculture although trade in a number of commodities such as arecanut and coconut had introduced the use of money and initiated the cultivation of crops for sale even in relatively remote villages.

Population estimates for this period are based on incomplete data but contemporary Portuguese estimates can be checked at least for the coastal areas with the acreage of paddy land cultivated as recorded in the Portuguese revenue registers and also perhaps with the number of converts to Christianity in later times as recorded by the Catholic missionary organizations. The collation of evidence from these sources indicates an approximate figure of seven hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants for the whole island. Of this, well over half, or four hundred to four hundred and fifty thousand, lived on the western and southwestern seaboard. The Jaffna peninsula was another relatively densely populated area with a hundred thousand to a hundred and fifty thousand people. There was also a concentration of people around Gampala and Senkadagalanuvara (Kandy) and perhaps also around such reservoirs in north-central Sri Lanka as were still in working condition. The rest of the Kandyan country was sparsely populated. Above the three thousand foot level, for instance, there were hardly any settlements. In the eastern plains, prosperous settlements like Madakalapuva (Batticaloa), Tambalagama and Kantalai were exceptions and in an extensive region east of Mātalē from Nuvarakalāviya through Tamankaduva to Vellassa, even the agrarian base of the economy almost disappeared and the inhabitants were chiefly the forest dwellers who relied mainly on hunting and gathering for their livelihood.

Rice remained the staple food of a vast majority of the inhabitants and much of the agricultural effort was directed at the cultivation of paddy. Successful paddy culture depended on a number of factors such as the provision of adequate labour, the availability of land which could be prepared and used for rice cultivation and the prevalence of sunny weather during the ripening season but perhaps the key factor in Sri Lanka was an adequate supply of water. Except in the case of lower-yielding varieties of hill paddy, the paddy plant needs to stand in mud or water during the early stages of growth. In a broad belt stretching from north of Negombo to south of Galle - the so called wet zone of Sri Lanka - an annual rainfall of over seventy five inches virtually solved that problem and in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, paddy cultivation was largely concentrated in this region which included the core of the kingdom of Kōtte and the western regions of the Kandyan kingdom.

Of course, paddy was also grown in the drier regions to the north and east with the aid of irrigation facilities. In the Jaffna peninsula, traditional methods of well-irrigation seem to have enabled the cultivation of considerable extents of paddy though the records of local revenue seem to indicate that paddy was not the main crop of the region. In the northern and eastern plains much of the land cultivated in the heyday of the Rajarata civilization seems to have been abandoned. Nevertheless, a few of the great reservoirs of the earlier era survived, more or less, intact and these enabled the cultivation of paddy in the lands that were fed by them. Evidence in the work of Fernão de Queyroz makes it clear that Kantalai tank was in good order in the sixteenth century. Paulo de Trinidade, another seventeenth century writer has left a graphic description of how Nuvaravãva and Kalāvãva appeared in his time:

> "Besides in this island there are two artificial lakes with which rice fields are irrigated. One is situated in the Maňgul Corla half a league from Rajapura (Anurādhapura) which in Chingala is called Norauaua (Nuvaraväva), an area of three leagues in circumference. It is entirely surrounded by an earthen bund, thrown up by hand. Below at the surface of the water it is faced with cut black stone, very well fitted together. At the end there is a stone arch, through which the water is let out. The water seethes and boils on account of the force with which it enters the arch. It is thus forced through stone pipes and flows underground for a quarter of a league to reappear and irrigate beautiful fields of rice. In this small arch about which we spoke there is a stone slab with which they can cut off the water and

by means of which they can regulate the water as they wish. The other artificial lake since it is larger is called Malauaua (Mahaväva) which means large lake. It is situated two leagues before reaching the one we spoke about and is about seven leagues in circumference and is constructed like the former and with it they can irrigate many rice fields."<sup>1</sup>

The traditional royal dues in paddy derived from the Maňgul  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}$ as recorded in the Portuguese revenue register of 1599 also strengthens the impression that the regions of north central Sri Lanka were not completely abandoned to the jungle as often supposed. On the east coast, Batticaloa was famed as a grain-surplus area while in the highland kingdom proper, the region between Gampala and Mātalē bordering the kingdom of Kōtte seems to have been the chief paddy growing region, though paddy cultivation in lower Uva and in parts of Bintänna are also referred to in Portuguese sources.

The techniques of cultivation used were those which had been traditionally used and especially in the lowland areas, buffaloes seem to have been utilized for the labour of ploughing and threshing. Cow dung appears to have been the main fertilizer used. In a few low lying areas, however, the annual flooding of the fields, which left a deposit of alluvial soil on them, reduced if not eliminated the need for fertilizers. In any case, most of the fields lay fallow for half the year because even in the wetter regions where two peak seasons of rainfall facilitate the cultivation of two crops, double cropping was practiced only in a few villages such as Udamatta-Kändangamuva in the Panāval koralē and Duldeniya in the Paranakuru korale. The yield depended partly on the variety of paddy sown, because hill paddy which required less water and matured quickly, generally gave a smaller crop than the mavi of the lowlands. In the region of Kotte, the only region for which we have evidence of this subject, yields ranged from fivefold to twelvefold.<sup>2</sup> Although this may appear low by modern standards such yields compare well with contemporary production figures in other parts of the world.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Chapters on the Introduction of Christianity to Ceylon taken from Conquista Spiritual do Oriente of Fr. Paulo de Trinidade, trans. Edmund Pieris and Achilles Meersman, (Colombo, 1972), pp 24-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Archivo Histórico Ultramarino, Codice 484, 7 v. 11v -12, 512-513.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Fernand Braudel, The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, (2 Vols, Collins, London, 1972), Vol. I, p 425.

In the diet of the people, rice was supplemented by dry grains such as green-peas (mung), gingelly (tala) and varieties of millet (amu, menēri and kurakkan). These grains were mostly grown in chēnas in the drier regions but were also regularly cultivated in fields in some areas. Of the sixteen villages held by the King of Kōtte in the Pitigal kōralē, three had fields of dry grains amounting to a total of forty three amunas according to the Portuguese revenue register of 1599.<sup>4</sup> The sandēsa kāvyas (messenger poems) of somewhat earlier date also refer to the cultivation of uňdu, mung and tala.<sup>5</sup> In the Jaffna peninsula, more than three fourths of the grain received by the king as dues and taxes consisted of these varieties.<sup>6</sup>

The produce of some of the tropical trees that grew on the island also formed an important element in the daily diet. In Kōṭṭe and Kandy, the *jak* and *kitul* trees were valued greatly. The coconut palm, cultivated chiefly in the south-western coast, also played a vital role in the lives of the people. In the area north of Matota, however, the place of the coconut was generally taken by the talipot palm.

The *jak* tree provided cheap and plentiful food for the needy villager and this perhaps accounts for the opposition faced by the Portuguese in their attempts to cut down *jak* trees to use their timber for ship building and the making of furniture. The *kitul* palm besides providing both treacle and  $s\bar{u}r\bar{a}$ , an intoxicating liquor, was also valued as the source of jaggery, a coarse form of sugar. In some areas jaggery was produced on an extensive scale. The royal village of Däraniyagala in the Panāval  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}$ , for instance, yielded 500 balls of jaggery annually to the treasury. This was perhaps to be expected because although the sugar cane was known in Sri Lanka and sugar crystals were imported in small quantities from Bengal, jaggery remained the chief source of sugar for the villager.

Jaggery was also produced from the *talipot* (palmyrah) tree in the north and from the coconut palm in the south west coast. In fact the palmyrah and the coconut trees played very similar roles in the economies of the north and southwest. Their leaves were also used to thatch houses and their wood used as building timber and supports for the roof. Both provided varieties of toddy (*surā*), and treacle. Oil obtained from both nuts was used for both cooking and lighting. The tender roots of the palmyrah, when dried,

<sup>6</sup> Archivo Histórico Ultramarino, Caixa 2 Doc. 246.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Archivo Naçional do Torre do Tombo, Manuscritos do Convento da Graça, Tombo 6 D, pp 380-1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Girā Sandēsaya, stanza 86; Hamsa Sandēsaya, stanza 156; Paravi Sandēsaya stanza 100.

were considered a delicacy while the water of the nuts of the king coconut palm provided a refreshing drink. However, the coconut palm had the edge over the palmyrah because, apart form all this, the kernel of the coconut was used as food and its husk used to make ropes and fishing nets.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, it is not surprising that coconut plantations were already extensive by the early sixteenth century. Evidence indicates that coconut cultivation was gradually spreading northwards along the coast from the southwest. Sixteenth century sources seem to show that at that time coconut grew most plentifully on the coast south of Colombo but the seventeenth century historian, de Queyroz, maintains that the largest palm groves were to be found in the proximity of Negombo.8 The annual yield of nuts per coconut tree is given as fifteen in the Portuguese revenue records. Even taking into account the very old and young trees this figure seems to underestimate the yield by a large margin, but perhaps this was to be expected. Coconuts were plucked four to six times a year and sometimes more frequently and therefore the yield could not be easily checked by officers of the crown unlike in the case of grain which could be measured at harvest time, once or twice a year. This difficulty was compounded by the fact that although there were a few large plantations consisting for thousands of palms, the vast majority of coconut groves were small individual holdings of less than one hundred trees each.9

The cultivation of fruits and vegetables formed an important part of the agricultural scene. The Portuguese writer, Duarte Barbosa testified as follows: "They have a great deal of very good fruit; and the mountains are full of sweet and sour oranges of three or four kinds and plenty of lemons and citrons and many other good fruits which do not exist in our parts and they last all the year."<sup>10</sup> Mangos and bananas abounded in almost every village. "As to the fruits" said Pyrard "they have a taste and savour such that none so

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<sup>10</sup> Barbosa, Vol.II, p 167.

Barbosa, The Book of Duarte Barbosa, Vol. II pp 90-1; Ceasar Fredrici in Richard Hakluyt (ed.), The Principal Navigations, 2nd edition, 1598-1600, reprinted at Glasgow, 1904-5, Vol. V, pp 379-80, Thomé Pires, Suma Oriental, Vol. I, p 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> de Queyroz, pp 20, 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Pieris, The Ceylon Littoral 1593, passim.

excellent are to be found in all the Indies."<sup>11</sup> Vegetables were grown in low-lying fields and in jungle clearings as well as in garden plots near dwellings, but both the extent of cultivation of both fruits and vegetables and their place in the diet of inhabitants cannot be determined with certainty due to lack of data.

Milk and dairy products also find mention in the sources; "...there is much breeding of cattle and buffaloes from which is made a large quantity of butter which is carried as a cargo to many parts."<sup>12</sup> In Jaffna, milk and butter formed part of the dues owed to the king in kind. In Kōṭṭe, the rulers owned six *kiripaṭ*ti or dairies in the Aṭakalan *kōralē* alone and these are said to have yielded seven hundred and fifty measures of butter(or ghee) to the treasury annually.<sup>13</sup> Although there was a distinct subcaste of herdsmen (gopallo) who managed large herds of cattle, it seems likely that at least some of the cultivators possessed oxen and buffaloes of their own. Oxen were cheap. Queyroz mentions that a cow cost only thirty *reis* or about a tenth of a *larin* in Batticaloa and though this might have been an underestimate, even a century later in more populous south west coast, an ox could be bought for only four *larins*.<sup>14</sup>

The consumption of meat appears to have been low. The indications are that the consumption of beef was looked down upon. The rearing of the pigs does not even find mention. However, poultry was kept and the nearby jungle would have provided the villager with some small game. On the other hand, salted dried fish was a popular item of food. There is no evidence to indicate as to what proportion of the salted fish consumed in Sri Lanka was imported, although trade with the nearby Maldive Islands, famed at the time for varieties of dried fish, suggest that there certainly was some import. It appears likely that at least a substantial portion of the salted fish was produced in Sri Lanka, especially because a large section of the fishing community was resident on the eastern coast and on the western coast north of Kammala up

<sup>11</sup> Pyrard, The Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval, trans. Albert Gray (ed.), London, (Hakluyt Society, 1887-1890), Vol.II, p 191. See also Varthema, The Itinerary of Ludovici di Varthema, trans. J W Jones, (London, Argonaut Press, 1928), p 190.

<sup>12</sup> João de Barros, Decadas, trans. D Ferguson, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch, Vol.XX, 1909, p 35.

<sup>13</sup> Archivo Naçional do Torre do Tombo, Manuscritos do Convento da Graça, Tomo 6 D, p 411.

<sup>14</sup> de Queyroz, p 64, Archivo Histórico Ultramarino, Codice 484 f. 53.

to Jaffna, regions where scanty rainfall and bright sunshine facilitate the salting and drying of fish.

The evidence of continued migration from both the Malabar and the Coromandel coasts to the littoral regions of Sri Lanka seem to indicate that conditions of life in the island were somewhat better than those in the neighbouring sub-continent. On the other hand malarial fever appears to have spread over most of the drier regions of the island and even in the southwest, smallpox and cholera, though perhaps not endemic, was heard of from time to time. Ma Huan, writing in the fifteenth century did give a picture of a prosperous people and the near contemporary sandēsa kāvyas (messenger poems) seem to confirm this, but this picture should perhaps be tempered with the account of the difficulties of the farmer as depicted in the  $P\bar{u}j\bar{a}valiya$ .<sup>15</sup> In fact, there must have been considerable variations in the standards of living even in the agriculturist class because the farmer's income depended not only on the extent and fertility of the land but also the tenure under which it was held.

The system of land tenure which prevailed in the Sinhalese areas was an extremely complex one. In each village, a portion of the low-lying paddy fields and highland area where garden crops were cultivated, was set aside for the village holder. This portion known as *muttettu* did not form a fixed proportion of cultivated land in the village. In Kōtte, it is known to have varied from 25% to about 10% of the cultivated area. Most, though perhaps not all, villagers were obliged to help cultivate this land free of charge. In certain villages, instead of *muttettu* lands, or in addition to them, there were extents of land which could be cultivated by any of the inhabitants on condition that half the produce was given to the village holder. In later times, such areas were known as *aňda muttettu* but this term does not occur in sixteenth century sources. The produce of these two categories of land together with some traditional dues and services of the inhabitants of the village, formed the income of the village holder.

The rest of the cultivated land in the village was divided up into *pamgus* (shares or parts) each *pamgu* made up a tract of highland and a field suitable for-the growing of a cereal crop. The holder of each *pamgu* or the *pamgukāraya* cultivated it and enjoyed its produce in return for the performance of specific services and/or the payment of certain dues to the king or the village holder. Likewise, the village holder enjoyed the income from the village he held in return for 'service' or 'payment' to his immediate chief or to the king. The 'services' or 'payments' could range from a purely formal act such as the annual presentation of betel leaves to much more

<sup>15</sup> UCHC I, pp 721-2.

laborious and exacting duties such as service in the royal palace or the hunting and taming of elephants.

In fact, the distribution of villages was so arranged that all those who performed administrative and other functions for the ruler were provided with incomes for their maintenance in accordance with their status. Although all villages and lands held by lay subjects had some service or payment attached to them, there were certain basic distinctions in land tenure. Land held as paraveni grants had been, at least in theory, originally granted by the king for some signal service rendered to the Crown or in consideration of kinship to the ruler. The dues attached to these lands do not appear to have been onerous. On the other hand, divel lands were held in return for the current performance of stipulated services and were liable to be resumed by the Crown when the services ceased to be performed or at the death of the holder. As King Bhuvanekabāhu of Kotte explained to the Portuguese viceroy of India in a letter dated 12 November 1545: "... from ancient days till now, the kings gone by used to give these lands to whom they pleased and having given them, if they fall sick of any illness, lameness or old age, and were not able to come to watch at the palace or were not able to go to war and disobeyed them in whatsoever way it might be, they were able to take the said land from them..."<sup>16</sup> In fact, however, most divel lands were granted to a near relative on the death or disablement of the holder so that, in practice, the distinction between the two types of land was not so great. Moreover, both entire villages as well as individual holdings of land could be held on either tenure and in both forms of tenure, the holder being entitled to the produce of the land held, once services were rendered and payments made. On the other hand, while paravēni land could be sold or otherwise alienated, the transfer of rights over divel land was limited in the sense that, whoever received the income from the land, the original recipient had to perform the services until a fresh grant was made by the ruler or an authorized subordinate.

Otu and aňdē were different from these forms partly in that they applied only to plots of land and not to villages. Moreover, unlike paravēni and divel, they were forms of leasehold. In Kōtte at this time, otu land generally involved the obligation to pay the village holder the grain equivalent of the sowing capacity of the field cultivated. However, the amount paid varied according to area. According to Portuguese revenue registers otu fields in the Gālu kōralē paid twice the amount sowed. There also seems to have been a degree of flexibility in the amount collected from the cultivator. The Sinhalese petitions of 1636, as related by de Queyroz, state that what was due to the village holder varied according to the crop harvested. If the crop was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Schurhammer and Voretzch, Ceylon, Vol. I, p 196.

good, otu lands paid two amunas of paddy per amuna sown. Otherwise, the dues were half this amount.

Aňdē was a form of leasehold somewhat less advantageous to the cultivator. When the produce of an aňdē field was collected, a small portion near the watch hut (*päldora*) was left uncut to compensate the farmer for the arduous task of guarding the crop. From the rest, another part was set aside to serve as seed paddy (*asvädduma*). The remainder was divided equally between the cultivator and the village holder. Here too there were variations. In the Gālu  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}$ , for instance,  $aňd\bar{e}$  fields paid either twice or thrice the amount sowed to the village holder. In areas where the yield was six fold this meant that after deduction of the seed paddy the cultivator obtained only half to one third the yield. In this case, however, the  $aňd\bar{e}$  farmer could obtain benefits occurring from a higher yield.

Apart from the *nindagam* which were villages held in lieu of services or payment there were two other categories of villages belonging to Buddhist and Hindu shrines. Examples of royal villages in Kandy include Nāranovita, Diyatilaka Nuvara (Haňguranketa) and Pusgama. The Portuguese revenue registers indicate that one sixth to one eighth of the total number of villages in Kotte were reserved for the gabada or royal storehouse and these included the richest and most populous settlements of the kingdom. Temple land, termed pagoda lands by the Portuguese, were distinctive in that they were exempt from services to the king. The number of temple villages in Kotte must have certainly exceeded four hundred. Many of them, however, belonged to a few richly endowed shrines - like the Hindu temple at Munneswaram and the Buddhist vihara at Kälaniya. As far as the cultivator was concerned, however, there was little difference between holding land in a nindagama and a gabadāgama or a temple village. In the one case the cultivator rendered services or paid in dues to the village lord, in another to the ruler and in the third, to a temple.

The ruler played a key role in the operation of the land tenure system. Recent research has thrown doubt as to whether the ruler was the 'sole owner' of all land as previously attested by scholars. The primary objection has been that the modern concept of land ownership cannot be applied without modification to ancient and medieval Sri Lanka. It has also been established that the ruler, once he or she made a grant of land, had no right to modify the terms of that grant without an acceptable reason. Moreover, as has been pointed out elsewhere in this chapter, there were political constraints in granting of land. Nevertheless, the ruler has extensive rights over land. At least in theory, *divel* land was land granted at pleasure and every year a substantial portion of land became available for fresh grants on the death or disablement of *divel* land holders. All waste land was also presumed to be the property of the Crown. A royal grant was needed to clear

land to establish a fresh settlement. Abandoned land and land without heirs reverted to the king and the extent of Crown land was also augmented by confiscation of the property of those guilty of serious crimes such as treason. Since the extent of *paravēni* land was fairly small, a king during his reign had a large proportion of the land in his kingdom at his disposal.

The description of the system of land tenure given above has been derived almost totally from evidence relating to Sinhalese areas. There is hardly any evidence relating to the system that prevailed in the Jaffna peninsula and its environs. However, evidence from an earlier period indicates that the right of the kings of Jaffna over land were limited in that they were merely entitled to share of the produce. This share called *tirvai* usually amounted to one-tenth of the produce. In addition, a tree tax on fruit bearing trees and a garden tax appear to have been levied.<sup>17</sup>

The pattern of the village settlement varied according to the physical and climatic background. In the drier regions north of Negombo and east of Väligama the village was usually a compact unit with a cluster of houses and fields centered round the source of water, the village tank or stream, and separated from other settlements by a stretch of scrub or woodland. In the Jaffna peninsula where wells provided a reliable water supply and in the wetter south-west regions, settlements were more scattered and the Sinhalese word gama (often translated as village) tended to be used, not only for a village or a holding of land within a village but also to a collection of cultivated areas physically separated from one another by jungle. The village of Induruva for example had four other settlements annexed to it. With the growth of population in some areas what had originally been a panguva or part of a village, expanded to be a sizeable village on its own.

Villages varied greatly in size. The extent of cultivable land in some villages, Yatipasgamuva and Kalukanda in Denavaka for instance, was so small in extent that hardly five families could have lived in each of these villages. On the other hand the villages of Mahapetigama and Doranagoda in the Siyana  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}$  was reported to have had three hundred houses.<sup>18</sup> Tambalagama in the principality of Trincomalee also appears to have been a very large village. But even in the most thickly settled areas, the jungle was not far away.

Caesar Federici came across a forest within three miles of Colombo in the 1560s. Fernão de Queyroz mentions that three hundred coconut plants

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> S Pathmanathan, The Kingdom of Jaffna c 1250-1450, pp 371-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> The Tombo of the Two Köralēs, S G Perera (ed.), pp 12, 14; Archivo Naçional do Torre do Tombo, Manuscritos do Convento da Graça, Tome 6 D, pp 368-9.

were once destroyed at Pānadura by an elephant. The elephant must have wandered into a new coconut plantation from the forest of Horakälle which formed the northern boundary of the port-settlement. Generally, forest or waste land adjoining the village was regarded as part of it. For instance, Bēruvala on the western seaboard was bounded by streams both to the north and the south of it but to the east it extended up to the limits adjoining village of Navattuduva. Forests or woodlands played an important role in the village economy. In the drier regions, they provided land for *chēna* cultivation and even in the southwest they supplemented the produce of the fields and garden land with items such as timber, firewood and honey. There were, however, royal forests which none could enter without permission. The forest at Bōgoḍavatta in the Hēvāgam *kōralē* was an example of this.

Common bonds within each village community were fostered by the nature and the pattern of agricultural activity. In paddy cultivation, for instance, the need for a high labour input during certain periods, the prevalence of a common water supply, and the use of unfenced fields promoted cooperation within each village area. However, in social life the influence of the 'caste system' was important.

The caste structure was maintained by a taboo on inter-caste marriages though this taboo did not strictly apply to all sexual relations. Sinhalese folk-lore gives a number of instances when women of 'lower castes' became concubines of men of higher status. Even in such instances, however, the man always refrained from eating food cooked by his concubine. Queyroz mentions that there were several castes "which they consider so low that they will not eat anything touched by these people without considering themselves polluted."<sup>19</sup> Outward distinctions between castes were also maintained by customs regarding the forms of dress and address.

A fifteenth century Sinhalese work, the Janavamsa lists twenty six different castes as follows: goviyo (cultivators), pēsakarayo (salāgamayo or weavers), kamburu (navandanno or artificers), waduvo (carpenters), hannali (tailors), radav (washerman), ämbattayo (barber), sommarayo (leather-workers), durāvo (toddy-tappers), kumbakarayō (badahalayo or potters), karāvo (fishermen), väddo (hunters), beravāyo (drummers), hakaruvo (jaggery-makers), hunno (lime-burners), pannayo, (grass-cutters), yamanno (iron-smiths), val-waduvo (rattan workers), gahalayo (servants), paduvo (palanquin-bearers), malkarayo (florists), kinnārayo (mat-weavers), rodiyo (rope makers and tanners), oliyo (dancers), indrajālakārayo (conjurers), and

<sup>19</sup> de Queyroz, p 19.

chandālayo (scavengers).<sup>20</sup> However, the listing is not necessarily in the order of social standing of the various groups as is sometimes erroneously assumed. In any case, a representation of social status by a linear order can often be misleading.

As misleading would be the uncritical acceptance of the identity of a particular caste with a given occupation as is done in the Janavamsa. Thus, for example, by the early sixteenth century a number of members of the salāgama community had already been diverted to cinnamon peeling while other sections of this caste served as palanquin bearers, messengers and porters. In some sectors of the western seaboard the salāgama community's function of weaving appears to have been taken over by another immigrant group, the paravas though weaving continued to be practiced by the salāgama community well into the eighteenth century. In Mannar and Jaffna, the paravas were fishermen as were the mukkuvans on the east coast. The separate references to careas pescadores (karāva fishermen) and careas (karāva persons) in the Portuguese tombo of 1615 raised doubts as to whether the whole of the karāva community engaged in fishing. There is little doubt that the frequent arrival of immigrant groups during this period made the relationship between caste and occupation a more flexible one, at least in the southwest.

The goyigama cultivator caste which formed the largest group numerically continued to dominate society and the administration. The herdsmen (gopallo) formed a separate sub-caste within the cultivator group. The vehemence of the attacks on the karāva caste by the Janavamsa and the Sadi Ayas Malaya<sup>21</sup> (a seventeenth century panegyric on King Senerat of Kandy) leads one to suspect that the more recent immigrant groups like the karāva and salāgama communities were perhaps less ready than the other castes in Sri Lanka to accept the 'inferior' position assigned to them.

Information on the caste structure among the Tamils is very scanty for this period but there is little doubt as to the pre-eminent position held by the *vellalas* (cultivators). As among the Sinhalese, the Tamil cultivator caste appears to have been the largest group numerically and was divided into several sub-castes. In both areas, there was a group of families which acted as an aristocracy and formed marriage links with the royal family.

Although many immigrant groups were absorbed into society during this time, the process was a very gradual one and some communities such as the Muslims who were mainly traders and lived mainly in the southern and

<sup>21</sup> BMAM, 6606 (156).

<sup>20</sup> Janavamsa, Hugh Nevill (ed.), Taprobanian, Vol.I, pp 74-93, 104-114.

western sea-coats maintained their identity outside the caste system. In Jaffna too, foreigners (paradezes) were distinct enough to have a special tax imposed on them. Certainly, there was a great deal of movement across 'ethnic' boundaries by immigrant caste groups and a 'caste system' sometimes encompassed more than one 'ethnic' group. The Janavamsa, for instance, lists the Väddas as one of the castes within the Sinhalese system. At this time, the Vädda hunter-gatherers occupied an extensive area from Vellassa and Batticaloa to the outlying provinces of the Jaffna kingdom. The Mātalē Mahā Disāve Kadaim Pota seems to indicate that there was a high proportion of Vädda inhabitants even in the Mātalē region. There are indications that there were transitions from agriculture to hunting and gathering as well as the other way round. De Queyroz describes the Väddas as follows: "They have no settled abode but wander in bands through the woods in chase of beasts on which they live being most dexterous with the bow and arrow of wood hardened in the fire. They preserve meat, putting it in honey wherein it becomes soft and fitter to be eaten without any further cooking or seasoning save that of their stomachs."<sup>22</sup> De Queyroz also indicates that in certain areas there were more 'civilized' groups of Väddas who bartered the products of the forest for clothing and who lived in thatched houses. Individuals as always had multiple identities and which identity was emphasized depended on the context.

Thatched houses were the rule in Sinhalese and Tamil villages and each family lived separately in their own dwelling. At least among the Sinhalese, polygamous and polyandrous marriages were quite common. De Queyroz asserts that "...it is common practice for four of five brothers or more to marry one single woman and on the contrary, a single man may marry many sisters..."<sup>23</sup> Sinhalese folklore also gives instances where a number of brothers married two or more sisters and this appears to have resulted in a form of joint marriage. Of course, monogamous marriages were also known, but the seventeenth century Portuguese writer, Ribeiro, who lived for over one and a half decades in Sri Lanka, seem to consider that polyandry was the rule. Polyandrous unions had the advantage in that they minimized the fragmentation of *paravēni* holdings and ensured continuous attention to the land while one of the joint husbands was away on royal service. Polyandry, however, was not confined to the humbler folk. Bhuvanekabāhu, Rayigam Bandāra and Māyādunnē were born to the common queen of Srī Rājasimha

23 ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> de Queyroz, p 16.

and Vijayabāhu "whilst living in one house."<sup>24</sup> Ribeiro maintains "...the woman who is married to a husband with a large number of brothers is considered very fortunate, for all toil and cultivate for her and bring whatever they earn to the house and she lives much honoured and well supported..." but such marriages did not always work out so well. De Queyroz, for instance, relates a case that once came before a Portuguese judge: "...there appeared before him a woman married to seven brothers to complain of the ill treatment she received from so many and begged in good earnest to be relieved of some of them. And as they were still subject to their laws and customs, the *ouvidor* asked her whether two would be enough for her and she replies that she would take four and choosing those she liked the case was settled; such are the fruits of paganism."<sup>25</sup>

Marriage alliances were determined largely, though perhaps not exclusively, by the elders in the family, but once married women appear to have had a great deal of liberty. Sinhalese folklore does not attach any great odium to marital infidelity by either partner. Women seem to have had a relatively emancipated position. At least in the Sinhalese areas they could inherit and hold land. The *tombo* of the Two Kōralēs, for instance, records a widow who held a *paravēni* holding in the village of Yahalēkum̃bura.<sup>26</sup>

The picture of a society with a relatively stable social structure based on subsistence agriculture must be modified somewhat when the impact of trade is considered. At this time, trade was largely a question of barter but the information given in the Portuguese revenue register of Kotte (1599) tends to support the view that the use of money was certainly not confined to trading centres on the coast. This particular revenue register was an attempt to record what the lands had traditionally yielded, rather than an effort to assess contemporary revenue dues. It is therefore an extremely valuable source for any reconstruction of the economic base of sixteenth century society and administration in Kotte. The figures given in it show that the revenue in cash from the royal villages alone brought the king of Kotte a sum well over 630,000 fanams and this was a very considerable sum when one considers that a fanam in those days could purchase fifteen coconuts or a measure of pepper. The use of money appears to have been as widespread in Jaffna because the king of that region also enjoyed a substantial income in cash but it was perhaps more restricted in the less developed interior regions

<sup>26</sup> S G Perera, The Tombo of the Two Körales, op.cit., p 21.

<sup>24</sup> Rājāvaliya, p 215.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> de Queyroz, p 91.

of the island and barter was an accepted mode of transacting business everywhere.

The foreign trade of Sri Lanka was not necessarily confined to items of small bulk and high value. There is evidence of the import of substantial quantities of rice through the western seaports of the island. "...Rice comes [to Lanka] from the mainland..." says Ludovici di Varthema. Duarte Barbosa claims, "Of rice there is but little, they bring the most part of it hither from Coromandel..." Christavão Lourenco Caração visiting in 1522 was much more emphatic "the land is so deficient rice in that if in any one year the sampans of the Coromandel do not come with rice, they [i.e. the Sri Lankans] do not eat anything save herbs and people die of hunger in forests and roadways."<sup>27</sup>

It is possible that some of the import might have been in varieties of Indian rice such as giraçal (Sinh. sūduru samba) which were preferred by the trading community in the seaports. There is also little doubt that some regions in Kötte were rice-deficit areas. Two such areas can be tentatively identified. In the west coast north of Kammala, a combination of climatic factors and the superior attraction of the pearl fishery and the salt fish industry limited the production of the rice. Then again, in the coastal stretch from Beruvala to Galle the cinnamon peelers did not have adequate paddy land for their own sustenance. This was certainly the case in the early seventeenth century when 350 salāgama peelers of Välitota had less than 100 amunas of paddy land to feed themselves. It might well have been cheaper for people in those areas to obtain supplies by sea rather than transport rice overland from other parts of the island. The Jaffna peninsula too might well have been a rice deficit area. Nevertheless, the evidence in the Portuguese revenue registers seem to indicate that the picture of almost complete dependence on imports for rice was overdrawn and that, in fact, many areas in Kötte were rice-surplus regions although the island as a whole could well have been a net importer.

Apart from rice, the major item of import was cloth. "All white cloth is of value [in Sri Lanka]..." says Thomé Pires in his account of the trade of the east. According to him, the varieties of cloth marketable in Sri Lanka include *caçutos* (a dark cloth), *mantazes* (a kind of cloth from Gujarat) and *vispiçes* (a coarse cotton cloth).<sup>28</sup> Cloth was imported to the island from the

<sup>27</sup> Varthema, The Travels, p 192; Barbosa, The Book of Duarte Barbosa, Vol. II, p 111; Gaspar Correa, Lendas da India, trans. D Ferguson, CLR, 3rd Series, Vol. IV, p 51; T Pires, Suma Oriental, Vol. I, p 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> T Pires, Suma Oriental, Vol. I, p 86.

Coromandel coast as well as from Gujarat. Gold and silver coins were also in demand. Some sugar was imported from Bengal. The demand for other products, chiefly rosewater, white sandalwood, copper, quicksilver, vermillion, opium, cloves, and nutmeg, was small. In 1521, Christovão Lourenco brought 200 *cruzados* worth of copper, alumen and coral to Sri Lanka and failed to sell his wares.

The exports were more varied. When Dom Lourenco de Almeida arrived at Colombo, he found traders loading "green coconuts and dry ones from which is extracted oil."<sup>29</sup> Barros too indicates that the export trade in coconut was substantial but quantitative estimates have not survived. Arecanut, a nut chewed in most parts of South and Southeast Asia with the betel leaf and moistened lime, was perhaps equally important as an export item. Unlike the coconut, which grew mainly on the coastal belt, arecanut throve throughout the southwest and in parts of the highland region. The tombo of 1599 indicates that 1600 amunas of arecanut (24,000 to 25,000 nuts per amuna) were exported from the port of Galle and a further 1500 amunas through Väligama. François Pyrard, writing on arecanut in Sri Lanka in the early seventeenth century, states that it "grows in such abundance that all India is furnished thence and a great traffic is carried on to all parts, for whose ships are laden with it for conveyance elsewhere."<sup>30</sup> However, the work of Thomé Pires in the early sixteenth century makes it clear that, at that time, Sri Lankan arecanut was exported largely to the Coromandel coast, because Gujarat and Western India were adequately supplied by exports for the Malabar region. The betel leaf itself, "...which through India is habitually chewed by both men and women, night and day,"<sup>31</sup> also grew in southwest Sri Lanka, especially in the area called Bulatgama. It was exported from Sri Lanka at the end of the sixteenth century but there is no indication of the quantity involved.

To contemporary western writers Sri Lanka was known primarily as the source of the best cinnamon and western sources give considerable information on the collection and trade of this product. However, from the point of view of the export value or of revenue to the state or even of it's impact on the life of the people as a whole, the cinnamon trade at this time was much less significant than that in arecanut.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Gaspar Correa, Lendas da India, trans. D Ferguson, CLR, 3rd Series, Vol. IV, p 146.

<sup>30</sup> Pyrard, The Voyage, Vol. II, p 141.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Barbosa, The Book of Duarte Barbosa, Vol. I, p 168.

Cinnamomum zeylanicum grew wild in most of the southwest regions of the island and the bark of the tree when peeled and dried was used extensively in South and South East Asia, as well as in Europe, as a condiment. Cinnamon oil which was extracted from the fruit of the tree was used for medicinal purposes but unlike the bark, the oil was not produced in substantial quantities and did not form an important item of export.

Other varieties of cinnamon grew in many areas. Burma was known for cinnamon burmanni while other species such as cinnamomum iners and cinnamon cassia throve in places as far apart as the Malabar coast, Java, Mindanão, Tongking, Hainan and Southern China. In fact, though Sri Lanka's product was generally recognized as the finest and the best, its higher price enabled its competitors to virtually exclude it from the markets of southeast Asia so that the exports of cinnamon from Sri Lanka at this time seems to have been confined to India and the regions to the west of this sub-continent. Some cinnamon was exported directly to Aden, Ormuz, Gujarat, Bengal and the Coromandel coast but a considerable quantity was also taken to the Malabar coast for transhipment.

The evidence available at present seems to indicate that the export trade in cinnamon was a monopoly of the ruler of Kōṭṭe. As Barbosa affirms, "the king has it cut into fine branches and the bark is stripped and dried during certain months of the year. With his own hand he makes it over to these merchants who come to buy it for no dweller in this country save the king only may gather it."<sup>32</sup> Gaspar Correa, who wrote in the mid-sixteenth century, also commented as follows, "There at the port of Colombo the king had a large house to which his people brought the cinnamon of their dues and in the house he had his officials who received it and weighed it and thence dispatched and sold it at the king's command."<sup>33</sup> Further support of de Queyroz's contention that "...cinnamon had always been a royalty in Ceylon..."<sup>34</sup> is perhaps provided by the king's ability to offer large quantities of cinnamon at very short notice to the Portuguese when they first arrived in the island.

On the other hand, the quantity annually exported is much less easy to determine. In the first few years of the sixteenth century before they found

<sup>32</sup> Barbosa, The Book of Duarte Barbosa, Vol. I, p 167.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Gaspar Correa, Lendas da India, trans. D Ferguson, Ceylon Literary Register, 3rd Series, Vol. IV, p 152.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Translation in T Abeyasinghe in *Portuguese Rule in Ceylon*, 1594-1612, p 143 from de Queyroz, p 728.

their way to Kōtte, the Portuguese purchased on average about 500 quintals annually in the Malabar coast but this quantity could well have included a proportion of Malabar cassia. Correa claims that in 1518, the Portuguese secured a total of 1000 bahars from Sri Lanka. In that year, with the Portuguese fleet in harbour, other traders refused to enter Colombo and therefore this figure might well have represented the total export from Kōtte for that year. This, however, is no indication that production had reached this level at the turn of the century because the threefold rise in sale prices in Sri Lanka within the first two decades of the sixteenth century might well have induced an increase in production. Since cinnamon was not cultivated but peeled off trees found in the forest, production could be increased quickly in response to prices.

Trade in cinnamon was extremely lucrative for those who exported the product from Lanka. A bahar purchased in Sri Lanka for a third of a cruzado in 1506, was sold in Calicut for three and a half cruzados, over ten times the original purchase price. In 1521, a bahar cost one cruzado in Sri Lanka, fifteen in Cochin, thirty at Diu and fifty to sixty at Ormuz. In Lisbon, in 1525, a bahar fetched as much as one hundred and ninety five cruzados.

Asian traders seem to have dominated the cinnamon trade up to 1518 and the Portuguese often had to purchase their own supplies through them. After this date, however, the Portuguese position took a turn for the better. The tribute from Kōtte ensured a regular supply while the expulsion of resident foreign Muslims from the Kōtte kingdom in 1526 weakened their opponents. Finally, in 1533, they gained an official monopoly of export by contract with the ruler of Kōtte and through their rivals continued to obtain supplies by devious means they faced much greater difficulties and higher costs.<sup>35</sup>

Precious stones mined in the Kuruviți and Navadun Kōralēs and in parts of the central highlands were also valued as articles of trade. Gems found in Lanka included topazes, zircons and amethysts but the best known were the sapphires, cat's eyes, and rubies. Later in the century, Linschoten wrote that Sri Lanka produced the best cat's eyes of the region. Thomé Pires, said that in Sri Lanka,

> "there are two qualities of rubies. The dark red are not much prized; the very light coloured are of two sorts in Ceylon. They have

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> See C R de Silva, "Colonialism and Trade: The Cinnamon Contract of 1533 between Bhuvanekabāhu, King of Kötte and Antonio Pereira, the Portuguese Factor in Sri Lanka," University of Colombo Review, Vol. 10, December 1991, pp 27-35 and C R de Silva, "The Portuguese Impact on the Production and Trade in Sri Lanka Cinnamon in Asia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," Indica, Vol. 26(1), 1989, pp 25-38.

knowledge among themselves which ruby happens to be a manica; these are worth three times as much and they pay a high price for them. Among the people here every ruby has a price but they prefer the very large ruby even with stains to the small prefect one and they prefer balais (light coloured) rubies to the red ones. There are in Ceylon cat's eyes which are much appreciated and better sapphires than in Pegu. All other kings of stones found in Ceylon are better than those from other parts."<sup>36</sup>

Some sources hold that the rubies from Pegu were of much higher quality than those of Sri Lanka and indeed Federici who visited the island in the mid-sixteenth century claims to have sold Burmese rubies in Sri Lanka for a good price. However, a price list of rubies at Calicut compiled somewhat earlier seems to indicate that on the Malabar coast Sri Lankan rubies fetched a higher price than their competitors from Pegu. According to this list a ruby weighing one carat was worth thirty *fanams*, one weighing two *carats*, sixty five and one weighing three carats, one hundred and fifty. The larger rubies fetched much higher prices. A twelve carat ruby was worth 2000 *fanams* and a sixteen carat stone, 6000 *fanams*.

The value of Sri Lanka's trade in gems cannot be estimated with any confidence. However, the complexity of the organization of mining suggests that gem production was substantial. Castanheda maintained that the ruler leased out parts of his lands for mining on condition that all gems above a certain weight were to be handed over to the state. There were varying accounts of the limit above which a gem was considered to belong to the Crown. Françisco de Albuquerque held that the limit was eight carats while Ludovici di Varthema stated it was ten carats. According to Pires, however, the criterion was not weight but value. All gems worth more than fifty cruzados were deemed royal property.<sup>37</sup>

Writing in the early seventeenth century Paulo da Trinidade described the traditional system of gem mining as it operated in the royal villages. "In the Disāva or neighbourhood of Sofragão there are four of these Agras or villages where these stones are found. They are inhabited by people occupied in this work. Some are called *maiorais* and they are the ones who give orders to the others. Others have as duty to explore the places where stones are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Thomé Pires, Suma Oriental, Vol. II, p 516.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> For more information see C R de Silva, "Peddling Trade, Elephants and Gems: Some Aspects of Sri Lanka's Trading Connections in the Indian Ocean in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," Asian Panorama: Essays in Asian History, Past and Present, K M de Silva (eds), et al., (New Delhi, Vikas, 1990), esp. pp 295-9.

found which they recognize by certain plants which grew there. Others are coolies who do the digging. Others, after the pit has been dug to a depth of two arm-lengths say whether there are stones in the veins which run through the earth. Others called *sanganes* which means guards serve as such. Others have as their task to distinguish the good from the bad and in this they are excellent masters ...they all go to the spot where those charged with recognizing where stones may be found, have said there are some. Arriving there, the *maiorais* give orders to the coolies to dig. After having dug to the length of a man, at times two men from the veins visible in the earth, the discoverers make out that there are stones whereupon the *sanganes* are put on alert. Then, all the stones, both good and bad, are taken out until the working is exhausted. The stones which they found are handed over to those whose office is to distinguish them...<sup>"38</sup>

Pearls were another product for which Sri Lanka had been well known. The pearl fishery in the Gulf of Mannar was among the largest in the world, easily bearing comparison with the fishing off Bahrain in the Persian Gulf or that off Hainan in the South China Sea. Although the pearls fished off Sri Lanka and South India were said to be smaller and less bright than those found off the Persian Gulf, they were preferred in Europe as they were considered clearer and whiter than others.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the control of the fishery off the Indian shores of the Gulf of Mannar had definitely passed into the hands of the chieftains of the Palayakayal and Kilakkarai. Palayakayal, a feudatory of the state of Kollum (Coulam), had already established a reputation as a centre for trade in pearls. Jaffna and Kōṭṭe both aspired to control the pearl fishery and at this time at least Kōṭṭe had some control over fishing off its northern shores. Thus, when the ruler of Palayakayal attempted to fish off Lanka soon after the turn of the century, he was attacked and his fleet forced to retire by the forces of Kōṭṭe. With the increase of internal dissension, however, Kōṭṭe's hold over the pearl fishery slipped away and trade in pearls became concentrated on the Indian coast.<sup>39</sup>

The trade in elephants was much more valuable than that in pearls or precious stones. Sri Lanka's elephants enjoyed a high reputation in the East. According to Barros they were "...those with the best instinct in the whole of India and because they are notably the most tameable and handsomest, they are worth much." Elephants lived in large herds of two or three hundred in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Paulo da Trinidade, Chapters on the Introduction of Christianity to Ceylon, p 36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> C R de Silva, "The Portuguese and Pearl fishing off South India and Sri Lanka," South Asia, n.s., Vol. 1(1), 1978, pp 14-28.

most parts of Sri Lanka. In Kōṭṭe, the hunting and taming of elephants could be done only for the Crown and only the ruler could possess them although merchants could purchase them for export. In Jaffna, this rule does not seem to have operated and therefore, traders who purchased elephants in Kōṭṭe often took them overland to Jaffna for sale or shipment to India. This factor, as well as the arrival of elephants caught in the Vanni must have made Jaffna a centre of the elephant trade. Sri Lanka's elephants were exported not only to Gujarat, Bijapur and the Malabar coast but even to Vijayanagara and Bengal in which regions they faced competition from elephants of Pegu and Arakan.

According to the *tombo* of 1599 the king of Kötte was traditionally entitled to at least forty elephants and sixty elephant tusks a year. In 1591, the ruler of Jaffna promised the Portuguese a tribute of twelve tuskers annually. Together with the elephants exported from the highland kingdom the total exports might well have amounted to seventy five to one hundred elephants a year.

Elephants were purchased in India for use in war, for haulage of heavy goods and for ceremonial purposes on occasions of state. The price of each elephant depended on a number of factors, its health, training and general appearance being among them. Generally, a tusker was considered worth double a tuskless elephant. The height at shoulder level was also a measure of the value of elephants and the price of elephants is often given in *xerafims* per cubit of height. The distance from the market was another factor which affected price, because elephants were expensive to feed and could fall sick or die unless well looked after. Moreover, they were a very bulky commodity by the standards of the time. Trinidade gives us some idea of the difficulty of shipping these animals:

"After they are sold they are embarked on large boats called *champanas* in the following manner. They construct a kind of shoot of wood and strong planks reaching from the land of the *champanas* and so narrow it can contain only one elephant. They can close it from both ends by means of short poles. They bring the elephant and make him walk backwards so as not to see the sea. The *cornaca* (mahout) urges and spurs him till he enters the *champana* where he is immediately and securely fastened. They then unfurl the sails..."<sup>40</sup>

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Paulo da Trinidade, Chapters on the Introduction of Christianity to Ceylon, p 34.

According to Barbosa the price of an elephant on the Malabar or Coromandel coast could vary from four hundred *cruzados* to a thousand five hundred or even two thousand. The figures given by Castanheda are much higher. He states that an elephant trained for war could fetch as much as a thousand gold coins per cubit of height and that others were sold for six hundred and fifty per cubit. Prices in Sri Lanka must have been somewhat lower but even if Barbosa's prices are accepted elephants appear to have brought in more wealth to Sri Lanka than any other single product. This is probably why the kings of Kötte and Sītāvaka had a close control over the elephant trade. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Kötte elephants were apparently sold at Kötte or Colombo. In later times the rulers of Sītāvaka had elephant stalls near their capital.

Arecanut and coconut, cinnamon, elephants, gems and pearls appear to have been the more important and better known exports. There were others including wax, honey, and timber from the forests, chanks from the Gulf of Mannar and dyes from chaya and other roots, but trade in these items was of small value. The higher cost of overland transport in comparison to that over water and the radial pattern of drainage in Sri Lanka ensured that the coast was dotted with a number of small ports. The most important of these were located on the western and south western coast, viz. Puttalam, Chilaw, Kammala, Negombo, Colombo, Pānadura, Kalutara, Bēruvala, Gintota, Galle, Väligama, Mātara and Devinuvara. There were, of course, ports in other areas of the coast but they were more widely spaced and, of Tirukovil, Batticaloa, them. Valavē, Tangalla, Pānama, Kottiyār, Trincomalee, Mullaitivu, Point Pedro, Jaffna, Mannar and Kalpitiya were the most important.

Customs dues were charged at ports and at inland customs posts or kadavat which marked the frontiers of the kingdoms. There is no information on levies at the kadavat but the amount of dues traditionally charged at the sea ports of Kotte can be obtained from Portuguese revenue registers of a later date. Goods from inland areas paid one impost when entering the port area and another when exported. Thus, for instance, arecanut paid ten percent in kind at the inland limit of the port. A further sum of four fanams per amuna had to be paid by the exporter when shipping the goods. Rice brought into Chilaw traditionally paid half a measure per man-load, one measure per ex-load and two measures per elephant-load. Those who were not natives of the port had to pay double this and a further doubling of dues took place if paddy was brought in. Goods such as betel and pepper paid ten per cent at the point of entry to the port area, but less marketable goods such as rope, timber, resin, and chaya paid only six per cent. Export duties on shipments were apparently very light but the costs incurred by traders were augmented by compulsory gifts of cloth to the kanakapulle, the kangany and

the *adikar* or *shahbandar* of the port and also to the ruler. Import duties amounted to five or six per cent depending on the port, but opium and spices were assessed at ten per cent. Goods sold by the Crown, such as cinnamon, pearls, gems and elephants do not seem to have been liable to customs duties.

The external trade of Sri Lanka appears to have seen largely in the hands of the Muslim Mappila traders of the Malabar coast. In the first two decades of the sixteenth century, Cherian Marakkar, the principal Mappila merchant of Cochin, and his brothers controlled almost the whole of the cinnamon trade of the island. The merchants of Cochin were also active enough to make their city into a mart for Sri Lanka's elephants. Many Mappila merchants settled down in Sri Lanka's ports and Barbosa's graphic description of the merchants of the island no doubt refers to them:

"...They are stout and well-looking, tawny, almost white in hue, the most part of them bigbellied; they are extremely luxurious and pay no attention to matters of weapons, nor do they possess them. All are merchants and given to good living. They go naked from the waist up and below they are clad in silk and cotton garments; they wear small turbans on their heads, their ears are bored and in them they wear much gold..."<sup>41</sup>

Gujerati merchants who played a vital role in Malacca were less evident in Sri Lanka mainly because the rhythm of the monsoon winds did not allow them to delay at a port in the island on their way to or from Malacca, if they were to reach their homeland before the stormy southwest winds closed the ports of the west coast of India. The Hindu and Chetti merchants from the Coromandel were probably active, especially in the north and east of Sri Lanka, but contemporary sources do not give us information regarding their activities.

Internal trade was in the hands of humbler itinerant merchants who transported salt, salt fish and cloth to the villages and bartered them for arecanut, wax, honey, and other produce. Rivers were used to transport goods, whenever possible. The Kälani river was navigable by small oceangoing vessels up to Malvāna and, by river boats up to Ruvanvälla. The Kalugaňga too, was navigable for most of its length and was utilized to bring rice and paddy down to the coast. Perhaps the construction of an artificial canal from the Kälani river to Negombo and beyond on the orders of Vīra Parakramabāhu of Kōtte was at least partly intended to facilitate trade. When waterways were not available, elephants, oxen and porters performed the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Barbosa, The Book of Duarte Barbosa, Vol. II, p 110.

labour of carrying goods because the lack of roads prevented the use of wheeled vehicles in the transport of trading goods.

Although both the foreign and the internal trade of Sri Lanka were sizeable, it certainly did not form the mainstay of royal revenue. In Kötte, for instance, where trade was well developed, land revenue (chiefly in paddy) amounted to at least 175,000 *xerafims*. In contrast the receipts from customs dues were under twenty thousand *xerafims*. The sale of elephants may have fetched another twenty thousand but royal income from cinnamon, gems and pearls could hardly have amounted to more than a further ten thousand *xerafims*. Thus, even on a fairly generous estimate trade accounted for less than twenty five percent of royal receipts; in reality it might have been much less. The ruler of the more isolated highland kingdom was even more dependent on land revenue, dues at the *kadavat* and receipts from the sale of elephants forming the only other major sources of revenue.

We are on less certain ground when we deal with the kingdom of Jaffna. An early seventeenth century document lists the traditional revenues of the rulers of Jaffna as follows: 11,800 *patacas* of five *larins* per *pataca* in cash, 851 and one fourth *candils* of grains and legumes (of which 178 and one half *candils* were paddy), gifts of bananas from all twice a year, all the oil, betel, butter and milk required for the palace and revenue from all elephants caught for the king.<sup>42</sup> When this information is combined with de Queyroz's assertion that the elephant tribute formed the chief source of revenue of the ruler of Jaffna and other evidence of trading activity with the Indian coast, it does seem that the rulers of Jaffna were much more dependent on trade than their compatriots in the south and perhaps therefore more vulnerable to threats by those who commanded the sea.

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Archivo Histórico Ultramarino, India Caixa, Doc. 246.

## **CHAPTER III**

## THE RISE AND FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF SĪTĀVAKA (1521-1593)

## C R de Silva

It could well be argued that the kingdom of Sītāvaka was in essence a rejuvenated Kōṭṭe. It had the same administrative structure and depended largely upon the same economic base in southwest Sri Lanka. Its literary and cultural traditions were the same as those of Kōṭṭe and in the second half of the sixteenth century, particularly after 1562, the frontiers of Sītāvaka were almost identical with those of Kōṭṭe after the death of Parākramabāhu VI (1411-67). Even the royal line of Sītāvaka was a branch of the royal family of Kōṭṭe and, certainly, after 1551, the monarchs at Sītāvaka considered themselves legitimate rulers of Kōṭṭe and *cakravartis* or emperors over the whole island. Indeed, Māyādunnē, king of Sītāvaka (1521-81) might well have shifted his capital to Kōṭṭe when it fell into his hands in 1565 had it not been for the threat of a Portuguese counterattack, either from their base in Colombo or by a seaborne expeditionary force.

Nevertheless, modern historical writing has generally tended to consider Sītāvaka as a kingdom quite distinct from Kōtte. This was partly because historians, relying largely on Portuguese chronicles for events of this period, perhaps unconsciously adopted the Portuguese viewpoint that Bhuvanekabāhu and his grandson Dharmapāla (1557-97) were the only *de jure* rulers of Kōtte. The contemporary monarchs who ruled from Sītāvaka 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 Sītāvaka as a separate entity. Territorially distinct units ruled from Kōtte and Sītāvaka, 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 Māyādunnē (1521-81) and his successor Rājasimha (1581-92) were thought of essentially as monarchs of the Sītāvaka *mahā-vāsala* or the palace of Sītāvaka. Also, even if the truth of the matter be slightly more complex, the rulers of Sītāvaka developed a different image from that of the latter day monarchs at Kōtte. 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 Bhuvanekabāhu and Dharmapāla who gradually became figurehead rulers under Portuguese protection.

Finally, even if Sītāvaka was merely Kōtte reborn, it was Kōtte 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 Sītāvaka had, therefore, to evolve a somewhat different set of priorities and policies.

The birth of the principality of Sītāvaka came with the assassination of Vijayabāhu VI in 1521 after the revolt by three of his sons.<sup>1</sup> Bhuvanekabāhu (1521-51), the eldest of the rebel princes, was acclaimed the new emperor of Kōtte while his brothers, Pararājasimha (1521-38) and Māyādunnē (1521-82) were installed as kings owing allegiance to their brother. Pararājasimha was entrusted with Rayigama which was made up of the Rayigam, Pasdun and Vallalāviti kōralēs, less the seaports. Māyādunnē, who had perhaps contributed most to the successful rebellion of the princes against their father, received a much larger area which included the Four Kōralēs, Denavaka (or the Five Kōralēs), half of Hēvāgam kōralē and six other kōralēs, namely Kuruviți, Ätulugam, Panāval, Haňdapāndunu, Beligal, and Dehigampal. With the selection of Sītāvaka as the capital city, this unit became known as the kingdom of Sītāvaka.

The division of Kōtte 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 new king of Kōtte did lose direct control over a considerable amount of the resources which his father had enjoyed. On the other hand, the portion left to Bhuvanekabāhu was still quite sufficient to make him the richest, and potentially the most powerful of the monarchs of

See above Chapter 1.

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the island. If the figures stated in the first Portuguese *tombo* of Kötte are taken as a rough guide, the area allotted to Pararājasimha contained 660 villages and that given to Māyādunnē around 1200. If we exclude the Seven Kōralēs, which seems to have been an autonomous unit ruled by another branch of the Kōtte royal family, the extent under the direct control of Bhuvanekabāhu came to some two thousand eight hundred villages, apart from which he held all the seaports of Kōtte.<sup>2</sup> Nor did Bhuvanekabāhu lose much in prestige, because the Kōtte sovereign was acknowledged as overlord by the kings of Rayigama and Sītāvaka and the practice of assigning the power to rule parts of Kōtte to brothers of the chief king was no innovation. Much depended, therefore, on whether Bhuvanekabāhu 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 stepbrother Dēvarājasimha 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 Hāpitigam kōralē led by Vīrasūriya or Pilässē Vīdiyē Bandāra, a nephew of Vijayabāhu VI and Manampēri, the king's equerry. A reference in de Queyroz<sup>3</sup> seems to identify Vīrasūriya, who proclaimed himself king of Kōtte, with the  $\bar{e}kanāyaka$  of Vijayabāhu VI who had long been hostile to Bhuvanekabāhu and his brothers. But Vīrasūriya did not have much chance to gather support. The brothers moved quickly, defeated him in battle and promptly had him executed.<sup>4</sup> The failure of this revolt marked the end of organized opposition to the new regime in Kōtte.

With the restoration of peace and order in his kingdom, Bhuvanekabāhu 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

<sup>4</sup> Alakēśvarayuddhaya, p 32.

Fernão de Queyroz, p 203-4; Joao de Barros and Diogo do Couto, The history of Ceylon from the earliest times to 1600 AD as related by João de Barros and Diogo do Couto; trans. Donald Ferguson (ed.), JCBRAS, Vol. XX, pp 71-2; Alakéśvarayuddhaya, pp 29-32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> de Queyroz, p 204.

who had influence in court are likely to have urged the new king to make an effort to break the monopoly. In 1522 Bhuvanekabāhu requested permission from the Portuguese to export 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. Bhuvanekabāhu 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 Kōtte.<sup>5</sup>

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 also in tolerating a Portuguese fortress situated within a few miles of his own capital. Bhuvanekabāhu was too well aware of the military prowess 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 quality cinnamon, it certainly achieved the contrary. The new captain of Colombo, Fernão 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.<sup>6</sup> This view seemed to have gained wide support because even the cinnamon which 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 Coromandel by your fleet which you have there..."7 Such arguments eventually convinced the authorities in Lisbon,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> C R de Silva, "Trade in Cinnamon in the Sixteenth Century," CJHSS, new series, Vol. II, No. 2, pp 19-20; Vitorino Magalhaes Godinho, Os descobrimentos e a ecoonmia mundial, Lisbon, 1971. Vol. II, p 208.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> de Queyroz, p 205.

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 has been amended.

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who were already apprehensive about their own extensive commitments in the Indian Ocean. 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 Portuguese factor, Nuno Freyre de Andrādē was left behind with a token force of twenty soldiers to guard the Portuguese factory.<sup>8</sup> Bhuvanekabāhu's policy appeared to have succeeded.

However, complications arose quite quickly. In February 1525, 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 Kōṭṭe to hand over to them, all Portuguese who lived in his kingdom. Bhuvanekabāhu realized that this course of action would lead to swift reprisals from the Portuguese in India. He therefore, listened to the counsel of Nuno Freyre de Andrādē and despatched a force of six hundred Kōṭṭe troops 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 3 May, he was repulsed once more, with the loss of four ships, by a combination of Kōṭṭe and Portuguese forces.<sup>9</sup>

These events proved to be significant. They alienated the Muslim Mappila traders from the king of Kōṭṭe. De Andrādē was astute enough to seize the opportunity and convince Bhuvanekabāhu that these traders, an obstacle to good relations between the Portuguese and the king of Kōṭṭe, must be expelled from his domains. When the order to expel foreign Muslim merchants from Kōṭṭe was ultimately issued in 1526, it greatly strengthened Portuguese control over the export trade of the island.<sup>10</sup>

Bhuvanekabāhu'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 highhanded fashion. The decision to expel the Muslims was also opposed by Māyādunnē and Pararājasimha and, in fact, might well have been one of the causes of the break between them and their brother, the emperor of Kōtte. Portuguese chroniclers, of course, attribute the Kōtte-Sītāvaka conflict to the ambition of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> de Queyroz, p 205.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> de Queyroz, pp 208-9; Correa, CALR IV, pp 159-61, 190-1; Barros, JCBRAS, XX, pp 74-5, 77-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> de Queyroz, p 210; C R de Silva, "Portuguese Policy Towards the Muslims in Ceylon," CJHSS, Vol. IX, 1966, p 114.

Māyādunnē "...as he increased in age so did he in cupidity, desiring greatly to attain to the monarchy of that island..."<sup>11</sup> Māyādunnē might well have been ambitious but this analysis fails to explain why such ambition was not also directed against his other brother, Pararājasimha. Māyādunnē, who welcomed the expelled Muslims to his territory could have been convinced that the policy of alliance with the Portuguese was a mistake. In any case, Bhuvanekabāhu's decision enabled Māyādunnē to appear as a protector of the Sinhalese against alien domination and to use this posture to win the sympathy of many of Bhuvanekabāhu's own subjects.

Māyādunnē's open opposition to Bhuvanekabāhu's policies could only result in war. The ruler of Sītāvaka 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 Māyādunnē proclaimed himself cakravarti or chief king of the island and launched an attack on the territories of Bhuvanekabāhu. 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 Sītāvaka compelled Bhuvanekabāhu'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 Sītāvaka forces until Bhuvanekabāhu'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. Māyādunnē promptly abandoned his pretensions and offered a peace treaty, which was accepted by his brother. The Portuguese force, lavishly rewarded by Bhuvanekabāhu, left Kotte soon after.<sup>12</sup>

If relations between Bhuvanekabāhu and Māyādunnē were not cordial in the eight years that followed, at least they were peaceful. However, the close collaboration between the Portuguese and Bhuvanekabāhu seems to have led to increasing resentment on the part of the king of Sītāvaka and his Muslim allies. The Kōtte-Portuguese alliance was cemented on 15 October 1533 by a new agreement relating to trade in cinnamon. Hitherto, the Portuguese had obtained 300 *bahars* of cinnamon as tribute annually.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, p 73. See also Couto, JCBRAS, XX, p 90.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 57-9; de Queyroz, pp 211-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> C R de Silva, "Colonialism and Trade: The Cinnamon Contract of 1533 between Bhuvanekabāhu, King of Kōṭṭe and Antonio Pereira, Portuguese Factor in Sri Lanka," University of Colombo Review, Vol. 10, December 1991, p 28. A bahar could equal 2 quintals (256 arrateis) or 2 quintals, 1 arroba and 12 arrateis (300 arrateis) or three quintals (384 arrateis). The contract of 1533 states that the tribute originally promised by the Kōṭṭe ruler was calculated with less than three quintals per bahar.

Portuguese requirements, in excess of tribute, were purchased from the royal storehouse. Kötte officials were far from being satisfied with this arrangement because 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.

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 quintals (or 384 arrateis). In effect, this involved an increase in the tribute payment from 800 quintals 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 lower quality cinnamon was to be weighed at a lower weight of 300 or 340 arrateis per bahar. In return for these concessions, the king of Kötte obtained a pledge that all the cinnamon he offered would be purchased by the Portuguese.<sup>14</sup> This agreement must have been viewed with dismay by the Muslim traders in Sītāvaka and it's 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 Māyādunnē's decision to try his fortunes on the battlefield once more in 1536.

In this attempt, Māyādunnē was strengthened by a force of four thousand men who arrived from Calicut in forty five rowing ships under Ali Abraham. The combined forces besieged Kōṭṭe but the city held out once more until Martim Affonso de Souza, the captain of Cochin, responded to Bhuvanekabāhu's appeal with a force of three hundred men in eleven ships. De Souza's preparations no doubt reached Māyādunnē's ears because when the Portuguese arrived at Colombo at the end of March 1537, they found that the two brothers had made peace once more. After being liberally rewarded by Bhuvanekabāhu, 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.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Archivo Nacional do Torre do Tombo, Corpo Chronologico, Parte I, Maco 51, Doc. 96; Simao Botelho,' O Tombo do Estado da India, 1554' in Subsidios para a Historia da India Portuguesa, Rodrigo Jose de Lima Felner (ed.), (Lisboa, Academia Real das Ciencias, 1868), p 240.

The Samudri's resources were, however, far from being exhausted. In that very 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 southward 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 Māyādunnē, 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 Kötte in late 1537. De Souza reacted quickly. Hoping to intercept the Calicut fleet before its arrival in Kötte, he selected twenty five swift rowing vessels in which he placed six hundred and fifty Portuguese and many auxiliary 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 routed them. On his triumphant arrival at Colombo, however, de Souza found that Māyādunnē 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.<sup>15</sup> Within a year, however, the two brothers were at war again.

Portuguese chroniclers have failed to put forward convincing reasons as to why the relatively quiescent period of 1528-36 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 transcendent ambition of Māyādunnē. It is, however, more likely that the question of the succession to Kōtte was a more cogent factor than both of these.

According to the prevalent law of succession, Pararājasimha and Māyādunnē were the heirs of their brother, Bhuvanekabāhu. Pararājasimha, however, had repeatedly supported Māyādunnē against his elder brother and did not seem likely to press his claims. In fact, in the last few years of his life, Pararājasimha abandoned the government of his kingdom to Māyādunnē and settled at Māpitigama in the Ätulugam kōralē, a part of Sītāvaka.<sup>16</sup> Bhuvanekabāhu'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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> de Queyroz, pp 213-8, Couto, *JCBRAS*, XX, pp 75-9, 91-8, Correa, *CALR*, IV, pp 208-11.

<sup>16</sup> Alakēśvarayuddhaya, pp 32, 34.

only child by the chief queen was a daughter named Samudrādēvi. There was thus a real prospect that Māyādunnē would succeed to the throne of Kōṭṭe, a prospect not viewed with equanimity by the nobility of the Kōṭṭe court, to say nothing of the Portuguese. There were those who wished to secure the throne of Kōṭṭe by marrying Samudrādēvi. Although direct evidence of such intrigue dates only from 1538 the schemes might have been in the air as early as 1537. Such a situation could well have provoked Māyādunnē to preemptive action.

The succession question came into prominence during 1538. In that year Pararājasimha died and his lands were occupied by Māyādunnē. Bhuvanekabāhu did not contest the issue and indeed legitimized Māyādunnē's occupation by making him a formal grant of Rayigama. This could well have been because the Kōṭṭe nobility was divided into factions on the question as to who should win the hand of Samudrādēvi and thus the time was not opportune to contest Māyādunnē's claims to Rayigama. The eventual victor in the contest of suitors turned out to be Vīdiyē Bandāra, a grandson of Sakalakalāvalla. Vīdiyē, 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 Bandāra, assassinated. Māyādunnē, sensing the threat to his position and hoping to profit by the division within Kōṭṭe took to the field in mid-1538.<sup>17</sup>

Both Māyādunnē and Bhuvanekabāhu 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 Māyādunnē in investing the capital of Kōtte. In fact, by early 1539, despite a valiant campaign by Vīdiyē Bandāra, Bhuvanekabāhu had lost all his domains save the city of Kōtte and a few ports.

Portuguese assistance was slower in arrival largely due to the diversion of their resources to the 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 forces could return on board. Ferreira then sailed back to Colombo and burnt some of the captured vessels in full view of the populace. Māyādunnē prudently abandoned the siege of Kōtte and withdrew a few miles

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p 23; de Queyroz, pp 221-3; do Couto, *JCBRAS*, XX, pp 99-100.

inland.<sup>18</sup> The destruction of the Calicut fleet at Negombo indicated that, for once, Māyādunnē'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 Sītāvaka seems to have decided to try his fortune in battle against the combined Kōtte-Portuguese army.

Two decades of intermittent conflict with the Portuguese had taught the Sinhalese kings the value of firearms and the Sītāvaka 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 Kōtte-Portuguese forces had to win two sanguinary battles, one at the stockade of Kaduvela and another further up the river, before the way to Sītāvaka lay open and Māyādunnē forced to sue for peace.

Bhuvanekabāhu was ready for terms but Ferreira first requested three hostages including Māyādunnē's favourite son and then demanded that Payichchi Marakkar and nine other Kunjali leaders should be handed over as a condition of peace. Māyādunnē 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..."<sup>19</sup> and offered to pay a large ransom instead, but Ferreira was adamant. The Sītāvaka monarch finally had the Kunjalis killed and sent their heads to the Portuguese commander. This naturally meant the end of the Sītāvaka-Calicut alliance. Never again did the Samudri send military assistance to Māyādunnē. The humiliation of the Sītāvaka king was completed by making him return all his conquests and pay the expenses of the war.<sup>20</sup> Bhuvanekabāhu's readiness to agree to make peace with his brother, even after the military situation had swung in Kötte's favour has puzzled historians since the sixteenth century. The earlier Portuguese chroniclers were inclined to attribute this to the soft heart and brotherly feelings of Bhuvanekabāhu. 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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> de Queyroz, pp 223-5; Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 100-5; Correa, CALR, IV, pp 210-1; 265-8; P E Pieris and M A Hedwig Fitzler (eds), Ceylon and Portugal: Kings and Christians, 1539-1552, (Leipzig, 1927), pp 37-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, p 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, pp 40-2, do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 105-7; Correa, CALR, IV, pp 269-73; de Queyroz, pp 226-30.

lacks judgement and he talks idly like a boy..."21 Writing a century and a half later, de Queyroz did not entirely agree. Indeed, in a moment of insight, he argued that Bhuvanekabāhu might well have perceived the aggressive intentions of the Portuguese and wished to retain Māyādunnē as a counter weight.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Bhuvanekabāhu, well aware of popular support for his brother and the difficulty of seeking him out in the highlands of Denavaka 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 autonomy he enjoyed since 1521, would intervene on behalf of Māyādunnē simply to keep Kotte in turmoil. Finally, the anti-Portuguese stance of the Sītāvaka ruler could eventually attract greater support for him even within Kötte, thus leaving Bhuvanekabāhu in the position of a client of the Portuguese. Ferreira's masterstroke of demanding the Kunjali commanders as a price of peace had, however, altered the situation. Māyādunnē, bereft of foreign assistance was much less of a threat and the Portuguese and Bhuvanekabāhu could go ahead with their own plans for the succession of Kötte.

The marriage of Vīdiyē Bandāra and Samudrādēvi in 1538 had resulted in the birth of a son in the same year. By late 1539, the decision had been made to designate the infant, Dharmapala Astana, as heir to the kingdom of Kötte. Portuguese chroniclers and historians who followed them have generally attested that the initiative on this matter came from Bhuvanekabāhu. 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 instructions on the question of the Kötte succession were already in the hands of D Estevao da Gama, Viceroy of India. As da Gama wrote back to the king on 11 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 The Portuguese pastor in Kötte, Nuno Freyre de very desirable..."23 Andrādē 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

<sup>23</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, p 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ferreira quoted by de Queyroz, p 232.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> de Queyroz, pp 226-7.

on Portuguese persuasion that Bhuvanekabāhu sent two trusted envoys to Lisbon in 1541 to have a gold statue of Dharmapāla crowned by the king of Portugal as a token of Portuguese recognition of the price as the heir to Kōtte.<sup>24</sup>

The envoys returned to the island in late 1543 after successfully accomplishing their mission but Bhuvanekabāhu's problems were becoming increasingly complex. The people of Kōṭṭe were turning towards Māyādunnē. In fact, soon after Ferreira's force departed, Māyādunnē won over many of the provincial chiefs of Kōṭṭe. By 1541, most lands and ports which owed nominal allegiance to Kōṭṭe were actually under the control of Māyādunnē and revenues from these areas flowed into the Sītāvaka treasury.<sup>25</sup> The peace terms of 1539 were fast being eroded.

The drift away from Bhuvanekabāhu 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 They successfully claimed another clause of the same agreement. extraterritorial rights and exemption from customs duties for themselves and their subordinates and proceeded to abuse these concessions. Sinhalese subjects of Kötte were known to bribe the factor in order to be listed retrospectively as one of his employees and thus avoid payment of fines for offenses they had committed.<sup>26</sup> The factor's agents were suspected of procuring exemptions from customs duty for goods of many merchants by falsely claiming that the goods belonged to the factor. Some factors like Pero Vaz Travassos (153?-39) were bold enough to openly insult Bhuvanekabāhu himself.27

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 made advance payments to the locals and sometimes entered in their accounts thrice or four times the amount actually given.

de Queyroz, pp 233-6; do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 118-9; Correa, CALR, IV, p 323.

<sup>25</sup> Ceylon sur des konigs Bhuvanekabāhu and Franz Xaver, 1539-1552, G Schurhammer and P A Voretzeh (eds), (Leipzig, 1928), p 99.

<sup>26</sup> Schurhammer and Voretsch, pp 99-103.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, p 42; Correa, CALR, pp 268, 273.

When return payments by goods began, the goods were valued at low prices. As those who failed to pay their debts became bond 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. Equally resented was the Portuguese practice of forcibly cutting down trees in gardens belonging to local inhabitants for timber 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 conversion. Stories of Portuguese misdeeds and violations of custom no doubt were embellished as they passed along by word of mouth and the resentment they caused alienated many from the ruler of Kötte.

Bhuvanekabāhu 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 effect,<sup>28</sup> but their enforcement was quite a different question. In fact, such orders from Lisbon were sometimes used by the Portuguese in Sri Lanka to further restrict the powers of the king of Kōtte. For instance, on 13 March 1543, the king of Portugal laid down that ships could be built in Kōtte 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 Kōtte being bypassed. By 1545 the order was being interpreted to mean that Bhuvanekabāhu himself could not order any ship to be built in his kingdom without the concurrence of the Portuguese governor of India.<sup>29</sup>

Bhuvanekabāhu's difficulties were further enhanced by the arrival of a group of Franciscan missionaries in Kōṭṭe. Bhuvanekabāhu himself was partly responsible for their arrival. Hearing that the Portuguese king, João III, set great store by his religion, Bhuvanekabāhu had instructed the envoys he sent to Lisbon to ask 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 Kōṭṭe, himself, would be a willing convert. Thus it was that in late 1545, a group of four Franciscans led by João de Villa de Conde arrived at Kōṭṭe. Bhuvanekabāhu readily welcomed the missionaries

<sup>28</sup> Schurhammer and Voretsch, pp 99-104, 113-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Schurhammer and Voretzch, p 113. See also Pieris and Fitzler, pp 42, 99,168, 223 & 230.

and gave them permission to construct churches and preach in his kingdom. He even offered to construct a monastery for them and granted the Franciscans an annual income of 250 pardaos. As a special favour he decreed that Christians would be exempt from marāla dues. However, he repudiated his envoy's promise of conversion.<sup>30</sup>

The Franciscans were not satisfied. They wanted nothing less than the conversion of the monarch himself, because they realized that without this, their chances of success in converting his subjects were slim. Fr. de Villa de Conde himself had several acrimonious disputes in court with leading Buddhist monks of Kōtte in an effort to discredit them.<sup>31</sup> 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, Fernão de Queyroz, maintains that Bhuvanekabāhu refused to change his religion chiefly because of political reasons. It is undoubtedly true that conversion to Christianity would have lost Bhuvanekabāhu 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 equally 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. João 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 God...."32 In fact, the Bhuvanekabāhu that emerges from contemporary documents is somewhat different from the weak and vacillating personality he is often depicted to have been.

In time, Bhuvanekabāhu became less favourable to Christian missionary activity. Many deathbed conversions were being made with the object of evading *marāla*, (death duty). Moreover, as the king of Kōtte explained to the Portuguese governor of India "...they do not become

<sup>32</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, pp 89, 219.

<sup>30</sup> Schurhammer and Voretsch, pp 410-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> de Queyroz, pp 238-42, 258-61.

Christians except when they kill another or rob him of his property or commit other offenses 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....<sup>33</sup> Thus, despite the embassy to Lisbon, the early 1540s were marked by a deterioration of relations between the Portuguese and the king of Kōtte.

In this context, it is not surprising that Bhuvanekabāhu was favourably disposed towards overtures for an alliance with his brother, Māyādunnē. The ostensible object of the proposed accord was the subjugation of the kingdom of Kandy, ruled by Jayavīra, 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 Jayavīra had profited by the divisions in the lowlands to make his kingdom virtually independent and that he had begun to seek Portuguese assistance in early 1542. It is possible that Jayavīra's call for assistance might have been a response to a threat of attack from either Kōṭṭe or Sītāvaka or both of them, but this appears unlikely because there is no evidence of the lessening of Kōṭṭe-Sītāvaka tension up to the end of 1542. It is therefore more likely that Jayavīra 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.<sup>34</sup>

Whatever the order of events was, the king of Sītāvaka 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 Kōtte. Bhuvanekabāhu 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 Kōtte. He therefore, responded favourably to Māyādunnē's overtures.

Any doubts that Bhuvanekabāhu had regarding his decision were probably dispelled by the events of 1543-44. In response to Jayavīra's appeals for aid in August 1542, an advance party of twenty or twenty five Portuguese from Nāgapatnam arrived at Trincomalee in February 1543. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, pp 86-7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> T B H Abeyasinghe, "The Politics of Survival: Aspects of Kandyan External Relations in the Mid-sixteenth Century," JCBRAS, new series, XVII, 1973, pp 13-5; Pieris and Fitzler, pp 74,171.

hostility of a local ruler to the Portuguese-Kandy alliance effectively prevented the soldiers from making their way to Kandy,<sup>35</sup> but Bhuvanekabāhu had received definite evidence that his Portuguese allies would actually aid a rebel vassal against the king of Kōtte.

In 1544 other developments further strained relations between the king of Kōtṭe and the Portuguese. A Portuguese adventurer, Andre de Souza, persuaded Jugo Bandāra, one of Bhuvanekabāhu's sons by a junior queen, to embrace Christianity to enhance his claims to the throne of Kōtṭe. Bhuvanekabāhu, hearing of this, had Jugo Bandāra killed, but de Souza made his way to India with Jugo Bandāra's brother and a son of Bhuvanekabāhu's sister. These princes were baptized with the names of Dom Luis and Dom João respectively and, until they died of smallpox at Goa in January 1546, Bhuvanekabāhu had to face the possibility that the Portuguese might decide to replace himself and his grandson with either his son or his nephew.<sup>36</sup>

But if Bhuvanekabāhu's options were limited, those of Jayavīra, king of Kandy, were even more so. After many years a king of the highlands was again confronted with the combined might of the southwest lowlands and on this occasion, the numerical superiority of the forces of Kōṭṭe and Sītāvaka was reinforced by their experience in, and the possession of, firearms. Within Kandy itself, there was a knotty problem relating to the succession. Jayavīra had originally married Kīravälle Biso Bandāra, the daughter of his own sister and Kīravälle Maha Ralahāmy and this marriage had resulted in one daughter and one son, the latter being known as Karaliyaddē Bandāra. After the death of the first queen, Jayavīra had espoused a princess of the Gampala royal line and had one more son who is variously identified as Mahā Astāna, Kumārasimha Adahasin and Jayavīra Bandāra in various sources. By the 1540s Karaliyaddē Bandāra was recognized as the crown prince but he suspected that his stepmother was intriguing to have him supplanted by his step brother. Karaliyaddē was thus becoming increasingly disaffected.<sup>37</sup>

In the context of Kandy's predicament, the Portuguese were offered most attractive terms; a factory site at Trincomalee, an annual tribute of 15 tusked elephants and 300 oars for galleys, payment of all Portuguese soldiers sent to Kandy and the payment of the salaries and maintenance of the factor,

<sup>35</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, pp 74-6.

<sup>36</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, pp 96-7,101; Georg Schurhammer, Xaveriana, Lisbon, 1964, p 521.

<sup>37</sup> do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, p 133; T Abeyasinghe, JCBRAS, n.s, XVII, p 14; G P V Somaratne, op.cit., pp 200-1, Alakēśvarayuddhaya, p 36; Paulo da Trinidade, Chapters on the Introduction of Christianity to Ceylon taken from the Conquista Espiritual do Oriente, trans. Edmund Pieris and Achilles Meersman (eds), (Colombo, 1972), pp 74-5. his clerk and twenty Portuguese soldiers needed to guard the newly established factory. To crown it all, the king of Kandy offered to be converted to Christianity with his heir and court and offered his daughter already sought by Māyādunnē for his son - to any nominee of the Portuguese.<sup>38</sup>

By November 1545, the lowland forces, led by Māyādunnē's chief minister Arya, had begun the assault on the Kandyan frontier. An urgent message was sent to India requesting Portuguese assistance. King Jayavīra also successfully sowed division among his enemies. He offered the hand of his daughter to Bhuvanekabāhu's seven-year-old grandson, Dharmapāla. Bhuvanekabāhu was inclined to negotiate for peace after this. All that he had wanted had been the submission of the Udarata (Kandy) and that was now offered to him. Continued warfare could well have resulted in a greater accession of power and prestige to Mayadunne and a break with the Portuguese, both of which did not appeal greatly to the king of Kotte. Māyādunnē, who had been seeking the Kandyan king's daughter for his own son could not have been too pleased at this turn of events but he too, agreed to make peace before a Portuguese force arrived to deprive him of victory once again. Māyādunnē, however, insisted on a few other conditions: the delivery of a war indemnity in cash, of some war elephants and a quantity of guns. It was to avert these conditions that Jayavira made a final desperate bid for Portuguese aid. Having obtained a Franciscan friar from Kötte, he had himself secretly baptized on 9 March 1546.

Portuguese assistance was, in fact, on its way. Andre de Souza had set out from Cochin with a contingent of about forty Portuguese and some auxiliary forces on 15 February 1546. By the time de Souza made his way to Kandy via Colombo and Yāla, however, it was already well into April. A volunteer force of twenty Portuguese under Miguel Fernandez also made its way to Trincomalee via the Palk Straits but was prevented from joining up with Kandyan forces due to the hostility of the ruler of Trincomalee.

Although Jayavīra had known of de Souza's force by at least 17 March 1546, he decided before long to confirm peace on the terms negotiated with Māyādunnē. De Souza's force was small and it was apparent that no further reinforcement was likely to arrive for several months with the onset of the southwest monsoon. Therefore, although the king of Kandy paid generous allowances to the Portuguese soldiers and granted a further 3000 pardaos to cover expenses and, indeed, even persuaded five of his chiefs to

<sup>38</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, pp 82, 132-4, 136-8, 142, 145-6, 154; T Abeyasinghe, JCBRAS, n.s, XVII, p 17. be baptized, he himself refused to make his conversion public until forces sufficient to alter the verdict of the previous war arrived from India.

Jayavīra 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.<sup>39</sup> 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...."<sup>40</sup> The king of Kandy himself, could not have been unaware of moves to convert his own son and to place him on the Kandyan throne. Thus, when Bhuvanekabāhu alleged that the Portuguese were a set of brigands who had come to plunder and destroy, he found a ready ear in Jayavīra.<sup>41</sup>

The development of a closer understanding between Kōṭṭe and Kandy isolated Sītāvaka once more. In mid-1547, Māyādunnē tried to alter that situation by joining with the prince of the Seven Kōralēs to attack Kandy but intelligence of the arrival of yet another Portuguese force in Kandy caused him to postpone his plans. This expedition, led by Antonio Moniz Barreto, was a result of Jayavīra'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. By then, Jayavīra's hour of need had passed. Therefore, he stiffened his terms. Christian missionary activity would be allowed in Kandy only when the Portuguese obtained "the kingdom of Māyādunnē and all this island up to Jaffnapatam..." for Jayavīra. 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 Kötte seem to have led to a compromise agreement but before this could be implemented a message from Bhuvanekabāhu arrived in Kandy. In effect, the message threatened the end of the Kötte-Kandy entente unless the Portuguese were expelled from Kandy. This decided Jayavīra, who mobilized his forces and requested the Portuguese to leave his kingdom through the port of Batticaloa on the eastern coast. Barreto, who by this time had lost all trust in the king, immediately burnt his baggage, abandoned his artillery and withdrew along

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, pp 141,146,177; Documentacao para a historia dos missoes do padroado Portuges do Oriente; Antonio da Silva Rego (ed.), (Lisbon, 1947-1958), Volume III, p 413.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, p 152

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p 181.

the shorter westward road to the coast through the Seven Körales.<sup>42</sup> The first attempt at a Luso-Kandyan alliance had ended.

Meanwhile, the ruler of Sītāvaka had had time for reflection. The Kötte-Portuguese accord, which had been a stumbling block in the 1530s seemed to have been replaced by an equally vexing Kötte-Kandy alliance. Māyādunnē, therefore, turned to his erstwhile enemy, the Portuguese, in an attempt to alter the balance of forces. Barreto's retreating force was welcomed and fed by Sītāvaka officials, in marked contrast to the way in which the inhabitants of Kötte behaved. The people of Kötte 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 Bhuvanekabāhu, proved receptive to Māyādunnē's overtures and met the king of Sītāvaka personally. Māyādunnē proposed a Portuguese alliance with Sītāvaka against Kandy. He offered to pay the costs of a Portuguese expedition and agreed to share the treasure of the Kandyan king with the Portuguese, if the Portuguese sent two hundred soldiers for the campaign. He was even ready to pay tribute to Portugal. All Māyādunnē 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 Kötte) to Sītāvaka. Barreto agreed to take Māyādunnē's envoys with him to Goa for further negotiations.<sup>43</sup>

It did not take long before the monarchs of Kōṭṭe and Kandy woke up to the danger of their position. The king of Kōṭṭe paid twenty five pardaos to each Portuguese soldier who had been to Kandy as recompense for losses they had suffered and offered Barreto a further 10,000 pardaos if only he would submit a report more favourable to Kōṭṭe at Goa. He also began preparations for a new war with Sītāvaka, a war which seemed imminent. The king of Kandy in his turn, returned the artillery left behind by Barreto. Barreto spurned the offer of money. Portuguese anti-Bhuvanekabāhu 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 Kōṭṭe.<sup>44</sup>

Bhuvanekabāhu, however, sent his own emissaries to Goa. He denied impeding conversion in Kōtte. Fortunately for him the energetic Portuguese governor, Don João de Castro died on 6 June 1548 and his elderly successor,

44 *ibid.*, pp 214,216.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, pp 197-204, 207; do Couto, *JCBRAS*, XX, pp 126-8, 131.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, pp 210-1,214.

Garcia de Sa rested content with writing letters of admonition to the King of Kōțțe. Bhuvanekabāhu, meanwhile, tactfully suggested that he was in no hurry about the repayment of loans he had made to the Portuguese state. Nevertheless, the Portuguese commitment to defend Kōțțe was in doubt for quite some time. For instance, Jorge Cabral, de Sa's successor as governor, threatened to support Māyādunnē when Bhuvanekabāhu rejected a Portuguese request for a loan of a further 30,000 *cruzados* although the king of Kōțțe had continued to pay tribute quite regularly.

Māyādunnē was not unaware of the situation. Around May 1549 he gathered his forces and attacked Kōṭṭe. Bhuvanekabāhu's forces were speedily cooped up in the environs of Kōṭṭe city. Bhuvanekabāhu 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 it was January 1550 by the time he set sail with a force of six hundred Portuguese from Goa. Thus, Kōṭṭe forces were shut up in the capital city for most of 1549.<sup>45</sup>

Once the Portuguese reinforcement arrived, however, Māyādunnē raised the siege of Kotte. By about March 1550, the Kotte-Portuguese army took offensive and stormed up the Kälani Valley capturing the forts built by Sītāvaka forces on the way and decisively defeated Māyādunnē at Navagamuva. The capital city of Sītāvaka was captured and sacked although the temples were spared due to Bhuvanekabāhu's express wishes. Māyādunnē retired further inland to Batugedera in Denavaka.<sup>46</sup> At this stage, there arose a difference of opinion between the allies as to what should be done. Now that Māyādunnē was defeated and was suing for peace, the Portuguese wanted to settle with him and to turn to Kandy to avenge the humiliation of 1547. The clergy were particularly keen on this because 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 because it conveniently coincided with revenge against Jayavīra. Bhuvanekabāhu 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-Kötte alliance which had been a cornerstone of Kötte policy since 1546. Continuation of the campaign against Māyādunnē would have given Bhuvanekabāhu more time to manoeuvre. Furthermore, Māyādunnē's almost successful bid for Portuguese support during the years 1547-49 might well

<sup>45</sup> Correa, CLR, Third series IV, pp 430-1.

do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 132-9; Pieris and Fitzler, pp 234,246.

have led the king of Kötte to regard him too dangerous a rival to tolerate for long.

But, as often happened, it was the Portuguese who had their way. Māyādunnē's offer to pay a huge sum of money to pay for the expenses of the Portuguese fleet might well have tipped the balance. Bhuvanekabāhu was forced to make peace with his brother and to join in an attack on King Jayavīra of Kandy. The invasion resulted in disaster. The 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 Kōtte army also lost heavily. All the heavy arms and baggage were lost.

The campaign had significant consequences. In Kandy, Karaliyaddē speedily reconciled himself with his father. Portuguese repute in war fell precipitously. Viceroy de Noronha reported a few months later to the king as follows: "I find the Portuguese have lost so much of prestige that the people of the country tell them at every opportunity to go to Candya."<sup>47</sup> Māyādunnē gained the initiative once more. In fact, the worst loser was Bhuvanekabāhu. 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.<sup>48</sup>

Mutual recrimination was thus the order of the day when the new Portuguese viceroy of India, Dom Affonso de Noronha, arrived at Colombo on 17 October 1550 due to an error in navigation on his way to India. The Viceroy was influenced against the king of Kōṭṭe by the reports of both Franciscan Friar, Fr. João de Villa de Conde and de Noronha's own nephew, Diogo de Noronha who was in Māyādunnē's camp.<sup>49</sup> According to de Queyroz he was also displeased because Bhuvanekabāhu 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."<sup>50</sup> 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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, p 237

<sup>48</sup> do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 139-44; Pieris and Fitzler, pp 236-8, 248-9.

<sup>49</sup> Correa, CALR, IV, p 432.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> de Queyroz, pp 238-40.

xerafins which was refused by the king of Kōṭṭe. Moreover, de Noronha received Timbiripola, Māyādunnē's son, as Sītāvaka's envoy on board his fleet, accepted Sītāvaka as a Portuguese vassal state and agreed to take envoys from both Sītāvaka and Kōṭṭe to take a fresh look at the question of the disputed succession of Kōṭṭe. The viceroy was certainly attracted by the idea of an alliance with Māyādunnē against Kandy.<sup>51</sup>

Scarcely five months after the departure of the viceroy, Bhuvanekabāhu was shot dead by a Portuguese soldier. Fighting between Kōṭṭe and Sītāvaka had recommenced by the end of 1550 and Vīdiyē Bandāra was defending the frontier against Māyādunnē with some success when Bhuvanekabāhu, accompanied by the Portuguese Factor, Gaspar d'Azevedo and a Portuguese bodyguard, went to his palace at Kälaniya.<sup>52</sup> One day "...while the Portuguese were in 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....<sup>53</sup>

Controversy has raged since the sixteenth century on the responsibility for Bhuvanekabāhu's death. Diogo do Couto's version, also ambiguously reported in the Rājāvaliya, 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...." 54 The viceroy, de Noronha reported that Māyādunnē 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.55 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 mulatto soldier, Antonio de Barcelos was a slave left behind by the viceroy. Gaspar de Azevedo, the Portuguese factor, made no attempt to find who was responsible and suspicion grows when one finds that de Noronha had left the factor detailed instructions as to what should be done in case Bhuvanekabahu died.

<sup>53</sup> do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 146-7.

54 *ibid.*, p 148.

55 Pieris and Fitzler, p 258.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, pp 238-40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p 258.

Certainly, there was widespread contemporary belief that the Portuguese had killed the king.<sup>56</sup> The Mestres of Goa wrote to King João 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...<sup>57</sup> Bhuvanekabāhu had outlived his usefulness to the Portuguese and his grandson, the twelve year old Dharmapāla, educated by the Franciscans was probably seen as a more pliant instrument.

The tragic death of Bhuvanekabāhu was mourned all over Kōṭṭe, even by those who were critical of his policies. As a mild and liberal ruler, he had won the regard of many of his subjects despite his unpopular alliance with the Portuguese. Bhuvanekabāhu 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, Bhuvanekabāhu gently asked him whether Barreto himself had actually experienced them; a question which provoked the Portuguese soldier to rise in great anger dash his bonnet on the floor and walk out of the reception chamber.<sup>58</sup> To the end of his reign, Bhuvanekabāhu managed to obtain Portuguese assistance regularly against his brother, despite Māyādunnē's best efforts and, to his credit, Bhuvanekabāhu unlike Jayavīra of Kandy did not think his kingdom "well worth a Mass."

The death of Bhuvanekabāhu brought the question of succession to a head. Māyādunnē proclaimed himself king of Kōṭṭe and advanced down the Kälani river. The Portuguese and the Kōṭṭe nobility in the other hand, acclaimed Dharmapāla as king with his father, Vīdiyē Bandāra, as regent. Vīdiyē Bandāra was able to repulse the Sītāvaka forces and drive them back from Kōṭṭe. 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 Sri Lanka but his primary ambition does not seem to have been to capture Sri Lanka but rather to seize the Kötte king's treasure. Bhuvanekabāhu's frequent

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> ibid., pp 256-257. In one of de Noronha's letters to the king of Portugal he says of Bhuvanekabāhu "...I am of the opinion that he ought to receive some punishment and it would not have been a great matter to deal with him in a different way if I had the necessary means," ibid., p 237.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, p 283.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> de Queyroz, p 272.

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 because he had not accepted Christianity. When it was pointed out to him that it was hardly a politic moment for conversion because Sinhalese Buddhists were already going over to Māyādunnē in great numbers, he agreed to defer conversion until Māyādunnē's power was eliminated, on condition that the privileges that the Christians had hitherto enjoyed in Kotte were maintained and also on condition that the late king's treasure handed over to the Portuguese. De Noronha was, however, disappointed at the quantity of treasure eventually delivered. In an effort to gain more, he had several chieftains and attendants tortured and he eventually persuaded Dharmapala and his court to acquiesce in the Portuguese 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 Māyādunnē.

De Noronha's activities in Kötte undermined the loyalty of the people of Kötte. The plunder of the revered Buddhist temple at Kötte (the *raja maha vihāraya*) led to wholesale desertions. The Portuguese restored the premises to Buddhist monks in belated recognition of the blunder but the rumours of Dharmapāla's imminent conversion persisted. Dharmapāla's reign had got off to an inauspicious start.

Eventually, de Noronha's Portuguese forces were accompanied by a much dwindled Kōṭṭe army of 4000 men. They advanced along the Kälani both on land and in rowing vessels destroying several stockades on the way and defeated Māyādunnē in a battle in front of the city of Sītāvaka. The city itself was captured and sacked by the Portuguese contingent of the army and Māyādunnē fled to Däraniyagala. De Noronha realized that a difficult campaign in mountainous country lay ahead especially because Jayavīra of Kandy was likely to give refuge and assistance to Māyādunnē. He therefore demanded the rest of the money promised before proceeding any further. Vīdiyē Bandāra was unable to comply, and 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 Kōṭṭe.<sup>59</sup> Even from the Portuguese point of view, apart from the seizure of the Kōṭṭe King's treasure, de Noronha's expedition was singularly devoid of positive results.

de Queyroz, pp 299-305; Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 146-54; Pieris and Fitzler, pp 262-73.

The decade ending in 1557 had been one in which political alignments in Sri Lanka south of Jaffna had changed with almost bewildering rapidity. The four main protagonists, Kötte, Kandy, Sītāvaka 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 Sītāvaka, which had spread over Rayigama in the 1530s and gained *de facto* control of part of Kōtte, seemed to have been kept in check by periodic Portuguese assistance to the Kōtte sovereign. The balance of power within Kōtte itself had altered in favour of the Portuguese but they were more unpopular than ever 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 1536-39; a Kōtte-Portuguese alliance against Sītāvaka with Kandy sitting on the wings.

But the picture was to alter decisively in the 1550s. In the first place, there was a change of monarch in the highlands. The aging Jayavīra had been more inclined to view Māyādunnē favourably after the Portuguese attack on his domains in 1550. In late 1551, however, his elder son, Karaliyaddē Bandāra raised the standard of revolt once more, seized and executed his rival stepbrother and expelled his father from Kandy. Jayavīra Bandāra found refuge in Sītāvaka. The resultant clash between Māyādunnē and Karaliyaddē was indecisive but, from then on, Sītāvaka, in its struggle against the Portuguese, had always to take into account the presence of a hostile Kandy on its flank.<sup>60</sup>

The developments in Kandy, however, were more than counterbalanced by those in Kōtte. After the death of Bhuvanekabāhu, the Portuguese unabashedly went ahead with their project of converting the kingdom into a Roman Catholic client state. Two measures were taken early to achieve their result. In the first place, the missionary effort were stepped up in the churches at Negombo, Kōtte, Colombo, Pānadura, Maggona, Bēruvala, Galle and Väligama. Some twenty five thousand converts were claimed in the early 1550s.<sup>61</sup> Secondly, steps were taken to eliminate the power of Vīdiyē Bandāra, who was viewed by the Portuguese as the only threat to their undisputed control over the youthful Dharmapāla.

It was the second measure that boomeranged. Vīdiyē, who had diplomatically left Kōtte to spend some time with his cousin, the prince of the Seven Kōralēs, was enticed back by a request from his son and was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Alakēśvarayuddhaya, p 36; de Queyroz, pp 314,704; Paulo da Trinidade, p 75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, p 124; Pieris and Fitzler, p 78.

immediately imprisoned. Not even Vīdiyē Bandāra's ready conversion to Christianity in late 1552 served to reduce the rigour of his confinement. His wife, however, was resourceful enough to spring him from prison in 1553. Bitter at the treatment meted out to him, Vīdiyē Bandāra launched an anti-Portuguese and anti-Christian crusade which immediately struck a responsive chord among the people of Kōṭṭe. Māyādunnē, himself, sent a contingent of six hundred men to assist him and Vīdiyē seized the whole coastal belt south of Colombo, destroyed all churches in that area and established his headquarters at Pälända. By 1554, he was strong enough to launch attacks on Kōṭṭe city itself. In the north, his ally, the Prince of the Seven Kōralēs seems to have been as successful. Dharmapāla's kingdom was swiftly reduced to an area around Kōṭte and Colombo.

The Portuguese, now in dire straits, turned to Māyādunnē for assistance. The king of Sītāvaka proved receptive to the idea of an alliance against Vīdiyē Bandāra. Māyādunnē had found that despite the assistance he provided, Vīdiyē Bandāra did not recognize him as the legitimate ruler of Kōtte but rather considered himself as regent on behalf of Dharmapāla. Vīdiyē also refused to assist Māyādunnē in his campaigns against Karaliyaddē Bandāra. The king of Sītāvaka, well aware of Vīdiyē's prowess in the field of battle had ample reason to fear his rapid success in Kōtte.<sup>62</sup>

The Sītāvaka-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 Māyādunnē from Vīdiyē Bandāra. According to the information given by de Queyroz, Dharmapāla's kingdom was henceforth to be confined to a coastal strip from Colombo to Välitota together with the Salpiti and Rayigam kōralēs. The rest of Kōtte was to go to Sītāvaka, in exchange for which Māyādunnē agreed to be a Portuguese vassal and pay the traditional tribute in cinnamon. Three key nobles in Kōtte who were regarded as hostile to Māyādunnē were to be arrested and tried by the Portuguese, ostensibly for being in league with Vīdiyē Bandāra.<sup>63</sup>

Vīdiyē Bandāra's forces were no match for the Sītāvaka veterans commanded by Vickramasimha *mudali*. The Sītāvaka army seized the stockade built at Molkāva in the Pasdun *kōralē* and then, reinforced by three hundred Portuguese soldiers, decisively defeated Vīdiyē Bandāra at Pälända. Vīdiyē retired southward with his depleted forces and found refuge in the Kandyan

<sup>62</sup> do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 157-9, 161; de Queyroz, pp 306-18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> de Queyroz, pp 318-9; Alakēśvarayuddhaya, p 37; C R de Silva, Lancarote de Seixas and Mādampē, p 28.

kingdom, whose monarch had been at war with Māyādunnē since 1552, but his efforts to invade Sītāvaka and establish himself in the lowlands once more failed so completely that the Kandyan king accepted the offer of a separate peace from Māyādunnē and expelled Vīdiyē from his kingdom. Vīdiyē's final effort to recoup his fortunes from the Seven Kōralēs also ended in defeat and with his flight and ultimate death in Jaffna, the Sītāvaka forces occupied the Seven Kōralēs and Pițigal *kōralē* assigned to them by the treaty of 1555. Sītāvaka had by now emerged as the largest and strongest kingdom in the island.<sup>64</sup>

The revolt of Vīdiyē and the concurrent rise of Sītāvaka power did not deter the Portuguese from their ambitions in Kōtte. Churches in the coastal districts were rebuilt in 1556 and sizeable numbers of Sinhalese, especially from the *karāva* caste, were baptized.<sup>65</sup> 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...."<sup>66</sup>

The defeat of Vīdiyē encouraged the Portuguese to prevail on king Dharmapāla to announce his conversion to Christianity in early 1557.<sup>67</sup> On embracing his new religion, the eighteen year old monarch not only adopted the Portuguese name Dom João, but also took the unprecedented step of confiscating all temple land and gifting them to the Franciscans. The Temple of the Tooth (*Daladāgē*) of Kōtte and the well-endowed *maha vihāra* of Kälaniya were immediately handed over to the missionaries.<sup>68</sup> Such a step

<sup>65</sup> de Queyroz, p 296; Archivo National do Torre do Tombo, Maunscripts do Convento da Graca, Tomo III, Caixa 15, p 276.

66 Pieris and Fitzler, p 240.

67 do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 171-2; Documentacao para a historia das missoes, Vol. VII, p 361, Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon, 49-V-50. Luis Frois to the College of Goa, 24 January 1559.

68 de Queyroz, pp 330-1.

do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 170-7; de Queyroz, pp 318-25; Alakēśvarayuddhaya, pp 37-40.

did not go unchallenged. In Kötte city itself, a group of bhikkhus led by bhikkhu 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 bhikkhus were seized and put to death.<sup>69</sup> From then on, Dharmapāla became solely dependant upon the Portuguese and a small minority of Christian converts in Kötte.

It did not take long before Sītāvaka and Kōṭṭe were once again at war. The evidence in the *Rājāvaliya* suggests that the conflict might have arisen due to the efforts of Kōṭṭe to seize the Mātara *disāva* while the main Sītāvaka force was pursuing Vīdiyē Bandāra from the Seven Kōralēs. Māyādunnē was in no mood to tolerate this breach of the treaty of 1555. He sent a strong force under Kīravälle Obberiye Ralahāmy to drive out the Kōṭṭe forces which were led by Manampēri *mudali*. The presence of a strong Portuguese contingent in the Kōṭṭe army enabled them to fight a drawn battle at Denipitiya and retreat in orderly fashion to Mātara port but, with the arrival of reinforcements from Sītāvaka under Danturē Ēkanāyaka *mudali*, the whole of the southwestern coast up to the environs of Colombo fell into the hands of Māyādunnē.<sup>70</sup>

There is little doubt that warfare would have resumed even if the Portuguese had not made a preemptive strike. The treaty of 1555 had not been regarded by either party as a lasting settlement and there was widespread feeling that, with his conversion to Christianity, Dharmapāla had forfeited whatever claims he might have had to kingship. Māyādunnē could now appear as the champion of Buddhism over foreign and Christian influence. In November 1557, a large Sītāvaka force, estimated at 50,000 by de Queyroz, marched westward towards Kōtte to eliminate the last strongholds of Dharmapāla's kingdom on the lower reaches of the Kälani.<sup>71</sup>

The task proved to be somewhat more difficult than Māyādunnē anticipated. In the first place, the Sinhalese forces of Kōtte had but a few square miles of territory to defend and thus had the advantage of interior lines of communication. Therefore, 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 defensively and withdraw to the fortified cities of Kōtte and Colombo. Moreover, the Kōtte army was

<sup>69</sup> ibid., pp 335-8.

<sup>70</sup> Alakēśvarayuddhaya, p 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> de Queyroz, pp 335, 339.

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 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 Kötte, the inflow was sufficient to maintain Portuguese strength despite a high casualty rate.<sup>72</sup> 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 unloaded from Portuguese ships defended both Kötte 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 bank of the Kälani river and similar vessels on the Kötte lake helped in the defence of the capital city.73

On the other hand, the Sītāvaka 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 their soldiers armed with bows, spears and swords. At least in the initial stages of this protracted conflict, they missed the expertise which had been supplied by the *Samudri's* forces in the late 1530s. Neither did they possess cannon sufficiently large to batter down the walls of Kōtte and Colombo and in the first few years, they were inhibited in their siege of Kōtte by the presence of strong Portuguese forces in Colombo. Moreover, at least in the first few years, Sītāvaka seems to have had difficulty in maintaining its huge army in the field for considerable lengths of time. While the number of 50,000 men given in de Queyroz was almost certainly an overestimate, the maintenance of even half that number in battle readiness must have taxed the administrative and economic resources of Māyādunnē's kingdom. On occasion, the Kōtte forces were able to surprise their enemies while they were fishing or hunting and

<sup>73</sup> de Queyroz, pp 339, 341,345.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, pp 338-9, 396; do Couto, *JCBRAS*, XX, p 205.

they could always hope for a relaxation of pressure during the ploughing and harvesting seasons.<sup>74</sup>

The campaign of the late 1550s and early 1560s also brought to the fore the military skill of Māyādunnē's youngest son, Tikiri Bandāra. Tikiri Bandāra had, of course, seen battle before. While hardly sixteen years of age he had been the nominal commander of the army which defeated Vīdiyē Bandāra at Pälända and had been known by the name of Rājasimha since that victory. He had also participated in the campaigns that drove Vīdiyē out of the Four and Seven Kōralēs but it was in the campaigns of 1557-65 that he established himself as a commander of courage and ability. He was fortunate in having able instructors in the experienced commander of the Sītāvaka forces, notably Vickramasimha *mudali* and Danturē Ēkanāyaka *mudali*, both of whom had already made their repute in earlier conflicts.

Signs of a long struggle were evident from early on. The Sītāvaka forces besieged Kötte from November 1557 to November 1558 without success and from then on, built a series of stockades along the Kälani valley to keep the Portuguese penned in within a small area. The Portuguese effort to break through these barriers in 1559 failed decisively because although they seized two stockades at Kälaniya, they were repulsed at Māpitigama and lost a pitched battle in the same area soon after. By 1560, the initiative appeared to have passed to the Sītāvaka 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 forts. Even more effective was their tactic of devastating the villages that still owed allegiance to Dharmapala. In 1560 the villages of Vattala, Päliyagoda, Telangapāta, Mutval and Varāgoda were pillaged. This struck at the heart of Kotte's military power because the area round Colombo and Kötte had become its sole recruiting ground. 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 Sītāvaka force under Ekanāyaka *mudali* was attacking villages under Kōtte rule. The captain of Colombo marched out with 250 Portuguese and 800 Sinhalese to protect the villages of Mulleriyāva and Kolonnāva but when the Portuguese committed their troops to battle at Mulleriyāva, Rājasimha brought up the main Sītāvaka army and surrounded them in such a manner that almost all the Sinhalese and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> *ibid.*, p 345.

half the Portuguese in the Kötte army were killed before the remnants secured their retreat to the capital.<sup>75</sup>

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

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 Rājasimha soon after, made his army very difficult to match on level round. The Kōṭṭe Sinhalese army had been decimated and the Portuguese were left holding on to Kōṭṭe and Colombo with great difficulty. Indeed, when reinforcements failed to arrive from Goa in September-October 1563, the fall of Kōṭṭe seemed imminent. Dharmapāla and the Portuguese were, however, spared this disaster partly by assistance sent directly from the newly established fort at Mannar and partly by the intervention of Karaliyaddē Bandāra, the king of Kandy.

Karaliyaddē had been watching the rise in the power of Sītāvaka after 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 a Portuguese fort at Mannar in 1560. Sometime between 1562 and 1564 therefore, Karaliyaddē embraced Christianity and obtained a force of Portuguese soldiers to assist him against Sītāvaka. In 1564, when the Portuguese were hard pressed bỳ Rājasimha, the Kandyan king sent a force of 5000 Sinhalese and thirty Portuguese to raid the Seven Kōralēs. This army marched up to Chilaw and burnt the port but failed to divert Rājasimha from Kōtte.<sup>76</sup>

Kötte held out in 1564, but the war of attrition was taking a toll on the limited Portuguese manpower in Asia. Since there did not appear to be any immediate prospect of the reconquest of Kötte, the Portuguese viceroy, Antao de Noronha ordered that Kötte city should be abandoned and all forces

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, pp 338-50, 396-409; do Couto, *JCBRAS*, XX, pp 205-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 215-35; de Queyroz, pp 409-20; C R Boxer, "Dom Jorge de Menezes Baroche and the battle of Mulleriyāva, 1560," Mare Luso Indicum, Vol III, 1976, pp 85-97.

should concentrate in Colombo. Despite great opposition from Dharmapāla and his followers, this order was carried out in July 1565.<sup>77</sup>

The abandonment of Kōṭṭe hurt Portuguese prestige in the island but it was a tactically wise decision. No longer burdened with the defence of Kōṭṭe city, the Portuguese were able to adopt the former Sītāvaka tactic of harrying the villages in enemy territory. Thus, the years after 1565 saw Portuguese attacks on Attidiya, Gorakāna, Kalubōvila, Pānadura, Moraṭuva, Kolonnāva, Pāliyagoḍa, Télaňgapāta, Mattumāgala and Hāňdala. When the Sītāvaka forces 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 Kōṭṭe, the Portuguese tried to utilize their command of the sea to establish new centres of influence. A proposal to build a fort in Galle 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.<sup>78</sup>

The period which followed the abandonment of Kotte was used by the ruler of Sītāvaka to reorganize the kingdom. The vast stretches of land that fell into Sītāvaka hands in the late 1550s 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 Rājasimha (1581-92) but the period of his rule, these revenue reforms may well date to this period. Rajasimha was also the first Sri Lankan 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 with emulating the Portuguese practice of burning excess cinnamon to keep the 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 1530s 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 each quintal and on rare occasions even

As Gavetas do Torre do Tombo, Vol. III, p 70; do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 236-42; de Queyroz, pp 420-1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> de Queyroz, p 422; T Abeyasinghe, editor and translator, Portuguese Regimentos on Sri Lanka, (Colombo, 1976), pp 8-9.

occasions even double this price. Cinnamon had become a key source of revenue to the king of Sītāvaka.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the virtual limitation of Sītāvaka activity to defensive operations in the period 1565-73, the Portuguese did not relent. They spurned any suggestion of a truce. In 1574, after the death of Dharmapāla's first queen, they obtained for him a Kandyan princess whose hand had already been sought for by Rājasimha. This insult provoked a Sītāvaka attack on Kandy in 1574 but on the news of the reduction of Sītāvaka troop strength around Colombo due to the Kandyan campaign, the Portuguese under Diogo de Mello Coutinho went on the offensive. The Sinhalese stockades at Kälaniya and Kaduvela were destroyed by raiding parties and though these were soon rebuilt, Coutinho utilized his sea power to attack the ports and coastal settlements under Sītāvaka rule. Efforts were made to inhibit the growing trade of Sītāvaka and ships sailing from ports controlled by Sītāvaka were attacked at sight. Between 1574 and 1576, Negombo, Kammala and Alutgama were all attacked and each sacked thrice. Other ports that felt Portuguese wrath included Kalutara, Maggona, Bēruvala, Alutgama and Chilaw. In the course of these years the Portuguese also destroyed the raja maha vihāra of Kälaniya, the Buddhist temples of Negombo, Salpē, Alutgama and Rayigama and the Hindu temple at Munnesvaram.<sup>80</sup>

The Sītāvaka forces were handicapped by war on two fronts. By the 1570s the Sītāvaka army was capable of defeating either the Kandyans 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 Sītāvaka 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 Sītāvaka did not possess a defensible natural frontier either on the west or the east. Efforts by Rājasimha to wed a Kandyan princess in the period 1569-73 and the Sītāvaka decision to open its ports to Portuguese traders around 1576-77<sup>81</sup>

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p 429.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> C R de Silva, CJHSS, new series, Vol. II, pp 21-2, 24; C R de Silva, CJHSS, new series, Vol. V, p 98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> de Queyroz, pp 424-7. Dharmapāla's own situation was not without risks. He was poisoned at a dinner hosted by de Mello Coutinho and though he survived after the administration of antidotes, Dharmapāla lost all his teeth and developed a stammer. De Mello was suspected of complicity and accepting a bribe from Māyādunnē and was recalled to Goa.

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 1577-78. The Portuguese raided Negombo and Chilaw in August 1577 and Kalutara, Bēruvala and Alutgama in early 1578. In the latter year, however, Sītāvaka 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, Mādampē, Negombo, Kammala, Kalutara, Alutgama, Välitota, Maggona, Bēruvala and Gintota forcing the retention of numbers of Sītāvaka 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 Rājasimha was thwarted once more.<sup>82</sup>

In 1579 Sītāvaka switched its main effort towards the Portuguese. In April that year the main Sītāvaka army of about 25,000 fighting men 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 Sītāvaka 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. Rājasimha 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 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. Rajasimha 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 sea power proved to be crucial. Urgent messages sent to Nagapatnam, 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

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, pp 427-30.

conditions that had prevailed at times during the sieges of Kötte 1562-65 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 18 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 Sītāvaka army to abandon the siege.<sup>83</sup>

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. Meanwhile, Rājasimha kept the Portuguese confined to Colombo and its immediate environs by establishing the Sītāvaka military headquarters at Biyagama, just twelve miles from Colombo.<sup>84</sup>

Nevertheless, the failure to capture Colombo must have been a disappointment for Rājasimha. In that same year, 1581, his father, Māyādunnē, died. Diogo do Couto and the author of the Cūlavamsa have both asserted that Māyādunnē was murdered by Rājasimha himself.85 Modern historians have generally been reluctant to accept this charge. Māyādunnē was about eighty years of age, and might well have died a natural death. Since Rājasimha had been the virtual ruler of Sītāvaka for many years do Couto's assertion that the murder was committed to gain possession of the kingdom lacks credibility. Do Couto's own account is so biased against both Māyādunnē and Rājasimha that he would have had few qualms about accepting adverse reports against either. Nor was the author of the Cūlavamsa, a Buddhist monk, unbiased because Rājasimha abandoned Buddhism for Saivite Hinduism in later life. The story that Rajasimha 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, Fernão de Queyroz, who was no defender of Rājasimha, explicitly states that Rājasimha

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> ibid., pp 431-9; do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 262-3; Biblioteca Publica de Evora, Codice CXV 1-13, ff 34-7v.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, p 94.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, p 271; *Chv*, XCIII vs 3-4.

received the news of the death of his father on his return to Sītāvaka after the siege of Colombo 1579-81.<sup>86</sup>

But even if Māyādunnē died a natural death there are indications that Rājasimha'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 do Couto's assertion that he was killed by Rājasimha himself to remove a rival. According to do Couto, the plotting continued and at various times the conspirators included Timbiripola's own son Rayigam Bandāra, the samghanāyaka of Sītāvaka and Rājasimha's close relatives. In all these cases Rajasimha'a reaction was swift, merciless and effective.87 Although do Couto's picture of Rajasimha's ruthlessness and the atmosphere of fear and suspicion at the Sītāvaka court might well have been overdrawn, Sinhalese sources seem to support his general contention that for those who were powerful, or potentially so, life was somewhat precarious at Sītāvaka. It is not known whether the opposition of the sampha was a cause or a result of Rājasimha's conversion to Hinduism but, in the end, the effect was to reduce the enthusiasm of the subjects for the ambitious enterprises of the Sītāvaka monarch. Rājasimha's policy of higher taxes and ceaseless warfare also could well have been resented by several sections of Sītāvaka society. As yet, however, Rajasimha'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 Kandyans divided. A section of the nobility led by Virasundara Bandara supported Rājasimha against their own king, Karaliyaddē Bandāra. The Kandyan king's depleted forces were decisively defeated in a battle near Balana and Karaliyadde fled towards Trincomalee where he died after a vain effort to rouse the vanni chiefs in his cause. His nephew, Yamasimha Bandāra, who was designated his heir, and his daughter, Kusumāsanadēvi, finally found refuge with the Portuguese at Mannar where they were baptized under the names of Dom Felipe and Dona Cätherina respectively.88

The conquest of Kandy relieved Sītāvaka of its anxieties on the eastern frontier. It also provided Rājasimha with valuable additional resources in men and material. Rājasimha was now in direct control of a greater extent

<sup>88</sup> de Queyroz, pp 438-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> de Queyroz, p 438; CLR, 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; A C Burnell and P A Tiele (eds), (London, 1885), p 78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 271-3, 277-8, 284-6.

of territory in Sri Lanka than any king since Parākramabāhu VI. It was an index of his strength that unlike in 1574, the Portuguese failed to divert Sītāvaka forces from Kandy by attacks on Sītāvaka territory in 1582. In fact, by 1582 the Portuguese were busy rebuilding the walls of Colombo in anticipation of another siege.<sup>89</sup>

This attack, however, took a further five years to materialize. Rājasimha had learnt the value of both artillery and sea power 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 Acheh. Gunpowder, gunners and technicians were obtained from abroad and a strong effort made to develop a navy. In 1586 a few Sītāvaka rowing ships equipped with sails tried to seize two *dhonies* bringing supplies into Colombo fort. Although the *dhonies* managed to elude the Sītāvaka fleet and put to Colombo, the Portuguese vessels within the port did not feel strong enough to sail out and challenge their opponents. The Sītāvaka fleet also cruised off Mannar, impeding shipping in that area. By 1587, Rājasimha's fleet amounted to 22 ships and eighteen large *dhonies*. The Portuguese tooke the threat seriously and in 1586, sent Thome de Souza Aronches as Captain Major of the coast to combat the Sītāvaka fleet.<sup>90</sup>

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 Rājasimha. In 1585, there was an attempt to poison him and soon after, some army captains including a son of Kidanpalāgeyi Hidda Nayidē of Hēvāgama fled to the Portuguese. About the same time, there was a movement in the Udarața to oust Rājasimha and replace him with Vīrasundara Bandāra. Although Rājasimha acted first and had Vīrasundara Bandāra killed, latter's son, Konnappu Bandāra, escaped to the Portuguese and was baptized as Dom João of Austria. In fact, Rājasimha'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.<sup>91</sup>

A truce between Sītāvaka and the Portuguese seems to have been concluded 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 the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, pp 439-40; do Couto, *JCBRAS*, XX, pp 262-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 275-6, 280, 285, 297-8; Archivo Portuguese-Oriental, J H da Cunha Rivara (ed.), Nova Goa, 1857-1877, Vol. III, p 253.

<sup>91</sup> Archivo Portugues-Oriental, Vol. III, p 72; Mandārampurapuvatha, Labugama Lankananda (ed.), (Colombo, 1958), Stanzas 66-8.

Beira lake with the sea on the northwest. But the truce was not destined to last for long because the Portuguese continued to welcome and give refuge to anti-Sītāvaka elements. 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 Rājasimha finally launched his all out attack on Colombo.<sup>92</sup>

Rājasimha's last siege of Colombo (May 1587 - February 1588) has long remained the best known of the Sri Lankan attacks on the Portuguese fort largely because of the detailed description of the struggle provided by the Portuguese historian, Diogo do Couto.<sup>93</sup> It was a contest in which the Sītāvaka forces came close to victory, but were eventually thwarted by their inability to prevent the arrival of Portuguese reinforcements from India.

Estimates of Rājasimha's army given by both do 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 a century. Most important of all were over a hundred cannon of various sizes by which Rajasimha hoped to open a breach in the walls of the This formidable force led by Rajasimha himself and his most fort. experienced generals, Vickramasimha mudali, Senarat mudali and Vijekoon mudali moved in slow stages from Biyagama and encamped in front of Colombo by 29 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 *lascarins* could manage to send out an appeal for aid and then hold on till assistance arrived. In this sense, Rājasimha had timed his moves well because when he attacked the southwest monsoon was in full force and communications by sea were virtually at a standstill. However, the Portuguese had a counter to this because one day in July, when the wind had dropped somewhat, two *dhonies* slipped out of the harbour and made for Mannar. Rājasimha's fleet, sheltering in the Kälani 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 because from then

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> de Queyroz, p 440; do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 274-5, 279.

<sup>93</sup> do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, p 288-387.

on, Rājasimha 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 ineffective the Portuguese vessels stationed on the lake. When the first assault on the fort was launched on 4 August, the only reinforcement that had reached Colombo was some forty men from Mannar. Rājasimha 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 overlooking the lake. Yet, both this attack and a subsequent one on 20 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 Nāgapatnam on 15 August and fifty from Goa on the 23rd of the same month. Rājasimha's navy on which he had lavished considerable attention, failed to prevent these arrivals and had the worst of an indecisive conflict with a Portuguese fleet on 7 September. With the arrival of seven ships carrying 250 Portuguese on 15 September the garrison of the fort rose to over a thousand Portuguese and the immediate danger of capture seemed averted.

Rājasimha, 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 Sītāvaka 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 Bēruvala, Välitota and Väligama. Soon after, another force of one hundred and ten Portuguese and sixty *lascarins* in ten ships set out from Colombo. This force raided Kosgoda and Mādampē and soon after, destroyed the Sinhalese fort at Galle in a surprise attack. Sailing on, it sacked Väligama, Mātara and Devinuvara before returning to Colombo. Among the buildings it destroyed was the beautiful Hindu temple at Devinuvara picturesquely described by do 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...."94

Rājasimha made his final efforts in January. A great assault on 10 January was repulsed with loss and the Sītāvaka 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, Rājasimha 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 Rājasimha beyond the Kālani river because they still feared to meet the Sītāvaka array in open battle. Thus, Rājasimha 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.<sup>95</sup>

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 Sītāvaka rule in 1581. The execution of Vīrasundara Bandāra on suspicion of treachery would have reduced Rājasimha's support in Kandy while his levy of men and material for his campaigns against the Portuguese might well have been resented. Some of Karaliyaddē Bandāra's supporters lived on in Kandy and provided a focus for the opposition while the Saivism of Rājasimha could not have inspired enthusiasm among the predominantly Buddhist population of the highlands. Thus, when in 1590, a Christian of royal blood called Dom Francisco *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 Sītāvaka. Indeed, Yamasimha Bandāra (Dom Felipe), heir to Karaliyaddē, 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 João de Mello de Sampāyo, a former captain of Mannar, accompanied Dom Felipe into Kandyan territory. The expedition also included Konappu Bandāra, otherwise known as Dom João of Austria, who had won a reputation for bravery and military skill at the siege of Colombo and at Goa.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, p 372.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, pp 288-387; de Queyroz, pp 440-2.

Dom Felipe was welcomed by the Kandyan nobility and crowned at Vahakōtte. His army fortified Gannoruva and repulsed the Sītāvaka forces that attempted a counterattack in a battle at Ganetänne. The enraged Rājasimha immediately had his aging commander in chief Vickramasimha *mudali*, put to death.<sup>96</sup>

The successful revolt of the Udarața encouraged others to raise their heads against the stern rule of the Sītāvaka monarch. In 1591, Sōtupāla Bandāra, ruler of the Seven Kōralēs rose in revolt and offered his allegiance to Dom João Dharmapāla of Kōtte. Rājasimha sent the bulk of his army to subdue this new rebellion but this action coming with the posting of Sītāvaka troops on the Kandyan frontier, weakened their forces near Colombo. The Portuguese, who had hitherto been content with raiding coastal settlements, seized the opportunity to attack and raze the Sītāvaka stockade at Biyagama thus forcing Rājasimha to abandon his campaign in the Seven Kōralēs. In 1592, when Rājasimha once more withdrew his men to attack the Seven Kōralēs, the Portuguese marched out of Colombo fort and destroyed the stockades at Biyagama and Kaduvela. Rājasimha's immediate reaction in beheading the commanders of the two stockades only led to further disaffection. To make matters worse, the reduced force sent against Sōtupāla Bandāra was repulsed with loss.<sup>97</sup>

Rājasimha's only ray of hope came, curiously enough, from Kandy. The vigorous policy of conversion to Christianity in the highlands had roused opposition to Dom Felipe. Dom Felipe himself died suddenly amidst rumours that he was poisoned and Konappu Bandāra immediately proclaimed himself successor under the name of Vimaladharmasūriya. The new king reverted to Buddhism and requested the Portuguese to depart from his kingdom. The Portuguese being too few to resist, retired to Mannar.<sup>98</sup>

To Rājasimha, the break between Vimaladharmasūriya and the Portuguese appeared to be a chance to reverse his fortunes. He proposed a truce with the Portuguese but found out soon enough that he did not need it, for dissension among the Portuguese troops within Colombo rendered them completely ineffective in 1592. Rājasimha was therefore able to mount an

<sup>96</sup> Archivo Portuguese Oriental, Vol. III, pp 126, 203, 254-5; de Queyroz, pp 444-5, 705; Paulo da Trinidade, 77-9; Archivo Historico Ultramarino, Codice 281, ff 33, 85, v. 209.

<sup>97</sup> Paulo de Trinidade, p 79; de Queyroz, pp 443-4.

<sup>98</sup> Paulo da Trinidade, p 80; Archivo Portuguez Criental, Vol. III, pp 479-80; J F Judice-Biker (ed.), Colleccao de tratados e concertos das pazes que o estado da India Portuguese fez., Vol. I, Lisboa, 1881, pp 220, 226.

attack on the Seven Körales and subjugate it in person. Sötupäla Bandara fled to Mannar where he embraced Christianity as Dom Manoel.

But the difficult task of reconquering Kandy remained. Rājasimha himself set out for this task with his new commander in chief Aritta Kivendu Perumal, also known as Manamperuma *Mohottāla* but Vimaladharmasūriya successfully defended Balana pass against the Sītāvaka forces. Rājasimha, disappointed at his failure retired to Petangoda leaving the defence of the Four Kōralēs to his commanders. A festering wound caused by a bamboo splinter in his foot refused to respond to treatment and Rājasimha died soon after his return to his palace at Petangoda.<sup>99</sup>

The death of Rājasimha left a power vacuum in Sītāvaka. According to the *Rājāvaliya*, Rājasimha's eldest son Rajasūriya was proclaimed king and his brother was made the ruler of the Beligal *kōralē* but in reality, power belonged to the person who controlled the powerful Sītāvaka military machine and for the time being this was Manamperuma. Within a brief period Rājasimha's two sons were disposed of and Rājasimha's sister's grandson, the five year old Nikapitiyē Bandāra was set up as king. Two Sītāvaka 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, Sītāvaka was able to hold its own. When the king of Kandy sent a punitive force to the Väudavili kõralē, it was routed by Manamperuma. The commander also pacified the port of Chilaw and defeated two Portuguese detachments that sought to subjugate the Alutkūru kõralē. But Manamperuma was not content to be merely 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 Kõțte for Dom João Dharmapāla on condition that he was made its *de facto* ruler. Sītāvaka was being betrayed from within.

Manamperuma had overestimated his capabilities for although the Portuguese and Dharmapāla accepted his terms and conferred on him the name of Jayavīra Bandāra, he soon found his armies melting away and retired to Colombo fort in September 1593 with a few elephants and a few hundred *lascarins*. Moreover, on his return, his rival, Pannikki *mudali* changed sides and became the new commander of the Sītāvaka forces.

99 de Queyroz, pp 444, 468-9, 707; Archivo Portugues Oriental, Vol. III, pp 425-6; Rājāvaliya, p 232.

On the other hand the damage to Sītāvaka morale by the desertion of Jayavīra Bandāra was considerable. He was easily their best surviving general and with his desertion, Sītāvaka soon lost its hold over some of the coastal area. Already, by August 1593, the Alutkūru korale had been subjugated by a force based in a newly built Portuguese stockade at Negombo. In the last three months of 1593, the Kälani valley west of Kaduvela was subdued by a force of 1200 lascarins under Jayavīra Bandāra supported by a few hundred Portuguese. New recruits from recently conquered territory were enlisted to strengthen Jayavīra's army, which in early 1594, attacked and seized the Sītāvaka stockades of Kaduvela and Malvāna. By March 1594, the lower Kälani valley was lost to Sītāvaka and Jayavīra's army was 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 Sītāvaka army at Hanvälla. On the eve of battle, the Sītāvaka commander Pannikki mudali crossed over to the Portuguese side and the demoralized Sītāvaka army was routed after a six hour battle. This was virtually the end of the resistance. The Queen Regent, captured while fleeing to Denavaka 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 Sri Lanka. By May 1594, virtually the whole of the old kingdom of Kotte acknowledged the sovereignty of Dom João Dharmapāla and the authority of the Portuguese.<sup>100</sup>

The rise of Sītāvaka had been largely the result of the efforts of a number of able men, Māyādunnē, Rājasimha and their ministers and generals of whom the most notable was Vickramasimha *mudali*. It's growth was a relatively slow process requiring two generations of intense struggle against the superior resources of the Kingdom of Kōtte and the superior military technology of the Portuguese. Even after these factors had been countered, the Kandyan support of the foreigner led Sītāvaka to fight a two front war which greatly hampered its efforts.

In literature the age of Sītāvaka cannot compare with the preceding age of Kōtte.<sup>101</sup> Of its art and architecture there is virtually no survival from which a judgement could be made. The economic base of the kingdom changed little in the sixteenth century, though perhaps trade gradually provided a greater part of state revenue than before. It was in military

de Queyroz, pp 469-77; Rājāvaliya, pp 232-4; Archivo Portuguese Oriental, Vol. III, p
 486, Biblioteca Publica de Evora, Codice CXVII-I-13, ff, 80, 87-90.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> UCHC I, Part II, (Colombo, 1960), pp 771-8.

exploits that Sītāvaka 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 Rājasimha. It was no coincidence that the successor but one of Vimaladharmasūriya took upon himself the name of the second ruler of Sītāvaka.

If the personal factor played a vital part in the rise of Sītāvaka it looms even more significantly in its precipitous downfall and, in this respect, Rājasimha 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 Rājasimha 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 Rājasimha 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 Kōţte rose on the ruins of a Sinhalese Sītāvaka.

# **CHAPTER IV**

## THE KINGDOM OF JAFFNA UP TO 1620

## C R de Silva and S Pathmanathan

The history of the northern kingdom during the sixteenth century can be viewed largely as an effort to preserve the independence gained under the Çinkāiāriyān (Āriyaccakkaravartti) dynasty soon after 1467. The successful campaign against domination by the south seems to have promoted a revival of Tamil learning in the relatively peaceful reign of Pararājasēkeran (1472(?)-79). A Tamil sangam was established and a comprehensive treatise on Ayurvēda and Sidda medicine called Pararājasēkeran was produced under royal patronage.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the kingdom was none too strong. It was small in size and largely relied on a force of mercenary soldiers from South India for its defence. Its resources were meagre. A seventeenth century Portuguese document which details the traditional income of the kings of Jaffna indicates that their total revenue might not have exceeded 35,000 *xerafims* or about one-fourth of the revenues of the kings of Kōtte.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, the location of Jaffna was of considerable strategic value. It was vital for the command of the gulf of Mannar and the Palk Straits which at this time formed a busy waterway. As the Portuguese commentator, Thome Pires, pointed out, while the ships which left the Malabar coast for southeast Asia or Bengal preferred to sail round the island, the smaller Malabar craft which traded with the Coromandel coast preferred to take the shorter route between Sri Lanka and the mainland. According to

<sup>1</sup> UCHC 1, p 701.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See Chapter II, C R de Silva, "Sri Lanka in the Early Sixteenth Century: Economic and Social Conditions," for details.

de Queyroz, the series of islands and shallows stretching across the Palk Straits from Mannar to Rāmeswaran prevented navigation from the gulf of Mannar to the seas off the Coromandel coast except through two channels. The first, near Rāmeswaran had a depth of only two fathoms and even the larger rowing vessels had to be unloaded to enable them to pass safely. The second channel near Mannar, however, was deep enough to let vessels pass. Thus, most vessels must have taken the channel close to Mannar and the ruler of Jaffna, as the overlord of Mannar, was placed in a strategic position in relation to the shipping in this region.<sup>3</sup>

An added advantage was the proximity of the pearl fishery in the Gulf of Mannar. This fishery was one of the two major pearl fisheries in the world, rivalled in output only by that off the Chinese island of Hainan. On the Indian coast, the controlling centres of the fishery were the ports of Palayakayal and Kilakkarai, both of which were under Muslim chieftains subject to the rulers of Travancore and of Vanga respectively. On the coast of Sri Lanka, fishing for pearls and chanks was carried on at both Chilaw and off Karaitivu island near Mannar. The kings of Kotte retained control over the Chilaw fishery but in this period it was nowhere near the Mannar fishery in productivity and importance. The Mannar fishery on the contrary, rivalled those off the Indian coast and was much more lucrative. Control over the Mannar fishery was apparently disputed between the Muslim chiefs of Palayakayal and Kilakkarai. The Cinkāiāriyān rulers of Jaffna traditionally claimed the right to one day's catch every season. There is no evidence that they tried to enforce this claim duing the sixteenth century but the claim must have been seen as a potential threat to the control of the fishery.

We have no evidence of direct intervention of South Indian chieftains in the affairs of Jaffna. In the early sixteenth century, the rulers of Travancore seem to have been preoccupied in adjusting to the consequences of Portuguese commercial dominance in the Malabar coast. In Vijayanagara, Nagama Nāyaka, the Viceroy of the south was cautiously establishing his authority against powerful feudatories. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that both Travancore and Vijayanagara claimed suzerainty over Jaffna and it is possible that Pararājasēkeran and his successor might have accepted the nominal overlordship of Vijayanagara.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Tome Pires, The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires, Vol. I, p 84; de Queyroz, pp 1, 57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ludovici di Varthema, The Travels of Ludovici di Varthema in Egypt, Syria, Arabia Deserta, and Arabia Felix, in Persia, India and Ethiopia AD 1503-1508, trans. J W Jones and G P Badger (eds), (London, Hakluyt Society, 1863), pp 188-9; C R de Silva, "The Portuguese and Pearl fishing off South India and Sri Lanka," South Asia, (New Series), Vol. 1(1) November 1978, pp 15-6.

The most potent threat to the kingdom of Jaffna during the sixteenth century developed from the naval and military power of the Portuguese in the Malabar coast but in the first few decades of that century, the threat was somewhat muted by Portuguese preoccupations elsewhere. Nevertheless, the Portuguese had shown an interest in the pearl fishery from very early on. On 8 November 1519, Antonio de Miranda de Azevedo, having arrived at Colombo to take away the annual tribute from Kōṭṭe, wrote to his sovereign as follows. "...In this island there is pearl fishery. Your Highness could make a great profit from it if it was forbidden to fish in it without your authorization...."<sup>5</sup> By 1523, João Flores had been appointed the first Portuguese captain and factor of the fishery coast but there was virtually no Portuguese interference in the affairs of Jaffna proper in the first four decades of the sixteenth century.

Meanwhile in Jaffna itself, Pararājasēkeran was succeeded by his son Çankili (1519-61). The Portuguese sources hold that Çankili usurped the throne killing his own father and setting aside the lawful heir, his older brother, Vagru Tucuri Pandarao. However, since Portuguese writers are uniformly hostile to him owing to Çankili's later anti-Catholic policy, it might will be that the old king had really been killed by a *brahmin* as asserted in the Yalpana Vaipava Malai. In any case, de Queyroz makes it clear that Çankili's elder brother, (also known as Paranirūpasingam) did not openly oppose Çankili's rule till the 1540s.

Çankili was a strong and ruthless ruler. He strengthened his forces by settling warlike *vadugai* troops from South India in the villages of Palali, Vayavilan and Madduvil and took the title of Segarājasekeran on his accession to the throne.<sup>6</sup> By the early 1540s, however, Çankili had aroused Portuguese hostility by his policy of confiscating cargoes of all ships wrecked on the coasts of his kingdom. The loss to the Portuguese must have been substantial because when Martin Affonso de Souza, the Portuguese Governor of India, organized a fleet of twenty ships in August 1543, largely to plunder Hindu shrines on the Indian coast, he also tried to obtain compensation for the cargoes of all vessels hitherto confiscated by the King of Jaffna. However, de Souza's fleet was so badly buffeted by storms on the way that once he reached Jaffna he was content with Çankili's offer of tribute and a promise to

<sup>6</sup> de Queyroz, op. cit., p 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> As Gavetas da Torre do Tombo, Vol. IV, Lisbon, Centro dos Historicos Ultramarinos, 1964, p 142.

pay compensation. Çankili paid the stipulated tribute of 5000 pardaos and two elephants a year for two years in advance and the Portuguese fleet then sailed away.

Cankili's accord with the Portuguese did not last long. By the early 1540s Portuguese missionary activity on the Indian Fishery Coast had led to the conversion of substantial numbers of parava fishermen. In 1543, some paravas of Mannar wished to follow suit and invited St. Frances Xavier to come over to Mannar to preach the new religion. Xavier accepted the invitation and on his visit he converted about six hundred paravas to Christianity. This event was promptly reported to the king of Jaffna. To Çankili it was clear that the conversion of the paravas involved more than a mere change of religion. After conversion the paravas were regarded as Portuguese subjects and expected to pay dues to the Portuguese factor at Tuticorin. Çankili was determined to check this erosion of his authority and marching to Mannar in 1544 with a force of 5000 men, he put to death all the Christians who refused to give up their faith. It is possible that such drastic action did not meet with total approval among the Hindus who had a strong tradition of religious toleration and according to de Queyroz it was at this stage that Paranirūpasingam fled to India and sought Portuguese aid to displace Çankili. The missionaries agitated for immediate retaliation but Portuguese traders did not show enthusiasm because Cankili continued to return cargoes of ships wrecked off Jaffna.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, the years which followed saw many projects for a Portuguese conquest of Jaffna. These projects had the support of the missionary organization and the influential St. Francis Xavier added his own voice in support. Nor was there any dearth of princes who were ready to promise various concessions to the Portuguese in return for being placed on the throne of Jaffna. Paranirūpasingam himself offered to become a Christian. One of Bhuvanekabāhu's sons, Dom Luis,<sup>8</sup> already a Christian, offered to convert the kingdom as well. Bhuvanekabāhu himself pledged to cancel all debts owed to him by the Portuguese and to supply in addition 400 quintals

<sup>8</sup> See above p 79 for Bhuvanekabāhu's refusal to convert to Christianity.

do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, pp 119-21; de Queyroz, op.cit., pp 243-53; "The Portuguese in Ceylon in the First Half of the Sixteenth Century: Gaspar Correa's Account," CLR, Vol. IV, 1935-36, pp 323-4; Ceylon and Portugal, Part 1: Kings and Christians, 1539-1552, P E Pieris and M A Hedwig Fitzler (eds), (Leipzig, Verlag der Asia Major, 1927), p 102; Ceylon sur des Konigs Bhuvanekabāhu und Franz Xavers, 1539-1552, Schurhammer and Voretzch (eds), (Leipzig, Verlag der Asia Major, 1928), pp 142-3; S G Perera, "The Jesuits in Ceylon in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centúries," CALR, Vol. V, 1919-20, pp 32-3.

of cinnamon annually if he was given the Jaffna kingdom.<sup>9</sup> Çankili on his part pursued a consistently anti-Portuguese policy. He allowed mercenary soldiers from South India to travel through his kingdom to join the forces of Māyādunnē and offered a refuge to Vīdiyē Bandāra after his defeat by a Sītāvaka-Portuguese alliance.<sup>10</sup>

But it was 1560 before the Portuguese bestirred themselves to send a military expedition to Jaffna to oust Çankili and then it was done because of an entirely new development. The Christian *parava* settlements on the Indian coast had been coming under increasing attack by the Hindu *vadugai* forces of the island areas. Even the fortification of Punnaikayal, the new Portuguese headquarters on the fishery coast, failed to protect fishermen and missionaries from sporadic attacks. On his appointment as Portuguese Viceroy of India in 1558, Dom Constantino de Bragança had received instructions to conquer Jaffna, and to settle the Christians *paravas* there, to finally settle this question. The problem was urgent enough because even while the expedition for this purpose was being prepared in Goa in August 1560, *vadugai*.troops attacked and overwhelmed the Portuguese fort at Punnaikayal.<sup>11</sup>

De Bragança set out with a large fleet of some seventy small vessels from Goa on 7 September 1560. Ten galleys, the largest vessels of the fleet, were found to draw too much water to cross the shoals near Adam's Bridge but the rest of the fleet was able to anchor off the port of Jaffna by October 1560. The Portuguese found the Jaffna forces strongly fortified there. De Queyroz also reports that when the Viceroy mustered the troops he found that he had only 1200 Portuguese on board though the pay roll named 4000. The rest were personal servants and retainers whom Portuguese captains entered in the pay roll to draw extra allowances. Nevertheless, when the auxiliary forces were counted de Bragança's force was still a formidable one and after a few days reconnoitre the Portuguese landed at Colombuturai, an unfortified landing place a little to the east of the port. The invading army rested that night and marched the next day on the capital of Nallūr.

The campaign which followed was notable for the bravery of the crown prince who commanded the Tamil army but in the end of the Portuguese forces proved victorious without much loss in men. Çankili,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Pieris and Fitzler, op. cit., pp 97, 99, 123, 125-6, 186.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> See above pp 86-7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> de Queyroz, op.cit., p 386; Documentos para a Historia do Padroado Portugues do Oriente, Vol. VIII, Antonio da Silva Rego (ed.), Lisbon, Agencia Geral das Colonias, 1952, pp 180-1, 269-70, 308-10, 364-5.

warned by soothsayers that he would die within a year, seemed to have lost heart. He abandoned his fortified palace at Nallūr without a struggle and then fled from his fort at Kopay without offering further resistance. The royal family and the king's treasure was conveyed by a small following into the lands of the vanniyār of Trincomalee. By this time Çankili felt his situation so insecure that he sued for peace.

The Portuguese had their own reasons for coming to terms. They had not brought sufficient provisions for a long campaign in their small vessels and the supplies obtained from Nagapatnam were soon exhausted. There was little grain left in the country especially because Çankili had set fire to his grain store-house before retreat. The soldiers were therefore dispersed in villages looking for food and many of them had begun to fall ill. De Bragança himself was anxious to finish the campaign and return to Cochin before the ships of the annual fleet to Europe which were being loaded, left for Lisbon. But he imposed fairly harsh terms. The king of Jaffna or his son were to have command over most of the kingdom but the islands and the coast were to be under Portuguese control. The ruler of Jaffna was forbidden to have firearms or foreign troops in his army and had to accept a Portuguese garrison. He was to pay an indemnity of 100,000 pardaos of gold and hand over the treasures left behind by Vīdiyē Bandāra. He was also to pay an annual tribute of 10 elephants a year. Conversion to Christianity was to be freely permitted though it was stipulated that converts would continue to pay taxes to the rulers of Jaffna. Finally, the Crown Prince himself and two other mudaliyārs were to be delivered up as hostages.<sup>12</sup>

Çankili must have agreed to these terms in the hope that he would be able to repudiate the treaty once the main body of Portuguese troops left the kingdom. The hostages were handed over, the indemnity paid and part of the jewels left by Vīdiyē Bandāra delivered to the Portuguese. But the position of the Portuguese was much weaker than they realized. Sickness had reduced their effective strength and their forces were dispersed. The soldiers had outraged the Hindu populace by killing cows for food and by invading the privacy of households to look for provisions. All Hindus were expected to come for baptism and conversion and those who proved laggardly were put to prison. The Portuguese missionaries and soldiers energetically set about destroying Hindu temples.

At length retaliation began. The Franciscan custodian and a few Portuguese soldiers were killed as they tried to destroy a Hindu temple that was still standing. On the same day Dom Jorge de Temudo, the Bishop of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> do Couto, JCBRAS, XX, op.cit., pp 181-95; de Queyroz op.cit., pp 351-72; Rego, Vol. VIII, op.cit., pp 266, 321-2.

Cochin who had accompanied de Bragança's expedition, was attacked and eight or nine Portuguese in his retinue killed. These incidents sparked off a general uprising. The Portuguese at Nallūr swiftly retired to their ships and the garrison at Kopay joined them after fighting their way through but a number of Portuguese and some three hundred local Christians failed to reach the ships and lost their lives.

De Bragança realized that a reconquest of Jaffna was going to be an immensely difficult operation. He therefore decided to sail away and seize the island of Mannar. Mannar he hoped would serve the same purpose of being a refuge to the Christians of the *parava* coast and being much smaller was more defensible. A fort was built on the island and a garrison of 150 Portuguese and a fleet of ten small ships left to defend it before he left Mannar for Cochin in January 1561.<sup>13</sup>

In time, Mannar proved to be an extremely valuable possession for the Portuguese. In 1560 itself Manoel Rodriguez Coutinho, the captain of the Fishery Coast, had been persuaded to make Mannar his headquarters and for the next century, it remained the administrative centre of the pearl fishery. Although most of the original migrants from the Indian coast returned to their old villages, some remained behind in Mannar and these, with the Christian converts there, gave the Portuguese a strong base of support. The Portuguese under Coutinho successfully resisted an attempt by Çankili to seize Mannar fort while it was still unfinished in 1561 and from then on, it served as a base used not only for occasional intervention in the affairs of Jaffna but also as a supply point from which to strengthen and assist the Portuguese operating in the south-western and central parts of the island.<sup>14</sup>

De Bragança's expedition had another and somewhat unanticipated adverse effect on Jaffna. Çankili's crown prince, who had been handed over to the Portuguese as a hostage, was carried away a prisoner to Goa despite all the appeals of his father and in his absence, a struggle for the succession began by 1561. Puvirāja Paṇdaram, one of Çankili's sons, deposed his father and seized power but was himself speedily dethroned by another claimant, Kāsi Nayanār (the Cochim neyra in de Queyroz). The opponents of the new king then appealed to the Portuguese at Mannar and Jorge de Mello who had just succeeded Manoel Rodriguez Coutinho as Captain of Mannar was glad to seize the opportunity to extend Portuguese influence. With Portuguese

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> de Queyroz, op.cit., pp 375-85; 393-6; JCBRAS, Vol. XX, op.cit., pp 196-203; Rego Vol. VIII, op.cit., pp 267-8, 322.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> de Queyroz, op.cit., pp 414, 418; Rego Vol. VIII, op.cit., p 268; T B H Abeyasinghe (ed.) and trans. Portuguese Regimentos on Sri Lanka, (Colombo, Department of National Archives, n.d probably 1976), p 6.

support the anti-Nayanār forces were able to imprison Kāsi Nayanār and install their own candidate on the throne. However, Kāsi Nayanār's followers assassinated the new ruler and succeeded in restoring Kāsi Nayanār to the throne. They even besieged Mannar in 1563. Kāsi Nayanār himself was, in his turn, slain by an assassin hired by the Portuguese. By this time, conditions in Jaffna were disorderly enough to enable Jorge de Mello to go in person to Jaffna and install his candidate, Periyapullē, on the throne. The accession by about 1570 of this Portuguese nominee, who called himself Segarājasekeran, marked another stage in the growth of Portuguese power over Jaffna.<sup>15</sup>

It is customary to date the establishment of the Portuguese protectorate over Jaffna to the conquest of that kingdom by the expedition under Andre Furtado de Mendonca in 1591 but the regimento or standing orders issued to the Captain of Mannar dated 31 December 1582 makes it quite clear that the ruler of Jaffna was paying an annual tribute of 13,700 fanams or ten elephants<sup>16</sup> by that year. It is possible that this payment was regularly made from the time of the accession of Periyapulle although, as Abeyasinghe points out, the Portuguese accounting of state revenues of the East prepared by Antonio de Abreu in 1574 makes no mention of tribute from Jaffna.<sup>17</sup> The regimento of 1582 also makes it clear that by 1582 the Portuguese had established some degree of control over the lands of Mantota adjacent to the island of Mannar. They drew revenues from that region in the form of rice and ghee, apart from 500 fanams in cash. Their control over the pearl fishery was already giving them an annual revenue of 64,000 fanams and what was more significant, they had used their control over the seas to extend their influence over the eastern seaboard of Sri Lanka. The Konēswaram temple at Trincomalee was paying protection fees of 1,280 fanams a year and the Portuguese also collected a duty on Kandyan arecanut exported through the ports of Trincomalee and Batticaloa. Thus, at a time when the Portuguese were being hard-pressed in Kotte, they were building up

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> de Queyroz, op.cit., pp 49, 419; V Viriddhagirison, The Nāyaks of Tanjore, (Annamalainagar, 1942), p 78.

<sup>16</sup> Regimentos das Fortalezas da India, Panduronga S S Pissurlencar Bastora (ed.), 1951, pp 359-60; T B H Abeyasinghe, Jaffna Under the Portuguese, p 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Abeyasinghe, Jaffna Under the Portuguese, p 2.

considerable commercial power and political influence on the northern and eastern sectors of the island.<sup>18</sup>

Puvirāja Paņdaram Pararājasēkeran, son of Çankili, regained the throne once more when he succeeded Periyapullē by 1582. At first, Puvirāja Paņdaram continued his predecessor's pro-Portuguese policy. According to de Queyroz, when Yamasimha Bandāra left for Goa to solicit Portuguese assistance to expel Rājasimha of Sītāvaka from Kandy, he left his family with the Jaffna king.<sup>19</sup> In time, however, the new king seems to have veered round to an anti-Portuguese policy. It is possible that the Jaffna monarch was inspired by the successes of Rājasimha to try to rid himself of Portuguese dominance.

In 1590, while the Portuguese fleet at Mannar and most of the garrison was away guarding the pearl fishery, the Jaffna forces embarked on seventy five small vessels and suddenly attacked the fort of Mannar. Only one vessel with 17 men on board together with sixty Portuguese soldiers on land were available to defend the fort but fortunately for the Portuguese, the Jaffna fleet saw a ship returning from the fishery with the sick and presuming that the whole Portuguese fleet was on its way back, beat a hasty retreat.<sup>20</sup>

Puvirāja Pandaram thereupon appealed to the Samudri of Calicut for assistance. In 1591, a fleet of 22 galliots left Calicut under Catamuca to assist the ruler of Jaffna to capture Mannar. Meanwhile, the captain of Mannar, forewarned about the intentions of the king of Jaffna, appealed to the Portuguese Viceroy, Mathias de Albuquerque. Albuquerque promptly dispatched Andre Furtado de Mendonca with a hastily prepared fleet of twenty foists. De Mendonca made his way to Colombo despite adverse weather and embarking a hundred Portuguese and a large number of *lascarins*<sup>21</sup> sailed for Karaitivu island where the Kunjali fleet was awaiting better weather to launch the attack on Mannar. In the battle that ensued, the whole of the Calicut fleet was captured and de Mendonca proceeded to Mannar where he was joined by another three hundred and fifty Portuguese who were returning from a successful expedition to Kandy.

<sup>19</sup> de Queyroz, op. cit., p 439.

<sup>20</sup> S G Perera, The Jesuits in Ceylon, op.cit., p 38.

21 These lascarins were largely drawn from Sinhala speaking areas of Kötte but must have included some Tamil speakers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Pissurlencar, op.cit., pp 359-61; Tikiri Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Regimentos, op.cit., pp 8-9.

De Mendonca thus found himself in command of a large force of 1400 Portuguese soldiers and some 3000 lascarins and he decided to seize this opportunity to resubjugate the kingdom of Jaffna. Sailing from Mannar with 43 vessels and over two hundred fishing boats commandeered for the purpose, de Mendonca appeared off Jaffna port on 27 October 1591. The Portuguese landed at Colombuturai on the same day and on the next they defeated the Jaffna army which was encamped before Nallūr. The king was captured and beheaded and de Mendonca enthroned a son of Periyapulle (1570-c1581) who was also a son-in-law of Puvirāja Pandaram and had been captured in battle. The newly installed monarch, Ethirimanna Çinkam took the name of Pararājasēkeran and promised to pay an annual tribute of twelve elephants or a sum of 1200 pardaos, to accept a Portuguese garrison and to forbid foreigners to settle in his kingdom. To make Portuguese control over the kingdom even more secure, de Mendonca put to death some 800 vadugai and a number of Muslims from Calicut. He also ordered that all vessels in the ports of Jaffna save two that were reserved for the king's use be destroyed immediately.<sup>22</sup>

The new king of Jaffna, however, had an extremely difficult task. Owing his throne to the Portuguese, he was pledged to favour Christianity. On the other hand this policy alienated the majority of his subjects who remained Hindu in faith. Meanwhile the disturbances in Jaffna during the preceding three decades had enabled the Jaffna nobility to erode royal power. The nobles did include some Christian converts who looked to the Portuguese for advancement but a large majority remained Hindu and resented Portuguese interference in their trading and cultural ties with Tanjore. It was this latter group that invited the Prince of Rāmeswaran to accept the throne of Jaffna in 1592. The Prince with the aid of the Nāyak of Tanjore attempted to cross over to Jaffna with a number of followers in twelve large boats but the Portuguese, having been forewarned once more, met him at sea near Talaimannar and utterly defeated his small force in September 1592.

However, the events of 1592 brought home to Pararājasēkeran how limited was the support he enjoyed in his kingdom. While the military situation remained in the balance he was forced to leave his palace and retire to the Portuguese township of Jaffna for greater safety.<sup>23</sup> His kingdom returned to obedience after the execution of a few chiefs but in the next few years Pararājasēkeran made an effort to move away from the Portuguese and to gain greater support among his subjects.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638, p 7, de Queyroz, op.cit., pp 445-55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> de Queyroz, op. cit., pp 457-8.

This move was partly due to his growing disillusionment with the Portuguese. Some Portuguese openly insulted the king when he disagreed with them. The factors of Mannar caused him financial losses by demanding tribute in elephants in one year and cash in another without prior warning. The Portuguese ouvidor or judge of Mannar tried to assume authority over cases in the Jaffna kingdom. Above all, there were the problems caused by the proselytizing zeal of the missionaries. A good instance of the aggressive behaviour of the missionaries is seen in the activities of Fr. Pedro Betancor. In 1614 Fr. Betancor coveted the site of an Islamic mosque which commanded the quay at Pannaithurai. When the Muslims refused to give it up, Fr. Betancor had it set on fire and so intimidated the king that the ruler forced the Muslims to move their mosque to another site and give the former site to the missionary. Similarly the failure of the king to remove a cross that was planted in the island of Urkavalturai led to the establishment of a thatched hermitage in 1604. When the hermitage was burnt down due to local opposition the missionaries were strong enough to force the Hindu king to build another larger one for them at the same site. By 1614 there was a church of brick and two-storied dormitory with two bastions to defend it and royal power over Urkavalturai had been substantially eroded. The settlement of Christians at Kayts also tended to weaken the king's authority there.

The Portuguese themselves were dissatisfied with Pararājasēkeran. They began to have doubts about his loyalty as early as 1595. These doubts grew with time. According to Paulo de Trinidade, the king of Jaffna refused to check the flow of trade and essential supplies to Kandy despite a show of force by Manoel Barretto de Silva, the Captain of Mannar. Barretto de Silva who sailed to Jaffna with a force of three hundred Portuguese and seven hundred Christians of Mannar, was faced with superior forces and had to withdraw after a promise of continued religious freedom in Jaffna. In fact, however, all he achieved was to rouse the anxieties of the Christian converts in Jaffna, 800 of whom migrated to the island of Kayts where they could hope for the protection of Portuguese seapower. By 1614, the Portuguese king had sent definite instructions to depose Pararājasēkeran and only the lack of means prevented the Captain-General from doing so.<sup>24</sup>

Pararājasēkeran died in 1617 leaving a three-year-old son as heir. Arasakēsari, Pararājasēkeran's elder brother, was proclaimed regent and the Portuguese Viceroy at Goa was requested to confirm this arrangement. Before any such confirmation arrived, however, a rival faction headed by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> ibid., pp 458-63, 665-7; C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, op.cit., pp 11,42-43. The section which follows it based primarily on C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, op.cit., pp 43-51 and the sources cited there.

Çankili Kumāran, a nephew of Pararājasēkeran seized power and put to death all the princes of the blood save the heir and Çankili's own brother-in-law, Luku Kumāran. Periya Migapulle *Āracci*, a prominent supporter of Arasakēsari and Arasakēsari himself were also killed. His son Sinna Migapulle *Āracci* there upon fled to the Portuguese and requested assistance to oust Çankili. Çankili himself applied for confirmation of his position as regent.

At this time, the Portuguese were occupied in trying to suppress a formidable rebellion in Kōṭṭe led by Nikapiṭiyē Banḍāra.<sup>25</sup> They had no particular aversion to Çankili, especially because before his seizure of power, he had granted two of the villages he held to Fr. Pedro Betancor. The Portuguese, therefore, acquiesced in Çankili as regent on condition that he gave no assistance or refuge to Nikapiṭiyē Banḍāra.

Çankili, however, had difficulties in enforcing his authority in Jaffna. His slaughter of the princes was resented in Jaffna and his open liaison with, a woman of ill repute, a dancer, lowered him in the eyes of his subjects. According to de Queyroz, he was "proud, ambitious and weak." In August-September 1618, Sinna Migapulle *Āracci* who had returned to Jaffna after embracing Christianity and taking the name, Dom Luis, joined with another Christian *mudaliyār*, Dom Pedro, to raise a revolt which drove Çankili to Kayts. Çankili applied to the Portuguese at Mannar for assistance but they were reluctant to act against a rising led by Christians. Çankili thereupon appealed to the powerful Ragunatha Nāyaka, Nāyak of Tanjore (1600-34) who promptly obliged with a force of five thousand men under Varuna Kulattan; a force which easily crushed the rebellion.

Nevertheless, Çankili's position remained an unenviable one. His power in Jaffna depended on the troops from Tanjore, many of whom remained behind under their commander to serve in Jaffna. On the other hand, Çankili did not dare break with the Portuguese and thus continued to pay tribute and allow freedom of movement to Portuguese settlers and priests within his kingdom even while they were urging the Portuguese authorities in Goa to conquer Jaffna. By September 1618 such representation had convinced the Portuguese Viceroy Dom João Coutinho, Conde de Redondo, that Jaffna could be annexed to the Portuguese crown without great difficulty. However, before the Viceroy's plans could be put into effect, Constantino de Sa de Noronha, the Captain General took a hand in the matter.

De Sa's motives are somewhat difficult to assess. His intervention might have been defensive in intent. He had heard that the king of Jaffna,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> See below. pp 127-9.

despite assurances to the contrary, was permitting mercenaries and supplies to filter into territory in Lanka held by anti-Portuguese forces. It was also stated that Çankili was making efforts to entice Senarat, king of Kandy into renewed opposition against the Portuguese and had already sought aid from the Dutch at Pulicat. In March 1619, de Sa also received word from Mannar that a cousin of the last Kunjali admiral of Calicut had appeared off Jaffna with five armed vessels presumably at the request of Çankili and that this fleet was attacking Portuguese shipping. De Sa saw these developments as a threat to Portuguese power in southwest Sri Lanka and argued that subjugation of Jaffna was necessary to destroy an incipient anti-Portuguese alliance including the Dutch, Kandy, Tanjore and Jaffna. On the other hand, de Sa was also concerned about the extent of his jurisdiction. Up to this time, the defence of Portuguese interests in Jaffna and Mannar had been within the purview of the Captain of Mannar. De Sa claimed jurisdiction over the entire island on grounds of his title as Captain General of Lanka and his action can also be seen as an attempt to expand his de facto authority.<sup>26</sup> Linked to the question of jurisdiction was de Sa's desire to extract revenue from the elephant trade in Jaffna. De Sa's orders to the commander of the expedition to Jaffna specifically required him to collect "money of the elephants." We cannot be certain what this referred to. The Portuguese historian, de Queyroz, claims that Çankili owed the Portuguese three years tribute but this is improbable because the question did not arise when Çankili asked for assistance from the Portuguese in 1618. It is possible that the demand for the "dinheiro dos elefantes" might refer to the elephants sent to Jaffna from Kotte in 1615 but left unsold in the care of the ruler of Jaffna due to the prohibition on the sale of elephants by the Portuguese viceroy that year. It might be that he wanted a larger share of the profits from the sales. In any case, de Sa claimed that he was sorely in need of money. As he explained in his orders to his commander, "there is no money to pay the soldiers, nor for their food allowance, nor to buy rice for the winter save that obtained from the elephants."27

De Sa despatched two detachments of troops to Mannar. One of these travelled by sea and the other overland. Together they totalled 230 Portuguese and three thousand *lascarins* and 1500 porters who transported the supplies for the force which marched overland. One objective of this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Abeyasinghe, Jaffna Under the Portuguese, op.cit, pp 6-9; C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, op.cit., pp 44-5.

<sup>27</sup> de Queyroz, p 631; Regimentos das Fortalezas da India, Panduronga S S Pissurlencar (ed.), Goa, 1951, pp 359-60: Assentos dos Conselho do Estado da India, Panduronga S S Pissurlencar (ed.), Bastora, 1953, Vol.I, pp 55-6, 59.

expedition was to defeat the Kunjali fleet and safeguard Mannar but the overall commander of the expedition, Filipe de Oliveira, was empowered to invade and conquer Jaffna if the king was proved to have had dealings with the Kunjali or refused to pay the funds due to the Portuguese state. In the campaign against the Kunjalis the Portuguese met with reverses. The seaborne contingent having arrived first at Mannar decided to attack before de Oliveira, who was marching overland, arrived. The result was disastrous. The Portuguese fleet of two galleys and eighteen small vessels was forced to retire to Jaffna with the loss of twelve of the smaller craft. Abeyasinghe suggests that the decision to attack the Kunjali fleet before de Oliveira's arrival might have been motivated by the desire of the Captain of Mannar to settle the problem swiftly and protect his jurisdiction but, in any event, the manoeuvre failed.<sup>28</sup> When de Oliveira at length reached Mannar there was no alternative but to await further assistance from Nagapatnam against the superior Kunjali fleet. The Kunjali fleet remained in the area till August 1619, and sailed away probably in search of booty. Meanwhile, de Oliveira proceeded to Pooneryn where he had to obtain the aid of Cankili to secure a ferry boat to transport his tired soldiers across the Jaffna lagoon.

Çankili's conduct during the whole episode had been determined by an unwillingness to break openly with the Portuguese. He must have hoped that the services he rendered would prevent any clash between the Portuguese and Jaffna. The Portuguese took eight days to ferry all their forces across the Jaffna lagoon and the inactive Çankili missed an opportunity to destroy the Portuguese forces piecemeal. De Oliveira, however, speedily undeceived any hopes Çankili might have had. He demanded immediate payment of the money owing to the Portuguese and the surrender of Varuna Kulattan. Çankili, aware of his weakness offered immediate payment of 5000 pardaos and offered to send his vadugai troops back to India. De Oliveira accepted the payment but instead of withdrawing his troops, he advanced to Vannarponnai. The ensuing battle resulted in the destruction of the Jaffna army after it had gained some early successes. Çankili was captured in flight. Varuna Kulattan managed to escape to Tanjore.

With the capture of Çankili all resistance in Jaffna ended. De Oliveira moved to Nallūr and established his headquarters at the great Hindu temple there. By June 1619, resistance seemed to have collapsed and de Oliveira announced the annexation of the kingdom to the Portuguese crown. A hundred Portuguese and most of the *lascarins* were sent back to Colombo. With them were sent the deposed ruler, Çankili and two of his nephews because, as de Oliveira explained: "everything which smacks of royalty is best

<sup>28</sup> Abeyasinghe, Jaffna under the Portuguese, op.cit., p 9.

sent far away from here." Çankili was eventually sent to Goa where he was tried in the *Relacao* (High Court) for treason, found guilty and executed. He became a Christian shortly before his death.

If de Oliveira had expected that Jaffna would remain peaceful after annexation he was somewhat unpleasantly surprised. Twice within the next two years, the Portuguese had to face major campaigns more arduous than that by which the kingdom was conquered. In both cases sizeable invading forces from Tanjore were joined by local Tamil recruits in an attempt to oust the Portuguese. At times, the small Portuguese force of occupation amounting to hardly two hundred Portuguese and a thousand *lascarins*, was badly outnumbered, but the Portuguese had three invaluable advantages; the support of a sizeable number of converts, intelligence of Tanjore preparations sent by Portuguese compatriots in Nāgapatnam and the command of the sea. The last factor enabled a flow of aid and munitions to the Portuguese in Jaffna both from Nāgapatnam on the Malabar coast and from Kōţte.

The first real challenge to the Portuguese came in March-April 1620. By the end of 1619, Dom Luis, dissatisfied with the role assigned to him under Portuguese rule, fled to Tanjore. He persuaded Ragunatha Nāyaka to assist him to collect troops for an invasion of Jaffna to enthrone the prince of Rāmeswaran, the only prince of the Jaffna royal family who was not in Portuguese hands. The prince prepared his own forces but meanwhile the troops mustered by Dom Luis in Tanjore arrived in the Jaffna peninsula. This invading force was somewhat small, being limited to a thousand men, but by the end of March, Tamil recruits from Jaffna had swollen this army to three thousand. De Oliveira and his forces were besieged in the Church at Jaffna and in the premises of the Hindu temple at Nallūr. A smaller Portuguese detachment was detailed to defend the Christians in Kayts. However, the Portuguese had some good fortune. A detachment of 200 Sinhalese, probably sent to relieve a detachment on garrison duty in Jaffna, arrived in time to strengthen the besieged. A supply of munition sent from Nagapatnam got through safely. Soon after, a relieving force of a hundred and twenty Portuguese and one thousand five hundred lascarins from Kotte arrived in Jaffna under Luis Teixeira de Macedo in response to appeals for help. De Macedo's forces were supported by a fleet of six vessels under Andre Coelho. The combined Portuguese forces were able to completely destroy Dom Luis's army before the forces of the Prince of Rameswaran joined them. The Prince was subsequently defeated in a battlefield located a few miles north of Nallūr. Franciscan historian Paulo da Trinidade, whose work was written in the sixteen thirties alleged that Macedo massacred women and children to strike terror into the hearts of the rebels. Contemporary documents seem to support these allegations.<sup>29</sup>

Such repression did not discourage Dom Luis and within the same year came a second campaign. De Oliveira had news of preparations in Tanjore. On 15 August he began to construct a small fort enclosing the Franciscan church in Jaffna. Once the walls were up to a defensible height, he shifted his headquarters from the Nallur temple to the fort. The first campaign had taught De Oliveira the dangers of splitting the small Portuguese force. In November, the Portuguese at Nagapatnam sent munitions to Jaffna with a message that an attack was imminent. On 5 December 1620, two thousand men of Tanjore led by Varuna Kulattan landed at Tondaimannar. Once more, many Jaffna Tamils joined the invading force. De Oliveira marched forward to meet the invaders but checked at Nallur he was forced to retire to the fort. Both sides sent requests for reinforcements but the Portuguese relief force arrived first. On 14 January 1621, ninety Portuguese and a thousand Sinhalese arrived at Jaffna. With these forces de Oliveira defeated Varuna Kulattan at Nallūr but it was only after another battle at Kopay in February 1621 that the invading army was destroyed and its command killed. Meanwhile, a reinforcement from Tanjore arrived but the Portuguese, were ready for it and ambushed it at Achchuveli on 11 February 1621. The Tanjore dead included the new Governor of Jaffna sent by the Nāyak and this defeat ended the efforts of Tanjore to oust the Portuguese from Jaffna.

The conquest of Jaffna was useful accession of strength to the Portuguese at a time when their fortunes in the East were on the wane. It strengthened their control over the pearl fishery and increased their dominance over Sri Lanka trade in elephants, partly a by virtue of a greater control over the supply from the Vanni and partly because Jaffna proved useful means of rewarding the services of Portuguese soldiers. Most important, at a time when their command of the sea was being challenged, the possession of Jaffna rendered communications between the Portuguese on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts safer than before.

The reasons for the loss of the independence of Jaffna are not difficult to pinpoint. For over a century and a half the Jaffna kingdom had maintained a precarious existence; it had survived largely by either pledging vassalage to the strongest neighbour or by balancing one powerful neighbour against another. It was easy of access by sea and thus vulnerable to attack by the Portuguese to an extent that Kandy and Sītāvaka never were. Further, once

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, pp 48-50.

the Portuguese established control over the lowlands of Kötte, they found that they could effectively use *lascarin* troops from Kötte against the Jaffna Tamil forces. The calibre of Tamil leadership was poor especially after the death of Çankili I (1519-60). In fact, none of the Tamil kings after Çankili I compared favourably with contemporary monarchs of Sītāvaka and Kandy. Finally, there was the key factor of the presence of a Christian minority in Jaffna which generally supported the Portuguese. During and after the conquest they provided a source of strength in Jaffna that might well have tipped the balance in favour of the Portuguese on crucial occasions.

The conquest of Jaffna had other important advantages for the Portuguese. Their communications between the Malabar and Coromandel coast were now more secure and the Dutch settlement at Paleacate began to look isolated. The flow of Indian arms and mercenaries to Sri Lanka was checked to some degree and the villages of Jaffna became useful means of rewarding the services of Portuguese soldiers. The control of Jaffna also strengthened Portuguese dominance over the pearl and chank fisheries and gave them a greater measure of control over the trade in Sri Lankan elephants. For the people of Jaffna, except for a minority of Christians, it was the beginning of a dark period which saw the destruction of Hindu temples and increased taxes and dues.

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# **CHAPTER V**

# **PORTUGUESE RULE IN KÖTTE 1594-1638**

## **T B H Abeyasinghe**

In an analysis of Portuguese rule in the Kötte kingdom, one needs to consider how and why the Portuguese came to acquire territory, the mode of legitimation of their authority, resistance movements among the Sinhalese and the means the Portuguese adopted to defuse such resistance and consolidate their rule.

The great Rājasimha died in March 1593 and by August the same year, there was dissension among the ruling circle in Sītāvaka. This enabled the Portuguese at Colombo to win over the some of the late monarch's closest supporters, principally his commander-in-chief, Manamperuma *mohottāla*, and with their help, to capture the Sītāvaka strongholds and occupy Sītāvaka territory. By about May 1594, Kaduvela, Malvāna, Gurubävila and Sītāvaka itself had fallen like dominoes. With the capture of the late king's successor at Denavaka, the Sītāvaka kingdom ceased to exist.<sup>1</sup>

At the height of his power, Rājasimha had absorbed the once great kingdom of Kōtte, leaving Colombo alone in Portuguese hands. But with the rapid disintegration of Sītāvaka the territorial integrity of Kōtte as it had existed at the beginning of the sixteenth century was restored. The beneficiary of these rapid political changes was not Dharmapāla, the nominal king of Kōtte (1551-97), but his Portuguese protectors, who were the central figures in the drama that was being enacted. It was their armed forces, that took the members of the Sītāvaka royal family into custody, captured the treasures of the late king, and occupied his territory. The

T B H Abeyasinghe, "Some Portuguese Documents on the Last Days of the Strāvaka Kingdom, 1593-94," JSLBRAS, n.s XXIV, 1978-79, pp 86-91.

conquered lands, in effect, became appurtenant to the Portuguese overseas empire.

Though Dharmapāla survived the restoration of Kōṭṭe, it is noteworthy that he did not take up residence in the old capital. Nor did he try to assert his rights to Kōṭṭe or even to share its administration with the Portuguese. He continued, as he had been for a quarter of a century, a figurehead. But a figurehead was not without its uses. Dharmapāla's presence in the Portuguese camp enabled them to camouflage their annexation of territory. When a revolt occurred in 1595-96 in the Kōṭṭe kingdom against them, Dharmapāla's person was ostentatiously taken round the country.

The death of Dharmapāla late in May 1597 made it necessary to put the annexation of Kōṭṭe to the Portuguese crown on a legal footing. Although Portuguese chroniclers from João de Barros to Fernão de Queyroz, following the doctrine of universal papal dominion put forward by Spanish jurists like Matias de Paz and Gregorio Lopes, took their stand on the Portuguese crown's right to navigation, commerce and conquest in the East, the Portuguese crown or its officials in the East seldom claimed territorial rights based on this doctrine, or its corollary, papal donation.<sup>2</sup> They saw that claims based on a doctrine which was highly contentious even in Europe were unlikely to make much impression on the Asian people. They therefore proceeded to arm themselves with legal instruments likely to prove more acceptable. The Portuguese claim to legitimate authority over the Kōṭṭe kingdom was based on four legal instruments.

The first document was drawn up by a Portuguese notary in Colombo on 12 August 1580 in the form of a deed. By it, Dharmapāla made an order bequeathing the kingdoms that he had inherited from Bhuvanekabāhu to the king of Portugal, Dom Henrique and his heirs.<sup>3</sup> It also stipulated that the bequest would take effect only if Dharmapāla were to die without heirs. The other three documents were executed in Colombo on 4 November 1583. By one of them, Dharmapāla "for greater firmness and security" ratified the earlier donation and stated that he now bequeathed his kingdom to Philip II, who had annexed Portugual in 1580. At the same time he expressly disinherited his relatives from any right to the throne. The other documents

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For discussion of this see J H Parry, The Spanish Theory of Empire in the Sixteenth Century, (Cambridge, 1940), pp 13-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Four copies of this document were prepared, as was contemporary practice. One of them is preserved in an excellent condition in the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo in Lisbon (hereafter: ANTT) in Gaveta XIV, Maço 4 as document No. 5. (There is a photocopy of this in the National Archives of Sri Lanka). It has also been recently published in As Gavetas da Torre do Tombo (hereafter Gavetas), (Lisboa, 1963), Vol.III, pp 607-11.

recorded a public declaration by Dharmapāla nominating Dom Philip as his heir and the acceptance of such donation and nominations by two *mudaliyārs* representing the people of Kōtte.<sup>4</sup> The documents also recorded that the *mudaliyārs* took an oath to accept Philip as their king and obey him as such on Dharmapāla's death, and that they renounced any right to elect another ruler to succeed Dharmapāla. Though there are references to a fifth document in Portuguese possession, one executed by Rājasimha's grandson Nikapitiyē Bandāra, claims based on it were never advanced. We have therefore to conclude that in the Portuguese view, Dharmapāla's documents alone furnished them with a sufficient and exclusive claim.

When Dharmapāla died on 27 May 1597, the Portuguese captain general, Dom Jeronimo de Azevedo, at a solemn assembly held two days later at Colombo, to which the late king's principal officers as well as representatives of the provinces had been summoned, conveyed to them the late king's wishes, as embodied in the documents executed in 1580 and 1583, and proceeded to proclaim Philip as Dharmapāla's successor. On Azevedo's suggestion, the assembly elected procurators who, on behalf of the people of Kōṭte, took an oath of allegiance to the new sovereign. A ceremonial procession through the city streets completed the day's proceedings. During the next 40 years, the historical kernel of this day's events was mythified by the accretion of several elements comforting to the ego of a people under foreign yoke, to emerge finally as the historic Malvāna convention, at which the Sinhalese agreed to accept the Portuguese king as their own, only after extracting a solemn promise from the Portuguese to observe their customs.<sup>5</sup>

Donation by the legitimate and reigning sovereign, election and acceptance by the *mudaliyārs*, as representatives of the people of Kōṭṭe, due proclamation of the new sovereign on the demise of the old, these three elements constitute the Portuguese claim to legitimacy of authority over Kōṭṭe.<sup>6</sup> Throughout their rule, the Portuguese repeatedly fell back on these elements to justify their possession. Some comment on the legal aspects of the documents seems in order. The only writer on the subject has shown convincingly that Dharmapāla's original document of 1580 conformed, in its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> These two documents are preserved in ANTT, Gaveta XIII Maço 7, No. 16. They also have been published in *Gavetas* Vol.III, (Lisbon, 1963), pp 53-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> T B H Abeyasinghe, "The Myth of the Malvana Convention," CJHSS, VII(1), 1964, pp 67-72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See for example, the two documents reproduced in Judice Biker, *Collec Cao de Tratados e Conceros de Pazes*, tomo I (Lisboa, 1881), pp 218-28, both of which set out to prove the Portuguese crown's rights to Sri Lanka.

essentials, to the format of a Sinhalese royal land grant. Less convincing, however, is his further observation that the contents of the document fall within Sinhalese private law, which recognizes the right of a property-owner to dispose of it by gift or bequest, and that Dharmapala was only nominating a successor to his property.<sup>7</sup> Underlying this argument are the premises that the kingdom was the property of its ruler, and that the ruler was therefore entitled to bequeath it to whomsoever he pleased. The first was an accepted political idea in Renaissance Europe, but it is doubtful weather even Renaissance jurists would have conceded the second. In Sri Lanka itself, succession to the throne was treated differently from succession to private property. According to constitutional ideas prevalent at the time, two well recognized limitations governed succession to the throne, first that no non-Buddhist could be king, and secondly, that only those connected by blood to Sinhalese or Indian royal families had the right to rule over the Sinhalese. The application of the first would invalidate Dharmapala's own right to the throne of Kotte, let alone his right to bequeath it to another non-Buddhist king.

The keenness with which the Portuguese occupied Kōtte territory and tried to legitimate their possessions shows that, in Sri Lanka, they had departed from their policy of operating through client rulers. Support of client rulers required only token military presence, but in Kōtte Portuguese commitments had grown until they became the ruler's sole military and political support. At that point, the rationale for client relationship with the local ruler disappeared and direct control was the logical alternative. The Portuguese, therefore, abandoned their earlier policy and opted for territorial acquisition.

The years 1593 and 1594 demonstrated that territory could be acquired with available resources. In 1592, the Portuguese were still recovering from the debilitating and prolonged siege that Rājasimha had laid. In 1594, they were masters of a kingdom, whose forests yielded elephants and the valuable cinnamon, whose soil yielded precious stones, whose coastal waters yielded pearls, and where conditions were widely regarded as ideal for a Portuguese colony to take root and prosper. They therefore felt that the island could more than pay its way and would be an asset.

Two external factors operating at the same time made the island appear desirable for reasons of strategy and security. One of these was the advent of the Dutch in 1595. From that year, Dutch shipping began sailing round the southern coast of the island on the way to the East Indies, thus underscoring the strategic value of Sri Lanka. Possession of territory there

R K W Goonesekera, "The Gift of a Kingdom" in UCR, Vol.XXIII, pp 31-2.

would enable the Portuguese to watch the sea routes and, hopefully, to strangulate enemy shipping. If, on the other hand, the Dutch were to obtain a foothold, they could, it was feared, neatly turn the tables on the Portuguese.

The second factor was the rise of the Mughal power in the Deccan between 1593 and 1600, posing a threat to Portuguese Goa. Some twenty years earlier, Akbar had threatened two other Portuguese centres in India, Diu and Damao. There was, therefore, a fear that the growth of Mughal power under Akbar might compel the Portuguese to evacuate their bases in India. If that happened, Sri Lanka would then be a natural alternative. Thus, estimates of intrinsic worth of the island as well as of its strategic location made the Portuguese desire direct territorial annexation.

Predictably, the array of notarial documents the Portuguese had gathered made no impression on their Sinhalese subjects in the Kötte lands, as shown in six major rebellions that swept through these territories and four minor outbreaks of resistance. Five of the major rebellions were led respectively by Akaragama Appuhāmy in 1594, Edirillē Rāla in 1594-96, Kāngara āracci in 1603, Kuruvita Rāla in 1603 and again in 1616-19 and by Nikapitiyē Bandāra in 1616-17. The sixth was directed jointly by four *mudaliyārs*, Kulatunga Vickramasimha, Amarakoon Manthri, Siyanā Kōralē Bandāra and Kattota Manthri in 1630- 31. Two of the minor revolts took place in 1599 in the Hēvāgam kōralē and the leaders were Kuruppu āracci of Koratota and Vellappuli āracci. The third was in the Seven Kōralēs in the summer of 1616 and the last was in the Mātara disāva in 1619 and was led by Ēkanāyaka mudaliyār.<sup>8</sup>

Ten rebellions within 44 years shows the degree to which the Sinhalese found Portuguese rule distasteful. It will also be noted that the first decade of Portuguese rule was marked by as many as four major rebellions. As Portuguese authority tightened its hold, there were fewer opportunities for rebels, but once a rebellion broke out, the rebels were able to hold out much longer than in the first decade.

The leadership of these rebellions did not come from the royal houses. This was due to a simple, yet effective, precaution the Portuguese had taken as the Sītāvaka lands were falling. This was the removal abroad of all those who were closely related to the old royal houses, for fear that they would be a disturbing element on the local political scene. Two Sītāvaka princes, both grandsons of Rājasimha, were thus exiled to Goa and later to

For discussion of these rebellions in detail see, T B H Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, 1594-1612, (Colombo, 1966), Chapters 2 and 3; C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638, (Colombo, 1972), Chapters 2 and 3.

Portugal. A decade earlier such royal exiles would have been kept in reserve, to be produced as candidates to a kingdom which the Portuguese wished to turn into a client state. The new precautionary measure explains why rebel leaders sometimes had to "import" fugitive Sinhalese princes from abroad or to impersonate them. Kuruvita Rāla adopted the first course when he invited the prince Māyādunnē to come over from India in 1616, and the pretender Nikapitiyē adopted the second when he impersonated the prince of that name.

The rebel leaders were drawn from a broad spectrum. On one side, there were Edirillē Rāla and three of the *mudaliyārs* who led the revolt in 1630. These were drawn from the members of the native aristocracy, with which went possession of considerable land and high rank in the native *lascarin* forces. Akaragama, as the honorific *appuhāmy* suggests, had royal blood in his veins, though his kinship to the royal family was not close enough for him to qualify for exile. But at the other end of the scale there were Amarakoon *manthri* who had only recently risen from the ranks, several *āraccis* or *lascarin* captains, the pretender Nikapitiyē who was a minor village headman, and most surprising of all, Kuruvita Rāla, a fisherman's son. The conclusion seems to be that any enterprising person who defied the Portuguese could get a following, though the task was considerably easier for those who had aristocratic lineage and held high military rank. The latter factor was particularly important, for command over the *lascarin* force gave the rebel leader a useful power-base and a convenient starting point.

Except for the revolt of 1630, no other rebellion was preceded by a conspiracy, and no other rebel leaders had long premeditated their uprisings. Rebellions against the Portuguese were, therefore, spontaneous movements, and the role of the chance factors in igniting them was often crucial. This does not mean that the Sinhalese were rebels without cause. On the contrary, two deeply felt sentiments provided the resistance movements with an ideology. These were, the desire to be rid of the foreigner and hostility to the Roman Catholic religion. The first was strikingly brought out in the title "Liberatador de nacao chingala" (Liberator of the Sinhalese nation) that Edirillē Rāla assumed.<sup>9</sup> The same feeling of antipathy to foreign rule is clear from the words of one of the rebel leaders in 1630, words expressing sorrow at the loss of liberty, horror of enslavement to a foreigner and the fear that the very name of the Sinhalese will disappear from the face of the earth.

As the religious arm of a colonial power, and as an immigrant religion which sought to supplant the resident religions, the Roman Catholic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Paulo da Trinidade, Conquista Espiritual do Oriente, (Codex Lateran No.7746 of the Vatican Archives photocopy at the Sri Lanka National Archives, Livro 3 Chapter 21 p 786). This work has been published in Lisbon, but I have not had access to a copy in Sri Lanka.

church was a natural target of attack for the Buddhists and Hindus. The destruction of Buddhist and Hindu places of worship, the transfer of temple lands to the churches and the privileges and tax exemptions which were held out to would-be converts, fanned the flames against the churches and their ministers, and to the rebels they become special and highly visible targets. In this connection, it is interesting to note that even Roman Catholics like Edirillē Rāla, on becoming rebels "burnt churches, profaned ornaments, hacked sacred images and used the chalices for shameful purposes."<sup>10</sup> Obviously, opposition to Portuguese rule made it mandatory to oppose the Roman Catholic religion.

To stress the ideological element is not to forget other factors. Personal pique, wounded pride and frustrations among the chiefs as well as discontent among ordinary people arising from more earthly reasons like the operation of Portuguese land policy, the lawlessness of the officials and the government's increased demands for their services and goods, provided the resistance movement with much motive force.

The epicenter of rebellion until about 1600 was the basins of the Kälani gaňga and the Kalugaňga, in particular the Siyana, the Hevagam, the Salpiti, Rayigam and the Pasdun korales. Akaragama, Edirille, Kuruppu and Vellappuli all began their movements there. But tremors of these resistance movements rapidly spread to the outlying areas of the Kotte kingdom, the Seven and the Four Körales, and the Matara disava. When Portuguese authority over the Kälani-Kalu basins tightened by 1600, the centres of the second generation rebellions shifted to the peripheral areas of the Kotte kingdom, where Portuguese control was not as yet securely established. Kāngara āracci turned against the Portuguese only in Balana, in Kandyan territory. The abrasive and long drawn out revolt led by Kuruvita Rala originated in the Two Korales. Nikapitiye rose against the Portuguese in the Seven Körales. The revolt of 1630 began in far-off Badulla. Even though they all began in the peripheral areas of the Kotte kingdom or beyond, they invariably moved to the Kälani valley where alone telling blows on the Portuguese could be delivered. In 1603 Malvana, where the captain-general resided, and the Alutkūru koralē just to the north, were overrun. Similarly, in 1617, Nikapitiye's forces came within a few miles of Colombo and Kuruvita Rāla penetrated deep into the Rayigam koralē. The rebel mudaliyārs in 1630, though they failed to ignite an uprising in Colombo, soon succeeded in overrunning most of the lowlands.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> de Queyroz, pp 507-8.

<sup>11</sup> Abeyasinghe, *Portuguese Rule*, chapters II and III.

Resistance movements in Kōṭṭe were aided from two quarters, Jaffnapatnam and Kandy.<sup>12</sup> The former is known to have helped the rebels only once, in 1617, but Kandy was a more frequent and substantial contributor of aid. The king of Kandy, Vimaladharmasūriya I, recognized Edirillē as king of the lowlands, had him crowned in Kandy, and himself came down to Sabaragamuva to reinforce the rebel forces. He also helped Kāngara and Kuruvita Rāla, and as the Portuguese subdued their uprisings, both leaders took service with the Kandyan king.<sup>13</sup> From Senarat, Vimaladharmasūriya's successor, Nikapitiyē received a force of 2000 well trained Kandyans to supplement his peasant army. In the conspiracy of the *mudaliyārs*, the Kandyan king was associated from the start, and he planned the denouement at Badulla to click with the maturing plans of the rebel leaders.<sup>14</sup>

A blend of seeming altruism and hard headed calculation seems to have guided Kandyan policy towards the rebellions. The Kandvans considered it their duty to help the lowlands Sinhalese, with whom they had much in common. But as the avowed Portuguese aim was the annexation of Kandy to the Portuguese crown, in helping the rebels the Kandyan kings were in fact buying time for themselves. There was another, subtler, motive at work. From the lowland revolts, the Kandyans were planning to extract maximum political advantage. To foment rebellion there was a sure means of levering the Portuguese into sitting at the conference table with them. This was why Vimaladharmasūriya I sought to extract peace three times, in 1594, 1598, and 1603, each time at the height of a crisis for the Portuguese.<sup>15</sup> Senarat followed the same policy; having at first helped Nikapitiye with a substantial body of troops, he suddenly made an about face, offered peace to the Portuguese and withdrew aid from rebels. This time the Kandyan offer was gratefully accepted.<sup>16</sup>

To defuse the feelings of hostility among the Sinhalese, to overcome the rebellions and to serve the long term needs of exercising their authority,

- <sup>14</sup> C R de Silva, Portuguese in Ceylon, op.cit., pp 100-1, 105-7.
- <sup>15</sup> Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule, op.cit., p 23.
- <sup>16</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, op.cit., p 25, 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> C R de Silva, op.cit, p 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule, op.cit., pp 22-3; C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Sri Lanka, op.cit., p 14.

the Portuguese produced a political and military program. This included a comprehensive defence system, a scheme of colonization and a native policy which was discriminatory against the chiefs.

The defence system embraced four elements: an army, a chain of garrisoned forts, a navy and a policy of terrorism. The Portuguese forces stationed in the Kötte lands, however, were not only for defence. They were used in Jaffna and against Kandy as the need arose. The most reliable elements in the Portuguese armed forces were those companies made up of Portuguese soldiers themselves. The number of these soldiers varied over the years. For a decade after 1594, the total remained at 800, which was the peak of its strength. Thereafter, only a crisis brought on by a major reverse would induce the authorities in Goa to rush reinforcements to Colombo to raise the number to that peak. This was the case in 1617 and after the Portuguese defeat in 1630. But as the crises pass, troop strength was allowed to dwindle to between 400 and 600. This happened during the decade after 1603-4 and again in the 1620s.<sup>17</sup> Though the Portuguese authorities in Colombo often pointed out to Goa and Lisbon the necessity of keeping the Portuguese forces at maximum strength, and the dangers arising from the failure to do so, neither Lisbon nor Goa could spare the troops for Sri Lanka. For the shortage of Portuguese troops, several palliatives were offered, but no cure. One palliative was that the annual fleet going out to Malacca should "winter" in Colombo instead of in Goa, thus allowing its troops to be used for operations in the island. Men from Portuguese ships going past Colombo to the east or to Goa also often proved useful, particularly in 1617 and 1630-31.18

Even at peak strength, the Portuguese troops available in Kötte were clearly inadequate, and had to be supplemented. A large body of Sinhalese *lascarin* troops served the Portuguese government, as they had served the Kötte kings. In the early days of Portuguese rule, this force numbered about 12,000, but by the 1630s the number had gone down to 4700. No serious attempt was made to reverse this trend, partly because over and over again they had proved disloyal to the Portuguese. But it was recognized on all hands that without *lascarins* no fighting could be undertaken, particularly on Kandyan campaigns.

Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule..., op.cit., pp 35, 43, 64; C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, op.cit., pp 29, 122-4.

<sup>18</sup> Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule ..., op.cit., pp 128-9; C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, op.cit., pp 23, 116.

It was sometimes thought that men of mixed descent, Indians or East African blacks being from the tropics, should prove a satisfactory substitute for Sinhalese *lascarins*. Recruits from all three groups, numbering about 300 in each, supplemented the Portuguese troops. Married Portuguese settlers numbering about 300 were also sometimes enlisted for particular campaigns, though, as a rule, their services were required only for home defence.

To serve the logistic and strategic needs of the army, a chain of stockades and forts were constructed. Some twenty two of these were built during the years 1594-1600, mostly in the Kälani-Kalu basins and the areas bordering on the Kandyan lands, with the objectives of overcoming the rebellions and preventing Kandyan incursions into rebellious territories. After the country had been pacified and Kandy had gone into the defensive, many of these forts were abandoned. But six were retained, at Colombo, Negombo, Kalutara, Malvāna, Galle and Mänikkadavara, and were even improved from time to time as the need arose and finances permitted. Later, a seventh was added at Sabaragamuva, in place of two forts which had been abandoned. Besides the forts at Colombo, the capital, and at Malvāna, where the captaingeneral resided, the Mänikkadavara fort was the most important, because it was the base for operations against Kandy. More than half the Portuguese army was stationed there.

Many of the early Portuguese forts were little more than wooden stockades, or structures with walls of rammed earth or coconut trunks piled one on top of another. These stockades were protected with ditches and fascines. Such hastily improvised structures were adequate for defence against Sinhalese rebels or Kandyan invaders, who had few artillery pieces. But when forts began to be built or improved with the Dutch threat in mind, improved fort building techniques were brought in, and there are references to fortification engineers in the island. Forts with wall of brick or stone and lime, strengthened with several bastions, began to be built. They were equipped with several pieces of small artillery and as important, many had a source of drinking water within their walls. Each fort was garrisoned by one or several companies of Portuguese soldiers and auxiliary troops, native, Indian or African. At each fort, several gunners were also stationed.

Early in their rule, the Portuguese had taken steps to manufacture firearms in the island. This was not difficult as both the technology and the raw materials were available within Kōtte. Guncasting techniques were well within the competence of Sinhalese blacksmiths and quantities of iron were delivered free to the government from several villages as a part of the obligation of their inhabitants. De Azevedo had set up a foundry works at Malvāna where the two were put together and arquebuses and foot muskets were turned out. As these were found to be up to specifications, by 1630s two other foundries were established in Mātara and the Seven Kōralēs. A complement to the manufacture of firearms was the setting up of a gunpowder factory by Constantino de Sa.<sup>19</sup>

The Portuguese navy's role, though less conspicuous than that of the army, was crucial in the defence system. It kept the Portuguese power in the island firmly anchored to its sources, both Indian and European, and was the umbilical cord carrying reinforcements and nourishment from India. On occasion, notably in 1630, when their army failed disastrously, the navy, for a time, became their mainstay. Besides keeping supply lines and communications open, the navy also had to counter foreign threats and to seal off Kandy from foreign contacts. Three patrol boats, later raised to six, stationed in Mannar, carried out the surveillance duties, while ships attached to the Portuguese Indian Ocean fleets took supplies and engaged enemy shipping. In emergencies, any available vessels, even private ones, were pressed into service.<sup>20</sup>

On occasion, the Portuguese resorted to a policy of terror and wanton destruction of life and property for defence purposes. Its basic feature was the summary punishment of suspect or refractory areas instead of guilty individuals. The Portuguese adopted this course when they failed to stamp out rebellions in the Seven and Four Kōralēs in the 1590s and in 1617.<sup>21</sup> A policy of terror could in the long run be self-defeating, and the Portuguese seem to have used it as a last resort, and only in the frontier areas of their territory.

In the programme designed to implant Portuguese authority deep in the native soil, the setting up of colonies of immigrants played a pivotal role. Such colonies were expected to act as political stabilizers among a hostile and potentially rebellious population and secondly, it was hoped that they would provide a self-replenishing source of manpower for recruitment to the Portuguese army.

In earlier Portuguese plans, colonization had been coupled with the relocation of the native population. As enunciated in 1608, the policy had visualized the fortifications of ten coastal towns -- Chilaw, Negombo, Colombo, Pānadura, Kalutara, Alutgama, Galle, Väligama and Mātara -- compelling the Sinhalese population, particularly the chiefs, to reside within

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Regimentos, op.cit., p 18; C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, op.cit., p 77.

<sup>20</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon... op.cit., pp 184-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon..., op.cit., pp 29-32; Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule..., op.cit., p 32.

those towns, and settling immigrant Indian and Portuguese amidst them. The arable land in the neighbourhood of the fortified towns was to be allotted for the maintenance of the immigrants and the residents.<sup>22</sup> This naive and chimerical scheme, if implemented, would have reduced the 5000 villages of the Kōtte kingdom to less than a dozen nucleated towns.

The attempt at relocating the resident population was not pursued. But a modified and limited version was implemented by Constantino de Sa in the 1620s. He set up two fortified settlements-one called "the new city" at Päliyagoda and the other at Mulleriyāva.<sup>23</sup> The purpose was to ensure the good behaviour of the Sinhalese *lascarins* and their *āraccis* by keeping their families in protective custody.

While the relocation proposal was thus being abandoned or selectively implemented, the other part was rapidly implemented, though not as originally planned. The authorities had hoped that generous offers of land would attract prospective settlers, both Portuguese and *paravar* Christians from India to the island, thus strengthening the colony of Portuguese already on the island. For this to be achieved three or four thousand colonists should have been attracted. But actually no more than a hundred seem to have come as settlers to the island.

Meanwhile, those Portuguese already in the island, from the captaingeneral down, grabbed the arable land in the more desirable areas of the Kōtte kingdom, under the guise of implementing the colonization policy.<sup>24</sup> As most of these were officers in the service of the government, the end result of the policy was to create a class of temporary landholders, not permanent settlers. Undoubtedly such a result was not without some marginal benefit to the Portuguese crown. Many Portuguese officials who came to own land hoped to settle down in the island eventually. They, therefore, identified their interests with those of the Portuguese crown and endeavoured to defend and extend those interests. The career of Lancarote de Seixas who held many military and revenue offices with distinction and also became one of the wealthiest landowners, illustrates this. But in terms of the objectives with which the colonization scheme was mooted, the results must be regarded as deeply disappointing.

A supplementary scheme to settle groups of Indians also made no great headway. Conceived concurrently with the main scheme, at first the

Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule..., op.cit., pp 62-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Regimentos, p 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon..., op.cit., p 78.

authorities had hoped to encourage the immigration of paravar Christians from the Tirunelvely coast of South India and settle them in the coastal belt to the north of Negombo. But as many paravar did not show interest, only a few families came to settle down in the island of Karaitivu off Kalpitiya. As the basic problem of manpower still remained, many variations on the theme of colonization surfaced during the next decades. The objectives were extended from purely politico-military to the economic and agricultural, to put immigrant labour to the Muturajavela area to grow food. The recruiting ground for colonists was widened from the Coromandel coast to Goa and the The assistance offered by the government was neighbouring islands. enlarged, to include not only grants of land but also maintenance allowances for an initial period, settling expenses, basic agricultural implements and tax exemption for a specified period. But still there were no takers, for life in seventeenth century India was not all that hard and therefore emigration offered no attractions.

In the development of Portuguese policy towards the native population, the traumatic experience of the first decade of their rule appears to have been decisive. From it, they concluded that the Sinhalese would be implacably hostile to their presence, quite irrespective of what they did or failed to do. The rebellions were begun, led and managed by the chiefs. In the Portuguese view, no rebellion had an independent existence apart from the rebel leader. That was why the capture or killing of a leader invariably meant the end of the rebellion. The ordinary people followed their leaders from habits of feudal deference to status, office or rank. If the chiefs were neutralized, the argument ran, the ordinary people could be won over. Unlike the chiefs, they were not irredeemable.

The Portuguese government in Kötte sought to neutralize the chiefs by deporting them, or to emasculate them by removing the sources of their power and wealth. For rebel chiefs, there was no mercy. Azevedo openly admitted that he had dealt more severely with them than with their rank-andfile followers. On suspicion alone, some chiefs like Dom Fernando Samarakone, his brother Dom Diogo, and Naidē Appu were deported, without charges or a trial. Even when Samarakone was cleared and appointed to high office in Goa and Chaul, he was not allowed to return home. Posts in the higher administrative services were taken away from the chiefs, within a decade of the establishment of Portuguese rule. Only one Sinhalese was appointed to the high post of provincial governor (*disāva*) after 1615. The Portuguese land policy was also openly aimed at undermining the chiefs. Only one captain-general, Constantino de Sa tried to modify the official line,<sup>25</sup> but the failure of that experiment convinced his successors that it should never have been attempted.

If the Portuguese authorities regarded the chiefs as potential rebels, they viewed the peasants as deserving of protection from undue exploitation and oppression. For this reason, justice to the people became the theme-song of official policy. In 1605, the king warned that anyone, official or nonofficial, ill-treating the peasant would be severely punished. During the next 35 years, he repeated the warning many times.

To the royal cry for justice, officials in India and Sri Lanka sent up choruses of approval. "Onde esta [i.e. justica] falta, falta Deos tambem" (Where justice is lacking, God himself is lacking), Azevedo pontificated. He identified the sources of oppression of the people as the *vidānas*, the Portuguese landholders and foot-loose soldiers.<sup>26</sup> An anonymous memorial presented in 1611 alleged that the root cause of the Portuguese failure to complete the conquest of the island was the "great tyranny that we Portuguese use on the natives."

As the warning went unheeded for the most part, in the 1630s there was a resurgence of interest in the plight of the ordinary people. This derived largely from the threat to Portuguese security posed by Kandy and the Dutch drawing together, thus underscoring the need to win over the Sinhalese subjects. These subjects sensed the more responsive mood of the government, and in 1636 presented a petition outlining their grievances, thus adding to the momentum for reform.

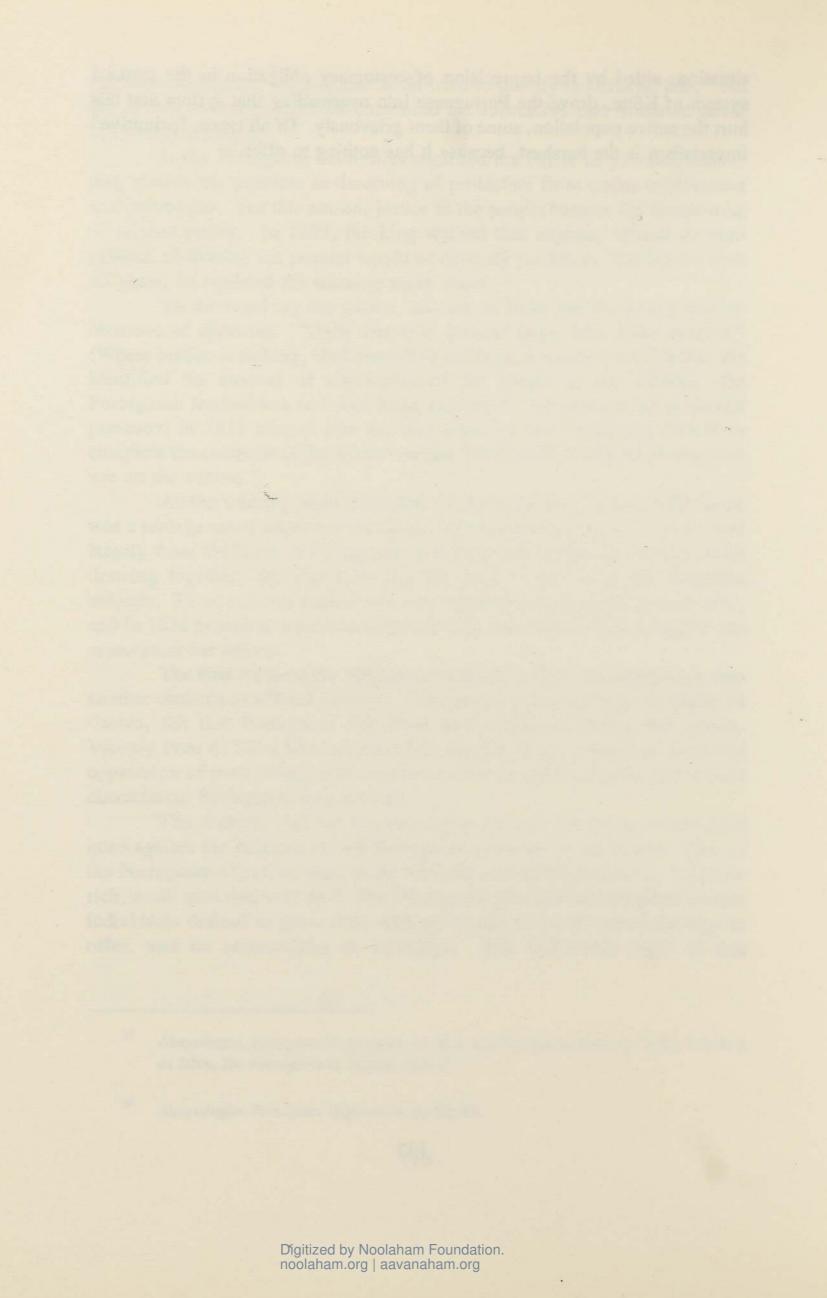
The first result of the heightened concern for the ordinary people was another outburst of official rhetoric. The captain-general, Diogo de Mello de Castro, felt that Portuguese rule must be founded on justice and reason. Viceroy Pero de Silva went on record to say that lowly commerce involving oppression of poor people was contrary to the chivalric conduct that should characterize Portuguese men-at-arms.

The rhetoric was not translated into policy. To do so would have gone against the rationale of the Portuguese presence in the island. One of the Portuguese objectives was, as Bernes Diaz said of the Spaniards, "to grow rich, as all men desire to do." The Portuguese government as well as private individuals desired to grow rich, with no capital to invest, no technology to offer, and no commodities to exchange. The ineluctable logic of that

<sup>25</sup> Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Regimentos, pp 48-9, and Portuguese Rule, pp 78-81, 113; C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, pp 81-2.

26 Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Regimentos, pp 22, 43.

situation, aided by the imprecision of customary obligation in the tenurial system of Kōṭṭe, drove the Portuguese into overloading that system and this hurt the native population, some of them grievously. Of all types, "primitive" imperialism is the harshest, because it has nothing to offer.



# **CHAPTER VI**

## THE KINGDOM OF KANDY: FOUNDATIONS AND FOREIGN RELATIONS TO 1638

### T B H Abeyasinghe

The foundation of the kingdom whose capital was at Senkadagala<sup>1</sup> was both a factor in, and a result of, the disintegration of the Sinhalese kingdom of Kötte after the death of Parākramabāhu VI (1412-67). It appears that Sēnāsammata Vikramabāhu, the founder of the Senkadagala kingdom, profited by the widespread, and in some areas, long drawn-out, revolts in the territories of the Kötte ruler, Bhuvanekabāhu VI (1470-78), to carve out a kingdom for himself in the central hill country of the island.

The exact year of the foundation of the kingdom cannot be ascertained, but most sources agree that a king by the name of Sēnāsammata Vikramabāhu was its founder-ruler. Inscriptional evidence makes it clear that in August 1511 Sēnāsammata was no longer king, while other evidence assigns to him a reign of at least 37 years. He could not therefore have come to the throne later than in 1474. In the present state of our knowledge, the kingdom of Kandy must be taken as having been founded not later than that year.<sup>2</sup>

Later called, in Sinhala, Mahanuvara, Portuguese documents refer to it as Candea (from Sinhala kanda, meaning hill) often using that word both for the kingdom and its capital. Dutch and English usage continued the Portuguese practice, replacing, however, the "c" of the Romance language, with the Germanic "k."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In 1969 Mendis Rohanadeera published the text of a recently discovered *ola* manuscript, *Asgiriye Alutvuna Lanka Ithihasaya*. The information contained in it would appear to suggest that the date of accession of the founder of the Kandyan kingdom was about eleven years earlier than 1474. Since there are serious doubts about the authencity and accuracy of this text its chronology has not been accepted.

Inscriptions at Gadalādeniya and Alutnuvara enumerate the Four Koralēs,  $\overline{U}va$  and the eastern lowlands between Trincomalee and the Mänikganga among the territories that acknowledged Sēnāsammata's authority, but the central hilly region of the island, then known collectively as the Udarața, Kanda uda kațțuva, or simply as the pasrața was the nucleus of his kingdom. Whether the three terms designated precisely the same region cannot be determined, for only the last - the pasrața - is defined in a contemporary source - as consisting of Gampala, the denuvara of Siduruvana (i.e. Udunuvara and Yaținuvara), Balavita, Mātalē, Pansiyapattuva and  $\overline{U}va.^3$ 

The birth of the new state in the fifteenth century was preceded by an emerging sense of unity and common identity among the people in the core area of that kingdom during the previous century. In any society, collective consciousness can arise only among those brought together by their work or mode of livelihood, and in pre-modern societies, this could mean consciousness within an army, a priesthood and sometimes, among slaves. In the case of the Kandyan lands, it was among the feudal levies raised for local defence against aggression from the north. In the comradeship of bows and arrows, the sentiment of unity was born, and these levies were probably its vehicle of transmission too.

The Rajavaliya says that when the ruler of Gampala, Bhuvanekabāhu V (1372-1408), fled in fear to Rayigama on the approach of an invading army from Jaffnapatnam, the troops of the five provinces (*pasrața*) expressed disapproval of that king's conduct, consulted among themselves and decided to attack the camps of the enemy on their own. Their initiative paid rich dividends, for the invaders were routed.<sup>4</sup> It is clear that the attachment the troops felt for their families, homesteads and lands and their concern for the security of these carried greater weight than loyalty to their lawful ruler and their obligation to support any wider strategy of his. These troops conceived of the hill country as having interests distinct from those of the rest of the island, including the other areas inhabited by the Sinhalese. At the same tine,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> It is clear that the *pasrața* (five provinces) at this time consisted really of six-taking the *denuvara* as one. In this connection, it may be pointed out that the Seven Kōralēs and the Four Kōralēs at this time consisted of a larger number of units than the designatory numeral would seem to justify. Ūva seems to be the odd man out; geographically it is separated from the Kandyan plateau. It probably became a part of the *pasrața* at a later stage, the other five forming the original *pasrața*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> There is evidence that by the fourteenth century, the army had become, along with the nobility, an "estate" of the realm, with a corporate status of its own. S Paranavitana, "Lamkatilaka Inscriptions" in UCR, XVIII (1&2), 1960, pp 1-45; see particularly pp 5, 41-5.

loyalty to a wider geographical region was beginning to replace, or at least coexist with, narrower loyalties to the village or the locality in which each man was born and raised. It was this sentiment, at once separatist and unifying, that provided the ideological backdrop to the birth of the new kingdom.

The Kandyan *pasrața* (with the exception of Uva) formed a distinct geographical region whose defence had to be treated as a single problem. The feudal levies drawn from the *pasrața* almost certainly formed a joint defence force, possibly under a unified command. This would explain why feelings of solidarity and identity came into being among them. In medieval Sri Lanka, the locally-drawn troops did not form a separate military "caste" with independent interests of their own. They were drawn from all ranks of society-from their commanding officers who belonged to the highest *radalas*, to the porters, drummers, woodcutters and smiths who were drawn from the "lower" castes. For the entire army to be infected, the separatist sentiment must have been widespread among all segments of society.

How did this sentiment arise? In the second half of the fourteenth century, the power of the Āryacakravatis was growing in Jaffnapatnam. In 1359, their tax collectors were stationed on the Kandyan soil. Within a decade or two, during the reign of Bhuvanekabāhu V, there was another attack on the Sinhalese areas. The threat from the north and the inability of the rulers of the Sinhalese kingdom to take adequate measure to protect the hill country was probably the strongest single factor leading to the growth of sub-nationalist sentiment in that area.

The creation of a unified Sri Lanka by Parākramabāhu VI (1411-67) in the fifteenth century did not snuff out the new spirit in Kandyan lands.<sup>5</sup> Under that king the Udarața had its own ruler, Jotiya Sitāna, who was powerful enough to rebel against the Kōțțe ruler. On the suppression of Jotiya Sitāna's revolt, the Kōțțe ruler installed a prince of the Gampala dynasty in the same position. Both Parākramabāhu VI and Bhuvanekabāhu VI contracted dynastic marriages with Udarața princesses. Obviously even powerful Kōțțe rulers found it prudent to handle the hill country with a velvet glove and rule it in association with its leading families.<sup>6</sup>

The army had been the first spokesman of the separatist interests of the *pasrata*. Such separatist sentiments apparently persisted for a century

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> For a discussion of these problems see G P V Somaratne, The Political History of the Kingdom of Kotte 1400-1521.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> See above Chapter I, C R de Silva, "Sri Lanka in the Early Sixteenth Century: Political Conditions..."

among the *udarata* troops, and culminated in the foundation of the new kingdom in the fifteenth century. The new kingdom was the product of a *coup d'etat*, in which the army played a major role, and the title Sēnāsammata, (meaning approved by the army) borne by the titular founder of the kingdom and by no previous or subsequent ruler in the island's long history, bears testimony to the mode of legitimation of the ruler's authority. That this ruler was under obligation to the troops is also clear from certain immunities he granted to them by edicts carved on rock. Clearly, the existence of such immunities was a limitation on the king's authority.

A second factor which potentially limited the king's power was the influence of great chiefs known as the Bandāras who virtually shared authority with the ruler. To the covenant between the Kandyan king and the leading men of the Four Kōralēs inscribed on rock at the Alutnuvara *dēvalē*, Yāpa Bandāra, Dodanvala Parākramaya, Varava Bandāra and Gampala Bandāra were virtually co-signatories with the king on the Kandyan side. In the Gadalādeniya inscription too, Yāpa Bandāra and other chiefs were similarly associated with the king. It would therefore appear that the accession of Sēnāsammata Vikramabāhu did not lead, at least initially, to a reduction of the status and powers of the Bandāras, contrary to what the *Siduruvāna Kadaimpota* alleges. The leading chiefs were jointly held responsible with the king for the observation of covenants. In so far as the concept of sovereignty had developed in the Kandyan lands, it was thought of as residing collectively in the king *and* the principal chiefs.

From the role of the army as the co-founder of the kingdom, and of the chiefs as its co-sovereigns, one would expect the subsequent history of the kingdom to have been punctuated by periodic, and debilitating, convulsions and for the crown to have become a plaything of intriguing factions, military and aristocratic. The kingdom's relative freedom from such turmoil was probably due to the almost permanent state of siege in which it was forced to exist during its first two hundred years, under threat first from the Kōtte and the Sītāvaka kingdoms, and thereafter, from the Portuguese. If the threat from the north had set in motion forces that brought the kingdom from Kandy into being, that from the south-west, by emphasizing the need for internal unity as the necessary condition of survival, kept it comparatively free from factionalism.

This is not to say that in the Kandyan kingdom, the ruler was able, under cover of the need for unity, to whittle down or limit the privileges of the army and the chiefs. One can, on the contrary, argue that the existence of a state of permanent alert would place a premium on the army and the chiefs, two vital factors in the defence of the kingdom. Their key roles would lead to the accretion of power and privilege, not diminution. Indeed there is evidence from the later centuries of the continuance of army privileges and

of the chiefs constituting a political hazard to the monarchy. The right to refuse service outside the Kandyan lands was a cherished privilege of the Kandyan troops and one which they jealously guarded, despite the tempting offers of booty sometimes made to those who were willing to forego it. Mandārampurapuvata, King Vīra Parākrama According to the Narendrasimha's (1707-39) object in contracting matrimonial alliances with South Indian princely houses was to counter the pretensions of the chiefs. As king Senarat (1604-35) also sought brides outside the Kandyan lands for his sons, we can conclude that even he viewed the chiefs as potential claimants to the throne of Kandy. All along therefore, the chiefs and the feudal levies enjoyed the status of estates of the realm. To curb their powers and privileges, without, at the same time, reducing their usefulness to the monarchy as instruments for the security of the kingdom, was the dilemma faced by the Kandyan rulers throughout its history.

Vikramabāhu's documents use on him epithets like *chakravarti* (universal emperor) and *Trīsinhalādhiśvara* (lord of the three Sinhalas). By the fifteenth century, both titles had lost their original meanings, coming to connote only independent sovereign status. But within the first fifty years of the foundation of the kingdom of Kandy, its ruler's right to these titles was contested by the Kōtte ruler who, on two occasions, despatched military expeditions to bring it back into subjection. On both occasions, the Kōtte ruler's forces proved to be so strong that the Senkadagala ruler thought it prudent to renounce independent status and acknowledge the latter's paramountcy. A Kōtte whose strength had not been sapped by internal division or by the parasitic growth of the Portuguese power had proved more than a match for the kingdom of the *Udarata*.

These early conflicts demonstrated that the existence of a single political organization with the economic and manpower resources of the south and southwest of the island at its command posed the chief external danger to the survival of the young kingdom. As this area was, under a single state, Kōṭṭe, during the first two decades of the 16th century, it became Kandy's policy to divide it or otherwise weaken it. Thus, in 1521, when three princely claimants to the throne of Kōṭṭe sought armed assistance form Kandy to enforce their claims against the ruling king, the Kandyan ruler readily obliged, probably, because he saw a chance of insuring himself against aggression from that quarter, by backing the winning side in a *coup d'etat.*<sup>7</sup>

With the success of the coup d'etat, the ancient Kötte kingdom, was cut up into three smaller kingdoms, Kötte, Sītāvaka and Rayigama, for the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See above, Chapter I, C R de Silva "Sri Lanka in the Early Sixteenth Century: Political Conditions..."

three coup leaders. With that, the single state polity of the south and southwestern region of Sri Lanka was replaced by a multi-state and mutually competitive political system, with their resources divided, and their energies absorbed in internecine conflict.<sup>8</sup> For twenty years, Kandy faced no danger from that quarter.

In the 1540s, a new threat to Kandy's independence was posed by the kingdom of Sītāvaka, which also covered a part of the south and southwestern region. Its ruler, Māyādunnē, had annexed the kingdom of Rayigama on the death of its ruler, and had, in 1539, suspended a long-drawn out contest he had had with Kōtte. A period of mutual cooperation between Kōtte and Sītāvaka replaced one of conflict and this spelt danger for Kandy. In October 1545, after having secured the Kōtte ruler's assistance, Māyādunnē sent his forces to attack the hill country. Once again, the full resources of the low country were arrayed against the Udarata. Kandy's reaction to this threat was twofold. Firstly, its ruler called in the Portuguese at Goa to redress the balance of forces in the island. Secondly, he sought to detach Kōtte from the offensive alliance against him, in other words, to divide the resources of the low country.

Missions and messages from Kandy went to the Portuguese authorities at Goa or at other Portuguese factories in August 1542, July 1544, April 1545, and in November 1545. In these, the king of Kandy offered the Portuguese an annual tribute, a site for a factory, expenses for the soldiers to be stationed at the factory, and it seems, even to embrace the Roman Catholic faith, and in return sought only some companies of Portuguese troops to reinforce his defenses against Sītāvaka. In response to these invitations, two Portuguese expeditions were sent to Kandy, in March 1543 and April 1546. The first, however, failed to establish contact with Kandy and the second arrived too late to be of help, the king of Kandy having sued for peace and agreed to pay a war-indemnity to Māyādunnē about a month earlier.

The second part of Kandyan strategy was to detach Kötte from the offensive alliance. In this, Kandy was brilliantly successful, and the Kötte king not only left the offensive alliance, but also became Kandy's ally. The new alliance was sealed in a marriage between the royal houses, the Kandyan ruler's daughter being given away as wife to the Kötte ruler's grandson and heir, Dharmapāla.

Alliance with Kötte was a corner-stone of Kandy's external relations during the next three decades. During the early days of the alliance, friendship with Kötte enabled Kandy to ward off the threat, not only from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, see also Chapter III, C R de Silva, "The Rise and Fall of the Kingdom of Sītāvaka."

Sītāvaka, but from the Portuguese as well, who alleging that the Kandyan ruler had invited them over to Kandy under false pretenses undertook two punitive expeditions against him, in August - September 1547 and March 1550. Both expeditions failed, demonstrating that to Kandy, the Portuguese were as harmless as enemies as they had been useless as friends.

Meanwhile two factors served to strengthen the ties between Kandy and Kōṭṭe. In 1557, Dharmapāla became a Roman Catholic. A contemporary king of Kandy, Karalliyaddē Bandāra, also was converted to the same faith, though at what date is not known. The second factor was Dharmapāla's marriage to another Kandyan princess in 1573, when his first queen died.

From the accession of Dharmapāla in 1551, the Kōtte kingdom was in crisis, until its final denouement in 1597. The Sītāvaka rulers, Māyādunnē and Rajasimha I, harassed it continuously and grabbed its territory, driving its ruler to the point of abandoning even his capital, Jayavardhana Kotte, in 1565.9 With the decline of Kotte as a political power, and with its ruler becoming increasingly dependent on the Portuguese, the main plank of Kandyan foreign policy gave way and its ruler had to find a new ally. He turned once again to the Portuguese. They appear to have welcomed him back in to the fold, though on what terms is not known to us. But we do know that a company of Portuguese soldiers was permanently stationed in the Kandyan capital. In all probability, this meant, among other things, that Kandy had no independent external relations. When Kandy entered into relations with any external power, it was usually as a part of the wider Portuguese strategy in the island. Thus, in 1565, the Kandyan ruler had to make a diversionary raid into the Sītāvaka held Seven Korales, when the Portuguese and their protege, Dharmapala, were hard-pressed by the Sītāvaka armies.

After a thirty year interval, Sītāvaka's drive to annex Kandy was revived in the 1570s. In 1574 and again in 1578, Rājasimha attacked Kandy, but the hill country could not be subjugated. In 1581-2, he attacked it a third time, throwing a massive force of 30,000 men into the attack. Karalliyaddē Bandāra met him at Balana and was routed, and Kandy was annexed to the Sītāvaka crown.

The *Rājāvaliya* speaks of Rājasimha as drawing "revenues" or levying "imposts" on Kandy, the identical term its author uses in regard to Parākramabāhu VI's rule over the same area. Conquest probably did not mean full integration of territory, nor the devising of a uniform

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>'9</sup> For discussion of this see, T B H Abeyasinghe, *et.al.*, Udarața Rājadhāniya, 1470-1818 (Colombo, 1977); also Abeyasinghe, "The Politics of Survival: Aspects of Kandyan External Relations in the Mid-Sixteenth Century," JCBRAS, n.s. XVII, 1973, pp 13-5.

administration, revenue, and defence system for the enlarged kingdom. Though Kandy lost its royal house, it probably enjoyed some degree of autonomy, subject to payment of tribute and the performance of specified services. For ten years, from about 1581-91, there was no kingdom of Kandy and one cannot, therefore, speak of Kandy's foreign relations.<sup>10</sup> The story can be taken up only with the accession of 1591 of its second founder, Vimaladharmasūriya, to the throne of a kingdom embracing the same territories and using the same designation as the earlier kingdom.

The principal objective of Kandy's foreign relations under Vimaladharmasūriya I (1591-1604) and Senarat (1604-35) was not different from that of the earlier rulers who had presided over that kingdom's destinies, - survival from external attack. In the sixteenth century, such attacks had come from Kötte, Sītāvaka or the Portuguese. Now the Portuguese presented the sole source of danger to Kandy. Earlier, when confronted by one low country power, Kandy had countered by joining hands with another. This had been possible because, after 1521, there were several competing states in the region. But the emergence during the last decade of that century of a single Portuguese state polity there, made this no longer practicable. Kandy, therefore, had to look elsewhere for allies. There was another difference. Whereas earlier the Portuguese had gone to Kandy sometimes as allies and sometimes with punitive intentions, henceforth, they would go there with unmistakably hostile objectives, seeking annexation and incorporation of that kingdom in their territories. Kandy, therefore, had to take Portuguese policy towards itself as a reference point and shape its foreign relations accordingly.

To the Portuguese, Kandy had no right to exist as a separate and independent political unit. Against Vimaladharmasūriya and his successors, who were *de facto* rulers in Kandy, the Portuguese put forward the claims of other candidates. From 1591 to 1694, they sponsored the claims of Kusumāsanadēvi, Karalliyaddē's daughter, (then living under Portuguese protection at Mannar), as the legitimate sovereign of the Kandyan kingdom. They hoped to marry her off to a Portuguese *fidalgo*. When, in 1594, Vimaladharmasūriya captured her in war and made her his queen, they had to change their line. With the abjuration of the Roman Catholic faith, they argued, she forfeited her right to the throne of Kandy. In her place, they advanced the claims of another candidate, the king of Portugal, no less. To do this, they had to contrive reasoning which would carry some degree of plausibility. The main plank of their case derived from several notarial deeds of donation in favour of the Portuguese king, one executed in 1580 by king

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> See above Chapter III, "The Rise and Fall of the Kingdom of Sītāvaka..."

Dharmapāla of Kōṭṭe and two others by Yamasimha Bandāra and his son, when they reigned in Kandy in 1590-1 for brief periods under the protection of Portuguese arms. A subsidiary line of argument ran thus; Kandy had always been a dependency of the Kōṭṭe kingdom; the marriage of the Kandyan ruler's daughter in 1573 to Dharmapāla brought with it the renewed subjection of Kandy to Kōṭṭe; with Dharmapāla's donation of his kingdom to the king of Portugal, the Kandyan lands became a dependency of the king of Portugal.<sup>11</sup>

The Portuguese king's emphatic assertion of sovereignty over the kingdom of Kandy, based for the most part on quasi-legal arguments and specious reasoning whose validity his opponents rejected, is a theme that runs through seventeenth century Portuguese correspondence on Sri Lanka, and many aspects of their policy in the island are comprehensible only in terms of that assertion. That such assertions, far from being academic exercises, were taken quite seriously by them is clear from the title of a paper prepared in Goa in 1643: "Of how the kings of Portugal are legitimate heirs to the kingdoms of Ceylon, principally the kingdom of Kandy," almost certainly to be used in their negotiations with the Dutch on the implementation of the ten year truce.

then, rightfully, belonged to Portugal, Since Kandy Vimaladharmasūriya was, to the Portuguese, a rebel, a usurper, and a tyrant. With the passage of time, they did not tone down their vitriolic language. The epithets they used on Vimaladharmasūriya's successors were no less harsh. The use of the term "tyrant" by the Portuguese on Kandyan kings had a special significance at the time. Some contemporary European political theorists, particularly Roman Catholic writers such as Juan de Mariana, gave unqualified approval to tyrannicide, and at least one captain-general is known to have tried to remove a Kandyan king by political assassination. To dispossess the Kandyan kings and to incorporate the kingdom in the Portuguese seaborne empire was therefore a prime objective of the Portuguese.<sup>12</sup>

The first expeditions for the purpose was undertaken in September-October 1594, under captain-general Pero Lopes de Souza. The Portuguese authorities at Goa and Colombo decided on this occasion to sponsor the claims of Kusumāsanadēvi, (the Portuguese preferred to use her baptismal name of Dona Cätherinā). De Souza reached Kandy with a large Portuguese force and

See T B H Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, 1594-1612, (Colombo, 1966); C R de Silva, Chapter III above, "The Rise and Fall of the Kingdom of Sītāvaka..."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> T B H Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon...op.cit.; T B H Abeyasinghe, et.al., Udarata Rājadhāniya...

an even larger body of native auxiliaries, and proclaimed the young princess the rightful sovereign, Vimaladharmasūriya, meanwhile, having fled to an outlying area of the kingdom. But popular support for the Portuguese protege was lacking, and disagreement broke out among the commanding officers of the invading force as to the choice of a prince-consort for the Queen. Vimaladharmasūriya cleverly exploited the dissension in the enemy camp, and created a rift between the Portuguese forces and the auxiliary troops. This made immediate withdrawal of the Portuguese troops to Colombo appear the wiser course. Before this step could be taken, however, Vimaladharmasūriya struck, cutting off the path of retreat of the invaders, and on the field of Danture, not far from Kadugannava, cut down the entire Portuguese force or took them prisoner. The most valuable prize taken by the winner at Danture was the princess. Rebellion in the Kotte lands and the inability of the Portuguese to find replacements for the losses they had suffered at Danture delayed a second attack on Kandy but late in 1602, eight years after Danture, Pero Lopes's successor, Dom Jeronimo de Azevedo, undertook the second expedition. Though he occupied the fort at Balana, mutiny and desertion by the Sinhalese auxiliary troops made further progress inadvisable and Azevedo decided to retreat. With Kandyan forces harassing him, he successfully accomplished "the famous retreat" of Portuguese chronicles and safely brought his troops down to Colombo. This success was, however, marred by an equally striking failure: almost all Portuguese forts that had held down their conquests in the island were overrun by the Kandyans following in the wake of the retreating Portuguese, and their capitulation secured, along with those of the defending garrisons.

What was the Kandyan reaction to the Portuguese claims and their attempts to enforce them? Vimaladharmasūriya's actual possession of the Kandyan territory was, of course, the strongest argument against the Portuguese claims and no brandishing of legal documents and name-calling was gong to explain away that ineluctable fact. After Danturē, Vimaladharmasūriya made Kusumāsanadēvi his Queen, and thus her claim as a descendant of the Kandyan dynasty strengthened his own. He could, therefore, dismiss Portuguese assertions about their own sovereignty over Kandy as meaningless rhetoric. Legitimation by possession and marriage did not confer immunity against Portuguese attacks however. Vimaladharmasūriya therefore had to consider the options open to him and plan his strategy.

One option he did not have, that of trying to rid the island of the Portuguese. That had been the main thrust of Rājasimha of Sītāvaka's policy, and though he had overtaxed his resources in the attempt to realize it, he had died with his wishes unfulfilled. Vimaladharmasūriya had no wish to attempt anything so grandiose unless his rather meagre resources could be substantially reinforced from another source, preferably European. Three

Dutch visits to the island between July 1602 and June 1603 raised hopes that subsequent events dampened. Vimaladharmasūriya had, therefore, to learn to live with the Portuguese.<sup>13</sup>

His foreign relations postulated a three-power presence in the island, Jaffnapatnam in the north, the Portuguese in the western seaboard lands and Kandy in the central hills. In regarding this arrangement as ineluctable he probably thought he was in step with the archetypal politics of the island, divided in ancient times into three *rațas*, and referred to as *Trī Sinhala* (Three Sinhalas) during and before his time. He therefore sought a working relationship with the Portuguese.

But the Portuguese refused to play the game according to Vimaladharmasūriya's rules. They were unwilling to accept the position of merely one among several powers in the island and espoused a counter-theory conferring upon them sole legitimate authority. This placed Vimaladharmasūriya in a difficult situation. On the one hand, he had to defend his kingdom with all the means in his power. On the other, he had to search for a stable peace, with guarantees against aggression. This necessity to carry both the shield and the olive branch simultaneously, explains much of the Kandyan king's policy during the years 1594-1604.

When Pero Lopes invaded, Vimaladharmasūriya destroyed the invading forces. A defeated enemy, he thought, should prove flexible and willing to abandon untenable claims. After Danture, he therefore made an overture of peace. To the Portuguese, however, Danture proved nothing conclusive, and Pero Lopes's successor, Dom Jeronimo de Azevedo, pressed on with preparations for an attack on Kandy. Vimaladharmasūriya, therefore, had to fall back on defending Kandy. With this in view, he thwarted Portuguese attempts at pacifying their territories, recognizing Edirille Rala, one of the rebel leaders, as king of Kötte and Sītāvaka. But as peace was his ultimate goal, he made only limited commitments to Edirille, stopping far short of all-out support. When the theatre of Portuguese anti-insurgency operations moved from the Kälani valley to the Four and the Seven Körales, he had to commit himself more deeply, since the Portuguese were now within striking distance of the Kandyan frontiers. He therefore, assumed personal command there. Thus, for three years after Danture, he successfully kept the Portuguese occupied in their own territories, and out of those of the Kandyan kingdom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> This is discussed in T B H Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon 1594-1612, Chapters II and III; C R de Silva, The Portuguese Rule in Ceylon..., Chapter 2-4, and T B H Abeyasinghe, et.al., "Udarata Rājadhāniya 1470-1818."

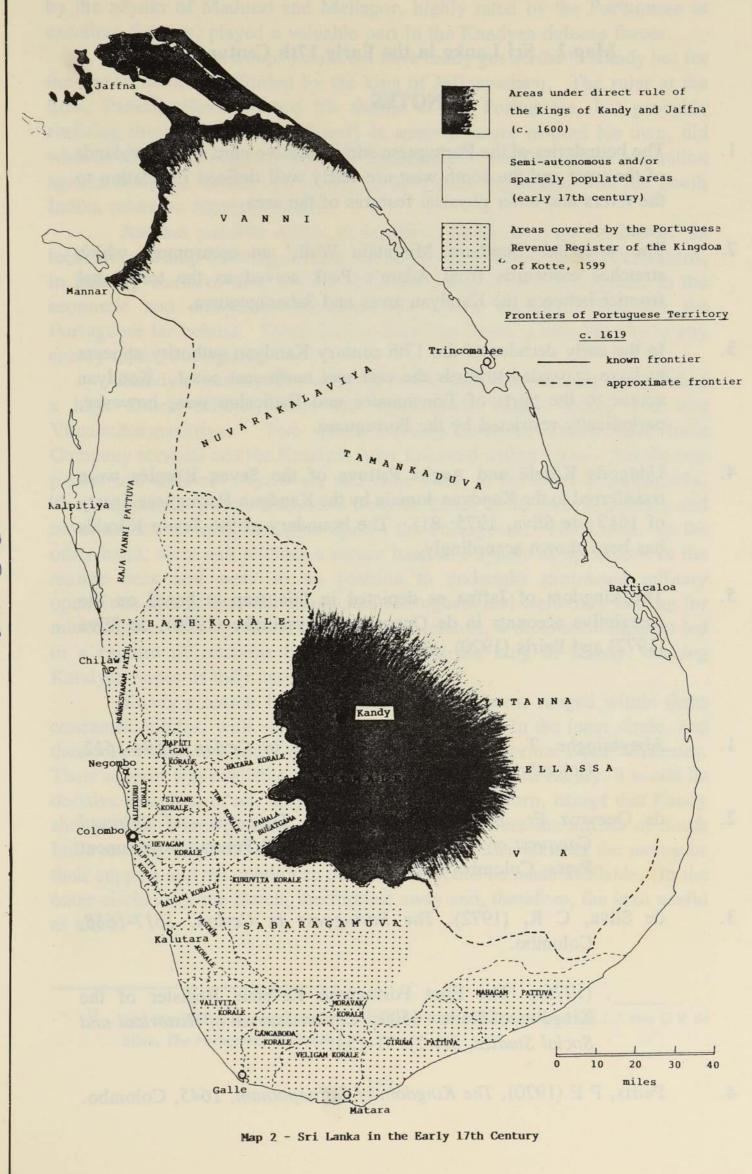
In 1598, Vimaladharmasūriya again probed the reactions of the Portuguese. But Portuguese thinking was two-dimensional; to them, desire for peace meant inability to wage war, when it was not plain cowardice. They, therefore, pressed on with preparations to invade Kandy, and launched the attack five years later. Its failure, the king of Kandy thought, should make them see reason, and so he sent emissaries to Goa in 1603 or 1604. But Portuguese response was again negative.

It would be clear from this discussion that in the confrontation between the Portuguese and Kandy, the initiative lay with the former, except during the two or three years immediately after the battle of Danturē. This was because in their relative fighting capacities the Portuguese had an edge over the Kandyans. Naturally, Vimaladharmasūriya, and his successors, sought to neutralize this Portuguese advantage with support from external sources.

One source of support that Vimaladharmasūriya could always count on were the anti-Portuguese elements in the Portuguese-held territories of the island. Linguistic, religious and cultural ties, and a common social system bound the Sinhalese living under the authority of the Portuguese to those living in the Kandyan areas. After the decline and disappearance of the native kingdom of Kötte, many Sinhalese in the Kötte lands began to look upon Kandy as the guardian of their common heritage. To them, to defend Kandy was almost a religious duty, and to wage war against it would be unthinkable. Kandyan policy was to tap this unearned reservoir of goodwill so to its advantage. In this, it rarely failed. This, more than any other factor, explains why all Portuguese attempts to invade and occupy Kandy were thwarted by mutinous native auxiliary troops, led by their officers. Though no evidence is available (except in regard to the Uva invasion of 1630),<sup>14</sup> it would be reasonable to conclude that Kandy maintained close liaison with rebels, actual or potential, in Portuguese territories. With mutiny among the 4000-5000 strong body of native auxiliaries, the small force of the Portuguese troops in the island, rarely exceeding 700, would be heavily outnumbered and then the civilian population would rebel, transforming an army mutiny into a general uprising. In its struggle against the superior strength of the Portuguese, it was the support of the Sinhalese of the low country which enabled Kandy to hold its own.

A second source of support for Kandy was the Madurai area in South India, with which Sri Lanka has had long-established relations. Troops sent

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> See The Expedition to Uva made in 1630, together with an account of the siege laid to Colombo by the King of Kandy, (translated into English) by S G Perera, (Colombo, 1930).



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## Map 2 - Sri Lanka in the Early 17th Century

### NOTES

- 1. The boundaries of the Portuguese administrative units in the lowlands of the west and the south-west are fairly well defined in relation to the rivers and other physical features of the area.
- 2. The so-called 'Southern Mountain Wall,' an escarpment which stretches eastwards from Adam's Peak served as the traditional frontier between the Kandyan areas and Sabaragamuva.
- 3. In the early decades of the 17th century Kandyan authority appears to have expanded towards the east and north-east coast. Kandyan access to the ports of Trincomalee and Batticaloa was, however, periodically restricted by the Portuguese.
- 4. Udugoda Köralē and Asgiri Pattuva of the Seven Köralēs were transferred to the Kandyan domain by the Kandyan-Portuguese Treaty of 1617 (de Silva, 1975: 81). The boundary of the Seven Köralēs has been shown accordingly.
- 5. The kingdom of Jaffna as depicted in this map is based on the descriptive accounts in de Queyroz, Abeyasinghe (1966), de Silva (1972) and Peiris (1920).

#### Sources

- 1. Abeyasinghe, T, (1966), Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, 1594-1612, Colombo.
- 2. de Queyroz Fr. Fernão (undated), The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon, translated by S G Perera, Government Press, Colombo, 1930.
- 3. de Silva, C R, (1972), The Portuguese in Ceylon, 1617-1638, Colombo.

\_\_\_\_, (1975), 'The First Portuguese Revenue Register of the Kingdom of Kotte - 1599,' Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies, 5(1-2): 71-153.

4. Peiris, P E (1920), The Kingdom of Jaffnapatnam, 1645, Colombo.

by the *nāyaks* of Madurai and Meliapor, highly rated by the Portuguese as excellent fighters, played a valuable part in the Kandyan defense forces.

South Indian troops would not have easily got across to Kandy but for the transit facilities afforded by the king of Jaffnapatnam. The ruler at the time, Pararājasēkeran, owed his throne to the Portuguese, but probably realizing that the survival of Kandy in some measure insured his own, did what he could to strengthen Kandy. On occasions, the Portuguese accusation against him, ran further; he is said to have even negotiated with the South Indian rulers on Kandy's behalf.

Another possible source of assistance to Kandy were the Dutch. In techniques of ship-building and gun-founding, they had surpassed the Iberians, in infantry warfare, they were at least the equal of the Portuguese; in the economic and manpower resources they could mobilize, they left the Portuguese far behind. These factors made the Dutch a valuable ally to any enemy of the Portuguese.

Kandyan connections with the Dutch went back to July 1602, when a high Dutch official, Joris van Spilbergen, visited Kandy and met Vimaladharmasūriya. Two other meetings between Dutch East India Company servants and the Kandyan ruler followed within a year. But the two parties had different objectives, and these were, at the time, irreconcilable. The king sought firm commitments from the Dutch in the form of military and naval assistance in his struggle against the Portuguese. The Dutch, on the other hand, were still without a secure base or a sphere of operations in the eastern seas and were in no position to undertake protracted military operations against the well-entrenched Portuguese and were only looking for merchandise. On top of the divergence of interest, a diplomatic incident led to a rupture of relations between them and the king of Kandy, dashing Kandyan hopes of their assistance.

Kandy's search for friends, it would be seen, ranged within three concentric circles, with varying degrees of success. In the inner circle, and therefore closest to Kandy, were the Sinhalese of the former Kōtte territories. Their support was available on demand for the defence of Kandy; it would be decisive and, best of all, they asked for nothing in return, except that Kandy should survive and prosper. In the second circle were the  $n\bar{a}yaks$  of South India and the ruler of Jaffna. Geography and politics dictated the nature or their support and the conditions on which it would be made available. In the outer circle were the Dutch, the furthest away and, therefore, the least useful as allies.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> See above, T B H Abeyasinghe, "Portuguese Rule in Kötte, 1594-1638...," also C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon..."

Meanwhile, the failure of Azevedo's invasion in 1602-3 had led the Portuguese to reexamine their strategy. A frontal attack would require the deployment of many times the forces that had been available in 1594 and 1602-3. But in the first decades of the seventeenth century, the Portuguese authorities in Goa and Europe, faced by ever widening circles of commitments, against the Dutch in the Moluccas, against a combination of the Dutch and the ruler of Atjeh in Malacca, against the Dutch and English naval blockades in Europe, and beset by a series of financial crises, found themselves unable to spare the resources or the men for such an undertaking. Since a frontal attack was beyond them, the Portuguese decided on slow strangulation of Kandy.

There were three elements in the Portuguese policy. First, Kandy was to be sealed off against commercial and political relations with the outside world by means of armed boats patrolling the eastern coastal waters of the island. Secondly, Portuguese and Indian immigrants were to be settled in the coastal territories, as a solution to the inadequacy of troops for the invasion and occupation of the kingdom. Thirdly, Kandyan lands were to be systematically devastated and rendered uninhabitable. "...With this regimen of war that kingdom is to be bled to death, until it is entirely depopulated and laid waste..." the architect of this policy explained. The object of this exercise was to bring Kandy on its knees, so that the Portuguese at some future date, would be able, with minimum effort, to bring it under subjection.

Kandy had no armed vessels with which to run the Portuguese blockade. But the Portuguese patrol boats, based on Mannar away in the northwest and without territorial stations in the east coast, the ports on which were Kandy's windows on the world outside, could not effectively enforce the blockade, as frequent visits by Dutch and Danish vessels in the 1610s were to demonstrate. And as Kandy's was a subsistence economy with selfsufficiency in the basic necessities of life as its characteristic feature, even a total embargo on foreign trade would have only marginal repercussions on its economy. The settlement of colonists in the island would add significantly to Portuguese fighting capacity only in the long run.

Of the three-pronged attack on Kandy, only the last, that of delivering series of lightning attacks, with the sole objective of effecting the maximum damage on life and property, scored any success. For ten years from about 1607, under three captains-general, Dom Jeronimo de Azevedo (1594-1612), Dom Francisco de Menezes Roxo (1612-14) and Manoel Mascarenhas Homem (1614-16), Kandyan lands were subjected to a relentless ordeal, though under the second, the pressure on Kandy was somewhat less. King Senarat, who had ascended the throne in 1604 on the death of Vimaladharmasūriya, could devise no counter-strategy. It is doubtful whether any other could have. Surprise and extreme mobility were the hallmarks of the Portuguese attack; the attacking force was a small and compact body of troops presenting few problems of supply and logistics. The Kandyans found no weak link in the Portuguese strategy. The Kandyan court, in the circumstances, had only one course of action; it took refuge in the inaccessible mountain fastness of Mädamahanuvara or Haňguranketa, or further afield in the Uva region, allowing the Portuguese to roam the Kandyan territories at will.<sup>16</sup>

To Senarat, the glimmer of a distant dawn came only from one source, European allies. The rapport with the Dutch, notwithstanding the severe strain it had undergone in 1602, was renewed from 1610 onwards, and a treaty, possibly two, were concluded between the Kandyan ruler and the representatives of the Dutch East India Company,<sup>17</sup> committing the Dutch to assisting the Kandyan king immediately. But the Dutch position in the East was not substantially different from what it had been ten years earlier, and their higher authorities regarded the treaties as inoperative.

When the Dutch authorities failed to honour the treaty concluded with Kandy in 1612, a Dutchman who had taken service with the king of Kandy volunteered to procure aid from other European sources. Eventually, he succeeded in interesting the newly formed Danish East India Company, which dispatched a fleet in 1618. But the Danish Company, whose first voyage out to the East this was, was primarily interested in lading their ships, and were in no position to undertake long military or naval campaigns against any power. Although a treaty was concluded between the Danes and Kandy in August 1620, it produced no tangible gain for either party.

Meanwhile, however, the period during which the Portuguese were severely mauling Kandy was coming to an end. Help came this time, as on previous occasions, from the rebellious elements in the Portuguese-controlled territories of the island itself. Of the three circles within which Kandy's external relations operated, its contacts with elements falling within the first were still, even during Senarats reign, the most reliable and most fruitful. Unlike earlier revolts in the lowlands which had generally been sparked off by Portuguese defeats in Kandy, the explosion this time was self-ignited.

In September 1616, a revolt broke out against the Portuguese in Sabaragamuva. Within three months, it had spread to the Seven Kōralēs, where it was led by a man with the assumed name of Nikapitiyē Bandāra, who turned it into a general uprising engulfing most of the lands under the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> T B H Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, 1594-1612...

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> For the early negotiations with the Dutch see, K W Goonewardena, The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon, (Amsterdam, 1958), pp 1-57.

Portuguese.<sup>18</sup> From these revolts Kandy received an immediate bonus; Portuguese raids on Kandy ceased forthwith. Welcome-as was the respite, Kandyan policy was not to sit back and enjoy it, but rather to fan the flames of revolt in the lowlands so that the Portuguese would never be able to resume the offensive against Kandy. For this, Senarat sent a force of 2000 wellarmed troops to aid Nikapitiyē in the Seven Kōralēs and, the renowned warrior, Kuruvita Rāla, to Sabaragamuva at the head of the Ūva troops.

Kandyan external relations under Senarat moved towards the same limited objective as under his predecessor. There was no attempt to rid the island of the Portuguese. That was, to him, outside the realm of practical politics. He, therefore, resorted to military intervention only as an instrument for securing peace. His policy was to press the Portuguese only up to the point of making them agree to a detente with Kandy. But the overwhelming success that Nikapitiyē had achieved in the early months of the year 1617, making him Senarat's rival, not *protege* or instrument, made the king realize that he had almost overshot his goal. He, therefore, promptly recalled the Kandyan contingents, and in March 1617, sent a preliminary mission to probe the Portuguese reactions. The Portuguese were hard-pressed at the time and were willing to negotiate. The Kandyan-Portuguese treaty of August 1617 was the result of Senarat's initiative.

After several months of hard bargaining, the terms of the treaty were agreed upon. By these, the Portuguese recognized Senarat as king of Kandy "seeing that he is married to the queen Dona Cätherina, legitimate queen of the kingdom of Kandy." Senarat in return recognized the authority of the Portuguese over the "lowland kingdoms." He also had to pay an annual tribute of two elephants, delivered at Malvana, and release the Portuguese prisoners of war and arms he had been holding in Kandy. By two other clauses, he promised not to enter into relations with any powers hostile to the Portuguese, and to extend his help to stamp out rebellion in the Portuguese territories in the island. In a schedule to the treaty, Kandyan boundaries were laid down, as the frontier posts of Pānama, Velavara, Valavē, Kosgama, Ūva, Idalgas-hinna, Bulatgama, Dehigas-hinna, Balana, Nuvara Kalāviya and a few others which are now unidentifiable. Kandyan boundaries on the east coast "reach the port of Kottiyar, and Batticaloa up to Panama," a concluding sentence added, upholding the Kandyan position on the controversial question of the ownership of Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> The rebellions that broke out against Portuguese rule are reviewed in detail in T B H Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, 1594-1612, Chapters 2 & 3; C R de Silva, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, 1617-1638, Chapters 2 & 3.

It will be seen that the Kandyan king had conceded much to secure Portuguese recognition of his right to the Kandyan throne and the territorial integrity of his kingdom. To the Kandyans, the importance of the treaty lay in that, for the first time since 1591, the Portuguese conceded Kandy's claim to be a separate political entity with its own ruling house. The corollary of this position was that Portuguese claims to Kandy, founded on many ingenious arguments, were no longer operative. But the Portuguese refused to accord Kandy full sovereign status, preferring to regard it instead as a tributary power with full internal autonomy, but with severely curtailed rights in external relations.

The crisis created by widespread rebellion had made the Portuguese relax their pressure on Kandy but three years later, the horizon was unusually clear for them and in the north of Sri Lanka, they had scored another success, the annexation of the kingdom of Jaffnapatnam. The Portuguese, therefore, felt that they had overreacted in 1617 to the threat from Nikapitiye Bandara and had allowed themselves to be bought off too cheaply by the Kandyans. Subsequent events gave an edge to this feeling. The visit of the Danish squadron in 1620 and Kandyan reception, cautious but not hostile, and the construction of a fort at Kottiyar Bay by the Danes, made the Portuguese doubt Senarat's sincerity and good faith. The treaty of 1617 had turned sour. The Danish visit also made the Portuguese realize that the clause in the treaty that the ruler of Kandy would be "friend of our (i.e. of the Portuguese) friends and enemy of our enemies" would remain a dead letter unless they had naval bases on the eastern coast. Even earlier in the century when they had sought to seal off Kandy from external contact, they had realized the need for such bases. This was why in the negotiations leading to the treaty of 1617, the Portuguese had laid a claim to Batticaloa. After 1620 the need for fortifications there was more keenly felt, and the Lisbon authorities warned the captain general against ratifying a treaty which did not recognize the Portuguese right to Batticaloa. Notwithstanding the fact that they were at peace with Kandy, and their recognition in 1617 of the eastern seaboard of the island as Kandyan territory, in 1623 the Portuguese built a fort at Trincomalee on the site of the famous Koneswaram temple. In 1628 they seized and fortified Batticaloa. This was undeclared war.<sup>19</sup>

Senarat's policy in the face of these many provocations was initially one of appeasement. Several consideration made this course appear the wiser. Kandy after 1617 had begun recovering from the effects of destructive Portuguese raids, and a further period of recuperation was desirable. Another factor impelled Senarat to pocket this pride and seek to buy time. This was

<sup>19</sup> See, C R de Silva, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon..., for discussion of this.

the internal hemorrhage Kandy suffered on the conclusion of peace with the Portuguese, because a widely supported rebellion against Senarat had racked the lands for some three years. Senarat also wanted his children to be brought up in peace, free from the atmosphere of insecurity that had been characteristic of the years prior to 1617. Lastly, there was no prospect in sight of obtaining external aid, and without such aid, Senarat felt it would be futile to attempt to take up arms against the Portuguese.

By the end of the decade, these considerations no longer held. In the 1620s, Kandy's growing prosperity was noted with concern, sometimes with dismay, by the Portuguese authorities. By 1628, Senarat's children were grown up, the youngest Mahā Astāna being then sixteen. "They are," Senarat is alleged to have said, "now men and know how to sleep leaning on a lance." Though the prospect of external aid was now no brighter, Kandy was happily free from internal turmoil. It therefore felt that it could measure up to the Portuguese.

Another factor tended towards increasing militancy on the part of Kandy. In the 1620s, Senarat began associating his three heirs with him in matters of administration and war. In 1628, this process was completed when the youngest, later to be known as Rājasimha, was acclaimed king of Kandy. His impact on central control and direction of Kandy's external relations seems to have been considerable. He was born in Mahiyangana, probably when the Kandyan court had fled there to escape a Portuguese attack on Kandy. Something of the atmosphere of terror in which he was born and in which his early years were spent left an indelible mark on him. A deep and abiding hatred of the Portuguese became the motive force behind his external relations. To him, as to his great exemplar, Rājasimha of Sītāvaka, to drive the Portuguese out of the island was almost an obsession. With this end in view, he gave a new direction and a new dynamism to Kandyan policy.<sup>20</sup>

From 1628, Kandy began to assume the offensive. It exerted pressure on the Portuguese on all fronts, probing their defenses and looking for a vulnerable point. When the Portuguese began building the Batticaloa fort in 1628, the Kandyans impeded the work. For three years, they kept up pressure, attacking and besieging it repeatedly in a way they had not done during the construction of the fort at Trincomalee five years earlier, or thereafter. On the western front, the Kōtte lands were attacked repeatedly, the outlying provinces of the Four and the Seven Kōralēs being their favourite targets. In the north, Jaffnapatnam was attacked twice, in 1628 and 1629, with considerable forces. But the Kandyans failed to chalk up any significant

20 *ibid*.

achievement, and the Portuguese defenses held. Jaffnapatnam was the most promising, but even there initial success was followed by failure.

The Portuguese counter-strategy was to perform holding operations on the eastern coast and the northern front, and assume the offensive on the western theater. Captain-General Constantino de Sa e Noronha (1618-21 and 1623-30) who had, as far back as 1624, been pressing for permission to complete the conquest of Kandy and had been making preparations for it, began a counter-offensive on this front. In March 1629, Kandyan territories were raided and Balana itself seized. Three months later, Portuguese forces entered and burnt the capital of the kingdom. Early in 1630, a Portuguese force pursued several companies of Kandyan troops into their territories. To cap it all, in July 1630, the captain-general began an invasion of Uva, in retaliation for a Kandyan attack on the Two Korales, throwing into the fray a force of nearly 600 Portuguese and 4500 native lascarins. In mid-August, the expeditionary force reached Badulla, the capital of Uva. Here, the captain-general had reason to suspect the loyalty of the mudaliyārs commanding the lascarin force. Realizing the peril the Portuguese would be in if the lascarins were to desert, he decided to retreat to Colombo. The Kandyans began massing forces, in readiness for attack, with the senior ruler and the three juniors in command. At this point the lascarins deserted to the Kandyans almost en masse. Heartened by this, the Kandyans followed the retreating Portuguese from Badulla as far as Randenivala, not far from Vällaväya, where on 22 August the entire Portuguese army was annihilated or taken prisoner.21

The destruction of the attacking Portuguese was only one of the Kandyan objectives. The second was the seizure of Colombo. That Kandy would now aim at this, and by implication at seizing all Portuguese-held lands on the western seaboard, of which Colombo was the headquarters, was an indication that the basic set of assumptions on which Kandy's external relations under the previous rulers had been based were being totally abandoned. With Rājasimha, the Kandyan kingdom came of age. During the 150 years that had elapsed since its foundation, all it had asked whatever power was ruling the lowlands of the island was the right to exist and to be left alone. It had hit back only when that right was questioned or challenged. When the Portuguese succeeded the Sinhalese kings of Kōtte and Sītāvaka as the rulers of the lowlands, it regarded the change purely as an internal matter for the lowlands, requiring no adjustment in its own policies. Rājasimha rejected this view. To him, it was a self-evident truth that the Sinhalese people had to be ruled by a Sinhalese king. In his own words "the black

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*.

people of this island.... wheresoever they might be (are) my vassals by right." The Portuguese, therefore, had no right to the allegiance of the Sinhalese people. He had found a perfect counterpoise to the Portuguese claims to sovereignty over the island.

From Rājasimha's view, it followed that Colombo, and with it all Portuguese territories, had to come under his authority. His Kandyan subjects agreed, and so did some of the Sinhalese of the low country. Before de Sa set out in July 1630, some of the latter had planned to seize the city and hand it over to the Kandyans. Soon after the news of the Portuguese debacle at Randenivala was received, an attempt was made to execute the plan but the plot failed. By the time the Kandyan forces arrived before the city, it was prepared to defend itself. Though most other Portuguese forts were occupied with the neighbouring territories, Colombo itself did not fall. The Kandyans, even after a siege lasting a year, failed to take it.<sup>22</sup> From the beginning of 1632, the Portuguese began rolling back the besieging Kandyans.

The years 1632-3 were a period of stalemate in Kandy's relations with the Portuguese. On the one hand, defenses of Colombo had proved invulnerable. Kandyan attacks on Galle and Negombo had also been repulsed and the psychological momentum created by early successes was thereby lost. On the other hand, there was dissension in the Kandyan camp; disagreement among the three princes was simmering about this time, and on top of that a rebel leader who had deserted to the Kandyans at Badulla returned to the Portuguese fold about the same time. But the Portuguese were in no position to capitalize on Kandy's difficulties and assume a new offensive. This set the stage for negotiations and a new treaty of peace.

The treaty of 1633-4 was a revised version of that concluded in 1617. Its first clause took note of the political changes in Kandy since the earlier treaty: by it, the Portuguese recognized that "the kingdom of Kandy is divided among three kings, sons of the queen Dōna Cätherinā, legitimate heiress of these kingdoms of Kandy" and also that "as the kingdom of Kandy is the principal among these kingdoms, (the others being Mātalē and Ūva) the Mahā Astāna is the chief." In regard to the Portuguese prisoners-of-war and arms held in custody in Kandy, the boundaries of the Kandyan kingdom and restrictions on its foreign relations, the treaty of 1633-34 repeated with only verbal changes the provisions of the 1617 treaty. But on two issues, the ownership of Batticaloa and the question of Kandyan tribute, the negotiating parties could not agree to a mutually acceptable formula. The Kandyan ruler thereupon appealed to Goa, sending two of his ambassadors there. But Goa was no less obstinate on the points in dispute and the ambassadors were

22 ibid.

forced eventually to agree to the Portuguese terms. The treaty signed at Goa on 3 April 1633, therefore, embodied these terms. The Kandyans conceded to the Portuguese the site on which the Batticaloa fort stood, and the surrounding territory to a distance of two hundred geometrical paces from the fort-walls, reserving to the king of Kandy the right to trade in the port and to one-half of the customs duties collected there. Kandy also promised to pay a yearly tribute of an elephant for the first six years, and double that thereafter.<sup>23</sup>

The Kandyans had hoped, after Randenivala, to seize Colombo. When they failed, they had hoped to have the treaty of 1617 substantially revised, and to recover Batticaloa. But the treaty of 1633 disappointed these hopes. Rājasimha, therefore, at first refused to confirm the treaty entered into by his ambassadors. Only when it appeared that such refusal would lead to resumption of hostilities did he agree to ratifying the treaty, which he did at Attapitiya in January 1634.

If it was the Portuguese who felt cheated during the aftermath of the treaty of 1617, in 1633-4, it was the Kandyans who felt that they had won the battle only to be balked during the treaty negotiations. This must have been particularly galling to Rājasimha whose first essay in diplomacy this was. Already about 1630, he had made contact with the Dutch, with the idea of getting their assistance against the Portuguese. Disappointment with the treaty made him pursue this line with added vigour. Close reliance on elements falling within the first of the three circles within which Kandyan external relations ranged, Rājasimha probably realized, had its limitations, no less than uses. These elements had probably saved Kandy in 1594, 1603, 1617 and 1630. But Kandy was no longer interested in saving only itself. It wanted also to save the Sinhalese under Portuguese rule. For this foreign help was essential. Kandy's three circles were not competitive, but complementary, and each had a role.

Unlike in the first decade of the 17th century, the Dutch were now willing to respond positively to Kandyan advances.<sup>24</sup> By 1630 they were firmly established in the East Indies, and in the next two decades were to turn their attention to Portuguese strongholds to the west of Java. The annual blockade of Goa from 1636 onwards, and the siege of Malacca, ending in its capture in 1641, indicated where their new sphere of interest lay. Rājasimha's overtures, therefore, coincided with the Dutch western drive.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>24</sup> See K W Goonewardena, The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon, pp 12-57 for discussion of this.

That Kandy was in contact with the Dutch was generally known among the Portuguese, though the lack of precise information made them overestimate the pace at which tentative contacts were maturing into agreement and alliance. Three Portuguese prisoners of war in Kandy, for instance, reported in July 1631 that Kandy had already concluded an alliance with the Dutch, information we know to be demonstrably untrue. Rumour of such an alliance was freely circulating again in 1637; it came to the ears of the president of the Danish factory at Masulipattanam in September that year.

The specter of a Kandyan-Dutch alliance produced a panic reaction among the Portuguese authorities in Colombo. During the first three decades of the seventeenth century, Kandy, with hardly any external support other than that from the low country Sinhalese, had managed to hold its own, though it had not been strong enough to undertake a war to dislodge the Portuguese. An alliance between Kandy and the Dutch would load the dice heavily against the Portuguese. The Portuguese authorities in Colombo, therefore, argued that Kandy must be subjugated before any Dutch aid arrived. One who advocated this course of action was the captain-general, Diego de Mello de Castro (1633-5 and 1636-8). Before the ink was dry on the treaty of 1633-4, he was voicing the opinion that the treaty would not inaugurate a durable peace. About the same time he wrote to Goa suggesting that the time was opportune for the final solution to the Kandyan problem, since the old king was ailing, the new one yet raw and inexperienced and there was dissension among the three princes, one of them being even likely to desert to the Portuguese.<sup>25</sup> Adding a few deft touches to make the picture appear somber to the Goa authorities, he reported that not only had Rājasimha concluded an alliance with the Dutch, but had also negotiated with the nāyak of Tanjore for additional aid and was stockpiling food for an invasion of Portuguese territory. Brushing aside the advice of those who advocated a wait-and-see policy, in March 1638, he sought the permission of the Goa authorities for a preventative strike on Kandy. Before a reply was received, however, he launched the attack the same month.

There is little doubt that Rājasimha would eventually have attacked the Portuguese possessions. But Diego de Mello probably overreacted to the danger and certainly overestimated the speed with which seventeenth century Kandyan armies could be mobilized for attack. That the king was not ready for war is clear from one point; on learning of Portuguese preparations for war, he sent emissaries on at least two occasions reminding the captaingeneral about the sworn peace and the desirability of maintaining it.

<sup>25</sup> See C R de Silva, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon.

When de Mello led his forces in Rājasimha's lands in March 1638, the Kandyans as usual allowed them to penetrate into the interior, without engaging them. The invaders took the capital and burnt it. At this stage, the Indian mercenaries in the service of the Portuguese deserted to the Kandyans, and the captain-general, as in 1594 and 1630, decided to retreat to Colombo. But on 28 March, at Gannoruva on the banks of the Mahavāli gaňga the Kandyans attacked in strength, the entire Portuguese army being again destroyed or captured, as in 1594 and 1630. The kingdom of Kandy had yet again demonstrated, in ordeal by battle, its fitness to survive as an independent power.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*.

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# PART 2

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# **CHAPTER VII**

## EXPULSION OF THE PORTUGUESE FROM SRI LANKA

## C R de Silva

The foundations of Portuguese power in Sri Lanka rested on their command of the sea and their superior military technology. Sinhalese and Tamil armies did on occasion succeed in defeating Portuguese forces but the Portuguese always averted final defeat by retreating to coastal forts where they were relieved by reinforcements and supplies from their strongholds in India.

What ended the pattern was a Dutch attack on Portuguese possessions in Sri Lanka. The primary aim of the Dutch in the first few decades of the seventeenth century was to secure a monopoly of the spice trade in the East Indies and a key to this achievement was the capture of Portuguese Malacca. Malacca, however, was periodically strengthened by assistance from the Portuguese in India. Therefore, when the Dutch governor general in Batavia decided to make a final effort to capture Malacca, his plan involved regular blockades of the port of Goa and attacks on Portuguese possessions in Sri Lanka and South India to divert Portuguese attention. This Dutch interest in Sri Lanka coincided with the emergence of a more resolute leadership in Kandy.<sup>1</sup> Senarat was succeeded by his son, Rājasimha II (1635-87). It is

See K W Goonewardena, The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1638-1658, Amsterdam, 1958, pp 12-4 and G D Winius, The Fatal History of Portuguese Ceylon: Transition to Dutch Rule, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1971, pp 33-5. In his recent work, J H O Paulusz draws a picture of a cunning, deceitful Rājasimha whose conduct was ultimately disastrous to Kandy (See the Introduction, Robert Knox, An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon, revised, enlarged & brought to the verge of publication as the second edition by Robert Knox edited by J H O Paulusz, 2 Vols, pp 25-245 of Vol. 1. This interpretation has not been accepted in the present chapter. For a refutation of Paulusz see K W Goonewardena, "Robert Knox: The Interleaved Edition," JSLBRAS, XXXVII, 1992-3, pp 117-34.

possible that, at the outset, the new king did not wish to provoke a conflict with the Portuguese. After all, he had been the signatory to the peace treaty of 1634 with the Portuguese on behalf of Kandy.<sup>2</sup> However, experience swiftly convinced Rājasimha that co-existence with the Portuguese was not a feasible option. In 1634 itself, the Portuguese captain of Batticaloa had provided refuge to a group of rebels who had opposed Rājasimha's take-over of the principality of Ūva on the death of his brother Kumārasimha.<sup>3</sup> These rebels were alleged to have killed a Kandyan *disāva* and to have plundered goods which were being transported to the royal treasury.<sup>4</sup> The Portuguese had also opened secret correspondence with Rājasimha's half-brother Vijayapāla, in order to incite him against the king.<sup>5</sup> In these circumstances, Rājasimha's appeal to the Dutch for assistance in September 1636 was perhaps as much a defensive measure as an attempt to expel the Portuguese.

The immediate result of the negotiations was a renewal of the war with the Portuguese. João Ribeiro suggests that the conflict was caused by personal hostility between Diogo de Mello de Castro, the Portuguese captain general and King Rājasimha was responsible for the conflict. According to him, the captain general had confiscated an elephant granted by Rājasimha to a Portuguese on the ground that tribute was in arrears. The king is said to have retaliated by confiscating two horses sent by the captain general to be traded for elephants.<sup>6</sup> Portuguese historian, Fernão de Queyroz reports that the confiscation of some jewellery sent by the captain general for sale to Kandy was the immediate cause of the war.<sup>7</sup> While relations between the captain general and the king might well have been at a low ebb, it seems likely that the conflict itself was facilitated, if not precipitated, by distrust of

<sup>4</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638, p 148.

<sup>5</sup> P E Pieris, Prince Vijayapāla of Matalē, (Colombo, 1927), pp 29-33; Knox, The Interleaved Edition, 1989, Vol.1, pp 37-9.

<sup>6</sup> Joao Ribeiro, History of Ceilao with a summary of de Barros, do Couto, Antonio Bocarro and the Documentos Remettidos with Parangi Hatana and Kustantinu Hatana, trans. P E Pieris, second edition, (Colombo, 1909), p 150.

de Queyroz, p 801.

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 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638, (Colombo, H W Cave, 1972), pp 141 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Cv, Chapter 96, verse 4, alleges that Kumārasimha was poisoned, Vol. II, p 234.

each other's intentions and fears of both Kandy and the Portuguese for the survival of their power in Sri Lanka.

De Mello de Castro had always advocated a renewed attempt to conquer Kandy. He had advocated this policy just three and a half months after signing the treaty of 1634 but had had no support from his superiors either at Goa or in Lisbon. By March 1637, however, the Viceroy at Goa had swung round to supporting de Mello's position. In 1637 there was another reversal of policy which gave greater resources to de Mello. In March of that year, the Council of State at Goa ratified the Portuguese king's instructions that the revenues from Sri Lanka's cinnamon should be used to strengthen its defence. Therefore, when de Mello heard of the arrival of Dutch envoys in Kandy he decided to make an attempt to conquer Kandy before Dutch assistance arrived.<sup>8</sup> However, he waited until he received reinforcements from Goa in early 1638. Brushing aside the apprehensions of a group of Portuguese settlers in Colombo, who favoured a more defensive posture, and the pleas for peace from Rājasimha, the captain general invaded Kandy in March 1638.

De Mello's invading force was quite small with some seven hundred Portuguese, five thousand local militiamen, three hundred African and two hundred Indian auxiliaries and a regiment of persons of mixed Portuguese-Sri Lankan descent. Any real chance of victory depended on the defection of Vijavapāla and his troops from the Kandyan ranks and de Mello must have had hopes of that. The invading force found the capital abandoned and set it on fire but Vijayapāla remained loyal to Rājasimha. Forced to retreat, the Portuguese were surrounded and annihilated in a decisive battle at Gannoruva on 27 and 28 March 1638. Militarily, Gannoruva was one of the greatest defeats suffered by the Portuguese in Sri Lanka. Of the seven hundred Portuguese who went into battle only thirty three survived, all as prisoners. Some forty per cent of their auxiliary troops were also killed and the rest scattered. For the first time since the days of Rājasimha of Sītāvaka, a Portuguese army had been defeated in battle before the wholesale desertion of the Sinhalese militiamen. The Portuguese were weakened at a time when they needed their strength most.9

<sup>9</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, 1617-1638, pp 154-5, J H O Paulusz in Knox, Interleaved Edition, Vol.1, pp 57-9 emphasizes the role of Vijayapāla in the victory.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> C R de Silva, *The Portuguese in Ceylon, 1617-1638*, pp 142, 144, 150-1; K W Goonewardena, *The Foundation of Dutch Power*, pp 14-6. The Dutch envoys arrived off Batticaloa on 27 October, landed at Kalmunai and negotiated with Rājasimha after which they sailed away with Kandyan envoys on board. The envoys met the Dutch commander Westerwold on 23 December. De Mello heard of the arrival of the Dutch on 18 November.

On 10 May of the same year, the Dutch arrived in force before Batticaloa and coordinating the attack with the Kandyan forces, forced the Portuguese to surrender on 18 May. Soon after, on 23 May, Rājasimha signed a treaty of alliance with the Dutch. By this treaty, he promised the Dutch a monopoly of cinnamon, pepper, wax and ivory. In the case of elephants, the king of Kandy promised to sell at least 50% of the total number of exported to the Dutch. The Dutch, in turn, accepted Rājasimha as the ruler of all Sri Lanka and promised to help him conquer the maritime districts of Sri Lanka from the Portuguese in return for payment of expenses. All forts captured from the Portuguese were to be garrisoned by the Dutch, if the King 'thought it fit' and expenses of these garrisons too were to be paid by Kandy.<sup>10</sup>

However, cooperation between the two allies did not prove to be smooth. Dutch experience in the Spice Islands had convinced them that control of the area of production alone would ensure a regular supply of produce at prices they could control. Therefore, as historian K W Goonewardena has pointed out, they began to devise a scheme which would enable them to keep control of the coastal area while preserving the commercial privileges gained in the treaty of 1638. The first step in the scheme was to make a Dutch translation of the Treaty in which the clause 'if His Majesty thought it fit' was omitted, thus enabling them to claim the right to garrison all forts seized from the Portuguese and to make the King of Kandy pay the expenses of occupation. While Batticaloa had been garrisoned by the Dutch through mutual agreement, this ruse was used to retain control of Trincomalee after its capture from the Portuguese on 1 May 1639 and to justify Dutch refusal to hand over Negombo fort after its capture by a combined Kandyan-Dutch force on 9 February, 1640.<sup>11</sup>

Rājasimha protested strongly and was partly mollified when the Dutch agreed to hand over the fort of Trincomalee when he delivered ten elephants to be set off against Dutch expenses incurred in capturing the fort. There were other reasons for Rājasimha's forbearance. Portuguese preoccupation with the possibility of Dutch attacks on the western coast of Sri Lanka had enabled him to retain control of parts of the Four Kōralēs and

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> K W Goonewardena, The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1638-1658, pp 18-9;
 G D Winius, The Fatal History of Portuguese Ceylon, pp 38-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> K W Goonewardena, *The Foundation of Dutch Power*, pp 18-9, 25-36. Winius, while confessing inability to explain the omission of the crucial clause referred to above suggests that the Dutch East India Company would not have had the intent of taking over the administration of land. (G D Winius, *The Fatal History of Portuguese Ceylon*), pp 41-3. His arguments are not convincing.

Sabaragamuva, two of the four *disāvas* which made up Portuguese territory in southwest Sri Lanka. Kandyan forces had also seized portions of the Seven Kōralēs and Mātara. Thus, after 1638, Rājasimha gained an extensive area on Kandy's western frontier. Therefore, despite his distrust of the Dutch he had reason to continue to cooperate militarily with them.

Although the Portuguese fort of Galle fell to a Dutch attack in March 1640, relations between Kandy and the Dutch were not always smooth. In August, a Dutch envoy who had behaved boorishly in the Kandyan court was killed on his way back to the coast. Soon after, however, the rebellion of his brother, Vijayapāla, gave Rājasimha another reason to continue to work with the Dutch. By late 1640, Vijayapāla had left Kandy and established himself as the ruler of the southeastern principality of Uva. Rajasimha knew that Vijayapāla had had friendly correspondence with the Portuguese and, indeed, in December 1640, the Portuguese threatened to place Vijayapala on the throne of Kandy. In the first half of 1641, Vijayapāla's forces took the offensive and seized the eastern seaboard up to Trincomalee in the north. Vijayapāla was finally defeated in August of that year but his subsequent defection to the Portuguese in October 1641 might have convinced Rājasimha that he would be safer on the throne if the Portuguese were expelled from Sri Lanka.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Vijayapāla's defection might explain, in some measure, why Rājasimha did not accept repeated Portuguese offers of alliance despite mounting evidence that the Dutch were exaggerating their expenses and using alleged delays in payment as excuses for holding on to the forts of Negombo and Galle and the cinnamon-rich lands around them.

However, the struggle was not yet over. The Portuguese, under a new captain general, Dom Felipe Mascarenhas recaptured Negombo in November 1640 and confined the Dutch to the environs of Galle. Meanwhile, in Europe, Portugal declared it's independence from the Spanish ruler and the new Portuguese regime signed a truce with the Dutch in June 1641. News of the agreement reached the Dutch in Batavia in October 1642 but Antonio van Dieman, the Dutch Governor General in the East, hopeful of gaining further territory from the weakened enemy, effectively prevented the implementation of the truce in the East for a few years. He did this by appealing to a clause in the agreement which stipulated that the side which held a city on the day of the implementation of the truce should also have the land administered by it. The Dutch envoy sent to negotiate with the Portuguese was instructed to claim the entire Mātara and Sabaragamuva *Disāvas* for the Dutch on the strength of their possession of the fort of Galle. The Portuguese refused on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> K W Goonewardena, The Foundation of Dutch Power, pp 36-63; Knox, Interleaved Edition, 1989, Vol.I, pp 67-9.

the grounds that neither of these areas had actually been administered from Galle and the war continued.<sup>13</sup>

For a while, the Portuguese held their own. They continued to hem the Dutch forces to the area around Galle and when a force of 300 Dutch soldiers ventured out in May 1643 they were ambushed and decisively defeated at Akurässa. However, in January 1644, a large Dutch expedition seized the fort of Negombo and all Portuguese efforts to recapture it failed. Thus it was that when the truce was eventually implemented on 10 January 1645, according to the agreements signed at Goa and at Colombo, the Dutch were conceded the Alutkūru kōralē north of Colombo and coastal lands south of the Bentara gaňga consisting largely of the Gālu, Väligam, Moravak and Dolosdās kōralēs. Puttalam and Kalpițiya were acknowledged to be Portuguese possessions. Portuguese power in southwest Sri Lanka was henceforth confined to the coastal area between the Alutkūru kōralē and the Bentara gaňga although, in the Kälani valley area their control extended inland up to Batugedera in the south and Mänikkadavara and Alavva in the north.<sup>14</sup>

By 1644, relations between the Dutch and Rajasimha were deteriorating rapidly because of Dutch attempts to gain control of the areas around Galle and to organize the peeling of cinnamon in defiance of Rājasimha's wishes. When the king of Kandy learnt of the agreements which the Dutch had made with the Portuguese, he protested that the Portuguese had been conceded some lands which were in fact under Kandyan control and that the name of the ruler of Kandy should be substituted for that of the Dutch Company as the legitimate sovereign of the lands allotted to the Dutch. To put pressure on the Dutch, Rājasimha ordered the cinnamon peelers to leave Dutch controlled territory. The Dutch, now intent on retaining the lands they had secured and fearing a Kandyan attack, made an alliance with the Portuguese against the king of Kandy on 9 March 1645 and in May, the Dutch declared war on Rājasimha. The war was a disaster for the Dutch. The Portuguese, happy to see their former enemies fall out, refused any assistance of the Dutch. In May 1646, Dutch forces were forced to retire to Negombo fort with some 100 soldiers killed in several engagements and 340 more left as prisoners in the hands of Rajasimha.

At this juncture, the Portuguese sought to win the Kandyan king over to their side but all Portuguese efforts to win Rājasimha's support foundered

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> G D Winius, The Fatal History of Portuguese Ceylon, pp 49-72; K W Goonewardena, The Foundation of Dutch Power, pp 66-75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> G D Winius, The Fatal History of Portuguese Ceylon, pp 75-83; K W Goonewardena, The Foundation of Dutch Power, pp 81-95.

on their refusal to hand over his brother, Vijayapāla to him. Sporadic clashes with Kandyan forces in the late 1640s led to the seizure of some inland areas hitherto controlled by the Portuguese to Kandy. Meanwhile, the Dutch with a number of conciliatory letters and presents, restored peaceful relations with Rājasimha.<sup>15</sup>

The truce between the Portuguese and the Dutch ended in 1652. Kandy fought in alliance with the Dutch in these final campaigns. The Portuguese proved to be inadequately prepared for the resumption of war. Their resources had been diverted to the struggle against the Dutch in Brazil. Within a month, in October 1652, the Dutch seized the forts of Kalutara and Aňguruvātota and had gained control of the Pasdun and Vallallaviti kōralēs. Portuguese losses were temporarily halted when a mutiny resulted in the imprisonment of the Portuguese captain general and the ascendence of Gaspar Figueira de Serpe as Portuguese commander. Figueira de Serpe was half-Sinhalese and a resourceful military general. He used the forces he had with daring to push the Dutch back across the Bentara gañga and to repel Kandyan attacks. In the period up to 1655, however, Kandyan forces strengthened their grip on most of Sabaragamuva.

The end of Portuguese rule in the southwest of Sri Lanka came in 1655-56. General Hulft arrived in September 1655 with 14 ships, over 1200 soldiers and siege equipment. Landing at Maggona, the Dutch recaptured Kalutara and then decisively defeated Figueira de Serpe's forces to advance to Colombo. Colombo fell after a bitterly contested siege on 12 May 1656. Less than a hundred of the Portuguese defenders survived. The Dutch, who had promised Rājasimha that they would hand over Colombo to him, promptly occupied the fort, excluded the Kandyan forces and thus lost Rājasimha's support.<sup>16</sup>

By this time, however, Portuguese power in Sri Lanka was confined to Jaffna and Mannar. In February 1658, a Dutch fleet commanded by Rycloff van Goens appeared before Mannar and captured it swiftly. The Dutch then proceeded to Jaffna and invested the Portuguese fort there. After a three and a half month siege, the Portuguese garrison was forced to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> G D Winius, The Fatal History of Portuguese Ceylon, pp 107-19; K W Goonewardena, The Foundation of Dutch Power, pp 96-132.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> In Knox, *The Interleaved Edition*, Vol.I, pp 231-41, J H O Paulusz tries to defend the Dutch action in retaining Colombo.

surrender on 23 June 1658 and Portuguese power in Sri Lanka came to an end.<sup>17</sup>

The victory of Dutch arms in Sri Lanka was but a reflection of their general success vis-a-vis the Portuguese in Asia. Indeed, Portuguese power in Asia had been on the wane in the face of Dutch and English competition since the early years of the seventeenth century and the expansion of Portuguese power in Sri Lanka in those years was a movement against this trend. The Dutch, who had a vast mercantile fleet in Europe, proved to be superior to the Portuguese in resources of shipping and armament. The Portuguese, with their forces thinly spread in Brazil, Angola, Mozambique and various parts of Asia, were expelled by superior Dutch forces from most of their Asian strongholds and in their turn the Portuguese preferred to concentrate on the defence of Brazil and Angola at the expense of their Eastern Empire. Thus, it was that no counterattack was mounted against the Dutch in Sri Lanka. On the contrary, the Dutch using Sri Lanka as a base eliminated Portuguese power on the Malabar Coast by 1663.

Portuguese rule over the plains lasted only for some six decades and their control over Jaffna was restricted to less than forty years. Even during these short periods their control over these areas was sometimes successfully threatened by rebels or hostile armies. Nevertheless, the Portuguese left a significant impact on Sri Lanka and this can perhaps be explained partly by the fact that though their actual period of rule was brief, they did maintain a substantial presence in the island for about a century.

In the field of administration the change from an indigenous to a colonial system of administration was characterized a number of changes. In the first place, with the establishment of Portuguese power, the local ruler was replaced, in theory by the ruler of Portugal. In actual fact, the functions of the ruler were taken over by a layer of foreign officials - captain general (in Kōtte and the captain major in Jaffna), controllers of revenue and judicial officers - who together exercised the multifold functions that had been the province of king and council of old. This attempt to divide authority at the colonial centre was fostered by the introduction of new concepts relating to administrative organization such as the partial separation of civil administration from revenue collection. Secondly, while the indigenous systems of administration were retained at the lower levels, in course of time, some of the positions in the higher reaches of the indigenous administration

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> G D Winius, The Fatal History of Portuguese Ceylon, pp 121-66; K W Goonewardena, The Foundation of Dutch Power, pp 141-81; Tikiri Abeyasinghe, Jaffna under the Portuguese, pp 13-4.

were taken over by the Portuguese. Colonial rule also introduced a greater element of uniformity in administrative organization. Finally, the changed objectives of the new regime and the sketchy understanding of the nuances of local customs by the new rulers led to distortions of the old system even where the colonial power wished to preserve the local system. An essential part of this was the implicit or explicit implementation of policies which led to differential treatment between the colonial subjects and the conquering Portuguese who lived in Sri Lanka. All of these developments were also seen, in some measure, in succeeding colonial administrations in Sri Lanka.

The most important Portuguese official in Sri Lanka was the captain general. In theory, his appointment and dismissal was a prerogative of the ruler of Portugal. In practice, however, the slow communications between Sri Lanka and Lisbon often allowed and sometimes forced the Portuguese viceroy at Goa to make appointments subject to ratification by the Portuguese sovereign. Once appointed, the captain general was subordinate to the viceroy, and had to obey the viceroy's orders. As the officer on the spot, the captain general generally had great influence on decision making relating to Sri Lanka and had the right of direct communication with the ruler in Lisbon, but much depended on the personality and family connections of the particular captain general. The viceroy had the right to remove a captain general but in two out of three such instances, the authorities in Lisbon intervened to reinstate the captain general.<sup>18</sup>

The captain general had wide powers including the right to declare war and to make peace. He was the head of the civil administration. The missionary clergy looked to the captain general for support and patronage. Although revenue matters were considered outside his purview, the captain general had the right to requisition extraordinary expenses for the conquest of Sri Lanka. The captain general also had extensive judicial powers including the right to pass sentence of death on local inhabitants although in the case of crimes committed by Portuguese captains or nobles, all he could do was to arrest them and send them to Goa for justice. Finally, this powerful official could confiscate the property of all who plotted against the Portuguese and was himself exempt from arrest by judicial officers in Sri Lanka.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, the power of the captain general was restricted by a number of factors. In the context of the small number of Portuguese in the

<sup>19</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, 1618-1638, pp 159-60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> The officials reinstated were Constantino de Sa de Noronha, dismissed in 1621 and Diogo de Mello de Castro removed in 1635. The removal of Francisco de Menezes Roxo in 1614 was upheld.

country, at least at the end of the sixteenth and in the early years of the seventeenth century, the captain general had to rule through a number of local chiefs who needed to be kept in good humour. The captains of the forts in Sri Lanka were nominated from Portugal. The vedor da fazenda, who controlled the revenue collecting apparatus, was not a subordinate of the captain general. After the early years of the seventeenth century, at least in theory, the right to grant land was vested in a board in which the captain general was one of three members. The captain general's civil jurisdiction was legally restricted to petty cases. Thus, in many ways, the powers envisaged for the captain general by the Portuguese authorities in Lisbon fell far short of the powers of the ruler of Kōtte.

In practice, however, captains general found ways around some of these restrictions. For instance, Don Jeronimo de Azevedo and his successors were able to expand their civil jurisdiction by reviving the Kōṭṭe royal court or the *mahanaduva*. The captains general tried to depict themselves as successors of the local rulers and became known by the title of 'king of Malvāna.' "Exigencies of war" also provided an excellent excuse to dispense with legal restrictions on their powers.<sup>20</sup>

The history of the office of the main military commander in the north of Sri Lanka is a more complicated one. Until the conquest of Jaffna in 1619, the chief Portuguese officer in the north of the island was the captain of Mannar who also had jurisdiction over the Fishery Coast. After the conquest, the old kingdom of Jaffna was placed under a captain major whose jurisdiction did not extend over Mannar and the pearl fishery. From 1619 to the 1640s, the captain major of Jaffna was subordinate to the captain general of Sri Lanka (Ceilao). In the 1620s, with the construction of the Portuguese forts in Batticaloa and Trincomalee, these two forts were placed under the captain major of Jaffna. In the last years of Portuguese power in Sri Lanka, however, an important change occurred. With the loss of the forts on the eastern coast and of Negombo to the Dutch, the Portuguese, foreseeing a threat to their position in South India, created a new captain generalship of Jaffna which now included the old kingdom of Jaffna, the fishery coast and the Portuguese possessions on the western coast of Sri Lanka up to Kalpitiya. This administrative arrangement lasted till the end of Portuguese rule in northern Sri Lanka in 1658.

3

The captain major of Jaffna, like the captain general of Sri Lanka tried to use traditions connected with indigenous royalty to enhance his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Unless otherwise specified the material in the sections below are from C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, 1618-1638, Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, 1594-1612 and Abeyasinghe, Jaffna under the Portuguese.

position. When he travelled in Jaffna, the beating of drums announced his approach and like the kings of Jaffna, the captain major had a military escort and two shield bearers.

The most important restriction on the power of the captain general and the captain major of Jaffna was the presence of the superintendent of revenue or *vedor da fazenda*. The first superintendent of revenue was appointed in 1597 but the powers of the *vedor da fazenda* were clarified and enhanced by the standing orders issued to Antao Vaz Freire in 1608. The *vedor da fazenda* was expected to maximize the royal revenues and to submit plans to achieve this objective to the king of Portugal and the viceroy of India. He could appoint and dismiss all minor revenue officials and impose fines of up to five hundred *cruzados*. The making of a *tombo* or register of lands and services was another of his functions. The *vedor da fazenda* also controlled all normal expenditures and was one of the three person board in charge of making land grants. He was entrusted with the fortification of the important ports of Kōṭṭe. After 1619, the *vedor da fazenda* had to supervise revenue collection in Jaffna and was also ordered to complete a *tombo* of Jaffna.<sup>21</sup>

The overlapping jurisdictions of the captain general and the superintendent of revenue led to frequent clashes between the two officials. Don Jeronimo de Azevedo clashed with Antao Vaz Freire and Constantino de Sa de Noronha had bitter disputes with Ambrosio Freitas da Camara. Diogo de Mello de Castro claimed that the appointment of a captain general and a superintendent of revenue in one area was like having two heads on one body. However, although the functions of the superintendent of revenue were vested in the hands of the captain general for short periods, the authorities in Lisbon and Goa preferred to maintain the traditional Portuguese system of an independent authority collecting revenue.<sup>22</sup> Factors at Colombo, Galle and Jaffna were Portuguese officials who helped the superintendent in revenue collection. The factor of Colombo was also the chief police officer (alcaide mor), superintendent of works (vedor das obras) and chief customs officer (juiz de alfandega) in the port. The collection of revenue in the southwest was through an official known as korale vidane. The korale vidane was assisted in the performance of duties by a number of others called atukorales, mohottālas and kanakapullēs. In Jaffna, the Portuguese replaced the

<sup>21</sup> However, the captains general of Jaffna, appointed in the 1650s also had the powers normally granted to superintendents of revenue.

On clashes between Felipe de Oliveira, captain major of Jaffna and Ambrosio Freitas da Camara, see Abeyasinghe, Jaffna under the Portuguese, pp 45-7. Some vedors like Lancarote de Seixas, vedor 1618-22 and 1630-31, did work well with the captains general.

indigenous *adigārs* with Portuguese collectors and this might partly explain their relative success in enhancing state revenue in Jaffna in comparison to the declining state income in Kōtte.

This discussion on the top layer of Portuguese officials can be concluded with a consideration of the judicial officers. The judicial arm was the weakest in the Portuguese administration. The Portuguese had one judge (or *ouvidor*) in Colombo, one in Mannar and one in Jaffna. By 1638, there was also a Portuguese magistrate (*juiz*) in Galle. Their main functions were to try petty cases and to make preliminary investigations on major cases which were referred to the High Court at Goa. The captain general and the superintendent of revenue also had some limited judicial powers. Most civil disputes between indigenous inhabitants however seem to have been settled by the indigenous court system.

The introduction of a layer of foreign officials at the top of the administration marked not only the changed purpose of the new colonial regime (which was the exploitation of the resources of the country for transfer to the metropolis), but also the introduction of a greater functional separation in administration. Revenue collection and civil administration were distinguished from each other. A new judicial arm was created. On the other hand, these changes were only partial because the shortage of personnel forced the Portuguese to retain much of the local administrative systems.

The establishment of a colonial administration also led to the introduction of a few new institutions. A new military force of occupation was one of them. Portuguese power depended largely on a standing army of Portuguese soldiers. The Portuguese regular forces in the seventeenth century fluctuated between 600 and 800 men organized into companies of thirty to thirty eight soldiers under captains, ensigns and sergeants. The main force of three to four hundred soldiers was usually stationed at Mänikkadavara under the Captain Major of the Field. A hundred to two hundred soldiers were stationed in Jaffna fort and the rest scattered in various other forts such as Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Kayts, Negombo, Kalutara, Galle, and in some inland stockades. While the Portuguese army in battle did include up to a hundred married Portuguese settlers (casados), a few hundred Indian and African levies and a large force of up to five thousand indigenous soldiers, the regular Portuguese soldiers, organized as an army of occupation, formed the basis of their military dominance in Sri Lanka. The naval arm of the Portuguese military in Sri Lanka is less well known but it secured Portuguese supply routes. In the late sixteenth century there were eight to ten small Portuguese ships guarding the pearl fishery. In the seventeenth century this number fell to as low as three vessels but the Portuguese could always requisition the trading ships of the Portuguese casados based in Jaffna and in the south west.

Portuguese rule also introduced the concept of a municipal council with elected officials. The municipal council of Colombo was active as early as 1580 although its charter was not confirmed by the ruler of Portugal until 1641. However, Colombo seems to have been the only city in Sri Lanka to claim this status and the Portuguese male settlers in the city were probably the only persons to have a voice in the election of the aldermen who worked with the appointed magistrates and the procurator to govern the city. Not surprisingly, the city council proved to be vociferous in the defence of settler interests. The exclusive interest in the welfare of the Portuguese was also displayed in the restriction of the hospital facilities in Colombo to Portuguese soldiers.

The Portuguese compilation of a *tombo*, or land register was in a sense, not a totally novel development for Sri Lanka because the Kötte kings, for instance, had records of landholdings and of revenues due to the Crown. However, the Portuguese effort to inscribe land and revenue records in as much detail as possible was an essential part of colonial control and in its turn these detailed records introduced a rigidity which had not characterized an earlier age. Jorge Frolim de Almeida made a register of the revenues of Kötte as early as 1599. Antao Vaz Freire, his successor as *vedor da fazenda*, completed the land register of Kötte in 1615. In the years which followed three supplements were added to the Kötte land register. The *tombo* of Jaffna was eventually completed only in 1645 but in the period before that Portuguese officials made successively higher recalculations of the revenues due to the state. *Tombo* making and revenue collection thus became stages where dominance and resistance were continuously reenacted.<sup>23</sup>

The indigenous territorial and departmental systems discussed in Chapter 1 were largely continued under Portuguese rule. There was a territorial as well as a departmental administrative structure. However, there were changes. In the first place, there was a trend towards appointing Portuguese officials to posts in the indigenous system from the end of the sixteenth century. The last native of Sri Lanka to hold the post of *disāva* or *disāpati* under the Portuguese was Don Constantino Baretto who was *disāva* of Mātara in the early 1620s. After that all *disāvas* were Portuguese. In the south west, the *vidānēs* in charge of the major departments such as the cinnamon department were also Portuguese. In Jaffna, Portuguese revenue collectors replaced the local *adigārs*.

The establishment of colonial power also led to the imposition of greater uniformity within the indigenous system. For instance, the old administrative system of Kötte in the sixteenth century had different kinds of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> C R de Silva, "The First Portuguese Revenue Register...," p 73 ff.

territorial administrator/rulers appointed by the ruler. They included  $r\bar{a}jas$  or kings who were often kinsmen of the supreme ruler, *disāpati* or provincial rulers, and officials in charge of seaports. In fact, according to the revenue register of 1599, only two areas of Kōtte - Denavaka and Mātara- were ruled by *disāpati*. This diversity was lost when the Portuguese divided the entire area of the south west to four *disāvas* - Mātara, Sabaragamuva, Four Kōralēs and Seven Kōralēs. In Jaffna, in the 1640s, the Portuguese appointed a single collector for the provinces of Vadamarachchi and Pachchilaippalai, thus reducing the traditional four provinces into three.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, we need to consider the Portuguese impact on the administrative system resulting from the distortion of the indigenous system through changes in personnel and of objectives. The appointment of Portuguese to administrative positions in the indigenous system led to changed priorities. For many of the appointees, the post, generally granted for a three year period, was a reward for long years of service to the Crown and an opportunity to raise a personal fortune. While indigenous appointees in earlier times had not been completely free from this perspective of building personal wealth and fortune, their actions had been restrained by their understanding of local customs and practices and fear of the king's justice. These factors weighed much less in the outlook of the Portuguese appointed to office. Indigenous officers too, made use of the relative ignorance of the new rulers to arrogate new privileges to themselves. Thus, for instance, the disāpati in Portuguese times acquired the right to sentence people to death, a right they did not possess under the old system. Another important development was the introduction of the idea of a colonial subject who did not have the same rights as the a member of the ruling Portuguese elite. Any common Portuguese soldier on travel had the right to demand food and lodging in a village he passed by. Portuguese accused of crimes were subject only to Portuguese judges though Portuguese judges, of course, had authority over indigenous inhabitants. Portuguese village holders paid less to the state than their indigenous counterparts.

In the long run, the change in the basis of state revenue was perhaps more important than all of the changes discussed above. Up to the sixteenth century, the mainstay of state revenues had been the taxes on the land and its produce. This changed dramatically during Portuguese times and there emerged one of the characteristics of colonial rule - the dependence of the state on revenue from export of agricultural products. This change was due to two major factors. The first was a decline in revenue from the land in Kōtte caused by Portuguese policy. Many of the royal villages which had

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> See also C R de Silva, "The First Portuguese Revenue Register...," p 86.

provided income to the Crown were granted to individual Portuguese on payment of quit rents. This practice reduced the state revenue from this source by at least seven eighths because the individual holder paid only twelve per cent of the (conservatively) estimated income from the village as quit rent. The second factor was an enormous rise in the revenue from exports. A good example is the case of cinnamon. The Kotte kings had sold cinnamon to merchants who came to Colombo and had obtained a very low price for it, but the Portuguese who controlled the trade in it gained far greater profits. Although profits to the state were limited till about 1628 due to extensive private trading, from then on, the Portuguese state obtained profits which far outstripped any income they obtained from land. Indeed, one of the clear results of Portuguese rule was the expansion of the cinnamon trade. In the sixteenth century the trade had been so organized that a fixed quantity (approximately 400 bahars or 104,000 lb) was delivered by the peelers to the royal warehouse and any surplus collected was sold by individuals. The peeling itself was made the hereditary task of a group within the salāgama caste, and their number was so low and the price offered for surplus cinnamon was so low that production was not high. In the sixteenth century, individual Portuguese broke into the trade and production began to rise. The state too continued to increase the amount of cinnamon it required the peelers to supply. In the sixteenth century their obligation was to deliver about 100,000 lb of cinnamon free of charge to the state. By 1615, when a state monopoly of export was proclaimed, this amount had risen to 460,000 lb and by 1640 to between 630,000 and 840,000 lb.25

In respect of Jaffna too, the revenue from commerce rose sharply. For instance, according to the assessment which the local chiefs gave Felipe de Oliveira in 1619, apart from the revenue derived from the sale of elephants (which was considerable), the revenues which the rulers of Jaffna obtained from commerce was just a few hundred *pardaos* out of a total of 11,700. By 1645, the excise on tobacco alone brought in 5000 *pardaos* and revenue from commerce (without the sale of elephants) brought in 12,500 *pardaos* out of a total of 28,000. Although, in Jaffna, unlike in Kōṭṭe, the Portuguese had also managed to raise the total revenue collected from land, the major growth was in revenue from trade.

Increased reliance on commercial crops for revenue led to the comparative neglect of subsistence agriculture and increasing control of and interference in commerce by the state. The latter can be seen in the case of arecanut. Arecanut, which was principally used for chewing with betel

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> C R de Silva, "The Portuguese Impact on the Production and Trade of Sri Lanka Cinnamon in Asia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Indica*, 26, 1989, pp 33-8

leaves, had been exported from Sri Lanka for several centuries before the arrival of the Portuguese. In the time of Kōṭṭe, the revenue of the state from arecanut was confined to the areca received from royal villages and the customs and octroi duties on trade, but soon after the assumption of Portuguese rule, it was decreed that all arecanut produced was to be sold to the state at a fixed low price in order to finance war expenses. Protests against this compulsory purchase proved to be of no avail and the result seems to have been a decline in interest in cultivating arecanut.

Increasing control over items of commerce tended to stifle trade though the prevalence of smuggling must have mitigated some effects of Portuguese policy. The success of smugglers depended on the type of commodity traded. The Portuguese maintained a firm grip on the export of elephants. Indeed, the revenue to the state from the elephant trade was second only to that from cinnamon. On the other hand, the trade in pearls and gems was obviously much more difficult to control.<sup>26</sup> There is also evidence that increased exactions in Jaffna contributed to the movement of people to the Vanni and while alternating period of conflict in the lowland south west led to an ebb and flow of people from that region to the Kandyan highlands. The movement away from Portuguese territory was perhaps not unconnected to the transfer of villages from local to foreign hands. The holding of villages, as described in Chapter 1, simply entitles the village holder to the revenues of the muttettu lands in that village as well as to certain customary services. The 1615 tombo of Kotte indicates that a fifth of the villages of Kötte had already come into Portuguese hands by that time. In Jaffna, by 1645, an even larger proportion of villages was held by the newcomers. In terms of the actual parcels of land held by cultivators, however, it is difficult to find many instances of dispossession. Particularly in the south west, labour rather than land seems to have been the scarce factor, although productive paddy land was certainly at a premium and, as will be noted later, income rights from land became a marketable commodity.

The Portuguese impact on religion was as important as that on the economy. From the outset the Portuguese were intent on making converts to Roman Catholicism, not least because they hoped that such converts would be loyal to them. Converts were therefore exempted from various taxes and given preferential treatment. For example, they gained preference in case of inheritance and did not pay death duty. In Kötte, the missionary effort which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> C R de Silva, "Peddling Trade, Elephants and Gems: Some Aspects of Sri Lanka's Trading Connections in the Indian Ocean in the 16th and 17th Centuries," Asian Panorama: Essays in Asian History, Past and Present, K M de Silva et.al., (eds), New Delhi, Vikas 1990, pp 287-302.

had slowly got under way in the early sixteenth century spread rapidly after the Portuguese conquest of the lowlands. The Jesuit order which had been active in Mannar since 1560 also came in force to both Kōtte and Jaffna in the seventeenth century and they were augmented by a few Augustinians and Dominicans. At the height of the missionary effort in the 1630s there were perhaps a hundred missionaries working in different parts of the country.

The Roman Catholic missionaries were aided by the wholesale destruction of Buddhist and Hindu shrines as well as by the gift of many of the former temple lands in the south west for their maintenance. They established numerous churches and some of them learnt the local languages, though they were restrained by prejudice from admitting indigenous converts to the exclusive religious orders. They had initial success among parava and karāva groups who were both vulnerable to the actions of a power which dominated the sea and also were not totally integrated into the Buddhist and Hindu social systems. By the 1630s about half of the people of the coastal regions of the south west and most of the inhabitants of Jaffna professed Christianity. Because indigenous converts were not ordained there was a shortage of priests. Jaffna, for instance, never had enough priests to man the 42 parishes which had over 115,000 converts. Although the number of Roman Catholics fell sharply after the end of Portuguese power in Sri Lanka, Portuguese occupation firmly established a new religion in that country.

For Buddhists and Hindus, the period of Portuguese rule was a dark age. Their faith was kept alive only by sustenance from beyond the frontier. The Buddhists looked to Kandy for inspiration while the Hindus looked to the Nāyaks of Madura and Tanjore. By the end of their period of rule, the Portuguese had established strong Catholic groups in Kōtte and in Jaffna, both of whom managed to survive though with greatly diminished numbers during an era of persecution by the Dutch.

The economic and religious changes brought about under Portuguese rule had a profound influence on the social fabric of the maritime districts. Polyandry and polygamy, both accepted social arrangements in earlier times, fell into disfavour on the southwest coast though they persisted in the interior. There were changes in respect of caste too. For instance, the *salāgamas*, who were an important group which had migrated from the Malabar Coast between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries had originally been primarily weavers. Some of them had been ordered by the king of Kōtte to peel cinnamon. With the rising demand for cinnamon there was a tendency to enlist all of them for cinnamon peeling. In time, members of other castes too were required to peel cinnamon and there are instances of *karāva*, *hunu* and *batgam* people performing this task. In course of time these peelers were absorbed by the *salāgama* caste. Then again, in the sixteenth century, the obligation to peel cinnamon was imposed in return for grants of land and the obligation varied with the extent of land. By the end of the Portuguese rule the obligation had been converted into a personal one. Each adult of the caste had an obligation to peel a stipulated amount of cinnamon irrespective of the extent of land held. Another example is provided by the *karāvas* who had become converts to Christianity early and obtained a privileged position in respect of employment and dealings with the state and this was one of the factors that stimulated their rise as an entrepreneurial class in later years.

The Portuguese might also have had an impact on the mechanism of integrating new groups such as the karāvas and the salāgamas into the Sinhalese caste hierarchy. Hitherto, all traditional non-goyigama groups had distinct caste occupations as well as rituals which expressed the idea of service to the dominant goyigama caste. By the sixteenth century, the new immigrant karāva and salāgama groups were developing an identification with an occupation but had not as yet developed a ritual connection with the goyigamas. It is possible that the coming of the Portuguese and the changes which followed arrested the development of a ritual dimension with respect to these two castes. This process marks a significant structural change in the Sinhalese caste system.

Very little of Portuguese civil and military architecture has survived in Sri Lanka. However, the era of Portuguese rule is likely to have led to the spread of furniture made in the Indo-Portuguese style. A more lasting impact is seen in music and dance, clothing and dress. Hymns and lullabies came to be part of the lifestyle of many Christians while dance music, still known as 'baila' in Sri Lanka, remains popular to this day. Western male attire was accepted by some groups in the south west but the more significant impact seems to have been on female dress. At the time of the arrival of the Westerners there is some evidence that some women in Kōṭṭe did not cover their upper bodies. We do not have sufficient evidence to determine whether this was a caste restriction. This practice was certainly modified in the lowlands in Portuguese times and the Portuguese blouse (*jacqueta*) became the fashion. Lace-making too, appears to have been brought to Sri Lanka by the Portuguese.<sup>27</sup>

Although the ravages of war, higher taxes and the compulsory purchase of arecanut prevented the accumulation of capital by the peasants, some of the converted leaders of the local aristocracy gained a considerable wealth and lived in style. Indeed, a significant development in the lowlands

O M da Silva Cosme, Fidalgos in the Kingdom of Kötte, Sri Lanka (1505-1656), (Colombo, Harwoods, 1990), pp 438-520; K David Jackson, Sing without Shame; Oral Traditions in Indo-Portuguese Creole Verse, (Philadelphia, John Benjamins), 1990.

in the first half of the seventeenth century seems to have been the sale of income rights from whole villages as well as of individual parcels of land. By 1634, the Portuguese were so alarmed by this that they ordered that all lands purchased from cinnamon peelers, elephant hunters and feeders, woodcutters and bullock cart men should be restored to them.

Portuguese customs and manners had a great impact on the lowlands and their forms of dress left traces which lasted well into the twentieth century. Portuguese words are found in abundance both in Sinhalese and Tamil and the language remained the medium of trade and of the preaching of Christianity during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Pockets of people speaking a Portuguese creole have survived to the present day. Little work has as yet been done to analyze the Portuguese impact on the local ecology both in terms of increased felling of trees for shipbuilding and in the introduction of new fruits and plants from the Americas.

Although the Portuguese impact was thus one of great importance, it should also be recalled that it was largely limited to parts of maritime Sri Lanka. For most of the island the impact was more limited and the Portuguese were remembered in Sinhala and Tamil folk tradition mostly as invaders who were responsible for the destruction of cities, temples and settlements.

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## **CHAPTER VIII**

# THE KANDYAN KINGDOM 1638-1739: A SURVEY OF ITS POLITICAL HISTORY

### L S Dewaraja

The one hundred years surveyed in this chapter begin with the early days of Rājasimha II, indeed with the treaty he signed with the Dutch East India Company for the purpose of ousting the Portuguese from the island. It ends in 1739 when the Sinhalese dynasty which traced its origins to Sēnāsammata Vikramabāhu became extinct in the male line. The death of Rājasimha II in 1687 divides this period into two equal halves. He died after a reign of nearly 60 years. Although he left his mark on the history of his country as few others before him did for many centuries, yet 1687 is not as significant a dividing line as 1739, when the Nāyakkar dynasty from South India succeeded to the throne of the Kandyan kingdom in a surprisingly peaceful transition.

In 1635, the young prince Mahā Astāna, son of Dōna Cätherinā and Senarat, who had been managing the affairs of state since 1629 ascended the throne of Kandy as Rājasimha II. He deserves to be remembered as the greatest of the Kandyan rulers not only because he preserved Kandyan independence and dignity but also because he was the last king to actively resist European domination over the coastlands which he claimed were his. Educated under Franciscan friars Rājasimha could read, write and speak Portuguese fluently, and was familiar with the manners and customs of many European peoples. As a result he could meet foreign ambassadors and discuss terms with them without the need for intermediaries and interpreters.

Realising the futility of trying to rid the country of the Portuguese without naval help, he began negotiations with the Dutch who had their headquarters at Batavia. It was not Rājasimha's intention to exchange one

foreigner for another, but he was aware that the Dutch East India Company was eager to secure a monopoly of trade and believed they were not bent on territorial acquisitions. He therefore hoped that by offering them trade concessions and a fort in the island he could obtain their help and rid the island of the Portuguese. When Rājasimha's proposals were conveyed to the Dutch by a letter of 9 September 1636<sup>1</sup>, the Dutch who long coveted the Portuguese monopoly of cinnamon, eagerly seized the offer and sent two envoys to discuss terms with the king. After several meetings it was agreed that the Dutch would supply arms and ammunition to the king to fight the Portuguese, if the king would grant them in return the export trade in cinnamon, a highly prized commodity in Europe. As a consequence of these negotiations the Admiral of the Dutch fleet blockading Goa, Admiral Westerwolt sent William Jacobz Coster with four ships to help capture Batticaloa.<sup>2</sup>

Diego de Melo, the Portuguese Captain General of Colombo hearing of these dealings between his enemies and encouraged by the arrival of troops from Malacca prepared to invade Kandy and defeat the king before Dutch aid came. Courageous though he was on the battle field, the king was unprepared for war and to avert possible defeat sent emissaries three times calling for the halting of hostilities.<sup>3</sup> On hearing the protest the Captain of the Field, Damiao Botado, declared scornfully, "The blackie is afraid; we shall have to drag him here by his ears."<sup>4</sup> Five hundred Portuguese soldiers, 5000 lascarins, a number of Canarese, Africans and other auxiliaries marched to Kandy unopposed and set fire to the city, its palaces and temples, while the king retired to his stronghold in Gale Nuvara, waiting for the opportune moment to strike. With the help of his brother Vijayapala of Matale the king surrounded his hosts from all corners of his realm. The Kandyans who were used to a century of war with the Portuguese, and who knew every thicket and hillock in their country waited till the invading army withdrew. The way back to Balana was obstructed by Vijayapāla's army of 16,000 and the Portuguese were forced to camp for the night on the banks of the Mahaväli. Having first prevented them from crossing the river, the Sinhalese then beat

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, Chapter II for a review of the background.

<sup>3</sup> de Queyroz, p 803.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p 802.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> K W Goonewardena, The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon 1638-1658.

off all detachments who were sent to fetch water, so that the enemy was fatigued and enfeebled. Rājasimha himself appeared on the battlefield with forces exceeding fifteen thousand, "brandishing his golden sword, flashing with its thousand rays, giving orders not to let a man escape."<sup>5</sup> On 28 March, Palm Sunday, ignoring a plea for peace, the entire Portuguese army was annihilated at Gannoruva and only the padres were spared. "With Gannoruva," Paul E Pieris, the well-known Sri Lankan historian said "ends the history of the Sinhalese as a fighting race."<sup>6</sup> Pieris was disregarding the resistance put up by Rājasimha II himself in later years and some of his successors thereafter against the Dutch.

When the news of the Kandyan victory spread the whole island rose in arms. The depleted Portuguese garrisons in Mänikkadavara and Malvāna retired to Colombo. Manoel Mascaranhas Homem (1638-40) was hastily sent to defend Colombo but Rājasimha was not in a position to follow up his victory and besiege Colombo, though his men seized some lowland areas. The Portuguese concentrated their strength in Colombo, Negombo and Galle and towards the end of 1638 recovered some territory, particularly the fort of Malvāna.

In the meantime, Coster landed in Batticaloa and hearing of the great triumph of Rājasimha realised that he had come at an opportune moment and proceeding to Batticaloa laid siege to the fort. Westerwolt arrived soon after and Rājasimha joined forces on land with 15,000 men as the bulk of his army had been left behind with Vijayapāla to threaten Colombo. In April 1638 the fort of Batticaloa surrendered and in May a treaty was signed between Rājasimha on the one hand and Westerwolt and Coster on the other acting on behalf of the Prince of Orange. Both copies of the original treaty were written in Portuguese and each party kept one copy. The originals are no longer extant but from the Dutch translations which are available the treaty was most favourable to the Dutch. Since subsequent dealings between Rājasimha and his so-called 'allies,' till the expulsion of the Portuguese in 1658, were governed by the terms of this treaty, it is relevant to examine its clauses.

The Dutch were allowed unrestricted trade without payment of tolls and taxes. They were given a monopoly of trade with the king's subjects in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Parangi Hatana, quoted by P E Pieris in Ceylon: The Portuguese Era, (Dehiwala, Sri Lanka, 1983), p 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p 206.

all the important products of the island except elephants which were a royal monopoly. Even with regard to elephants the king had to sell the same number of beasts to the Dutch as he sold to others. The king further agreed to bear all expenses incurred by the Dutch in expelling the Portuguese from the forts and the reimbursement was to be in cinnamon, pepper, wax and other merchandise.

Article 3 of the treaty was to the effect that all captured forts would be garrisoned by the Dutch "if the king so desired." Article 4 stated that in case the captured forts were fortified by the Dutch, the king would pay their wages and give them their food rations. The important condition in the third clause, "if the king so desired" was found only in the original Portuguese version which the king could read and which he used, whereas in the Dutch translation used by his "allies" it was omitted. If that provision had not been attached to article 3 Rājasimha may never have signed the treaty because he would then be only substituting one foreigner for another. On the evidence provided by a Sri Lankan scholar, K W Goonewardena, it is very clear that the omission of the vital proviso from the Dutch version was not a mere translation error but a deliberate and well planned exclusion contrived to deceive the king.<sup>7</sup>

For his part, the king wished to use the Dutch to expel the Portuguese. He gave them the contract for a fixed price at the end of which he thought that the contractor would leave. Since their main interest in the island was cinnamon the king gave them its monopoly and the facility of a fort. However, just at the time, commencing with van Dieman, the Batavian authorities were becoming expansionist in their outlook. From the outset their aim was to gain a territorial foothold on the cinnamon growing areas and hence their insistence on manning and possession of forts. The next stage of their plan was to keep the king in permanent indebtedness by arguing that they would retain the forts and lands around them till their expenses were reimbursed. The subsequent events, and the suspicion and distrust that was generated during the period of military partnership, have to be viewed against the background of these policies and motivations.

The next target of the combined operations was Trincomalee which fell in 1639 followed by Negombo and Galle in 1640. By now the king had grave misgivings regarding his allies. The main areas of conflict were as follows. Firstly, the king disagreed with the Dutch over the planning and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> K W Goonewardena, op. cit., pp 32-6.

timing of operations. For instance, the king was insistent on the capture of Colombo but the Dutch stalled because they were informed that in the areas around Galle and Negombo, cinnamon grew in wild profusion. Besides handing over Colombo to Rajasimha would be a strategic disadvantage to them in the pursuit of their own plans. Again after the capture of Trincomalee, the king wanted an attack on Jaffna but the Dutch found excuses yet again. Secondly, the Dutch tried to do it alone wherever possible. Although the king sent substantial forces to Trincomalee it was captured before the king's army arrived. Instructions came from Batavia to capture Galle without the king's help. Thirdly, there was fundamental disagreement over article 3 of the Treaty. After the capture of Trincomalee the king insisted that the fort be handed over to him but this was ignored. When Negombo fell the king wanted the fort destroyed but the Dutch began repairing it for occupation. He was then shown Article 3 of the treaty and Rājasimha discovered the missing proviso and the great fraud practised on him. When the king protested Coster agreed to a revision of the treaty under which Trincomalee was returned in exchange for ten elephants. Colombo was to be razed to the ground and all forts were to be garrisoned by the Dutch until expenses were paid.

In addition, serious differences arose with regard to the calculation and payment of expenses incurred by the Dutch. Instead of Article 3, the justification for holding on to the fort shifted to Article 8, which related to the reimbursement of expenditure. Rājasimha was anxious to clear his debts, but the Dutch justified their hold on the forts and on the island by exaggerating their expenses, undervaluing the merchandise already given to them by the king and excluding from their accounts items which had already been delivered to them. Keeping the king in permanent bondage they enjoyed the produce of his lands.

Early in 1641 in the midst of all his problems with his allies Rājasimha was threatened with the prospect of having to fight a war on two fronts. The Portuguese in Colombo, fearing an attack and encouraged by a relieving force were on the offensive and re-captured Negombo and attacked Galle. In December 1640 in the south east, Vijayapāla who was sympathetic to the Portuguese escaped from Kandy and established himself as King of Ūva. His grievance was that when the third brother Kumārasimha died (c. 1637) Rājasimha had annexed his entire principality without sharing it with Vijayapāla. The Portuguese made use of this opportunity to embarrass Rājasimha by threatening to place the king of Ūva on the Kandyan throne. Rājasimha took action, defeated Vijayapāla and his 8000 men. Keeping the prince under surveillance in Kandy he refused to take stern action against his brother who despite his European sympathies had served him gallantly and faithfully in his wars. Vijayapāla soon succeeded in making his way to Portuguese territory and ultimately ended in Goa where he received an allowance befitting his rank and settled down there having become a Christian.

In the meantime Portugal had thrown off its union with Spain and a ten year truce was signed with the Dutch in 1642, which was applicable to overseas territory as well. In Sri Lanka the Dutch accepted it with reluctance but sporadic fighting continued nevertheless. Relations between Rājasimha and the Dutch had deteriorated but the king preferred not to aggravate the situation because an open rupture would make matters worse for him. Nevertheless through his letters and the demands conveyed in them he did not conceal his contempt for the deceit practiced on him. The Dutch by their artful accounting had seen to it that the king's debt had risen to unpayable heights and also they also continued an attitude of alternate appeasement and provocation.

At the end of the truce in 1652 the triangular warfare resumed. For both the Dutch and the king, the main target was the capture of Colombo, but both sides feared that the one who captured it first might retain the prize. Rājasimha was fully well aware that once Colombo fell he would have to dance to the Dutch tune, yet his hatred of the Portuguese was such that he put all his efforts to the task of expelling them. The king himself came down to the lowlands in 1653 with his forces estimated by de Queyroz as 18,000 strong. This was unwelcome news for the Dutch who feared that the king might capture Colombo by himself and do as he pleased with it. Even if the city was captured in conjunction with them they feared that the king might have too much of a say on account of the strength of his forces. Despite these misgivings the Dutch pretended to be well disposed towards the king and tried to pacify him with gifts and promises which they never intended keeping.

Finally when the fort of Colombo surrendered in May 1656 the Dutch garrison moved in as they did in 1658 in Jaffna and Mannar, violating all the solemn undertakings they had given for twenty years. Rājasimha had only exchanged one foreigner for another, and as the Kandyans sarcastically said "he gave pepper and got ginger." The military alliance which began in 1638 ended and henceforth till he was mellowed by old age and ill health Rājasimha's relations with the Dutch were confrontational.

In 1658, when the expulsion of the Portuguese was virtually complete it looked as if Rājasimha had been outwitted by the Dutch but in actual fact

his kingdom was more extensive than it had been when the Portuguese ruled the coast. The entire disāva of the Seven Korales, a major portion of the disāva of Sabaragamuva and the eastern half of the disāva of the Four Korales, all of which once belonged to the Portuguese were now a part of Kandyan territory. Besides, the ports of Chilaw and Kalpitiya on the west, and Trincomalee, Kottiyar and Batticaloa on the east, were for the time being accessible to the king for purposes of trade. Whereas the Portuguese could claim, as heirs of the kings of Kotte, a legal right to the territory they held, Rājasimha did not recognise Dutch claims to sovereignty over the coastal areas. When it became clear to Rajasimha that the Dutch had come to stay, he ravaged the villages on the borders of Dutch territory, creating a devastated and depopulated frontier between the Kandyan and Dutch areas so that the later may not be tempted to expand inland.<sup>8</sup> From the outset the Dutch seemed intent on controlling the entire seaboard. With the occupation of Kalpitiya this trend was clear. The presence of the English in the east coast in 1659-60 convinced the Dutch of the necessity to assume control over the coastal strongholds. This clashed with the interests of the Kandyans who were intent on preserving their links with the outside world. There is evidence that Rajasimha tried to establish contact with the English in 1660 and the French in 1672 in order to seek help against the Dutch.

While the king was pre-occupied with the intransigent Dutch, trouble was brewing within the kingdom. The latent dissatisfaction within certain sections of the Kandyan nobility erupted in open rebellion at the time the Dutch were trying to establish their position in the seaboard. By the end of the year 1664 Kandy was in the grip of a convulsion, which, while it did not lead to serious repercussions within the kingdom, certainly affected the king's foreign relations and further encouraged the Dutch to pursue a more aggressive policy towards the king. An attempt was made by a few of the nobles aided and abetted by a bhikkhu of the Poyamalu vihara, (which later became the prestigious Malvatta vihāra) to assassinate the king and place his son on the throne instead. The details regarding the rebellion are obscure but there are two independent sources of information to reconstruct its main events. The first is the invaluable account left by Robert Knox, the Englishman, who was a captive in the Kandyan kingdom at the time the incident took place.<sup>9</sup> The other is the description of the rebellion, written by its ringleader, Ambanvela Rala, who was later captured by the king and sent

<sup>9</sup> Knox, (1991), pp 92-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1658-1687, pp 2-3.

over to the Dutch for execution. Instead he was hospitably received by the Dutch, and 10 years later at their request he wrote an account of the rebellion.<sup>10</sup>

As reported by Knox, the rebellion broke out on 21 December 1664 and lasted 5 days. The reasons for the rebellion are summed up by its leader who mentions firstly, the oppressive government of the king. He says that the chiefs were discontented because the king condemned innocent people to death and seduced their wives and daughters. Secondly, he was an autocrat, and did not consult his councillors. Thirdly, the king neglected religion. The annual Äsala festival, the kingdom's principal religious and state function had not been held for two years. Knox too mentions that the king's tyranny caused this outbreak. Both Ambanvela Rala and Knox had grievances against the king and therefore they tended to emphasise the tyrannical aspects of his region and interpreted the revolt 1664 as a national uprising against an oppressive and autocratic ruler. But Rājasimha was not the unmitigated tyrant that he is depicted by Knox and Ambanvela Rala. Other indigenous sources, Sinhala<sup>11</sup> and Pali<sup>12</sup> refer to the king as a brave warrior and a venerated The other accusation levelled against Rajasimha is that he monarch. neglected Buddhism. Rājasimha was no fanatic. In an age when religious bigotry was common, Rajasimha adopted a tolerant attitude to all faiths. Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians of all denominations, were allowed to freely practice their religion in his realm. Perhaps the higher ranks of the samgha were offended at this tolerant attitude of the king and the aristocrats were kith and kin with the sampha. They were thus able to enlist the support of an eminent bhikkhu, Srī Nivāsa thēra, living in a leading monastery in Kandy. During his long reign, Rājasimha's time and energy were spent on waging ceaseless warfare with the Europeans, so that he had little time for matters spiritual. The only religious activity that is accredited to him is the restoration of vihāra and dēvalē lands.<sup>13</sup> Rājasimha was not the lavish patron the sampha wished to have. It is significant that Srī Nivāsa thera, having gone to Nilambe where the king resided could not even get an

<sup>10</sup> "Ambanvela Appuhāmy's Rebellion of 1665," J H O Paulusz, JCBRAS, n.s., VII, Part I, 1960, p 104 ff. A Sinhala land grant, the Aluvihara Sannasa of 1665, refers to this rebellion. See P M P Abhayasingha, Udarata Vitti, p 22.

- 11 Mandārampurapuvata, Labugama Lankananda (ed.), (Colombo, 1958), v 309, ff.
- <sup>12</sup> Cv, Chapter 96.
- <sup>13</sup> Cv, chapter 96, verse 39.

audience with the king. The fact that in his reign the valid ordination of the samgha became extinct shows that the periodic ordination ceremonies, which were traditionally performed by royalty, were neglected. Although Ambanvela Rāla reports that the Äsala perahära was not held for 2 years and holds the king responsible for this neglect of duty, the Mandārampurapuvata specially mentions that the Äsala perahära and all other religious functions like the Vesak  $p\bar{u}ja^{14}$  were performed during the reign of this king.<sup>15</sup> It is likely that the perahära was normally held but during the two years 1663 and 1664, due to rumours of a likely outbreak of rebellion, the king thought it expedient not to permit any large gathering of people in Kandy.

Whatever reasons Ambanvela Rāla, later adduces to justify his actions or please his benefactors, it is seen that, he, together with 4 disgruntled chiefs and their followers, aided and abetted by a disillusioned *bhikkhu* planned the revolt. The chiefs, aware of the king's power and influence, hesitated at first but the *bhikkhu*, prevailed upon them and they finally agreed to attempt this act of regicide. Ambanvela's confederates were Hālmassage Kanduru Rāla, Mahantē Appuhāmy, Pallandeniya Mohottiyar and Jayasundara Appuhāmy. They had gathered together a band of trustworthy men. At this time, the king was residing in Nilambē, 14 miles from Kandy. The plan of the conspirators was to kill the king's supporters, then do away with the king and enthrone his son.

At midnight, on 21 December 1664, the king was taken by surprise. Many of his immediate body guards were slain and the First Adigār Daldeniye Rāla killed by Ambanvela himself. At this juncture a few other nobles of high rank joined the rebels. They were Edanduvāvē Rāla, Disāva of the Four Kōralēs, Hīnāgama Appuhāmy, Disāva of Udapalāta and Rankotdivela Rāla, Disāva of Ūva. The conspirators entrapped the ruler, but so gripped were they by the charisma of kingship that none of the rebels dared to strike a blow on the defenseless monarch. The king taking advantage of this opportunity fled to Hēvahäta, where he took refuge in the mountain, Galauda. The rebels gave chase, but as a result of their profound respect for of the sanctity of the king's person, they feared "to approach within shot of him."<sup>16</sup> The

16 Knox, op.cit., p 93.

Religious ceremonies performed on the birthday of the Buddha which falls on the full moon day of May.

<sup>15</sup> Mandārampurapuvata, v 382.

inhabitants of Hevahäta knew nothing of the revolt, which goes to show that the uprising was not very widespread. While in hiding Rājasimha took the step of sending a letter to the Dutch at Colombo requesting them to come to his assistance.<sup>17</sup> The rebel leaders gave up the chase, marched to Kandy with their supporters, and proclaimed as king, the prince Mahā Astāna, only son of Rajasimha. The conspirators thought that while the youthful and rather mild prince sat on the throne, they would manipulate the affairs of state in a manner advantageous to themselves; a situation which they could not visualise as long as the imperious and autocratic Rajasimha stood at the helm. The prince tardily accepted the honour, but on the advice of his relatives soon changed his mind. He collected an army and decided to attack the rebels. This was the turning point of the episode. The rebel leaders lost heart and attempted to escape to the Dutch in the low country. The prince's men isolated them and blocked all exits from Kandy, thus preventing their escaping or receiving assistance from the provinces. For 8 to 10 days there was pandemonium. Seized with panic the rebels attacked each other and there was general slaughtering and plundering. According to Knox, "a great man" came forward with his followers to defend the king and restore order. This was Tennakoon Rala, who with his tremendous personal influence, rallied the king's forces while the king watched the situation from his mountain refuge. When the time was ripe, the king came forth with a band of supporters and marched to Kandy. The people rallied round the king and some of the rebels realising the hopelessness of their position declared themselves for the king. The five ringleaders tried to escape but were captured. Four of them were executed and Ambanvela Rala was sent in chains to Colombo with a request that the Dutch Governor would give him fitting punishment. Edaňduvāvē, Disāva of the Four Korales, who joined the rebels was also put to death and his office given to his brother-in-law, Tennakoon.<sup>18</sup> Many innocent people suspected of conspiracy also died at the hands of the executioner. The king very likely adopted stern repressive measures against his nobles to prevent the occurrence of such rebellions in the future. Within a month law and order were restored and the king moved his court to Diyatilaka Nuvara off Hanguranketa which was more suitable from the point of view of security. He removed his son from the public eye and kept him closely guarded in seclusion in order to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. The rumour

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon, p 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Tennakoon Disāva and Tudugala Madduma Rāla who was Gajanāyaka Nilamē in 1664 were two brothers of illustrious ancestry. They were invited by Rājasimha to join his service. Their sister was married to Edaňduvāvē.

spread that the king had put his son to death for the part he played in the rebellion. Perhaps the king himself was responsible for spreading the rumour in order to terrorise would be rebels. The Dutch in Colombo, Robert Knox who lived in the kingdom and even Tennakoon *Disāva* who at the time was very close to the king, believed that the prince was put to death.

There was no evidence that there was a widespread desire to do away with the king. The discontent was restricted to a few nobles and their retinue living in Kandy and Nilambē, while the provinces were unaffected. Although the rebellion in no way permanently undermined the king's position within his realm, it greatly influenced Dutch policy towards Rājasimha. The appearance of dissension within the kingdom and Rājasimha's request for aid from the Dutch, strengthened their position. Due to distractions within, the vigilance with which the king watched his frontiers relaxed, paving the way for the pursuance of aggressive policies which the Dutch had earlier planned.

In April 1665, two Dutch armies marched from Colombo and Galle to Bibilegama and Ruvanvälla. As the king offered no resistance they went further, occupied Sabaragamuva and posted Dutch troops and lascarins at three strategic points in the king's territory. When the Dutch forces advanced, the king's chief military and administrative officers withdrew in order to avoid a clash with the Dutch. The local officials and villagers had no other alternative but to submit to the Dutch. The result was that all the king's lands between the former Kandyan-Dutch boundary and the recently established military outposts were annexed by the Dutch. Rājasimha lost considerable territory, from Negombo in the north to Valavē in the south and also a good number of his subjects.<sup>19</sup> In 1667, since there were no signs of hostility from Rajasimha the Dutch embarked upon the second stage of their campaign, and went deeper into the king's territory occupying Arandara and then Alavva. As a result, the king lost a further stretch of land in the south west. With the Dutch occupation of Trincomalee (1665), Batticaloa and Kottiyar (1668), all three ports on the east coast were blocked. In 1669 the stretch of coast in the south east from Valave to Panama were lost. Between 1665-70, Rājasimha's kingdom had shrunk considerably. On the west and south west Dutch power had reached the foothills of Kandy. In the east all the outlets for the produce of the kingdom were in hostile hands; in the south east the valuable salt pans were controlled by the Dutch while the king could only watch in dismay.

<sup>19</sup> S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon, pp 33-4.

During the period 1665-70 Rājasimha was very likely strengthening his military resources and waiting for a suitable opportunity to return the blow. Trained for warfare from his early youth, he had a remarkable grasp of military tactics and strategy and he struck only when he was sure of success. In August 1670 Rājasimha launched his counter attack on a number of fronts. The onslaught was fiercest on the west and south west, but simultaneously Trincomalee, Koṭṭiyar, Batticaloa and Pānama in the east were attacked. A major event was the re-capture of Arandara in the Four Kōralēs, the Dutch military outpost nearest to Kandy. The Dutch forces withdrew from Ruvanvālla, Sabaragamuva and Bibilēgama and soon their control was restricted to their boundaries prior to their expansion 1665. There were sporadic uprisings of the people who repudiated their allegiance to the Dutch. In the east the Kandyan forces gained ground. The Dutch were driven into the fort of Trincomalee. In Batticaloa too there was unrest.

While the Dutch were in this difficult position, a French squadron under Admiral de La Haye sailed into Koțțiyar Bay in March 1672. It is certain that prior contact had been established between Rājasimha and the French because the king had already made preparations to meet and receive them on arrival. The king welcomed them, exchanged envoys and even went to the extent of gifting the Bay of Koțțiyar, to the French in return for help against the Dutch. No help was forthcoming and the French who were troubled by sickness and lack of provisions in addition to Dutch hostility, departed in July. A nobleman, M de La Nerolle, was sent as Resident from the king of France to the king of Kandy.<sup>20</sup>

The presence of the French was a matter of grave concern for the Dutch and Rājasimha used this opportunity to embarrass them still further. He attacked many of their strongholds and also incited the people to rebel against them. Considerable damage was done to the Dutch in the Hāpitigam kōralē, Four Kōralēs and even as far as the Pasdun kōralē, which was one of the original Dutch provinces. Tennakoon Disāva and the Disāva of Udapalāta who were influential people in the area, appeared on the frontiers and stirred the people to rebel. Unrest spread to Sabaragamuva. The people refused to pay taxes and perform services to the Dutch. Dutch resistance was feeble. A detachment marched to Sītāvaka and Idangoda and tried to restore law and order but their domination was only nominal.

Rājasimha had retrieved his lost position and prestige. The Dutch attempts to encircle the king by annexing the entire coast had been checked.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p 66.

In the east and south east coast they had only a nominal control. Above all Rājasimha had instilled confidence into his people and even gained the loyalty of some of the Sinhalese in Dutch territory. In 1675, emboldened by his success, Rājasimha launched his biggest campaign which he personally planned on a massive scale. The king had entrusted the Disāvas with operations in designated areas. The renowned warrior Tennakoon Disāva was in charge of the attack from the Seven Korales and the Four Korales. To command the forces facing Alutgama, Kalutara and the Pasdun korale, he picked the young Tudugala Appuhāmy<sup>21</sup>, recently appointed Disāva of Sabaragamuva; Mahakuruppu Rāla was sent to Yāla and Moragammana Disāva to Batticaloa. Tennakoon's campaign was a brilliant success. He turned his attention to the north as far as Arippu, spreading disaffection among the Vanniyars. In the south the Kandyans surrounded the fortress of Bibilegama which had not yet been evacuated. With the fall of this fortress the entire Matara disavany was exposed to the Kandyan onslaught. But they did not proceed in that direction, very likely due to the rains.

The Kandyans could not consolidate their power in the areas which they overran. A good portion of their army consisted of peasants who had left the fields to perform compulsory military service or *rājakāriya* to the state. These recruits could not afford to stay away from their fields for very long. Hence they demolished the Dutch fortifications, devastated the lands rendering them economically useless to the Dutch, and then abandoned them.

Though these efforts succeeded in denying the Dutch territorial possessions in the eastern seaboard, yet, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Koțțiyar remained under Dutch control. With their naval resources they could effectively regulate Kandyan foreign contacts, both commercial as well as political, on the east. On the west, Kandyan trade was even more rigidly restricted, for any vessels arriving at the Kandyan port of Puttalam had to pass through Kalpitiya.<sup>22</sup> This situation adversely effected the economy of the kingdom, limited its sovereignty as an independent state and above all it was an affront to the dignity of its ruler. Consequently breaking this blockade became one of the principal objectives of Kandyan policy in succeeding years.

The king's unceasing activity against the Dutch was a limited success in the sense that it led them to undertake a revision of the policy towards

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Tennakoon's brother's son.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> S Arasaratnam, "The Kingdom of Kandy: Aspects of its External Relations and Commerce, 1658-1710," July-December 1960, CJHSS, p 3(2).

Kandy after 1675. They could neither enjoy the benefits of their lands nor of the trade monopoly they had imposed, without peace and the co-operation of the Kandyans. They now sought to extend the hand of friendship to the king by returning his lands in order to preserve the peace. Besides, the king was ageing and because the Dutch believed he had no successor, they thought it was very necessary to come to terms with him. But Rājasimha, in spite of his age and feeble health preserved his dignity and self-respect to the last. Although he could no longer plan and direct massive campaigns, he showed no desire to accept the offer of the lands, which, in fact already belonged to him.<sup>23</sup>

There is evidence to show that just at the time when the king was engrossed with his dealings with the foreigner, rival factions were at work within the Kandyan court. Tennakoon's military feats and the trust placed upon him by the king seemed to have excited the envy of certain other chiefs. Tennakoon was of royal lineage and he was believed to have been born on the same day and same auspicious hour as the king and hence it was easy to arouse Rajasimha's suspicions. Rather than face royal rancour, Tennakoon with a company of his followers fled to the Dutch in February 1676. After this event the position of his brother's son, Tudugala Appuhāmy, Disāva of Sabaragamuva, in the court was precarious. At this time Tudugala was recalled to the palace and appointed Gajanāyaka Nilamē, chief of the king's elephant keepers. The king's motive in giving him this new honour was no doubt to have Tudugala within easy reach of the court where his actions could be watched. The internal happenings of the Kandyan court, for the most part, are shrouded in mystery. A rather hazy glimpse is obtained from the report of a Dutch envoy. The ambassador Jan de Bucquoy who returned to Colombo in 1680 reported that a massacre of the aristocracy took place around 1678-79. Among those said to have been killed were Tudugala Appuhāmy and five other noblemen, three of whom were provincial governors. There is no way of ascertaining the immediate cause of these executions, but it is apparent that Rajasimha was increasingly faced with treason and disloyalty among his nobles, provoked, perhaps, by the presence of the Dutch in the coast.

The king's age and ill health together with his domestic troubles were some of the factors that led to his relative inactivity during his last days. After 1679 the attitude of the Dutch too changed from the coercive policy of van Goens to one of peace and smooth diplomacy under Lawrence Pyl. The governor referred to himself as the 'king's governor of Colombo.' Rājasimha

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon, pp 103-4.

too made some positive gestures of goodwill very likely with the intention of ensuring the smooth succession of his son. A few months before his death Rājasimha made an unexpected and remarkable gesture of his friendship. He released all the Dutch prisoners and the ambassadors who had been detained for years in his court, and sent them back to Colombo with a message of goodwill to the governor. Having thus created an atmosphere of peace and harmony, the king brought his young son to the limelight, invested him with royal authority before he - the king - passed away in December 1687.

Rājasimha is an outstanding personality in the history of Sri Lanka. Within his kingdom he had established undisputed authority. The Sinhala and Pali literature, the folklore and folk songs of the time, depict him as a popular hero. Among the common people he was venerated as a god - "Rasim deyyo." The cinnamon peelers from the Dutch lands promptly obeyed any command from the king. They would evacuate their lands and move to Kandy to do his bidding. The *lascarin* forces defected from their employers and Dutch subjects would throw off their allegiance to the foreigner, at the mere mention of Rājasimha's name. He had great personal charm and endearing qualities which helped him to win over the loyalty of several Europeans who took service under him. In an age of bigotry he lacked racial and religious bias, quite a contrast to the Dutch and the Portuguese. Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims enjoyed equal rights in his realm and the Roman Catholic mission established its headquarters there.

Rājasimha's relentless battles were not fought in vain. He succeeded in preserving the independence of his kingdom and halting the advance of the foreigner. The opposition he maintained towards the Dutch was the last worthwhile resistance shown by Kandy to any European power. He personally planned his campaigns, led his troops to battle and was in the thick of battlefields both in Randenivela and Gannoruva commanding his troops. Rājasimha was one of the earliest Asian potentates to appreciate the value of European trained armies led by European officers in ground warfare and this was one of the reasons why he detained white men giving them privileges denied to his subjects. We have the evidence of a Frenchman serving the VOC, Jean de Lacombe, that several French officers who came in de la Hayes's fleet, begged him for permission to remain in Kandy. They served Rājasimha with unswerving loyalty and were appointed commanders of the king's army. Lacombe expresses the opinion that if there were but 50 Frenchmen in the service of Rājasimha, the Hollanders would soon be in trouble, "since they would have trained for battle the best subjects of the

Prince who do not lack heart or courage in the most perilous undertakings."<sup>24</sup> After him no king led his troops to battle. In the case of an invasion, his successors burnt the city and went into hiding.

Rājasimha's linguistic ability permitted him to meet with ambassadors personally and fashion his own foreign policy.<sup>25</sup> The indefatigable energy he displayed when it came to matters of state was such that soon after the victory at Gannoruva he journeyed to Batticaloa to meet the Dutch and discuss the terms of the treaty. After Rājasimha the foreign ambassadors' encounter with the king deteriorated into an elaborate ritualised ceremonial, while the conduct of foreign affairs slipped into the hands of the chiefs. This trend became apparent in the next reign.

Amidst the political vicissitudes of Rajasimha's reign, a significant development which later led to serious consequences, was taking place. This was the beginning of a series of matrimonial alliances between the Kandyan royal family and the Nāyaks of Madura. The Nāyaks, with whom the king of Kandy had dealings, were originally the viceroys of the Vijayanagar empire, who were dispatched from the capital to rule over the distant provinces of the empire. There were Nāyak governors in Madura, Tanjore, Gingi, Vellore, and Seringapatam but towards the end of the sixteenth century when the power and prestige of Vijayanagar had declined the governors began to act as independent sovereigns. The spread of the Vijayanagar empire to the south led to considerable emigration of people from the Telegu speaking areas to the south where the Tamil language was spoken. These settlers included generals, other officers and soldiers who came in the wake of the viceroys, as well as peasants of all castes and persons in various walks of life. In the course of time many of these humble settlers assumed the name Nāyak which was originally used by the ruling families. The name Nāyak, therefore did not specify any social or economic group. The natives of the south, referred to the new comers who adopted the Tamil language as vadukun or vaduga meaning northerner. It is by this name that they are known in Sinhala, Portuguese and Dutch<sup>26</sup> sources.

A Compendium of the East being an account of voyages to the Grand Indus made by Sieur Jean de Lacombe of Quercy formerly Captain at Arms in the service of the Company of the Indies of Holland, 1681, Translation, (London, 1937), p 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Knox, p 51 remarks that the "King careth not that any should talk with Ambassadors, but himself, with whom he taketh great delight to have a conference."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> The Portuguese and Dutch sometimes call them badagas.

Among the Nāyakkars of Madura, Tirumala Nāyaka (1623-59) was perhaps the most notable. He shook off the nominal allegiance of Vijayanagar and made Madura independent. It is believed that Tirumala Nāyaka had a younger brother named Kumāra Muttu Nāyaka, who ruled as deputy to him. Thereafter, all Nāyak rulers of Madura had a deputy who belonged to the lineage of Kumāra Muttu Nāyaka. It will be seen that the second and third Nāyakkar kings of Kandy were remotely connected to this collateral branch of the Madura Nāyaks. The last ruler of any consequence who wielded power over Madura was Vijaya Ranga Cokkanātha (1688-1732) after whom the Nāyak territories plunged into anarchy and fell before the Muslim armies of Chanda Sahib.

While these events were taking place in the mainland Rajasimha II was fighting a desperate battle to safeguard his kingdom from the Europeans on the coast, first the Portuguese and then the Dutch. Amidst the troubled politics on both sides we hear of a series of matrimonial alliances between the Nāyaks of Madura and the ruling family at Kandy. The Madura and Tinnevelly districts of South India were separated from Sri Lanka only by the Gulf of Mannar and as a result there had been frequent contact over the centuries, amicable as well as hostile between Sri Lanka and this area. The practice of securing brides from South India was not a new phenomenon. There had been several recorded instances beginning from the legendary prince Vijaya where brides and grooms from South India were acceptable to the Sinhalese royal families. But it was only in the latter half of the 17th century that it became a matter of policy for the chief queen or queens to be obtained from Madura. The reasons which may have prompted the Sinhalese kings to contact these matrimonial alliances with south India may reasonably be inferred.

Royal marriages are instruments of state policy rather than affairs of the heart. One good reason for the alliances with South India may be found in the need to curb the growing power of the nobles who had by this time become a threat to the security of the throne. Inter-marriage with royalty would mean a further growth in the power of the nobility. By introducing these South Indian elements to the court the kings were probably trying to check the influence of the insubordinate nobles.

It is known that by the 17th century the kings of Kandy had already sought military assistance from the Nāyaks. Vimaladharmasūriya I obtained help from the Tanjore - Madura area and contingents of *vadugas* came over

to Sri Lanka.<sup>27</sup> The next king Senarat and Çankili, king of Jaffna received military aid from the vadugas.<sup>28</sup> No less than a thousand men from Madura fought for Rājasimha in the victorious battle of Gannoruva in 1638.<sup>29</sup> In view of this continuous and substantial assistance Rajasimha would have considered it expedient to reinforce this friendship by a marriage alliance, for the brides soon followed in the wake of the soldiers. Marriages with the ruling family of Madura would also solve the dynastic problem created by the disappearance of all the other Sinhalese kingdoms, that of finding brides of appropriate social status. The king desired a consort of the sūriyavamsa or solar dynasty to grace the occasion of his consecration and also produce an heir acceptable to the people. Since the royal family at Kandy was the only one of that rank in the island, Rajasimha turned to the kingdom of Madura which was close geographically, and closer still in historic associations with Sri Lanka, for a royal spouse. Rājasimha's "right and lawful queen was a Malabar."<sup>30</sup> It is known that the king had a secondary wife, Väligama duggannā mahatmayā, a Kandyan lady of noble birth to whom he gave lands and wealth.<sup>31</sup> But queenly rank and status were reserved from this reign onwards for the Madura ladies. Rājasimha's successors too followed his example in this respect.

Rājasimha's successor, Vimaladharmasūriya II (1687-1707), lacked the warlike and dynamic qualities of his father. Brought up in the seclusion of a monastery for a greater part of his life, he was a mild and peaceful man, inexperienced in affairs of state. The cessation of hostilities by Rājasimha and the atmosphere of goodwill he tried to create in the twilight of his life ushered in a period of peace, which though strained and superficial lasted for about ninety years. A century of turmoil and conflict, the constantly shifting boundaries and changing allegiance had disrupted the life of the people. Under Vimaladharmasūriya, the boundaries become fixed and no one wished to change them because both the Kandyans and the Dutch desired peace. These settled conditions should have provided the opportunity for the kings

- <sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p 154.
- <sup>30</sup> Knox, op. cit., p 54, Cv, chapter 96, verse 40.
- <sup>31</sup> A C Lawrie, A Gazetteer of the Central Province, p 753.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, 1594-1612, p 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, 1617-1638, pp 42-3,49,97-8.

to establish royal authority over the land.<sup>32</sup> But the opportunity was lost for both Vimaladharmasūriya and his successor, though of differing temperaments, lacked drive and energy. Vimaladharmasūriya was intensely religious while his successor was pleasure loving, so that the chiefs were at liberty to strengthen their influence much to the detriment of royal power.

William Hubbard,<sup>33</sup> an English prisoner in Kandy for a period of 44 years (1660-1703), especially mentions Yālēgoda Rāla,<sup>34</sup> Disāva of Mātalē and Edaňduvāvē Rāla<sup>35</sup>, Disāva of the Three and Four Kōralēs as the leading nobles and usurpers of royal power. It is said that these two "with the other court chiefs mainly govern the kingdom and give the king no more knowledge of affairs than they desire".... "The people or subjects loved the king and cannot speak enough of his goodness but they hate and fear the court chiefs because of their evil dealings without the king's knowledge."<sup>36</sup> The king's enthusiastic commitment to his religion was exploited by some bhikkhus to further their influence as well, one of whom Vattēpola Terunnānsē, was said to have been the king's greatest confidante.

In spite of his pacific temperament the king showed his disapproval of Dutch policies. From the outset he made it plain to the Dutch that the Kandyans desired not only to participate in the island's trade but also to keep the ports open in order to maintain foreign contacts. There had been frequent religious intercourse between the Buddhists of Sri Lanka and South East Asia. These contacts had been disturbed throughout the 17th century due to the presence of the Portuguese and the constant wars that prevailed. It was seen that the *samgha* or order of monks which was once revived by Vimaladharmasūriya I at the end of the sixteenth century had become extinct.

36 S Arasaratnam, 'William Hubbard...," op.cit., p 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> S Arasaratnam, "Vimala Dharma Suriya II (1687 -1707) and his relations with the Dutch" in CJHSS 6(1), 1963, pp 59-70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> William Hubbard, a fellow prisoner of Robert Knox, escaped to Colombo in 1703. His report on Kandy had been translated into Dutch and was once again rendered into English by S Arasaratnam, "William Hubbard, Fellow Prisoner of Knox in Kandy, 1660-1703" in UCR, Vol. XIX, No.1, April 1961, pp 30-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> The name is given as Galēgoda, but this is a mutation in the course of two translations of the name Yālēgoda.

<sup>35</sup> Son of Edaňduvāvē, executed for treason in 1664.

Due to the efforts of Vimaladharmasūriya II, a group of 33 Burmese *bhikkhus* led by the Mahā Thēras, Santāna and Lokāgrapuggala, arrived in Kandy and helped re-establish the order.<sup>37</sup> They wished to continue these cultural relations with other Buddhist centres in South East Asia and for this purpose the ports had to be left open.

From 1688 to 1697 the Dutch had tried to negotiate a treaty with Kandy with the intention of securing recognition from the king of their possession of the maritime lands. But the king refused to touch any offer or start any negotiations that did not at the outset concede to him the freedom to have commercial and political contacts through the island's ports. The agitation on the part of the Kandyans together with some purely economic factors prompted the Dutch in 1697 to partially liberate the trade of Sri Lanka. Now private traders could sail in and out of the king's ports with goods other than cinnamon. Immediately brisk trading activity began. To make the best out of the situation, in 1700, the Kandyans closed their kadavat or the traditional outlets from their kingdom to the low country. The objective was to channel the export of arecanuts through the king's port and to prevent them passing through Dutch hands. This measure imposed great hardships on the company and in 1703 the ports were closed again.<sup>38</sup> Although the Kandyans re-acted with hostility and refused to sell their arecanuts to the Dutch, the political and military weakness of the kingdom, and his own lack of initiative prevented the king from maintaining a prolonged opposition to the foreigner. Kandyan resistance to the drastic Dutch policies was henceforth a very feeble one. The acquiescence of the king in provocative measures by the Dutch could be understood in the light of his contemporary needs. It was stated that Vimaladharmasūriva II had married a princess from Madura according to the established practice of the time. The time was ripe to fetch a bride for his son, the heir to the throne. Since the Dutch were guarding the waters round the island their approval was necessary for any communication between Kandy and South India. In 1706 two Kandyan envoys embarked on a Dutch ship in Colombo, from whence they proceeded to the court of Madura on this errand.<sup>39</sup> Governor C J Simons remarks, that far from the request being granted, the ambassadors

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> D B Jayatilaka, "Embassies to Arakan," JCBRAS, Vol. XXXV, No.93, 1940, pp 1-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> S Arasaratnam "Vimala Dharma Suriya 11 (1687-1707) and his Relations with the Dutch", *op.cit.*, p 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Udarata Vitti, P M P Abhayasingha (ed.), pp 122-9.

were not even well received in Madura.<sup>40</sup> While the mission was not a success, the king was placed under obligation to the company for the facilities afforded to him.

The period between 1658 and the death of Vimaladharmasūriya II in 1707 witnessed a steady decline in the position of the Kandyan kingdom. In 1658 Kandy faced Dutch power on an equal footing. Dutch attempts to encroach on the kingdom and encircle the island were vigorously resisted though with limited success. By 1707 Dutch fear of Kandyan hostility was not half as great as it was in the 17th century. By this time all Kandyan foreign contacts and trade were effectively channelled through the company. Within the kingdom, the position of the king vis-a-vis his chiefs had It is only in the realm of religion that deteriorated considerably. Vimaladharmasūriya II asserted his personality and henceforth Buddhism began to play a more important part in politics than it did in the 17th century. A significant achievement of the king was that he revived the sampha and re-established international contacts. As a result he won the loyalty of Sinhalese Buddhists all over the island. Much to the embarrassment of the Dutch, he improved the shrine at Kälaniya, a stones throw from their capital of Colombo. Vimaladharmasūriya II set this trend and successive rulers too considered themselves the patrons of Buddhism all over the island. The Sinhalese Buddhists, whether in Dutch or Kandyan territory, focused their allegiance on the king of Kandy. This allegiance cut across political boundaries in spite of Dutch attempts to subvert it and tended to unite the people of the highlands and coastal areas through the bond of a common faith.41

On 4 June 1707 Vimaladharmasūriya II died and his young son ascended the throne as Srī Vīra Parākrama Narēndrasimha (1707-39). After his accession, the king resumed the efforts to find a royal consort from South India. Narēndrasimha had a Kandyan wife, of very aristocratic birth, the daughter of Monaravila *Disāva* of Mātalē. Inspite of all these qualifications, queenly rank was denied her and the king turned to South India in search of a bride. The parentage of Narēndrasimha's South Indian *mahēsi* is very important for it was her brother who ascended the throne in 1739 and founded the Nāyakkar dynasty. According to Sinhala and Pali sources she was a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Memoir of Cornelius Joan Simons, p 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> S Arasaratnam, "Vimala Dharma Suriya II(1687-1707) and his Relations with the Dutch" in CIHSS 6(1), 1963, p 70.

princess. The Dutch governor Schreuder<sup>42</sup> too refers to her as a princess but adds that she was the daughter of one Pitti Nāyakkar who was a vaduga. However a Tamil document found among the Mirtanjaya manuscripts<sup>43</sup> provides further information regarding the ancestry of the queen of Narendrasimha. It says that the Nayak of Madura, Vijaya Ranga Cokkanatha not only rebuffed the request from the king of Kandy, but also forbade his relatives to accept the offer. Then a destitute subject of the Nāyak secretly accepted the presents from the Kandyan envoys and agreed to give them his daughter. The bride accompanied by her parents, brothers and sisters fled to Rameswaran and thence to Kandy. Whatever be the truth of this story it is certain that the bride's parents were people of no consequence in their homeland. The consecration of Narendrasimha and his South Indian consort was celebrated with great magnificence in 1708.44 Even after the nuptial festivities were over, the bride's relatives showed no inclination to return home and preferred to make Kandy their home. In 1710 another such bride came to Kandy and her family and retinue, too, continued to reside in Kandy.

Narēndrasimha was not the mild and god-fearing man that his father was. "The king had a violent temper" wrote Governor C J Simons in 1707, "directly opposite that of his father." The nobles who were used to the gentle ways of Vimaladharmasūriya would certainly have resented the new king's temperament. At the beginning of his reign there was dissension among the nobles.<sup>45</sup> The roots of this factionalism and the unrest must have been well established earlier, but the youth of the king, his well known addiction to women, wine and song and his indifference to matters of state must have provided the opportunity for more overt acts of violence among the nobles. The nobles clashed with each other, coveted the throne and engaged in rebellion, with the result that agriculture, religion and education, were neglected.<sup>46</sup> It is said that certain people descended from the noble families

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, v 429.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Edited and translated by the Revd. William Taylor in Oriental Historical Manuscripts in the Tamil Language, Vol.II, App.G pp 42-9. There is an English translation of a document containing the same information in the India Office Library, Colin McKenzie Collection (General), Vol.4, p 107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> A C Lawrie, A Gazetteer of the Central Province of Ceylon, Vol.I, p 41.

<sup>45</sup> Mandārampurapuvata, v 428.

in Udunuvara were degraded by the king with the intention of putting an end to ancient clans.<sup>47</sup> When in this context, Narendrasimha fetched *mahesis* from Madura, he was perhaps trying to prevent the growth of noble and well established consort families.

As early as the second year of his reign a plot was afoot to assassinate him and place on the throne a certain Pattiye Bandara.48 ,Some sources refer to him as a brother of the king<sup>49</sup> but very likely he was a half brother, the son of Vimaladharmasūriya by a secondary wife. Whereas the king's mother was a foreigner. Pattive Bandara's mother belonged to the Kandyan nobility. On examining the family histories of the conspirators it is seen that many of them were of aristocratic birth whose families had served Kandyan royalty for generations. The ring leaders of the plot were, Yālēgoda, Disāva of Mātalē and Edaňduvāvē, Disāva of the Three and Four Korales, who were the most trusted confidantes of the king's father. Several officials of the central and provincial government and palace staff were involved in it. In the month of February - March 1709 the plotters with the help of some palace guards planned to do away with the king, but he was saved by the loyalty of the Second Adigār Rammoloka, also Disāva of Sabaragamuva. The rebels and their protege were put to death according to the law of the land and the few loyal courtiers were amply rewarded by the king.

The attempted rebellion of 1709 is mentioned in a letter of Ignatious de Almeida, a Oratorian priest who had arrived in the island in 1708 and had been put in charge of the Roman Catholic villages in the highlands of Kandy. He reported that as long as the rebellion lasted there was general confusion in the city, and there was a danger to the church as well, for the priests were liable to be suspected of being supporters of the king, who was very well disposed towards the church.<sup>50</sup>

The reasons which tempted the chiefs to rebel seem fairly clear. The king, as we are aware, did attempt to keep the chiefs under close supervision, and this must have been irksome to many of them especially to those who had wielded a freer hand in the previous reign. The rebellion took place about a

50 S G Perera, The Life of Venerable Father Joseph Vaz, p 22.

#### 205.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Colombo Museum, MS x9, p 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> A Sinhalese manuscript describing the rebellion of 1709 is edited by P M P Abhayasingha in Udarata Vitti, pp 27-9. Also land grant of 1710, BMOR, 121388.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Davy, p 309.

year after the king's marriage to the *vaduga* maiden. Although there had been such marriages earlier, there is no evidence that as on this occasion the bride's relatives flocked to Kandy and made it their home. The numbers of these unwelcome visitors had recently increased and they had come to form a distinct and alien power group within the court. This may have excited the jealousy of the Kandyan nobles. Besides Narēndrasimha was a playboy, so much so that his subjects called him *Sellamniriňdu*, the playful monarch.<sup>51</sup> He was young, being only nineteen years old at the time, and had a long reign ahead of him, so that the chiefs may have considered it timely and opportune to do away with him, and place Pattiyē Bandāra on the throne.

Undeterred by the rebellion that occurred at the very outset of his reign, Narendrasimha tried to maintain a balance of power by appointing a vaduga to the responsible office of mahā gabadā nilamē, steward of the royal stores, placing him in charge of the royal villages in Udunuvara, Yatinuvara, Dumbara, Hēvahäta, Hārispattuva and Maturata. This was an unwise step, for these areas which lay closest to the capital were the most populous in the kingdom and contained many rich paddy lands and the ancestral homes of many Sinhalese chieftains. On this occasion the people instigated by the local chiefs of these districts rose in revolt. The uprising which took place in 1732 was ruthlessly crushed. It is said that Hevahäta and Maturata were burned down on the orders of the king. Several of the ringleaders were done to death, their lands confiscated and their offices given to others. Once the king's wrath had cooled down, the adigars and some of the disavas warned him that it was impolitic to place foreigners in ministerial offices.<sup>52</sup> These incidents make it evident that there was a deep seated dissatisfaction ready to erupt into open hostility from time to time.

The latter half of Narēndrasimha's reign coincided with the last days of the Madura Nāyak kingdom, when it was overrun by the armies of Chanda Sahib, Nawab of Arcot (1734-36). Due to these unsettled conditions the flow of immigrants increased, the more so because by this time definite contacts with Kandy had been established. The immigrants who had come from India in earlier years had been absorbed into Sinhalese society. Because the vaduga Nāyaks who came in the 18th century, came not as refugees or nameless adventurers, but as kinsmen of royalty and representatives of the sūriyavamsa, they tried to maintain the myth of the solar lineage by keeping aloof and living in a separate street which was exclusively reserved for them by the

<sup>51</sup> Gunnapane Vajiranana, Vihāra-vaga Vitti, p 11.

<sup>52</sup> Mandārampurapuvata, vs 468-82.

king.53 Although their numbers were now considerable, they did not intermarry with the Sinhalese nobles but remained an endogamous group attached to the court circle. Being foreigners they had no bond with the people and in the Kandyan villages traditional loyalties were strong. Not being Buddhists they had no sympathy with the sampha which commanded the respect of king's nobles and commoners. The Dutch disliked them intensely because the Nāyakkars were engaged in a secret trade with their compatriots in South India, in spite of all Dutch attempts to prevent it. They clung more and more to the person of the king and sought to achieve their ambitions by winning the king's favour. So long as this favour remained personal, they were perhaps tolerated, but when this favour took the form of appointment to leading posts in the royal service, the old nobility became actively resentful. State appointments were the only avenue to wealth and influence and there were many aristocratic families which considered such posts their prerogative. Members of these families had served Kandyan royalty for generations and when the aliens were given preference over them antagonism naturally resulted. Although we have clear evidence only of one such appointment it is not unlikely that many more were made. The uprising of 1732 seemed to have had the desired effect, for never again, not even when a Nāyakkar sat on throne, do we hear of an administrative appointment being given to a Nāyakkar, at least not in the higher ranks of the service.

Another likely reason for the discontent was the king's inadequate support of Buddhism. The intense loyalty of the Kandyans for their ancestral religion is amply demonstrated in contemporary literary works and the land grants by noblemen and commoners alike to religious institutions. The king's father had devoted his lifetime to furthering the cause of religion and had invited monks to come from Arakan in 1697 to revive the order. It has always been the duty of the king to maintain the continuity of the *samgha* by holding annual ceremonies of ordination. But Narēndrasimha's indifference to these matters was such that within a few years of his accession, the number of *bhikkhus* dwindled and the last of them is said to have died in 1729.

The king's partiality towards the Roman Catholic missionaries in Kandy was also a cause of resentment. We learn from Portuguese sources<sup>54</sup> that at this time the Roman Catholic fathers Jacome Gonçalves and Ignatious de Almeida were engaged in missionary work within the Kandyan kingdom with the support of the king. It is said that the king ordered that these priests

<sup>53</sup> It was known as Kumaruppe Vidiya and after British occupation, Malabar Street.

<sup>54</sup> Replacao que o Padre Propozito da Congregacao de Oratorio de Goa fez de estado presente da missao de Çeylao, Vol.40, folio 740.

should be treated with the same degree of honour as was given to his nobles. This situation would have caused further tension, because we learn from the same source that the Roman Catholic missionaries were currying favour with the Nāyakkars. This liaison between two alien factions certainly aggravated the ill feeling among the nobles and the *samgha* and also led to further complications later on.

Harassed by disaffection and insecurity at home, and plagued by frequent attacks of ill health, Narendrasimha, had neither the resources nor the energy to formulate a vigorous foreign policy. He was dependent on Dutch help to fetch his brides and on Dutch physicians and medicines for his ailments. He tried to maintain their goodwill, although the continued closure of the ports and channelling of imports and exports by the Company imposed severe hardships on all sections of Kandyan society. The opposition to Dutch action was now initiated by the chiefs who tried to force the king to follow a sterner course of action. Although on two occasions 1716 and 1732 the kadavat were closed so that Kandyan produce should not flow into Dutch hands, the Dutch did not relax their drastic monopolistic policies. Kandyan hostility was beginning to break out in overt acts of unfriendliness instigated no doubt by the chiefs. There had been instances where the cinnamon peelers in Dutch territory, who had to perform obligatory service to the Company, fled to the king's lands to escape this oppressive form of taxation. It was suspected that some of the Kandyan chiefs were encouraging the malcontents. The situation deteriorated rapidly and the Kandyans began to make minor incursions into Dutch territory. But the pressure on the Dutch was relieved after 1737 when the king's ill health became a matter of major concern.55

We have no information regarding the last days of Narēndrasimha's life except the little we can glean from Dutch sources. Although he had three Madura queens all of them were childless. But a secondary wife of the king, a Kandyan lady of the govikula, bore him a son named Unambuvē Bandāra.<sup>56</sup> The bar to his succession was the lack of royal status in the mother. The king's brother-in-law, a native from Madura was being groomed for kingship. According to the laws of succession that prevailed in Kandy, the throne almost always passed from father to son born of a mahēsī or from brother to brother. But when Narēndrasimha nominated as his successor, the brother of his chief queen, his act was without precedent in the island's history. The events of his reign perhaps influenced the king to make this choice. The king feared and envied the growing power of his nobles and to

56 Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 35.

<sup>55</sup> Memoir of van Gollenesse, Introduction by S Arasaratnam, pp 6-13.

install a Nāyakkar in the throne was a sure means of curbing their pretensions. The Madura youth was receiving the traditional secular and religious training of a Sinhalese prince under the guidance of the most erudite religious personality of the realm, Saranamkara sāmanēra.<sup>57</sup> This was a tactful move for the foreigner who had been in the Kandyan court since 1708, now became acceptable to at least a section of the nobles. From the events that follow it is likely that the king's nominee had the support of the First Adigār Ähälēpola. But the king's choice was not undisputed. The claims of Unambuvē Bandāra were pressed by the kinsmen of his mother.<sup>58</sup> They were supported by Leuke<sup>59</sup> who was an antagonist of Ähälepola and no favourite of the king. He espoused the cause of Unambuve with the intention of preventing a Nāyakkar sitting on the throne. But the other nobles feared that if Unambuve became king his mother's kinsmen would wield influence over the king and gain all places of honour. The question of a successor remained a burning one for over a year<sup>60</sup> while the king lay critically ill. When the king died in 1739 his wish prevailed and the native from Madura ascended the throne.

The reign of Narendrasimha was not marked by any significant achievements in internal development or foreign relations. But he is remembered because he was the last representative of Sinhalese royalty. With his death the dynasty of Sēnāsammata Vikramabāhu, the first ruler of the independent kingdom of Kandy ended. This line of rulers continued through Kusumāsanadēvi (later baptised as Dona Cätherinā), the great grand mother of Narendrasimha. After him a foreign youth with no pretensions to royalty ascended the throne of Kandy and began the Nayakkar dynasty. The reign of Narendrasimha witnessed a further decline of royal power, when the fashioning of foreign policy slipped imperceptibly into the hands of the nobles. We also see the incipient power struggle between the rival groups, the Kandyan aristocrats and the Nāyakkars; a rivalry which led to grave consequences later on. The impact of South India was felt not only on Kandyan politics and court life but also on society in general. Kandyan art, architecture, music, dancing, folk cults and beliefs began to show indelible signs of prolonged Dravidian contact.

<sup>57</sup> Mandārampurapuvata, v 512.

<sup>58</sup> Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 31.

<sup>59</sup> Memoir of Joan Gideon Loten, Introduction, p v.

<sup>60</sup> ibid.

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### CHAPTER IX

# THE CONSOLIDATION OF DUTCH POWER IN THE MARITIME REGIONS 1658-1687

### **S** Arasaratnam

With the Portuguese surrender of the fortress of Jaffna to the attacking forces of Admiral Rijckloff van Goens in June 1658, the Dutch power had replaced the Portuguese as the ruler of the maritime regions of the island.<sup>1</sup> The contest for these lands, that had gone on for twenty years, had been finally resolved and the Portuguese deprived of yet another valuable part of their Estado da India by a waxing Dutch power. At the same time, the Dutch fleet under Admiral van Goens crossed over to the South Indian mainland for an attack on Portuguese strongholds on that coast. In January 1658 Tuticorin was taken and, later in the same year, the port-city of Nagapatnam on the Coromandel coast. The conquest of Tuticorin and Nagapatnam, two fortified harbours on the Indian coast opposite the island of Sri Lanka, considerably strengthened the security of the island and made the Dutch masters of the narrow straits between Sri Lanka and the Indian mainland. After a short respite of three years, Dutch expansion in south India was resumed and Coilan (1661), Cranganore (1662), Cochin (1663) and Cannanore (1663) were taken successively. With this, Portuguese presence was totally expelled from southern India and the Dutch navy exercised dominance over these waters.

Within the country, the deteriorating relations with king Rājasimha II of Kandy created problems in consolidating Dutch authority over the lowlands. The permanent establishment of Dutch power in the island was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> On the expulsion of the Portuguese and the establishment of Dutch power see K W Goonewardena, *The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1638-1658*, (Amsterdam, 1958) and G D Winius, *The Fatal History of Portuguese Ceylon*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1971).

achieved at the cost of incurring Kandyan hostility. It was in violation of the contract of 1638 and was not recognised by the king, who claimed sovereignty over the lands now occupied by the Dutch. The Dutch-Kandyan alliance that had seen severe strains after 1638 was finally broken in 1656 with the capture of Colombo and its fortification by the Dutch. From then on there had been open conflict between the two parties and the king was particularly aggrieved at what he considered Dutch deceit over Colombo. The elimination of the Portuguese power from the island had removed the common enemy that had hitherto prolonged the uneasy alliance. A number of breaches occurred that widened the gulf between them. Rajasimha proceeded to do the utmost damage to the Dutch. Large extents of land in the korales on the western and southern frontiers were systematically devastated by his forces and denuded of population. The greatest amount of damage was done in the Vallalāviti, Pasdun, Rayigam, Salpiti and Alutkūru korales. Thus was created a long belt of wasteland between the king's domains and those of the Dutch that served as a natural frontier between the two.

It was not altogether true that the Dutch had stepped into Portuguese shoes.<sup>2</sup> Admittedly in the north, the Dutch annexed wholesale what the Portuguese held through conquest from the kingdom of Jaffna. There was thus no change in frontiers here. But in the rest of the country, to the west, south and east, the Dutch held far less territory than the Portuguese held in the heyday of their power. In the east, the ports of Trincomalee, Kottiyar and Batticaloa now belonged to Kandy. To the west and south-west, Rājasimha had annexed some extensive and populated  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}s$  during the war with the Portuguese) was now in Kandyan hands. So was a major portion of the disāvany of Sabaragamuva and the eastern half of the disāvany of Four Kōralēs. In this area the extent of land occupied by the Dutch was about half that held by the Portuguese. Thus, though Rājasimha's diplomacy had not succeeded completely, he could console himself in the thought that he had come out of the whole episode better than when he went into it.

The refusal of Rājasimha to recognise the legality of Dutch occupation of the lowlands compounded the task of consolidation.<sup>3</sup> The Dutch based their claim on rather weak legal foundations. They held that by the treaty of 1638 they had undertaken to help the king drive the Portuguese out of the island in return for the reimbursement of all expenses incurred in the process. Accounts of these expenses were maintained and, after the fall

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, pp 23-47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See K W Goonewardena, op. cit., p 181.

of Jaffna, a bill was presented to the king. Out of the expenses was deducted the value of what had already been received from the land in the form of cinnamon, arecanut, elephants and land revenue. The value was fixed unilaterally at a ridiculously low price. The balance was a sum of 7,265,460 guilders which, as the Dutch were well aware, the king had no means of paying. The lowlands was being held in permanent security for the recovery of this above sum of money. In the meanwhile the king's liability went on increasing with every additional day that Dutch forces were stationed in Sri Lanka. Fully aware of this shaky legal title, the Dutch felt it not advisable to rake up these embarrassing issues.<sup>4</sup> In fact, it was only in 1766 that a Kandyan sovereign recognised Dutch sovereignty over the lowlands. Until then succeeding kings of Kandy addressed Dutch Governors as 'my Governor in Colombo.'

The Dutch were a commercial company called upon by the circumstances of events to administer a large extent of territory in Sri Lanka. The successful exploitation of the lands to derive the maximum profits out of them were their overriding concern. For this, continuous peace and good government were necessary. Agriculture that had been disrupted by the recent wars had to be resumed. If the productivity of the country was to be restored it was necessary to persuade the people of the permanence of Dutch sovereignty and its good intentions. Above all, the goodwill of the king and the people concerned was necessary to ensure the seasonal cinnamon harvest, the commodity of trade that had been the original cause of Dutch involvement in Sri Lanka. In this context the absence of recognition from the king was ominous because it made control of Sinhalese subjects of the border provinces difficult. It kept the lands in a continuous state of tension and kept alive whatever loyalty the people there had towards the king. These problems became the first concern of the Dutch officials in Sri Lanka.

The task of resolving these problems fell on the shoulders of Admiral Rijckloff van Goens. A dynamic, forceful and highly controversial personality, van Goens is one of the great servants of the Dutch East India Company in the 17th century. He had been made an Admiral in 1656 and given charge of the attack on Portuguese possessions in South Asia. With the expulsion of the Portuguese from Sri Lanka, he was installed in Colombo as Commissary and Superintendent over Coromandel, Surat, Sri Lanka, Bengal and Malacca. He exercised a general control over affairs in Sri Lanka, which was, however, specifically in the charge of a Governor, Adrian van Meyden, and from Colombo he continued to direct operations against the remaining

<sup>4</sup> See S Arasaratnam, "Dutch Sovereignty in Ceylon: A Historical Survey of its Problems," CJHSS I, (1958), pp 105-21. Portuguese possessions on the Malabar coast. In Sri Lanka he addressed himself to the task of ironing out relations with Rājasimha of Kandy and organising an orderly administration of the lowlands. He was to dominate the course of events in the island for almost two decades.

The immediate problem in Sri Lanka was to establish firm foundations for a civilian administration in the newly acquired territories and at the same time to maintain a sufficient state of military alert to withstand any further attacks by the king. The king continued to be unfriendly and the defence of the frontiers was very necessary to guard against the repetition of sporadic incursions of the king's forces into Dutch territory. The organization of inland defence took Dutch military presence to the frontiers. Watch posts were set up in strategic locations and were manned by small companies of Dutch troops assisted by Sinhalese *lascarins*. This made available Dutch protection to people in the remotest areas. All passes leading to the Kandyan kingdom and former Portuguese outposts were occupied. A powerful wall of defence was erected on the frontiers with Kandy, especially on the populated western and south-western sides.

The uneasy peace between the Dutch and the Kandyans was not to last long.<sup>5</sup> In February 1659 a Dutch force fell on the Kandyan port of Kalpitiya and took it after a brief assault. It was fortified and garrisoned by a Dutch company. This act invited Kandyan retaliation and the war was reopened on many fronts along the western frontier. The decision to seize Kalpitiya was one taken by van Goens and the officials in the island and subsequently approved by Batavia. Kalpitiya was a significant port in the country trade with India. It was an important west coast outlet of the Kandyan kingdom and its loss was a serious blow to Kandyan trade. It was the first of a series of mounting acts by van Goens to encircle and weaken the Kandyan kingdom and to force its king to come to terms with the Dutch and recognise their sovereignty over the lowlands.

Rājasimha reacted immediately to this new threat. All his fears of Dutch expansionism were revived but he could not save Kalpițiya. Kandyan forces converged on the port and cut it off on the land side but could not challenge the Dutch on the sea side from where they had launched their attack. The Kandyans laid waste the lands in the hinterland and carried away with them many of the inhabitants. Similar attacks took place to the south as well where guerrilla tactics were employed by bands of Kandyan irregulars. The Dutch were forced to strengthen their interior outposts by deploying a large force. Van Goens multiplied the number of military posts and fortifications throughout the land. He also organised a mobile field force that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1658-1687, (Amsterdam, 1958), pp 12-21.

would hasten to trouble spots at the first signal. In this way Kandyan pressure on the western korales was relieved. Van Goens proposed to take the offensive into the king's domains by a two-pronged march towards certain key points from which the disāvanies of Sabaragamuva, Four Korales and Seven Korales could be controlled. He also suggested a simultaneous occupation of the king's remaining ports on the east and the enforcement of an economic blockage.

All these suggestions were turned down by the Supreme Government at Batavia. They were alarmed at the extent of territorial commitment in the island.<sup>6</sup> The necessity to erect secure defences on the frontiers with the Kandyan kingdom and to maintain a military presence in the interior had claimed a large military establishment that was consuming a lot of money. To declare war on the king and take the offensive against him would have meant that the Dutch were augmenting their territorial involvements in the island. This was something they would not agree to and they seriously recommended the officials in the island to keep the peace with Rājasimha and to be satisfied with holding what they had. They were quite content to leave Rājasimha in the occupation of his present lands if he would allow them in peace to exploit the economic resources of their part of the island. With the conquest of Portuguese possessions in Malabar, completed in 1663, they had reached the limits of territorial expansion in South Asia.

On their instructions a series of steps were taken to restore good relations with Rājasimha. Kalpitiya, where the trade had been closed to Kandyans after its occupation, was now opened to their traffic. Routes to Kandy were reopened and commercial and other contacts were re-established. Dutch embassies again visited Kandy and were received, at first with coolness, but later with increasing warmth. The Dutch administration in the island was expressly forbidden from any territorial expansion at the expense of the king. The Commissioner and the Governor were instructed to 'caress' Rājasimha and maintain good relations with him.

Though there were sound considerations against territorial expansion landwards, along the sea other pressures operated. The wars with the Portuguese had admittedly made the Dutch masters of the seas around Sri Lanka. But their physical possession of the littoral was limited. There were large parts of the coastline that were not theirs and this was particularly so on the east of the island. Here there were two fortified harbours, Trincomalee and Batticaloa, besides other smaller ports which belonged to the king of Kandy. In these ports there was a lot of trade and traffic with India and beyond. Seasonally a number of small boats sailed in from Indian coastal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> For discussion of van Goens's plans see, *ibid.*, pp 17, 77-97.

ports with all kinds of commodities and a brisk trade was carried on in the country's produce. This part of the island produced an abundance of rice which was exported. Then there were elephants, ivory, timber, wax and honey. In the populated parts there were good markets for imports such as textiles from South India. From the 1650s, English and Danish country merchants were sailing into the port of Kottiyar in the Trincomalee bay in their port-to-port small scale trading in the Bay of Bengal.

The continued ownership of these ports by the king and his encouragement of free traffic there posed a problem for the Dutch. Through these ports the king of Kandy could have intercourse with other European powers. This could render ineffective the claim that was being put forward by the Dutch to exclusive possession of the littoral of Sri Lanka and the right to shut out all other Europeans from its seas after the expulsion of the Portuguese. In those places where they had no physical presence they had no means of ensuring that the exclusive claims were maintained. The issue came to the fore when the English East India Company began to show interest in acquiring a trading settlement on the east coast of the island.

The English were close rivals to the Dutch in Asian trade.<sup>7</sup> In South Asia their trading settlements were in close proximity to those of the Dutch and they were competing in common markets for the produce of the area. Through their conquest of Sri Lanka, the Dutch had secured a monopoly over cinnamon and the English felt that if they acquired a station on the island they could break into this monopoly, besides participating in the flourishing Indo-Sri Lanka trade. The fact of a rift between the Dutch and the king of Kandy was well-known to the English and this encouraged them to make an effort at opening negotiations with Rājasimha to acquire a trading station and concessions in or around Trincomalee. Around this time (1659-60) the crew of two English country vessels that had touched on the east coast had been taken captive to Kandy by the king.<sup>8</sup> The English Company's officials at Madras were instructed to establish contact with the king with the dual purpose of obtaining the release of these captives and securing trading concessions in his kingdom.

The Dutch soon came to know of these attempts of the English. A close watch was maintained on the main outlets of the east coast and a few messages from the English to Kandy were intercepted. The Dutch Governor

On the early years of English trading activities in Asia see, K N Chaudhuri, The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760, (New Delhi, 1978).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Among the captives taken on this occasion was Robert Knox famous now for his celebrated book on the Kandyan kingdom published in London in 1681 after his escape, An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon.

lodged protests with the English President at Madras against their efforts to break Dutch monopoly rights. He argued that the Dutch had a contract with the king of Kandy which gave them exclusive rights in the island and a complete monopoly of its cinnamon. In terms of this contract the English, or any other European nation, had no right to establish relations with Kandy, much less to seek a base in the island and share in its trade. Both the English and the Kandyan king rejected this claim and went ahead with negotiations, eluding as best as they could the Dutch blockade. But nothing ensued, largely because the English were unable to give the king guarantee of armed support against the Dutch. The Dutch tightened their naval watch on the Kandyan ports and no official English embassy could be sent to Kandy.

This was the first challenge to the unilateral claims made by the Dutch to exclusive rights of possession in Sri Lanka. Their willingness to use force in the assertion of these rights showed the extent to which they were prepared to go. This dispute between the Dutch and the English in Sri Lanka was typical of a series of such disputes between these two trading Companies in many parts of south and southeast Asia. The Dutch claimed exclusive rights over trade and trade routes in many places by virtue of conquest or contracts with indigenous rulers. The English refused to concede to these claims to monopoly and sought to exercise the freedom of the seas and free mutual relations with Asian rulers. This issue was one of the causes of the second Anglo-Dutch war of 1664. In Sri Lanka because of superior naval power in these waters, the Dutch were able to keep out English vessels from Kandyan ports by force.

From the point of view of the development of Dutch policy in the island the English attempt to gain entry to the east coast served to strengthen the hand of those officials who had pressed for further territorial expansion on the island. Rijckloff van Goens had already proposed the occupation of the eastern ports but this had been turned down in order not to rouse Rājasimha's hostility. In fact an attempt had been made in 1660 to occupy Trincomalee but it provoked such a strong reaction from the king that it was abandoned. The English episode showed the difficulty of keeping a constant watch on a long coastline without a single fort anywhere in the area. Dutch officials in the island now returned to this theme and kept pressing for the occupation of at least Trincomalee and, if permitted, Batticaloa also. The Supreme Government was now persuaded of the danger of leaving the eastern They were convinced of the necessity to maintain a coast unoccupied. presence there to keep European nations out more effectively. Towards this they were prepared to incur the displeasure of Rajasimha. When van Goens was sent back to Sri Lanka for his second tenure of office as Governor in the end of 1664, he was given authority to occupy Trincomalee and Batticaloa and plant the Dutch flag there.

The opportunity to achieve this came at this very time. In December 1664 there erupted a major rebellion against Rājasimha in Kandy.9 A party of rebels led by some influential chiefs of the realm conspired to overthrow the king and set his young son on the throne. They took the king and his bodyguards by surprise in his palace of Nilambe but the king escaped into the woods of Hangurangketa for safety. From there he reorganised his forces and, with the help of the prince who refused to join the rebels, he fought his way back to the capital and regained his throne. In a few months, by the middle of 1665, when Rājasimha was pressed by his enemies and was fighting for his throne and his life he wrote to the Dutch, soliciting their assistance against the rebels by sending a detachment of Dutch troops to Kandy and by patrolling the seas on the east coast. It was in fact the first letter written by him to the Dutch for a long time. In his desperation Rajasimha had swallowed his pride. He was probably apprehensive that the rebels might get help from outside, or, in the alternative, he might have wanted to prevent their flight to the lowlands or overseas. Whatever may have driven Rājasimha to seek the help of the Dutch, he played right into their hands.

Rijckloff van Goens had now come back to assume the office of Governor for the second time in September 1664. The new turn of events in Kandy fitted in well with his concepts of Dutch power in the island.<sup>10</sup> It strengthened him in his conviction that the Kandyan kingdom was weak and was no match for the modern and expanding Dutch power. He saw the troubles of Rājasimha as providing an excellent opportunity to secure themselves further in the island by the annexation of strategic places and redrawing the frontiers with Kandy in a manner favourable to the Dutch. In the west and the south-west the Dutch could now march further into the Kandyan kingdom without facing opposition and reoccupy some of the places that had been held by the Portuguese but re-captured by the Kandyans. In this way many Sinhalese peasants who had migrated into Kandyan territory could be brought back and the lands on the Dutch side of the border repopulated. Likewise, it was a first rate opportunity to achieve the aim of occupying the ports of Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

In April 1665, fully three months after the first request of Rājasimha for assistance, two Dutch companies marched into the Kandyan kingdom, one from Galle another from Colombo, and occupied two strategic strongholds of Ruvanvälla and Bibilēgama. Here they erected temporary stockades and stationed themselves. Seeing no resistance being offered, part of the company

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> This episode is reviewed in greater detail in chapter VIII above, pp 189-93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> See S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1658-1687, pp 29-45.

advanced further and occupied Sabaragamuva. Using this military presence in these strongholds as a base, the korales within a radius that could be controlled by these troops were annexed and brought under Dutch administrative control. The area thus annexed was substantial. Previously the Dutch had only controlled the western half of the Pasdun, Rayigam and Siyana korales. Now the remaining parts of these korales were taken. Next the korales neighbouring these to the east were occupied. Thus annexed were Hēvāgam, Panāval, Kuruvita, Navadun, Kukule, Atakalan and Kolonna korales. Thus the territory held by the Dutch on the western and southwestern part was almost doubled. With the military presence in the background, a mass emigration of people was encouraged from the king's lands to the Dutch korales nearer the coastline to occupy and cultivate unoccupied land. In order to attract the loyalty of the people and to encourage a voluntary submission, the fiction was maintained that these annexations were taking place on the king's orders and in the king's name. Thus the expansion was not carried out as a direct challenge to the king's authority but as a peaceful penetration and a form of indirect control. In the newly annexed korales, the administration was left in the hands of the local chiefs who were to take an oath of allegiance to the Dutch. The taxes in cash, kind and services due to the lord of the land were collected by the Dutch.

In 1667, a push by the Dutch main force northwards from Ruvanvälla brought them to Arandara which was firmly fortified and made into a stronghold. Arandara was situated in the heart of the Kandyan *disāvany* of Four Kōralēs. This enabled the annexation of Hāpitigam, Haňdapānduna, Beligal and Dehigampal *kōralēs*. Marching further north the troops occupied Alavva, a strategic post on the road to Kandy. This brought their power up to the Maha Oya and gave them a commanding position in relation to the Seven Kōralēs.

A similar policy of penetration was followed on the east coast. In September 1665 an expedition was sent under Captain Du Pon to occupy and fortify Trincomalee. This was successfully achieved within a few days. A few years later, in 1668, another expedition under Commander Roothas occupied Batticaloa and Kottiyar, a port frequented by country vessels. As in the west, these Dutch strongholds were used as nuclear areas to subordinate the surrounding countryside. In 1670, Pieter de Graauw was sent with a company of troops on a tour of the eastern stations. He called at various stations along the coast, assembled the chiefs of neighbouring lands and entered into contracts with them. By these contracts, they accepted Dutch protection and promised loyalty in return. Similarly, in the south-east, a hitherto neglected part of the island, van Goens jr, the son of the Governor, was sent to instal a Dutch presence. Three strategic places, Yāla, Māgama

and Pānama, were selected from where Dutch control was asserted over neighbouring inhabitants. By 1670 Dutch power had penetrated to the entire east coast, along a thin belt of territory all along the coast. Here too the form of control, in large part, was indirect.

The cumulative effect of these events, which took place over the period 1665-70, was that the Dutch were now in a far stronger position than before. Their territory had virtually doubled. They possessed the entire sea coast. They would not be bothered by the problems of penetration by other They were in a position to European powers through Kandyan ports. dominate the trade and traffic of the island. They had acquired valuable cinnamon woods and rice-producing land in the west. They had a larger population under their control. The problem of food supply and labour were now less acute. All this had been achieved without any sign of opposition from Kandy. The Dutch troops' strength in the island was severely extended but was not put to a trial. The only resistance came in the form of a sporadic popular uprising in the Mäda, Kadavata and Atakalan korales in September 1668. It forced the Dutch to withdraw from the interior strongholds of Sabaragamuva and Arandara. But it was not a sustained resistance and the military posts were reoccupied.

Yet the cost of expansion was also beginning to tell. The Dutch administration in Sri Lanka kept requesting Batavia for troop reinforcements. A large military force had to be deployed in the many interior strongholds and outposts and the new coastal stations in the east. The troops were spread very thin and were required to be in a constant state of preparedness in some very inaccessible terrain. It was a period when Dutch territorial expansion was proceeding in many quarters in Southeast Asia. Batavia was pressed with requests for troop strength from many subordinate governments. They were finding it impossible to accede to all these requests and supply all these stations. The Batavian government was tending to be critical of the necessity and wisdom of such large commitments. They sought over and over again, in these years, to restrain the hand of the Sri Lanka government. They were in agreement with acquiring all the ports of the island and even the entire coastline, if necessary. But they were increasingly critical of the expansion far into the interior and were always cautioning against rousing the hostility of Rājasimha.

While normally, as subordinate to the supreme government at Batavia, the island's government should have been controlled and instructed by Batavia as to matters of policy, the special circumstance of the towering personality of van Goens enabled him to dispense with the control of the superiors at Batavia. He had direct correspondence with the Directors in Holland and appealed to them over the heads of the Batavian authorities. He wrote them lengthy despatches, presenting one-sided evidence of the position

in the island and succeeded in winning their support for his views. Because of this support he emerged as the sole policy-maker for the Dutch in South Asia and went ahead with his plans.<sup>11</sup>

The unexpectedly easy success in Sri Lanka made him conceive of a grand design for the Dutch in South Asia. He was greatly impressed with the island's potential as a centre of Dutch interests in South Asia. He held it superior to Java and felt that Colombo, not Batavia, should be the chief seat of Dutch power in the east. He wanted to build up a major Dutch sphere of interest in this region embracing Sri Lanka and the South Indian coast from Cranganore to Nagapatnam. The entire island should be annexed with the defeat of the Kandyan kingdom. He dismissed the power of the king of Kandy with contempt and as something which should not stand in the way of Dutch interest. In any case, it was crumbling through internal dissension and would collapse at a frontal assault by the Dutch. The Kandyan rebellion made van Goens and other officials grossly underestimate the will for survival of the Kandyan kingdom. Their grand design for Sri Lanka was based on such underestimation and was to run into serious trouble. There were other unsatisfactory elements in the situation. The central authority co-ordinating and controlling Dutch activities in the east was located at Batavia. The Governor-General and Council of Indies were men of long experience in the east, some having served in Sri Lanka and neighbouring quarters. In this council, matters to the west of Japan in the east, were discussed and policies formulated for each quarter looking at it in the perspective of total Dutch commitments in Asia. Now one of the subordinate governments had usurped some of these functions and there was danger of Dutch commitments achieving a lack of proportion in one place in relation to its total activities. This also explains the fact that Sri Lanka was the first place where the Dutch acquired a large stretch of continuous territory away from the sea-coast and ruled over a large number of Asian subjects. In spice islands they held less territory and ruled over less people and in Batavia at this time the ommelanden (environs) would not have been more than 400 square miles.

The initial push into the interior had been undertaken on the pretext of going to Rājasimha's aid at his invitation. Even then the Batavian authorities warned van Goens about going too far inland. When Dutch armies advanced from Ruvanvälla to Sabaragamuva, Batavia disagreed with the move but was powerless to prevent it. Van Goens was acting first and then seeking approval, confident that the Directors would back him up against any censure from Batavia. The pretext of defending Rājasimha against his enemies was soon given up. What had earlier been portrayed as a temporary occupation

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, pp 46-9.

now became permanent. The supreme government liked this even less but was not in a position to take to reverse the policy as the Directors appeared to be going all the way with van Goens.

The long-overdue counter attack of the Kandyans came in 1670. At this time a massive attack was launched by the king on a number of fronts. The heaviest push was on the west and the south-west.<sup>12</sup> Simultaneously attacks were made in Kottiyar, Batticaloa and Pānama in the east. The fort of Arandara, the Dutch post nearest to the city of Kandy and giving them a commanding position in the *disāvany* of Four Kōralēs, was besieged by a large army under Tennakoon Rāla.<sup>13</sup> The Kandyans isolated the Dutch garrison by cutting off its lines of communications and summoned the fort to surrender. Ensign Steinbeck who commanded the garrison in the fort thought it prudent to surrender. He decided to hand over the fort and retreat to the nearest Dutch fort of Ruvanvälla. As the troops were leaving the fort the Kandyans fell on them and captured them to a man and marched them to Kandy. It was a major blow to the Dutch position and prestige in the area.

With the fall of Arandara, Dutch forts lower down were exposed to Kandyan attacks. Sinhalese *lascarins* attached to Dutch troops fled in panic. The Dutch decided to withdraw from three strongholds in that area; Ruvanvälla, Sabaragamuva and Bibilēgama. These withdrawals touched off uprisings against the Dutch in many *kōralēs*. The Dutch pulled back their forces and their officials to the coast where they strengthened the defences of the cities, expecting attacks from the Kandyans. Van Goens had been out of Colombo when these events took place. As soon as he returned he took measures to retrieve the situation. He reorganised the army, made them take the field again and drove back marauding Kandyan bands from the coastal lands. But he did not yet feel safe to reoccupy the newly acquired lands.

In the east too the lately established Dutch authority was left in shambles. In the Trincomalee district the rising was led by a vidāna under the Kandyan administration, Ilensimha Vanni. A Dutch company of 22 soldiers and 24 *lascarins* that had ventured into the interior was surrounded and annihilated, with only one man escaping. Dutch forces were back to the refuge of the Trincomalee fortress. In Batticaloa, Dutch *lascarins* who were manning outposts defected to the Kandyans. The people rose up, led by troops sent from Kandy and repudiated their recent allegiance to the Dutch. Likewise in the more remote places of Pānama and Māgama Dutch authority was quickly overthrown.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, pp 53-74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> On Tennakoon's career see, J H O Paulusz, The Tudugala Family..., CHJ, XVII, (1970).

These events were presented by van Goens to Batavia and to the Directors in Holland as the work of dissidents who were seeking to overthrow Rājasimha as much as they were opposed to the Dutch. He portrayed Rājasimha as a powerless prisoner in his domains where a band of rebel chiefs has taken control and were seeking to turn the Kandyan kingdom against the Dutch. Rājasimha was still held to be firm in his friendship towards the Dutch whom he considered his protectors. Van Goens addressed a letter to King Rājasimha dated 24 November 1670 where he absolved the king of all responsibility for the recent events and the requested the return of the captured Dutch soldiers. Rajasimha ignored this letter and the prisoners were not released. The Batavian government thought the trend of events rather odd and showed signs of disbelieving van Goens' version of the recent happenings. Their doubts became more outspoken and their disillusion with van Goens more pronounced. The Directors, however, continued to rely on van Goens' judgment and, in fact, authorised the reoccupation of the abandoned forts and lands. But van Goens felt unsafe as yet to reoccupy the uppermost of the outposts. Sītāvaka was now made the furthest limit of Dutch military power and this place was fortified and strengthened.

It was at this time that the Dutch faced the first serious external threat to their power in Sri Lanka. The French had been appearing more frequently in the Indian Ocean from the 1660s. In 1670 they decided on a grand effort and despatched a large and well-equipped fleet, known as the Persian Squadron, to show the flag as a prelude to trade. It was commanded by Admiral de La Haye, while the control of all political affairs was in the hands of François Caron, a Director of the French East India Company. It had as its concrete aim the founding of a central base of French power in the east, preferably in Sri Lanka or on Banca off the Bantam coast.<sup>14</sup>

The French appear to have made contacts with Rājasimha in Kandy and conducted some preliminary negotiations, through an intermediary, for the grant of port facilities for them in Kottiyar, near the Dutch fort in Trincomalee. The squadron sailed into Kottiyar Bay on 21 March 1670 where some Kandyan couriers seem to have expected their arrival and exchanged letters. The Dutch had a small *ōla* (i.e. palm leaf) hut at Kottiyar which they hastily abandoned and withdrew to Trincomalee. Admiral de La Haye did a tour of the bay and selected a well situated island where he ordered the construction of defence works. The French named the island "Isle of the Sun." A military officer M Boisfontaine was chosen to proceed to Kandy to greet the king. He returned with a satisfactory account of his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> This is discussed in detail in S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon 1658-1687, op.cit., pp 55-6.

reception by the king. The French soon put up other fortification works in other parts of the bay. They were bothered by the problem of supplies. In spite of all assistance rendered by the king's men they found it difficult to procure enough meat, fruit and vegetables for a fleet 3000 to 4000 strong. The surrounding country had been devastated by the recent troubles and food supply was inadequate.

The gradual entrenchment of the French in Kottiyar posed an acute dilemma for the Dutch. They were not officially at war with the French and so they could not attack the fleet and drive it out of the bay. In any case, they could not assemble sufficient forces for an immediate attack on the fleet. They therefore made strong written protests against the French presence on the grounds of a grant to them by Rajasimha of the bay and the surrounding land. The French countered that king Rajasimha had himself permitted them to come in and settle in the bay. They had a letter from the king and the authority of his ambassadors. This came as a surprise to the Dutch for they were as yet unaware that there had been any contacts between the French and Rājasimha. They now switched lines of argument and claimed possession of the Kottiyar bay by right of conquest from the Portuguese. Towards the end of May, some prominent Kandyan chiefs came with a formal deed of gift of Kottiyar and the bay to the French. The French translated this into Latin, engraved it on a brass plate and displayed it on a prominent spot as proof of their possession.

The Dutch sought to deny the French all supplies, by land or by sea. They brought their fleet, commanded by van Goens, and anchored it outside the entrance to the bay. He made a landing on Tambalagama, bordering on the bay, and tried to cut the people off from any contact with the French. But the Kandyan army attacked his company and he was forced back to his ships. The French, however, refused to join the Kandyans in an assault of Dutch formations as they were still at peace with that nation. This was a matter of great disappointment to the Kandyans who had ceded them Kottiyar in the hope of securing French assistance against the Dutch.

When the French showed no signs of heeding Dutch protests, the Dutch began to take more hostile direct action. Two French vessels that returned from Coromandel with provisions were seized and a third forced to turn back. French guard posts were subject to minor attacks and a few French troops taken captive. This Dutch blockade made the food situation acute. As individual ships would be subject to Dutch seizure, the Admiral decided to sail with the entire squadron to Coromandel to buy provisions. Two ships and a company of 100 men were left behind on the Isle of the Sun. M de La Nerolle was sent as Resident from the king of France to the king of Kandy. The fleet sailed out of the bay on 8 July. A few days later the Kandyans arrived with a large army with plans for an attack on the Dutch and

were disappointed to see that the fleet had left.

As soon as the French fleet left the Dutch entered the bay and attacked the remaining French troops on the Isle of the Sun. The fort was captured, all French soldiers were taken prisoners and about 300 Sinhalese helping the French were summarily hanged. The French squadron became involved in an attack on San Thome on the Coromandel coast. In the meanwhile, war had broken out in Europe between France and Holland. The Dutch proceeded to Coromandel with a reinforced fleet and forced the French to surrender at San Thome in September 1672.

The opportunity created by the French presence was used by Rājasimha to attack the Dutch on a number of fronts. People were incited to rebel against the Dutch and supported their rebellion. Hāpițigam kōralē, the Dutch side of the Four Kōralēs and Sabaragamuva, were steeped in unrest. In the south, Kandyan forces crossed the Valavē gaňga and attacked the Kolonna kōralē. There was a high rate of desertion among the *lascarins*. Dutch troops had to be moved in substantial number to attack the Kandyans and drive them back. A rigorous trade blockade of the Kandyan kingdom was put into effect but to no visible effect. By the end of 1673, this Kandyan offensive had been contained, though Dutch control over the interior was tenuous and guerrilla activity continued sporadically. Dutch forces did not attempt to advance further than Sītāvaka and Idangoda. In the east the unrest triggered by the French presence continued.

The widespread simultaneous uprisings had again severely extended Dutch forces. Urgent pleas to Batavia for reinforcements did not meet with a ready response. Holland was facing a difficult war in Europe and in the Archipelago there were major military involvements. In 1675 the Dutch suffered another blow to their prestige with the fall of a fortified stronghold in the south, Bibilēgama, to the Kandyans. They took it after a vigorous assault and the entire Dutch company of 76 soldiers, 20 *topasses* and 200 *lascarins* was taken captive to Kandy. The loss of this fort left the entire southern country up to Mātara open to attack. Again the loss was accompanied by massive desertion of *lascarins* and increasing guerrilla activity deep into Dutch lowlands.

While the Kandyans were good at assault and destructive warfare they could not hold what they conquered and defend it for any length of time. Rājasimha had shown by this activity over the past five years (1670-75) that he was not the powerless puppet the Dutch officials in Sri Lanka portrayed him to be. He had shown his great wrath at the treachery of the Dutch, at a time when he was in dire straits and had asked for their help. He had made a further essay into international diplomacy in negotiating with the French and seeking to use them against the Dutch. He had shown shrewdness and strategy in the selection of targets for attack. He had been successful in

dismantling Dutch authority over the newly conquered areas. By this activity Rājasimha had forced the Dutch to reconsider their policy towards him.

For the Dutch, these years had been very lean years. The first sustained European attempt to found a permanent settlement in the island in defiance of Dutch claims gave them a fright, made more acute by the friendly response of Rajasimha to this attempt. The policy of expansion undertaken after 1665 had not provided the expected economic benefits. On the contrary it had burdened them with increasing annual deficits, reaching a record figure in 1673-74 of 730,579 guilders. The military had been kept constantly on their toes and it had not been possible to organise a civil administration in the interior lands. It had even been difficult to fulfil the annual demand for cinnamon and other economic activity was totally dislocated. It was clear now to the Supreme Government at Batavia and to the Directors that there was something wrong with policy in Sri Lanka. The previous assumptions had been so totally disproved. It had been asserted that Rajasimha was tottering to a fall and that the country was ripe for annexation by the Dutch. The large scale and well-organised attacks of the Kandyans confused them immeasurably. It simply was not reconcilable with what they had so far been told to believe. In these circumstances, the Directors ordered the Council of Indies at Batavia to initiate discussions and formulate a policy for Sri Lanka. Van Goens had been appointed Director-General and was about to leave for Batavia.

The events of 1670-75 had convinced the Batavian government of the correctness of their stand against a forward policy in Sri Lanka. They had always cautioned van Goens against pushing Rājasimha too far. They had advocated the maintenance of peaceful relations with him. The failure of van Goens' policy in Sri Lanka had tipped the scales in their favour. The Directors no longer looked upon him as the favourite officer to whom they had to defer. When van Goens left Sri Lanka in June 1675 for Batavia to participate in the discussions of the Council, it was clear that he was fighting a losing battle. There began a period of prolonged and sometimes acrimonious debates in the Council when policy in Sri Lanka occupied an important place in its agenda. The discussions continued into the period when van Goens succeeded as Governor-General in January 1678. They are a comprehensive review of the Dutch commitment in Sri Lanka and provide a valuable source for the history of recent Dutch activities in the island.

The Councillors showed particular hostility towards van Goens and decided to initiate discussions even before his arrival in Batavia. From the outset the policy of outright conquest of the whole island, a proposal seriously considered five years back, was dismissed as impractical and undesirable. At first the Council adopted a resolution to maintain the *status* quo in as peaceful a manner as possible, to cut down expenditure and to

attempt to cultivate good relations with Rājasimha and negotiate a peace treaty with him. Soon it was realised that this was no policy. An embassy sent to Rājasimha led by a Dutch officer Bucquoy and taking a present of a lion got down from the Cape was detained at the frontier. It was not possible to come to terms with Rājasimha without making territorial concessions.

This realisation made some members of Council move towards more radical solutions. Pieter van Hoorn, a Councillor of long experience in Batavia, proposed in a memorandum that the Dutch should withdraw from all territory taken since 1665 in return for a treaty of recognition from Rājasimha. Though this view did not at first find favour with the Councillors, the continuing unrest in the island in 1677 made opinion in Council change gradually towards the point of view of van Hoorn. In August 1677 the Council again reconsidered the position. They decided that the only way out of the impasse was to offer Rajasimha the return of all land seized from him since 1665 and to abandon all the fortifications that had since been erected in his lands. The area that was to be abandoned was specified in the resolution. These constituted the following korales: Kuruvita, Navadun, Kukule, Atakalan, Kolonna, Mäda, Hemitegalla Agras (sic), Denavaka Agras (sic), Gennemale, Bannetepatte Agras (sic), Panāval, Ätulugam, Haňdapānduna, Beligal and Pānama. The Dutch administration in the island was instructed to make this offer in a letter to the king.

This resolution was taken in the teeth of opposition by van Goens. Indeed he did not sign the instructions sent out to Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka he had been succeeded in 1675 by his son van Goens jr who had for long held office in the island in the shadow of his father. Fully in sympathy with his father's views, he did not carry out the instructions in the spirit in which they were given. In a letter to Rājasimha offering to vacate these lands, he did not name them district by district, as the Batavian instructions had done, but grouped them into three provinces (or disāvanies) Pānama, Five Kōralēs and Three Korales. These provinces did not include all the korales that were named in the Batavian instructions. It seems reasonable to conjecture that this was a deliberate deception on the part of van Goens jr to make Rājasimha turn his back on the offer. Rajasimha just ignored the letter and the offer it contained. The letter did not refer to Sabaragamuva or Four Korales which were ancestral lands of the Kandyan patrimony. Nor did it mention Kottiyar and Batticaloa, his ports on the east coast. He thought it was yet another example of Dutch duplicity.

In the meanwhile van Goens jr, Governor of the island, was fighting a rearguard action to have the new policy reversed. He argued forcefully that the fortress of Sītāvaka was vital to the security of the Dutch. He contended that the *disāvany* of Three Kōralēs should not be given up and these lands were necessary for the defence of Colombo and the sea coast. Their loss would also curtail the rice supply for the cities as well as the inflow of other commodities of trade. While he was arguing in this strain, a vital change occurred in the administration at Batavia which for the time-being put an end to the new trend in policy towards Sri Lanka. Maetsuycker, the Governor-General, died on 9 January 1678 and on the following day van Goens succeeded to this position. With his position of dominance in Batavia and with his son as Governor in Sri Lanka, he was able to reassert his influence over Sri Lanka policy. Gradually the resolution of August 1677 was lost sight of and matters reverted to the position before 1675.

Rājasimha sent his chiefs to the borders to see if the Dutch would in fact hand back some of his territories. They were driven back on the ground that the king would not agree to a peace treaty before the lands were evacuated. The signing of a peace treaty was made a precondition for the withdrawal. In this way the chances of achieving an accommodation with Rājasimha became more remote and this suited the aims of the two van Goenses, father and son. In 1679 van Goens jr vacated the office of Governor and Laurens Pyl, Commander of Jaffna was appointed to succeed him, provisionally as Officer administering the Government and in September 1681 he was confirmed as Governor.

Laurens Pyl was keen on proving himself a success by solving the problems that beset the Dutch in the island.<sup>15</sup> He began to collect information regarding various aspects of Dutch administration. He had the advantage of a detailed report compiled by Adrian van Rheede, an officer in the Company's service, on the instructions of the Batavian Government in 1677. He came to the conclusion that it was impossible for the Dutch to subsist on the island without peace with Rājasimha. The king could prevent the peeling of cinnamon and threaten even the coastal towns. The newly annexed territory neither gave the Dutch security nor were profitable to them. The Batavian Government instructed Pyl to provide them with an up-to-date report on the state of trade, the condition of the fortifications, the power of Rājasimha, the state of agriculture and Dutch military strength on the island.

The report compiled by the Dutch authorities in Sri Lanka revealed many facts that had so far been misrepresented or hidden from view. The officials were able to show with statistical evidence that after declaring a monopoly of trade the turnover of trade in Sri Lanka had reduced considerably. They were also of the opinion that Rājasimha had a considerable force at his disposal and could put a stop to economic activity on the lowlands. The officials did much research into old Portuguese records and secured the help of Sinhalese chiefs to estimate the strength of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> On the re-appraisal of van Goens's policy, see, *ibid.*, pp 101-9.

Kandyan army. They showed that the contest between the Dutch and the Kandyans was an unequal one as the Kandyans were able to field a much larger force which the Dutch could not match. It was therefore foolhardy to go on antagonising the king and to plunge the country into eternal strife.

Influenced by all this new evidence, opposition within the Council of Indies to Governor-General van Goens grew. This opposition was led by Cornelius Speelman the Director-General and designated successor of van Goens. By 1681 the opposition was in a majority in the Council and was able to take decisions in the face of the Governor General's opposition. Another comprehensive review of Sri Lanka policy was carried on in October and November 1681 and major decisions were taken. Van Goens refused to participate in these discussions. In any case he retired from office in November 1681, an unhappy, sick and broken man.

The Council made an objective résumé of the history of Dutch relations with Rajasimha and of Dutch policy in the island over the past twenty years. It attempted, for the first time, to see the issue from the point of view of Rajasimha and conceded many errors made by the Dutch in Sri Lanka. Asking the fundamental question of the justification for Dutch power in the island, they replied that cinnamon was its chief motivating factor. All other considerations were subordinate and should not be allowed to get in the way of the cinnamon monopoly. Territorial commitment on the island and attendant expenditure was justified only so far as it was necessary for the maintenance of the cinnamon monopoly. This was also the way to peace because it would pacify Rajasimha and make the presence of the Dutch on the island acceptable to him. Thus the grand design of van Goens was drastically reduced to modest proportions. The aims of policy were pitched low in the hope that basic minimum desires could be achieved without much expenditure. It was an attempt to go back to the solid commercial basis of policy in Sri Lanka which had been lost sight of over the past 15 years.

In pursuance of these objectives, the Council resolved to reiterate the decision made in August 1677 to offer the return to Rājasimha of land taken since 1665. The districts were named in the resolution and were identified as those in the 1677 resolution. The Council urged the importance of coming to terms with Rājasimha during his lifetime as he was a reasonable man. All fortifications inland were to be demolished or reduced in size and the important stronghold of Sītāvaka to be abandoned. The Sri Lanka administration was to be encouraged to make every effort to enter into a new peace treaty with Rājasimha, recognising the frontiers as existing before 1664. This was to be treated as a matter of urgency because Rājasimha was getting old and there was no knowing what the attitude of his successor would be.

After the departure from Sri Lanka of van Goens jr, Rājasimha showed signs of resuming direct contacts with the Dutch which had been suspended during the period of hostility. Under the two van Goenses he had shown his displeasure at their policies by refusing to receive their envoys or replying to their letters. Soon after the accession of Pyl there arrived in June 1680 a letter from Jan Baptista, a former Dutch ambassador to the court of Kandy. It was addressed to Pyl and written obviously on the instruction of the king. It condemned the action of the Dutch in seizing the king's lands and closing his ports and threatened a major war if the ports were not opened soon. Pyl replied to this letter evasively but with respect and sought to reopen the lines of communication with the king. The tone of his letters were different from those of the two van Goenses. He referred to himself as the king's Governor of Sri Lanka as had been the practice many years back.

The Supreme Government decided to send two of its officers, from Batavia, Michiel Ram and Laamswaarde, as emissaries to the court of Kandy in 1682 with a letter from the Governor-General Speelman containing the proposal decided on in the resolution of November 1681. The letter expressed regret at the differences which had arisen between the king and the Dutch lately and promised to withdraw from the occupied lands when they had specific orders from the king. They expressed the hope of entering into a fresh contract of friendship with the king. Rājasimha detained these ambassadors at the frontier for a long time and they eventually returned with their mission unaccomplished. Rājasimha was not going to be drawn into any parleys with the Dutch while they were occupying his territories and therefore in a position of strength from which to drive a hard bargain.

With the failure of this attempt the enthusiasm of the Dutch authorities to remodel their relations with Kandy began to fade and they were now prepared to accept a situation of stalemate. Rājasimha was now in his eighties and increasingly beset by problems of ill health. He was not as active and vigorous in the pursuit of a forceful policy against the Dutch. Pyl too adopted a policy of submissiveness and tact. Frequent embassies were sent to Kandy with presents. His permission was requested before cinnamon peelers were sent into the woods and he generally granted permission and did not interfere with peeling operations. Reports of the king's extreme physical disability reached the Dutch in Colombo and this tempered their eagerness to negotiate terms with him.

Pyl and the Council in the island were now not eager to upset the territorial status quo. They were not anxious to give up any territory at a time when one reign was about to end and another about to begin in Kandy. So they pleaded with the Batavian authorities against a unilateral abandoning of the up-country fortresses. Sītāvaka was maintained and so were the eastern ports. They were prepared to follow a policy of watching and waiting for the outcome of events in Kandy. They were in favour of opening the ports for the trade of the Kandyans to pacify them. The profits the chiefs would desire

from the trade would keep them contented without starting anything against the Dutch.

The Dutch were apprehensive about the political future of the Kandyan kingdom after the death of Rājasimha. They were under the impression that Rājasimha had no direct male heir to the throne, a misapprehension shared by many in Kandy at that time. After the rebellion of 1664, the king had isolated the heir and brought him up under a veil of secrecy. The Dutch officials in the island thought that these conditions might produce a war of a succession in which the chiefs would try to take the upper hand, and the unrest in the centre of the island would undoubtedly affect order in the lowlands. To sacrifice any territory at this time would be to invite trouble. Should a formidable successor emerge in Kandy, the Dutch would be in a strong position to bargain. This consideration too ruled out any change in territorial boundary at the present time. Everything pointed to a policy of inactivity but constant vigilance.

In the very last years of Rājasimha's reign, he seems to have been anxious to foster good relations with the Dutch so that he might leave behind a legacy of goodwill for his successor. In July 1684 four highly placed Kandyan chiefs were sent on a goodwill visit to Colombo. They avoided all political discussion but merely conveyed to the Governor the personal regard the king had for him.<sup>16</sup> In March 1686, Ganē Bandāra, the principal *bhikkhu* of Kandy, was sent by the king as a special emissary to Colombo. Again the intention was to send greetings and good wishes. Pyl took the opportunity to convey to the king the message that the Dutch would recognise and support anyone nominated by Rājasimha to succeed him. Even at this time, the existence of an only son and undisputed heir to the throne was not revealed to the Dutch. Ganē Bandāra was a person of royal birth, related to the king and belonged to the highest noble clan in the realm. His arrival as the king's emissary was considered an honour to the Dutch.

These gestures of goodwill were capped by a very significant act in May 1687. There were a number of Dutch prisoners in Kandy, consisting largely of those who had been captured in various wars and few others who had been Dutch ambassadors to the court and were not allowed to return. The Dutch had tried very hard to liberate them by alternate means of threats and supplication but had met with a stony silence from Kandy for many years. Quite unexpectedly on 7 May 1687 the prisoners were marched down from Kandy in the company of the Adigār, Asvällē Rāla and three other chiefs. The prisoners were formally handed over by the *Adigār* in a session of the Council in Colombo. The *Adigār* stated in a speech that the king's regard for

<sup>16</sup> ibid., pp 111-2.

the Governor was the only reason for their release.

In December 1687 the king presented his son in court and vested him with royal authority.<sup>17</sup> Two chiefs were sent to Colombo to notify the Dutch. A few days later Rājasimha passed away. The Dutch were given official intimation of this by a delegation led by the First *Adigār* who also brought greetings from the new king. The Dutch Government in Sri Lanka expressed its condolence at the king's death and signs of official mourning were shown. The new king was recognised and a company of Dutch troops and Sinhalese *lascarins* under the command of Koopman Alebos was sent to Kandy to congratulate him.

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For a brief assessment of the career of Rajasimha II, see ibid., pp 110-8.

# **CHAPTER X**

# THE VOC IN SRI LANKA 1688-1766: PROBLEMS AND POLICIES

## **D** A Kotelawele

In the three quarters of a century reviewed in this chapter it could be said that the position in the island of the VOC improved from an ambiguous political status as the *de facto* but not *de jure* rulers of the territories it controlled to *de jure* rulers of those areas. The wars with the Kandyan kingdom, in the early and mid 1760s, culminating in the treaty of 1766 are crucial in this improvement in status. For that reason this chapter has been divided into two uneven parts, with the 1760s as the dividing line, with greater emphasis on the second part which deals with the wars with the Kandyan kingdom and the treaty that followed.

Previous chapters of this volume would have shown how the treaty of 1638 did not give the Dutch any secure claims to the territories they came to rule. It was primarily a treaty of alliance between the king of Kandy and the Company for purposes of cooperation against the common enemy, the Portuguese. However, once the Dutch settled in the territories conquered from the Portuguese, they tried to make use of some articles in the treaty to justify their occupation of territory in defiance of the king of Kandy, whose ally they had been when they first came to the island. At first, they tried to utilize article 3 of the treaty, which stated that the Dutch were to occupy the forts captured from the Portuguese. They did this by deleting from that article its crucially important qualifying phrase 'if the king desired,' from their copy of the treaty. When this device failed, they fell back on those articles of the treaty according to which the king promised to make good the expenses the Company had incurred in the war against the Portuguese. They

claimed to hold the territories until the king met these expenses.<sup>1</sup> None of these efforts to create a legitimate basis for territorial possessions succeeded, and the legal basis of Dutch occupation of territories in Ceylon was always in question until the treaty of 1766.

The wide variety of the arguments used by a succession of Dutch governors to justify the Company's position in the island is in itself indicative of the basic insecurity of that position through most of the period surveyed here. Governor van Goens (1664-75) proposed basing Dutch rights on conquest from the Portuguese. Governor Simons (1702-06) agreed with this contention, and added that the long occupation of the principal harbours of the island would further strengthen Dutch claims. Van Imhoff (1736-39) also agreed with this line of argument but was prepared to recognise the general sovereignty of the king of Kandy over the lands controlled by the Dutch. For Schreuder (1757-62), too, the best claim to sovereignty over the lands the Company ruled was its right of conquest. However, actual possession and sufficient force to defend that possession were the real guarantees of Dutch power in the island.<sup>2</sup>

While the treaty of 1638 did not give the Dutch any viable legal right to the territories they ruled, it did contain certain articles which tended to diminish the sovereignty of the Kandyan state in its external relations. Articles 9 and 10 granted a monopoly of the island's trade to the Dutch, thus foreclosing any independent overseas commercial activity to the kingdom of Kandy. These articles also deprived the Kandyans of the right to treat with any foreign power, Asian or European. All the external connections allowed to the Kandyan state under the 1638 treaty are contained in the following section of the article 10: "that the people of the neighbouring country of Tanjore may be permitted to come here with their vessels containing provisions and other paltry commodities, but nothing else, and may come and go unmolested."

Nevertheless, the Kandyans treated the Dutch as their feudatories. The well-known contemporary historical chronicle, the *Cūlavamsa*, refers to the Dutch as "the powerful Olandas, sea merchants who had been entrusted with the protection of Lanka at the time of the king Rājasimha, fulfilled the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> K W Goonewardena, The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1638-1658, (Amsterdam, 1958), pp 41-5. See also his refutation of J H O Paulusz's views in the latter's introduction to the second edition of Robert Knox's An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon..., (Colombo, 1989), pp 25-245 in "Robert Knox: The Interleaved Edition," JSLBRAS, XXVII, 1992-3, pp 117-34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> S Arasaratnam, "Dutch Sovereignty in Ceylon: A Historical Analysis of its Problems," CJHSS, 1, (1958), pp 105-6.

task of envoys to the kings who rule Lanka."<sup>3</sup> When one considers the fact that the author of the chronicle was a *bhikkhu* whose monastic establishment was closely connected with the court of Kandy, this statement may reasonably be taken as reflecting the official view of Kandy. During the negotiations for a ceasefire in 1763 when the Governor referred to the "lands of the Dutch," the Kandyan ambassadors objected to the expression. They insisted that the lands belonged to the king of Kandy who had given them to the Dutch in feudatory right.<sup>4</sup> Other evidence of this viewpoint was also forthcoming. For instance, when rebellions occurred in the Dutch territories and the rebels complained to the king of Kandy that the Company was being unjust to them, he sent emissaries to the lowlands to inquire into the complaints of the rebels. This happened during the rebellions of van Domburg's<sup>5</sup> (1734-36) time as well as during Schreuder's governorship. The underlying rationale of the Kandyan actions in these two instances was, presumably, that they possessed rights of overlordship over the territories ruled by the VOC.

The ambiguous if not dubious legal position of the VOC in Cevlon led to two main problems. First, the inhabitants whom the Dutch ruled, tended to regard the king of Kandy as their overlord. This was further encouraged by the Dutch pretence of referring to themselves as the 'obedient servants' of the king of Kandy, a device to which they resorted simply to keep the king in good humour. Second, and more serious, they had no proof to show their European rivals in Asia that they had any legal basis to exclusive rights of trade and settlement in the islands. Indeed the problem had cropped up immediately after the establishment of Dutch rule. In 1659 and 1660 some English ships were wrecked off the eastern coast of the island and their crews taken captive by the Kandyans. Exploiting the situation, the English in Madras had tried to negotiate with the Kandyans, not only for the release of the prisoners, but also for trade concessions, and the French had tried in 1672 to establish themselves in Trincomalee with the cooperation of the Kandyans.<sup>6</sup> The weakness of the European rivals' efforts, rather than the strength of Dutch legal claims, coupled with the determined and effective opposition, saved the day for the Dutch on each occasion.

It was the Dutch policy of monopolizing the external trade of the

<sup>3</sup> Cv, Chapter 99, v 109.

<sup>4</sup> K A 2971 fos. 242 G & C Colombo, to GG&C Batavia (Secret) 18 April 1763.

- <sup>5</sup> W D van Limberger, "A Concise History," JRASCB, XI, (1889), p 126.
- <sup>6</sup> S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1658-1687, op. cit., pp 18-20 & 61-6.

island that lay at the root of their troubles with the court of Kandy, for it barred not only the Company's European rivals from the island's trade but also prevented the king of Kandy from external trading. This policy matched the Company's policy elsewhere in Asia. In Sri Lanka there was an additional reason. The profits made from cinnamon, the prized product of the Company in the island, were not included in the trade books of the Dutch government here, and land revenues were not sufficient to cover the entire expenditure. This made the Dutch look to the island's external - and, in particular, the Asian - trade to cover the gap between income and expenditure.<sup>7</sup>

The island's trade, internal and external, are reviewed in Chapter XIV of this volume. Suffice it to state here that Sri Lanka's elephants, arecanuts, chanks and pearls enjoyed a good market in India. Their trade was in the hands of Indian merchants from Golconda, Bengal and Coromandel (collectively known as Moors), and other merchants, mainly the Chetties (or Chettiyars) from south India. The Moslem merchants from Bengal and Golconda were mainly interested in the elephants of Sri Lanka, and they brought much needed rice to the island on their inward voyage. The more important trade relations with India, however, were with the Madura and Coromandel coasts. From the Tanjore region came a large quantity of food products, and almost all Sri Lanka's needs in clothing were supplied from the Coromandel region. The commercial interdependence between these regions and Sri Lanka were so great that Arasaratnam has suggested that they formed an 'economic unit.'<sup>8</sup>

The VOC had captured the island's important outlets of external trade: Kalpitiya in 1659, Trincomalee in 1665 and Batticaloa and Kottiyar in 1668. This left the kingdom of Kandy with only one port, Puttalam, which was effectively blockaded by the Dutch from Kalpitiya. Every vessel that entered or left Puttalam was required to have a pass issued by the Company, and was examined on entry as well as exit. The VOC's assumption of the rights to the seas round the island prevented the development of any other ports in the lands that belonged to the king of Kandy.

The imposition of monopolistic controls on the island's external trade by the Company adversely affected the kingdom of Kandy both economically and politically. In a political sense the treaty of 1638 prevented the Kandyans, at least theoretically, from having any connections with foreign powers; more important, however, were the economic effects. The revenues

<sup>8</sup> S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon..., p 148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See chapter XIV of this volume for discussion of this.

which the king derived from custom duties, as well as his income from trading in goods from royal villages (gabadāgam), were drastically reduced. The chiefs who worked closely with Moorish merchants lost an additional source of revenue. The Kandyan villager whose only significant source of earning cash was by the sale of his arecanut, was also adversely affected since the Dutch paid a paltry price for arecanut. As the Company was the sole importer of cloth of the island, the villager probably paid a higher price for that essential article. The Moors and Chetties who lived in Sri Lanka and were the middlemen in the trade of the island were also affected. The result of the monopoly was a decline in the welfare of the people in general,<sup>9</sup> and economic weakening of the Kandyan kingdom.

The Company's monopoly of the trade must have been all the more irksome to the Kandyans since a large proportion of the Dutch trading products came from the Kandyan country. Of the cardamom that the Company exported, almost the entire collection came from Kandy.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, a large part of the Company's pepper exports came from the King's lands. As regards arecanuts too the share collected in the Dutch lands was small compared with that secured from Kandy. The Company also collected a sizeable quantity of cinnamon in Kandyan territories. While the Kandyan kingdom produced most of the Dutch trading products it was the trade in arecanuts and elephants they were most anxious about. This was probably because it was this trade that the Kandyans were used to since earliest times, and that such products as cardamom and pepper were collected primarily for the European trade. The aim of the Kandyans was to participate in the trade with neighbouring India rather than with Europe or elsewhere, and hence the commodities involved in this latter trade were of no interest to them or of only secondary importance.

The Dutch soon realised that it was difficult to rule the lowlands profitably with the Kandyans in a permanent state of hostility. The king and the nobles commanded great prestige among the population of the lowlands, an advantage which on occasion they used in fomenting rebellions. Moreover, rebels and outlaws of the lowlands found a ready refuge in Kandy. From the point of view of the Dutch the frequent desertions of the cinnamon peelers was the most damaging of the flights of persons to the Kandyan kingdom. On such occasions, the Dutch had to rely on the Kandyans to retrieve them. The elephants captured by the Company in the south and

<sup>9</sup> S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon, pp 174-7; "The Kingdom of Kandy: Aspects of its External Relations and Commerce, 1658-1710," CJHSS, 3, (1960), pp 116-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> K A 2664 fos. 435-7; Memoir of van Gollenesse, 28 February 1751.

south-west of the island had to be transported for sale in Jaffna through the Kandyan kingdom. Permission for such transit facilities, as well as for peeling cinnamon in the king's land, had to be sought annually from the Kandyans. In all these matters, the Company was totally dependent on the Kandyans.

The problem created by Dutch policy in Sri Lanka was that in order to maximise profits a strict monopolistic policy had to be followed, but this in turn antagonised the king of Kandy, on whose goodwill its success essentially rested. The numerous attempts made by the Dutch to come to terms with Kandy are thus easy to understand. In 1687 they re-opened negotiations with Kandy with a view to obtaining a new treaty, since that of 1638 did not make any sense in the changed circumstances resulting from the Company becoming a land power in Sri Lanka. But the Kandyans insisted that unless the Dutch re-opened Kalpitiya, Kottiyar and Batticaloa for free trade, no new treaty was possible. The insistence of the Kandyans on this point and the Dutch refusal to grant it, brought the negotiations to a standstill.<sup>11</sup> In 1696 the Batavian authorities decided to free the trade of the island, a decision opposed both by the Dutch authorities in the island and by the Directors of the Company in Amsterdam. After a detailed discussion between Amsterdam, Colombo and Batavia, it was decided to return to the status quo ante.<sup>12</sup> Governor van Imhoff tried to devise a compromise solution to the question of free trade for the Kandyans. His proposals were rejected by the higher authorities of the Company as well as by the Kandyans themselves.<sup>13</sup> Van Imhoff's was the last attempt by the Dutch to reach a peaceful agreement with Kandy, and its failure meant that by 1740 the Dutch as well as the Kandyans were no nearer to finding a solution.

The denial of legitimate trade to the kingdom of Kandy led to widespread smuggling. The Moslems and the Chetties who lived in the Kandyan kingdom and its environs and in the neighbouring states in Southern India were the major carriers of this activity. On the Kandyan side some of the important chiefs of the time had close links with these groups, and after the advent of the Nāyakkar dynasty to the throne of Kandy in 1739 the relatives of the kings too were often said to be involved. The geographical

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, pp 121-7.

<sup>13</sup> For a detailed discussion of van Imhoff's attempt at a solution see: Arasaratnam, "Baron van Imhoff and Dutch Policy in Ceylon, 1736-1740," BKI, 118, (1959), pp 454-68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> S Arasaratnam, "The Kingdom of Kandy: Aspects of its External Relations and Commerce...," op.cit., CJHSS, 3, (1960), p 119.

areas where smugglers operated were the north-east of the island, north of Trincomalee, and the north-west beyond Negombo. Across the straits that separated the island from the southern tip of India was the land of the Thevar whose traditional policy was to encourage traders. Even though the Dutch managed to impose a treaty on this state too, which excluded other traders, they could not prevent the illicit traders operating from there. The items of trade were arecanut and spices from Sri Lanka, and mainly textiles from across the straits. The policy of cruising the straits evolved to prevent smuggling did not prove to be very effective as it was found that the smaller numerous smugglers vessels could often avoid the Dutch cruisers in harbours in the numerous small river mouths. What is more it was found that often Dutch officials themselves were in the pay of the smugglers. By the mideighteenth century the Dutch tightened the measures against smuggling in the north-east and north-west of the island; more and better equipped vessels were engaged and substantial rewards were given as inducements for the detection and capture of smugglers. A spy network too was established. More stringent punishments were imposed on officers who contravened regulations against smuggling - 25 years of incarceration in chains. Tighter controls were also imposed on the traffic of the Nāyakkar relatives between the court of Kandy and their home territory. The increasingly tighter measures taken to eradicate smuggling would certainly have hurt not only those who directly participated in smuggling, but also those in the Kandyan kingdom, the chiefs as well as the Nāyakkar relatives of the king, who did have connections and interests in the smuggling activities. This factor could have had an effect on the insistent Kandyan clamour for free trade.

A development that significantly affected the relations between the two powers was the revival of Buddhism in the kingdom of Kandy, reviewed in a later chapter of this volume (chapter XI). The movement dates from about the second decade of the eighteenth century, and its central figure was the sāmanēra Välivita Srī Saranamkara as he then was. The movement seems to have strengthened the Kandyan state at a time when a foreign dynasty ascended the throne. It helped to create a greater sense of unity or at least to strengthen the existing feelings of affinity between the people of the Kandyan kingdom and those of the Dutch lowlands of the south-west of the island. The movement also had its repercussions on the day to day relations between the two powers.

The religious revival had its repercussions on the Christian missionary activities and on the relations between the Kandyans and the Dutch. The Roman Catholics whose revived missionary endeavours found a safe haven in the Kandyan kingdom and who even occasionally persuaded the king to intervene on their behalf with the Dutch found themselves bereft of that support. This was especially so after the accession of the Nāyakkar dynasty to the throne of Kandy.<sup>14</sup> Thus in 1742 the Kandyans objected to the building of a school and a church for the Reformed Church<sup>15</sup> in the Hāpitigam kōralē then under Dutch control.

The religious revival emphasised the unity of all Buddhists living in the island, including those living in the Dutch territories, which was both culturally and politically significant. Leuke, the Disāva of Three and Four Kōralēs, once made a request from the Dutch Governor for some land for a lay disciple of Buddhism (upāsaka) near the Kälaniya temple, situated in the Dutch territories a few miles east of Colombo. In 1750 an important Kandyan bhikkhu accompanied by thirty-two others came to Colombo ostensibly to seek treatment from a Dutch doctor. It turned out that the bhikkhu was perfectly healthy, but that his real aim was to snatch a pilgrimage to Kälaniya, a sacred place among Buddhist shrines, as tradition had it that the Buddha himself had visited the place. The Governor, fearing that if a pilgrimage were allowed it might be difficult to dislodge the bhikkhus from the shrine, decided to refuse their request. The bhikkhus then requested that they be allowed to make a pilgrimage to Adam's Peak, in the king's name, with the full customary ceremonial of such occasions. The route was to be through Galle and Matara, Dutch territories, even though the same pilgrimage could be made via king's territories without setting foot on Dutch lands. The request was refused by the Governor.<sup>16</sup> The Kandyans could not be thwarted on every occasion. Thus the headship of the Buddhist order of the low country was created by Kīrti Srī and a bhikkhu living in Mātara was appointed to the office.<sup>17</sup>

The religious revival in the Kandyan kingdom clearly proved useful in asserting Kandyan influence in the Dutch ruled areas. This is of special significance in view of the Kandyan claims to overlordship over the territories ruled by the Dutch. During the Governorship of van Domburg, *bhikkhus* were active agents inciting rebellion.<sup>18</sup> As we shall see in chapter XI of this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> R Boudens, The Catholic Church in Ceylon Under Dutch Rule, (Rome, 1957), pp 202-22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Van Limberger, "The Dutch in Ceylon," op. cit., p 133.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> K A 2647 fos. 31-7, G & C Colombo to GG & C Batavia, 28 April 1750. This series in the Algemeen Rijksarchief has been renumbered under letters VOC.

<sup>17</sup> K Vachissara, Saranamkara Sangharaja Samaya, (Colombo, 1960), p 248.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Van Limberger, "The Dutch in Ceylon," op. cit., p 128.

volume, there were occasions during the war of 1760-66 when Buddhism was used as a rallying cry to raise the people against the Dutch.

The Buddhist revival seems to have given the new Nāyakkar dynasty an excellent opportunity to make itself acceptable to the people and legitimize their authority, thus strengthening the structure of the Kandyan state at a crucial moment. This was especially important since the new dynasty was of South Indian origin. Through 'good works' (in the religious sphere) the new kings accomplished such a great deal that they succeeded in consolidating their position on the throne of Kandy.

Since the Nāyakkar succession to the throne of Kandy was not disputed the Dutch authorities in the island thought it politic to hail it as ushering in an era of good relations. The Batavian authorities, however, held a different view: they indicated a wish that the Company officials in Sri Lanka should exploit the change of dynasty to its own advantage. This policy was elaborated during the war of 1760-66, and it was with a similar policy that the British were eventually able to cause the disintegration of the Kandyan kingdom in the early nineteenth century. Batavia hoped that, as in former times, the Sinhalese would look upon South Indians with hostility and that, this could lead to dissatisfaction among the Kandyan chiefs and encourage pretenders, thus potentially providing a situation that could be exploited by the Company to obtain a new and more satisfactory treaty from the Kandyans. Batavian authorities reminded Company officials in the island that it was by exploiting the difficulties of Rajasimha II that Westerwolt was able to obtain the treaty of 1638. If, however, no advantages were to be obtained in this way the Company was to carry on normal relations with the Kandyans.<sup>19</sup> This last was in fact what the Dutch had to content themselves with for some time to come.

Since the departure of van Imhoff relations between Kandy and the VOC became strained until about 1746, undoubtedly mainly due to the unresolved question of free trade for Kandyans. The personality of the *Disāva* of Three and Four Kōralēs, Leuke, also may have had an adverse effect on relations. The death of the First *Adigār* of Kandy, and the *disāva* of Sabaragamuva's fall from royal favour further strengthened the position of the anti-Dutch Leuke in 1744. Another important issue was the refusal of the Dutch to provide the Kandyans with assistance for inviting Buddhist missionaries to the island. The failure of the Kandyan embassy to Siam of 1741 for this purpose and the unfavourable report of the ambassadors to the court, may also have been a cause of Kandyan hostility towards the Dutch at

<sup>19</sup> K A 895, fos. 766-85, GG & C Batavia to G&C Colombo, 30 October 1739.

this time. Batavia later admitted that the Kandyan ambassadors had been sent to them without proper credentials or a translator as a result of which their reception in Batavia had not been entirely friendly.<sup>20</sup>

Between the departure of van Imhoff and the arrival of the new Governor, Julius Valentein Stein van Gollenesse, the Kandyans constantly harassed the Dutch. Transport for cinnamon peeled in the king's land was obstructed if not disallowed. The Company's villages on the frontiers were attacked and some irrigation construction works there disrupted. Only in 1742 did the Kandyans show signs of friendliness, probably to further their request for assistance in sending a letter for procuring bhikkhus from Siam to restore the valid ordination of the sampha. Governor Daniel Overbeek (1742-43) promised to send the Kandyan letters only as far as Nagapatnam. Despite Kandyan harassments, the Batavian authorities recommended a policy of pacifying the Kandyans and eschewing any steps that might lead to a war. The Company had too many problems in Malabar, and in Java as well, to become unnecessarily involved in Sri Lanka. Batavia believed that the best way to secure the Company's interests against Kandy at this time was to win over some courtiers who could advance the Company's interests there. As regards the Kandyan request for assistance with bhikkhus, the Batavian authorities recommended to Colombo that they be put off with suitable excuses, for the previous Kandyan embassy which sailed in Company's ships had given the court a hostile report about the Dutch.

When van Gollenesse assumed the governorship, Kandyan hostility had not abated. The first Dutch embassy to visit the court of Kandy was admonished by the *Disāva* of the Three and Four Kōralēs to the effect that the Hollanders had been invited by the forefathers of the reigning monarch to be trusted servants of the court, and that those governors who discharged their duties properly were rewarded well while those who did not, should make efforts to improve their ways.

Further signs of Kandyan displeasure were evident. Nevertheless the Kandyans at the same time continued to ask for Dutch assistance in sending a mission to obtain Buddhist missionaries from Siam or Burma; and the Dutch in turn refused to comply. In 1745 and in the following year permission for peeling cinnamon in the king's lands as well as transport of the Company's elephants through them was not granted. The only sign of friendliness shown by the court in this period was when news was received that van Imhoff had been appointed Governor General of the Indies. An embassy was despatched from Kandy to Colombo to convey the court's pleasure at the news and to ask the Governor to send its felicitations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Van Limberger, "The Dutch in Ceylon," op.cit., p 133.

In 1745 van Gollenesse wrote to Batavia trying to impress on the Supreme Government that a pacifist policy towards Kandy was of no avail since the "arrogance" and the "insatiable demands" of the Kandyans had increased. He maintained that the point had been reached at which further appeasement would damage the interests of the Company.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile a Kandyan embassy had demanded assistance to send a mission to Siam, and reminded the Dutch that in the time of Governor de Heere (1647-1703) the Dutch were of great assistance to the court in a similar matter. The Governor, however, refused to accede to the request.<sup>22</sup> As a result the hostile actions of the Kandyans increased. People from the Company's lands who entered the king's lands to trade in cloth and to collect cardamom were driven away by the Kandyans. The latter also laid claim to seven Company villages in addition to the nine they had occupied before van Gollenesse assumed the Governorship. These hostilities made the Governor decide to seek redress from the Kandyans before finally resolving to take drastic measures. However, the Dutch in Colombo were persuaded to proceed more cautiously by the arrival of new instructions from Batavia a few days later. These allowed the Governor to grant the Kandyan request for a vessel to send a mission to Arakan or Pegu. Batavia further reminded Colombo that it was not the time to go to war with Kandy to settle differences. Since there could be no absolute peace until freedom of trade was granted to Kandy, the policy should be to maintain a peace sufficient to secure the Company's main interests in the island. The use of force was to be held to a minimum as in the days of Governors Becker, Rumpf and van Imhoff. The instruction said that destruction or blocking of the king's salterns in order to ensure permission for peeling cinnamon in the king's lands would be in accordance with this line of limited retaliation.<sup>23</sup>

In accordance with these instructions van Gollenesse wrote to Kandy towards the end of 1745 expressing willingness to assist in sending an embassy for *bhikkhus*. From then on relations with the court became more amicable. The Company's ambassadors were given a friendly reception and the usual permission for peeling cinnamon and transport of elephants was given. The Kandyan mission to Siam left in January 1747. Then in the famine that followed a small pox epidemic in the lowlands the Kandyans assisted the Dutch by delivering food stuffs for the stricken areas. Towards

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.* 

<sup>23</sup> K A 902 fos. 479-85, GG & Batavia to G & C Colombo, 24 September 1745.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> K A 2534 fos. 188-91, G & Colombo to GG & C Batavia, 7 August 1745.

the end of the year a letter with presents from the Governor General van Imhoff was delivered and the Governor agreed to a request from Kandy to provide for another embassy to Siam. The reigning monarch in Kandy died in August 1747 but this did not involve any changes of Kandyan policy. Until the end of van Gollenesse's governorship fairly amicable relations continued with only a few incidents which, as we shall see, did not augur well for the future. When the Governor was about to relinquish duties in Sri Lanka a special Kandyan embassy arrived in Colombo to thank him for the services rendered to the court.

At the beginning of van Gollenesse's governorship the court had been openly hostile to the Dutch, although satisfactory relations were established between the two powers in the years after 1746. Van Gollenesse attributed this to his demonstration of the self-sufficiency of Dutch power in the island. It is true that in 1745 and 1746 sufficient quantities of cinnamon were collected - 1848 and 8144 bales respectively - in the Dutch territories, and elephants were transported by sea although it was costly.<sup>24</sup> But it is clear that it was by following a pacifist policy as advocated by Batavia that satisfactory relations were established. Probably the biggest single concession that the Dutch made to Kandy was assistance in procuring monks from Siam. Furthermore the Dutch had to put up with many hostile acts in order to avoid a major crisis. In spite of the re-establishment of a system of working relations with Kandy, the fundamental issue of free trade continued to remain a source of annoyance to the Kandyans, for as van Gollenesse himself observed, the Kandyans would never be reconciled until that question was solved in their favour.<sup>25</sup>

The few incidents that marred the good relations established during the Governorship of van Gollenesse should be recorded since they illustrate some of the perennial problems of Kandyan-Dutch relations. For instance, in 1749 when the Company was making preparations for pearl diving off the north-western coast of the island, a message from the court warned that the Company should stick to its old privileges. The court, in other words, was challenging VOC claims to the rights of the seas round the island. In 1746 when the relations between the two powers were satisfactory, the Kandyans had promised to deliver some six hundred cinnamon peelers who had absconded to the king's lands, but they were not delivered despite this promise. In 1749 the Company's watch post of Tambalagama near Trincomalee was attacked and burnt down by the king's subjects, and when

25 ibid.

<sup>24</sup> K A 2664 fos. 396-405, Memoir of van Gollenesse, 28 February 1751.

the Dutch protested, the Kandyans replied that the Company had no rights to have a watch-post there, implying that the Dutch could have fortifications only if the king so desired.

Despite the outward calm, the relations between the two powers became increasingly strained during the eight years after 1752. The court's demand for the participation in the island's trade with the Indian coast was first made in 1752. After the arrival of the much awaited Siamese mission the demand was made every year until the outbreak of open hostilities. A noteworthy feature of the Kandyan diplomatic offensive in the 1750s was the limited scope of its demands. The court asked permission only to send two or three thonies laden with trade goods annually, and participation in the Company's elephant trade of the island. On previous occasions, such as in 1687 as well as during the governorship of van Imhoff, they had insisted on the total freeing of all the harbours of the kingdom. In fact what the Kandyans were asking for in the 1750s had actually been offered to them during the governorship of van Imhoff, but had been rejected then.<sup>26</sup> This change of Kandyan policy can be interpreted in two ways. First, the new demands could have been the thin end of the wedge by which the court hoped to end the VOC monopoly of the island's trade. (This was, in fact, the interpretation given to the Kandyans' requests by the Dutch). Second, the demands were the result of the Kandyans realising that it was futile to hope for the total freeing of the entire external trade of the Kandyan kingdom, and they settled, therefore, for what was attainable. It could have been a combination of both these considerations. In either case it is clear that the Kandyans had adopted a more realistic line of action.

It would appear that the position of the VOC in Asia, especially in relation to its rivals, would have led to a more pliant and accommodating line towards Kandy. The French and the English were dominant in Southern Asia, and in the Indonesian archipelago Dutch power was being considerably weakened as a result of constant wars and financial chaos.<sup>27</sup> In Malabar, Dutch power had been reduced as a result of the war with Travancore.<sup>28</sup> However, the new situation in which the VOC found itself did not result in a more accommodating attitude towards Kandy. On the contrary their

A Das Gupta, Malabar in Asian Trade, (Cambridge, 1967), pp 41-3.

S Arasaratnam, "Baron van Imhoff and Dutch Policy in Ceylon," BKI, Deel 118, pp 454-68; "The Kingdom of Kandy: Aspects of its External Relations and Commerce, 1658-1710," CJHSS, Vol. 3, (1960), pp 109-27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> D G E Hall, A History of South-East Asia, (London, 1964), p 308.

reaction was similar to that at the beginning of the century when there were fears of the expansion of French power in South Asia. The decision to close the ports of the Kandyans at that time was very much a result of that fear.<sup>29</sup> The overall weakness of the Company in Asia and the grówing strength of its rivals seem to have driven the Dutch to an even more tenacious hold of their monopoly and territorial possessions in Sri Lanka.

Cinnamon provides a guide to much of the Company's policy in the island. The advantages of Sri Lanka, wrote van Imhoff "are more of a geographical and political nature if the cinnamon be excluded; but if this spice is taken into consideration the scale turns at once, and no comparison with other lands is possible, because for so far as is known, cinnamon of such good quality is to be found nowhere else than in Ceylon.<sup>30</sup> Since the latter's governorship cinnamon prices in Amsterdam, which had remained constant from the beginning of the century, took a sharp upward turn, resulting in a hundred percent rise by 1760 as compared to the beginning of the century.<sup>31</sup> This trend in fact continued well into the 1790s. That the Kandyans had to be insulated from any unrestricted contacts with those European powers established in South Asia was a natural corollary of this development.

The policy of the Company, therefore, was to deny any requests of the court that affected their monopoly of the island's trade, while trying to keep the king and the courtiers in good humour by granting their numerous petty requests. Pleasing the court in this manner was a feature of Dutch policy in the period under review. A few examples will suffice. In 1753 the *Disāva* of Three and Four Kōralēs, Dumbara Rālahāmy, petitioned the Governor for the release of a former Moorish resident of Kandy and banished by the Dutch. The petition was granted. In 1755 Dumbara suggested that a certain diamond in the possession of a high ranking Dutch official might be an ideal present for the king. Somewhat grudgingly, the Governor decided to purchase it and present it to the sovereign. In the same year on a request of Dumbara he was allowed to send a *thony* of paddy to Trincomalee without payment of duty to the Company. The provision of transport to various relatives of the King between Coromandel and Sri Lanka was also included among these concessions and favours calculated to please the court. This was

<sup>31</sup> N W Posthumus, Nederlandsch Prujsgeschiedenis, (Leiden, 1943), pp 148-50 and ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> S Arasaratnam, "The Kingdom of Kandy: Aspects of its External Relations and Commerce...," op.cit., CJHSS, Vol.3, pp 109-27.

<sup>30</sup> Memoir of van Imhoff, p 1.

considered by the Dutch to be the best means of getting many things done with the minimum outlay and was highly successful.

The Dutch in Colombo were wont to report to Batavia that the relations with the court had been friendly, if on their part they granted 'favours' to the Kandyans, and the latter gave dispensation for cinnamon peeling in the Kandyan territories and for transport of elephants through the same friendly relations. But there were numerous incidents that reveal the underlying hostility of the Kandyans towards the Dutch. Thus although a Kandyan embassy arrived in 1751 to thank van Gollenesse for his services to the court, yet in the same year the Kandyans harassed the Dutch in Tambalagama, Kottiyar and Batticaloa. Junior Kandyan officers of the area adjoining these Dutch stations prohibited the Dutch from collecting timber in the king's lands and blocked the provisioning of these stations from there. Those responsible for these actions claimed that they were carrying out orders from the king's Disāva. The Dutch had no alternative but to try to pacify these chiefs with presents. However, the dispute continued into the following year when the Dutch Opperhoofd of Trincomalee placed a cannon landwards to intimidate the Kandyans. The Kandyans protested and demanded the dismissal of the Opperhoofd. The Dutch were not prepared to be browbeaten and the dispute seems to have petered out, probably as a result of the arrival of the Buddhist mission from Siam in 1753. The dispute arising from the king's Disāva of Puttalam probing the pearl fisheries off Chilaw, where the Dutch claimed exclusive rights to pearl fishing, is also an example of underlying Kandyan intransigence.

When the Kandyans demanded participation in the Company's elephant trade and permission to send two or three *thonies* of trade goods to the Indian coast, the Batavian authorities advised Colombo to refuse. They attributed the demands to the influence of the "Moorish and *Chetty* rabble" that hung around the court of Kandy.<sup>32</sup> The demand, however, was repeated in 1756. The government argued that the Kandyan requests were unfair in view of the great expenses that the Company had undergone in procuring the Buddhist missionaries from Siam, and that it was impossible to grant the requests without intruding upon the established privileges of the Company in the island. The Kandyan argument that the Company enjoyed most of the resources of the island, was of no avail. All that the Governor would agree to do was to write to Batavia about the requests.

The Kandyan embassy that came to Colombo in early January 1757 discussed the situation in Europe and made their demands once again. In an obvious attempt to conjure a renewed threat from the Portuguese to the island,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> K A 911 fos. 1-16, GG&C Batavia to G&C Colombo, (Secret), 8 September 1754.

the Governor informed the Kandyan ambassadors that France was allied with Portugal and that the latter had promised Macao and Goa to the French in return for compensation elsewhere. The likelihood of the two powers, France and Portugal, undertaking joint action against Sri Lanka was held to be a decided possibility. As for the Kandyan requests the Governor could offer little hope. The embassy left promising assistance in the event of an attack from a foreign power, and asking the Governor to find some means of providing profits for the court.<sup>33</sup>

Meanwhile a rebellion of cinnamon peelers took place in 1757 which ended only in late 1758. The rebellion was caused by deep seated grievances of peelers. With prices of cinnamon in Amsterdam rising sharply by the mideighteenth century, the demand for cinnamon to be peeled increased. At the same time, there appears to be an expansion of arable land in the lowlands with the population clearing more and more lands for paddy, chenas and homesteads. In this situation, the peeler community found it difficult to deliver the quantities demanded; and the government resorted to increasing punishments on those peelers who failed to deliver the individual quotas. The peelers responded to this situation in two ways; one was simply to flee to the lands of the king of Kandy and the other was to resort to open rebellion. In late May 1757 some peelers who went to Giriulla in the king's lands to peel cinnamon armed themselves and browbeat others to join them in a revolt demanding the dismissal of the chief of the Mahābadde, Carel de Mirando. Appeals to the court of Kandy to intervene and return the rebels proved to be of no avail. The peelers meanwhile retired to Sabaragamuva, again in the king's lands, and the peelers in the south too joined the rebellion. Towards the end of 1757 it was found that the Mahā Mudaliyār of the Governor's Gate, Leander De Saram and the Basnāyaka Muhandiram Louis Perera too were in collusion with the rebels. Upon this discovery they were arrested and banished. When an appeal was made once again to the court of Kandy to intervene with the peelers and persuade them to return to the Dutch territories the court only agreed on the condition that the Chief of the Mahābadde, Carel de Mirando, be dismissed and the rebels be allowed a free pardon. Governor Schreuder agreed as there was no other way even though he had earlier placed a price on the heads of the rebels and not agreed to dismiss de Mirando.<sup>34</sup> The peelers finally returned in early 1758.

Meanwhile the Kandyan diplomatic offensive continued. An embassy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> K A 2772 fos. 788-803, Extract Dag-Register, Colombo, 5 January 1757; K A 2772 fos. 803-08, Extract Dag-Register, Colombo, 7 January 1757.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> K A 2792 fos. 656-676, Extract Dag-Register, Colombo, 5-7 November 1757.

arrived in Colombo on 5 November 1757, bringing a letter from the king which embodied the requests made in the embassies of January and March. The Governor could do no more than give the same replies as had been given previously, but with the addition of his own grievances against the court: obstacles put in the way of cinnamon collection by minor Kandyan headmen, hindrances to elephant transport, and non-cooperation in returning the peelers who had fled to the king's lands. But the Kandyans stuck to their demand for participation in the arecanut trade, urging that the arecanuts from the king's gabadāgam were rotting under the trees. The Governor could only promise to write to the authorities at home and Batavia adding, however, that there was little likelihood of a change of policy. The Kandyan ambassadors promised to place the Dutch grievances before the king. The discussions ended without any headway being made in the Kandyan efforts at winning concessions.<sup>35</sup>

The peelers' rebellion was accompanied by revolts in the south-west of the island arising from a variety of similar causes. In December 1757 the Mahā Mudaliyār of the Governor's Gate, Leander de Saram, and the basnāyaka muhandiram Louis Perera were accused of complicity in the peelers's revolt as well as in the other revolts, and banished. The Mahā Mudaliyār was a favourite of the court, having been decorated several times by them for his loyalty. His peremptory arrest, and especially his banishment, greatly offended the court of Kandy which immediately appealed on his behalf. The Dutch ambassadors who were in Kandy at the time, acting on instructions from Colombo, replied that although those officers may have been decorated and honoured by the court they had to be punished since they had committed offenses against the Company. In any case it was up to the Company to punish its own officers. The Dutch consistently maintained this position and the banished officers were not reprieved until later, during the war, on Batavian orders. This incident certainly did not help to improve relations with Kandy.

A Kandyan embassy, led by Dumbara, arrived late in October 1758. It demanded the release of the two officers and repeated the earlier requests for Kandyan participation in the island's trade. This time their tone was less diplomatic, even rather threatening. The envoys, adopting Olympian hauteur, said that the king was determined to secure his demands and that none could resist the royal wishes. Schreuder replied that orders from Batavia had not changed on the question of Kandyan participation in trade. Regarding the banished officers he maintained the right of the Company to punish its own officers. In fact on the first of the Kandyan embassy's requests (on trade),

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> K A 2818 fos. 196-205, Resolutions, 25 February 1758.

Schreuder had by then received orders that it should never be granted lest the Kandyans acquire a taste for trade which would ultimately lead to the Company losing all its privileges in the island.<sup>36</sup>

Schreuder confessed later that it was impossible to continue to refuse a request which the Kandyans had been making for more than seventy years.<sup>37</sup> Certainly by October 1758 he realised that Kandyan patience was The Kandyan ambassadors refused to accept the customary at an end. invitation of the Governor to visit the fortifications of Colombo, on the excuse that Dumbara, who headed the embassy, was ill. Schreuder heard from a trustworthy source that the excuse was not genuine, and that the Kandyans had not expected their request to be rejected again. Furthermore, the ambassadors had been preparing to leave Colombo without attending the customary farewell audience with the Governor. On confidentially inquiring the reasons for this, Schreuder found that the failure of the embassy could entail Dumbara's downfall at the court. The king had entrusted the handling of affairs with the Company to Dumbara and failure to gain concessions could appear to the king that the former had neglected the proper advocacy of the Kandyan case which would lead to him being suspected of complicity with the Dutch. On hearing this Schreuder decided to send three of his trusted Sinhalese officers to negotiate secretly with the Kandyan ambassadors at their quarters at Nagalagam pass, on the Kälani river about 11/2 miles from the fort, where ambassadors normally resided. The object of this visit was to impress on the Kandyans the Governor's position, that he could not grant their requests but that he would try to find a way out of the impasse. The Kandyans themselves could put forward alternative proposals.<sup>38</sup>

At the conference Dumbara pointed out the injustice of the Company enjoying all the major resources of the island, and paying a price for the produce of the king's lands which did not even cover the costs of the trouble of collecting them. As a compromise, he suggested that the Company should pay for the king's arecanut the amount the traders paid in Colombo when buying from the Dutch. Schreuder's negotiators failed to persuade the Kandyans to budge from their position. During the second round of negotiations the Company's emissaries were instructed to put forward proposals for a compromise settlement.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> K A 422, Unpaginated, Directors to Batavia, 4 October 1756.

<sup>37</sup> K A 737 fos. 30-41, Secret Resolutions GG&C Batavia, 4 May 1764.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> K A 2816 fos. 653-666, detailed translations of notes of separate conference, 24, 25 October 1758.

These proposals entailed sacrifices by both sides. The Kandyans had to allow 10 to 12,000 bales of cinnamon to be peeled in their lands annually without permission being asked. Similarly, permission had to be granted once and for all for the transport of the Company's elephants through the king's lands, and for the felling of timber for the Company's needs from the jungles around Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Kalpitiya. All refugees, especially the cinnamon peelers, should be delivered promptly. Frontiers of the king's lands had to be kept open to facilitate free communications. And, finally, all minor chiefs had to be properly instructed so that they would not hinder collection of cinnamon or timber, or the transport of elephants through Kandyan territory. In return for all these concessions the Dutch promised to pay the court annually a sum of 50,000 larins or 23750 florins calculated at 91/2 stuivers for each larin. The annual embassy and the presents to the court would be abolished. Dumbara pointed out that the annual embassies were conceived primarily from the ceremonial and prestige point of view by the court and not as a source of financial gain. In any case he was not impressed by the amount of money offered in the new proposals. It hardly amounted to 5000 pagodas. (Dumbara would have been outraged if he was aware of the current price of cinnamon in Amsterdam). However, the Kandyan ambassadors emphasized that what they expressed were only personal impressions regarding the new proposals. They needed the authority of the court to give a final and authoritative decision on them. But the Company's negotiations noted that there was not much hope of a settlement on the basis of the proposals.<sup>39</sup>

The Batavian authorities shared Schreuder's misgivings about the prospects of success of the new move, though they approved it. But it is highly unlikely that the Directors would have endorsed it, for they later expressed their satisfaction with Schreuder for not utilising the dispensation given by Batavia to go ahead with the proposals; and they advocated a harder line towards Kandy. The Kandyans do not seem to have treated the proposals with much credulity and never subsequently mentioned them. On the other hand they repeated their original demands only to be turned down by the Dutch once again. However, permission for the peeling of cinnamon and the transport of elephants was also given in this year by the Kandyans. In 1760 the revolts that flared up in 1757 seemed to have died down but by early 1758, reappeared in the Dutch territories, and the Kandyans invaded the Company's territories claiming they were investigating the complaints that the lowlanders had made to the king.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*.

Meanwhile the kingdom of Kandy itself was shaken by an attempted *coup d'etat*. In May 1760 it was discovered that there was a plot, by some courtiers with the connivance of some of the leading *bhikkhus* of the Buddhist establishment, to assassinate the reigning monarch and to replace him with a Siamese prince, said to be a brother of the king of Siam. The prince was in the island as a *bhikkhu*, and located at the principal *vihara* in the city of Kandy.

It is difficult to establish the motives of the conspiracy. A recent scholar argues that there were two factions in the court based on ethnic and cultural differences and economic interest.<sup>40</sup> Certainly there were divisions in the court of Kandy. Van Gollenesse himself noted two factions in the court, but did not give cultural and racial differences as the basis for this division. In fact, both rival groups at court were composed of Sinhalese notables and led by them.<sup>41</sup> The fact that van Gollenesse failed to notice a faction of anti-Tamil and anti-Hindu courtiers is all the more significant since, in 1739, Batavia had advised the Dutch authorities in the island to be on the alert for precisely such groupings.<sup>42</sup> The *Memoir* of Loten which has more details on the court of Kandy noted a faction of the court which wanted to place on throne of Kandy the brother of the reigning monarch! According to the *Memoir*, the young prince had been much loved by the Kandyans.<sup>43</sup>

The account given by the Siamese *bhikkhu* who was to have been enthroned if the plot had succeeded, states that the courtiers who were well disposed to the Company were put to death after the conspiracy was discovered. In this version, the emphasis was on a faction of the court which was pro-Dutch. It was only when the interrogators put words into the deportee's mouth that he began to talk in terms of 'genuine Kandyans' and 'Malabars.' Questioned further it was found that the people who had the greatest influence on the king were Sinhalese notables, apart from the king's own father.<sup>44</sup> Another contemporary account expresses the wish of some courtiers and *bhikkhus* to place on the throne a prince who hailed from a

- <sup>42</sup> K A 895 fos. 766-85, GG&C Batavia to G&C Colombo, 30 October 1739.
- <sup>43</sup> Memoir of Joan Gideon Loten, pp 2-5.
- <sup>44</sup> K A 2904 fos. 697-700, Report of Evidence given by the Siamese Deportee in Tuticorin, 17 March 1761.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> J H O Paulusz, Secret Minutes, Introduction, pp 4-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> K A 2664 fos. 396-405, Memoir of van Gollenesse, 28 February 1751.

country which practised Buddhism in its pure form.<sup>45</sup> Even in this source one fails to find evidence of a Buddhist-Kandyan clique trying to oust a Dravidian Hindu cabal that had monopolised all positions and power in the Kandyan state.

The question of whether the Nāyakkars were monopolising the important offices of the Kandyan kingdom can be answered much more easily. Many lists of important office bearers are available in the Dutch records, and it is impossible to find in them any important offices being filled by a Malabar.<sup>46</sup> A letter written by Srī Saranamkara, while in exile for his part in the conspiracy, complains that the king was granting favours to Moors.<sup>47</sup> This was more likely since at that time the king of Kandy and his courtiers were working hand in glove with a group of Moors in Kandy for purposes of maintaining political contacts for private trade. However, there is no evidence that any Moors were appointed to positions of power in the Kandyan state. In fact, according to one account, the conspiracy was revealed by a Moor who was rewarded for his services with a title and some lands.<sup>48</sup>

That much of the real power in the Kandyan state was wielded by the Sinhalese rather than Malabars is evident from the foregoing account. Suffice it to note here the influence that the Kandyan chiefs had in the formation of Kandyan policy towards the Dutch. The affairs with the Company were in the hands of the *Disāva* of the Three and Four Kōralēs. In the period under review there were two who held this office in succession, Leuke and Dumbara, both Sinhalese. In the dealings with Dutch ambassadors who were sent to Kandy the influence of Sinhalese officials was also easy to see. The Dutch ambassadors were met at the frontiers of Kandy by representatives of the *Disāva* of the Three and Four Kōralēs and conducted to Kandy where they were met by more important courtiers. It was the normal practice for

<sup>48</sup> H C P Bell, Report on the Kegalle District, (Colombo, 1904), pp 99, 104.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Lanerolle Appuhāmy, "Relation of a Conspiracy Against the King of Kandy in the year 1760," CLR, Vol. 2, pp 272-4. This account is faulty in the identification of the bhikkhu involved in the conspiracy. It gives the name as Upali. The bhikkhu Upali actually died in Sri Lanka. The Dutch account, contained in the evidence given in report of the interrogation of the Siamese bhikkhu who was to have been enthroned, gives the name as Tammebaan. For the identification of bhikkhu Upali see, P E E Fernando, "An account of the Kandyan Mission sent to Siam in 1750," CJHSS, Vol. 2, p 49.

K A 2664 fos. 396-405, Memoir of van Gollenesse, 28 February 1951; Loten, Memoir, pp 2-5; Schreuder, Memoir, pp 31-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> K A 2903 fos. 67-9. Letter of Saranamkara to Governor, 9 April 1761.

courtiers to discuss Kandyan-Dutch relations at this stage with the Dutch ambassadors. The occasion of meeting the king was more or less a ritual, and very little of substance affecting the relations between the two powers was discussed there. After the royal audience, however, the courtiers discussed political and diplomatic matters at length once again with the Dutch ambassadors.<sup>49</sup> Although these discussions were in the king's name there is no doubt that those who actually conducted the negotiations and handled the greater part of the dealings with the Dutch had considerable say in forming policy. When less important embassies were sent by the Company the emissaries did not even see the king. The courtiers in assembly opened the despatches from Colombo, discussed the contents among themselves, and reported to the king, discussed among themselves once again to formulate a reply to the Dutch, and then gave the reply to be conveyed to the governor.<sup>50</sup>

From the foregoing account it is clear that the Nāyakkars were neither monopolising the important positions of the kingdom of Kandy, nor were they powerful influences in making policy decisions, especially on matters concerning the Dutch. If it is said that the Nāyakkars were more interested in trade and were consequently more hostile to the Dutch it has to be noted that such well known Kandyan notables as Leuke and Dumbara were also keenly interested in trade. Leuke's case is more interesting since he was already influential when the Nāyakkars ascended the throne and deeply interested in trade even at that stage. Actually those who were responsible for the interest taken in trade by the Kandyan chiefs were the Moors and Chetties, living in the Kandyan kingdom, rather than the Nāyakkars.

If it is difficult to support the theory that the Nāyakkars were monopolising the profitable positions of the Kandyan state, and that they wielded great power in the kingdom then what in fact were the motives behind the conspiracy? Direct evidence is not available, however, but it can be tentatively suggested that the conspiracy was probably the outcome of rivalries and divisions within the court. In a state lacking a large standing army, and dependant on the provincial chiefs, the *Disāvas* and *ratērālas* (in charge of districts around the capital), for revenue as well as police and judicial duties,<sup>51</sup> the chiefs held substantial power. Their influence on state affairs,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> K A 2772 fos. 833-56, Report of van Dhoorn's Embassy to Kandy, 25 April 1756; P E Pieris, "The Dutch Embassy to Kandy in 1731-32," JCBRAS, XX-60, pp 187-220.

<sup>50</sup> K A 2772 fos. 896-99, Report of Domingo Rodrigo etc., of the Embassy to Kandy, 31 October 1756.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> For powers of the chiefs see, R Pieris, Sinhalese Social Organization, pp 19-26.

as well as personal aggrandizement depended on the relations they established with the monarch. Factions among chiefs were the direct outcome of this situation. Thus Schreuder notes: "With reference to the above mentioned illegitimate son of king Wiraprakreme Nareendre Singa [*sic*], called Oenamboewe Bandāre, it is reported that, after the death of the king, some of the Ministers who were related to his mother proposed to crown him as king, but that the others would not agree to this because of the fear that the friends of his mother's family would wield too great an influence at the Court and, perhaps, receive a higher status, wherefore the late king's brother-in-law Srī Wijeya Raja Sinha was elected king."<sup>52</sup>

Schreuder states that the First Adigār Gallēgoda was a confidant of the king as well as of his father.<sup>53</sup> The evidence of the Siamese deportee quoted earlier notes that the Disāva of the Three and Four Korales was a great influence on the king. Second Adigār Samanakkodi, who was later executed, does not seem to have had much influence at the court, nor was his position a strong one. Gallegoda, on the other hand, had two brothers who were provincial chiefs, the Disāva of Ūva and the Ratērāla of Hārispattu. In addition, he himself had held a number of offices.<sup>54</sup> In addition the Disāva of the Three and Four Korales was a brother of the Disava of Seven Korales, an important province adjoining the Dutch territories.55 While the conspirator Samanakkodi was not influential at the court, he appears to have been a power in the Kandyan Buddhist establishment through his cousin, the bhikkhu Tibbotovāvē, who was the head of three important vihāres including one of the two main vihāres of Kandy, Malvatta.<sup>56</sup> We could infer from all this that the conspiracy could have been an attempt to oust the Gallegodas from power, by an alliance of Samanakkodi and a section of the Kandyan Buddhist establishment. The cry of Buddhism in danger raised on the occasion was, very likely, a red herring, in view of the substantial contributions made by the Nayakkar kings to the advancement of Buddhism. In fact they appear to have been more fervent Buddhists than the earlier Sinhalese kings who tolerated the Roman Catholics and gave them a safe

52 Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 31.

54 ibid.

55 *ibid.*, pp 31-2.

56 J H O Paulusz, Secret Minutes, 28 May 1762, p 90.

<sup>53</sup> ibid., p 32.

haven in the Kandyan kingdom. Under some of the Nāyakkar kings Roman Catholics were no longer tolerated.<sup>57</sup> In addition to the displaying the fervour of recent converts the Nāyakkar kings also realised the importance of patronising Buddhism as a means of consolidating their power.

The role of the deported bhikkhu from Siam remains undetermined. However, the little evidence that is available suggests that he was no mere onlooker, but could have played an active role in the conspiracy. In Dutch records the name of the deported Siamese bhikkhu is given as Tammebaan, presumably the name he assumed on entering the sampha. Later references to him is by the name Kromptipipit. This latter is a corruption of the real name found in the Siamese chronicles, Krom Muen Tep Pipit. He was a son of king Boromkot (1733-58) by one his concubines. In 1747 Tep Pipit supported one of the younger princes, by one of the queens of Boromkot, to the position of Uparāja (viceroy) overlooking the elder one. Tep Pipit's candidate succeeded. On the death of Boromkot in 1758, a struggle for succession to the throne ensued between the Uparāja and his elder brother Chao Fa Krom Khun Anurak Montri. The Uparāja Chao Fa From Porn Pipit gave in to his brother's claims to the throne and for his part decided to become a bhikkhu. For Tep Pipit the position became difficult since he had espoused the cause of the younger prince throughout for the position of Yuvaraja as well as for the kingship. Consequently he too sought refuge in the Buddhist order. On the accession of the new young prince to the throne a plot was hatched by discontented officials ostensibly to bring the old claimant, the former Uparāja, now a bhikkhu back to the throne. This was strongly supported by Tep Pipit. But the former Uparāja suspected that the real aim of the conspirators was to place Tep Pipit on the throne ultimately, and revealed the plot to the king, his brother. The conspirators were arrested and Krom Muen Tep Pipit was banished to Sri Lanka (presumably at the end of 1758 or early 1759). Siamese chronicles note that the king of Sri Lanka welcomed Tep Pipit not knowing that he had been banished from Ayudhya. When he was deported from Sri Lanka in 1760 he was not allowed to return to Ayudhya and was taken into custody in Tenessarim. In 1764 on the fall of Tenessarim to the Burmese, Tep Pipit fled the town. When Ayudhya was besieged by the Burmese, he raised an army and marched on the capital. However, his army was defeated, and he fled to Nakorn Rajasima, a town in the north-east. There he became the governor of the town after procuring the murder of the ruling governor. With the fall of Ayudhya in 1767 to the Burmese, Tep Pipit was invited to Pimai by the governor of that town where he was crowned as the 'legitimate king of Siam.' Subsequently he was

<sup>57</sup> R Boudens, Catholic Church Under Dutch Rule, (Rome, 1957), p 222.

defeated by Chao Tak Sin (who later became king of Siam in the new capital of Dhonburi) and executed.<sup>58</sup>

When the Dutch were searching for him in Siam he was found to be in custody, and it was alleged that his freedom would endanger the safety of the state.<sup>59</sup> In the evidence he gave to the Dutch chief of Tuticorin he did not give any indication of his own part in the plot to oust and murder King Kīrti Srī Rājasimha, and the Dutch themselves suspected that he had played a role he was unwilling to reveal.<sup>60</sup> Siamese connections with Sri Lanka were not new and Siam had been held in high regard in Kandy from early times. Making use of the reputation of the Siamese in Kandy, it is likely that the bhikkhu encouraged and played a more active role in the conspiracy, in the hope of becoming king, than has been hitherto realised.

The origins of the myth of the Kandyan-Buddhist versus Hindu-Dravidian division in the plot of 1760 are worth examining. First, it could owe something to the propaganda of the conspirators themselves. The Sāsanāvathīrna Varnanāva, a Sinhalese work of the 1830s or 1840s, contains some of this propaganda<sup>61</sup> and its author could have been influenced by the propaganda campaign of the Dutch, as well as of the English who later succeeded them, against the Nāyakkar dynasty. The anti-Nāyakkar campaign of the English was exactly the same as that of the Dutch, and was intended to encourage the Sinhalese chiefs to rise against the kings of Kandy. Thus the Sāsanāvathīrna Varnanāva could have been influenced by both the propaganda of the plotters, and those of the Dutch and the English. This work itself could be one source of the myth about the attempted *coup* of 1760.

The Dutch records themselves, especially those of the 1760s, are full of expressions which tend to support a Nāyakkar monopoly of all important offices of the Kandyan state. This appears to be the outcome of the Dutch attempt to discover a scapegoat for all their troubles with the court of Kandy. The blame for the requests made by the court for participating in trade was put on the "Moorish and *Chetty* rabble that surrounded the court of Kandy." But Governors such as van Imhoff had pointed out, that so long as free trade

61 C E Godakumbura (ed.), Sāsanāvathīrna Varnanāva, (Moratuwa, 1956), p 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> This is based on Damrong Rajanubhab (ed.), *Praratchapongsawadan chabap* praratchahatthalekha (Royal Autograph edition), Bangkok, 1962, Vol. 2, pp 259-60, 263, 277-8, 309-11, 321-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> K A 3004 fos. 1839-46, G&C Colombo to GG&C Batavia (Secret), 12 January 1765.

K A 2904 fos. 697-700. Report of Evidence Given by the Siamese Deportee in Tuticorin, 17 March 1761.

was not allowed to Kandy, amicable relations with the court would never be established. Schreuder, during whose time the tension with the court broke out into open war, blamed everything on the machinations of all powerful Nāyakkars. The supposed power of the Nāyakkars at the court is referred to by Schreuder thus: "... I must observe that that Nation (i.e. Nāyakkars) is now not only the predominant factor but that there is almost no office of importance at the court which is fulfilled by a genuine Kandyan, ...whilst all lucrative employments are publicly distributed among the Malabars."<sup>62</sup> Due to this "Malabar characteristic" of the court, Schreuder observed: "it is now chiefly bent on money-making by carrying on trade..."<sup>63</sup> There is little doubt that judgements of this kind passed on the court by the Dutch, which were essentially attempts to explain away current difficulties with the court, influenced the interpretations of the events of 1760.

After the wars with Rājasimha II in the 17th century, the Dutch in Sri Lanka were on the defensive for more than half a century. The VOC carried on in permanent fear of an alliance between the Kandyans, and one of the European rivals of the Dutch. There was also the constant fear of the Kandyans subverting the Company's authority in the territories it controlled. By 1760 both sides were flexing their muscles. Both were weaker than they thought they were but both hoped that an aggressive policy would gain them greater advantages than the stalemate that had prevailed for several decades. Both sides believed that they had legitimate grievances against the other. They drifted into a war which both hoped would resolve issues in their favour.

We begin this part of the present chapter with the despatch of the Kandyan emissaries to inquire into the troubles in the lowlands in October 1760. Before the actual despatch of the Kandyan emissaries an embassy from Kandy had arrived in Colombo to place before the Governor the grievances of the rebellious inhabitants. Governor Schreuder induced some of his leading Sinhalese officers to give a reasoned rejection of the case presented. The rejection was total and the Kandyans went home empty handed. This was perhaps not the most polite way of dealing with a court already displeased with the Dutch over other questions. As a matter of fact, the Batavian authorities rebuked Schreuder for the manner in which the Kandyan embassy of October 1760 was handled. The precipitate banishment of the Mahā Mudaliyār of the Governor's Gate, was another important reason for Kandyan

<sup>62</sup> Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 31.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, p 18.

displeasure with the Dutch. Of more immediate effect on the Kandyan invasion could have been the story publicised in Kandy by the rebels, that the Dutch were about to enthrone the Siamese *bhikkhu* who had been later handed over to the Dutch for deportation.<sup>64</sup>

These reasons are of primary significance in understanding the immediate causes of the Kandyan invasion of the Dutch territories in 1761. However, of more basic importance were the causes connected with the Dutch policy of monopolising the trade of the island and the consequent denial of the Kandyan requests for participation in the trade with India. The desire to participate in this trade was perhaps the principal source of Kandyan hostility and the most important underlying cause of the invasion. In fact the Kandyans connected this demand with the entire presence of the Dutch in the island. However, as in the case of many another war, the aims of the belligerents changed during the course of the war. By mid-1761 the Kandyan aim seems to have been reduced to the retention of the Matara disavany, and four of the korales of the Colombo disavany in addition to the gaining of permission to participate in the trade of the island. The Dutch at first only wanted to throw back the Kandyans from the territories they ruled. After the appearance of the mission sent to Kandy by the English East India Company, the Pybus mission, the Dutch were bent on territorial annexations as well as concluding a new treaty ensuring their sovereignty over the lands they ruled and curbing the rights of the king of Kandy to make treaties with foreign powers.

In the first four months of 1761 the Kandyan offensive was successful everywhere except in Negombo, where the Dutch put the combined Kandyan and rebel forces to rout. Further south, however, the Kandyans had been more successful. In December 1760, the Kandyans overran the Dutch outpost of Beralapanātara in the Mātara *disāvany*. By the end of March 1761 the Dutch were driven out of the outposts of Hakmana and Tangalla as well as from their main fort of Mātara, thus placing the entire Mātara *disāvany* in the hands of the Kandyans. In the Three and Four Kōralēs, the Kandyans succeeded in capturing Hanvälla by the end of March. Furthermore, the land communications between Colombo and Mātara were severed.<sup>65</sup> Despite these reverses, it was decided by Schreuder not to vacate the remaining Dutch outposts of Kalpitiya, Negombo and Batticaloa.

The idea of utilising an entire population to meet a technologically

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> For discussion of this see Chapter XI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> For this point as well as on the Kandyan military operations leading to the fall Mātara, in general, see, J H O Paulusz, Secret Minutes, Introduction, pp 10-5.

superior enemy is also basic to the modern and more sophisticated theories of guerrilla warfare. The conditions for the successful conduct of this form of warfare were available in ample measure in the island. The terrain was very suitable. The low hills and woods that abounded in the lowlands coupled with the lack of efficient overland communications, provided one essential condition for successful guerrilla operations.

While such conditions favoured a guerrilla strategy, others made its adoption necessary. The Kandyan state lacked a large standing army. All it had was a royal bodyguard which was only a few hundred strong. The greater part of the Kandyan armed forces consisted of feudal levies called up in times of need.<sup>66</sup> The army thus collected was by no means a professional one. The Kandyan army being a non-professional army and consequently lacking the discipline of contemporary European armies, had to rely on a different kind of warfare.

The rebellious subjects of the Company had been utilised on a large scale by the Kandyans in their war against the Dutch. In the attack on Mātara, the local rebels had been allowed to form the front line in order that they could take their revenge on the Dutch, and also for reasons of honour.<sup>67</sup> It was found later that most of the Kandyan batteries in the Mātara *disāvany* were manned by local people. The Kandyan invasion was preceded by the disruption of communications in the areas ruled by the VOC. In fact, this was basic to the Kandyan strategy. Roads were blocked, and bridges destroyed. Usually in places where there were road-blocks the Kandyans built well sited batteries from which to harass Dutch armies. This was what happened to communications between Colombo and Hanvälla and in the entire Mātara *disāvany*.<sup>68</sup>

The military strength of Dutch power in the island was based on the coastal fortifications. The Kandyan military organization and methods of warfare were inadequate in two main respects when it came to attacks on fortifications. Heavy artillery, and men trained in their use, were wanting on the Kandyan side. As a result, long demoralising sieges and stratagems to induce a defending garrison to surrender were used by the Kandyans (for example, Katuvana). However, with proper artillery support Sinhalese forces were not averse to frontal attacks on fortifications. Galagoda, the Kandyan commander who led the successful attack on Mātara, is said to have obtained

68 ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> R Pieris, Sinhalese Social Organisation, (Colombo, 1956), pp 103-9.

<sup>57</sup> J H O Paulusz, op. cit., Introduction, pp 10-5.

a sufficient number of heavy guns, and drilled his troops before the attack. Captured Dutch soldiers had been used as instructors, and some passing English ships had provided additional artillery to the Kandyans. At Mātara one of the weaker forts of the Dutch on the island, the Sinhalese use of siege warfare had been so skilled that a knowledgeable Dutch observer remarked: "their gabions, sconces, facines, and other contrivances rivalled in quality the best work of that kind produced in Europe."<sup>69</sup> However, procuring sufficient quantities of heavy artillery, and training men in their skilled use in large numbers were not tasks that could be accomplished within a short time. Whenever the Kandyans dug in for an attack on the fort the Dutch would dislodge them with well directed commando raids which the Kandyans could not withstand. Without the skill in open warfare of the type prevailing in contemporary Europe, in which a successful campaign against the Dutch had to culminate, the effort of the Kandyans was foredoomed to failure.

At the start of their campaigns the Kandyans were able to utilize the discontent in the lowlands arising from the Dutch land policy. Galagoda tried to convert this discontent into anti-Dutch sentiments, appealing to the lowlanders to rise up and rid the country of the Dutch. Buddhism was also used as a cry to rally the lowlanders in their struggle against the Dutch. However, these tactics were by no means sufficient to sustain the morale of a popular force over a long period of fighting.

On the other hand certain features of the Dutch administration and policy made it more difficult for mere appeals to religious and other sentiments to be effective in sustaining the spirit of militancy in the population of the lowlands. These areas had been subjected to the rule of colonial power for more than two centuries already, and it is likely that the spirit of resistance among the people was weakened as a result. Their experiences would also have taught them the futility of making efforts to expel a well entrenched European power from the island. The fact that the most important of the Dutch forts in the island were not overrun by the Sinhalese forces would have made the promises of ridding the island of Dutch power less credible. What is more, the most articulate section of the population, the Sinhalese officialdom, had a vested interest in the continuance of Dutch Their estrangement during the rebellions seems to have been power. temporary. In the Matara disavany, for example, the influential chiefs who went over to the Kandyans found the latter to be more difficult masters to serve than the Dutch. After carefully sounding the reactions of the Dutch in

69 ibid., pp 10-5.

Colombo they returned to the fold of the Company.<sup>70</sup> There were similar examples among Sinhalese headmen in the Dutch service in the Colombo *disāvany*.<sup>71</sup> No wonder then that very early in 1761 it was clear that the Kandyan offensive had been blunted, and the tide had turned against them.

From the very beginning of hostilities the Batavian authorities instructed Colombo to refrain from taking steps that might forfeit the loyalties of the Sinhalese headmen. They realised the mistake of Schreuder in deporting important Sinhalese headmen, and ordered the recall of all the The latter were to have all their properties which had been deportees. confiscated by the Governor, returned to them. Even with regard to the ordinary rebels, the policy was one of conciliation. The Batavian recommendation of allowing free pardons to all those who returned<sup>72</sup> was put into practice at least in Mātara. The Kandyans, on the other hand, seem to have earned considerable antagonism for their cause in their effort to appoint new officers loyal to them in the newly annexed areas. A case in point is the reaction of the salāgama caste to the new appointments of the Kandyans. The methods used by the Kandyans to persuade the uncommitted and those hostile to their cause do not seem to have made them any more popular. Threats of degradation to lower castes, and destruction of their property were some of the methods used.

On the positive side, the record of the Dutch in Sri Lanka was not a bad one for a colonial administration. The nature of the Company's social and economic policy left the native institutions intact, by and large. Administratively, the Dutch also left considerable authority in the hands of the native officialdom. In religious policy, where there was plenty of room to earn the antagonism of a people professing an ancient faith, they were less intolerant, and their policy of prosleytisation was to a great extent ineffective. This is in contrast to the repressive policy of the Portuguese. The only exception to this was the policy followed towards the Roman Catholics. Even here, the Company's repressive regulations were not always enforced.

On hearing of the hostilities, Batavia recommended a policy of appeasing the Kandyans, in which they persisted until August 1762. The Governor General and Council argued that in a long war, success was doubtful, losses heavy and opportunities for the Company's rivals to fish in troubled waters great. They agreed, therefore, to concede to the Kandyans

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Eg. J H O Paulusz, op. cit., 1 February 1762, pp 44-5.

<sup>71</sup> Raven-Hart, Dutch Wars, p 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> J H O Paulusz, Secret Minutes, 27 November 1762, pp 167-8.

half of the profits of the elephant trade of the island, as well as 25,000 to 30,000 florins per year provided they granted the Company certain concessions. These were, the free peeling of cinnamon in the king's lands and free transport for the Company's elephants through the same, and the embodying of these concessions in a treaty. As a further concession, one *thony* of trade goods was to be allowed to the Kandyans with the necessary safeguards. Batavia also reprimanded Schreuder for his stringent measures to protect cinnamon lands and asked him to take immediate steps to remove the causes of complaint so as to pacify the inhabitants. And Batavia promised to send some military assistance for purely defensive ends.<sup>73</sup> In none of his correspondence with Kandy did Schreuder make use of the freedom allowed him to make concessions to the Kandyans - his reason for this attitude being the hope of settling the troubles without making any concessions.<sup>74</sup>

Even after hearing of the worsening situation in Sri Lanka up to March 1761, the Batavian authorities recommended a policy of appeasing the Kandyans and pacifying the Company's rebellious inhabitants. Schreuder was asked to recall all his deportees as a means of pacifying the Company's own inhabitants. The recall of Leander de Saram, the Mahā Mudaliyār, it was felt, tended to re-establish good relations with the court. Towards the same end Batavia recalled Schreuder for he had made himself persona non grata with the Kandyans. He was to be replaced with Lubbert Jan van Eck the Governor of the Coromandel, who had a reputation for getting on well with native subjects as well as with native rulers. Even after the fall of Hanvälla and Mātara in early 1761, Batavia persisted in this policy, advising Schreuder not to undertake anything that might further estrange the court of Kandy. Reporting the fall of Mātara and Hanvälla Schreuder had urged Batavia to take a more aggressive line against Kandy. Batavia refused to accept the views of Schreuder, first, because much had happened since the late 1730s in the south Asia region and elsewhere as a result of which the Company's position had been weakened compared with that of her rivals. Second, because even though van Imhoff had urged war as one means of settling scores with Kandy, he had also pointed out that it was a most hazardous venture.<sup>75</sup> The Governor General and Council reminded Schreuder of the fate of great Portuguese armies as well as the reverses the Dutch themselves

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> K A 918 fos. 37-39, GG& C Batavia to G & C Colombo (Secret), 14 April 1761.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> K A 2903 fos. 468-523, G & C Colombo to GC & C Batavia (Secret), 24 January 1762.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> For a discussion of the correspondence between Batavia and van Imhoff see, Arasaratnam,
 "Baron van Imhoff and Dutch Policy in Ceylon, 1736-1740," BKI, 118, pp 454-68.

suffered at the hands of the Kandyans during the costly wars of van Goens. Moreover, Batavia contended, the aggressive policy of van Goens made the Company's territories in Ceylon economically unprofitable since it entailed the maintenance of large armies. These arguments were also those of the Batavian officials at the time of van Goens, and were later unreservedly endorsed by the Company's historian, van Dam.<sup>76</sup> Since an aggressive policy was militarily hazardous and economically unsupportable, the best policy to be adopted towards Kandy was the one chosen in the time of van Rheede, which was to flatter the court and to play the role of its "obedient servant." Experience had shown that this was the most effective way with the Kandyans.

A policy of appeasement was dictated by the sheer decline of the Company's military resources, and in the face of the growth of the power of her European rivals, especially of the English in South Asia, there was clearly no alternative. It was difficult to find the necessary man-power for even the ordinary voyages of the Company, or to reinforce the garrisons of the outer stations (*buiten comptoiren*). In these circumstances, fitting out a large fleet and mustering a land army of four to five thousand men was out of the question for the Company. In order to pacify the king further, therefore, Batavia decided to write a letter to the king, in which Schreuder was blamed for not heeding the king's good advice regarding the complaints of the people. The letter also stated that the Company intended to appoint a new Governor who would work to remove the sources of grievance among the people.<sup>77</sup>

The discretion allowed to Schreuder to make a bargain on the question of trade with the Indian coast was not utilised by him during 1761. Nor did he admit in the correspondence with the court that the Company's inhabitants had any grievances. Schreuder's justification for by-passing the instructions from Batavia was based on the need to uphold the Company's prestige in the face of the claims made by the Kandyans. He pointed out that the court was treating the Company as its vassal rather than its ally. Giving in further to their demands would confirm them in their attitude.<sup>78</sup> Here, it may be pointed out, Schreuder was thinking of the Company not in terms of a commercial body, but rather as a territorial power in the island, an attitude which Batavia did not favour.

<sup>78</sup> K A 2903 fos. 468-523, G & C Colombo to GG & C Batavia (Secret), 24 January 1762.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Pieter van Dam, (F W Stapel ed.), Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie, (The Hague, 1932), 2eBk, Deel 2, Inleiding, pp XI-XV.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> K A 918 fos. 114-117, GG & C Batavia to Kīrti Sri Rājasimha, 23 July 1761.

Despite the hopes entertained by Batavian authorities on the basis of their instructions peace was hardly in sight by the end of 1761. The Kandyans were insisting on the withdrawal of Dutch forces from four of the korales of the Colombo disavany and an undertaking not to send troops to the Matara disavany as a precondition to even receiving Dutch ambassadors at the As a result, the letter to the king from Batavia also remained court. undelivered.79 Meanwhile the Kandyans were occupying large portions of the Colombo disāvany and were in the interior of the Galu koralē; they were also occupying the Matara disavany. Their attempts to capture Negombo in November, however, failed again.<sup>80</sup> The Dutch on their part were making preparations to capture Mātara early in 1762 especially since it was feared that the Kandyans might invite a foreign power like the English and allow the province to become an English settlement.

It was at this time that the new Governor van Eck arrived in Colombo late in 1761. Early in the New Year peace was no nearer. Despite the recapture of Mātara by the Dutch by this time, the Kandyans were persisting in their previous demands and the Governor was not making any serious efforts to grant even what Batavia made provision for. Affairs had reached something of a stalemate when the Dutch heard of the presence of English emissaries at the court of Kandy.

Since 1746 ships from the British squadrons in India had frequented the harbour of Trincomalee for purposes of refitting. By 1760 the British had even built themselves a careening wharf on the edge of the harbour, and in 1762 had even made a chart of the whole harbour.<sup>81</sup> When the Seven Years War broke out it was France that the VOC feared more than England. Batavia was apprehensive that if France decided to attack the Low Countries, they would certainly also attack the Company's positions in Asia. In the South Asian region they assumed that Sri Lanka would be one of the first targets in such an event and asked the authorities in Sri Lanka to take all measures for defence, and especially to defend Trincomalee. The potential threat to the Company's interests in south Asia presented by the growth of English power, however, was not lost sight of during the Seven Years War. The policy followed by the Dutch in Sri Lanka was one of neutrality, of equal hospitality to both belligerents, a policy that the Dutch were following in Europe too.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> K A 2904 fos. 985-986, Resolutions (Secret), 21 October 1761.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> K A 2905 fos. 1026-7, Resolutions (Secret), 29 December 1761.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> H A Colgate, "The Royal Navy and Trincomalee...," CJHSS, Vol. 7, (1964), pp 1-16.

The Dutch in Sri Lanka feared collusion between the Kandyans and the English from the very beginning of the Kandyan offensive. During the attack on the fort of Matara the Kandyans had received some assistance in the form of guns and ammunition from passing English ships. They also heard that the Kandyans were making efforts to enlist the assistance of the English in Madras.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless it was in May 1762 that reliable and disconcerting information was received regarding the reception of Kandyan emissaries by the English in Madras, and the consequent despatch of the Pybus mission to the court of Kandy.<sup>83</sup> The intention of the English was to gather as much economic and political intelligence of the land as possible. The fourth article of the instructions to Pybus advised him not to make any definite promises to the king. However, article sixteen of the same instructions said something different. It said that, if the king of Kandy had captured any province or port suitable for the trade of cinnamon, and offered the same to the English, Pybus was to establish an English settlement there with the help of Admiral Cornish.<sup>84</sup>

The English intervention in the affairs of Sri Lanka occurred at a time when the Dutch and the English governments were trying to iron out their earlier differences. These arose in Bengal as well as in the west coast of Sumatra, and the English East India Company's authorities at home instructed their stations in India not to interfere in the affairs of the Dutch Company in a manner that might be construed as a hostile act. The home government was doing its best not to antagonise the Dutch government.<sup>85</sup> The sending of the Pybus mission, especially the intentions in item sixteen of the instructions to Pybus, do not seem to be in keeping with the advice of the Directors of the English Company. Even though instructions were sent to Bengal by the English Company on representations being made by the Dutch regarding the Pybus mission, the Madras Presidency was not taken to task for the Pybus mission. In fact, the Directors promised to defend the actions of the Madras authorities on the entire question. They agreed with the latter's flat rejection of the VOC's exclusive claims to the trade and settlement of the island, especially their assertion that the Dutch had produced no proof of their claims

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> K A 2903 fos. 67-9, Translation of an *ola* from Sri Saranamkara to Governor, 9 April 1761.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> K A 2903 fos. 44-64, G & C Colombo to CG & C Batavia (Secret), 6 April 1761.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> C[ommonwealth] R[elations] O[ffice] hereafter CRO, Ceylon 1, 1762-1795, pp 195-203.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> CRO Madras Despatches, 2 (p 362), Court of Directors to Madras, President and Council,
 23 December 1761.

but their unsupported assertions. However, Madras was prohibited from accepting from the king of Kandy any Dutch settlement in the island, or doing anything that might lead to a war with the Dutch. They further pointed out that the Kandyan terms would inevitably lead to a war with the Dutch which should be avoided at any cost, especially since there were signs that the French were recuperating from their defeats and would welcome the English involving themselves in a new war. Nevertheless, the Directors were not averse to the correspondence being maintained.<sup>86</sup>

By the time these instructions were received the English in Madras had abandoned the attempt to form an alliance with the king of Kandy. The Pybus episode so far as the Kandyans were concerned, seems to have been just another episode in the search for a European ally that would confine itself to economic activities and leave political power in their hands. The insistence of Pybus on territorial concessions prior to any kind of assistance seems to have scuttled the negotiations. The position taken by the English, according to one account, made the king exclaim that "if they already had the effrontery to put forward such claims, what would they not do as soon as they got hold of the lands."<sup>87</sup> The English in Madras on their part did not want to continue the negotiations since there was no likelihood of coming to a settlement with Kandy without promising assistance in the Kandyan war against the Dutch, thus involving themselves in a war with the Dutch.<sup>88</sup>

The Pybus mission at once brought to the fore the questions of Dutch claims to the exclusive trade of the island. The English in Madras admitted quite openly that they had sent an emissary to the court of Kandy since they assumed that the king of Kandy was an independent sovereign. They rejected the exclusive rights of the Dutch to the trade of the island and challenged the Dutch to prove the contrary.<sup>89</sup> Even though Batavia asked van Eck to make use of the treaty between Rājasimha and Westerwolt of 1638, as well as the treaties between the Dutch Republics and England, only the latter treaties were actually utilised in the protest notes sent to the English in Madras. Only the European treaties of 1654, 1662 and 1667 were quoted in the protests.<sup>90</sup>

- 88 CRO Madras despatches, Madras to Directors, 7 November 1763.
- <sup>89</sup> J H O Paulusz, op. cit., Piggot to van Eck, 7 August 1762, pp 135-7.
- 90 J H O Paulusz, op.cit., van Eck to Piggot, 9 November 1762, pp 154-9; ibid., 15 July 1762, pp 111-4.

<sup>86</sup> CRO Madras Despatches, 2 pp 691-2, Court of Directors to Madras, 9 March 1762.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> J H O Paulusz, op. cit., 15 July 1762, p 114; 31 July 1762, pp 121-2.

Van Eck found that the Westerwolt-Rājasimha treaty was of doubtful value in claiming exclusive rights for trade and settlement in the island, or to prevent the king of Kandy making contractual agreements with other powers.

Although the Pybus mission failed to produce any results on account of the incompatible aims of the English and the Kandyans, its effects on the Dutch policy in the island were momentous. From mid-1761 the local Dutch authorities were urging the need to take the offensive against the Kandyans only to be turned down by Batavia in the expectation that a peaceful solution to the differences would be found. As late as November 1761 Batavia was still hoping that their letter to the king would lead to a settlement with Kandy.

The attitude of Batavian authorities changed radically on hearing of the Pybus mission. Their instructions of 6 August 1762 were as much an aggressive assertion of the Company's rights in the island as a call to immediate action to vindicate them. Since Kandyan intractability was proved by their efforts to invite the English, no more faith could be placed in peaceful solutions. It had to be proved to both the Kandyans and the English that the VOC was prepared to defend its possessions.

The first step to demonstrate this determination was to expel the Kandyans from the territories held by the Dutch prior to 1760. Since the Pybus mission proved the weakness of the Company's titles to the lands it held in the island, Kandyans were to be forced to sign a new treaty. In order to do this suitable places in the Kandyan kingdom had to be captured by the Company. The first of these would be Puttalam, which would also give more protection to Kalpitiya and make it more difficult for the Kandyans to maintain contacts with India. Since 1761 some of the chiefs (vanniyārs), from the eastern side of the island around Trincomalee and Batticaloa owing allegiance to the king, had been making overtures to the Company promising to desert the king. Batavia gave instructions that these chiefs should be given the Company's protection. As a means of consolidating the VOC's position in its own territories the local authorities were requested to give tax concessions and other relief to the people and to treat the returned deportees with liberality so that they would have a stake in the fortunes of the Company. Finally, if the English were to make an attempt to land in the island with the intention of aiding the king, then this was to be resisted by force of arms.

On receipt of the Batavian instructions Dutch forces began to clear the Company's territories of Kandyan positions. The offensive had begun in earnest. In the Mātara *disāvany* the Kandyans were cleared from their remaining positions, and the Kolonna and Atakalan *kōralēs* of the Kandyan kingdom were attacked and ravaged. Further south the Dutch forces crossed the Valavē and took positions in the territories that formerly belonged to the

king. In the Colombo *disāvany* and the Gālu *kōralē* vigorous action was also taken and the Kandyans and rebels cleared from their positions. Further to the north the Dutch crossed the Mahā Oya and took Chilaw and Puttalam, the latter port having served as a smuggler's nest over a long period. In the east of the island the king's chiefs (*vanniyārs*) who made overtures to the Dutch were taken under the wing of the Company, and forays made into the Kandyan territories from Trincomalee.

Meanwhile, the Kandyans, unable to hold their original gains in the lowland, were seeking peace. Two Kandyan embassies were despatched - the first in February, and the second in March 1763. The first brought some important Dutch officials who had been taken prisoner, and expressed the wish to return to peace under the pre-war conditions. The second embassy came in accordance with van Eck's wish to treat with fully accredited ambassadors. On this occasion the Governor laid down his conditions for peace. They consisted of the Kandyans ceding a strip of coastal territory to the VOC, about four Dutch miles wide in the south east from the Valave to Kottiyar. The Dutch laid claims to all lands held by the Portuguese which included the Seven Korales and the Three and Four Korales and Sabaragamuva. Moreover, the Governor demanded compensation for the Company's losses during the war. The Kandyan ambassadors replied that they had no powers to sign a treaty embodying such conditions.<sup>91</sup> Even so, van Eck agreed to a ceasefire. The reason he gave for not negotiating to return to peace on the old footing was that he needed new instructions from Batavia. The real reasons for his decision to agree to a ceasefire were, as he himself admitted, that he was still waiting for reinforcements from Batavia and that the oncoming months were not suitable for military operations.

In Colombo van Eck was contemplating plans to make the Company's position in the island impregnable by settling the relations with Kandy once and for all. One of his favourite plans was to place the banished Siamese prince on Kandy's throne.<sup>92</sup> Such a scheme would ideally suit the Company since it was assumed that the Siamese would sign away any treaty that the Dutch would desire as he owed his throne to the Company. The plan was enthusiastically approved by the Batavian authorities. Van Eck also contemplated making Kīrti Srī a vassal of the Company. However, since the Batavian authorities were not enthusiastic about the idea, van Eck drew up the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> K A 2971 fos. 226-8, Report of the Conference with Kandyans, 26 February 1763; K A 2971 fos. 229-31, Report of the Conference with Kandyans, 28 February 1763.

<sup>92</sup> See J H O Paulusz, 'Prince Crumpty-Pippit and Governor van Eck,' Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon, XXI(2), (October 1931), pp 92-5.

draft of a treaty to be signed by the reigning monarch which was the third alternative way of settling matter with Kandy.

This draft contained the following main conditions:

- (a) The ceding of the Three and Four Kōralēs, the Seven Kōralēs, Puttalam and the coasts around the island to the Dutch.
- (b) The two parties to consider each other sovereign over the inhabitants that each of them ruled.
- (c) The abandonment by the king of Kandy the right to treat with any foreign power, whether Indian or European.
- (d) In case of an attack on one party by a foreign power, the other should come to assist the attacked party.
- (e) The Company to pay the king four gold pagodas or eighty rix dollars for each bale of cinnamon of 88 pounds, and also to pay suitable prices for the rest of the produce from the Kandyan kingdom.
- (f) Kandy to grant permission for cinnamon peeling for good and annual embassies to Kandy to cease.<sup>93</sup>

The subsequent war and diplomatic policies of the Dutch in Sri Lanka were directed towards obtaining peace within the island on the basis of one of the three alternative plans outlined above.

In the early part of 1763 the Dutch went on consolidating their position in the new areas they had captured from the Kandyans. Inroads made from Trincomalee into the king's lands brought territories as far to the interior as Mädavacchiya and Minnēriya under their control. Incursions made from Batticaloa captured territory as far south as Kalmunai. Although the Dutch had a heavy rate of desertions, and the Kandyans tried to counter their moves, the latter's successes were only temporary.

While Batavia was inclined to be more conciliatory towards Kandy and even drop the claims to the strip of territory round the island (provided that in a peace settlement lands up to Chilaw were given to the Dutch, along with all the important harbours in the coast round the island), van Eck was not inclined towards immediate peace. The Kandyans on their part were insisting on peace on the basis of a return to the *status quo* prior to 1760. The correspondence between the two parties therefore did not make any headway during 1763. In the latter half of this year van Eck commenced preparations for a large-scale invasion of the Kandyan kingdom. Van Eck's first plan was to invade the king's territories on all sides with six armies.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>93</sup> K A 2971 fos. 159-63, Resolutions (Secret), 16 July 1763.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> For details of the invasion plan see, Zwier, *Het Verdrag*, pp 38- .., Raven-Hart, op.cit., pp 4-5.

The main Dutch army came to within a fair distance of Kandy when it was forced to turn back due to difficulties that van Eck had underestimated. These were difficulties that any contemporary conventional European army had to confront. The land was largely unmapped and the available maps were inaccurate. The roads traversed hills and valleys that were largely forested. In addition the rains proved to be a serious obstacle which resulted in slow progress as well as sickness. Under such conditions transporting the paraphernalia of a regular army proved hazardous. The auxiliaries on whom the transport of supplies and heavy armament depended began to fall ill and/or to desert in large numbers, so that further progress towards Kandy was rendered impossible.95 Consequently, van Eck's main army returned to Colombo leaving a garrison inside Kandyan territory in Gonavila. The rest of the Dutch armies did not fare any better. However it was not the military strength of the Kandyans but other factors which frustrated van Eck's first attempt at invasion. It is natural therefore, that the Kandyans could not take full advantage of the discomfiture of the Dutch. Consequently the latter were not disturbed in the positions they held before the invasion. In fact van Eck's forces had occupied a position (Gonavila) inside the Kandyan territory and held on to it against efforts to dislodge them.96

The situation in Sri Lanka, however, did not favour a peaceful solution. The Kandyans were not prepared to sign away their territories, even though the limits of their military capacity seem to have been reached. Since their soldiers were agriculturists as well, a prolonged war meant continued neglect of agriculture. In armaments too, their mode of production which was domestic did not allow for a long war and continued losses. Although the Dutch themselves were reaching the end of their tether they could still hope for assistance from home as well as the other parts of the empire. The end of the Seven Years War proved a boon in supplies of manpower for they could enlist disbanded soldiers in India. Although this was costly for the Company which was already in financial difficulties, as has already been seen, the Company was determined to consolidate their power in the island at whatever cost. Van Eck himself was not a great believer in peace and was determined to go for total victory.

In the 1765 invasion of Kandy, van Eck's second invasion, he did not make the mistake of dividing his forces. The new plan was to invade Kandy with one army. Two columns were to meet at Kurunāgala and proceed to Kandy. The Dutch armies reached the outskirts of Kandy by mid-February

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, p 7.

<sup>95</sup> Raven-Hart, op. cit., pp 5-7, 26-7, 40-1, 89.

with little resistance. At this stage the Kandyans, either in trying delaying tactics, or in making a genuine peace probe under conditions acceptable to them, sent emissaries to van Eck. The Governor insisted on a treaty based on the following conditions.

- (a) The king's acceptance of the full sovereign rights of the Company and the States General over the territories held by the Company.
- (b) All deserters, rebels, and prisoners of war taken by the king's forces to be delivered to the Company.
- (c) The king to cede to the Dutch all the coasts around the island; and in addition Chilaw, Puttalam, the Seven Köralës, the Four Köralës, Sabaragamuva and Nuvara Vanni to be similarly ceded to the Dutch. (Cinnamon peeling in the king's lands was also to be allowed to the Company).
- (d) The Company to rule those lands as they thought fit, and the king to surrender all administrative documents concerning them.
- (e) Trade between the king's subjects and the Company's subjects to be allowed freely, and the refugees of either party to be properly exchanged.
- (f) The king to pay the Company its expenses of war.
- (g) A treaty of friendship to be signed by which the Company would protect the king on the condition that the king provide the necessary supplies.
- (h) The king to give up his rights to sign treaties with foreign powers.<sup>97</sup> The Kandyans did not respond to the peace offer on these conditions.

Consequently Kandy was invaded and taken by the Dutch army. Even though Kandy was taken the peace treaty that van Eck desired was not in sight. For the king had fled the capital with his Ministers into the depths of his hilly kingdom. Van Eck decided to hold Kandy until it could be reinforced during the next dry season. He assumed that there were sufficient provisions to last the rainy season during which time it was virtually impossible to supply the garrison in Kandy. Having appointed officers to the garrison to be left behind, and leaving instructions as to what was to be done in the "unforseen and unbelievable" event of a retreat, van Eck himself returned to Colombo on 4 March. Probably realising the hazardous prospect of leaving a garrison virtually isolated in hostile and virtually inaccessible territory, he also left a letter addressed to the king giving up the demand for war indemnities, and the Kandyan districts of north central Sri Lanka and offering to negotiate the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Zwier, op.cit., pp 64-5; and Raven-Hart, Dutch Wars, p 13.

other conditions.<sup>98</sup> It was found impossible to deliver this letter however in the ensuing circumstances.

The Dutch garrison in Kandy was subjected to harassment from the very beginning of the occupation and the torments worsened as time went on. The attempts of the Dutch to quell the constant attacks of the Kandyans who descended from the surrounding hills were of no avail. More pernicious enemies, however, were bad weather and sickness as well as the dearth of provisions. The forecasts regarding food supplies proved to be wrong, and the food problem got worse as days passed. And the foraging parties sent out were given rough treatment by the Kandyans who were occupying the hills surrounding the city of Kandy. Consequently, on the last day of August it was decided to abandon Kandy. The relief force sent from Colombo reached Kandy too late. In the retreat the Dutch managed to avoid the main Kandyan forces waiting for them due to a secret route which was found for them by Dissānayake mudaliyār of Hāpitigam koralē. Though reduced by sickness the Dutch garrison managed to reach Negombo safely in late September.99 Meanwhile, van Eck had fallen ill and died on reaching Colombo on 1 April, and the Commander of Jaffna took over as officer administering the government until the appointment of a new Governor.

Batavia appointed Willem Iman Falck, the young secretary of the Governor General's Council, as the new Governor. At the same time the Company's policy regarding the island was once again discussed at length. The discussions reveal a greater confidence in obtaining a victory than on previous occasions. They are also interesting in that they foreshadowed the methods by which the Kandyan kingdom was ultimately captured by the British. A new plan to end the war and arrive at a settlement favourable to the Company was discussed on the basis of proposals that van Eck had made earlier. This consisted of the three alternatives of van Eck's earlier scheme: first, the deposition of king Kīrti Sri, and placing on the throne of Kandy a Siamese prince or a Sinhalese nobleman; second, the division of the kingdom among a few noblemen who would govern it as vassals of the Company; third, making peace with Kīrti Srī Rājasimha on terms favourable to the Company. The plan to place the Siamese was abandoned since the prince could not be obtained. Because a Sinhalese nobleman on the throne of Kandy could also be hazardous to Dutch interests in the island that idea too was ultimately set aside. The third alternative was chosen in preference to the

<sup>98</sup> Raven-Hart, op.cit., p 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> *ibid.*, pp 15, 111-2, 122, 130-2; Zwier, *op.cit.*, pp 73-4.

second, since the king still remained very much alive and in control of his kingdom and dividing the kingdom of Kandy (as envisaged in the second alternative) without accomplishing the capture of the king would not settle matters finally.

Making peace with Kīrti Srī was considered therefore to be the most practical line of action. In seeking peace with the king, however, it was to be made clear to him that the Company was prepared if necessary to wage war so long as the Company's terms were not agreed to. To cope with such an eventuality the authorities in the island were promised reinforcements from Batavia and the Netherlands. Peace was to be offered to the Kandyans on the following conditions;

- (a) The recognition of the full sovereign rights of the Company over its territories.
- (b) The king was to cede to the Company the territories of Seven Köralës, Three and Four Köralës, Puttalam, Sabaragamuva (or at least the Mäda, Atakalan and Kolonna köralës of Sabaragamuva), and the lands of Nuvara Vanni, as well as give up all rights over the other vanniyārs who came under the Company's protection. In addition, the king was to cede to the Company all the sea coasts of the island that they did not possess prior to the war.
  - (c) Permission was to be granted by the king for cinnamon peeling in his own lands.
  - (d) The annual embassies were to be abandoned, and the needs of the courtiers as well as the king were to be bought from the Company at a reasonable price.
  - (e) The return of all deserters and prisoners in the hands of the Kandyans.
  - (f) All Moors and Nāyakkars in the Kandyan areas were to be banished, the Company providing transportation for this.
  - (g) The king was to give up all rights of correspondence as well as treaty making with foreign powers.
  - (h) The king was to regard the enemies of the Company as his own enemies and provide the Company with assistance against such enemies.
  - (i) The prompt delivery in future of all refugees from the Dutch lands by the Kandyans.
  - (j) The Company was to have all rights of building whatever fortifications on its frontiers it thought necessary.
  - (k) The purchase by the Company of the produce of the king's lands, especially cinnamon, pepper and arecanut.
  - (1) All important officers (presumably in the Kandyan kingdom) falling

vacant, were to be filled by Sinhalese, and foreigners excluded from them.

(m) The Kandyans were to pay a war indemnity.<sup>100</sup>

It is obvious at first glance at these conditions that the Dutch were making an effort to remedy all the ills that beset their rule in the island since its inception in the maritime regions. The territorial claims were primarily for defence as well as for gaining the control of the cinnamon producing areas The insistence on the king foregoing all rights of held by the king. correspondence with foreign powers was to forestall the Kandyans making alliances with powers which would breach the Dutch monopoly of the island's trade and products. Such a threat was present from the very beginning of the Dutch presence in the island and was once again brought to the fore in the Pybus mission. The humiliating ceremonies that the Company's ambassadors underwent for nearly a century were to be remedied by the abolition of the annual embassies to the court and the obtaining of the rights to peel cinnamon in the king's land by treaty. The insistence that the Moors and Nāyakkars should be banished and that the offices falling vacant in the Kandyan kingdom were to be filled by Sinhalese was made on the assumption that these two groups were acting in a manner inimical to the Company's interest. The latter condition was meaningless since no important office was held by Nāyakkars. The conditions regarding refugees arose out of the difficulties that the Company experienced mainly with regard to cinnamon peelers, but the ordinary rebels fleeing the Company's lands and taking refuge in the king's lands, as happened during the 1757-60 rebellions could not have been far from the minds of the Dutch. On numerous occasions Kandyans intervened and protested against the extension of existing fortifications as in the case of Trincomalee during the Governorship of van Gollenesse. The insistence of the rights to build fortification unhindered arose from there. As regards the indemnity, it was the aim of the Batavian authorities that it would keep the Kandyans in a state of economic debility in which condition they were less likely to make trouble for the Company.<sup>101</sup>

In the event of king Kīrti Srī Rājasimha rejecting these conditions for peace, the Governor was to select a member of the old royal house or a nobleman to be made king of Kandy. The ruler thus appointed would be a tributary of the Dutch, and be obliged to capture and deliver the king, in addition to signing a treaty embodying the conditions already noted. If it was found impossible to find a pretender to fulfill the scheme, the kingdom of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> K A 737 fos. 11-22, Resolutions Batavia (Secret), 24 June 1765.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> *ibid*.

Kandy was to be divided among two or more chiefs. These chiefs, whose position seems to have been conceived in the style of the Regents of Java, were obliged to fulfill the following conditions:

- (a) Help the Dutch in the capture of the reigning monarch and other Nāyakkars as well as Moors.
- (b) Pay to the Company whatever they delivered formerly to the king from the provinces they ruled.
- (c) Deliver the saleable produce of the lands they ruled to the Company in the manner required by them.
- (d) Refrain from sentencing a person to death without the prior consent of the Governor.
- (e) To agree not to introduce changes into the system of administration, laws and customs in the lands they ruled.
- (f) To forego all rights of maintaining correspondence with foreign powers, as well as the rights to make treaties.
- (g) And the recognition of the Company's rights to dismiss them in case they proved untrustworthy to the Company.<sup>102</sup>

Falck assumed the governorship on 10 August 1765 armed with the Batavian instructions. Militarily, the retreat of the Kandyan garrison of the VOC came to be known soon and although it was first intended to hold as many positions in the Kandyan territories as possible, the idea was given up due to the shattered state of the Dutch army. However, the Dutch held to their positions prior to the invasion.<sup>103</sup> Meanwhile a pretender to the throne of Kandy was brought from Coromandel. The imposter claimed to be a son of a Nāyakkar consort of the last Sinhalese king, Narēndrasimha. From the many inquiries that Falck made of persons knowledgeable on Kandyan affairs in the low-country as well as in the Kandyan kingdom, it was clear that the last Sinhalese king had no such offspring. Nor were the Kandyans whom Falck sounded, enthusiastic about the prospect of a pretender on the throne of Kandy. Nevertheless, it was decided to keep him in Colombo in case he came in useful for whatever he was worth. At the same time Falck heard that the Kandyans were seeking assistance from Indian rulers of the Coromandel coast. In fact, rumours of similar efforts on the part of the Kandyans were rife ever since the failure of the Pybus mission.

Falck despatched a peace offer to Kandy. A reply, however, was received only in November stating that the Kandyans were sending an embassy to welcome the new Governor. The Kandyan emissaries arrived in

103 Raven-Hart, op. cit., p 16.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.* 

early December and the Governor decided to open negotiations with them on the basis of van Eck's conditions presented to the Kandyans at Katugastota on the eve of his capture of Kandy.<sup>104</sup> This time the Kandyans did not object to negotiations on such a basis.

However the Kandyans showed bewilderment and incomprehension on the Dutch demand for full sovereign rights over the territories they ruled. They maintained that the king of Kandy had given the lands to the Dutch, which they ruled for more than a century and that they had no objection to that position being continued. The Kandyans had to be given explanations as to what was meant by the Dutch having full rights of sovereignty over the lands they ruled. Although the Kandyan ambassadors agreed to grant the lands the Dutch ruled in full sovereignty, it is doubtful whether they actually understood the idea of sovereignty in the way the Dutch meant it. However, in the treaty which both parties finally signed the king was still styled 'Srīlankādhīsvara,' meaning 'Lord of Sri Lanka,' even though the title of the king of Kandy as 'Emperor of Ceylon' was deleted.

On the Dutch claims to the territories of the interior as well as the sea coasts, the Kandyans proved more difficult to move. At times they even threatened to resume the war. Regarding the provinces of the interior, Seven Kōralēs, Three and Four Kōralēs and Sabaragamuva, the Kandyans put up the strongest resistance. In the end, the Dutch had to give in. The Kandyans were returned all the lands captured from them except the sea coasts on the condition that the Dutch would be allowed to peel cinnamon in those areas without having to ask for the king's permission.

Against the Dutch claims to a strip of coast round the island, the Kandyans argued that they were of no economic importance to the Dutch. The real objection to the Dutch claims to the coasts, however, seems to be the Kandyan concern for their salt supply which came from the salterns of the eastern and south-eastern coast. The Dutch contended that the reason for their claim was not economic, but strategic. They did not want a repetition of the Pybus affair. Sensing the real motive for Kandyan intransigence they conceded to the Kandyans the right to collect salt freely from the salterns on the coasts once they were ceded to the Dutch. Eventually the Kandyans gave way and agreed to the ceding of the coasts.

The abolition of the annual embassy with presents that the Dutch insisted upon was resisted by the Kandyans on the grounds that the king would lose materially by it. The Dutch promised to send annual presents, and

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> K A 3063 fos. 146-64, G&C Colombo to GG&C Batavia (Secret), 6 February 1766; K A 3063 fos. 164-78, G&C Colombo to GG&C Batavia (Secret), 30 March 1766; Zwier, op.cit., pp 77-85; E Reimers, "The Treaty of 1766 between the Dutch and the King of Kandy," CHJ, Vol. 2, 1952, pp 28-42, Vol. 2, 1953, pp 265-75, Vol. 3, 1953, pp 145-55.

they pointedly and repeatedly refused to undergo the humiliating court ceremonies at the reception of Dutch ambassadors as had hitherto been the custom. The abandonment of the right to treat with foreign powers was not resisted by the Kandyans, which is a little surprising at first sight.

The final draft of the treaty containing the more important points discussed above, and a host of other minor ones, was signed by the two parties on 12 February 1766. A number of factors prompted both sides to The weaker side at the commencement of the seek peace seriously. negotiations was undoubtedly the kingdom of Kandy. The Dutch had not only captured large tracts of their territories, but had also invaded and devastated their capital. The removal of a large section of the agricultural population for war service meant that agriculture came to be neglected. The Dutch 'scorched earth' policy during invasions undoubtedly also contributed to the distress of large sections of the Kandyan population. The plight of the Company in the island was not very much better. The Company's own territories were feeling the strain of a long war. It was difficult to gather provisions as well as auxiliaries and the population was restive. Meanwhile, the Company's position in Tanjore was threatened by Indian enemies of the Company with the connivance of the English, and the Company needed peace in Sri Lanka so that a stronger hand could be shown in the Coromandel. Finally, the fact that the Dutch had to coexist with the Kandyans after the war sobered them in their dealings with the latter.

The treaty gave the Company the legal rights to the territories it The accession of new territories meant that it had added protection ruled. from foreign intervention. These gains made it difficult for a foreign power to dismiss the Dutch claims to exclusive trade and settlement in the island, as the English did during the Pybus episode. Fear of Kandyan assistance to rebellious subjects of the Company made the Dutch extremely circumspect in their social and economic policies in the island prior to 1766. After the war, however, the likelihood of Kandyan interference in the lowlands became more remote. Furthermore, by obtaining control over the sea coasts and thus also the salt supplies of Kandy, the Dutch obtained a valuable counter against attempts at blackmail by the Kandyans in prohibiting cinnamon peeling in their lands, as well as by intervention in the affairs of those areas ruled by the Dutch. Moreover, the overall performance of the Kandyans in the war would, on the whole, have drained away the confidence that the lowlanders had in appeals to Kandy to redress their grievances against the Dutch. These circumstances would naturally have encouraged the Dutch to abandon their earlier caution in enacting administrative and economic measures that adversely affected the lives of the people.

It is more likely that the position of the Kandyan monarch suffered severely as a result of the war and the peace. Since it depended primarily on charismatic personal dominance, the military defeat and the Carthegenian peace would have seriously endangered it. The semi-official chronicle, the *Cūlavamsa*, makes out as if the king had won the war.<sup>105</sup> This version of the war is also an index to the extent to which a ruler such as the king of Kandy needed triumph in war. King Kīrti Srī Rājasimha never took the field, let alone prove his martial qualities. The organization as well as the conduct of the war was the work of the Kandyan chiefs. The decline in the king's position, and the great increase of the power of the chiefs was a marked feature of the politics of the Kandyan kingdom. Disloyalty of the chiefs to the king, coupled with their aspirations to regal position, greatly facilitated the conquest of Kandy by the British in 1815.

The war resulted in losses to both the Kandyans and the Dutch. The economic derangement following the war would certainly have contributed to the declining position of the king of Kandy. The economic ill effects of the war on the already weak financial position of the Company were foreseen by the Batavian authorities who, prior to the Pybus mission, advocated a policy of peace with Kandy at almost any cost. What happened after 1766 was not dissimilar to what followed the wars between Rājasimha II and the Dutch. The wars of the early and mid-1760s had drained the Company's coffers and, consequently, one of the chief features of the Dutch government in the island following the war was its chronic financial malaise.

The treaty did not completely settle the issue of peace. There was for a long time endless haggling and disagreement over the demarcation of the new frontiers. The repatriation of the rebels from the Dutch territories, the abandonment by the Dutch ambassadors of the humiliating court ceremonial as well as the return of the arms captured by the Kandyans caused disharmony between the two powers in the following period.

Viewed thus, the treaty of 1766 was by no means an unmixed blessing for the Dutch. It gave them additional territories to guarantee their safety, as well as legal rights over the territories they came to rule. But these gains were too costly for the Company, given its financial position in the island as well as in Asia generally. What is more, the expected period of easy relations with Kandy did not follow. And, meanwhile, the English were gaining in strength in the Indian subcontinent. Early in 1767 the Directors of the English East India Company instructed their Madras government to gather as much information as possible on the geography of the narrow straits between the India mainland and Sri Lanka, noting that, "such points of

105 Cv, Chapter 99, vv 128-39.

knowledge may have their use in time to come."<sup>106</sup> In the context of the growing financial and military weakness of the Dutch Company, the interest that the English were taking in the south Indian region was a portent for the future.

<sup>106</sup> CRO Madras Despatches 3, pp 609-10, Court of Directors to President and Council of Madras, 4 March 1767.

# **CHAPTER XI**

## THE KANDYAN KINGDOM AND THE NĀYAKKARS, 1739-1796

### L S Dewaraja

From 1739 to 1760 the Nāyakkar rulers were adjusting themselves to the political situation in Kandy. Several contending forces were at work which, between them, preserved a precarious equilibrium; an alien ruler was trying various devices to ensure his grip on the throne but with some, although limited, success; sovereign power slipped into the hands of a nobility weakened by disunity, while the people at large were still dazzled by the charisma of kingship, and generally accepted whoever sat on the throne. This present chapter will examine these trends and show how the tensions within the kingdom were aggravated by the presence of the Dutch on the coast. After 1760, however, the focus of attention shifts from internal politics to foreign policy for the history of Kandy after 1760 is the history of her foreign relations.

All available sources agree that the Nāyakkar rulers, except the last (Srī Vikrama Rājasimha, 1798-1815), were generally popular among their subjects. With a foreigner on the throne one may have expected rebellion which had beset the previous reign to persist, but inspite of considerable friction from time to time during the rest of the century, we only hear of one attempt on the life of the king, and that too by a disgruntled few. This acceptance of the Nāyakkar kings by the Kandyan populace might be attributed to several reasons. Firstly, they became lavish patrons of Whether this was genuine faith, political expediency, or Buddhism. traditional Hindu tolerance, it is difficult to decide; but nevertheless it did endear them to the people who bore an intense devotion to their traditional The kings did not try to inaugurate changes, but found that their faith. strength lay in perpetuating the existing social and political order. Moreover while a stranger sat on the throne, the court officials and provincial governors

had a freer hand in the administration and also in deciding issues both domestic and foreign. The nobles therefore approved of the situation in which the king remained somewhat of a figurehead while they wielded a great deal of power. The Nāyakkar kings, as we shall see, maintained their position by perpetuating existing cleavages and factions among the nobles, so that the latter were too engrossed in their own quarrels to combine against the king. Finally, it should be said that none of the Nāyakkar kings except, perhaps, the last who was deposed, had much drive or initiative to oppose the nobles, so that paradoxically, the weakness of the dynasty was a source of its strength.

There were other factors, however, which influenced the internal politics of the Kandyan kingdom. Among these was the presence of ever increasing numbers of the king's Hindu relatives in the court, for even though the nobles accepted the ruler who sat on the throne, they had no love whatsoever for his kinsmen, who had, even in Narendrasimha's time, grown into a sizeable faction. The king's Nāyakkar relatives were maintained at state expense being fed from the grain at the royal stores. They took part in trade and as a result had money, whereas the money income of the Sinhalese nobles was negligible. There is evidence too that at the beginning of the nineteenth century many of Sinhalese nobles were indebted to the king's relatives.<sup>1</sup> The growth of such indebtedness may have taken place earlier. There was every reason therefore for the native aristocracy to dislike these interlopers, who for their part were no novices in statecraft for they brought with them the wider experiences of South India. Although there is no evidence that they had any official position, it becomes clear in the reign that followed, that of Srī Vijaya Rājasimha (1739-47), that they actively interfered in court politics. The politics of the Kandyan kingdom were affected by a combination of forces: the presence of the Nāyakkars in the court; the royal links with South India; the efforts of the native aristocracy to maintain its power; the sampha equally anxious to preserve its place; the activities of a few but energetic Roman Catholic missionaries trying to gain converts among the Kandyan Sinhalese; and the effort of the Dutch in the maritime regions to control the trade of the island, and at the same time to preserve fragile peace with Kandy. When Srī Vijaya Rājasimha ascended the throne, the most important man in the kingdom was the First Adigar Ähälepola, who in all probability had backed the accession of the Nāyakkars. The king then entrusted him with the responsible task of fetching from Madurā a princess

<sup>&</sup>quot;The Diary of Mr John D'Oyly," JCBRAS, Vol. XXV, No. 69, 1917, Introduction, p XI; A C Lawrie, Gazetteer of the Central Provinces of Ceylon, p 631; Davy, An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and its inhabitants with Travels in that Island, (London, 1821), p 320.

of the ksathriyavamsa, so that his consecration would be complete.<sup>2</sup> The youthful adigār took great pains to execute this order and help solemnise the marriage of the king. Perhaps he foresaw that if another Nāyakkar was to succeed the king, already in his prime, his own position could be maintained. Srī Vijaya Rājasimha, on the other hand, had been in the Kandyan court for nearly 30 years before his accession, and he was well aware of the happenings of the last reign. A too powerful adigār was always a threat to the security of the throne. Ähälēpola's stature and family prestige was such that his position in the court was very nearly unassailable.

The king was unable, possibly unwilling, to engage in an overt attack on the authority of the First Adigar, but he was quite ready to raise rivals, whose jealousy would provide a check upon him, the obvious recourse of an alien dynasty unsure of its grip on the throne. Leuke was the leader of the rival faction opposing Ähälēpola and the king ignoring the fact that Leuke had opposed his accession began to shower favours on him.<sup>3</sup> As soon as Srī Vijaya Rājasimha came to the throne, Leuke was raised to the dignity of Disāva of the Three and Four Korales, an office hitherto held by members of his wife's family.<sup>4</sup> This was a mark of special favour for the governor of the Four Korales was given precedence over all others in war and ceremony. The Three and Four Korales lay between the Dutch territories and the Udarata. The major part of the "Great Road" from Colombo to Kandy ran through the area under the jurisdiction of this disāva. Along this road the Dutch ambassador and his retinue trudged annually carrying letters and presents for the king. According to the formalities observed, the Disāva of the Four Korales or his nominee met the ambassador at every stage of the journey, so that Leuke had considerable influence in fashioning policy towards the Dutch.

With these new responsibilities thrust upon him Leuke accepted the Nāyakkar whose accession he had at first opposed. In a few years time Leuke had proved his worth and in 1743 the king bestowed on him a lavish grant of *pravēni* lands. Moreover the king exempted the land from all taxes and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ähälēpola Sannasa of 1745, BMOM, 12138; Sri Lanka National Archives (SLNA) HMC 5/63/115/(2); a translation appears in A C Lawrie, A Gazetteer of the Central Provinces of Ceylon, p 200.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Leuke Sannasa of 1743 in the Department of Land Settlement, Colombo in Sannas of the Central Province, Vol.I, No. 194, p 363.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> He was married to the daughter of Edaňduvāvē *Disāva* of the Three and Four Koralēs in the time of Rājasimha II. His wife's brother also *Disāva* of the Three and Four Koralēs was the ring leader of the plot of 1709.

services to the crown and diverted them to the new proprietor.

In order to maintain a balance of power and ensure his position, the king, soon afterwards, appointed Ähälēpola as *Disāva* of Batticaloa, Tambalagama, Pānama, Nuvarakalāviya and the Seven Kōralēs. The king also granted him extensive rice fields in his own native village and in Hēvahäta, Hārispattuva and the Seven Kōralēs. These lands were granted outright as the private property of the donee so that they could be inherited by his descendants, and were declared free of all taxes and services to the crown.<sup>5</sup>

'Having thus enhanced the wealth and influence of the First Adigār, the king must have felt some distrust of the Second Adigar, Pilima Talavve, who had occupied that position since the last days of Narendrasimha's reign. The Ähälepolas and Pilima Talavves were connected by marriage and therefore an Ähälepola as First Adigar and a Pilima Talavve as Second Adigar was not a happy combination as far as the security of the throne was concerned. Not long after the new king's accession Pilima Talavve had to yield the place of Second Adigār, to Samanakkodi, a rival of Ähälēpola and a relative of Leuke. Till the king's death in 1747 Samanakkodi was a great favourite of the court. The Dutch too were aware of Samanakkodi's influence over the king<sup>6</sup> and they went to the extent of bribing the Second Adigār in order to get certain concessions made to the Dutch. But inspite of these cliques and loyalties, on no occasion, at this stage, did the Sinhalese nobles seek to betray the king in their dealings with the Dutch even when there was a strong provocation to do so. The Batavian authorities had hoped that, as in former times, the Sinhalese would resent South Indian rule so that the Company could fish in troubled waters. But the Dutch eagerly looking for cleavages took some time to realise that whatever differences there might be, the nobles generally rallied round the king during a crisis in relations with the VOC.

The Dutch as cool calculating merchants had hitherto pursued, and partly achieved their aims in regard to the Kandyan kingdom through a policy of cajolery and flattery, soothing the king's vanity by high-sounding titles. But the Nāyakkars had brought with them the wider experience of South India; they had tasted the "sweets of commerce" and were no longer duped by "caresses and compliments"<sup>7</sup> but wished earnestly to participate in the

<sup>5</sup> Ähälēpola Sannasa, op.cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Governor van Gollenesse to Samanakkodi Rālahāmy, 15 December 1746, SLNA/1/3355.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 18.

export trade. The Dutch disliked the Nāyakkars for various reasons, but undoubtedly what worried them most was the fact that Nāyakkars were by caste and occupation traders and hence their interests clashed with those of the Dutch. The relatives of the king were in regular contact with the Thevar of Ramnad, once a feudatory of the Nāyak of Madurā, whose territories lay closest to the island, separated only by a few miles of shallow sea. The Thevar was a rival of the Dutch in commercial matters. In 1743 the father of Srī Vijaya Rājasimha was living in the court of the Thevar of Ramnad and the Dutch suspected that his presence there was intended to facilitate the trade with Kandy which they had prohibited. From about 1744 the king's father-inlaw, Narenappā Nāyakkar, began to reciprocate the hostility shown him by the Dutch by obstructing the Company's activities in whatever way he could.

With the accession of the new dynasty a renewed interest in Buddhism became evident. The urgent need of the day was the resuscitation of the samgha which had become virtually moribund in the last reign. In order to demonstrate his enthusiasm for his new faith Srī Vijaya Rājasimha, embarked enthusiastically in efforts to restore valid ordination to the samgha in Sri Lanka, and had maintained close cultural contact with the Buddhist centres of South East Asia for this purpose. The first attempt made by the king in 1741 to invite bhikkhus from Pēgu ended in a mishap when the yacht provided by the Dutch foundered off the coast of Pēgu.<sup>8</sup> In 1747, three envoys were sent to the court of Siam on the same mission. But this too was doomed to failure for soon after the king's request was communicated to the Siamese monarch, news reached Siam that Srī Vijaya Rājasimha had died. Not knowing the religious views of his successor, the king of Siam was unwilling to let the monks proceed to Sri Lanka.<sup>9</sup>

A complicating factor in the sphere of religion was the presence of the Roman Catholic missionaries in Kandy. Ever since the Dutch had forbidden the entry of Roman Catholic priests into their territory, Kandy had remained the headquarters of the Oratorian Mission. The fact that the Calvinist Dutchmen were the political and commercial rivals of the Kandyan king had doubtless prompted Narēndrasimha to receive the Roman Catholic missionaries with open arms. This attitude changed with the accession of Srī Vijaya Rājasimha. As a prince he had close association with Jacome Gonçalves, but as the king was a foreigner and a Hindu turned Buddhist whose reign began under the auspices of a Buddhist revival, he had to avoid

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Memoir of van Gollenesse, p 48.

Kusalakriyanusandesaya or Kīrti Sri Caritaya, BMOM, 6606 (157).

any suggestion of overt partiality for Roman Catholic priests. Roman Catholic sources<sup>10</sup> suggest that this attitude of the king was due to the influence of the Dutch, who succeeded in poisoning the minds of the bhikkhus and certain disāvas against the Roman Catholic priests. How far the Dutch were involved in this we cannot be certain, but the Roman Catholic missionaries came under suspicion, and very soon, under attack as well. The priests were accused of writing anti-Buddhist literary works such as Jacome Gonçalves's refutation of Buddhism entitled Mātara Pratyaksanaya.<sup>11</sup> On Good Friday, 16 April 1745, the priests were interrogated in turn before a tribunal consisting of the Second Adigar, Leuke and a religious dignitary named Saranamkara then still a sāmanēra. The king, it is said, left the decision in regard to their presence in Kandy, to the Council. The Councillors appeared to have been bribed by the Dutch to follow an anti-Roman Catholic policy. As a result the king ordered the missionaries to leave the realm.<sup>12</sup>. It is interesting to note that for the next four years, the missionaries were operating from the Vanni, a semi autonomous area in the Seven Korales where the authority of the king and the disāvas was hardly felt. The king's action was perhaps motivated by a desire to please if not placate the Buddhists. The contemporary court historian describes the incident thus, "The infamous parangis (Portuguese), the infidels, the impious ones who at the time of Rajasimha had still remained behind in the town and are now dwelling here and were rich in cunning, endeavoured by gifts of money and the like to get their creed adopted by others and led a life without reverence for the Sasana. When the king heard thereof he became vehemently indignant, issued commands to his dignitaries, had their houses and books destroyed, and banished from the country those who did not give up the faith.13

On the death of Srī Vijaya Rājasimha, the brother of his mahēsi ascended the throne in August 1747, as Kīrti Srī Rājasimha. He was barely 16 years old at the time and it was much later, on 31 January 1750, that an embassy arrived in Colombo to announce that the king had girded the sword

Relacao que o Padre Propozite da Congregacao de Oratorio de Goa Fez do estado piezente de missao de Ceylao, Scritture Riferite Congressi Indic Orientali, Vol. 40, folio 740, (hereafter, Relacao que o Padre Propozite...).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> This is a Sinhalese work which refutes both Buddhism and the Reformed faith, see, P B Sannasgala, Sinhala Sāhitya Vaņsaya, p 732.

<sup>12</sup> Relacao que o Padre Propozite ... op.cit., Vol. 40, folio 740.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Cv, Chapter 98, vs 80-3.

of state according to the custom of the land and ceremoniously assumed his duties as king.<sup>14</sup> He had been in the Kandyan court ever since he was a child and he was educated under a preceptor well versed in Buddhist doctrine. His Buddhism doubtless recommended him to the mass of the people and his youth and foreign birth to the nobility, who may well have hoped that these would make him a puppet in their hands. If that was their calculation however they had left important factors out of their reckoning, for during the first few years of the king's minority, his father Narenappā Nāyakkar, now grown wealthy and influential seems to have gained control of affairs of state. A contemporary Portuguese document<sup>15</sup> describing the activities of the Roman Catholic missionaries in Kandy reveals the fact that Narenappā aided by other Nāyakkar relatives of the king, was powerful enough during the king's minority to attack the entrenched position of the native nobility in the court.

It was seen that the last king, on the advice of his council, had in April 1745 requested the missionaries to leave the kingdom and that they were living in the Vanni. Soon after the accession of the new king, the missionaries made representations to the king's father and grandfather who were obviously the most influential people at the time. The Nāyakkars were amenable to bribery and whether under the influence of such bribes or for other reasons they interceded on behalf of the missionaries who were now allowed to enter Kandy, administer the sacraments but not to settle down. The Council of Ministers was not consulted, regarding the return of the missionaries, for "no matter whoever goes to the palace; all decisions are taken by the king's father from whom everything has to be obtained with gifts."<sup>16</sup>

While these events throw much light on the activities of the Roman Catholic missionaries they also show that the political situation in Kandy was rather a tense one. Narenappā obviously held the whip hand. The evidence of our Roman Catholic source is supported by the Dutch governor Schreuder when he states that Narenappā was one of the most important people in the court and "directs almost everything according to his pleasure."<sup>17</sup> Indeed

<sup>14</sup> ibid., Chapter 99, v 1.

<sup>15</sup> Relacao que o Padre Propozite..., op.cit., Vol. 40, Folio 740.

<sup>16</sup> ibid., Vol. 40, Folio 742.

<sup>17</sup> Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 31.

Narenappā was ready by 1749 even to attack the most powerful of the native nobility at court.

In April 1749 Narenappā is said to have summoned the First Adigār to his house, threatened him with sword in hand and insulted him.<sup>18</sup> The provocation for Narenappā's high handed action is not known. Another victim of Nāyakkar intervention was Māmpitiya, Disāva of Sabaragamuva, who had been in active service of the monarchy since the beginning of the century. But Narenappā and his Nāyakkar allies intrigued so successfully against Māmpitiya that the young king was persuaded to dismiss him and to confiscate his lands.<sup>19</sup> The Nāyakkars may have believed that their political intervention would pass unchallenged, or if challenged that factions within the Sinhalese nobility would provide them with tacit or overt support. Ähälepola was the leading figure, perhaps, but he had an important rival in the Second Adigār Samanakkodi with whom was associated his kinsman, Leuke, who still had influence in the court. However, the history of factious contention between the two men and their followers was forgotten in the face of Narenappā's pressure. During the New Year festivities of 1749, the king found himself confronted with the possibility of a revolt, for the First Adigār Ähälēpola, up in arms, against the arrogance of Narenappā and his kinsfolk was backed by the other chiefs. It is said in a Roman Catholic source, that the Kandyan nobles went in a body to the palace, complained against the constant interference of the king's father, and threatened the king that they would seek for themselves another king who would safeguard their customs and privileges. The young king, alarmed at the united front that now opposed him, put the blame on his father and advised him not to meddle any further in the affairs of government.<sup>20</sup>

The Sinhalese nobles on the other hand, having secured the reinstatement of Māmpitiya, did not press the king further, although on this issue it would have been easy to secure Dutch support. The Dutch disliked the Nāyakkars so much that they had tried to win over the Sinhalese chiefs with, bribes and presents, into joining in opposing them. But although some of the chiefs showed a semblance of friendship to the Dutch on no occasion did they try to get Dutch help against the king.

Early in 1751 Leuke died and his mantle fell on the shoulders of Dumbara Rālahāmy alias Mīgastännē, whom the king appointed as Disāva of

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*.

20 *ibid.* 

<sup>18</sup> Relacao que o Padre, Propozite..., Vol. 40, Folio 743.

the Three and Four Kōralēs. He was the channel of communication between the king and the Company and hence his goodwill was very necessary to the Dutch. Although he did not scorn any opportunity for private gain and demanded from the Dutch a price for his good will, he nevertheless proved to be a loyal and trustworthy servant of his master whenever matters reached a point of crisis. But he was no ally of the Nāyakkar clan. He had a powerful antagonist in the court in the person of Galagoda alias Munvatte, *Disāva* of Ūva, who came to the fore because of his popularity with the Nāyakkar relatives of the king. Galagoda was a great favourite of the king, his father Narenappā Nāyakkar, and his brother who had now come to be regarded as the heir to the throne.<sup>21</sup> As later events proved Galagoda hated the Dutch and made no secret of it. There was ill will between Galagoda and Dumbara; the latter was envious of Galagoda's popularity with the monarch and Galagoda jealous of the favours and gifts which Dumbara received at the hands of the Dutch.

Another influential person in the court was Māmpițiya who had suffered a serious reverse at the beginning of the reign, but quickly regained his position. In 1750 he still held the *disāvanies* of Sabaragamuva and Nuvarakalāviya in addition to several other administrative posts.<sup>22</sup> In 1753 Māmpițiya, blind and aged at the time, yielded to the Second Adigār, Samanakkodi, who held the *disāvany* of Sabaragamuva which in this reign became the prerogative of one of the adigārs. But Māmpițiya's influence did not wane, for his wide experience and sound judgement always commanded the respect of the king. Besides the king had taken as his yakada dōliya<sup>23</sup>, Māmpițiya's granddaughter, and it was rumoured that the king held her in great esteem, far above his mahēsis; so much so that Māmpițiya's position in the court was strengthened.<sup>24</sup>

Although Samanakkodi, the Second Adigār and Disāva of Sabaragamuva, maintained his official status and seemed to have retained the dominant position he had enjoyed under Srī Vijaya Rājasimha, there was very soon a visible decline in his influence perhaps after the death of his powerful supporter Leuke. The attitude of the new king and very likely the popularity of Galagoda, with the Nāyakkars, undermined Samanakkodi's position and he

<sup>23</sup> Secondary wife.

<sup>24</sup> Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 32.

<sup>22</sup> Kiriälle Naavimala, Sabaragamu Darsana, p 287.

remained henceforth, as we shall see, a disgruntled element at the Kandyan court.

Hedged in between these courtiers the alien king must certainly have sensed his insecurity. Although no attempt was made at the time to betray the king to the Dutch, there was considerable anti-Nāyakkar feeling within the court. The king's strength lay in the fact that there was no unity among the Sinhalese nobles themselves. The previous king had tried to widen the existing cleavages and thus maintain his position. Kīrti Srī Rājasimha attempted to revive the samgha, endow it and strengthen it so that he could (as he thought) have the support of the community of bhikkhus who wielded much influence in the country. By winning over the samgha and the people to his side, he hoped to undermine the power of the Kandyan aristocracy. The policy, as we shall see, was not a complete success. The religious revival of his reign, did strengthen his position, but he could not drive a wedge between the nobility and the samgha, especially at the higher levels where there were strong ties of blood between the two.

One of Kīrti Srī's great achievements was his restoration of the valid ordination of the sampha. All previous efforts at doing this had failed. In May 1753 Upali thera arrived with a retinue of monks and 5 Siamese envoys sent by King Boromokot (1732-58) of Siam.<sup>25</sup> In July of the same year in the presence of Kīrti Srī Rājasimha and at his request six novices were admitted to the Upasampadā with Upali as their teacher. "And thus after many years this feast of the Great Ordination which for so long been neglected in Lanka was re-established once more amidst the rejoicing of the populace, the triumphant noise of drums, chanks and five kinds of music and the roar of cannon."26 The cultural ties thus established between Sri Lanka and Siam did not stop at this. Three years after the arrival of Upali and his retinue, the king of Siam sent yet another group of monks who brought with them rare religious books<sup>27</sup>. The arrival of the Siamese bhikkhus is an event of singular importance in the religious and cultural history of time, and is often retold in contemporary writings. The sampha which had become virtually moribund, with no leadership or organisation, was given form, shape and

See, K Malalgoda, Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750-1900, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), provides a detailed account of the revival of Buddhism in Kandyan kingdom, pp 49 ff; see particularly pp 60-4 for Kirti Sri's role. See also P E Pieris, "Kirti Sri's Embassy to Siam," JCBRAS, XVIII, (1903), pp 17-91; and P E E Fernando, "An Account of the Kandyan Mission sent to Siam in 1750 AD," CJHSS II, (1959), pp 37-83.

<sup>26</sup> Syamavarnanāva, JCBRAS, Vol. XVIII, p 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Cv, Chapter 100, vs 137-8.

official recognition. The founding of the Siyam *nikāya* or Siamese chapter was patronised by the king of Siam and the king of Kandy. It claimed unbroken spiritual secession from the ancient *saṃgha* of the Mahāvihāra tne first monastery established in the island; for in 1425 in the reign of Parākramabāhu VI of Kōṭṭe, the Sinhala *saṃgha* was introduced to Siam and 325 years later the Siyam *nikāya* was established in Sri Lanka.<sup>28</sup>

After the restoration of the Order the king proceeded to re-organise and institutionalise it. He placed Saranamkara at the head of the *bhikkhus* in the island and presented to him the insignia of the office of sampharāja. An upa-sampharāja or deputy sampharāja was appointed and at this time the title was borne by Tibbotuvāvē Buddharakkhita. From its very inception the Siyam nikāya had two chief monasteries in Kandy, Malvatta and Asgiriya. The king appointed heads of these institutions and placed all shrines and monasteries in the island under the supervision of these two.<sup>29</sup> The king renovated the existing monasteries and re-endowed them with lavish grants of land. In fact there is hardly any vihāra of importance in the whole country that did not benefit from the generosity of Kīrti Srī.

The resuscitation of the sangha had far-reaching political effects which the king did not foresee. One such was the caste requirement imposed on all entrants to the Siyam nikāya. It is not certain when and why this happened; but within a short time of its inception, admission of the Siyam nikāya, was limited to the novices who belonged to the govikula. It is significant that even the first six bhikkhus who were ordained at the hands of Upali not only belonged to the govikula, but were also selected from aristocratic families within it.<sup>30</sup> The infiltration of the aristocracy into the sangha had been at the very top. It is likely that these bhikkhus who were in authority at the time imposed the caste requirement in order to avoid the possibility of men of lower castes gaining places of importance in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. If, by resuscitating the sangha, Kīrti Srī Rājasimha's intention was to drive a wedge between the bhikkhus and the nobles, it was a miscalculation. For the sangha at the higher levels was quickly infiltrated by the radala and gained more power by the accumulation of lands donated

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> S Paranavitana, "Religious Intercourse between Ceylon and Siam in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," JCBRAS, Vol. XXXII, No.85, (1932), pp 190-213; K Malalgoda, Buddhism in Sinhalese Society..., op.cit., pp 61-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Mandārampurapuvata, vs 710, 712, 718, 720.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> For details see L S Dewaraja, *The Kandyan Kingdom 1707 -1782*, (Colombo, 1988), pp 114-8.

by the king. The kingship ties between the samgha and the nobility were preserved by the system known as  $n\bar{a}ti$  sisya paramparā in the samgha<sup>31</sup>, according to which succession descended from teacher to pupil, the latter being a blood relation of the former. From numerous references it is seen that the system was widespread; so that monastic property tended to accumulate in the incumbents' families. Since this system also ensured that the connection with the aristocracy was maintained, wealth and influence both tended to centre round the vihārēs.

The reorganisation of the order under the leadership of the sampharāja, with his headquarters at Kandy, had political repercussions as well. The school of bhikkhus trained under the guidance of Saranamkara carried the torch of learning outside the confines of the kingdom into the Dutch occupied provinces of Mātara and began a literary and religious revival The monasteries in the south became affiliated institutions of the there. Malvatta vihāra in Kandy, the incumbent of which was the accepted head of the sampha. Thither the maritime sāmanēras went for their ordination and the relations between the Kandyan and maritime bhikkhus were very close and intimate. Thus the religious revival tended to draw together the people of the Kandyan and coastal areas through the bond of a common faith. This gave strength and dignity to the Nayakkar ruler, for like the Sinhalese kings of Kandy he came to be regarded as the defender of the faith and could therefore command the loyalty of the Sinhalese wherever they lived. The king tried to make political capital out of this sentimental attachment and embarrass the Dutch wherever possible. For instance, when insurrection broke out in Dutch territory (1757-60) the worst affected areas were in the disāvany of Mātara and it was revealed that some of the noblemen in Matara who were Dutch subjects were in league with the king. The policy of the Dutch had been for a long time to emphasize the distinction between the two, the low country and the Kandyan and divide the Sinhalese, into two groups; so that the new trend which tended to blur the distinction proved irksome to the Dutch. It was after this that they changed their policy and adopted the attitude of patrons towards The Disāva of Mātara, a Dutchman went to the extent of Buddhism. requesting the head of the Mulgirigala vihāra to attend to the renovation of the shrine in the area and to see that the customary rites were performed.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> For a brief description of this system see Appendix II in K Malalgoda, Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750-1900, op.cit., pp 266-7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Letter from the Disāva of Mātara to the head of the Mulgirigala vihāra, 3 February 1765: Manuscript at the Netolpitiya vihāra, Ranne, photocopy at the SLNA (uncatalogued).

This was obviously an attempt to break through the combination that had developed and to give the *bhikkhus* a fellow feeling with the Company instead of with the king of Kandy.

In the meantime trouble was brewing in Kandy and soon the court was in the grip of an upheaval of a most serious nature. In 1760 there was a conspiracy against Kīrti Srī, an attempt to assassinate him and place on the throne a Siamese prince. The intrigues associated with this conspiracy make it clear that while the recent strengthening of the *samgha* by the king, did enhance his position and dignity even outside his kingdom - it did not produce the desired results where it mattered - within his court. The rift he hoped to create between his aristocracy and the religious elite did not materialise for Kīrti Srī Rājasimha had not only resuscitated the *samgha*, but in the process had also, unwittingly, strengthened the *radala* aristocracy and the kinship ties between the two.

From the sources available to us it would appear that the headquarters of the conspiracy was the Malvatta vihāra and that its architects were the Second Adigār Samanakkodi, the samgharāja and his deputy Tibbotuvāvē, who was a cousin of the Second Adigar and an official of the royal kitchen named Moladande Rala. The conspirators referred the matter to the bhikkhus who had recently arrived from Siam. With their help a Siamese prince arrived in Sri Lanka in the guise of a bhikkhu. He was accompanied by other bhikkhus who brought with them several volumes of Buddhist scriptures. The unsuspecting king accommodated the visitors in the Malvatta vihāra where they remained till the arrangements for the assassination had been finalised. The prince, later revealed to be Krumpty Pippit<sup>33</sup> a son of King Boromokot of Siam (1732-58) by a secondary wife, made common cause with the conspirators. From those preliminary arrangements it is clear that the plot had been brewing for some time, perhaps for several years. It seems therefore that ever since the sampha recovered from its amorphous state and became a wealthy and recognised institution it turned into a fertile breeding place for treason and intrigue.

The plotters chose a rather elaborate and peculiar method by which to kill the king.<sup>34</sup> He was invited to a religious festival in the Malvatta

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> This is a Dutch corruption of the Siamese name Krom Muen Tep Pippet.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> The sources for the study of this plot are: Gätaberiya Sannasa of 1760 in H C P Bell, The Report of the Kegalle District, pp 99-104. "India Office Land Grant of Kirti Sri Rājasimha," November 1760 in P E E Fernando (ed.), CJHSS, Vol.III, No.1, pp 272-4. Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 31; See also C A Galpin, "The Johnston Manuscripts: Relation of a Conspiracy against the King of Candy [sic] in the year 1760 given by Appoohamy de

vihāra in the course of which he would sit and listen to a sermon. Under his throne a pit was dug fitted with sharp spikes, the throne being so arranged that, on the king taking his seat, the draperies would give way and he would fall impaled upon the spikes.<sup>35</sup> However, a few days before the eventful night, Galagoda *disāva* who had gained knowledge of the plot secretly informed the king.

The Sāsanāvathīrna Varnanāva which was written about a century after this event tries to show that a Buddhist Kandyan clique was attempting to overthrow the Hindu Nāyakkar leadership. Although the provocation for this attempted rebellion is rather obscure it is clear that this was no organised attempt by the Buddhists of the Kandyan kingdom to overthrow the Nāyakkar domination. Only a few chiefs of consequence joined in it. The motivating force seems to be a personal one. The leadership of the attempted coup was taken by the Second Adigār whose influence in the court had waned considerably after the accession of Kīrti Srī Rājasimha. It was perhaps Samanakkodi who incited the upa-samgharāja, Tibbotuvāvē - a cousin of his to treachery and with the connivance of a few others, including the samgharāja himself, the plot was hatched in the precincts of the Malvatta monastery. Although the samgharāja and his deputy were in league with the Adigār, the bhikkhus in the Malvatta vihāra were in no way united against the king.

Our sources vary as to the person who leaked the information to the king about the plot. According to Schreuder<sup>36</sup> it was detected by the king's father Narenappā Nāyakkar. In the Sāsanāvathīrna Varnanāva it is said that Pilima Talavve informed Galagoda who made it known to the king. In the Gätaberiya sannasa of 1760, the king rewarded Palkumburē Rājakarunā Gōpala Mudaliyār with the lands that once belonged to the rebel Moladande for faithfully informing the king of the conspiracy. Gōpala Mudaliyār was the head of the king's bēt-gē or department of medicine and belonged to a well known Muslim family of physicians living in the Four Kōralēs. Two bhikkhus of the Malvatta vihāra are also mentioned as informants. Four of the conspirators were executed after investigations had provided firm proof of their complicity in the plot. They were Samanakkodi Adigār, Moladande Ratērāla, Kaduvela Rāla and Mätihanpola Disāva. It is said that the king wished to inflict punishment on the bhikkhus as well, both Kandyan and

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p 31.

Lanerolles," CALR, 11(4), April 1917, pp 272-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 31.

Siamese, but they were pardoned on the intervention of Dumbara. As a result, the sampharāja and Tibbotuvāvē survived. They were deprived of their offices and the former was imprisoned at Kehel-äla and the latter at Bintänna. But they were soon pardoned and reinstated. This was a magnanimous gesture on the part of Kīrti Srī and all the more commendable since Schreuder reports that so great was His Majesty's alarm that for a long time he neve: dared to leave the security of the palace, nor touch any food except that which was prepared by his own father. Perhaps the king hesitated to put the bhikkhus to the sword fearing that such an act though justifiable in law would make him unpopular among his Buddhist subjects. The Siamese prince was repatriated with Dutch help. But that was not the end of the story for the spirit of Krumpty Pippit was to haunt the Kandyan throne for a few years to come.<sup>37</sup> There is no evidence that the Dutch were involved in the attempted coup of 1760; but the Dutch gave thought to the incident of the Siamese prince and noted that because of his religion he was acceptable to a powerful group at Kandy.

The abortive coup of 1760 caused quite a convulsion in Kandy. There was a general purge of politically unreliable elements in the course of which charges of treason were brought against many innocent persons. This can be seen from the sudden change of personnel in the administration after 1760.<sup>38</sup> But since the old favourites still retained their position, it is clear that the king did not see this conspiracy as a general Kandyan uprising against him. The position of Galagoda and Dumbara became stronger than ever before. The former, now First *Adigār* and *Disāva* of Sabaragamuva and Puttalam had ten offices heaped upon him.<sup>39</sup> His position was strong because of his brothers who were themselves provincial chiefs; one was *Disāva* of Ūva and the other *Ratērāla* of Hārispattuva.<sup>40</sup> Dumbara who had acted with tact and foresight emerged unscathed from the crisis, his power enhanced. His brother had become *Disāva* of the Seven Kōralēs since the death of Ähālēpola. Pilima Talavve, was rewarded for his loyalty, by the post of Second *Adigār*, left vacant on the execution of Samanakkodi. In view

When relations between Kirti Sri and the Dutch broke down in the years 1761-65, the then Dutch Governor van Eck attempted to bring the Siamese prince back.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> The office of First Adigār was left vacant by the death of Ähälēpola in 1758. Regarding the offices held by Galagoda, see, Nanavimala, Saparagammuva parani liyavili, p 144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 31.

<sup>40</sup> Memoir of Governor Loten, p 3.

of all this evidence it is not possible to accept Schreuder's contention that this incident "forced the true born Sinhalese very shamefacedly and cautiously into their shells."<sup>41</sup>

Although the revelation of the plot strengthened the position of the king's father Narenappā Nāyakkar in the court, it in no way consolidated the position of the Nāyakkar faction as a whole. Nor could the king rely on the whole hearted support of his kinsmen. For within the Nāyakkar faction itself there were plotting and intrigue going on. This is not surprising, for Kīrti Stī Rājasimha had in Kandy in addition to his father, his father's brothers, and three fathers-in-law, quite a number of brothers-in-law and numerous other kinsmen whose permanent interests were now in Kandy. By 1757, and very likely earlier, the brother of the king, Astāna Andevar had come to be regarded as the heir to the throne.<sup>42</sup> But Nadukattu Sāmi Nāyakkar, the father of the first queen, had been trying, for a considerable length of time, to put forward the claims of his own son as heir to the throne. This rumour had spread to Dutch quarters as well for Governor Loten (1752 -57) was aware that the brother of the first queen had his eyes on the throne. Perhaps the king's brother in law saw no reason why the mode of succession followed on the previous occasions should not be continued, in which case he would automatically be heir to the throne. It was to prevent this that Narenappa Navakkar tried to sow the seeds of dissension between the king and his father-in-law. Owing to this intervention, Nadukattu Sāmi Nāyakkar lost all the influence he had in the court and he went to the extent of plotting against the life of the king in order to secure the throne for his son.<sup>43</sup> The plot was discovered and the king's brothers-in-law were sent back to their own country.

It is evident from the foregoing that at the close of our period the position of Kīrti Srī Rājasimha in his mountain kingdom was rather insecure. He could rely fully neither on the indigenous aristocracy nor on his own kinsmen. His attempt to establish the *samgha* and utilise it as a check upon the aristocracy did not produce the desired result, for the links between the religious elite and the *radala* were strengthened. His domestic problems apart, the relations between the king and the company had steadily declined from one of superficial goodwill to a state of habitual ill will. Each side lost

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Memoir of Governor Loten, p 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> John Pybus, the British envoy to Kandy in 1762 gathered this information during his stay in the city, R Raven-Hart (ed.), *The Pybus Embassy to Kandy 1762*, p 22.

no opportunity in striking a malicious blow at the other without provoking an open conflict. The king had a legitimate grievance. He was locked up within his own kingdom. The Dutch had asserted arbitrary control of the waters round the island and prevented him from exporting the products of his kingdom. In addition to these problems which had remained unresolved for nearly three fourths of a century, recent events led to a further deterioration of relations. There was no evidence to implicate the Dutch in the plot of 1760, but the king was convinced that they had been aware of it and given it encouragement. The Dutch on the other hand, suspected with good reason that the king was communicating with the European powers in South India. When insurrection broke out in Dutch territory (1757 -60) and Matara was seething with discontent, the hand of the king was visible. This fellow feeling between the king of Kandy and the Company's subjects was , as we have seen, intensified with the religious revival. The harsh administration of Governor Schreuder heightened this loyalty, for the more the maritime Sinhalese disliked the Dutch, the more they looked up to the king of Kandy. Schreuder bemoans the fact that the king keeps the company's subjects subservient to his will and that the people are ready at the slightest wish of the king to rebel against the Company. "The mere mention of the king's name is sufficient to seduce them from their allegiance to their lawful masters without the least reason whatsoever."44 By the end of 1760, the king and the Company were on the brink of an undeclared war.

Throughout 1759 there were complaints to the king of Kandy from the inhabitants of the Siyana, Hapitigam, Alutkuru and Hevagam korales and of the Matara disavany about the acts of injustices done to them by the Dutch. They also appealed to him for redress of grievances. At this moment when the company's grip over the territory was weakening, the king sought to make common cause with the rebels. He fanned the flames of discontent in the belief that it would create a situation in which he could intimidate the Company to make concessions relating to trade. The king not only sent some of his officials to investigate the grievances of the Company's subjects, but in October 1760, a Kandyan embassy was sent to speak on behalf of the lowcountry Sinhalese to the Dutch authorities. Towards the end of 1760 the disaffected provinces broke out in open rebellion. There were outbreaks of violence in Dutch territory from, near Negombo in the north, to Matara in the south. The Kandyan ruler responded to this by making preparations for war, strengthening his frontiers and amassing his troops along it. Galagoda Rāla, who functioned as Commander-in-Chief, planned the Kandyan campaign. He took control of the Matara disavany and the provinces up to Hevagam.

<sup>44</sup> Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 11.

Dumbara Disāva of the Seven Kōralēs took charge of the campaign on the frontiers of Alutkūru kōralē and Hāpitigam which guarded Negombo, while his brother, Dumbara, Disāva of the Three and Four Kōralēs had his men on the boundary of the Siyanā kōralē.<sup>45</sup>

Early in 1761, the Kandyan forces poured across the frontier and joined hands with the insurgents. No formal declaration of war was made but together the Kandyan forces and the low country rebels inflicted severe damage on the Dutch forces. The Company was hopelessly unprepared for war and hence during the first four months of 1761 the Kandyan offensive was successful. Prominent chiefs from the low-country abandoned the Dutch and went over to the king. It was only when the Kandyans under the leadership of Dumbara, were converging on the Dutch fort of Hanvälla,<sup>46</sup> that Governor Schreuder rose to action and despatched a garrison of 100 men to defend the fort; but in six weeks Hanvälla fell. The scarcity of food and water and the incidence of illness within the fort compelled the survivors to capitulate.

Galagoda, now a royal favourite, planned the attack on Mātara, assisted by his brother, the Disāva of Uva. He established his head-quarters at Mulkirigala. Very soon Hakmana, Tangalla and the fortalice of Kautvana fell before the onslaught of the Kandyans. Galagoda paused a while to replenish his meagre resources in artillery before the final attack on Mātara was launched. To attack the fortified barrier at Mātara, Galagoda needed a trained battalion of gunners. From various sources he assembled different types of artillery and employed Dutch prisoners to train the Kandyans in the art of gunnery. Palingupana Rala was ordered by the King to proceed to the south with the forces of Uva.47 The Sinhalese chiefs of Matara who held office under the Dutch were deserting them. The fort of Matara was stormed and the Kandyans displayed considerable skill in beating every effort of the defenders and exploiting every opportunity. The Dutch garrison at Mātara was put to the sword and its artillery carried away in triumph. The fort and everything within it was destroyed including the new tombo which had caused so much annoyance to the Sinhalese. The entire disāvany of Mātara lay at the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> For details of the war see, J H O Paulusz, Secret Minutes of the Dutch Political Council, 1762, Colombo, 1954, pp 8-18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Sannas of the Central Province A, p 113. The Dumbara Sannasa (October-November 1761), gives the kings's orders, how they were executed and how the Disāva was rewarded. It is available at the Land Settlement Office, Colombo.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> For details see Paliňgupāna Sannasa, November to December 1761 in Sannas of the Central Province A, p 115, at the Land Settlement Office, Colombo.

mercy of the Kandyans. The king of Kandy was so touched by the loyalty and bravery displayed by Dumbara and Paliňgupāna that valuable gifts and extensive lands were gifted to them by royal grants.

In the meantime urgent appeals for help had been sent by the Dutch to India and reinforcements were being hurried across from Coromandel and Malabar. These detachments, though hardly sufficient, were sent to man the fortresses of Negombo, Kalutara, Galle and Colombo. By the middle of 1761, however, the Kandyan onslaught had weakened. The Kandyans could not sustain a prolonged campaign for the peasants who were rallied to battle were not only unskilled but also unwilling soldiers, who preferred the plough to the sword. Besides disease was impartially affecting the Kandyans and the Dutch alike and thousands of sick and wounded crowded the hospital established at Salpe on the banks of the Mahā Oya, by Dumbara, Disāva of the Seven Kōralēs.<sup>48</sup> The inhabitants of the Dutch territories fatigued by the confusion and realising the futility of trying to drive out the Dutch, began to pledge their loyalty to the Company. Besides the Company received reinforcements from South India and although these were inadequate it could expect more to come in whereas the king's attempts to enlist the support of the Nāyaks of Tanjore and Madurā proved fruitless. Therefore Kandyan attempts to consolidate their conquests failed. The Adigar had to retire from the disāvany of Mātara; the fort was reoccupied by the Dutch and the salt pans of Hambantota were seized early in 1762. Chilaw and Puttalam which were of utmost importance to Kandy, were also quickly taken. Fatigued by the incessant hostilities the Kandyans like their opponents desired a rest and made overtures for peace; but negotiations dragged on with no finality ever being reached.

The king then resorted to the Kandyan tactic of soliciting the aid of another European power. He sent a verbal message to George Pigot, Resident and Governor of Fort St.George, Madras, through the medium of a Muslim trader. The Muslim traders who travelled freely too and from India were the traditional channel of communication between the kings of Kandy and their allies in South India. The response was favourable. John Pybus, a senior company servant and a member of the Madras Council was sent to Kandy.<sup>49</sup> The tedious and cumbersome diplomatic procedures of the Kandyan court did not augur well for the success of the negotiations and greatly annoyed the

<sup>48</sup> J H O Paulusz, op. cit., p 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> For details see V L B Mendis, The Advent of the British to Ceylon, Colombo, 1971, Chapter II also Major R Raven-Hart (ed.), The Pybus Embassy to Kandy, National Museums of Ceylon, Historical Series, Vol.I, (Colombo, 1958), p 83. See also Chapter XIX in this volume.

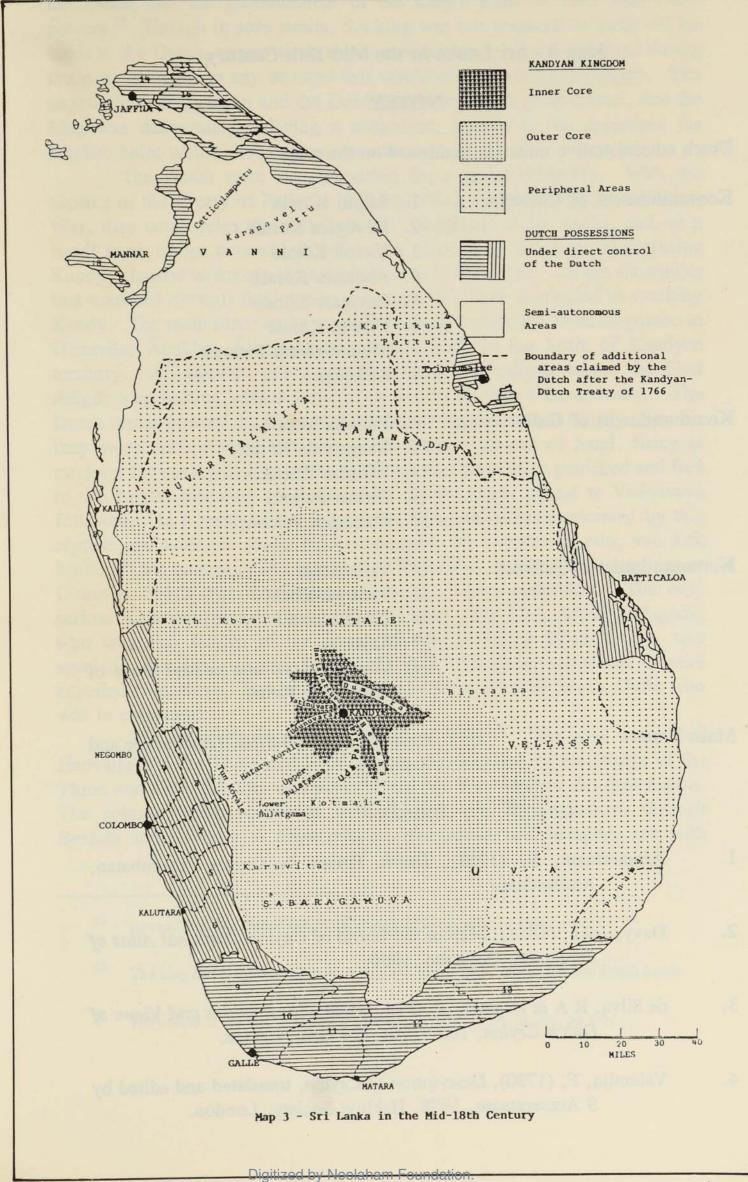
fastidious and indignant Englishman. The king's spokesman presented his case and inquired how the British could help him to get rid of the Dutch. But Pybus was not empowered by his superiors to make any concrete offer of aid; and instead he proposed a treaty of friendship with the king of Kandy. The conditions for such an alliance which Pybus proceeded to suggest would ultimately have reduced the king of Kandy to a vassal of the British East India Company. In return Pybus could offer nothing except vague declarations of friendship. Thus the first official contact which Kandy had with the British was disappointing, for the latter was trying to extract as many benefits as possible for his principals but the latter would not give the Kandyans anything very much in return.<sup>50</sup> Although the Pybus mission proved fruitless it was an eye opener for the Dutch; for they were now conscious of a new threat in the form of a Kandyan-British alliance against them. The awareness of this danger marked a change in their hitherto pacific policy and towards the end of 1762 the attitude of the Dutch became aggressive.

Evidence is scanty regarding the pressure groups operating in the Kandyan court at this time. It is likely that after the abortive coup of 1760 the King was largely relying on the advice of the Nāyakkar faction and more so on that of his father, Narenappā Nāyakkar. Among the Sinhalese nobles, Dumbara was not in favour of soliciting British help. There were others too who opposed the king's policy of seeking of the assistance of the British. Foremost among them was the *bhikkhu* Saranamkara, banished for conspiracy in 1760, who went to the extent of informing the Dutch of the king's dealings with the British. Another malcontent was, Tibbotuvāvē, (a cousin of the *Adigār* executed for treason in 1760) who appears to have maintained a secret correspondence with the Dutch. However, apart from a few disgruntled elements, there is no evidence that at this time there was an organised attempt by the *samgha* and the Kandyan aristocracy to undermine Kīrti Srī Rājasimha's authority during this period of crisis.

The Dutch were now bent on energetic action against the king. In the early part of 1763 they were consolidating their position and the Kandyans were gradually expelled from the territories held by the Dutch prior to 1760. Throughout 1763 the king continually sought peace and sent envoys to discuss terms. The new governor, the intractable Lubbert Jan van Eck, laid down his own conditions.<sup>51</sup> Among other demands he wished the king to cede the Three, Four and Seven Kōralēs, Puttalam and the entire coast of the island to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> For discussion of the Pybus mission in greater detail see Chapter XIX of this volume.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> These are embodied in the letter dated 12 November 1763 from Bauert, *Disāva* of Colombo to Dumbara, *Disāva* of the Three & Four Kōralēs.



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## Map 3 - Sri Lanka in the Mid-18th Century

## NOTES

Dutch administrative units (as numbered on the map)

Kommandment of Colombo	:	<ol> <li>Salpiti Kōralē</li> <li>Hēvāgam Kōralē</li> <li>Siyanā Kōralē</li> <li>Alutkūru Kōralē</li> <li>Rayigam Kōralē</li> <li>Pasdun Kōralē</li> <li>Munnēsvaram Pattuva</li> <li>Kalpițiya</li> </ol>
Kommandment of Galle	:	<ol> <li>9. Välivita Kõralē</li> <li>10. Gangaboda Kõralē</li> <li>11. Väligam Kõralē</li> <li>12. Giruva Pattuva</li> <li>13. Mahagam Pattuva</li> </ol>
Kommandment of Jaffna	:	<ol> <li>14. Välikamam</li> <li>15. Vadamarachchi</li> <li>16. Tenmarachchi</li> <li>17. Kayts</li> <li>18. Mannar island and coastal areas of Cetticulam Pattu</li> </ol>
Main Forts	:	Colombo, Galle, Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa
	1	Sources
1. Arasaratnam, S, (19 Amsterdam.	958),	Dutch Power in Ceylon, Djambatan,
2. Davy, John, (1821), J Sri Lanka, Co	-	of the Island of Ceylon, National Atlas of bo, 1986.

3. de Silva, R A & Beumer, W G M, (1988), Illustrations and Views of Dutch Ceylon, 1602-1796, E J Brill, Leiden.

4. Valentijn, F, (1730), Description of Ceylon, translated and edited by S Arasaratnam, 1978, Hakluyt Society, London. the Dutch and the abandonment of the king's right to treat with other powers.<sup>52</sup> Though in sore straits, the king was not prepared to write off his lands to the Dutch, or pay them any compensation for losses incurred during the war; or agree to any demand that would diminish his sovereignty. The negotiations dragged on and the Dutch suspected, with good reason, that the king was deliberately delaying a settlement, hoping in the meantime for English help; which, however, never came.

The Dutch were also preparing for a major offensive. With the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763 signalling the end of the Seven Years War, they could relax their vigilance in other parts of the world, and, as a result fresh troops poured into Sri Lanka. Van Eck, now bent on capturing Kandy, planned to invade the kingdom from 6 directions. Of the six armies that marched towards the interior early in 1764, none succeeded in reaching Kandy. The main force under van Eck himself penetrated from Negombo to Gonavila, Ätambe, Ätampola and Visinavaya<sup>53</sup> in the heart of Kandyan territory. An advance guard moved towards Kurunägala where the First Adigār was waiting with a force of twelve to thirteen thousand men. The Dutch forces crossed the Maguru Oya without opposition but shortly after this they were ambushed in a defile. The troops got out of hand, firing at random; the pack animals carrying the reserve ammunition panicked and fled to the jungles throwing off their loads. A disorderly retreat to Visinavaya followed. As a result of the desertion of the auxiliaries accelerated by this repulse and with the roads made impassable by continuous rain, van Eck broke off the campaign and retreated to Colombo, leaving behind a force at Gonavila which was intended as a base for future operations. The only serious Kandyan offensive was met with here. The First Adigar Galagoda, who was also Disāva of the Seven Korales in which Gonavila lay, was specially interested in seeing that the Dutch left the place, voluntarily or were expelled from there. But he was successfully repulsed by Major Duflo who was in command.

The other Dutch armies fared no better.<sup>54</sup> The one which left Hanvälla into the Three and Four Köralēs was blocked by the *Disāva* of the Three and Four Köralēs who brought his full force against the detachment. The column which proceeded from Pitigala into Sabaragamuva, through Bentota and Kalutara to Aňguruvātota, Nambapāna and Idangoda met with

54 For details of the fate of the Dutch armies see Raven-Hart, op.cit., pp 4-5.

<sup>52</sup> Raven-Hart, The Dutch Wars with Kandy 1764-66, op.cit., 1964, p 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> The king had his granaries at Ätampola and Visinavaya. These fell into Dutch hands.

disaster and almost the entire army was taken captive.<sup>55</sup> The first targets were the drummers who conveyed orders over long distances and the conspicuously clad officers who could be easily spotted. The casualties among the latter were so heavy that they were constrained to change their gear.

To avoid any official commitments and for reasons of prestige, the peace negotiations were ostensibly in the hands of Bauert, Disāva of Colombo and Dumbara, Disāva of the Three and Four Korales. Enfeebled and impoverished though he was, the king was not prepared to cede any of his territories and merely wished for peace on a pre-war footing, paying no compensation for Dutch losses, for he felt himself to be the aggrieved party. Nor was he agreeable to any treaty which prohibited negotiations with other nations. This last condition was now regarded as essential for the survival for the Dutch for the Pybus mission, though abortive, loomed large in their reckoning. In addition the Madras Council of the English East India Company had defended their right to treat with the king of Kandy and the latter's right to have intercourse with any foreign power.<sup>56</sup> The peace talks made no headway and Kandy was invaded the second time. In January 1765, one army under Colonel Feber with van Eck in supreme command left Colombo. The second one started by way of Puttalam and both were to converge at Kurunägala and proceed to Kandy. Although large numbers<sup>57</sup> of Kandyans appeared they were forced to retire and van Eck's army marched through the earlier route from Gonavila through Atambe, where the Adigar was defeated, to Visinavaya twenty miles from Kandy. Unlike in the previous year, the royal granary at Visinavaya was empty, but the fields were ripe for harvest and the peasants had ample stocks for food and seed paddy. These and half the standing crop, they were forced to surrender to nourish the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Many of the sepoys seem to have escaped or were released. The Europeans were held captive but were not ill treated. An interesting detail adds that an European drummer and fifer had to join the Temple Service *(hevisi panguva)* to provide music in honour of the gods in their village of imprisonment in Sabaragamuva, Raven-Hart, *op.cit.*, p 71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Letter from the Madras Council in Fort St. George 7 August 1762...," but at the same time we do acknowledge openly that a messenger was sent to us by the king of Candia, and that we did send a gentleman to the court of Candia in return, and this we say we think ourselves at full liberty to do without ordering any account of our proceedings to the Netherlands Company or their representatives, as we do not acknowledge any right or prerogative in the said Company to exclude all foreign nations from any intercourse with the court of Candia," J H O Paulusz, op.cit., p 136.

<sup>57</sup> Raven-Hart, op. cit., pp 10, 88.

invading army<sup>58</sup>, which now replenished moved on and meeting the second army from Puttalam continued their advance.

The Dutch met with stiff opposition specially at Uhumiya where the Kandyans lost heavily. The strongly fortified fort of Galagedara was occupied. At this point the Adigar sent five messengers to the governor saying that the king was prepared to cede the Seven Korales as far as Vaňdurāgala in the Kurunāgala district if the governor would turn back and hold a peace conference in Colombo. But nothing would deter van Eck, now confident of victory. He blamed the king for the present state of affairs and pompously proclaimed that he would be in Kandy in 8 days time and would discuss matters further, if His Majesty would be pleased to await him there.<sup>59</sup> The next day he occupied the fortress of Giriagama which the Kandyans had abandoned. The hill itself was unusually high and steep and very hard to climb because of the rocks and boulders. There were flat areas from which the Kandyans could have resisted the climbers and although there were many crowded around they had fled without firing a shot. Van Eck attributed this breakdown of resistance to the disorganisation within the Kandyan army due to the fact that the First Adigār and Commander in Chief, Galagoda, had fallen into disfavour with the king. But the Kandyans had well over a century of experience in dealing with European foes. They avoided open warfare and struck only when the enemy was at his weakest.

On 16 February van Eck's army reached Katugastota and entered the King's pleasure garden, on the banks of the river, half an hour's distance from Kandy. When the king heard that the enemy was approaching, he together with his family and kinsmen, destroyed the royal archives, lest it should fall into enemy hands and abandoned the city, taking with them as much of the royal treasures as they could. According to an eye witness, Kīrti Srī, with tears in his eyes caused his most precious objects to be removed from the palace and then gave leave to his troops to take what they could of the remainder. The first to be smuggled out to a place of safety was the Tooth Relic and the *bhikkhus* who attended on it. The inhabitants too dispersed and the deserted capital lay open to be looted by the invading army.

The king, realising that his capital was in imminent danger of being desecrated by the foreigner, sent frantic calls for peace appealing to the Governor not to cross the river and urging him to give audience to the Kandyan ambassadors, with their usual pomp and pageantry, to present the case. The head of the Kandyan delegation was the newly appointed First

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p 94.

<sup>59</sup> ibid.

Adigār, Pilima Talavve. With him were Mīvaturē, Disāva of Ūva, Palipāne, Disāva of Udapalāta, Talgahagoda, Disāva of Mātalē, Angammana, the Mahā Mohottāla or the Secretary to the king and a muhandiram named Monarāgama.<sup>60</sup> Apparently there had been a recent change in the personnel at the Kandyan court. The Galagoda family had wielded power since the early days of Kīrti Srī's reign and rose to pre-eminence after the abortive coup of 1760. Now Galagoda was overtaken by others, in particular by Pilima Talavve, who in 1761, succeeded the disgraced Samanakkodi as Second Adigār, was now elevated to the position of First Adigār. Galagoda's brother, the Disāva of Ūva seems to have been put aside in favour of Mīvaturē Rāla.<sup>61</sup>

The ambassadors were received with military honours at Katugastota, by Colonel Feber, Major van Wezel and the Secretary Johan Gerad van Angelbeek who conducted them to the Governor's tent. After much discussion the Governor presented his demands. The nature of the demands discussed in detail in chapter X of this volume - were such that the Kandyan monarch however enfeebled he may be could not possibly agree to them, since they would have converted his kingdom to a landlocked state, and he himself to a tributary of the Company. Much diplomatic fencing went on between the Governor and the Kandyan ambassadors who were seeking to relax some of the more drastic impositions. It is said that the peace treaty would have been concluded had not van Angelbeek pressed for another demand: "Your Excellency, now we have the rogues in a corner; now the time is ripe to make the king a vassal of the Company. He must pay 200,000 pagodas and after that lay down the crown and be again crowned by the company and as a perpetual remembrance of his vassalage, he must deliver to the Company four elephants every year."<sup>62</sup> This proposal was too much of a humiliation for the Kandyan ruler, and there was no realistic prospect of his accepting it. The governor felt with good reason that the Kandyans were dragging the negotiations on as a procrastinatory tactic to detain the Dutch till the rains fell, when nature would permit the local forces to engage in their

60 Raven-Hart, op. cit., p 95.

<sup>62</sup> "Journal of Expedition of the year 1765 against the Prince of Kandia," translated from the Dutch by A E Bultjens in JCBRAS, Vol. XVI, No. 50, 1899, p 54, extract from a letter dated 14 April 1765 written from Colombo by a principal member of the Council.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Dumbara, the well known *Disāva* of the Three and Four Kōralēs was now the *Disāva* of the Seven Kōralēs, a position earlier held by Galagoda. Pilima Talavve, brother of the First *Adigār* who was *Disāva* of Sabaragamuva, now appears as *Disāva* of the Three and Four Kōralēs.

traditional guerrilla warfare. Van Eck ordered his troops to cross the river and on 19 February took possession of the city and palace without meeting any opposition.

The looting began and even the Governor could not stop it. "The common soldiers turned everything topsy turvy and entering in carried out from there a very rich booty till evening, and also the day after. It consisted chiefly of all kinds of the most valuable stuffs and the finest linens, precious stones and silver wares and jewels and even pieces of gold, fine pagodas, ducats etc."63 "The palace was inspected by all, each remarking to the other with great astonishment how it was possible for a black king to have such a palace. Shortly after it was inspected this castle was plundered and every thing given up for booty... For three days the men did nothing else but roam and plunder, so that every thing has been ruined, both the walls and doors which were plated with silver, and now stripped of every thing, it is a most When the common soldiers had thus helped miserable spectacle."64 themselves the Governor took possession of the king's artillery and weapons<sup>65</sup> and proceeded to the Daladā Māligāva (Temple of the Tooth) which adjoined the palace and stole the riches which generations of pious devotees had offered to the shrine. Buried behind the palace was the silver covering of the relic casket weighing 210 pounds. The Governor agreed to melt it down and distribute the silver among the soldiers who were responsible for this victory.66

The Governor was in high spirits. He celebrated his victory and requested that a special service be held in Colombo to give thanks to the Almighty for the favour bestowed on the arms of the Company. He recommended promotions to his loyal officers. Contrary to the popular notion current among Europeans he found the climate of Kandy salubrious; the provisions he reckoned plentiful. There was oil, salt and spices sufficient for an army for a whole year in the king's go-downs. He resolved to hold on to Kandy and established his headquarters in the palace. He issued a proclamation calling the *samgha*, the chiefs and the people to appear before the palace and salute the Company as their sovereign. If the order was obeyed their titles would be confirmed; if not their property would be

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, pp 44-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p 49.

<sup>65</sup> Raven-Hart, p 99.

<sup>66</sup> ibid., p 137.

confiscated and they would be down-graded to the lowest castes - a punishment which only the king could inflict. No one responded to the call of the Company.

There were no signs of surrender, not even further offers of peace; for once their capital was sacked the Kandyans had little more to lose. There was no note of despair, inertia or lack of morale. In fact attempts were made by the fugitive King to rouse the people against the Dutch. The invading force learnt that the royal family was at the palace at Hanguranketa with 10,000 soldiers. Two columns were despatched in that direction but they only succeeded in catching a glimpse of the royal entourage, elephants, horses and palanquins disappear over the mountains in the direction of Uva. The pursuit was recalled by Lieut. Colonel van Wezel who feared the overwhelming strength of the Kandyan army. He turned his troops to the deserted palace at Hanguranketa. The soldiers having looted the palace of all it contained set fire to the rest. The next day a second commander, van Hounolte was sent who plundered the little that was left and reduced the remains of the palace to ashes. Both detachments that went to Hanguranketa were subject to severe attacks by the Sinhalese, for the passage between Kandy and Hanguranketa provided them with excellent vantage ground: "....here the Sinhalese had set a strong battery, which was invisible until close in front of it; the Company paid here for its rashness with eight wounded. On the same day the whole force retired from Hanguranketa to this paddy field where the action began, without being pursued, and camped there for the night; but the next day the Sinhalese made such good use of their configuration of the country that ... in less than half an hour from Kandia more than 50 men were wounded and killed."67 However, the Dutch did not cease their pillage and slaughter. "Every day at this time a commander was sent forth to roam and to burn and to murder every thing if only it was Sinhalese and if damage could be done to any thing orders were given for that and they were executed."68 But in no way could they intimidate the war weary Kandyans to surrender. Van Eck's overtures for peace was rejected with scorn. "No more were white flags seen to wave, no more was heard the word of peace, no more would the Sinhalese receive a letter from us for they sent it back to us three times and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> "The War with the Singhalese" (Translated with Notes), by Major R Raven-Hart in Spolia Zeylanica, Vol, 29, Part II, p 315 ff. This is an English translation of a Dutch Mss written by a soldier with considerable experience in the war with Kandy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> "Journal of Expedition of the Year 1765...," JCBRAS, XVI, No.50, 1899, op.cit., p 50.

as for ambassadors still less would they hear."<sup>69</sup> Until their city was vacated by hostile hordes, the Kandyans cared not for peace.

Meanwhile it became increasingly difficult for van Eck to hold on to Kandy. Sickness among the troops, the threat of the oncoming rains and dwindling resources had apparently reduced the Governor's recalcitrance for he left a letter to the court relaxing his demands.<sup>70</sup> He renounced the claims to Anurādhapura and the war indemnity and was now even prepared to negotiate on the other points. The Governor was now seeking peace on the same terms which the king had earlier offered. There was no response. Van Eck left Kandy with van Angelbeek on 4 March leaving behind a garrison in charge of Upper Merchant Martyn Rein (named Commander of Kandy) with Frankena and Duflo commanding the troops under him.<sup>71</sup> The Governor reckoned that the provisions would last four or five months after which the rains would cease and reinforcements could be sent from Colombo. The route to Colombo was beset by Kandyans and the retreating army was attacked at Visinavaya and Gonavila. Van Eck succeeded in reaching Colombo but died soon after on 1 April. Till his dying moment the spectre of a Siamese prince on the Kandyan throne haunted his mind. "The disappointment had more to do with his death than had his illness which at the outset was of no account"72, wrote a principal member of his Council. The Kandyan chronicler writes, "He (van Eck) left the fair town, fled without prestige and landed in the fire of death."73

The position of the Dutch garrison in Kandy was hopeless. Its commander Upper Merchant Martyn Rein had died of fever on 1 April. His assistant, Merchant Stork lay dying. Three to four hundred were sick. The native auxiliaries were dying of smallpox, fever and dysentery. The Kandyans were attacking them on all sides, deftly avoiding open warfare. "When our detachments went out the Kandyans fled but soon returned and

70 ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Cv, vs 99, 135-6.

<sup>69</sup> Raven-Hart, pp 13-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Feber, now promoted Colonel, was acting till Rein arrived from Colombo.

<sup>72 &</sup>quot;Journal of Expedition of the Year 1765...," JCBRAS, Vol.XVI, No.50, 1899, op.cit., p 52.

rebuilt their breastworks so that there were daily skirmishes."<sup>74</sup> The Dutch had exhausted their supplies of gunpowder and lead. The garrison had run out of food for van Eck had grossly overestimated the stocks. Arrack, a necessity for the Dutch soldier was in short supply. The lascarins and coolies, hungry and fatigued were escaping into the jungles. The Europeans were demanding their full ration of rice and unable to pacify them Major Frankena ordered them to disperse. The rains were beginning to fall and before the roads became impassable it was decided to abandon the city a decision which van Eck envisaged as an "unforseen and unbelieving necessity". On numerous occasions European armies had retreated from Kandy in this way and the Kandyans were well accustomed to dealing with them. As the Dutch forces passed through the steep narrow ravines, burdened with heavy gear and drenched in the monsoonal rains, the Sinhalese appeared in large numbers on the heights and attacked them, but always remained out of sight. The relief column sent under Medeler had to return without ever having contacted the retreating garrison. "The enemy hosts who came under the leadership of that foolish man," writes the Kandyan chronicler, "became powerless and helpless and were overtaken by calamities. Some fell victim to disease, others suffered great distress from hunger and sickness; some were slain in battle and others betook themselves to mountain fortresses."75 The remainder of the army succeeded in avoiding Balana Pass which was strongly fortified and reached Negombo through s secret route. The depleted garrison with none of the women and children arrived in Colombo as instructed, "with as much ostentation as possible to give the people the impression of a victorious campaign", leaving for that reason the sick and wounded in Negombo.

Emboldened by what the Kandyans considered was a victory there was a resurgence of their activity near Gōnavila and many other places like Avissavälla, Mītirigala and Hanvälla. The cinnamon peelers in the company's territory were attacked and the Dutch were driven away from Käbällagaharuppe, Iddamalpāna and Ruvanvälla which they had occupied. However they continued to hold Gōnavila, Visinavaya, Bōtale, Katugampola, Tambaravila, Hanvälla and Avissavälla and of course, Chilaw, Puttalam, Negombo and Kalpitiya. The Kandyans had come to the end of their tether. All their attempts to get help from South India proved fruitless. Four to five years of continuous warfare had disrupted their economy, their supply of salt.

75 Cv, vs 99, 136-7.

<sup>74</sup> Raven-Hart, op. cit., p 112.

Kandy needed a breathing space to recover from the blows that had been inflicted on her.

The position of the Dutch was no better. The Four-Kōralēs had to be evacuated. There was no cinnamon that year for the home market. They had suffered heavy losses. Of the men left a good number were unfit for a campaign so that the Dutch too earnestly desired peace. There were other considerations too which influenced them. Rumours were afloat that there would be another invasion of the low country with South Indian help. The Dutch realised that despite all their attempts to win over the Kandyan nobles with bribes and promises the latter stood firm in their loyalty to the king. The Dutch felt the strength of Kandy's determination to survive; and since she refused to succumb the next best thing would be to extricate from her an advantageous peace treaty. The most serious consideration, however, was the fact that the British influence was spreading in Madras and a peace in Sri Lanka would strengthen their hand there.

Dr Imam Willem Falck had been appointed to succeed van Eck and he arrived in Colombo bringing with him instructions from Batavia to enter into peace negotiations with the king. The king was informed that peace talks could be resumed if duly accredited officials were sent within a month. On 12 December 1765, four Kandyan envoys, the Disāvas of Mātalē and Udapalāta, Moragammana and Dumbara were on their way to Colombo ostensibly to welcome the new governor, but in reality to re-open peace talks. Falck felt relieved; despite the fact that the stipulated time limit had expired and the envoys brought no credentials he was prepared to open discussions and appointed de Costa and van Angelbeek as Commissioners to conduct the negotiations. The Mahā Mudaliyār Illangakoon acted as interpreter. The talks that followed reveal the diplomatic skill of the Kandyan envoys, their loyalty to the king and also the flimsiness of the arguments brought forward by the Dutch.<sup>76</sup> The Commissioners were instructed to insist as preliminary conditions, the recognition of the sovereignty of the lands they already held and the cession of the coastal strip around the island. The demands were based on those put forward by van Eck in Kandy. The refusal of the king of Kandy to recognise the Company's sovereignty over the maritime regions had vexed the Dutch ever since their occupation. Although they were de facto sovereigns they lacked a legal title to the lands they held, and the king's interference in the affairs of their territory only aggravated their misgivings.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> For details see, CHJ, Vol. II, Nos. 1&2, July and August 1952, pp 28-42; Reimers, "The Treaty of 1766 between the King of Kandy and the Dutch I", CHJ, Vol. II, Nos. 3&4, January and April 1953, pp 265-75; CHJ, Vol. III, No.2, (October 1953), pp 145-55.

In the face of increasing European competition it became more important than ever that they should base their rights on a legal footing. To the Kandyans, a legal definition of sovereignty was an alien concept; but with Illangakoon's explanation and persuasion they agreed to place the matter before the king. After some discussion the envoys agreed to the release of all prisoners, deserters and rebels. But with regard to the cession of the interior korales (the Four Korales, Seven Korales, Sabaragamuva and Nuvara Vanni) the Kandyans remained inflexible. Not only did the king derive a sizeable revenue from the arecanuts that grew in the Four Korales, but also through it ran the "Great Road," the line of communication between Colombo and Kandy. A fourth of the king's revenue came from the paddy lands of the Seven Körales. Sabaragamuva not only abounded in game but within it lay the Sacred Peak hallowed by the footprint of the Buddha. One of the first acts of the king on his accession was to reclaim the Peak from the Saivites (who had occupied it in the time of Rajasimha I), revive its rites and ceremonies, endow it with valuable lands and restore it to its pristine sanctity. Thus the king would never write it off to the Dutch. Even Nuvara Vanni could not be ceded for within it lay the ancient capital of Anurādhapura and its loss would be a great blow to the king's prestige for the kings of Kandy claimed to be the heirs of the bygone civilisations. The Dutch argued that these belonged earlier to them and they were returned by Governor Pyl to Rājasimha II in 1688 in order to preserve the goodwill between the king and the Company. They were prepared to forego the demand for the war indemnity and even grant a few trade concessions in exchange for the lands. Another line of argument was that the king's emissaries had offered most of these lands to van Eck at Galagedara. The Dutch failed to realise that this offer was made by the king to save his capital; but now the damage was done and the offer was no longer valid. The Kandyans were prepared to suffer the consequences of a war rather than give in on this issue. The Commissioners were constrained to relax their demands provided they were allowed to peel cinnamon everywhere without resorting to the annual embassies involving the obsequious prostrations of the Oriental court, which the Dutch had found very humiliating.

Another point of discord was the Dutch demand for a strip of one Sinhalese mile in width of the entire coast of the island. The discussions that followed show that the British bugbear loomed large in their minds. Frequent reference was made by the Commissioners to the Pybus mission. In order to prevent the recurrence of such incidents it was absolutely necessary that they possessed the coasts and without this no peace was possible. It is not territory we want, they explained, but security. When the Kandyans showed concern about their supplies of salt, the Dutch agreed to offer them free access to the salterns after the lands were ceded. After much debating and discussion which went on from 12 to 19 December, the terms were set out in 14 articles and the envoys tardily agreed to get the king's approval.

In the meantime Falck lost no opportunity in bringing as much pressure as possible on Kandy. While negotiations were in progress a pretender to the throne of Kandy was introduced to the picture to see the response of the Kandyan envoys to the idea of a Sinhalese prince as king of Kandy. He claimed to be the natural son of Narēndrasimha, the last Sinhalese king. "The standing of the pretender has markedly risen recently, but we shall make no use of him so long as there are hopes of a favourable peace with the present king."<sup>77</sup> The pretender was only a threat to precipitate the successful conclusion of the treaty; but the Sinhalese envoys were unperturbed and slightingly remarked that he was no Sinhalese prince, let alone a son of Narēndrasimha. This attitude of the envoys confirmed Dutch fears on their continued allegiance to the Nāyakkar ruler, notwithstanding all attempts they made to undermine their loyalties.

To bring further pressure on the king Pierre Duflo was despatched with a garrison of 1000 men from Negombo, with rather vague instructions to march into the interior. While the peace talks were proceeding, he moved in to Kandyan territory as a threat that hostilities will be resumed if the terms are not accepted. Meanwhile the Kandyan envoys returned to Colombo. The points now at issue were that of the coastal strip and the collecting of salt and cinnamon. Regarding the first the Commissioners categorically stated that there could be no discussion. As for the second, if the peeling of cinnamon in the king's lands was hedged with conditions and had to be requested yearly by an embassy, then the same conditions would apply to the collection of salt in the Company's lands; the ceremonies and the audiences would be identical. The envoys begged for a retention of even part of the coast. Simultaneously, Duflo was ordered to make a show of force, by penetrating into the heart of Kandyan territory to Mātalē.<sup>78</sup> Duflo's presence in Kandy was well publicised although his army had been rendered impotent by illness. On 9 February 1766 the terms were agreed and on 14 February the treaty was signed by the envoys after much persuasion and reluctance, only after Falck magnanimously announced that the silver casket which van Eck stole from the Daladā Māligāva would be restored to its rightful owners.<sup>79</sup> Two Dutch

<sup>77</sup> Raven-Hart, op.cit., p 152,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, p 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Batavia authorised that the rest of the loot from the Temple should be gifted to van Eck's family if the Court did not press for it. Raven-Hart, *op.cit.*, p 156.

officers went to Hanguranketa (where the king was residing as the palace at Kandy was not yet rebuilt) taking with them the treaty for ratification by the king. Once this was accomplished Duflo and his incapacitated army withdrew from Mātalē.

The treaty of 1766 was ostensibly the peak of Dutch power in Ceylon. All the problems that had vexed them for nearly a century were resolved in their favour. It had secured legitimacy for the territory they already held and in addition got a strip of the entire coast. This bought the king of Kandy within the Company's control: for his harbours were gone; his relations with foreign powers were rendered difficult if not virtually impossible; he had to supplicate the Dutch for his supplies of salt; his sovereignty was impinged and he was reduced to the position of a vassal of the company. He had agreed to do away with the prostrations and procedure that the Company's envoys were hitherto subjected to in his presence; so that in theory as well as in practice the king had to accept the trading Company Falck had every reason to rejoice and messages of as his equal. congratulations came from Batavia. But the Dutch euphoria soon evaporated, for the king having signed the treaty under pressure was not prepared to abide by it.

In a treaty of peace concluded at the termination of hostilities, the victor almost always imposes hardships on the vanquished. This is the fundamental nature of the transaction. The peace negotiation is a substitute for military operations and therefore cannot possibly be considered as being free from all threats and pressures. If such threats are regarded by the defeated party as a factor vitiating his engagement, the only course that would remain to the victor would be to go on with the war and refuse to suspend arms until he had completely subjugated or annihilated the adversary. The vanquished belligerent chooses deliberately to make peace and accept the hardships, if any, thereby imposed in order to avoid a much greater evil, perhaps complete annihilation. Examining the relative positions of the two parties on the eve of the signing of the treaty of 1766, the king of Kandy could by no means be considered a vanquished belligerent. The advantages that the Dutch gained from the treaty were quite out of proportion to their performance in the war and to their military potential on the eve of ratification.<sup>80</sup> The two Dutch expeditions to Kandy were disastrous failures. Duflo's regiment was debilitated by disease and scarcely in a position to attack Kandy if the need arose. In Europe as well as in the international

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> For full details see V Kanapathipillai, Dutch Rule in Maritime Ceylon 1766-1796, unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of London, p 102.

arena the Netherlanders were on the decline.<sup>81</sup> Throughout the 18th century there was an unmistakable decline in industries at home and they lost their 17th century lead in maritime cartography and navigational techniques to their English and French rivals. In this context it was hardly possible for the company to prolong the war with Kandy. With neither side gaining a decisive victory, the relative strength of the two belligerents was more or less the same. Kandy, apparently was not aware of this. The possibility of complete annihilation of Kandy, in case the negotiations broke down, was remote.

Kīrti Srī Rājasimha signed the treaty while Duflo was waiting, at Mātalē, seemingly with his dagger drawn. The king was unaware that Duflo's hand was too weak to strike. The fact that his signature was extorted under duress was perhaps considered by the king as a factor which vitiated his engagement and invalidated the treaty; hence he had no moral commitment to accept it. Besides a treaty of peace is of necessity a compromise providing for each side a roughly approximate solution of the differences between two. In this sense the Kandyan-Dutch agreement of 1766 was not a treaty for there was no element of reciprocity in it. While the Dutch derived enormous benefits the Kandyans got nothing out of it. It was truly a unilateral imposition of demands which the king signed under duress. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Kandyans tried every means to modify the terms and also hinder the implementation of the clauses.

In May 1766 the king's envoys to Colombo tried to evade the handing over of rebels and deserters and the necessity of asking permission to obtain salt. The court still persisted in its age old request for a share in the elephant trade. When van Angelbeek was sent as ambassador to Kandy, the court refused to relax its protocol. Van Angelbeek, as instructed by Falck, threatened to return without an audience. Finally he was allowed to place the Governor's letter on a table without handing it up to the king. Since van Angelbeek peremptorily refused to kneel, the last of the seven curtains which concealed His Majesty was not pulled and the Dutchman bowed while the king was partially hidden by a nearly transparent muslin curtain.<sup>82</sup> This was not a congenial atmosphere for diplomatic dealings. The king remained adamant with regard to his attitude towards the treaty and he expressed his wish to take the matter to authorities at Batavia.<sup>83</sup> In May 1767 an embassy consisting of four *Disāvas*, namely, Palipāne of Mātalē (the leader), Pilima

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> C R Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600-1800, pp 269-94.

<sup>82</sup> Raven-Hart, p 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> V Kanapathipillai, Dutch Rule in Maritime Ceylon, op.cit., p 122.

Talavve of Sabaragamuva, Dodanvala of Udapalāta, Yativatte of Vellassa, proceeded with two interpreters provided by the Company, taking with them a letter from the king and costly gifts. They achieved nothing and of the retinue of 80 no less than fifty five died including Pilima Talavve.

The drastic nature of the treaty undoubtedly had its effects on the power politics within the Kandyan court. The peace talks reveal that the Kandyan signatories to the treaty worked in unison with the interest of the king and country at heart. Not only did they use all the stratagems and logic at their command in an effort to circumvent Dutch arguments but they resisted all Dutch attempts at intimidation and bribery. But it is likely that their opponents in the court made use of the humiliating nature of the treaty, to bring the signatories into disfavour with the king. Soon after two of the signatories had to yield their places to others. Dumbara, *Disāva* of Mātalē was replaced by Palipāne who was opposed to the treaty and Angammana, *Disāva* of Udapalāta gave up his place to Dodanvala.

Having failed in attempts to persuade the Batavian authorities to modify the terms of the treaty Kandy's next move was to balk at its implementation and evade its obligations and at the same time look around for foreign allies. It was a difficult task for the Dutch to prevent the supply of salt to Kandy even though they controlled the salt pans; for the traditional channel of supply - the Muslim pedlar - plied his trade despite Dutch vigilance. The king on the other hand could effectively hinder the Dutch collecting cinnamon in his territory. He also began his age old demands - a share in the trade of areca and in the pearl fisheries and also for facilities to transport his relatives to and from South India. Even as late as November 1767, the court was refusing under "frivolous pretexts" to hand over some of the rebels and deserters.<sup>84</sup> Further complications arose when it came to the demarcation of the coastal strip in accordance with the treaty. There were differences of opinion with regard to the extent of the "Sinhalese mile" and the king attempted to keep the salterns. From 1770 onwards the king even began to demand the return of the coastal lands and assert his authority over them, so that although the treaty had grave legal implications, in actual fact it scarcely altered the position of the king vis-a-vis the Company. Dutch power, however, was rapidly declining in Europe as well as in Asia and the Company was nearing bankruptcy; hence the Company's attitude was very conciliatory, avoiding open rupture.

A series of Tamil letters found at the palace at Kandy when the British captured it in 1815 have brought to light the communications that went on between the kings of Kandy and the South Indian powers, both native and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Raven-Hart, op. cit., p 157.

European, seeking aid to oust the Dutch. This is not surprising for the kings of Kandy knew no other enemy save those who would occupy his coast. The king would befriend anyone who would help him against that enemy. Besides the Nāyakkar rulers had frequent contacts with the sub-continent and as a result the island was drawn into the wider arena of South Indian politics.

Kīrti Srī Rājasimha had lost confidence in the British after the Pybus episode of 1762; therefore he turned to the French in the hope that they would be more reliable allies. The king made concrete proposals for a peace treaty to Bellcombe, Governor of Pondicherry (1777-78).<sup>85</sup> In return for military assistance to oust the Dutch the king was prepared to cede to the French the harbours of Batticaloa and Trincomalee together with the territory known as Kattukulampattu. Having put forward these proposals the king urged the French to come speedily to his assistance and to execute all matters without delay. To the French this was a very welcome offer, for they needed a port in India, where their vessels could find shelter during all seasons to undergo repairs. The harbour of Trincomalee could shelter a fleet of ships during the fury of the north east monsoon when the Bay of Bengal was unfit for Further the French were keen on getting a foothold in navigation. Trincomalee to use it as a base against English East India Company's possessions on the east coast of India. Hence Bellcombe expressed great pleasure at the king's offer and after the customary felicitations, requested further clarification on certain points. He was particularly interested in knowing what commitments the king had to the Dutch and the strength of the king's army. In case any opposition arose from the Dutch quarter, Bellcombe wished to be equipped with documentary evidence confirming the king's gift. So together with his reply the Governor sent the king a draft of deed for the formal transfer of the three districts to be duly authenticated with the king's signature.<sup>86</sup> However, he added, that action will be unavoidably delayed till he had the authority from the superior in France to proceed. Kirti Sri Rajasimha speedily despatched his reply together with the deed of gift with the royal seal and a copy of the treaty of friendship between the king of Kandy and St. Louis, king of France.<sup>87</sup> These documents were sent to France and the Governor was awaiting orders to initiate action when in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Tamil Documents in the Government Archives, selected and translated by Mudaliyār C Rasanayagam, Colombo, 1937, pp 17-25. For more details of the Kandyan dealings with the French see, L S Dewaraja, Sri Lanka Through French Eyes, Kandy, 1989, pp 39-50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, pp 21-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Bellcombe to Rājasimha, June 1778 in Tamil Documents, pp 22-3.

December 1780 the situation in Europe underwent a dramatic change.

Britain declared war against Holland and Holland and France became allies. From Britain's point of view, the acquisition of Sri Lanka became a strategic necessity for the defence of her Indian empire. The Dutch territories became potential bases for the French. Britain's original plan was to capture Nāgapatnam and Trincomalee but this was later elaborated into the subjugation of all Dutch possessions in South India and Sri Lanka. In November 1781 Nāgapatnam fell and in January 1782 the British occupied Trincomalee. Mc Cartney, the Governor of Madras, having heard that the relations between the king of Kandy and the Dutch were stretched, despatched an envoy, Hugh Boyd, to Kandy.<sup>88</sup>

Hugh Boyd had clear cut instructions from McCartney to win over the king and express the Company's desire to enter into a special treaty of alliance for mutual gain. The British would help the king to regain his territory in return for which the king would furnish the British troops left behind in the island with provisions.<sup>89</sup> On this occasion the British were quite keen on an alliance with Kandy specially to prevent any French influence spreading there. Boyd was requested in particular to pay due deference to the customs of the oriental court. Hugh Boyd's letter to the king was couched in the most obsequious terms: "To the Lotus like golden feet of his Beneficent Majesty, the Lord of great Dominions..., Hugh Boyd Esquire with due submission, begs on his knees, that the Divine Lord will be graciously pleased to entertain his application ... "90 Boyd, in the same letter, informed the king of the seizure of Trincomalee and mentioned that the arms of the British are directed only against their enemy, the Dutch. He also communicated to the king that the Vice Admiral Sir Edward Hughes had made it known to his men by the beating of drums around Trincomalee, that the subjects of the king should be treated with "respect and consideration." He concluded by adding, "...Your Majesty's friends, the English," and begged the king for an interview so as to hand over McCartney's letter.

Unfortunately for the British, Kīrti Srī Rājasimha for whom the letter was intended, died a few days before Boyd arrived in Trincomalee and the letter was returned unopened. However Boyd arrived in Kandy to meet Rājādirājasimha (1782-96), the new ruler and brother of the deceased king. Rājādirājasimha was in no hurry to embrace the British offer, however

<sup>88</sup> See Chapter XIX of this volume.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> For details of the Boyd Mission, see below Chapter XIX.

<sup>90</sup> ibid.

attractive it appeared to be. With decades of experience behind them in dealing with European nations, the Kandyan kings were nothing if not circumspect in dealing with their offers of help, and their requests for treaties of friendship. The king of Kandy, therefore, acted with great caution and foresight. The Dutch were now in a very unenviable position. Trincomalee was in enemy hands and Boyd was in Kandy negotiating with the king against them showing how little the king cared for the treaty of 1766. The Dutch rushed two envoys to Kandy; the first to felicitate the new ruler and the second to thwart Boyd's intentions. Now with the envoys of the two European nations ardently wooing him, the king began bargaining. The British offer was an attractive one. The Dutch were made to understand that if they wanted to remain at peace with Kandy they had to return the coastal lands. Falck was constrained to oblige, for if he did not the king would turn to the British. Boyd's offer was rejected. The letter written by the king's Secretary to the Governor of Madras reveals the considerations which influenced this decision. In 1762 when the Kandyans were at war with the Dutch and needed British help desperately, the latter did not respond at all. As a result, after months of waiting the Kandyans had to suffer the consequence of a disastrous war and a humiliating treaty. Twenty years later when the position was reversed and the British were at war with the Dutch, they had come to solicit Kandyan friendship. The court, therefore refused to become estranged with the Dutch to suit the British convenience. The concluding sentence of the letter shows Kandyan awareness of European character. "As the Dutch are prone to succeed in their endeavour, even by having recourse to the art of begging, and if by such recourse they become friends with your king, our loss would be much greater than before."<sup>91</sup> With these arguments Boyd was put off saying that the request for peace treaty should emanate from the king of England. Boyd himself confessed in his memoirs that the British were motivated by self interest.

Rājādirājasimha, the second son of Narenappā Nāyakkar and brother of Kīrti Srī Rājasimha was born and bred in the Kandyan court. During the long reign of his brother, he was groomed for kingship having received his education from two eminent *bhikkhus*. The revival in religious and literary activity which began under Kīrti Srī Rājasimha under the stimulus of the king's encouragement, the efforts of Välivita Saranamkara and the cultural contact with Siam, continued in the latter half of the 18th century. Several Kandyan grants testify to the fact that Rājādirājasimha, himself a scholar, played a leading role in the literary and religious affairs. As a result of this tolerant and farsighted policy one does not still see an organised attempt by

91 Tamil Documents, p 35.

Kandyan nobles to join hands against the Nāyakkar ruler, although there were disgruntled elements. But the task was not an easy one; Rājādirājasimha had powerful forces to contend with. W J van de Graaf (1785-93) who succeeded Falck was seeking excuses to invade Kandy. In addition, around 1787, the king was constrained, to elevate the scheming and ambitious Pilima Talavve to the office of First *Adigār*. His qualifications for this important position could not be overlooked for his father and grandfather had both served in the same capacity.<sup>92</sup> In the same year he was *Diyavadana Nilamē* of the *Daladā Māligāva*. Pilima Talavve soon concentrated in his hands, sixteen offices, as a result of which his authority was entrenched in the central government, pervaded the provinces and cut into the departmental organisations as well. With Pilima Talavve and de Graaf, the king's position was a very difficult one.

A later chapter of this volume, chapter XIX, analyses in depth the severe challenge the VOC confronted in the 1790s from the English East India Company. Suffice it to state here that the VOC had lost its supremacy in the Eastern waters to the British, and in addition was also facing a grave financial crisis. In Sri Lanka the Company's subjects in the southern and western sea board, not to mention other parts of the Dutch territories, were reacting violently against Dutch agricultural policies.93 The late 1780s and early 1790s were a period of serious agrarian discontent in the lowlands. Naturally the Kandyan ruler watched the situation with some anxiety. De Graaf sought to attribute the discontent to the instigation of the Kandyan ruler. The Governor's attitude towards Kandy was hostile and he even went to the extent of maintaining an imposter to the Kandyan throne. This ruse, like all such previous ones, did not produce the desired effect. In the meantime, within the Kandyan court, the king and adigar were estranged and the latter was engaged in intrigues with de Graaf. Seeking to exploit this new situation de Graaf sent an expedition to Sabaragamuva in 1791 but quite contrary to Dutch expectations and despite Pilima Talavve's influence in the area, it encountered stiff opposition from the Kandyan force led by Leuke, Disāva of Sabaragamuva, proving beyond doubt that the king still commanded the loyalty of the chiefs and the people. The Batavian authorities ordered de Graaf to abandon his "forward policy," and to seek a reconciliation with the Kandy ruler. This de Graaf refused to do, preparing to resign his position

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> See the pedigree of Pilima Talavve in D'Oyly, Diary.

<sup>93</sup> See K M de Silva, A History of Sri Lanka, (London, 1981), pp 178-87.

instead.<sup>94</sup> When faced with the Dutch aggression, the King tried to revive the correspondence with the French at Pondicherry,<sup>95</sup> soliciting their aid, in return for Trincomalee and Tambalagama. Meantime the English East India Company despatched an envoy, Robert Andrews, to Kandy, its third in just over two decades, to seek the king's assistance in the expulsion of the Dutch. The international situation in north-western Europe forms the backdrop to this revival of the English East India Company's interest in the affairs of the Kandyan Kingdom.<sup>96</sup>

With the spread of French revolutionary ideology to the Dutch Republic, the Stadtholder fled to Britain where he was given asylum in the Kew Palace. He was persuaded to write a letter, the Kew letter as it came to be called, instructing all governors and commanders of the VOC's colonies overseas to let the British take possession of these territories, temporarily, till the Dutch Republic's independence was restored. The British used this letter in their campaign to get control over a large number of the VOC's colonies. Among these were the Dutch territories in Sri Lanka.

The negotiations in regard to Sri Lanka were in charge of the Madras establishment of the English East India Company. These are dealt with in considerable detail elsewhere in this volume. The main interest in this present chapter is in the Kandyan response to the offers of assistance conveyed through Robert Andrews.

While the English East India Company sought the assistance of the Kandyan ruler in their campaigns against the Dutch, there was considerable hesitance in giving the Kandyans the categorical assurance they asked against a return of the maritime regions to the VOC in the event of the latter's expulsion from the island. For the Kandyans this was the most vital feature of any treaty to be negotiated with the English East India Company. As for the latter, its principal interest was in the short-term advantages of obtaining the assistance of the Kandyans against the VOC. Despite this difference in outlook the two parties did prepare the draft of an agreement.

The Kandyans were persuaded to continue the negotiations in Madras and to send ambassadors there for this purpose. By the time the Kandyan ambassadors went to Madras the English East India Company had already gone into action against the VOC in Sri Lanka and had virtually secured its own control over the territories once ruled by the VOC. While in Madras the

<sup>95</sup> See K M de Silva, A History of Ceylon, op.cit., pp 178-87.

96 See Chapter XIX below for discussion of the Andrews mission.

<sup>94</sup> Tamil Documents, p 24.

Kandyan ambassadors discovered that Andrews's superiors, Hobart in particular, were much less accommodating than he had been. Hobart's view was that the British were entitled to all the Dutch possessions in the island by virtue of conquest from the VOC. The fourth clause of the draft treaty presented by the Kandyans had argued that the British entitlements were derived from what the king of Kandy offered them "out of his gracious pleasure." This Hobart rejected, but offered the Kandyans the right to employ ten ships for purposes of trade, especially to obtain an adequate supply of salt and fish. Since this was much less than what the Kandyans expected, the ambassadors were reluctant to sign the draft treaty prepared in these lines. Nevertheless Andrews persuaded them to sign the treaty and he himself returned to the island in August 1796 to secure the kings's ratification of the treaty.

While in Kandy Andrews was faced with demands for an increase in the number of ports the Kandyans could use. Since he had no authority to go beyond his brief Andrews would not agree to these demands. Eventually the treaty was not ratified by the Kandyans.

Indeed the negotiations took place at a time when the British were already in control of the former VOC possessions in the island. They had done this with little or no substantial assistance from the Kandyans. Once in Colombo they got to know of the contents of the treaty of 1766 which the Kandyans had signed, and the English East India Company soon claimed rights to these territories by virtue of conquest from the VOC.

Rājasimha II was accused of having exchanged ginger for pepper when he secured Dutch support against the Portuguese. Now in 1796 the exchange was much more unfavourable to the Kandyans, as the Kandyans were to learn all too soon. In less than 20 years of these negotiations the British had control over the whole island and had put an end to the Nāyakkar dynasty, and the independence of the Kandyan kingdom.

# PART 3

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# **CHAPTER XII**

# ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS: KANDYAN AND DUTCH

## L S Dewaraja, S Arasaratnam and D A Kotelawele

I

### KANDYAN KINGDOM

#### L S Dewaraja

The Kandyan administrative structure whose principal features we describe and analyse here was an integral part of the traditional Sinhalese monarchical system as it operated in what was to be the last of a long line whose roots go back to the Anurādhapura and Polonnaruva eras. First, the whole political system was based upon, and the social system too revolved around, the monarchy. The second significant feature of the social and political structure was a bureaucratic nobility whose appointments were derived from the king who, at least in theory, could also remove its members at will. Thirdly, this administrative class was rigidly graded and entrance to it was controlled by the unwritten yet inexorable laws of caste.

To a whole range of foreign observers the power of the king seemed beyond challenge. The king, Knox declared, in the 17th century, "ruleth absolute and after his own will and pleasure; his own head being his only

counsellor."<sup>1</sup> D'Oyly remarked in the early 19th century, that, "the ministers advise but cannot control his will."<sup>2</sup> In theory the power of the king was absolute. He had absolute control over the disposal of land which formed the basis of his power. He was the highest judicial authority; he heard important appeals and retained the right of inflicting the death penalty. As chief patron and economic support of the *samgha* he exercised-considerable authority over the religious organization. There was also king's role as the upholder of the social order.

In practice, however, the Kandyan monarchy was far from being an unfettered personal despotism. It followed the traditions of Indian monarchy, which, in spite of the quasi religious sanctity and the great authority vested in the personality of the ruler, was in no way an absolute monarchy. The Kandyan king exercised supreme power but his power was not personal and it was hedged in by safeguards against abuse. The most relentless of those checks was *sirit* the conventions of the country which every ruler had to follow, and which if violated would turn popular opinion against him. Past traditions and popular opinion combined to form a healthy check upon despotism.

The king was expected to avail himself of the advice of his ministers and before any innovations of importance were introduced it was customary to consult the chiefs and not infrequently the principal bhikkhus as well. The royal council consisted of the two adigars, the disavas, the maha mohottala or chief secretary and the rateralas. The principal bhikkhus had no official position but were summoned as required to the council. There is very little evidence in Sinhalese literature regarding the work of the amātya mandalaya, or king's council, either in this period or earlier. However, an eighteenth century Sinhalese manuscript, the Lak raja lo sirita,<sup>3</sup> though it does not depict the practical working of the council, does show how an ideal council should function. Some of the theories contained in it were almost certainly put into practice. It is said that the king was required to consult the council on any matter of importance as for instance, on the choice of a successor and in declaring war and making peace. If on any occasion the members of the council made a unanimous representation to the king, it was laid down that the king should uphold their point of view. If the king indulged in wanton cruelty it was the responsibility of the council to put a stop to it. Nor could

Knox, (1911), p 68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> D'Oyly, Constitution, p 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> BMOM 6603, (65).

the king dismiss the council as a body, though individual members could be removed if proved guilty of treason.

Important matters were referred to the council from time to time. For instance, when in 1747, it was decided that a mission should be sent to Siam to fetch bhikkhus the envoys were selected by Ähälepola, the First Adigar and the amātya mandalaya.<sup>4</sup> It is likely that the First Adigār presided at the council meetings. A contemporary Portuguese manuscript<sup>5</sup> confirms that the king had to abide by the unanimous decision of the council. It is known that Narendrasimha had shown favours to the Roman Catholic missionaries in Kandy. But on the accession of Srī Vijaya Rājasimha the bhikkhus instigated the king to take action against the missionaries. The king committed the matter to his council. The councillors, we are told, on the authority of Roman Catholic sources, were bribed by the Dutch to decide against the missionaries. On the advice of the council the missionaries were ordered by the king to leave the kingdom in 1745. The next king, the youthful Kirti Sri Rājasimha, on the advice of his father, who had been bribed by the Roman Catholic priests, called the missionaries back. In April 1749, the councillors took offence at the manner in which their advice was disregarded and they went in a body to the palace. The enraged First Adigar placed at the feet of the king his insignia of office saying, "From very ancient times all your predecessors had governed that kingdom in peace and quiet with the advice of the council. But you have done otherwise." He warned the king that if this state of affairs continued the councilors would seek another king who would safeguard their customs and privileges. The councillors questioned the king's right to invite the Catholic priests back to the kingdom and to receive their gifts. As a result of this united opposition the king had to withdraw most of the privileges he had granted to the Catholics.<sup>6</sup> This incident not only shows the voice of the council prevailing, but suggests that its threat to withdraw allegiance was taken seriously.

During this period the fear of palace intrigue constantly haunted the king's mind. A story popular in the eighteenth century and vividly represented in the mural paintings of many a Kandyan temple was the *Sutasōma Jātaka*, which related the story of a king named Pōrisada - from the Indian subcontinent - who had developed a desire to eat human flesh. In order

<sup>4</sup> BMOM 6606, (157).

<sup>5</sup> Relacao que o Padre Propozite da Congregacao de Oratario de Goa fez do estado Prezente de missao de Ceylao. Scritture Riferite Congressi Indie Orientati, Vol.40.

6 Relaca que o Padre...., ff.740 et.seq.

to satisfy his appetite he had one of his subjects secretly killed daily. Learning of this the ministers and the inhabitants earnestly appealed to him to give up his cannibalistic habits; but they were unable to restrain him. Thereupon they drove him from the throne and appointed another royal prince in his place. The fate of Porisada, boldly depicted on the walls of the Temple of the Tooth which the king regularly visited, constantly warned any king who should dare to deviate from the moral code set down for royalty. The right to rebel and the fear of assassination was always there, but whether these militated against tyranny or intensified the brutality of the rulers it is difficult to say.

The absence of a strong standing army deprived the king of the means of directly enforcing his will. Rājasimha II did have a considerable army,7 but in the reign of his successor the military strength of the kingdom dwindled. Kandyan war strategy, specially when on the defensive, did not necessitate the building up of a large army. The Kandyans had developed a very effective system of guerrilla warfare, exploiting for military purposes the forested mountains which surrounded the kingdom and the floods which followed the monsoon rains. Besides, the limited financial resources of the king did not permit the maintenance of a regular force. There is evidence to show that in 1810, the padikāra hevāpannē or paid soldiers consisted of a mere two hundred and fifty Muslims and one hundred Malabars.<sup>8</sup> The disāvas, too, did not keep regular forces except their personal bodyguards. They did possess a few firearms which were used mainly for ceremonial purposes, but the traditional system of conscription was such that the disāvas could muster and bring to the field a considerable portion of the male population in case of emergency. If the king looked to the disāvas to mobilize them, they could turn the people in arms against him, as the rebel chief Ähälepola tried to in 1814 when he raised the standard of revolt in his disāvany of Sabaragamuva. A standing army and an efficient system of communications were both necessary for the emancipation of a ruler from his nobles and both these were lacking in the Kandyan kingdom.

The king's principal officers were the two adigārs, called maha nilamēs or great officers. Their official titles were Pallēgampahē maha adikāram and Udagampahē maha adikāram, after the villages which were

<sup>7</sup> 

On Rājasimha's military strength see, "Raja Simha: His Military and other Resources. Report by *Disāva* Tennakoon in 1676," translated by J H O Paulusz in *JCBRAS*, Vol.V, Pt.2, July 1958, pp 160-72; also Knox, pp 86-91.

D'Oyly, Diary, p 50, entry for 9 December 1810.

attached to their offices.<sup>9</sup> The First Adigār had precedence over his colleague, but within the area of their respective jurisdiction they had equal powers and privileges. Up to the time of Rājasimha II there had been only one adigār, Rājasimha added the second and the last king of Kandy introduced still another.<sup>10</sup> This multiplication of office-holders was perhaps a contrivance to divide their authority and reduce their power. A plurality of adigārs meant that the king could set one against the other and thereby minimize the chances of their plotting against the throne.

Their duties were extensive and they acted as advisors to the king, as the principal judges and military chiefs. One of the titles of the First Adigār was agra sēnādhipati or commander in chief and he often led armies to battle. The advice of the adigars was sought regarding the appointment of all other chiefs, appointment to principal ecclesiastical offices, and before the granting of land and rewarding of services. All grants of land by the king's order were signed by one of the adigars. Royal sannas were always handed over by the king to the recipient, or by the adigars in the king's presence. All other land grants were handed over by the adigars themselves. The normal channel of communication with the king was through the adigars and it was left to them to determine who should have the opportunity of attracting royal notice. Since there was no organized system of espionage in the Kandyan kingdom, the king often heard what the adigars wished him to hear. The adigārs possessed general jurisdiction over all the Kandyan provinces: the First Adigar had under him broadly, the north and east of the kingdom, while his colleague was responsible for the south and west. They heard appeals from their respective parts of the kingdom except in cases which the king chose to reserve for his own hearing and decision.

It was seen that five villages were set apart as the perquisite of office of each *adigār*. These villages were occupied by three groups of people who came under the authority of the *adigārs* and who performed three specialized services. They were the *katupulla* or messengers, *räkavallu* or gaol guards of the great gaol at Kandy and *kasakāra* or whip crackers. The first group conveyed the king's and *adigārs'* orders to the provinces and delivered summonses to people required at Kandy. Their emblem of office was a silver headed cane curved at the top. The sight of this staff of office and the message its bearer conveyed was said to be as effective as the *adigār's* hand

<sup>9</sup> Pallēgampahē meant the five villages below the hill, and Udagampahē meant the five villages above the hill. This is from the point of view of their situation in relation 10 Kandy.

<sup>.10</sup> Davy, An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants, (London, 1823), p 143.

and seal. The *kaţupulla* people had to be constantly in readiness for duty at the palace or at the *adigār*'s house and they worked in shifts of fourteen days in each month under the supervision of their headman called *kōralē āccilē* who was appointed by the *adigār* from among the *kaţupulla* families. The *räkavallu* who were the guards of the great gaol in Kandy executed condemned criminals. They too worked in shifts organized under their headmen called *durayās*, but all of them were under the authority of the two *hiragē kankānams* or prison overseers appointed by the *adigārs* from among the *kōralē āccilēs*. The *kasakāra* people cracked whips in honour of the king and *adigārs* when they moved about. The whip crackers too performed duty in rotation, organized under their headmen. The *kaţupulla* and *kasakāra* people belonged to the *govikula* and were considered respectable; but it is certain that the *räkavallu* were of low caste because they performed the duty of executioners and also because their headmen were known by the typically low caste title of *durayā*.

The town of Kandy appears to have been a separate administrative unit for which both *adigārs* were responsible. One of the most important of their duties in the city was the supervision of the five ferries that guarded the approaches to Kandy. The ferrymen were under the authority of the *adigārs*, and paid to the *adigārs* a part of the profits they received from the ferries. The *adigārs* were also responsible for maintaining order in the city. For this purpose the city was divided into two sections by an imaginary line drawn through the middle of the street called Kalyāna Vīdiya.<sup>11</sup> The two *hiragē kankānams* acted as police officers under them. The *adigārs* were particularly charged with the conducting of public festivals in Kandy and the . superintendence of all other public works, as for example, keeping the streets and temples in good repair and maintaining the beauty and cleanliness of the town. They had to supervise the people who were engaged in *rājakāriya* in the town. They could compel the headmen of the provinces to send the men to attend to the king's work and in case of neglect to punish such officers.<sup>12</sup>

These extensive powers placed the *adigārs* in an enviable position. They were the normal channel of communication between the king and the general public for the king's orders to the chiefs, headmen and people were always communicated through the *adigārs*. Again it was the *adigār's* signature which validated state documents written in the king's name. It is easy to see, at a time when a foreigner sat on the throne, and rigid custom demanded that the king should remain in splendid isolation, how these

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> D'Oyly, Constitution, p 3.

privileges could be utilized by the *adigārs* to suit their ends. It will be seen too that the diplomatic etiquette followed in the Kandyan court made the *adigārs* the channel of approach to the royal person for foreigners, so that external affairs also could be manipulated to suit their interests.

The adigars held office at the king's pleasure. They paid to the king five hundred ridi on appointment and a similar sum every year as däkum,<sup>13</sup> in return for the privileges they enjoyed while in office. The offering of däkum usually took place, on the day of the Sinhala new year (April 13/14) and the ceremony was a solemn one on which the adigār and his retinue showed their loyalty to the sovereign, who was then at liberty to extend the term of office or terminate it. The adigars in turn appointed the headmen of the katupulla people who came within their authority and these people paid a sum of five to fifteen ridī as däkum to the adigārs. The prison overseers were also appointed in the same manner by the adigars and they too paid the same amount of däkum. The katupulla, räkavallu, and kasakāra, who had to perform special services, in return for the lands they held had to pay a fixed fine for any default of service. A small part of the fine was given to the headmen, but the rest was the perquisite of the adigar Each prisoner who was discharged from the prison in Kandy paid to the adigar a fee of two ridi. The adigars received an additional income from the ferrymen who came under their authority, who in return for the ferry dues they collected paid a fixed sum of money annually to the adigar. Besides all this, the fees, fines and forfeitures accruing during the process of administering justice were among the perquisites of the judge according to the custom of the land. A disāvany and several other offices were usually conferred on the adigār, in which case they performed all the duties and enjoyed all the honours and privileges attached to these offices. An adigar was always a disava and therefore the adigars belonged to the central organization and entered the provincial administration as well.

The honours due to the *adigār* were second only to those due to the king. Wherever they went they were preceded by a person bearing their staff of office; and a number of men cracking tremendous whips, emblematic of the punishment that awaited the wrongdoer. No person of whatever rank below the royal family could sit when the *adigārs* were standing and no person could ride an elephant, or a horse, or sit in a palanquin whilst the *adigār* was on foot. When he passed through the streets of Kandy no one could remain in the veranda of their homes which would place them on a higher level. Every one on the roads at the time an *adigār* was travelling had to make way for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> PRO/CO/416/Vol.20, f.87. Evidence of George Turnour, Revenue Commissioner for the Kandyan provinces, before the Commissioners of Eastern Enquiry, 1829-30.

him. He had precedence over the *disāvas*. If a *disāva* visited an *adigār* the music of the *disāva*'s retinue had to cease within sight of the *adigār*'s house. If the *adigār* passed through a *disāvany* its *disāva* had to follow two or three miles behind.

The royal dignity had to be maintained in whatever manner tradition had laid down. The organization and provisioning of the palace was itself a major task of administration, for food had to be provided uot only for the queens and royal concubines and their establishments, for the princes and princesses, but also for numerous relatives of the king, for some of the *bhikkhus* who were habitually fed by the king; for the palace staff who resided in the court; and not infrequently for foreign ambassadors as well. To this daily task had also to be added other routine chores, the provision of lights and baths, of linen and laundry, of guards and ceremonial attendance and the host of craftsmen's tasks such as the making of jewellery and furniture and the maintenance of the palace structure itself. For the smooth running of all these operations and the maintenance of the splendour and formality of the court a very considerable body of palace officials were required.

The palace service was distinct from the rest of the bureaucracy. Its members were exempt from the authority and jurisdiction of other officials, even that of the *adigārs*, who could not impose corporal punishment, fine or imprison any person attached to the king's retinue. If the palace officials held any land in the *disāvanies* these were free of the *disāva*'s control. This was a safeguard against any dangerous coalition between the king's immediate attendants and his ambitious *adigārs* and *disāvas*.

Many of the offices seem to have been created not for the purpose of administration but to enhance royal pomp and magnificence which in itself was a part of the charisma of monarchy. These offices were numerous, as the list given by Davy<sup>14</sup> shows, and seem to have varied in number with the needs of individual monarchs. Once a year on the occasion of the *Äsala* festival<sup>15</sup> the whole body of these officials, drawn according to the strictest order of precedence, moved in procession through the streets of the city following the Tooth Relic and the images of the gods. A list of officers who participated in the *Äsala* festival in the reign of Kīrti Srī Rājasimha 1s given in the *lēkam mitiya* or register of lands belonging to the Temple of the Tooth.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Davy, op. cit., pp 138-40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> The annual pageant held in Kandy in the month of July-August.

The first in order among these officers was the maha mohottāla or chief secretary, who performed the duties of secretary to the palace and was in charge of the palace archives. The insignia of his office was a palm leaf book and a silver stylus.<sup>16</sup> Next among those attached to the palace came the chiefs of the *lēkamas*. A *lēkama* could be described as a body of functionaries organized under a chief, known a *lēkam* or mohottāla, which performed services of a military or ceremonial nature for the king. In each *lēkama* there was a considerable number of people who held land in the *rațas* in turn for their service. The *lēkam* therefore had authority over all the people of his division living in all the *rațas*. The lands given to the king's immediate retinue were not scattered in the distant *disāvanies* and therefore the authority of the *lēkams* did not penetrate beyond the boundaries of the *ratas*.

By origin the *lekamas* were of a military nature.<sup>17</sup> But in time some of them had lost their military character and served only ceremonial purposes. The gajanāyaka nilamē, chief of the king's elephant keepers had, precedence over all the other lekamas on ceremonial occasions. His superiority over the rest arose from the great estimation in which elephants were held as forming one of the four constituent arms in war. Because of the elephant's military and ceremonial significance, the elephant department was of very high importance in most eastern monarchies, as for instance in Burma and Siam. To the king of Kandy, the elephant was a particularly valuable asset, for the Sri Lanka elephant was a most marketable commodity in the courts and temples of South India. Hence the importance of the gajanāyaka nilamē, whose duty it was to superintend the people who had charge of the royal elephants. The atapattuve lekam was in charge of the king's immediate bodyguard. In the time of Rajasimha II, the king's bodyguard had consisted of Africans "in whom he imposeth more confidence, than in his own people."18 In the eighteenth century, very likely after the establishment of the Nāyakkar dynasty, it came to consist of Malabars, doubtless in an attempt to minimize the possibility of a treacherous alliance between the nobles and those who had access to the king's person.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Jonville calls the maha mohoțțāla the archivist. See JCBRAS, Vol. XXXVIII, Pt.I, April 1948, p 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Davy, op. cit., p 150.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Knox, op. cit., p 56.

The kodituvakku lekam commanded the people who carried the king's gingalls, about one hundred in number.<sup>19</sup> The vedikkāra mohottāla or lēkam was in charge of the king's musketeers and the maduve lekam had the command of the men whose duty it was to keep watch round the capital at fourteen different stations.<sup>20</sup> The maduve service was established by Kirti Srī Rājasimha, when hostilities broke out between the Kandyan kingdom and the Dutch in 1761.<sup>21</sup> The padikāra mohottāla was in charge of the few salaried servants of the Crown, as for example the paid soldiers. The nānāyakkāra lēkam kept the list of men of noble birth from whom were selected the king's officers. These were the chief lekams, but slight changes in the list were made in different reigns. Kīrti Srī Rājasimha created a dunukāra lēkama or a body of archers and the last king of Kandy created the bondikulama lēkama to which he gave over the charge of his iron cannon. All the lekams lived in Kandy and administered their departments through officers known as mohandirams. In every rata there was a mohandiram attached to each of the lekamas and it was through this officer that the people of the lekama in each rata were mobilized for service.

The second category of officers of the palace were those in charge of the royal stores and of the supply of provisions to the palace. The maha aramudale vannakku nilame corresponding to the 'lord treasurer' was an officer of high rank in the royal establishment. He had four secretaries and four overseers appointed by the king functioning under him. These men were in charge of the royal treasurers. Next in rank was the maha gabadā nilamē or chief of the maha gabadāva, the royal store to which was brought all the dues paid to the king in kind, as for instance the kada rājakāriya which was paid by all the paddy landholders in the kingdom. The maha gabada nilamē was a sort of high steward whose duty it was to see that the king's dues in kind were regularly received and properly taken care of. He had several lesser officers under him ranging from secretaries to cleaners. The uda gabadā nilamē was in charge of the king's private storehouse in which was stored the produce of the king's villages or gabadāgam. The pallē vāhala gabadā nilamē was in charge of the storehouse attached to the queen's These three officers had authority over the cultivators, establishment. scattered all over the kingdom, who supplied provisions to three storehouses.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Davy, op.cit., p 150. A Gingall or jingall was a light portable field gun, fixed on a forked swivel; a type of harquebus. The Dutch called it grasshopper.

<sup>20</sup> Davy, op. cit., p 150, D'Oyly, Constitution, pp 72-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> D'Oyly, op.cit., p 72.

The third category of officers of the royal household attended to the personal comforts of the king. The maha sätapena-ge mohandiram nilame, master of the royal bed chamber, had in his custody the jewels that the king His assistant, a lekam, with the help of a mohandiram, wore daily. commanded the appuhāmies or gentlemen in waiting to the king. The number of these appuhamies varied and the last king reduced them to forty-eight. Their chief duty was to wait on the king, receive any order and communicate them to the adigars. When called they approached the king moving on their knees, "but having received their order, they were allowed to rise and walk away."22 The disāvas were ordered to send to the palace lads of gentle birth, usually the sons of noblemen, to be employed as appuhamies. The parents were exempt from taxes as long as the sons were in the king's service. If the king approved of them they were promoted to higher offices when vacancies occurred. If they incurred his displeasure the whole family might be punished; sometimes the entire family would be given away as slaves. The post of appuhāmy was a sort of a training ground for future appointments to higher administrative office.

Another officer of importance in the palace was the diyavadana nilame, who was entrusted with the superintendence of the king's bath, which was quite a complicated affair involving the services of nearly five hundred families who held land in return for services connected with the ulpänge or royal bath house. The main duty of the diyavadana nilamē was to wash, comb and dress His Majesty's hair and this officer alone had the privilege of touching it. He appointed, with the king's permission, ten sattambies and ten panividakārayas. The former acted as petty chiefs of the families connected with the bath. One of their duties was to pour water on the king's head and members of the best families only were allowed the privilege of washing his feet. The panividakārayas were employed in summoning the services of the people connected with the bath. There was an elaborate organization behind these services. Two villages, Baulana and Lagamuva which were under the authority of the diyavadana nilamē were given to the families that supplied the firewood to heat the king's bath. The residents of each village were responsible for supplying the fuel and removing the ashes during every alternate fortnight. Their services were organized by a vidānē appointed by the diyavadana nilamē.

The batvadana nilamē and his assistants had a responsible task to perform since they were in charge of the royal kitchens. Elaborate arrangements had to be made and the work had in it something of the nature of a security operation since the king's personal safety depended to a large

22 Davy, op. cit., p 152.

extent on them. The batvadana nilamē helped the king at mealtimes; the king always dined alone. Occasionally, as a great favour, and a mark of strong affection, he would permit a favourite queen to perform the office of the batvadana nilamē, who was then excluded, and no one else was permitted to be present.

The names of the palace officers are given in the appended list.<sup>23</sup> All of them had subordinates who held land in the *ratas*, on the tenure of palace service and these people came solely under the authority and jurisdiction of their respective chiefs. They were given land in the *ratas* so that they could be readily mobilized when their services were needed. All these officers can be thought of as personal servants of the king in a different sense from that in which he was served by the territorial chiefs. But very often the more responsible posts like *diyavadana nilamē*, *batvadana nilamē* and *maha gabada nilamē* were given to a favourite *adigār* or *disāva*. Most of the palace offices were created not for the government of the realm, but simply for the maintenance of the court. Nevertheless the palace officers have their place in the study of government, since the court was the centre of government, and the maintenance of royal dignity had its part to play in security acceptance of royal authority.

It is seen that the officers from two to eleven of the above list rendered services of a military or ceremonial nature. The next seven were concerned with the guarding of the treasures and the supply and care of provisions to the palace. Seven others were interested in the personal comforts of the king and the last six with his amusements.

The Kandyan kingdom consisted of two major territorial divisions, the ratas and the disāvanies. The area known as Kanda uda pas rata which was the nucleus of the kingdom, was divided into 9 ratas situated centrally on the mountain plateau and all within close proximity to Kandy. The disāvanies were more extensive areas sloping away from the central plateau towards the Dutch border or the sea. Two exceptions were Valapanē and Udapalāta which lay on the mountains, but as the rest of the disāvanies radiated from the central hills, the name disāva which literally means quarter, came to be applied to them. There were 12 disāvanies in the kingdom when the British took over in 1815. They were the Four Kōralēs, Seven Kōralēs, Ūva, Mātalē, Sabaragamuva, Three Kōralēs, Valapanē, Udapalāta, Nuvarakalāviya, Vellassa, Bintānna and Tamankaduva.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> This list (see Appendix I) is taken chiefly from Davy, pp 136-9.

It was seen that there were nine ratas or central districts each under a ratērāla. They were more populous and fertile than the disāvanies. At the time of the British occupation the ratas were - Udunuvara, Yatinuvara (in which the town of Kandy is situated) Tumpanē, Hārispattuva, Dumbara, Hēvahāta, Kotmalē, Uda Bulatgama and Pāta Bulatgama. The powers and privileges, and indeed the duties, of a ratērāla were much less than those of a disāva. The duty of the ratērāla was to collect the kada rājakāriya and in this he was assisted by a liyanarāla who acted for the ratērāla during his absence and kept accounts of the collected revenue. There were also undirālas<sup>24</sup>, one for each pattu, who helped in the collection of revenue. The ratērāla was assisted by kōralēs, atukōralēs and the headmen known as vidānēs. They paid a fixed sum of money as dākum to the king on appointment and a similar sum every year. The appointment could be extended or terminated at the kings pleasure.

Each disāva had his own administrative staff to which he appointed members of the local aristocracy of his disāvany. This hierarchy of officials was selected from the rațtē ättō. There were three principal headmen, appointed by the disāva, the disāva mohoțțāla, atapattu mohoțțāla and kodituvakku mohoțțāla all of whom resided in the capital. His orders to the lesser headmen were transmitted through the disāva mohoțțāla. Due to the poverty of communications and the clumsy procedure involved in the disāva's circuits in the province it was not possible for him to maintain a close supervision of the activities of his subordinate. It appears that as long as the disāva mohoțțāla had the goodwill of the disāva he could exercise almost arbitrary power, especially in the remoter parts of Ūva, Sabaragamuva and the Seven Kōralēs.

A disāvany was divided into kōralēs and a kōralē into pattus. The disāva mohottāla had his subordinates in each of these. In each pattu there was an officer known as a kōralē. His chief duty was to collect the kada rājakāriya and in this he was assisted by a number of atukōralēs. Then came the mohandirams, each in charge of a particular caste in a specified territorial division. Under the mohandirams there were the vidānēs responsible for a particular caste resident in one village. All these subordinate officers were appointed by the disāva from among the members of the higher ranks of the govikula. At times the vidānē was appointed from among the members of one caste which was placed under him. In that case he was called a durayā; the name vidānē being reserved only for headmen of the govikula. The disāva

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Knox, *op.cit.*, p 82, refers to the Undia thus; "A word that signifieth a lump. He is a person that gathers a king's money: and is so styled because he gathereth the king's monies together into a lump."

mohottāla and his subordinates carried out the orders of the disāva and also helped in the collection of the king's revenue from every peasant in the village.

The duties of the second superior headman, the atapattu mohottāla, were of a ceremonial nature since he helped in maintaining the status of the disāva. He was the chief of the disāva's atapattu or body-guard which kept watch at the atapattu maduva or guard room in front of disāva's residence in Kandy. The third superior headman under the disāva was the kodituvakku mohottala who was in charge of the police and pioneer force and of the local store of muskets or gingalls. The people under him were the low caste paduvās and were under the orders of a mohandiram. They had headmen of their own caste called durayās. They kept guard at a building known as a kodituvakku maduva where the gingalls and the criminals of the disāvany were housed. The kodituvakku people also performed other services of a menial nature to the king or disāva, such as navvying and carrying stones for building purposes. There were thus a number of officials engaged in the main task of collecting revenue and service dues. In the lower ranks of the bureaucracy the number of officers increased, but the territorial sphere of their authority became less. The inferior offices were generally given to the highest bidder and if it pleased the disāva the offices became hereditary in certain families. None of the offices were given for life and the incumbents could be removed at the disāva's pleasure.

It was seen that the economy of the Kandyan kingdom was largely non-monetary. The king obtained the services and ensured the loyalty of the higher officers by generous grants of his rights over land. This had advantages for both parties. Land was the most desirable form of wealth in the kingdom. The visible fact of stretches of paddy land, the control over the tenants, the share in the crop, the labour services at his disposal, ensured a life of ease and made the officer a man of consequence. If granted in *pravēni*, the land gave the family a sense of identity from generation to generation and enhanced its prestige.

The lands with which the *disāvas* were paid were known as *sārāmāru* nindagam or maintenance lands which were enjoyed only as long as the *disāvas* held office and were not heritable. When the king gave a gabadāgama or a royal village to a chief it became a nindagama. The produce of the muttettu or the proprietor's share, now went to the gamladda or grantee. The rest of the village was divided into pangus or shares and these shareholders now performed services or paid dues to the grantee instead of to the king. Thus as long as he held office, the holder of a sārāmāru nindagama held the right of usufruct over the muttettu, the right to the services of the tenants, rights to certain dues from the tenants, the right to

fine or eject the tenants from the shares for the non performance of services and finally the right to settle land disputes among the tenants.<sup>25</sup> In addition to the sārāmāru nindagam, the king gave lands known as pravēni nindagam to the disāvas. These were given with a royal sannas or seal which conferred on the donee the highest rights in land. In addition to the right of usufruct, he had the power to alienate that land by sale gift or will and his heirs had the right to inherit in the event of intestacy. In certain special cases these lands were declared free of all services to the crown.

Although the *disāva's* income in land and labour services was considerable, his income in cash was very limited. Since all the appointments were made by him, he received from each appointee, a *bulatsurulla* (forty leaves of betel on which were placed a fixed number of coins), according to the custom of the land. The amount was fixed by custom, but since the appointments were usually given to the highest bidder the *disāva* received more than the fixed amount. These cash gifts enabled the *disāva* pay his annual *däkum* to the king.

The administrative organization so far discussed was a territorial one though there was a functional division at the bottom of the administrative ladder. Its main feature was the delegation of the king's powers over his kingdom to a number of officers, the base of the pyramid being formed by a number of headmen, each of whom had a distinct area of territory, over which he exercised the functions of government. Co-existing with this was a system of departments known as *baddas* which cut vertically across the territorial system dividing the population into functional groups. The word *badda* may be defined in many ways but in this context it denotes, "a caste group organized for purposes of revenue and service to the state,"<sup>26</sup> a mechanism by which the labour resources of the kingdom could be mobilized for public services.<sup>27</sup>

The authority of each *badda* over the caste group and its services was all embracing and penetrated into the *disāvanies* stopping short only at the boundaries of the kingdom. During the early eighteenth century the *badda* system was highly centralized and functioned under separate departmental

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> For a fuller account see, U A Gunasekera, Land Tenure in the Kandyan Provinces, unpublished B.Litt thesis, Oxford University, 1959, pp 109-13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> T B H Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon..., p 72.

<sup>27</sup> Ralph Pieris, Sinhalese Social Organization, (Colombo, 1956), p 99.

heads, but during the last few years of the kingdom's existence, the baddas tended to come under the control of the  $Dis\bar{a}vas$ .

The Kandyan caste structure was essentially a system of labour specialization providing the various services needed for the state and society. Each caste was economically privileged in the sense that it alone had the right to supply a particular kind of labour. The castes were endogamous occupational groups, recruitment to which was determined by birth alone. They were geared to the administrative system and through the elaborate organization known as the baddas their services were channelled for the benefit of the state. Thus although the institution of caste had no religious sanction among the Sinhalese as it had in India, yet it was legitimized by its connection with the state and in the Kandyan kingdom it was a dynamic force driving the cog wheels of the administrative machinery. For instance the kottal badda or artificers department had within it all the craftsmen of the kingdom. There were silversmiths, blacksmiths, brassfounders, carpenters, turners, lapidaries and sculptors who were called by the general name of ācāri. In every rata and disāvany the craftsmen were organized locally in groups and the entire department was under two officers known as udarata kottal badda nilamē and pātarata kottal badda nilamē. Their offices were usually united with that of a disāva. For instance in 1741, Māmpitiyē, Disāva of Sabaragamuva, also held the pātarata kottal badda and, again in 1745, we find him holding both offices. D'Oyly has given us the composition of the local group of craftsmen in the Four Körales<sup>28</sup> and similarly constituted groups existed in every rata and every disāvany. These craftsmen worked for the king or the *disāvas* without discrimination, as for example manufacturing bows and arrows, spears and shafts required for a national emergency as well as supplying the metalware for the disāva's house. Each separate craft had its own headman and all the craftsmen held land in return for the services they rendered; so that the craftsmen like everyone else were cultivators, but rendered the specialized service that was demanded for their caste.

The other *baddas* were organized in the same manner as the *koțțalbadda*, on the basis of caste groups functioning under their respective heads. Some of these were the *badahälabadda* or potter's department, *radābadda* or washerman's department, *haňdabadda* or weaver's department, *kuruvē badda* or elephant department, and the *madigē* or transport department. These organized functional groups served the king and the chiefs, whereas the individuals within them served the needs of the village community in return for payment in grain.

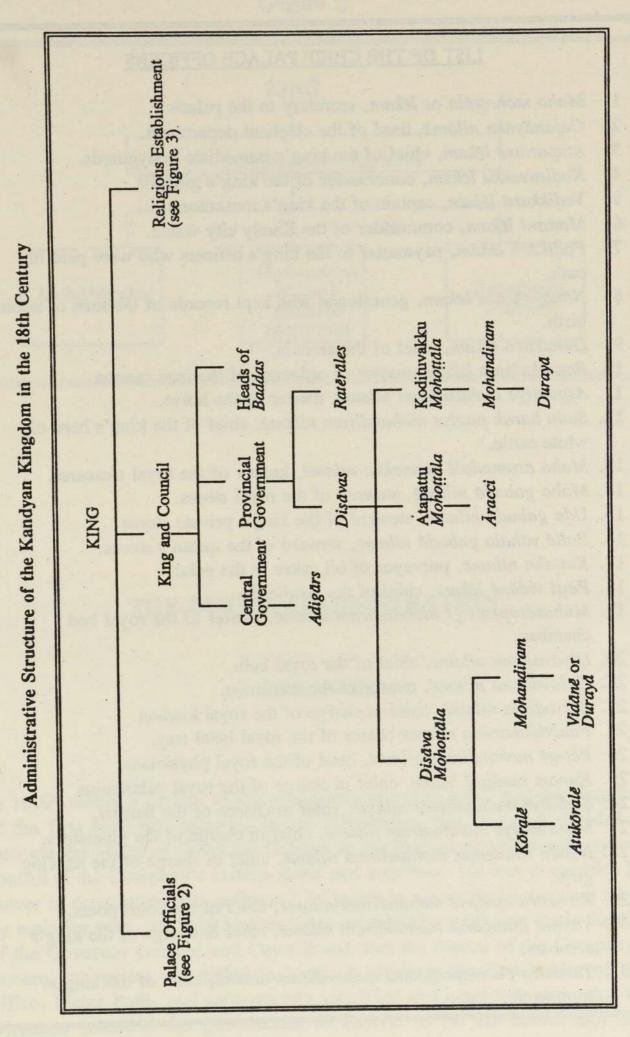
<sup>28</sup> D'Oyly, Constitution, p 12.

A few general features of the administrative structure so far discussed may be noted. It was highly bureaucratic and well developed, the result of centuries of evolution. The entire structure was hierarchical with the king at the apex and numerous headmen at the base of the pyramid. The king's executive and judicial powers were shared among of the officials at all levels as, for example, the task of collecting and organizing the revenues of the king in cash, kind and labour. The *vidānē* or headman was the last link in the vital chain that tied to state service the farmer in every field.

In theory the king had unlimited power. He paid his officers in recallable land grants and had the power to eject any of his subjects from the lands they held. The royal monopoly of trade was intended to channel all cash to the treasury. In appearance, at least it would seem that the disāvas were politically and economically entirely dependent on the king. But in the practical running of government, the day to day collection of revenue, the organization of labour services and the fashioning of foreign affairs, effective power was found in the hands of the nobles. The payment in land rights for the services and the possession of heritable land grants tended to make the disāvas and their families the focus of attention in the provinces. The geography of the country, the lack of communications and the temperament of the people who revered birth and rank were some of the circumstances that led to the devolution of royal authority on the provincial heads. These centrifugal tendencies became intensified as the 18th century advanced, because the Nāyakkar dynasty were foreigners and because of the concentration of several offices and hence of political authority in the hands of a few nobles. When Ähälepola Adigar held ten offices, he also enjoyed considerable areas of maintenance lands and also of praveni lands. This concentration reached a peak in 1798 when Pilima Talavve Adigar combined in himself sixteen offices. An examination of the offices held by these nobles makes it clear that their authority not only pervaded several disāvanies, but that it also penetrated vertically across the territorial system and entered the badda organization as well. Their power was entrenched in the devale system and entered the palace administration, even to the king's bed chamber and bathroom. The vihāra system alone stood outside the sphere of their direct influence, but here again the chief monks were their kin. So that although in theory there was a strict division of administrative functions, in the practical working of the Kandyan administration a few families dominated the entire structure. These families though often at loggerheads with one another were again connected by marriage.

For the king to break through this network, it would have required a different economic and social order. Under the prevailing goods economy the national treasury had little profit from the revenue of the more remote

territories. We have seen that most of them were used on the spot by the disāvas. The king's treasury which had to depend principally upon the income from the royal lands was accordingly strictly circumscribed. Perhaps only a money economy, which would have made it possible to pay salaries to removable state officials, to strengthen the finances of the state by making them more flexible and to maintain a standing army could have secured the king's emancipation - and then only in conjunction with improvements in communications and changes in the techniques of war. For only under such circumstances would the king have escaped from his dependence upon the loyalty of the disāvas who mobilized his army. And only under a money economy would the nobles have lost the economic basis of their ascendancy, their grip upon the machinery of state, their monopoly of office so often tending to become hereditary. As it was the non-monetary economy of the Kandyan kingdom together with the social and political conditions weighed against the strengthening of royal power. The king had to shower benefits on the nobles to keep them in good humour and had to employ other devices to keep them in check. The isolation of disāvas from their provinces, the reshuffling of disāvanies, the vigilance exercised over matrimonial alliances among the nobility, the exemption of certain people and lands from the authority of the disāvas, the monopolization of all exports by the king and the power of appeal allowed to every litigant were some of the methods intrinsic in the structure contrived to minimize the chances of the nobles gaining absolute power. A system of checks and balances was in operation, especially at the higher levels, but at most a rather precarious political equilibrium was maintained.

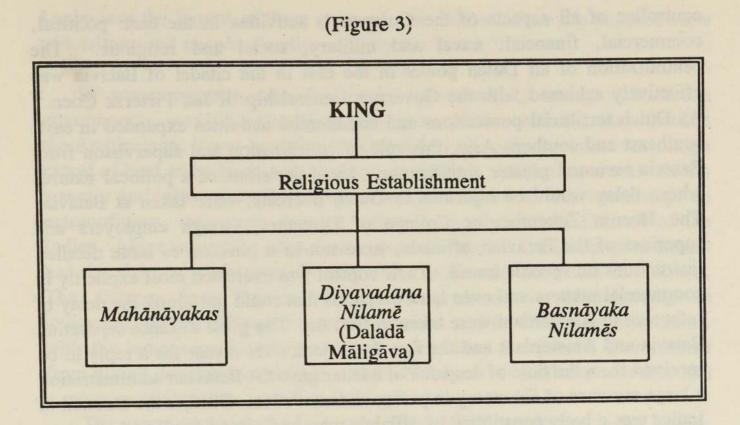


(Figure 1)

#### (Figure 2)

#### LIST OF THE CHIEF PALACE OFFICERS

- 1. Maha mohottāla or lēkam, secretary to the palace.
- 2. Gajanāyaka nilamē, head of the elephant department.
- 3. Atapattuvē lēkam, chief of the king's immediate bodyguards.
- 4. Kodituvakku lēkam, commander of the king's gingalls.
- 5. Vedikkarā lēkam, captain of the king's musketeers.
- 6. Maduvē lēkam, commander of the Kandy city watch.
- 7. Padikāra lēkam, paymaster to the king's officers who were paid in cash.
- 8. Nānāyakkāra lēkam, genealogist who kept records of the men of noble birth.
- 9. Dunukāra lēkam, chief of the archers.
- 10. Bondikulama lēkam, master of ordnance of the iron cannon.
- 11. Aspantiye mohandiram nilamē, master of the horse.
- 12. Sudu harak patțiye mohandiram nilamē, chief of the king's herd of white cattle.
- 13. Maha aramudalē vannakku nilamē, keeper of the royal treasures.
- 14. Maha gabadā nilamē, steward of the royal stores.
- 15. Uda gabadā nilamē, steward of the king's private stores.
- 16. Pallē vāhala gabadā nilamē, steward of the queen's stores.
- 17. Kuttaha nilamē, purveyor of oil cakes to the palace.
- 18. Patti vidānē lēkam, chief of the cowherds.
- 19. Mahasätapena-gē mohandiram nilamē, master of the royal bed chamber.
- 20. Diyavadana nilamē, chief of the royal bath.
- 21. Haluvadana nilamē, master of the wardrobe.
- 22. Batvadana nilamē, chief in charge of the royal kitchen.
- 23. Panividakarana nilamē bearer of the royal betel tray.
- 24. Bēt-gē mohandiram nilamē, head of the royal physicians.
- 25. Kunam maduve lekam, chief in charge of the royal palanquins.
- 26. Sudaliye mohandiram nilame, chief in charge of the fencers.
- 27. Maruvalliye mohandiram nilame, chief in charge of the gladiators.
- 28. Nätum illangamē mohandiram nilamē, chief in charge of the dancing girls.
- 29. Kavikāra maduvē mohandiram nilamē, chief of the court poets.
- 30. Vahala illangamē mohandiram nilamē, chief in charge of the king's acrobats.
- 31. Tamboru purampettukāra mohandiram nilamē, chief of the king's trumpeters.



Π

## THE DUTCH ADMINISTRATION

#### **S** Arasaratnam

In 1609, within a decade of the establishment of the VOC and the founding of the first forts and factories in the East Indies, the Directors decided to institute the office of Governor General as the highest authority with overall control of the Company's eastern assets and activities. He was to exercise his power in association with a Council of Indies in which decisions were taken by majority vote. In 1619 Jacatra (later renamed Batavia) was made the seat of the Governor General and Council and thus the capital of the Company's eastern enterprises. Detailed instructions given to the first holder of this office, Pieter Both, and subsequently amplified and amended, show that the Directors intended the government at Batavia to be the coordinator and

controller of all aspects of the Company's activities in the east: political, commercial, financial, naval and military, social and religious. The centralization of all Dutch power in the east in the citadel of Batavia was effectively achieved with the Governor Generalship of Jan Pietersz Coen.<sup>29</sup> As Dutch territorial possessions and commercial activities expanded in east, southeast and southern Asia, this role of coordination and supervision from Batavia assumed greater significance. Most decisions of a political nature, where delay would be injurious to Dutch interests, were taken at Batavia. The Heeren Zeventien or College of Directors, though employers and superiors of the Batavian officials, were not in a position to issue detailed instructions on specific issues. Their control was exercised most explicitly in commercial matters and even here decisions that could not brook the delay of reference to Amsterdam were taken in Batavia. The great distance separating Batavia and Amsterdam and the fact that it took over a year for a reply to be received from the time of despatch of a letter gave the Batavian administration a large measure of autonomy in policy and execution. Further the Council of Indies was a body constituted of officials who had served for long in various eastern comptoirs and thus acquired specialist knowledge of the areas that were the subject of consideration. The Batavian administration was indeed, as referred to at that time, the Supreme Government.<sup>30</sup>

As the arm of Dutch political authority and commercial participation extended over the sprawling regions of maritime Asia, several subordinate seats of administration were set up under the Supreme Government at Batavia. These operated as separate governments entrusted with the task of managing the affairs of a demarcated region. These governments were organised on the same lines as at Batavia. A Governor or Director was in charge assisted by a Council of senior officials. Just as distance from Amsterdam tended to promote independent action by Batavia, likewise the further away a subordinate government was from Batavia the more likely it was to have a wider measure of autonomous power. Thus the Sri Lanka, Malabar, Bengal and Coromandel administrations enjoyed a large degree of discretion at least in political matters and to a less degree in matters of inter-Asian commerce. These and other similarly placed places were referred to as *buiten comptoiren*, outer offices, looked at from the Batavian centre in the Archipelago. Sri

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Coen's career is reviewed in C R Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800, (London, 1965), pp 187-214.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> ibid., pp 188-213 for a discussion of the administrative system of the Dutch East India Company.

Lanka was the largest of these outer administrations, from the point of view of territory and people directly ruled by the Dutch.<sup>31</sup>

In some respects, the Sri Lanka government, among subordinate governments, stood in a special position in its relation with Batavia. Outside the Archipelago, it was here that the Dutch had sovereign control over a large extent of land and a large Asian subject population. Its Governor was usually a senior and influential officer in the Company's service. He was always an extraordinary, sometimes even an ordinary, member of the Council of the Indies. Alone among the subordinate governments, the Sri Lanka government had the right to correspond directly with the Heeren Zeventien in Holland. The distance from Batavia, the special problems in administering an indigenous people different from those in Java and the fluid state of relations with the indigenous kingdom of Kandy, precluded the Central Government from giving detailed instructions. The officials of Sri Lanka at all times had a measure of initiative in policy-making and execution.<sup>32</sup>

The extent to which the Governor of the VOC's territories in Sri Lanka, supported by his Council, used this initiative depended to some extent on personal factors. Strong and dynamic personalities such as Rijckloff van Goens (1658-63, 1665-75), Laurens Pyl (1680-92), Baron van Imhoff (1736-40) and Jan Schreuder (1757-63) took major decisions on their own and asserted the autonomy of the Sri Lanka government. There have been cases where the island's officials carried through decisions on matters of policy in the face of Batavian opposition by appealing over their heads to the Directors in Amsterdam. Generally, however, the Sri Lanka government operated within the framework of the general direction of policy issued from Batavia which was itself decided after consultation with the island's officials. In the conduct of daily administration, however, the Sri Lanka officials had great freedom.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> On the origins of administrative systems introduced by the VOC in the maritime regions of Sri Lanka see, K W Goonewardena, *The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon*, 1638-1658, (Amsterdam, 1958), pp 155-90.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> See, S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1658-1687 pp 120-27; and "The Administrative Organization of the Dutch East India Company in Ceylon," CJHSS, 8 (1&2), 1965, pp 1-13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Dutch governors in the maritime regions of Sri Lanka generally left behind for their successors comprehensive memoirs. These were as much a defence of their policies as for the guidance of their successors. A list of these memoirs is included in the bibliography of this volume.

The Company's cadre of officials was variously constituted. There was the commercial cadre hierarchically divided into various grades. The assistant had the most junior rank of clerk and there were ascending grades of boekhouder, onderkoopman, koopman and opperkoopman. They corresponded broadly to the clerk, junior merchant, merchant and senior merchant in the English East India Company's structure. While these were ranks they held in a commercial hierarchy, they were now appointed to political and civil administrative functions in the island as in other Dutch possessions. Then there was a cadre of military and naval personnel with their own hierarchy of military and naval officers. While most of them served in the armed forces in different parts of the islands, the commissioned officers were also appointed to political and civil administrative offices. Apart from these two categories which formed the bulk of the Dutch official personnel on the island, there were a number of others recruited for particular specialties and attending to duties related to their professions. Thus there were doctors, surgeons, apothecaries and dressers, ordinance specialists, assayers, master carpenters, iron founders, boat builders, stone cutters, bakers, cooks and a heap of other trades necessary to service the Dutch community. To these should also be added Predikants and Catechists.<sup>34</sup> The total strength of Dutch personnel of all categories serving in the island generally stood at around 3000.

From 1640, the seat of Dutch government in the island was Galle because until 1656 their power was confined to the southern region of the island and Galle was the first major city to fall into their hands. With the conquest of Colombo, the capital was shifted to that city in 1658 which remained the seat of the government of the Dutch territories in Sri Lanka until the end of Dutch rule. The Governor lived in an attractive residence, within the precincts of the Fort and overlooking the harbour which was the main centre of activity. He was the chief executive officer with control over all matters of Dutch administration, policy and interests in the island and its environs. This included the territories held in the littoral of Sri Lanka and the coastal parts of the southern tip of India, which from the inception was placed under the jurisdiction of the island's administration. This extended from Cape Comorin to Nāgapatnam until 1680 when Nāgapatnam was transferred to the Coromandel government.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> On Dutch religious policy in Sri Lanka see, J van Goor, Jan Kompenie as Schoolmaster: Dutch Education in Ceylon (Wolters Noordhoff, Gronmgen, 1978), pp 30-7, 125-44. See also R Boudens, The Catholic Church in Ceylon under Dutch Rule, (Rome, 1957); and S Arasaratnam, "Oratarians and Predikants. The Catholic Church in Ceylon under Dutch Rule," CJHSS, 1(2), 1958, pp 216-22.

The Governor was assisted by a Council known as the Council of Ceylon (Raad van Ceijlon) or, as it was more commonly referred to in the 18th century, the Political Council (Politiek Raad). It generally consisted of eight members, apart from the Governor, sometimes less. Usually the following Chief members of Council: The Administrator officers were (Hoofadministrateur), the Disāva of Colombo, the First Warehouse Keeper (Packhuismeester), the Fiscal, the Trade Accountant (Negotie Boekhouder), the Secretary, the Pay Accountant (Soldij Boekhouder) and the Officer commanding the troops. The Commanders of Galle and Jaffna were also members of the Council and if present in Colombo, were next in order of precedence to the Governor. The exact constitutional relationship between the Governor and the Council and the extent of the latter's powers when in conflict with the former were not precisely defined. As Governor Imhoff observed, it was impossible to lay down strict rules on what subjects the Governor could act on his own and what had necessarily to be referred to Council. In 1651 a general instruction was issued from Batavia that no decision or action of importance was to be taken by the Governor without the consent of the Council. At first the Governor had the right to appoint Councillors but later this was taken over by the Batavian Government. Vacancies could be filled by the Governor provisionally but were subject to approval by Batavia. All decisions were to be taken by majority vote and the Governor was generally bound by these decisions. If the Governor wished to overrule the wishes of the majority he did so on his own responsibility and this was generally disagreeable to the Supreme Government. All letters had to be read in full Council and all outgoing letters were to be signed collectively by all members of Council.

It is doubtful how far these regulations were effective in strengthening the authority of the Council against the powers of the Governor. The Governor with his vast powers of patronage and his overwhelming influence generally had his way over subordinate officers in Council. Evidence of the later period suggests that the Council did not function as a check to the Governor. Generally they followed the lead given by the Governor and Governors saw that the support given by experienced and able Councillors strengthened them in their relations with the authorities at Batavia. And, as Imhoff suggests, a Governor would always be wise to take sole responsibility on himself as little as possible.

In Colombo, the Chief Administrator was next in importance to the Governor. He was the Governor's deputy in matters relating to the lands in the jurisdiction of the Colombo division. He was in charge of the trade accounts and had control of the commerce of the island. He had ultimate responsibility for the precise accounting of all goods that came in and went

out of the island. He had also a supervisory control over all goods in stock in the island, though the actual task of administering the warehouse was outside his responsibility. This was the work of the warehouse keeper over whom he had no control. The Trade Accountant and a large staff of clerks and under merchants (onderkoopmen) worked under the Chief Administrator whose office was adjacent to that of the Governor. The Pay Office was a separate department in itself and, because of the abuses likely to arise there, it was carefully supervised. This office kept accounts of salaries paid to the employees every month, provisions given to them from the Company's stores and the properties and effects of employees who may have died or left the Company's service. The Fiscal represented the judicial side of the administration in Council. His office drew up plaints and sent cases for trial before one or the other of the courts. After 1687 Fiscals were appointed directly from Batavia in order to preserve their independence of the governments to which they were attached. The Secretary recorded the decisions of the Council, furnished members with copies of relevant documents and preserved all papers in his offices. He was presumably a full member of Council, participated in its deliberations and exercised his vote on decisions, though there was a ruling from Batavia in 1713 that Secretaries should not be members of Council. His office must have been a large one employing several clerks for all letters and papers had to be copied out in a clear hand. The amount of papers that passed through his office must have been phenomenal, judging from the extent Dutch records in Archives today.

For administrative purposes the country was divided into three divisions (commandmenten), Colombo, Jaffna and Galle. The Commandants of Jaffna and Galle, in that order, stood next to the Governor in rank. Though the government of the whole country was centralised in the Governor and Council at Colombo, the administrations of Jaffna and Galle had rather wide powers in matters pertaining to the areas under their jurisdiction. Each Commandant was assisted by a Council of senior officers in the province, of whom the most important was the Disāva who was second in authority and acted for the Commandant when he was away on a tour of inspection. Generally the Council in its relation to the Commandant functioned in the same way as the Political Council to the Governor. The area of jurisdiction of the Jaffna Command extended from north of Puttalam right round the north-western, northern and north-eastern coast up to south of the fort of Batticaloa. A separate Commandment for the east coast lands was set up in 1671 with Batticaloa as the capital and including Trincomalee but was abolished in a few years and the area was returned to the jurisdiction of Jaffna. The Galle Command extended from the Bentota River southwards along the coast up to Hambantota and, after the acquisitions of 1766, further on up to south of Batticaloa. The remaining possessions were ruled from Colombo.

In places situated at a distance from the three main seats of administration, Colombo, Jaffna and Galle, and which were considered of strategic or commercial importance an officer with the title of *Opperhoofd* was appointed in immediate charge. He was of relative seniority in service and was assisted by a small Council. Kalpitiya, Mannar, Trincomalee and Batticaloa were thus governed by an *Opperhoofd* and Council who received their instructions from the immediate superior authority - the Governor in the case of Kalpitiya and the Commandant of Jaffna for the other three places. Tuticorin was also the seat of an *Opperhoofd* and Council with jurisdiction over the Madura coast and answerable to the Governor.

In matters of internal administration, the office of Disāva was in many ways the keystone of the structure. It was through the office of the Disāva that the rulers came into contact with the people of the land. It was an important office in the Sinhalese system of administration and was taken over by the Portuguese and, through them, the Dutch.35 There were three Disāvas for the island, in Colombo, Jaffna and Mātara. There were Lieutenant Disāvas under them depending on the extent of the work. The Disāva combined in himself military, revenue, economic and judicial functions. All the military establishments and outposts in the area were under his charge. The maintenance of law and order by the use of the Dutch and native militia was his responsibility. He had especially to see to it that the lascarin force was maintained up to its strength and in good discipline. He supervised the collection of land rents and was in charge of the performance of obligatory services in the villagers. He was the instrument for the achievement of the policy of promoting development of agriculture and plantations. Disāvas were the main agents in the effort to expand rice cultivation and to introduce new crops such as coffee and cardamoms in the 18th Century. He was the head of the native officialdom and was in constant touch with them. He was president of the Landraad and disposed of cases along with other officials. In his capacity as Scholarch, he was manager of the church schools in the entire Disāvany.<sup>36</sup> These manifold duties made him a very powerful individual in the eyes of the people. He and his deputies were constantly on the move in tours of inspection to all parts of his division. The office required qualities of tact and understanding, and the ability to get

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> For the role of the *disāvas* in the Portuguese and Kandyan systems, see above pp 175-6, 324-8, 332-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> On the church schools in the island see, J van Goor, Jan Kompanie as Schoolmaster, op.cit., pp 109-44.

on with the people of the land. A proficiency in the language of the area was a great asset. It was with reference to these qualities that appointments were made. By the middle of the 18th century it was clear that the  $Dis\bar{a}va$  was made to shoulder too much responsibility and an attempt was made to take away some of his judicial functions.

Beneath the superstructure of Dutch officialdom holding all the superior and responsible posts was the native administrative hierarchy, retained intact by the Portuguese and now taken over by the Dutch. These lower level functionaries were permitted to continue provided they remained loyal to the Dutch. Their cooperation was essential for a peaceful collection of land and other revenues and for the enjoyment by the state of the obligatory services of tenants. The native official nobility was further the natural leaders of the people who would have been an invaluable buffer between the alien rulers and a subject people. From the outset it was Dutch administrative policy to wean them over and make them props of the new regime.

The traditional division of each Disāvany into koralē, pattu and village was maintained with Mudaliyār, Koralē and Atukoralē as the chief administrative officials. In each village there was a vidānē on whom rested the day to day management of village affairs. It was the duty of these native officers to furnish the dues from each village and to see that the service obligatory from each individual was performed in the manner required by the Dutch. They worked under the immediate supervision of the Disāva and his deputies to whom they were responsible. If the villagers were to be encouraged to cultivate a particular crop, the chain of command would seep down from the Disāva through his deputies to the Mudaliyār who would in turn pass appropriate instructions through Korale, his deputy to the vidane. Similarly, if labour was necessary for a construction work, the command was passed down to the village where the vidānē would see to the provision of the required number of labourers. The Mudaliyār sat on the Landraad along with Dutch officials and advised on customary law and land tenure.

It was found necessary to rely on the advice and knowledge of the native chiefs even in the higher rungs of administration. Thus Governors, from the inception befriended and consulted the most influential chiefs of the lowlands. The office of *Maha Mudaliyār* was instituted, the holder of which was constantly in attendance on the Governors and advised him on Kandyan policy, land tenure problems and appointments of local officials. He was also called *Mudaliyār* of the Governor's Gate. The first of these *Maha Mudaliyārs* was Don Joan de Costa who served the Dutch faithfully for over thirty years. Generally they were Sinhalese Christians whose loyalty to the Dutch was beyond question. In the north *Mudaliyārs* and *Mohandirams* were appointed from wealthy Tamil Christian families. Yet relations with the indigenous officialdom were always difficult. The Dutch were never sure of them and had to be constantly on guard. They were worried about the excessive influence and authority these officials wielded at local level. Almost every Governor was advising his successor to be careful and try to curb their power. Over-powerful chiefs would oppress the people and indulge in corruption in respect of the collection of land revenue and the administration of justice. Imhoff laid down in 1740 that *Disāvas* should from time to time investigate the behaviour of native chiefs and look into the complaints of the people against them. Schreuder complained in 1762 that *vidānēs* made illegal exactions from the poor tenants and these were difficult to detect or root out.

Then there was the question of loyalty of the chiefs, at a time when relations with the Kandyan kingdom were not good. Van Goens saw this when he was fighting a war with Rājasimha. Acts of sabotage in the administration were frequent and many districts had to be abandoned as ungovernable. Similar situations arose in the time of Schreuder and van Eck in the 1750s and 1760s.<sup>37</sup> Yet the Dutch relied on them a great deal and could not have ruled the country without them. Their knowledge of the land tenure system, of the traditional agricultural potential and of the customs of the land made them necessary allies in the tasks of administration. Throughout the period of Dutch rule there was therefore an uneasy relationship between them and the native officials.

The administration of the Cinnamon Department or Mahabadde was a typical illustration of the policy of grafting a Dutch officialdom in supervisory control over indigenous institutions. The functions of this Department were pivotal to Dutch rule in the island as it organised the peeling and delivery of cinnamon for export to Europe and Batavia. The Portuguese had made only slight changes to its functioning and the Dutch successors managed it in the same way but with greater efficiency. The Captain of the Cinnamon Department was a Dutch officer. Under the Captain there were four vidānēs in whose charge the villages of the salāgama cinnamon peelers were distributed according to geographic location. The vidānēs were hereditary headmen of the salāgamas and under them were duraiyā, divided into Mahaduraiya and sub-duraiyā. The chief function of the Department was to provide the labour force for all the operations connected with peeling the cinnamon bark and making it ready for export. The position throughout this period was that the demand for cinnamon was increasing and there was a shortage of labour to supply this demand. So the entire energies of this Department were directed towards mobilising all able-bodied salāgama men

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> For discussion of this in greater detail see above, D A Kotelawele [Chapter X].

who were obliged to peel cinnamon at the required time. The officers of the Department, both Dutch and Sinhalese, were busy keeping the salāgama labour force at maximum strength by keeping accurate lists of the salāgama population and punishing absenteeism. These lists had to be constantly checked and revised with reference to deaths, births and those reaching adulthood. The work was very burdensome and made an excessive demand on the time of the peeler who had also to attend to his fields and work many miles away from his village out in the woods. He resorted to all kinds of devices to evade service and to secure exemption for his children. The officers of the Department had to guard against this by keeping close watch on both the men and their chiefs.<sup>38</sup>

It was also the responsibility of the Captain of the Cinnamon Department to administer the very rigorous *placcaats* whose purpose was to preserve cinnamon as a Dutch monopoly. The destruction of a cinnamon tree, the unauthorised peeling of its bark, private trading in and transporting cinnamon were all offenses punishable with death. To enforce these the woods had to be patrolled. There was a *salāgama* force under the command of the Captain for this purpose. The Captain had some judicial power over the *salāgamas*, to the extent of settling small disputes. Major cases went through the normal legal processes. The Captain was also responsible for the collection of other dues in the *salāgama* villages.

Similar principles were applied in the organisation of the elephant hunt. Here Dutch control was even less because of the specialised and seasonal nature of the work. A Sinhalese *Mudaliyār* was appointed *Gajanāyaka* or head of the Elephant Department and there was an *Ethandenerālē* or Master of the Hunt, an officer with specialist knowledge of the operation and who took charge in the field when the hunt was on. The *Gajanāyaka* was in charge of the maintenance of the elephant stalls after they were captured and tamed. Under these two officials were men who specialised in their respective spheres of work connected with capturing, taming, rearing and protecting the animals. The service of these people was obligatory for the land they held. The *Disāva* of the area where operations were held had a supervisory control over the personnel.

The native *lascarin* force was also organised in the same way under a hierarchy of native officials and the supervisory control of the Dutch. The force was constituted out of able-bodied members of families that were liable

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> See instructions for the Captain of the Cinnamon Peelers or Superintendent of the Cinnamon Department in Instructions from the Governor General and Coronal of India to the Governor of Ceylon, 1656-1665, translated by Sophia Peters, (Colombo, 1908), pp 43-54.

for such service in return for the land they enjoyed. The official hierarchy consisted of the vidānē at the base to the appuhāmy, āracci, and Mudaliyār at the top. Each vidānē was responsible for summoning to service the stipulated number of lascarins in his charge. Careful rolls were maintained of persons liable to lascarin service. The Disāva of each district was in overall charge of the force. The force was deployed in outposts all over the country under a Dutch officer. They were taken on expeditions against the Kandyan kingdom and even outside the island in Madura, Tanjore and the Malabar coast. They supplemented the guard when cinnamon was peeled. When not engaged in active service they were used as messengers, interpreters and letter carriers. Their varied duties made them important to Dutch administration and they were given privileged treatment. Experience taught the Dutch, however, that they were of no great value as a fighting force. They could only be used effectively in defence. When it came to launching an attack, they would take to their heels at the slightest turn of fortunes. What was much more serious was that their loyalty was suspect and in engagements against the Kandyans entire detachments of lascarins with their officers were known to have defected to the king of Kandy.

and welfare small establishment for religious There was a The Reformed Church, the established Church on the administration.39 island, was divided into three Consistories at Colombo, Jaffna and Galle. A Church Assembly which met at Colombo had supervisory control and issued general instructions. The Chief Administrator was the head of this Assembly. In each of the many Churches that were spread through the country there was a Predikant in charge assisted by a Proponent or Rector and native Catechists. A Scholarchal Assembly, meeting in Colombo, was in charge of all matters relating to schools and registration of births and marriages. The Disāva presided at its meetings and it consisted of clerical as well as lay members. Once a year some members of the Assembly went on a tour of inspection of the schools. A Board of Deacons of the Reformed Church was established by regulation, consisting of clergymen and elders of the Church. Funds were channelled into this body by the government for welfare work such as the maintenance of orphanages and poor houses. Then there was the weeskamer, a board consisting of four officers and two free burghers whose responsibility it was to look after the property and interests of minors and those who died intestate. At first this was a solely Dutch institution but was later extended to Sinhalese and Tamils as well. These were all bodies of a semi-official character with officials and non-officials participating in management.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> See, J van Goor, Jan Kompenie as Schoolmaster, op.cit., pp 141-4.

The mode of payment of European officials differed widely from that of the native ranks. The European officials received a fixed monthly salary which varied from 9 guilders for the soldier of lowest rank to 2000 guilders for the governor. They were encouraged to receive as much of this as possible in Europe in order to lessen the need to transport much cash to the east. Besides the salary, they received a cost of living allowance and rations from the company's stores. Rations took the form of rice, meat, and wine or arrack. Besides this officials of the lowest grade drew a small subsidy. The annual salary bill for European personnel in Sri Lanka amounted in the 18th century to around 600,000 guilders. In addition the rations cost an average of 200,000 guilders. The total salary and allowance bill accounted for about two thirds the annual expenditure of the Dutch establishments in the island. In the 18th century, the strength of the European personnel in the island varied from three to five thousand. All private trade in the east was strictly forbidden to them. It was the company's position that they were fully recompensed for their services in the wages and rations they received.

The wages of the native officials were never more than 50,000 guilders per year. The reason why their salary bill was so low was that they were recompensed in the main by the traditional form of payment, namely through land. Native Sri Lankans who performed administrative functions were granted the revenues of productive land in villages. These lands were called *accomodessan* and the system had been widely used by the Portuguese. Such lands were not heritable nor could they be sold by the recipient. Plots of land were attached to a particular office and reverted to the state when the holder vacated his office. But with the tendency of office to be hereditary, the enjoyment of land attached to it had also become hereditary. The Dutch desired to put an end to the hereditary nature of appointment to offices which they wished to fill with the most efficient and most loyal men available.

This method of remuneration led to corruption and maladministration and paved the way for exploitation of tenants by powerful and unscrupulous officials. It also deprived the state of much revenue and increased the power and affluence of the official nobility. Dutch policy was therefore to restrict to a minimum the extent of land given away as *accomodessans* In Governor Becker's time (1707-16) the withdrawal of several *accomodessans* from *Mudaliyārs* resulted in an increase in revenue for the state.<sup>40</sup> Van Imhoff noted in his memoir (1740) the wide enjoyment of *accomodessans* by native officers as one of the causes of corruption in administration. He recommended the regulating of these grants by fixing the exact extent of land

Memoir of Hendrick Becker, Governor and Director of Ceylon for his successor Isaac Angustyn Rumpf, 1716 translated by Sophia Anthonisz, (Colombo, 1914), p 23.

to be attached to each office. Governor Schreuder (1757-62) drew up a specific list of such entitlements and this was approved by Batavia. According to this scheme the *Maha Mudaliyār* of the Governor's Gate, as the highest native officer, was entitled to 20 amunams of land, a *Mudaliyār* to 14 amunams, a *Gajanāyaka* to 12 *amunams*, a *Kōralē* to 10 *amunams*, a *vidānē* to 4 amunams and so on. Parallel with this were also efforts to cut down the number of officials so employed. Governor van Gollenesse (1743-51) reduced the establishment drastically in his time.<sup>41</sup> In spite of these efforts the native establishment continued to be top-heavy. One of the very early British reports written in 1799 on the administration of the lowlands under the Dutch observed that there were too many native chiefs holding offices and too much of the land's revenue was consumed by them.<sup>42</sup>

Just as there was concern with the exercise of arbitrary power by native officialdom, there was even more concern with corruption and abuse of authority by Dutch officers. The practice of associating councils with administrative heads even in remote outposts was partly intended as a check to misrule. Periodically Commissioners were sent out from Batavia or from Holland to investigate maladministration and recommend remedies. In 1684 Adrein van Rheede was sent out as a special Commissioner from Holland with wide powers to root out corruption in the South Asian comptoirs. He spent a few years in Sri Lanka sorting out many administrative and policy matters and instituting action against corrupt officials. There were other attempts at reorganisation that concentrated on the island. In 1659 Rijckloff van Goens was appointed Commissioner to reorganise the administration soon after the expulsion of the Portuguese. Governor Becker was held responsible for a major decline in administrative standards. Proceedings were instituted against him after he left the Governorship. In the first three decades of the 18th century, administrative misrule continued and after the worst excess of maladministration under Governor Petrus Vuyst (1726-30) a Commissioner was sent in the person of Silphanus Versluys. His actions were not satisfactory and he was replaced by another Commissioner Pielat.43

<sup>42</sup> "Administration of Justice and of Revenue on the Island of Ceylon under the Dutch Government (The Cleghorn Minute)," R Pieris (ed.), JCBRAS, n.s., Vol. III (2), pp 142-4.

<sup>43</sup> See Memoir left by Jacob Christiaan Pielat to his successor Diederick van Domburg, 1734 translated by Sophia Pieters, Colombo, 1905 esp., pp 1-14.

<sup>41</sup> Memoir of Julius van Gollenesse, Governor of Ceylon 1743-1751 for his successor Gerrit Joan Vreelandt, 28 February 1751, translated and edited by S Arasaratnam, Colombo, National Archives, 1974.

The administration of Petrus Vuyst struck a new low in abuse of authority. Even the judiciary was affected by this corruption and investigations revealed that a number of persons, including Dutch officials and free burghers, had been judicially murdered at the Governor's instigation. News of his outrageous proceedings reached Batavia unofficially and in May 1729 the Supreme Government ordered his dismissal from the governorship. He was summoned to Batavia where charges were instituted against him and the Court of Justice found him guilty and sentenced him to death in May 1732. The case attracted much contemporary notice and a pamphlet appeared in Rotterdam in 1733 giving an account of the entire happenings entitled: "The illegal justice executed by Governor Petrus Vuyst in Ceylon. And the lawful sentence and right done to the Governor by the Honourable Court of Justice of the Castle of Batavia." The whole proceedings are a vindication of the Dutch judicial system in the east but also show the weakness of the administrative proceedings and the ease with which governments could become oppressive.

In the middle years of the 17th century a succession of able and dedicated Governors retrieved the position somewhat. Van Imhoff brought about some necessary reforms in 1736-40 and restored respect for the Governor.<sup>44</sup> Likewise the succeeding administrations of van Gollenesse (1743-51),<sup>45</sup> Jan Giden Loten (1752-57) and Jan Schreuder (1757-62) provided sound leadership and effected many administrative reforms. Yet the weak area of administrative system continued to be the relations with native chiefs and the regulation of customary tenures. It was this that led to the biggest breakdown in Dutch administration in the lowlands in 1760s when during the prevailing unrest and rebellion large numbers of Sinhalese officials deserted to the king of Kandy. It was only the decisive defeat of the Kandyans after the expedition of 1766 that restored order in the coastal lowlands.

Corruption of Dutch officers and the consequent loss of revenue was a major problem. It was not a problem peculiar to Sri Lanka and there is the observation of a late 18th century critic of the VOC that it was destroyed by corruption. In Sri Lanka there was ample scope for corruption in many avenues of economic life. In the alienation of unoccupied land and the assignment of land revenues the officers were known to have done themselves well. During the first decades after 1658, in the time of van Goens, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Van Imhoff's career in Sri Lanka is reviewed in S Arasaratnam, "Baron van Imhoff and Dutch Policy in Ceylon, 1736-1740" in BKI, XVIII, (1962), pp 455-68.

<sup>45</sup> See, S Arasaratnam (ed.), Memoir of Julius Stein van Gollenesse, (Colombo, 1974).

practice was rife and the officers assigned themselves the best land. It was then stipulated that no officer should be the lessee of land taxes and in Governor Pyl's time some of the land alienated to high-ranking officers was withdrawn. But the officers knew how to circumvent the former regulation by becoming tax farmers by the use of frontmen among free burghers. In the 18th century it was widely known that many Dutch officers owned tax farms on a variety of licensed commodities such as textiles, arrack, arecanuts and other export produce.

A more serious problem, from the point of view of the Directors was in corruption in trade. It was an open secret that a large proportion of the trade in Sri Lanka was carried out in the private interests of Dutch officers. With a growing policy of restrictive controls, such illegal private trade increased. Every now and then scandals involving high officials were uncovered. These even extended to smuggling cinnamon out of the country. Arecanut and textiles were more easy to smuggle in collaboration with the many private traders who came from India. The textile trade was particularly lucrative, in It was view of the Company's monopoly of the market in the island. discovered by Governor Becker that in Galle the chief officers had formed a partnership which they called the 'Small Company' to carry on illegal trade in textiles. Another common abuse was to freight goods privately on behalf of individual officers in the vessels of the Company. Innumerable regulations were issued against these practices but none of them appears to have been fully successful. A good number of officers who served in Sri Lanka retired from service with fortunes made largely by illicit means.

The total cost of the administrative establishment in Sri Lanka was uniformly high and was a constant source of worry to the Directors and senior officials. Pieter van Dam, the Company's Advocate who wrote a monumental history of its activities in the east, identified Sri Lanka and Malabar as being expensive establishments and as responsible for bringing the Company, already in 1693, to a state of indebtedness. In the 18th century economy in administration is recommended to every Governor and some retrenchment was effected. As a consequence towards the middle of the century the annual budget deficit dropped to between 200,000 and 300,000 guilders from a high of about 500,000 guilders to which it had risen alarmingly. The Kandyan wars of 1762-66 worsened the position again, necessitating a larger military establishment. At the same time European rivalries in the Indian Ocean intensified, also requiring the strengthening of the neglected naval facilities in the ports of Colombo, Galle and Trincomalee and the stationing of more regiments such as those of Wurtemburg, Luxemburg and De Meuron, maintained at great expense. All these had the effect of contributing to the ultimate bankruptcy of the Company.

# THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE UNDER THE VOC

# **D** A Kotelawele

In Sri Lanka the Dutch East India Company administered a large extent of populous territory, and these were next in importance, among the Company's possessions, only to the Company possessions in the Indonesian archipelago. In this country the Company was no mere merchant carrying out trading and depending on the sufferance of a local ruler, but the ruler over a sizable extent of land and people. The charter of the Company gave it authority to administer justice in its territories and, over the period of its rule in Sri Lanka, a series of authorities was evolved to meet the needs of administering justice in territories it controlled. In examining these authorities one has to keep in mind a few considerations; the first being that the Company did not arrive with models of judicial authorities or tribunals and, that the Company authorities in the course of time developed these institutions taking into consideration the needs and circumstances of the times. Even though in Europe more formalized codes of law and tribunals had evolved by this time it was not possible to impose them in the Asian context where there was an established tradition of authority. The institutions that emerged over the years were thus an amalgam of the more formal European models and the traditionalist local models. Another factor to be kept in mind in delving into the history of the administration of justice under the Dutch is that there was no clear separation of the judicial and executive administrative functions. This was common to both the contemporary Sri Lanka and the European situations. Hence beginning with the authority of the local headman all the way to the highest of tribunals the authorities concerned performed judicial as well as an administrative executive functions.

The territories of the Dutch East India Company in Sri Lanka were ruled by a Governor who was assisted by a Council consisting of the chief administrative officers in the island. He was supervised by the Governor General and Council of Batavia, the eastern headquarters of the Company. The supreme authority of the Company was the Directorate, known the Lords Seventeen which was established in the Netherlands. And the Directorate in turn came under the supervision and guidance of the States General of the

United Netherlands. As in the other parts of the Dutch empire in the east, justice in Sri Lanka was administered by the Company in the name and on behalf of the States General of the United Netherlands.

Over the period of its rule in the island the Company established a hierarchy of judicial authorities which ranged from the local or village level headmen, rising to the higher levels of local headmen, and then on to officers administering minor outposts and Disāvas, Commandeurs and Fiscals. Above the tribunals of these officers were a series of formal courts the most important of these being the Civiele Raad, the Landraad and the Raad van Justitie or Higher Court. The latter court established in the major towns were also a court of appeal, the one in Colombo being the most important of these. Appeals were possible from the Raad van Justitie in Colombo to the Raad van Justitie of Batavia. The lowest judicial authority consisted of the local headmen. In the south and southwest of the island these consisted of the headmen attached to the Governor, Commandeurs and the Disāvas and those of the provinces - administering the pattus and korales; lower down were the vidānēs who administered groups of villages. The headmen performed the day to day chores of administration that consisted mostly of enforcing the traditional labour obligations of the people (rājakāriya) for the fulfilment of Dutch Company's objectives in the island. These consisted of: the provision and maintenance of irrigation systems, roads and pathways; assessment of the crops once they were ripe; transporting the government share of the produce to the government stores; providing timber necessary for the Company's requirements; promotion of cash crops, like pepper, coffee and cardamom; assisting with the preparation, collection and transportation of cinnamon; and timely sending of service people to wherever Company services were to be performed.

From the days of the Sinhalese kings the headmen had a judicial function and it is most likely that at the commencement of Dutch rule this practice continued. This is evident from the Instructions issued to the *Disāva* of Colombo in 1661 which lays down that some authority must be left to the heads of kōralēs on the administration of justice.<sup>46</sup> However it was in 1706 that the position of the headmen were recognized by government order. This order reissued in 1744, states that where inhabitants had complaints to make against each other they must go in the first instance to their headmen, *Vanniyārs, Mudaliyārs, kōralēs, āracci*'s or *vidānēs*. Each case may be heard and settled by the headmen in the first instance. If the matter was of such importance that it required to be heard by the Commandeur, *Disāvas*,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> L Hovy, Ceylonees Plakkaatboek I & II, Hilversum, Verloren, 1991, (hereinafter referred to as Hovy I or II), I, pp 66-74. Instructions to the Disāva of Colombo, 22 June 1661.

Opperhoofd or Captain of the Cinnamon Department (in the case of the cinnamon peelers), then the headmen must immediately send the complaining party to the relevant officer above them. There were penalties imposed on those who allowed litigating parties to come directly to the Governor after bypassing the lower authorities.<sup>47</sup>

The position of the headmen in the administration of justice was reiterated in many ways on different occasions. In 1775 in the Instructions to the Commandants of Negombo and Kalutara, the chief Sinhalese officer under the Commandants, the *Mahavidan*, was requested to settle minor disputes among inhabitants while he was on circuit; and they were expected to report such cases on their return to the Commandants immediately.<sup>48</sup>

The intention of the above legislation on the judicial powers of the headmen can be seen further accentuated in the Instructions of January 1787 to the Disāva of Colombo and Sinhalese headmen.<sup>49</sup> These instructions lay down that the complainant must first go the village chief, and the village chiefs were ordered to examine the complaint thoroughly after summoning all parties to the dispute. If parties were not satisfied by the decision arrived at this level they could go to the korale or pattu level where the matter could be heard along with witnesses. If the parties were not satisfied at this second level too, they could proceed to the level of Company officers, in this instance the Disāva; the headmen of koralē or pattu were expected to forward a written record of the case to the litigating parties, to the Disāva and maintain summary records of the cases. In cases settled at the level of headman they were expected to give a written sentence to the parties concerned. The significance of this document is that it articulates more clearly the level at which cases can be taken up in the headmen hierarchy than the earlier placcaats which merely stated the principle. Also these instructions had gone some way towards making the headmen's courts, at the higher levels, courts of record to the extent that minor headmen were expected to hand down sentences in writing and at the level of higher headmen they were required to keep summary records of cases.

The extension of the principle of allowing headmen of an ethnic group to adjudicate in disputes is found in the Gālu  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}$  in the last years of Dutch

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Hovy II, pp 494-5, Placcaat concerning... Procedure ..., 31 January 1744.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Hovy II, pp 779-81, Instructions to the Commandants of Negombo and Kalutara, 23 October 1775.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Hovy II, pp 881-8, Mandaat *ōla* regulating the handling of civil matters in the *disāvany* of Colombo.

rule. Muslims living in Galle, Mātara and Väligama in the Commandment of Galle were ordered to go to their headmen in the first instance in settling disputes among themselves. Only in the event of a failure to arrive at a settlement at this level, were the litigants allowed to proceed to the Dutch officers such as the *Disāva* of Mātara, the Captain of the Gālu *kōralē* or the Fiscal. Litigants could bypass the headmen and seek justice at the level of Dutch officers only in special circumstances and then they had to obtain a written report on the case from the headmen.<sup>50</sup>

During the rebellion of 1790 against the Dutch in the Mātara Disāvany one of the complaints of the rebels was that the headmen were not handling They maintained that often the their judicial responsibilities properly. headmen failed to give their decision in cases in time and even prevented the litigants from going on to the Disāva or the Landraad. Pieter Sluysken who looked into the complaints of the rebels agreed to allow the litigating parties to go on to the Disāva in case the headmen failed to give a verdict in a case within 48 hours. This concession was disallowed by the Governor, who maintained that it would create a far more difficult situation for villagers, since in such an event they would have to go with their witnesses all the way to seats of Dutch administration in order to get their cases heard; and the Disāva would have to keep litigating parties for long periods in towns and would have to give verdicts without knowledge of the local conditions.<sup>51</sup> The position of the headmen as judges was recognised in the instructions to the Landraad dated 25 June 1789. No native inhabitant was to bring up a matter before the Landraad prior to it being heard by the headmen and Dutch Thus the orders made with regard to the judicial powers of officials. headmen continued in force till the end of Dutch rule.<sup>52</sup>

There was another form of adjudication which had existed earlier and was elevated to a permanent order in 1744. When Governor van Gollenesse discovered that the Sinhalese were disrespectful in the administration of oaths in the Christian manner at the beginning of a court proceeding, he instructed the leading headmen of Colombo, Galle and Mātara to record the Sinhalese forms of taking oaths. These were submitted by the headmen and it turned out that they were actually forms of trial by ordeal used to establish the

<sup>52</sup> Hovy II, p 905, article I on procedures, instructions for the Landraad, 25 June 1789.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Hovy II, pp 814-5, Mandaat *ola* concerning the procedure of handling civil matters among the Moslems etc., etc., August 1784.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> SLNA 1/2918, unpaginated, Sluysken's observations and replies by the Disāva, 6 May 1791.

veracity of a statement given by a person, and according to which the matter in dispute would be settled. Most subjects referred to in these trials consisted of property rights, boundary disputes, thefts and similar matters. Even at these trials village leaders were in attendance, which in most cases could well have been headmen. This form of 'trial' seems to have survived well into the period of British rule.<sup>53</sup>

In the case of the northern territories, the headmen do not seem to have been given judicial powers comparable to those given in the southwest. The *placcaat* of 1744 only includes the *Vanniyār* chiefs. In the instructions issued to the *Disāva* of Jaffna in 1784 inhabitants with complaints are instructed to go to the *Disāva* in the first instance.<sup>54</sup>

Next to the local headmen minor disputes among the inhabitants were settled by Dutch officers. As we have seen matters that the local headmen failed to dispose of were referred to the *Disāva* or the *Commandeur*. In addition the post holders of distant places (Residents, Commandants, *Opperhoofden*) too were allowed jurisdiction over minor disputes. The Commandants of Negombo, Kalutara and Batticaloa were among these officers; similarly after the treaty of 1766 the officers administering Māgampattu, Puttalam, Chilaw and Karnavelpattu had similar powers. In 1766 the newly appointed commandant of Māgampattu was instructed to settle minor disputes among inhabitants; but he was expected to refer matters of importance to the *Disāva* of Mātara.<sup>55</sup> Instructions to the Commandant of Chilaw issued the following year had similar powers. Similar instructions were given to the Resident of Karnavelpattu who was appointed over lands of *Vanni* that came to be directly ruled by the Dutch in 1780.<sup>56</sup>

The Fiscal was another officer with judicial powers. To each *Raad van* Justitie was attached a Fiscal who functioned as the prosecutor in criminal cases. In addition, within the city limits (Four Gravets) of important Dutch stations like Colombo, Galle and Jaffna he had 'daily jurisdiction' over the

<sup>54</sup> Hovy II, pp 818-29 articles 4 and 5, renewed instructions to the Disāva of Jaffna, 2 September 1784.

<sup>55</sup> Hovy II, pp 735-6, Instruction to the Commandant of Lands between Valavē and Kumbukkan Oya, 5 September 1766.

<sup>56</sup> Hovy II, pp 742-5, 792-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> D A Kotelawele, "Realms of Law: Judicial Procedures of the Low Country Sinhalese during Dutch rule in Sri Lanka" in C R de Silva and S Kiribamune (eds), K W Goonewardena Felicitation Volume, Modern Ceylon Studies, 11 (1987), (Peradeniya, 1989), pp 112-20.

inhabitants and their properties; he exercised civil jurisdiction in cases of small debts not exceeding one hundred rix dollars in value and criminal jurisdiction in assaults and other petty cases with power to impose a fine not exceeding one hundred rix dollars or to order an offender to be whipped.<sup>57</sup>

The first of the courts set up by the Dutch was in 1648 after the capture of Galle in 1640. The existence of this court was only recently discovered in Hovy's researches. After the completion of the expulsion of the Portuguese and the establishment of the Dutch administrative institutions islandwide this court, known as the Commissarissen der Dajelike Zaken or Commissioner of Daily Causes, had ceased to function. It consisted of a number of higher Dutch officers and burghers and the most important Sinhalese officers in Galle. It had jurisdiction over Europeans as well as the Sinhalese in all territories the Dutch ruled from Galle at the time. (However the jurisdiction of this court was subject to the powers of the Governor's Council). It could also deal with civil matters arising among the traders who frequented Galle. These groups, and the Europeans, could if they wished opt to take up their cases with the Governor's Council. As a court of the first instance the Commissioners could handle minor civil and criminal matters. In more serious civil matters and matters deserving capital punishment the Governor's Council was to decide whether the Commissioners or the Governor's Council would try them. In matters concerning the Sinhalese, the Commissioners had to regulate themselves, "primarily according to the old laws and customs of the land, as far they could be admitted and, did not conflict with special placcaats." Among the semi judicial functions left to the Commissioners was the responsibility with regard to the transfer of immovable properties, the instruments concerning them, and their registration.58

This court is not heard of from the time of the consolidation of Dutch power in the island, i.e. from 1658 onwards. The reason undoubtedly was its supersession by the *Landraad* and the *Civiele Raad* which came into existence from about 1658. The composition and function of this court was similar to that of the *Landraaden*; even with regard to its semi judicial functions of registration of immovable property it foreshadowed the function of the *Landraad*.

The Civiele Raad (civil court) also known as the stads raad (town court) had been established from the beginning of Dutch rule in Colombo, Galle and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> T Nadaraja, The Legal System of Ceylon in its Historical Setting, (Leiden, 1972), p 9; Hovy I, pp liv-civ.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Hovy I, pp ic & 14-16, Ordinance for the Commissioners of..., 16 July 1648.

Jaffna. In Jaffna, at the beginning of Dutch rule, it functioned in place of the *Landraad* which had been dissolved due to the dismissal of the *Mudaliyārs*. The membership of seven of the courts consisted of Company servants mostly. However in Jaffna, some local notables and burghers too were members of the *Civiele Raad*, but they ceased to be members with the reestablishment of the *Landraad* towards the end of the seventeenth century.

The Civiele Raad had a purely civil jurisdiction. In the case of Jaffna matters up to the value of rix dollars 25 to 100 were within the purview of that court. In Colombo the jurisdiction of the court was widened to include matters up to the value of rix dollars 120 from 1678 onwards - and this limit appears to have been valid until the end of the eighteenth century. Even though at the beginning the jurisdiction seems to have been limited to the city limits (within the four 'gravets') later in the eighteenth century it was extended to the provinces too. The jurisdiction of the court had included matrimonial matters, from the beginning, and by the end of the eighteenth century the court came to be merged with another minor court that functioned in the cities with exclusive competence over matrimonial affairs, namely the *Commissarissen voor Huwelijksche Zaken* (Commissioners for Matrimonial Affairs). And the new court came to be called *Collegie van Huwelijksche en Kleine Gerechtszaken*, Court of Matrimonial and Petty Causes.<sup>59</sup>

As the name indicated the Court of Commissioners for Matrimonial Affairs had a specific competence. The *Disāva* of Mātara, referring to it in 1730, noted that it dealt with minor questions occurring on a day to day basis.<sup>60</sup> Another *Disāva* of Mātara, Vreelandt, noted that this court was presided over by an ensign and that the other members of the court were minor Dutch officials.<sup>61</sup> Governor van Imhoff writing in 1741 notes that this court dealt with matters pertaining to the observation of ordinances passed by the Dutch government on matrimonial affairs.<sup>62</sup> From the very inception of Dutch rule *placcaats* and ordinances were passed on marriages and related matters. In 1641, for instance, a *placcaat* was issued forbidding the personnel

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Hovy I, pp c-ci, Nadaraja, op. cit., p 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> SLNA 1/2695, unpaginated, Memoir of Diederick van Domburg, 8 December 1730.

<sup>61</sup> SLNA 1/2695, unpaginated, Memoir of Disāva of Mātara, J G Vreelandt, 3 March 1748.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Memoir of van Imhoff, p 64.

of the garrison from living in concubinage.<sup>63</sup> In 1647 an ordinance concerning the legalisation of marriages between native Christians was passed; matters concerning concubinage, separation and adultery too were dealt with in this law.<sup>64</sup> Legislation on similar subjects was enacted well into the eighteenth century depending on the circumstances. On the basis of van Imhoff's comments on the competence of this court such legislation could well have been within its purview.

The Commissioners also had a role to play in the solemnising of marriages according to the practices of the Dutch Reformed Church, primarily in towns, where this court seems to have been operative. Parties intending to get married had to appear before the members of the court - the commissioners - along with the relatives of the parties concerned, to obtain permission for the publication of marriage banns. The commissioners also had to issue certificates concerning the publication of the banns for the next stage of the marriage to proceed. Thus in towns where this court functioned the solemnisation of marriages came within its purview.<sup>65</sup>

The court known as the Landraad seems to have been in existence from The earliest mention of the Landraad is found in the 1658 onwards. Instruction issued to the Disāvas of Colombo and Mātara concurrently. It is likely that the institution of the Landraad was created to replace the earlier institution of the Commissioners of Daily Causes. The Instructions allow the Disāvas to dispose of minor disputes among the inhabitants, while "reserving others to the Landraad." The Landraad of Colombo at this time consisted of the Disāva, who presided, and other senior Dutch officers and important Sinhalese headmen. The court was empowered to decide on all matters, other than criminal cases up to the value of 80 rix dollars. Those above this value had to be referred to Colombo, presumably to the Governor. Another feature of the court at this time was that it was a circuit court where the Disāva could dispose of matters while in the field, with the assistance of important headmen of the place; thus it had no fixed composition, and no fixed abode and could meet anywhere in the Colombo Disāvany.66

66 Hovy I, pp 62-74, Instructions to the Disāva of Colombo, 21 June 1661.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Hovy I, pp 3-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Hovy I, pp 12-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Hovy II, pp 785-8, *placcaat* concerning the publication of banns and solemnisation of marriages... etc., 24 December 1776.

The composition of the *Landraad* established in Mātara was very similar, with important Dutch officials and the Sinhalese notables of Mātara being members. The function of the *Landraad* of Mātara too was very similar to the one in Colombo. The *Disāva* was expected to keep notes of the proceedings, and examine evidence of all parties rigorously.<sup>67</sup>

Instructions issued to the Disāva of Jaffna refers to the Landraad established in Jaffna, which however had been dissolved due to the removal of the Mudaliyārs. As a result of this situation the Disāva was required to handle all civil matters whose value was less than 25 rix dollars. Perhaps this is an indication of the nature of cases over which the abolished Landraad had jurisdiction. In dealing with such matters in the absence of the Landraad to assist him, the Disāva was expected to obtain the assistance of knowledgeable persons from the Raad van Justitie of Jaffna and two of the most senior local headmen. Litigants who failed in their suits before this tribunal had the liberty of presenting their cases to the Commandeur and his Council.<sup>68</sup> The Landraad in Jaffna had been re-established in subsequent years of the seventeenth century as the compendium of placcaats issued in 1704 refers to it. Article 72 of the compendium allows a litigant dissatisfied with a decision of the Landraad to give notice of appeal within ten days and make the appeal within one month; the appeal was to be to the Raad van Justitie. Presumably in a further reference to the Landraad of Jaffna article 75 of the compendium laid down that cases that have been pending without a final decision for over 10 years would cease to be heard. However those who wished to take up such cases again could do so in the Raad van Justitie.<sup>69</sup>

The Landraaden in Colombo and Galle were re-established during the governorship of van Imhoff. However the Mātara Landraad had been functioning in the early eighteenth century as the Disāva of Mātara, van Domburg, refers to it in his Memoir of 1730.<sup>70</sup> His successor Vreelandt too refers to the functioning of the Mātara Landraad as an institution attached to the office of the Disāva from olden times. At this time the Landraad of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Hovy I, pp 90-102, Instructions to the Disāva of Mātara, 21 June 1661.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Hovy I, pp 102-6, Instructions to the Disāva of Jaffna, 26 July 1661.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Hovy I, pp 288-309, completion of *placcaats* and ordinances for Jaffna, 25 April, 14 August 1704. Also Hovy I, pp cv note 188.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Memoir of van Domburg, referred to earlier.

Mātara was composed of six senior Company officers and six Sinhalese, and it had met at least twice a week.<sup>71</sup>

The Landraad was originally set up to assist the judicial function of the Disāva's office: matters too complicated for the Disāva to handle were to be referred to the Landraad and it is possible that at times it fell into disuse perhaps depending on the Disāva's interest in utilising the institution. However during van Imhoff's time the institution was again given a new lease of life with an additional function: namely in assisting the tombo registration work begun in the 1740s. In this function, members of the Landraad were requested to attend to the daily work of calling up people and requesting them to present such information as was necessary to prepare the land and head tombos - the register of lands and the register of families. Later on they were also given responsibility with regard to transfer and registration of lands.

It is possible that prior to 1789 there was no common set of instructions to all *Landraaden* in the island. For, when Governor van Gollenesse visited Jaffna in 1746, a mere five years after the restoration of the institution by van Imhoff in Colombo and Galle he found the *Landraad* of Jaffna defunct and the *Disāva* dealing with all land and related cases personally. The Governor restored the *Landraad* and requested Jaffna authorities to refer to instruction in memoirs for guidance and himself determined the composition of the *Landraad* of Jaffna.<sup>72</sup> In 1744 Governor van Gollenesse ordered the *Landraaden* to conduct cases summarily without recourse to detailed procedures.<sup>73</sup>

The first extant clear general instructions given to the Landraaden were those of 1789. These instructions perhaps formalized the already existing practices with regard to the entire functioning of the court beginning with the judges, the manner of procedure, manner of appealing, the position of the secretaries of the Landraad, translation, salaries, and the forms of oaths. In examining the formalization of the court one is led to conclude that an institution that originated at the beginning of Dutch rule to assist provincial administrators, the Disāvas, to dispense justice in cases too complicated for the Disāva to handle personally without a knowledge of local custom and tradition, had finally, by the end of Dutch rule, taken the form of a formalized court more in the European manner - with even pleaders being

<sup>71</sup> Memoir of Vreelandt, referred to earlier.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> K A 2556 fos. 1564-1584, Dag-Register, Jaffna, van Gollenesse's visit to Jaffna, 7 February to May 1746.

<sup>73</sup> Kotelawele, op.cit.

allowed to appear. The pleaders were however disallowed from appearing before Landraaden in the year 1794.

The Landraaden had existed at various times in Colombo, Jaffna, Galle, Mātara, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Mullaitivu, Mannar, Puttalam and Chilaw. Historians of legal institutions of the period of Dutch rule in Sri Lanka's maritime regions have made various assessments of this unique institution in the island. It has been said that the intention in establishing the institution was to make access to justice to the native population, simple, inexpensive and easy.<sup>74</sup> It has been described as one of the finest achievements of the Dutch regime.<sup>75</sup>

In examining such claims we need to remember that the Landraaden were established primarily for the convenience of the Disāva or the civil officer administering a distant outpost. It is also known that the functioning of the court in the 17th and early 18th century was intermittent as the 'revival' of the court in Colombo and Galle by van Imhoff shows, and shortly after the 'revival' in Colombo and Galle it was found that the court was defunct in Jaffna in 1744. Furthermore it was not exclusively a court of law; it had another function which was to assist in land administration primarily since 1740s in the compilation of the tombos.

That expeditious justice did not result from the establishment of the *Landraad* was noted as early as 1704 in Jaffna where cases dragged on for well over ten years without being settled. Late in the 18th century a senior Company administrator made similar criticisms and others; for instance by Peter Sluysken who after a long career of 20 years in the island became the Commandeur of Galle Commandant in 1789. The Resolution of the Commandeur's Council which has been called upon by the Government of Batavia to make proposals for improvement of the administration made the following remark:

"The present situation of this court in Galle cannot go on any longer. For a long time there has been much to be desired in the *Landraad*. The manner of procedures of this college is utterly tedious, and expensive for the poor native," and that many cases remained undecided for three, four and more years. The Galle Council enumerated some of the reasons for this unhappy situation: the members of the court were mostly decrepit and sickly people (*afgeleefde en siekelijk lieden*) who had little time to examine the many different and involved issues brought before the *Landraad*, in addition to attending to their primary calling as Company officers. The *Landraad* did not

<sup>74</sup> Hovy I, p cvii.

75 Nadaraja, op.cit., p 7.

have a full time secretary and the person who performed the function was often called away for other duties.<sup>76</sup> In his memoir to his successor while departing as Commandeur Galle Sluysken noted a further deficiency that militated against the proper functioning of the *Landraad* namely lack of knowledgeable personnel.<sup>77</sup> This was a feature that bedeviled all Dutch courts of the period.

After the Dutch acquired new territories in the 1766 Treaty with Kandy, an institution by the name of *Landsvergadering* or Country Assembly was set up in the east, northeast and northwest. The first of these were established in 1767 in Batticaloa and Chilaw. In Batticaloa the Assembly consisted of the heads of Mukkuvan families which owned almost all the lands in the district, and was presided over by the Chief Resident.<sup>78</sup> The Resident of Batticaloa was expected to decide and dispose of minor disputes among the inhabitants. More complicated cases out in the country, presumably in the territories newly acquired, adjacent to the Batticaloa fort, were expected to be referred to the Assembly. Appeals from this court went direct to the Governor and Council in Colombo. This Assembly also had wide powers in the assessment and collection of taxes and thus performed an administrative function as well.<sup>79</sup>

The Assembly of Chilaw was composed of the local Sinhalese chief headmen of the korales annexed from the Kandyan kingdom, and was presided over by the Commandant of Chilaw. The Country Assembly of Chilaw had a similar function, and a wider administrative role to assist the Commandant in all matters connected to general administrative policy, as well as function as a tribunal. As in Batticaloa the Commandant was expected to deal with and dispose of minor disputes among the inhabitants. But in more intricate matters concerning ownership, inheritance and gifts, marriage contracts, and disposal otherwise of property, the cases were to be referred to the Assembly and were to be decided according to the custom of the land. The Assembly was also to intervene and settle disputes between owners of paddy lands and tax collectors that the Commandant himself could not settle. Similarly where the Commandant failed to settle matters concerning marriages, divorces and similar disputes he was to refer them to the assembly.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> SLNA 1/5091, unpaginated, Resolution of the Galle Council, 1 April 1790.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> SLNA 1/5853, unpaginated, Memoir..., 8 November 1792.

<sup>78</sup> Nadaraja, op. cit., pp 8-9 and note 120.

It was within the powers of this tribunal to direct the guilty party to indemnify the innocent party and, in other instances, to impose heavier corporal punishment. However when imposing heavier punishments, such as, condemning a person to chains, prior authority had to be obtained from Colombo; similarly the imposition of capital punishment needed the authority and sanction of Colombo.<sup>80</sup>

The Instructions issued in 1773 to the Commandant of Puttalam and Kalpitiya refers to a *Landsvergadering* which is very similar to the ones referred to above and these Instructions also charged the Assembly with the additional task of compiling a *tombo* for the area.<sup>81</sup>

In the year 1780 some of the Vanni territories which hitherto were ruled by the Company through the semi independent Vanniyārs, were taken under the direct administration of the Company and a Resident was appointed to rule the territories. Here again we find the establishment of yet another Landsvergadering. This Assembly was composed of the Chiefs of Tinnamaraveddi, Paningamma, Meelpattu and Muliyavale and was presided over by the Resident. The jurisdiction and competence of the Assembly here is very much similar to the ones in Chilaw and Batticaloa. It was to be tribunal as well as a general advisory council. Here again term Landsvergadering is used interchangeably with Landraad to describe the institution.<sup>82</sup>

The common feature of the Country Assemblies established after 1766 is that they were composed of local headmen and were presided over by the Dutch Officer Commandant or the Resident. They had an advisory and general administrative function in addition to the functions of a tribunal. In this respect this institution is dissimilar to the *Landraad* as developed after 1740. Furthermore, in the composition, while the *Landraad* had representation of European Company servants and local headmen, in the case of the *Landsvergadering* the only European was the president, the Resident or the Commandant. In the case of the *Landsvergadering* it was often said that cases must be decided according to the custom of the land. In fact requests made by Moslems of Puttalam that in matters concerning their religion their priests must be granted the jurisdiction as in the days of the kings of Kandy, was allowed, with the proviso that the allowance was strictly

<sup>82</sup> Hovy II, pp 795-8, Instructions to the Resident of Karnavelpattu, 7 March 1780.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Hovy II, pp 742-5, Instructions for the Commandant of Chilaw, 8 June 1767.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Hovy II, pp 772-6, Instructions for the Commandant of Puttalam and Kalpitiya, 2 August 1793.

in matters pertaining to the faith alone; only in such matters as the maintenance of mosques, priests and similar concerns could dispute settlement be left to their priests, while matters concerning ownership of property and inheritance had to be left to the Assembly.<sup>83</sup>

The Raad van Justitie or the High Court was the highest court established in the hierarchy of judicial authorities in the island. At the beginning there were three of them established, in Colombo, Galle and Jaffna. In the second half of the 18th century one high court had been established in Trincomalee too. The first three had been in existence since 1660 at least. By the end of Dutch rule the geographical demarcation of the authority of the three main courts of Colombo, Galle and Jaffna were as follows: the authority of the High Court of Colombo extended southward from the Maha Oya down to the Bentara river: after the treaty of 1766 its authority extended up to the Däduru Oya so as to include the district of Chilaw. The Commandment of Galle which extended from the Bentara river up to the Valavē river in the pre 1766 period, extended up to Kumbukkan Oya in the southeast of the island after These territories constituted the District of Galle. The Jaffna 1766. Commandment in the pre 1766 period included the territories between Modaragam Aru in the northeast, the Jaffna peninsula, some territories on the borders of Vanni, and in the north-east up to Kokkilai and Kucchiveli: after the 1766 treaty territories in the north-east extended from Modaragam Aru up to Mannar and in the east the territories southward from Kucchiveli all the way down to Kumbukkan Oya. Thus after 1766 the administrative - judicial district of the north extended from Modaragam Aru in the northeast to Kumbukkan Oya in the southeast.<sup>84</sup> The Vanni territories were not directly ruled by the Company till late into the 18th century, and were ruled by the chiefs of the Vanni who merely acknowledged the suzerainty of the Company by paying tribute mainly in elephants. As was seen earlier most of these territories came to be ruled directly by the Company from 1780.

Nadaraja refers to the existence of three High Courts in Colombo, Galle and Jaffna. This was true for most of the period of Dutch rule in the island's maritime regions. However, recent researches of Hovy point to the existence of another High Court in Trincomalee from late 18th century. This High Court of Trincomalee appears to have had a rather limited jurisdiction; while it could impose the punishment of condemning a person to chains for three years, matters of higher significance had to be referred to Colombo and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Hovy II, pp 772-6, Instructions for the Commandant of Puttalam and Kalpitiya, 2 August 1793.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Nadaraja, op. cit., pp 4-5 and note 9.

higher appeals in civil matters had to be made to Colombo and not Jaffna; and appeals from the *Landraaden* of Trincomalee and Batticaloa were to be sent to Trincomalee and Colombo. Furthermore, approvals for punishment for condemning a person to chains from the district of Batticaloa had to be sent to Colombo. Nadaraja's view that the High Court of Jaffna had complete authority in the eastern territories of the Company is rejected by Hovy on the grounds stated above.<sup>85</sup>

The High Court consisted of seven members appointed by the Governor and Council of Colombo from the Company's civil and military establishments. Originally the Governor presided over the High Court of Colombo but this practice ceased after 1732 and the *Hoofd Administrateur* (Chief Administrator) took his place. In Galle and Jaffna the Commandeurs presided. The officer known as the Fiscal was the Public Prosecutor in criminal cases while in civil cases he was a member of the court. It is well known that few members of the court were trained lawyers.<sup>86</sup>

The High Court of Colombo was the most important judicial tribunal in the island and had original as well as appellate jurisdiction both civil and criminal. The High Court of Galle and Jaffna had a similar jurisdiction within their territories. Appeals could be made from the *Civiele* and *Landraaden* to the respective High Courts; in cases exceeding three hundred rix dollars in value appeals could be made from the High Courts of Galle and Jaffna to the High Court of Colombo. An action of appeal was possible from High Court of Colombo to the High Court (*Raad van Justitie*) of Batavia both in original and civil appellate actions, provided the value of the action was over three hundred rix dollars. Even though there was no real appeal from a decision of the High Court of Batavia, a dissatisfied party could obtain a hearing from the Governor General in Batavia.<sup>87</sup>

The High Court of Colombo had an original jurisdiction over all persons living within the judicial district of Colombo in matters that were beyond the jurisdiction exercised by officials such as Fiscal and *Disāva* who, as noted earlier, had authority to try petty cases. Whenever a death penalty was imposed by the High Court it had to be confirmed by the Governor prior to being carried out. The Governor and Council also had the power to suspend the execution of a criminal sentence pronounced by a High Court. In the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Hovy I, pp ci-cii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Nadaraja, op.cit., pp 5-6; Hovy, op.cit.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid*.

areas under their jurisdiction the High Courts of Jaffna and Galle had similar powers. In criminal cases too appeals were possible from the High Court of Colombo to the High Court of Batavia.<sup>88</sup>

An account of the administration of justice would not be complete without a reference to an institution that developed along with the courts system established by the Dutch, namely the *procurers* or pleaders. The earliest instruction to the pleaders is dated 1759, even though in referring to the manner of presenting pleadings, article 25 says that pleaders must refrain from being prolix as has been happening until then. Perhaps the institution grew gradually over time and by the mid-eighteenth century it was found necessary to give them formalized instructions on how to conduct cases.

According to the Instruction of 1759 procurers or pleaders could appear in three courts, the Raad van Justitie, the Landraad as well as the Civiele Raad. They had to be sworn in annually before the President of the Raad van Justitie. At the time of taking the oath they had to keep guarantors to the value of 100 rix dollars in order to indemnify any who may suffer as result of neglect, ignorance or abuse on their part. The pleaders were requested to be furnished with proper 'procuratie' or proxies before they appeared on behalf of a principal; they were exhorted to be reverential towards the judges, and present their cases decorously; listen to pleadings of opposing parties without interruption and calmly; again on receipt of an adverse verdict the pleaders as well as the principals were requested to accept them calmly; they were also called upon not to solicit but to wait for principals to come to them; it was their responsibility to ensure that cases were not prolonged and unduly delayed thus causing undue costs to the principals.

In case a *procurer* was suspended from the courts it was his duty to find a replacement and to see that his substitute was properly instructed; they were requested not to bring into their pleadings defamatory material even if they were true, if they were not related to the principal's case; also not to include in their pleadings things that could not be proved; the pleaders were also instructed not to reveal any secrets concerning their principals to the opposing party, nor were they expected to assist their opponents in the preparation of their case. They were also requested not to take on more cases than they could handle and, for this purpose they were to register with the Presidents of the *Raad van Justitie*, the *Landraad* and the *Civiele Raad*, what and how many cases they have taken on, in each court.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.* 

These rules of conduct, which are in the nature of a code, were imposed along with severe punishments for their breach or transgression. For instance, for being prolix in pleadings, a pleader could be suspended; for using injurious calumnies and invective in written submissions he could be suspended for 6 months for the first offence and could be dismissed for the second occasion in addition to a fine of 100 rix dollars Thus strict punishments were laid down for the transgression of instruction to pleaders.

The Instructions also contain matters on how to initiate a case: for instance, the manner of submitting a plea and counter pleas; that they must contain the principal points as well as the authorities, and passages from authorities to support them; that each document submitted must be properly signed; that prior to appearing for the case the procurer must submit all documents for the case; the pleader also had to demonstrate how he has built his case with relevant passages from the lists of authorities to support his case.

These Instructions lay down procedures with regard to the presentation and conduct of a case before a court, as well as the ethics of the profession of pleaders. The most important of these matters were embodied in the oath to be taken by the pleaders.<sup>89</sup> Thus during the period of Dutch rule a series of courts beginning with that of the headmen and Dutch officers and rising to the *Raad van Justitie* were established. At the higher levels the courts were courts of record; however even the headmen were expected to keep records of their cases and give their sentences in writing apart from having to report also in writing - to superior authorities on the cases, where necessary. Attempts were also made to codify local laws, a subject that will be discussed elsewhere. Considering these achievements one can only agree with Nadaraja that an introduction, however tentative, was indeed made to the rule of law during the rule of the VOC in the littoral of Sri Lanka.<sup>90</sup>

There is however the other side of the coin. The system established by the Dutch was an alien one and administered in the name of the States General of the United Netherlands; the local indigenous system was submerged and was rapidly being superseded. The latter process took place despite the efforts of the Dutch to codify indigenous systems of law and custom (the most lasting of which was the codification of the *Thesavalamai* of the inhabitants of Jaffna) and to introduce elements of local procedures into the system,

90 Nadaraja, op. cit., p 17.

<sup>89</sup> Hovy II, pp 629-34, Instructions for the permanent procurers appointed for the first time... etc. etc., 23 February 1759.

established by the Dutch, for example, as in the case of Governor van Gollenesse who, in 1744, ordered the admission of Sinhalese judicial processes.

It has been pointed out that the way a people settles its disputes is part of its social structure and the value system.<sup>91</sup> During the period under consideration many features of the social structure in maritime Sri Lanka came under stress and changed as a result. Similarly the value system was not only changing under the impact of changes in the social structure but also because the Calvinist Dutch sought to impose their own value system on the people they ruled over. In a study of Dutch policy towards Buddhism, Goonewardena has shown how policies aimed at promoting Protestant Christianity interfered with such social institutions as marriage and family: cross cousin marriages accepted in Sinhalese society were banned as incest, and declared illegal, while the age of adulthood (which could not have differed very much from that of society in northern Sri Lanka) was raised from 16 to twenty five. What is more, marriages contracted in the traditional manner were not accepted as legal: only marriages solemnised by the Dutch Reformed Church and through its rituals were accepted as legal. This was so in the Tamil territories too. Thus the greater part of the population who did not accept Christianity came to be regarded as living in sin and consequently their progeny was considered as having being begotten out of wedlock. This had other consequences especially in regard to inheritance of property. The interference with the institution of the family in this manner would undoubtedly have led to a great deal of confusion and uncertainty. The emerging changes in areas of land tenure and title to property discussed elsewhere would certainly have added to the uncertainties.

The courts system itself was new and not a natural growth from within society. Consequently their procedures were alien: this is what Governor van Gollenesse learnt when he found that the Sinhalese paid scant respect to the oaths they took in the Christian manner at the *Landraaden*.<sup>92</sup> Thus there was on the one hand an introduction or imposition of laws and norms as well as courts and on the other the submerged old structures: in other words the emergence of two legal cultures; one, the emergent dominant one of the

<sup>91</sup> Paul Bohannan, "The Different Realms of Law" and "Some Notes in Law and Change in North India" in Paul Bohannan (ed.), Law and Warfare; Studies in the Anthropology of Conflict, (New York, 1967), pp 51-2, 154-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> K W Goonewardena, "Dutch Policy towards Buddhism in Sri Lanka: Some Aspects of its Impact c. 1640-1740" in K M de Silva, et.al., (eds), Asian Panorama, New Delhi, 1990, pp 319-52.

colonising power and the other the submerged and weakening one of the local society. One important consequence of this situation of two legal cultures was the unending litigation that bedeviled society where the courts and judicial procedures were frequently abused, specially by the more powerful in society, a condition to which there is ample reference in contemporary sources. The birth of the 'inherently litigious native' was very much a consequence of the period of Dutch rule as much as the faint beginnings of rule of law in the island.

# **CHAPTER XIII**

# THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE KANDYAN KINGDOM IN THE SEVENTEENTH & EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

# L S Dewaraja

The dominant feature in Kandyan society during the period under survey was the stratification of the people into categories of varying rank or castes. Since admission to a caste was determined by birth alone there was no social mobility within this system of stratification. Not even the King could elevate a person from a lower to a higher caste, although the contrary was possible. The caste system entered into the administration, both secular and ecclesiastical, regulated taxation, determined judicial procedure and governed all social relationships.

The caste structure as it developed in Sri Lanka - among the Sinhalese had little to do with the fourfold varna system of North India dominated by the brahmins. Instead there was a bifurcation of society, dominated by what A M Hocart, has aptly termed the "farmer aristocracy"<sup>1</sup> or the govikula.<sup>2</sup> How and when the "farmer aristocracy" came to dominate Sinhalese society can only be guessed at, but during the period under survey, when we have some reliable evidence especially from European writers,<sup>3</sup> the govikula was certainly politically important, economically privileged and socially superior.

A M Hocart, Caste, A Comparative Study, p 4.

Govi, agricultural; kula could imply race, family, community, tribe, caste, house or abode.
 Robert Knox calls the govi folk "Hondrews" or Hamuduruvo.

<sup>3</sup> Knox, 1911, pp 105-21; John Davy, An Account of the Interior of Ceylon, (London, 1821), pp 121-30; James Cordiner, A Description of Ceylon, 2 Vols, (London, 1807), Vol.I, p 93.

The govikula always constituted more than half the Sinhalese population and was considered  $kulina^4$ , that is to say, superior, the superiority being in relation, to the hina jati, <sup>5</sup> or people of low birth, composed of various groups like artisans and craftsmen. Agriculture was not the monopoly of the govikula, since the entire population lived in part by farming and everyone held a share of land from which he derived his sustenance. But the govi have been distinguished from the others because no professional services, whether as artists or artisans, were assigned to them as was the case for other castes engaged in agriculture. There were several people of the govikula, especially those who held higher administrative posts, who did not till the soil at all, although they derived their income from their lands, employing the services of the lesser folk to till them. Among the hina jati there were, likewise, many who held land and whose primary occupation was agriculture; but all of them in addition specialized in some hereditary craft.

Since the govi formed more than half the Sinhalese population, a peculiar feature of the Sinhalese social structure has always been that the apex of the social pyramid was larger than its base. But this anomaly was not a real one, for we notice in the seventeenth and eighteenth century sources, the existence of a series of sub-divisions within the govikula, some of which had crystallized into sub-castes. These sub-castes may well have existed before the seventeenth century but we lack evidence of any kind till we come to the period under survey. Within the same caste there was neither connubium nor strict commensality for all. It was the sub-caste which was the strictly endogamous and organized unit and the individual was mainly identified with the sub-caste. Not all the divisions within the govikula can strictly be called sub-castes according to this definition, for there was considerable social mobility among the lower ranks of the govi. The radala and the mudali, the highest of these sub-castes, were strictly endogamous; these two groups in fact formed the nobility of the Kandyan Kingdom, although the rest of the govi population too was considered honourable.

The radala preserved its status by frequent intermarriage within its own ranks.

"They abhor to eat or drink, or intermarry with any of Inferior Quality to themselves... They are especially careful in their marriages, not to match with any inferior caste, but always each within their own rank; Riches cannot prevail with them in the least to marry with those by whom they must eclipse and stain the Honour of their Family; on which they set

<sup>4</sup> Kulina, well born, of high or eminent descent.

<sup>5</sup> Cv, Chapter 61, v 50 and Chapter 66, vs 153-4.

a higher price than on their lives. And if any of the Females should be so deluded, as to commit folly with one beneath herself, if ever she should appear in the sight of her friends, they would certainly kill her there being no other way to wipe off the dishonour she hath done to the Family, but by her own Blood... And thus by marrying constantly each rank within itself, the Descent and Dignity thereof is preserved forever."<sup>6</sup> Secondary wives of the king were always selected from the nobility and collateral members of the royal family found spouses from among the nobles.

The word "noble" has no precise legal meaning and simply indicates an actual or an accepted pre-eminence in accordance to a variety of different criteria. Invariably it involves the idea of a certain distinction of birth and Knox agrees when he says with reference to the govi that it is "Birth and Parentage that inobleth." Their superior birth gave them official recognition for "Tis out of this sort alone, that the King chooseth his great officers and who he employs in his court and appoints for governors over his country."7 Political power tended to concentrate in their hands, since they monopolized the key posts in the administration and the ecclesiastical hierarchy and manned the courts as well. Since the traditional loyalty of the people was focussed on them they exercised considerable social control. The concept of nobility also implied a measure of wealth and in spite of Knox's statement that, "Riches are not here valued, nor make any the more honorable," it will be seen that v ealth in its most cherished forms, lands and personal retinue, tended to e cumulate among the radala and mudali. These two groups which together formed the apex of the administrative structure, enjoyed large tracts of land granted to them in perpetuity by the king. In addition they were given maintenance lands which they held as long as they were in service. Landed wealth not only gave them economic security but also prestige, the outward pomp of retinues of service tenants, and a sense of continuity from generation to generation. An examination of the land grants of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries will show that certain posts were hereditary in one family for a period of more than a hundred and fifty years. We have definite historical evidence that members of the Ähälepola family held high office in royal service from the time of Rajasimha II to the early days of British rule; and if tradition is to be believed their importance dates from a much earlier period.<sup>8</sup> The Pilima Talavves who dominated Kandyan politics during the

<sup>8</sup>. Ähälēpola Sannasa' of 1745, SLNA, HMC 5/63/115 (2); also BMOM 12138.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Knox, 1911, pp 105-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Knox, op. cit., p 106.

latter half of the eighteenth century, could also boast of such illustrious ancestry, for the Arave Arthanāyaka Apa who was a witness to a grant of Vikramabāhu II (1357-74), may well have been an ancestor of Pilima Talavve.<sup>9</sup> The members of the Galagoda, Rammolaka, Leuke and Māmpitiye families are likewise known to have held office for over three or four generations.

The bureaucratic nobility was not only politically significant, the traditional method of conscription was such that military authority too was concentrated in their hands. The *Disāvas* or the king's provincial governors had no standing army of their own except their bodyguard, but when the need arose, they could, with the help of the local officials in the provinces, rally the peasants to battle. No king after Rājasimha II is known to have led his troops to battle and in the wars with the Dutch it was the *adigārs* who took the field. In war and in ceremony the people followed the *Disāva* of the province.

Birth, office, wealth and military authority combined with a specific style of living and conspicuous status symbols made the *radala* a socially privileged group. The clothes they wore and the colour and style of their headgear too revealed their higher status in society. "A man of rank and fortune will appear in the finest embroidered muslin swelled out by a number of *tupeties*,<sup>10</sup> sometimes amounting to six or eight, put on one over the other in succession, with his shoulders as unnaturally widened in appearance, by a jacket stuffed and puffed out to correspond to the bulk of the hips."<sup>11</sup> The great ones also generally wear their hair long hanging down behind. Only the "greatest" it is said had the privilege of wearing ornaments of gold. Special methods of salutation were used to greet the high born and special names and forms of address were used by the lower castes when speaking to them. "They have seven or eight words for Thou, or You, which they apply to persons according to their quality, or according as they would honour them."<sup>12</sup>

While the radala and mudali formed the apex of the administration the other subdivisions of the govikula had distinctive official positions within the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> H W Codrington, 'Ampitiye Rock Inscription,' EZ, IV. No.35, p 271.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> A *tuppottiya* is a cloth of 10 cubits in length worn round the waist by Kandyan chiefs and headmen.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Davy, op.cit., p 114; Also see Cordiner, op.cit., Vol.I, p 132.

<sup>12</sup> Knox, op.cit., p 168.

bureaucracy. In fact all official posts whether in the "central" government or in the provinces depended on the rank of the officer within the govikula. For instance the atapattu and gamvāsam also considered to be of gentle birth, formed the local bureaucracy of the provinces and held the most fertile lands.<sup>13</sup> A greater part of the govi population consisted of the ratē ättō, corresponding to the landed yeomanry from which rank were filled the numerous minor offices at the base of the administrative structure. The hēvāvāsam or military class, which once formed a part of the king's standing army was also one of govi status. It is doubtful whether these groups were also as strictly endogamous as the radala and mudali. While these groups together formed the govi comprising more then half the populations, all the other castes were regarded as hīna jāti.

There was no doubt regarding the superiority of the govikula but the precise position of the lower castes within the social hierarchy vary in the different sources. It is clear that there was no fixed order of precedence among the lower castes and due to historical and other reasons their rank and status may have changed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For example Robert Knox writing in the latter half of the seventeenth century, places the *navandannā* or artificers caste (which included the goldsmiths, blacksmiths, carpenters and painters) next in rank to the govikula.<sup>14</sup> He refers to an earlier period when the artificers were regarded as almost equal to the lower ranks of the govi and the inferior govi would even dine in the houses of the artificers. But in the list given by John Davy who wrote one and a half centuries later the karāvē or the fisher folk lead the low castes and the artificers whom he calls  $\bar{a}c\bar{a}ri$  are given the fourth place.

An unwritten code of behaviour governed all social relationships between different castes and overt caste symbols were fixed by custom. The length on the lower garment, the right to wear an upper garment, the forms of address, the prefixes and suffixes added to the names were all fixed by social usage. It was in marriage that caste rules were most strictly observed. However, casual sexual relationships between men of high caste and women of lower castes were frequent and were accepted by society as long as the man did not take the woman to his home as his wife. But in late Kandyan times even this form of hypergamy was frowned on, at least among the nobility, for Mīgastännē Adikāram was severely reprimanded by the last king

<sup>13</sup> D'Oyly, Constitution, pp 7-9.

14 Knox, op. cit., p 107.

of Kandy for keeping a concubine of the drummer caste.<sup>15</sup> There are reasons to believe that towards the end of the eighteenth century there was a greater stratification of society. In the early seventeenth century Kuruvita Rāla of the karāva caste had been appointed Disāva of Ūva and Commander of the Army by the king.<sup>16</sup> This is the only evidence we have of such an unconventional appointment and we can in no way infer that such appointments were common; but it shows that in the early seventeenth century there was a certain flexibility in caste matters. By the end of the eighteenth century even the Higher Ordination of Upasampadā was denied to persons who did not belong to the govikula.<sup>17</sup>

Whilst the religious sanctions which bear so potent an influence on the caste structure in India were lacking in Sinhalese society, their place was taken by inveterate custom, supported by the power of government departments, the dominance of the nobles and the authority of the law courts. To each man his caste status was not only an unalterable heritage which coloured his entire social life and considerably controlled his conduct, but also determined his position in the body politic, and the manner in which he was taxed, and also affected his legal rights and liabilities. In other words the caste system in the Kandyan kingdom was not only a self-contained autonomous social order of the people, but also an official order of society, protected, controlled and stabilized by the government. It was the basis of selection of all administrative officers and it will be seen that the whole economic structure of society had caste as its foundation. It controlled the nature of penalties imposed for crime and was the subject of legal liabilities in the case of degradation or slander. To injure the caste of one's own family by acting contrary to caste rules, or of another by slander, was a criminal offence, not a mere violation of a social convention or a religious precept. Caste offences against one's own family might be committed by such acts as dining with a person of low caste or by a female having connections with a man of lower caste. The second was looked upon as a serious offence and the aggrieved family was originally entitled to put the offending female to death. Private redress of this nature was subsequently forbidden and the courts took cognizance of the matter. In many cases the woman was made a slave of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> D'Oyly, op. cit., p 130.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638, p 10, footnote 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> L S Dewaraja, The Kandyan Kingdom 1707-1760, p 100, footnote 83.

crown and sent to a royal village.<sup>18</sup> The courts known as rata sabhā or district councils, composed of delegates from each village in the district were principally concerned with questions affecting caste, marriage and social They were abolished in 1833, but F A Hayley, Advocate of the status. Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, reports that even in his time (1923) they functioned unofficially in certain districts and were recognized by the villagers as having jurisdiction in caste matters. Proceedings were instituted on a complaint made to the chief or an officer of the court that a caste rule had been violated. A preliminary inquiry was held in the village by the village headman, who, if the complaint appeared to be well founded, summoned the accused person, with his or her relations and the villagers and pronounced a ban, prohibiting the members of the offender's clan from associating with him or his blood relations; the washerman from washing for them; the drummers from playing at his ceremonies; the smith from supplying them with tools and the potter from making their pots. If there was reason to believe that the accusation was a false one the accuser might be placed under the ban instead of the accused. The person under the ban requests the chief to summon the rata sabhāva, which is attended with considerable amount of ceremonial. If the accused is convicted, a fine is imposed; if acquitted the complainant may be punished for attempting to bring disgrace upon the accused. If the accusation was true the tainted family would be directed to deliver betel, silver and provisions to the chief, on receipt of which he proclaims aloud the formal removal of the ban and the restoration of the social position. All this shows that the ultimate controlling authority of the caste system was secular and it continued as a vigorous force in a Buddhist society because the state power was vitally involved in maintaining it. This state power was represented not only by the king but also by the chiefs who were drawn from the highest caste, who were also the administrative heads as well as the judges. Forfeiture of caste status was more through external decision by the government than through internal decision among caste fellows. The government, through its provincial heads acting as judges, examined the wrong doers and deprived them of their caste. Finally the restoration of caste status was also realized through the judicial organization on the payment of a fine. So that the financial interest of the chiefs was also involved in the maintaining of these social distinctions.

If the offending party belonged to the nobility the king had to inflict punishment of a suitable nature. The rulers were morally bound to protect

<sup>18</sup> Memoranda and Notes on the Kandyan Law of Inheritance, Marriage, Slavery, etc., by Simon Sawers (1826) printed in F A Hayley, A Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Sinhalese or Kandyan Law, App.I, p 38. For this memorandum of Simon Sawers, better known as the Digest of Kandyan Law, see also PRO/CO/416/19, folios 84-124.

and maintain the social order of society. In the case of irregular marriages among high offices, the king would personally inquire into them and reprimand the parties or punish the offender. Although the Buddha denounced the social system based on caste and the domination of the *brahmins*, yet the monastic organization as it developed in the Kandyan kingdom, not only accepted but exploited the caste situation for its own ends. So the kings, nobles and the *samgha* preserved and legitimized the social order with the *govi* as the governing elite.

The position of women as well as their economic contribution to society has generally been ignored by historians. With regard to the Kandyan kingdom the evidence of foreigners makes it clear that women were socially and economically active. It was seen that they participated in rice cultivation which was the main economic activity as well as in slash and burn agriculture. In addition to supplying food to the men folk they were responsible for weeding, transplanting, harvesting and conveying the reaped corn to the threshing floor. The entire processing, preservation, and preparation of grain for consumption was women's work. Furthermore, according to Knox,

"The man takes care only to provide Rice and Salt in his house, the woman provides the rest. When she goes to the woods for firewood there she picks up a lapful of herbs and toadstools and whatever is eatable."<sup>19</sup>

Thus a greater part of the diet of the Kandyan villager was provided by the woman and as in the rest of Asia the fuel was also supplied by her. Despite all this labour, she had to maintain a veneer of subservience to her husband. She did not sit in his presence. She waited upon him at meal times and later partook of the leftovers.

The social life of the Kandyans revolved around the ceremonies connected with the Buddhist temples and *devales* and the women were very much involved in the festivities. Describing the Äsala festival Knox writes,

"Next after the gods and their attendance, go some thousands of ladies and gentlewomen, such as are of the best sort of the inhabitants of the land, arranged in the bravest manner that their ability can afford, and so go hand in hand three in a row; at which time all the beauties on Zelone in their bravery do go to attend upon their gods in their progress about the city."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Knox, Interleaved Edition, Vol.II, p 251.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p 236.

It is said that groups of men and women of every caste and trade such as potters and washers marched in batches in the procession. "Women of Quality" often went from house to house to collect funds for religious activities. It was socially acceptable for women, whether high or low to openly engage in religious work. Further there was no segregation of the sexes in Kandyan society. "The men are not jealous of their wives for the greatest ladies of the land will frequently talk and discourse with any man they please although their husbands be in presence."<sup>21</sup>

The rights and privileges that women held within the institution of marriage is an index to her position in society. There were two forms of marriage in Kandyan society. Firstly, in the case of the diga marriage which was the more popular form, the woman leaves her parental home and becomes a member of the husband's family. Secondly, in the case of a *binna* marriage which usually takes place when the girl is the sole heir of landed parents, the man goes to reside in the home of his wife's parents only to father the children who will inherit the material name and lands. He has no claim to her lands or over the children and can be thrown out at her will and pleasure. As Knox says, he is like a servant lying with his mistress.<sup>22</sup>

Since there was no concept of holy matrimony in Buddhist societies, the dissolution of the marriage contract and the re-marriage of both parties was permissible. According to the late 18th century document, the *Lak raja lō* sirita.<sup>23</sup> either husband or wife could initiate action for the dissolution of the marriage contract by proving before a court of law the improper conduct of the spouse. After divorce both husband and wife were free to remarry. Knox observes,

"But if they chance to dislike one another and part asunder... then she is fit for another man, being as they account never the worse for wearing."<sup>24</sup>

Due to the facility for divorce marriage did not entail the joint ownership of property. The husband had no right over his wife's estate. Nor was it lawful to recover any debts, fines or damages from the estate of the wife for

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p 198.

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- 23 The Lak raja lo sirita is printed as an appendix in Anthony Bertolacci, The Agricultural, Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon, (London, 1817), pp 451-77.
- 24 Knox, Interleaved Edition, Vol. II, p 267.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p 283.

any liability theft or crime committed by the husband. Not even for high treason or the part of the husband could the wife's movable or immovable property be confiscated. British colonial legislation relating to marriage and ownership of property brought about slow and subtle changes in women's access to land and property.

Widowhood carried neither moral degradation nor loss of social status. There is evidence that widow remarriage was prevalent among royalty, nobility and the common folk. Knox observed that Sinhalese widows were "of very strong and courageous spirit, taking nothing very much to heart, mourning more for fashion, than affection, never overwhelmed neither with grief or love. And when their husbands are dead, all they care is to get others, which they cannot long be without."<sup>25</sup>

The economy of the Kandyan Kingdom was a purely agrarian one dependent on the successful cultivation of paddy. Each village or gama<sup>26</sup> consisted of a few landholdings and the nucleus of each holding was the mada bima or "wet land" on which was cultivated the staple crop. Attached to the paddy land of each holding were its appurtenances (aduttu deval) consisting of "dry land" (goda bima) gardens (gevatu) and temporary forest clearings (hēn). Each holding supplied to a great extent the foodstuffs required by the family that occupied it. The mada bim and goda bim which were complementary and inseparable elements of the land holding provided the rice, coconuts, betel, arecanuts, vegetable, firewood, pasture, honey and game.<sup>27</sup> One of the essential items of food which the Kandyan villager did not have, was salt which had to be fetched either from Puttalam or from the salt pans of the south-east coast. When the Portuguese and then the Dutch had control of the western coast of the island, the Kandyans could still get their supplies of salt from the south-east, although this journey was a difficult one. In times of war salt became a precious commodity to the Kandyans who always kept a stock of salt in case trouble arose between the Kandyans and the Portuguese or Dutch.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p 315.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> The word gama is loosely rendered into English as village which we use in the same sense as B H Baden Powell, "a group of land holdings with usually a central aggregate of residences, the inhabitants of which have certain relations and some kind of union or bond of common government." The Land Systems of British India, Vol.I, p 97.

On the Kandyan village see, Ralph Pieris, Sinhalese Social Organization, (Colombo, 1956), pp 39-55.

The cultivation of rice was carried on with utmost care and attention and Dr John Davy writing in the early nineteenth century remarks that "in no part of the world is agriculture more respected or more followed than in the Interior of Ceylon."<sup>28</sup> It is evident that even in Knox's time (1660-79) a well organized and settled village social system, a pre-requisite for the successful cultivation of rice, prevailed. Paddy cultivation needs a plentiful but well regulated water supply and involved considerable skill and discipline. In the Kandyan areas the steep mountain slopes were terraced or cut into steps three to eight feet wide, and the water collected, regulated and skillfully distributed from summit to foot, a technique that has been preserved unchanged to this day. In the highlands of the wet zone the villagers depended on the monsoonal rains and in the drier areas of the kingdom like Nuvarakalāviya, the supply was supplemented by tanks which stored the rain water. The co-operation of all the farmers of the village was necessary for successful irrigation and it was an offence to disturb the water supply of one's neighbour's fields. In some areas where the water supply was constant the farmers could sow the seed even two or three times a year. There were varieties of rice which could be harvested in three, four, five, six or seven months. Since the paddy plant requires stagnant water at its roots during the growing season, the farmer's choice of a variety of grain depended on the stock of water at his disposal; for if the water fails before the paddy is ripe then the crop will be spoilt. The ground was ploughed and levelled with the help of buffaloes before the seed was sown. When the plants were three to four inches above the ground, the fields were weeded and the paddy transplanted so as to maintain an even growth. Harvesting of all the fields in a village had to be done simultaneously for the water had to be drained out when the crop is ripe and the fields made dry for reaping. All the men of the village participated in reaping, first one field and then another, till all the paddy grown in the village had been reaped. The owner of each field supplied the others with food and refreshments while his field was being harvested. Thus there was a high degree of cooperation among the Kandyan peasants and a well developed sense of belonging to a definite territorial and social unit, the gama. The women were active participants in agriculture and there were special tasks allocated to them. They weeded the fields, transplanted the paddy and carried the bundles of harvested paddy from the field to the threshing floor, besides preparing the meals for the men folk. Thus paddy cultivation was a communal activity around which the entire social and economic life of the village revolved.

<sup>28</sup> Davy, op. cit., p 270.

Hen cultivation was an integral part of the village economy, specially in the drier and less fertile areas. The word hen sometimes anglicized to chena meant high jungle land in which the trees were cut and burnt. The hena was used for cultivating vegetables and grain other than paddy. After two or three years the land was abandoned to the encroaching jungle for recuperation. This was a form of the "slash and burn" agriculture prevalent in some countries of Western Europe and the shifting cultivation practised all over South East Asia. Crops which did not require permanent inundation like kurakkan, tana, mung, meneri, tala and certain vegetables were grown in this manner in the jungle areas within the limits of the village. Hen cultivation was generally done by the poorer people.<sup>29</sup> Knox, who was associating with some of the lowest strata of Kandyan society, says that many people had rice scarcely sufficient for half the year, while during the other half they lived on the produce from the hen.<sup>30</sup> The wealthier classes certainly had sufficient rice for their consumption. As in the days of old the encouragement of agriculture and the construction of irrigation works was considered a royal duty. It is said that Vimaladharmasūriya I brought under the plough lands even in distant Anurādhapura, Ruhuna and Kataragama.<sup>31</sup> Senarat is also credited with similar activities.<sup>32</sup> Rājasimha II renovated thirty two tanks in Nuvarakalāviya, Giruvā and Vanni areas and cultivated fields, gardens and orchards in many places.<sup>33</sup>

The Kandyans supplemented their diet with the produce of many tropical trees. Of these the jak, banana and kitul played in important part in their lives. The jak fruit and banana formed a substantial part of the diet of the villager. From the kitul they obtained a wholesome drink which was also a source of jaggery or unrefined sugar. The coconut tree played a vital part on their economy; so much so that Knox was prompted to comment that even if there was no other means of sustenance the people could still live to a ripe old age on these trees alone.<sup>34</sup> Consequently it was considered a crime for any

- 31 Mandārampurapuvata, vs 154-5.
- <sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, v 306.
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, v 383.
- <sup>34</sup> Knox, 1911, p 413.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Davy, *op.cit.*, p 270.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Knox, 1911, p 18.

man to cut down even his own trees unless they were past bearing.<sup>35</sup> Apart from the kernel which was used in the preparation of food, the Kandyan villager obtained toddy, arrack, vinegar, treacle, jaggery and oil from the coconut tree. The leaves were used to thatch the houses and also to weave mats and baskets, while the making of brooms, rugs and ropes from the coconut fibre was a common industry among the villagers.

The agricultural implements were manufactured and mended by the village smith who was paid in grain and other provisions by the villagers who required his services. The smith was quite skilful in his art and apart from a variety of agricultural and domestic implements manufactured locks and even guns. Iron ore was found in parts of the Kandyan kingdom and the people knew how to make steel. Though the workmanship was coarse the manufactured articles served very well the purpose for which they were made. In the 17th century the kings took considerable interest in the manufacture of armaments due to military needs. Vimaladharmasūriya I established 170 iron foundries all over his kingdom and thousands were said to be employed in them.<sup>36</sup> Under Rājasimha II mining of iron ore was begun in hitherto untapped areas and foundries were likewise opened.<sup>37</sup> Among the numerous artisans specializing in various crafts there were silversmiths, goldsmiths, carpenters, wood and ivory carvers, painters and potters. Judging from the specimens we have of the arts and crafts of the 17th and 18th centuries, it is evident that some at least of the craftsmen excelled in their craft and reached levels of competence possible only in a society where the craftsman was dedicated to his craft and where his services were recognized and rewarded. There are numerous instances throughout this period where the kings amply remunerated eminent craftsmen for works of rare distinction. The art of weaving, however, had made very little progress. The loom was of rude construction and the only cloth the Kandyans produced was the strong coarse cotton cloth worn by the common people. All these craftsmen served the needs of the village community and were paid for their services in kind by the villagers.

It would be relevant at this stage to discuss the effects of Portuguese activities on the Kandyan economy. During the early years of the 17th

35 ibid.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, v 383.

<sup>36</sup> Mandārampurapuvata, vs 151-5.

century, the Portuguese under Azevedo and his successors conducted biannual raids into Kandyan territory. De Azevedo's own words bear ample testimony to these devastating expeditions and their disastrous effects on Kandyan economy.

"I carried continuous war into that kingdom, attacking it twice a year with the entire body of troops with the aim of making its life ebb away, by killing off the inhabitants or capturing them, by destroying its food supplies and driving away the cattle into our conquered territories. In the summer I always spent the months of January, February and March there on this mission and in April I withdrew. In the winter, I spent a part of July and the whole of August there and retired in September, if the rains did not allow us to camp and go on till October. So that it is with this regime of war that kingdom is to be bled to death, until it is entirely depopulated and laid waste, and in such manner that the life of no male of fourteen years or above is spared."<sup>38</sup>

The months of January to March and Augurt to September were relatively dry months of the year when the fields were ready for harvesting. De Azevedo's raids were well timed so that his march to Kandy would be easy and the damage he could do, great. The *Cūlavamsa* corroborates De Azevedo's words and shows how the Portuguese raids were aimed at disrupting the economic basis of Kandyan power - the village settlement.

"They spread themselves over several fair provinces, laid waste fields and gardens, burned down houses and villages, destroyed the noble families and in this wise brought ruin on Sinhala. They broke into the towns, into the relic shrines and monasteries, destroyed the image houses, Bodhi trees, Buddha statues and so on, did great harm to the laity and the order, built at various places forts and carried on war unceasingly.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless Kandy survived for the paucity of troops limited the effectiveness of the Portuguese raids.<sup>40</sup>

After 1617 there was a period of peace and this was very welcome for Kandy needed time to recover from the wounds inflicted by De Azevedo. The immediate problem was the one of depopulation of Kandy. Senarat

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> T B H Abeyasinghe (ed and transl.), A Study of Portuguese Regimentos on Sri Lanka at the Goa Archives, p 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Cv, Chapter 95, vs 5-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon, 1617-1638, p 15.

encouraged settlers to colonise the depopulated and uncultivated lands. There was a movement of people from Kotte to the Udarata from the middle of the 16th century to the middle of the 17th century. Some of them settled in the intermediate regions of Sītāvaka in the 16th century, and went on to Kandy as the Portuguese extended their power. Muslim refugees from Portuguese territory were settled in the abandoned lands. Small bands of colonists from South India and Bengal were settled in certain other areas by Senarat.<sup>41</sup> Rājasimha II caused the people in the villages round Colombo to be carried over to the highlands by Senarat.<sup>42</sup> This policy of encouraging settlers and the peaceful conditions that prevailed for 10 years helped to undo much of the damage by the Portuguese in the first twenty years.<sup>43</sup> Kandy had remarkable powers of recuperation unlike the kingdoms in the arid northern and northcentral plains. With its heavy rains, fertile soil and salubrious climate, Kandy needed only the manpower to restore to life the lands rendered useless by De Azevedo's scorched earth policy. Once this need was supplied she quickly revived. The victories at Randenivela (1630) and Gannoruva (1638) and the stubborn resistance which she put up against the Dutch shows that she was once more a relatively prosperous kingdom with the will and strength to survive.

The economic conditions described above were not conducive to the development of brisk trading activity. It was the policy of the Kandyan kings not to develop communications and the construction of roads and bridges was deliberately discouraged for the security of the kingdom depended on its inaccessibility. There were a few towns. Knox mentions only five, Kandy, Nilambē, Alutnuvara, Badulla and Haňguranketa, all of which were royal residences at one time or another. In these towns there were a few shops selling cloth, rice, salt, tobacco, wines, drugs, swords, steel, brass and copper goods. The use of money was limited and the barter system prevailed. Sometimes paddy was used as the medium of exchange.<sup>44</sup> Domestic trade was limited, but for a long time there had been considerable trading activity between the Kandyan kingdom and the fertile and prosperous lands of Madura

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p 93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon 1658-1687, p 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> C R de Silva, *op.cit.*, p 109.

<sup>44</sup> Knox, 1911, pp 156-7.

and Tanjore.<sup>45</sup> De Queyroz mentions that the highlands possessed a sizeable export trade in elephants, ivory, wax, honey and arecanut.<sup>46</sup> Arecanut, pepper and cardamoms which grew abundantly in Kandy found a ready market in the mainland and the finely woven textiles of the famous weaving centres of South India were highly prized since the local cloth was of coarse quality. This trade was mainly in the hands of the Muslims but there was a strong Hindu section also consisting of Chettiars residing along the coasts of India and Ceylon. The traders brought South Indian wares to the ports in little boats called *dhoneys* and sold the merchandise to middlemen generally the Muslims. The Muslim traders were part and parcel of Kandyan society. They were not only a familiar and welcome sight among the villagers, but in commercial deals worked hand in glove with the nobles as well. These merchants penetrated into the interior of the kingdom peddling their textiles. Other items that were brought from the coast were salt and dried fish, a delicacy to the highlander, since it gave not only the relish but also the much needed protein for his starchy meal of rice. In exchange for all this the middleman collected the arecanuts from the villager.

The coming of the Portuguese and their control over the lowlands did not seriously disrupt this two way traffic.<sup>47</sup> Although the Portuguese imposed an economic blockade in 1605, with the intention of preventing external trade and foreign contacts, it did not prove very effective. Despite the official embargo on Kandyan trade, the lure of high profits from Kandyan products was very strong and some Portuguese and Muslim merchants did engage in trade. For a greater part of the period of Portuguese rule on the littoral the Kandyans had control of the eastern sea board and even when the Portuguese did control many of the ports this private trade still went on.

Once the Dutch ousted the Portuguese from the island in 1658 and occupied Tuticorin and Nāgapatnam in South India, they sought to monopolise the Indo-Sri Lanka trade. The Dutch were bent on annexing the principal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> For details see, S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon 1658-1687, pp 148-9; "The Kingdom of Kandy: Aspects of its External Relations and Commerce 1658-1710," CJHSS, Vol.3, July-December 1960, pp 109-27; "Vimaladharmasūriya II (1687-1707) and his Relations with the Dutch," CJHSS, Vol.VI, No.I, 1963, pp 59-70; Memoir of Julius Stein Gollenesse, Governor of Ceylon 1743-1751, Colombo, 1974, pp 5-9; "Dutch Commercial Policy in Ceylon and its Effects on the Indo-Ceylon Trade (1690-1750), IESHR, Vol.IV, No.2, June 1967, pp 109-30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> de Queyroz, p 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon 1658-1687, p 149.



ports of the Kandyan Kingdom, blockading the others, encircling Rajasimha and restricting his foreign contacts both political and commercial. In 1670 they declared a monopoly of all the major articles involved in the export and import trade of Sri Lanka: cinnamon, elephants, elephant tusks, arecanuts, chanks and pearls for the export trade and cotton goods for the import trade. All Kandyan products had to be sold to the company which would export them and then supply the Kandyans with all their requirements. The company would fix the prices of all Kandyan imports and exports and this would be most detrimental to the interests of the Kandyan producer and consumer. The Kandyan kings derived considerable customs duty from the ships that called at his ports,<sup>48</sup> and the closure of the ports thus deprived the king of a part of his revenue. Rājasimha retaliated by applying pressure on the Dutch by land and cutting off all communication between his kingdom and the coastal areas. This counter blockade had adverse effects on the Dutch because it cut off a good portion of their food supplies and also reduced their supply of arecanuts, two thirds of which came from the king's lands. It affected the Kandyans too, for while their arecanuts rotted under the trees, they had to face a shortage of cloth. This blockade and counter blockade with the Dutch closing the ports and the king his kadavat<sup>49</sup> resulted in an "economic tug of war" which continued throughout the rest of the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

The Dutch policy certainly led to the economic decline of Kandy. Arasaratnam has shown how after 10 years of Dutch control the trade on the eastern ports had been reduced to a mere trickle and this undoubtedly led to a decline in the prosperity of the area specially around the hinterland of the ports.<sup>50</sup> The situation in the western ports was worse since the Dutch control over trade was more effective in that area. The denial of the right to trade adversely affected the chiefs too, who at this time showed an interest in trade. The chiefs held extensive tracts of land and naturally they wished to exchange the products of the land, either for luxury articles from India or for cash. Some of the chiefs were in the habit of chartering vessels belonging to Muslims in order to transport their goods and make purchases in India on their behalf. In the next reign we find the chieftains influencing the king to bring pressure on the Dutch to relax their drastic monopolistic policy.

<sup>48</sup> C R de Silva, The Portuguese in Ceylon 1617-1638, p 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> The traditional gates between the Kandyan kingdom and the Dutch occupied areas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> S Arasaratnam, "The Kingdom of Kandy: Aspects of its External Relations and Commerce...," op. cit., CJHSS, Vol.3, July-December 1960, No.2, p 121.

Since the agitation from the court kept increasing some concession had to be given and in 1696 the king's ports were opened for unhindered trade. Immediately there was brisk trading activity. Areca was carried away and cloth poured in. To make the most of the opportunity, the Kandyans closed their kadavat in 1700 so that the trade would pass through the traditional outlets of the Kandyan kingdom, such as Puttalam and Kottiyar, over which the Company had little control. The freedom, however, was shortlived. The Company's sales were badly affected and once again in 1707 the earlier restrictions were reintroduced and the monopoly reimposed. Although the Dutch policy carried considerable hardships to the king, nobles and people, Kandyan resistance henceforth was a very feeble one. In the reign of Narēndrasimha the court tried various means such as persuasion, diplomacy and pressure to gain the freedom to trade but with no avail.

However with the accession of the Nāyakkar dynasty in 1739, the court became more and more vociferous in its demands for open harbours and freedom to trade. The Nāyakkars were by birth and occupation traders and they continued to have their political and commercial contacts in the mainland. The Nāyakkar relatives of the king, now entrenched in Kandy, helped the South Indian Muslim traders to smuggle through the Kandyan ports and entered into partnership with them. One such influential person who was frequently involved in commercial deals with the opposite coast was Narenappā Nāyakkar, father-in-law of Sri Vijaya Rājasimha and father of Kīrti Srī Rājasimha and Rājadirājasimha. The Dutch monopolistic policy affected all sections of Kandyan society, so that the king, his Nāyakkar relatives, the Sinhalese nobles, the private traders like the Muslims and Chetties, were united in demanding the freedom to trade. While relations with the Dutch rapidly deteriorated over this issue, Kandy was being Impoverished and exhausted she staggered economically strangled. throughout the 18th century with only the will to survive.

The king had to depend solely on the traditional revenues that he received from his people. These were of three kinds, labour services, produce and cash. There were two kinds of services which the king as lord of the soil could command. Firstly, all the paddy lands in the kingdom were subject to compulsory service, which meant that the king could command military services in case of national emergency and labour services in the construction of roads and other works of public utility. Since the service was attached to the land and not to the individual, whoever enjoyed a given extent of land had to supply the labour due, or provide a substitute. He could, if he wished, quit the land and be exempted from the service. The number of days of service due from each share of land seemed to have varied with the needs and fancies of individual rulers. In the case of military service the peasants were required

to appear in arms as often as summoned by the king to repel the enemy.<sup>51</sup> "Each man was expected to take the field, with a musket of his own, (the king providing ammunition) and he was obliged to continue on service, either till the enemy was repulsed, or till he obtained leave to return home." When the peasants were summoned for labour services, very often in the city, they were continuously employed for a period of fifteen to thirty days; but it is seen that some rulers demanded more. It is said of Rajasimha II that he kept the people constantly employed in the construction of public works and in the improvement and enlargement of his palace. His motive according to Knox was to keep his people occupied so that they would not have the leisure to plot against the throne.<sup>52</sup> The last king of Kandy was accused of oppressing the people by frequently employing them in building projects in the city. Very likely, the number of days of service may have been fixed by custom; individual rulers could demand more, but at the risk of incurring the displeasure of the people. While engaged in compulsory service military or otherwise, the people had to maintain themselves at their own expense. The organization and superintendence of compulsory services were in the hands The king retained the right to exempt any land from of the Disāvas. compulsory service.

It was seen that all the paddy lands in the kingdom were subject to compulsory services, both military and otherwise. The paddy lands occupied by people of the lower castes were subject to services of a professional nature as well.<sup>53</sup> In the traditional caste hierarchy, the *govikula*, or the farmer caste which, as we have seen, consisted of more than half the Sinhalese population, was the highest. All the other castes were considered low and though their livelihood too was agriculture, they specialized in some craft, e.g. the potters, weavers and smiths. In return for the lands held, these people performed some professional service to the state. Their services were organized by state departments known as *baddas* functioning under government officials. For instance the *kottalbadda* or artificers department, had within it all the craftsmen in the kingdom, and their services were channelled for the benefit of the state by the *kottalbadda nilamē*, or head of the artificers department. It follows therefore, that lands held by people of the *govikula* were not subject to professional services of this nature. Instead, the *govi* folk had ceremonial

53 D'Oyly, Diary, p 75.

<sup>51</sup> Knox, 1911, p 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p 20.

functions to perform and at the four great festivals<sup>54</sup> held in the city, their presence was compulsory. On all other events of public importance, such as the accession, marriage or death of a king, the members of the higher ranks of the govikula had to make their appearance; if not they were fined.

Of the taxes paid in kind the most important was kada rājakāriya.<sup>55</sup> All the paddy lands in the kingdom were divided into units of kat or pingo loads of rice and other produce. Unless exempted by the king as in the case of lands donated for religious purposes, the cultivator of an unit was liable to the payment of a kada or keravala, which means half a kada. Each kada consisted of twelve näli of rice and eight coconuts, and a keravala half that quantity. In certain areas a kada could be commuted for cash payment. The collection of kada rājakāriya was in the hands of the Disāva, who received it from the people and paid it to the king, keeping a part of it as the perquisites of his office. It will be seen from the foregoing that all the paddy land in the kingdom was subject to both compulsory services and kada rājakāriya, while certain paddy lands were subject to compulsory services, kada rājakāriya and specialized services.

There was also an annual rate paid at harvest time in grain depending on the size of the holding. This grain tax mentioned by Knox was very likely the vībadda, quite distinct from the kada rājakāriya. Whereas the collection of kada rājakāriya was the responsibility of the Disāva, there was a vibaddē lekam and officers under him, "who in Harvest time carry away certain measures of corn out of every Man's Crop according to the rate of their land."56 Since grain was not a marketable commodity within the Kandyan kingdom and since it could not be stored indefinitely in the humid Kandyan climate, there would certainly have been a surplus of grain in the royal stores, even after feeding a large palace staff and the numerous relatives of the king. This was why Rajasimha II commuted the grain tax during the early part of The vibadda was charged at the rate of five pälas from each his reign. household. The lands belonging to soldiers who died in battle was free from this payment; but if they died naturally their heirs would be liable to payment. The vibadda was abolished by Kirti Srī Rājasimha but was very likely revived

56 Knox, 1911, p 83.

<sup>54</sup> New Year celebrations in April; Äsala Perahära, or the annual procession held in July-August; Karti Mangalya, or the feast of lamps in November and Alut Sahal Mangalya or the feast of new rice held in January.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Kada or pingo-load; this was also called Kat hal rājakāriya or pingo rice service to the king. See memorandum by D'Oyly on the Revenues of the king of Kandy, dated 15 March 1815, PRO/CO/54/55, Folio 145.

in the reign of his successor. A point of interest is the fact that the basic of all the above mentioned taxes, compulsory services, specialized services, kada rājakāriya and vībadda was paddy land, or mada bim. Neither the goda bim on which grew vegetables and coconuts, nor the hen used for shifting cultivation were liable to any of these taxes.

As the lord of the soil the king had exclusive right to the precious stones and pearl banks.<sup>57</sup> Previous stones were plentiful in the province of Sabaragamuva and its capital was well known as Ratnapura, the city of gems. The Sinhalese kings had presumably controlled the small fishery off Chilaw. They received "stone money," a tax on every stone used by divers for the purpose of going down to the sea bed.<sup>58</sup> But during the period under survey, the Dutch who claimed a right to the territorial waters of Sri Lanka claimed also the right to the revenue from pearls and as a result there was frequent friction between the court and the company on this point.<sup>59</sup>

There was also a tax known as marāla<sup>60</sup> or death duty. It was sometimes paid in grain,<sup>61</sup> but in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it seems to have been paid more often in cattle. The tax consisted of a bull and a cow and a male and a female buffalo.<sup>62</sup> This tax was also abolished by Kīrti Srī Rājasimha, but the last king of Kandy revived it.<sup>63</sup> Certain castes of people paid miscellaneous duties to the King consisting of iron, steel, salt,

- 58 Memoir of Loten, p 7.
- 59 Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 17.
- <sup>60</sup> The word appears in earlier inscription as marāla. See EZ, Vol.III, No.29, p 280; also Codrington, Ancient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon, p 51.
- 61 A C Lawrie, A Gazetteer of the Central Provinces of Ceylon, (2 Vols), (Colombo, 1896 and 1898), p 634.
- Knox, op.cit., p 83; Sangarājavata, v 231. On the collection of marāla in Portuguese territory in Kötte, See Ribeiro's History of Ceylon, translated by P E Pieris, (Colombo 1909), p 151.
- 63 D'Oyly Diary, p 135, entry of 26 October 1812. When Älapāta Nilamē died, the King claimed all the property as marāla leaving nothing for the widow and children. This was of course an extreme from the tax, and there is no historical evidence of this form of marāla.

<sup>57</sup> H W Codrington, Ancient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon, p 53.

oil, ghee, betel, and jaggery. It is interesting to note that the Väddas,<sup>64</sup> the aboriginal inhabitants of the island, who lived by hunting in the wilds of Bintänna and Vellassa, brought to the royal stores, revenues in kind. They held no paddy land and hence were not subject to any tax, but they were "in a kind of subjection to the King" and paid a tax in jungle produce like tusks, bees' honey, bees' wax and venison.65 It is said that Kīrti Srī Rājasimha refused to accept, very likely for religious reasons, the venison brought by the Väddas. Among the sources from which the king derived his revenue in kind mention should be made of the produce from royal villages or gabadāgam,66 the annual presents which the nobles were obliged to give on New Year's day, and the occasional presents that the nobles were expected to give as for instance on the event of the king's marriage.<sup>67</sup> It was said earlier that it was obligatory for the higher ranks of the govikula to make their appearance in Kandy at the four festivals. On these occasions they were expected to bring gifts of some sort. "These Rents are but little money, but chiefly Corn, Rice or what grows out of the ground."68 Mention should also be made of the annual presents brought by the Dutch ambassador to the king. Since the king considered the Dutch as the guardians of his coast,<sup>69</sup> the presents were regarded as a tribute just like the däkum paid by the Disāvas.<sup>70</sup>

The Adigārs and Disāvas paid five hundred ridī to the treasury to purchase their appointments.<sup>71</sup> In addition all the king's appointees paid an annual fee called däkum, very often on New Year's day, in order to renew

66 PRO/CP/54/55, Folio 145.

67 These presents are called *nalangu*, literally "troubles." See D'Oyly, *Diary*, p 170, entry for 21 February 1813.

A list of presents valued at 19,780 guilders proposed to be sent to the king of Kandy in 1762 is given in, J H O Paulusz, (ed.), The Secret Minutes of the Dutch Political Council 1762, pp 85-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> On the väddas, the Sri Lankan aboriginals, see UCHC, Vol.I, pp 77-81; and C G Seligman and Brenda Z Seligman, *The Väddas*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1911).

<sup>65</sup> Knox, op.cit., p 98.

<sup>68</sup> Knox, 1911, p 75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Cv. Chapter 96, vv 35,37, shows the attitude of the Kandyans towards the Dutch.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> PRO/CO/416/C/Vol.20, folio 87; D'Oyly Diary, op.cit., p 6.

their appointments.<sup>72</sup> The *däkum* was paid in cash, but included various other articles like, "Gold, Jewels, Plate, Arms, Knives, Cloth, each one by a rate according to the place he is in, and country [sic] he hath under him."<sup>73</sup> The value of the cash gift was fixed for each *Disāva*, but varied from *Disāva* to *Disāva*<sup>74</sup>:-

Disāv	va of the Three and Four Korales	12,000	larins. Disāva 75:-
**	" " Seven Kōralēs	12,000	"
	" Ūva	12,500	
	" Mātalē	4,000	"
	" Sabaragamuva	5,000	"
н	" Udapalāta	400	H
Ratērāla of Yatinuvara		400	"
н	" Udunuvara	500	II
"	" Tumpanē	300	"
**	" Hārispattuva	400	"
"	" Dumbara	500	"
**	" Hēvahäta	600	"
Disāva of Puttalam		5,000	"
**	" Batticaloa	6,000	"
Vann	<i>iyār</i> of Nuvarakalāviya	10,000	н

The däkum was supposed to be paid from certain emoluments that the officers received. The amount was originally fixed in proportion to the  $Dis\bar{a}va$ 's income. The sums paid were not very large even in the context of the monetary value of that period of time, and as a total sum it demonstrated the hard reality that the king's cash income was very limited.

<sup>72</sup> PRO/CO/54/55, folio, 145.

<sup>75</sup> A larin was equal to 7 or 8 English pence.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Knox, op. cit., p 76.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> These figures are derived from the Johnstone Mss at the CRO, London, see particularly, the Ceylon Mss, Johnstone, iv, (Unpaginated).

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# **CHAPTER XIV**

## SRI LANKA'S TRADE, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL IN THE 17TH & 18TH CENTURIES

## **S** Arasaratnam

Sri Lanka's position in contemporary international trade and traffic underwent significant changes in the 17th and 18th centuries. These changes were largely the result of policies pursued by the two European powers, Portuguese and Dutch, who successively controlled the littoral areas and were thus in a position to influence the patterns of trade in the ports of Sri Lanka. With both these powers, their control over maritime Sri Lanka was part of broader Asian colonial and economic interests. These interests were based on sound naval power and strategy and passed through three stages of complete Portuguese naval domination of the Indian Ocean to an era of naval struggle between the Portuguese and the Dutch to a third phase of complete Dutch mastery, which continued, as far as the seas round Sri Lanka were concerned, till well into the 18th century. Commercial policies and changing patterns of commerce that resulted should be seen against this background of naval strategy and wider colonial interests.

In the international trade of Sri Lanka, cinnamon assumed a greater importance with the conquest of the island by the Portuguese, an importance which went on increasing in the 17th century and after, under the Dutch. The Portuguese declared cinnamon a royal monopoly in 1614 but this monopoly was not effectively administered and a number of private individual Portuguese officials participated in its export.<sup>1</sup> The important change

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C R de Silva, "Trade in Ceylon Cinnamon in the Sixteenth Century," CJHSS, n.s. 3(2) 1972, pp 16-27.

however, was that the Portuguese found it profitable to transport all the cinnamon to other Asian ports for sale so that they may be able to control the supply and dictate prices. Thus strict regulations were enforced in Colombo and other of the island ports against the private transport of cinnamon. About half the cinnamon exported from Sri Lanka was sent to Europe, the other half being sold in Asian ports, mostly in the Portuguese parts of Goa and Cochin and Ormuz.<sup>2</sup>

This control over production and supply, enforced, however haphazardly, from the early decades of the 17th century, resulted in an increase in price of cinnamon in the Asian markets. In fact, this trend was to continue throughout the century with far more rigorously operated monopoly under the Dutch. The vast profits of the cinnamon trade were an incentive to greater production in the island. In the 1620s, with the establishment of effective Portuguese control over large parts of the island, over 1,500 *bahar*<sup>3</sup> of cinnamon were exported annually and in the 1630s an annual average of 2,00 *bahar* is reached. With the Dutch-Portuguese wars from 1638 on, Portuguese share of the cinnamon trade dwindles and by 1656, with the fall of Colombo to the Dutch, it was taken over completely by the Dutch.

In the other sectors of the trade the Portuguese did not introduce any major long-standing changes but sought to participate in them. The sale of elephants in Sri Lanka was made a state monopoly but not in the trade in them, as they were cumbersome to transport and the demand was variable. Likewise, the trade in arecanuts and cloth was left in the hands of the incumbent traders, with duties imposed on these articles for state revenue. The Portuguese themselves traded in these goods with the Indian mainland but the pattern of the trade was not altered. Moreover, there were the ports not controlled by the Portuguese, Puttalam in the west and Kottiyār and a number of small havens in the Batticaloa area in the east in which the Kandyans carried on their customary trade.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, at the time the Portuguese were expelled from the island by the Dutch, the one significant change in the trade of the island was with respect to cinnamon. In other respects no major changes in the traditional trading

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<sup>3</sup> One Portuguese bahar is equivalent to about 380 pounds; a Dutch bahar was heavier at around 480 pounds.

*ibid.*, and C R de Silva, "The Portuguese Impact on the Production and Trade in Sri Lanka, Cinnamon in Asia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Indica*, XXV I (2), 1984.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> C R de Silva, "The Portuguese Impact on the Production and Trade in Sri Lanka, Cinnamon in Asia..., op.cit.

system had taken place. With the Dutch assuming control, rapid changes took place. Dutch commercial policies in the east were very different from those of the Portuguese. They operated a well-knit trading system in which a year's activity in trade and investment in the ports of the east were a prelude to the dispatch of the return fleet from Batavia and Sri Lanka to the Netherlands. This meant that Sri Lanka was brought within the orbit of this system and subordinated to the overall interests of the Dutch East India Company's eastern enterprise. It also meant that officers imbued with the prevailing economic philosophies and commercial practices of the Netherlands functioned as influential policy-makers and overlords of the island. The attempt to acquire trade monopolies and impose restrictive practices was an intrinsic part of the commercial policies of this period.<sup>5</sup> The East India Company itself was the archetype of such a monopoly organisation.

As far as cinnamon was concerned, the foundations of a cinnamon monopoly had already been laid by the Portuguese. It only remained for the Dutch to take it over and administer it more ruthlessly and efficiently. Far more stringent regulations, enforcing capital punishment for the slightest violation were passed, forbidding transport and sale of cinnamon, or even tampering with the cinnamon tree. Unlike under the Portuguese, when some privileged officials gained the concession of trading in cinnamon, this was strictly prohibited to Dutch officials, as in fact was any form of private trading. The Dutch judiciously apportioned the supply of cinnamon to the European market and to the Asian market in an approximate ratio of five to one, thus restricting the amount of cinnamon in the Asian market. The intention was to keep the prices so high that it would not be profitable for competitors to purchase it for transport to Europe. Thus the Dutch hold on the European market was complete. They were able to do this better than the Portuguese, both by the above policy of controlling the supply of cinnamon in the Asian market as well as because of their hold over all the ports of island and of the Malabar wild cinnamon which was a competitor, if an ineffective one.6

At the same time, there was an increase in the demand for cinnamon and other spices in Europe. As the sole suppliers of cinnamon to the European market, the possibilities of sale in Amsterdam were unending. The Directors increased their order for cinnamon from 480,000 pounds in the mid-17th

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See, Kristof Glamann, Dutch-Asiatic Trade, 1620-1740, 2nd ed, (Copenhagen/The Hague, 1981). See also K N Chaudhuri, The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1769, (New Delhi, 1978). Holden Furber, Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient 1600-1800, (Harvard, 1960).

See S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon 1658-1687, pp 181-93.

century to 800,000 a hundred years later. The latter amount could seldom be exported. The average annual export was more in the region 650,000 pounds of which about 100,000 was for the Asian market. A fleet of ships left from Colombo for the Netherlands in December usually setting sail on Christmas day, and joined with the larger return fleet from Batavia at the Cape of Good Hope where that fleet would have arrived earlier. Then the combined fleet sailed for Europe. The cinnamon for the Asian market was sent in the Company's ships to the main market ports of Mocha, Gombroon, Surat, Wingurla, Hoogly, Masulipatam, Paleacatte, Porto Novo and Nāgapatnam. A small quantity was sent to Batavia for the Southeast Asian region. The sales in these ports provided liquid assets which could be used to purchase import articles for Sri Lanka or for investment in the Company's trade in other quarters.

Cinnamon was one article the price of which the Dutch were able to dictate. As sole suppliers both in Europe and in the east they were in a position to do so. This is reflected in the phenomenal increase in price both in Europe and in the east from the 1660s. In Amsterdam sales the price nearly doubled to over 3 guilders per pound and kept at that level, sometimes rising up to 4,5 and even 6 guilders, depending on the scarcity of the commodity due to short-fall of supply from Sri Lanka or shipping losses. Likewise the price in the east which in the first half of the 17th century had never risen above 15 stuivers per pound and was often well below that, was now raised by the Dutch steadily to, at first 20 stuivers (or 1 guilder), then 30 stuivers and finally fixed at 48 to 50 stuivers a pound in 1660. The price was maintained at this level despite the protestation of the Company's officials on the spot that it was far too excessive and that sales would be affected. That there was a clear profit is seen from the fact that the cost price was next to nothing. The cinnamon was peeled from the woods by people of the salāgama caste who delivered fixed quantities as their obligatory caste service. They were paid a pittance, 72 stuivers for a bahar of 480 pounds, for any additional cinnamon supplied.

The country itself did not benefit at all from this enlarged export potential of one of its products. Cinnamon was not sold in the island's ports to any incoming trader and as such the country was deprived of the use of a commodity of exchange for its imports. The profits of cinnamon did not appear even in the Dutch accounts of their Sri Lanka administration. The sales in Europe appeared as profits in the Netherlands chambers of the Company and the sales in the various ports counted as profits in those ports. It was a classic case of colonial exploitation of a cash crop without the country of origin seeing any of the benefits of its sale.

Apart from cinnamon, there was still, in the mid-17th century, a brisk sea traffic in and out of the island that brought her into close trading relationship with a number of ports of southern Asia. There were still other lucrative products of export and a number of items of import that this trade embraced. The trade was both of the large-scale, relatively longer, voyages in larger bottoms, as well as the smaller peddling trade in small one-masted *thonies* or catamarans plying between the shorter routes from the island to the southern part of the Indian mainland.<sup>7</sup>

Of the large-scale shipping, the most regular and commercially significant was the traffic from Bengal and north Coromandel (Golconda). These vessels sailed into Galle and Jaffna right round the year, except during the worst months of the north-east monsoon. They were owned by powerful Muslim merchants of these Mughal Subahs, some by the Nawabs of Bengal and Cuttack and other Mughal military officials. Each vessel was under the charge of a nachoda who was empowered to transact business on behalf of the owners and share-holders of the cargo. Sometimes, English and Portuguese merchants used to own or have shares in these vessels, by which means they sought to break the strict Dutch regulation against the trade of other Europeans in the ports of Sri Lanka. The Bengal vessels brought in rice as their major cargo and this was a vital function of the trade. Sri Lanka in this period, was a rice importing area and an interruption in the overseas supply would have caused serious shortages. Rice from Bengal and Coromandel was cheaper than that from Canara on the west coast of India, the other supplementary source of supply. The arrival of the Bengal rice kept its price reasonably low during this entire period, though there was general tendency for a rise in price of this commodity, caused by wars and civil conflict on the Indian mainland. Besides rice, the Bengal traders brought sugar, butter, vegetable oils and few other exotic foodstuffs for which Bengal was famous. They also brought fine varieties of textiles - silks and muslins - which were a specialised skill of upper Bengal weavers. These goods were brought for retail by established wholesalers and brokers in the island.

On their return voyage, the vessels took a wide assortment of Sri Lanka produce. During the 17th century and the early part of the 18th, they used to export a considerable number of elephants.<sup>8</sup> The elephants were in

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, pp 145-77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> On the elephant trade, see, C R de Silva, "Peddlers of Trade, Elephants and Gems: Some Aspects of Sri Lanka's Trading Connections in the Indian Ocean in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Century" in K M de Silva, et.al., (eds), Asian Panorama: Essays in Asian History, Past and Present, (New Delhi, 1990).

demand in Bengal, in war operations, as draught animals and for ceremonial occasions. They fetched high prices, both in Sri Lanka and in India, and the Bengal and Golconda merchants invested a great deal of money on them. Their sale provided much of the exchange necessary for the purchase of rice, leaving this trade with a balance always in Sri Lanka's favour. The Bengal merchants, in addition to their full load of import cargo, would draw bills of exchange on the Dutch factories in India for any additional investment they wished to make. Other articles exported by them were arecanuts, *chanks*, *cowries*, pearls and spices in controlled quantities. The *chanks* were seashells fished in the pearl and *chank* fishery coasts were much desired in Bengal for ornamental and ceremonial purposes. *Cowries* were, likewise, smaller delicate shells used in the making of ornaments and even as money.

A less regular traffic existed with the ports of the west coast of India, Surat, Wingurla, Cannanore, Calicut and Cochin. It took in a variety of articles and was diverse in its participants. Rice again was an important commodity of import, followed by textiles, timber and different kinds of Middle Eastern goods. The Indian traders took back arecanuts, coir and ropes, Kandyan lacquer work, and handicraft products of varying description. Cinnamon and spices were forbidden to them as they would have competed with Dutch sales in their ports of origin.

A third region with which Sri Lanka had trade ties was the entire coast on the southernmost tip of India, extending from Travancore, through Madura, Tanjore to south Coromandel up to about Paleacatte and Fort St. George (Madras).9 This trade consisted at one end of the substantial oceangoing vessels, owned by the wealthy Chetty and Chulia Muslim merchants of Coromandel, that called at Sri Lanka on their sailings anywhere between the Red Sea and the Indonesian Archipelago. On the other end there were the one-masted thonies that would sail in their hundreds from the ports across the narrow straits between the island and India. Between these two extremes ranged a large number of vessels of varying sizes and description. They sailed from any one of the many ports and shallow havens of this coast and made the journey in four or five days time, with a stiff breeze. The ownership of these vessels was very mixed. There was a large element of Tamil and Malabar Muslims. Their strongholds were Quilon, Kayalpatam, Ramnad, Nāgapatnam and Nagore. Some of these Muslims had blood relations settled in Puttalam, Mannar, Galle and Batticaloa in the island of Sri Lanka. Some others had a dual domicile living for periods in Sri Lanka and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> For a discussion of this see S Arasaratnam, Merchants, Companies and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, 1650-1740, (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1986).

India. They were both large scale traders and pedlars. *Chetty* and other Hindu castes were perhaps numerically the largest among these traders. They too ranged widely in the scope of their activities. There were *Chetty* families that had settled for long in ports like Colombo, Galle and Jaffna with whom the incoming traders had dealings. Tamil Hindus of Jaffna also functioned as their brokers and agents. Finally, there were the *parava* Roman Catholics who flourished under Portuguese protection and had now emerged from being solely fishermen and boatmen into traders. In Sri Lanka these vessels would sail not only into the major ports of Colombo, Galle and Jaffna but also into a number of other lesser ones: Kalpitiya, Puttalam, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Batticaloa, Mātara, Pānadura, Kalutara, Negombo, Chilaw - in fact into every inlet and creek where they could drag their boat to shore and peddle their wares.

It is difficult to estimate the volume of their trade but it could be easily seen that it was a lifeline to the peasant economy of the island. The major article of import was textiles particularly those of the coarser varieties within the reach of the peasant consumer. There was among these a particularly desired cloth called cachai, a coarsely woven white cloth of about two yards length, worn as loin-cloth by the peasant, a standard and universal dress worn on all occasions. There were other dyed and painted varieties for the woman and materials of finer weave for the richer sections of the population. Another item of import was rice, which because of the shorter distance, was cheaper and served to fill in shortages in particular areas due to crop failures in the absence of other imported rice. The vessels also brought salt and salted fish to those parts of the island which lacked them. The major item of export was areca or betel nuts - the nuts of the areca palm, dried and chewed with the betel leaf, a habit to which almost the entire South Indian population had become addicted. It was in great demand in the whole of South India which consumed the entire produce of Sri Lanka. The areca tree was cultivated in almost every home in the island and was found in greater abundance in the wet zones of the south, south-west and centre. The nuts which each peasant collected from his garden thus gave him vital exchange to purchase his requirements in textiles, salt and other necessities from these traders. A group of itinerant pedlars, generally Muslims in south and south-west, acted as the middlemen who distributed the textiles to the peasantry and collected the areca nuts from him. Other items of local produce exported by these merchants included coconut and coconut produce, coir ropes and fibres, palmyrah wood and handicrafts products of local artisans.

The political unrest occasioned by the Sinhalese wars against the Portuguese and the subsequent Dutch-Portuguese wars, both of which occupied the first half of the 17th century, had not caused any interruption to this trade. It had adjusted to these conditions by avoiding the larger ports, the centres of military and naval activity, and sheltering in the smaller ports such as Puttalam and Kalpitiya in the west and Kottiyār and Batticaloa in the east. Early Dutch observers noted hundreds of vessels sailing in and out of all these ports to carry on a brisk trade. There had also been a shift to the east of the island where there was little or no military or naval hostility. Though these areas were far less populated than the west, they had the advantage of an unrestricted communication with the Kandyan kingdom, where this trade found an excellent market. When the Dutch conquered and fortified Kottiyār, they found a huge bazaar a few miles to the interior, in the village of Killevatty. A *Chetty* merchant had been appointed as the receiver of the royal tolls by the king of Kandy on all goods in this market.

There was also a small coastal trading system, operating from port to port, largely run by the fisher castes of Sri Lanka. It took rice from regions of good harvest to those of scarcity, likewise salt, and collected arecanut from remote coastal villages to the main ports of export. Its greatest value was in linking the productive but less populated eastern lands with the west and the south, as also the north with its flourishing handicraft production to the markets of the south.

It will be noted, from the above description of the island's trade, that no Sri Lankan vessels took part in outward sailings from the ports of the island. Whatever the position may have been in the period before the intrusion of the Portuguese into Sri Lanka, in the 17th and 18th centuries there was no Sri Lankan shipping overseas. This was just as well, because any such efforts in this direction would have been stifled by Dutch commercial policies as they now began to unfold. Some "burgher" (i.e. Dutch private citizens) shipping made its appearance in the first years of Dutch rule but soon folded up, finding it impossible to continue in the face of Dutch restrictive regulations. Some Sinhalese and Tamils functioned as brokers and agents, and as retailers. Some Kandyan nobles went into partnership with the South Indian Chetty and Muslim traders to invest in ventures to South Indian ports. Strangely enough, Sinhalese nobility of the low country did not take to this practice which was popular in the South Indian kingdoms. Generally speaking, the indigenous ruling groups tended to stay aloof from commerce and this partly explains the dominance of foreign elements in this sphere.

It was against a backdrop of this commercial picture that Dutch policy began to unfold. And this evolving policy in turn deeply affected the structure of commerce and, to some extent, the overall economic system. Within a few years of the consolidation of Dutch power in Sri Lanka, they were able to see the island's commercial potential. They could see that it was a country with a brisk trade, not merely in exotic and luxury items, but also in consumer

goods. As a commercial organization they wanted to get into the act themselves and get the best out of it. Cinnamon had already been successfully and exclusively controlled, almost from the very moment of their establishment. Looking around for other such articles of monopoly, elephants appeared as another possible commodity. Again the pattern had been established by the Portuguese, it only remained to render more efficient the machinery of sale. The elephants that were trapped in the jungles of south and north-central parts of the island were marched to Galle and Jaffna where the markets were. The animals were held in stalls here with prices fixed for each of them. Jaffna was the main market for sale and there was at Kayts harbour a pier specially constructed for the easy shipping of these cumbersome animals. The traders were represented at the sales by brokers who would inspect the animals and settle on a negotiated price. Throughout the 17th century the sales were good and netted from 100,000 to over 200,000 guilders per year. The revenue from the elephant trade was the biggest single item of revenue and sometimes represented 30 per cent of the total income from trade.

In 1697, the system of individual sales through brokers was abolished and public auctions adopted. The long-standing and influential buyers were dissatisfied with this innovation and lost interest in the trade. This alarmed the Dutch who reinstated the old method of individual sales in 1707. They still wanted to break the influence of the brokers who, they felt, made exorbitant commissions and had the merchants under their control. In 1710 Governor Becker (1707-16), noting that there was a good deal of corruption in Jaffna around the elephant trade, moved the market to Colombo. Bengal and Coromandel merchants refused to go to Colombo but preferred to continue to buy in Jaffna.<sup>10</sup> In 1713 the Batavian Government ordered the transfer of the market to Jaffna. The trade showed a marked improvement. But this revival was only temporary for the decline of the Mughal empire reduced the demand for elephants. From 1720 the trade was on the decline. Sales very seldom were above 100,000 guilders a year. A serious effort was made to improve the trade by reducing prices and trying to establish contacts with merchants in Indian factories. But all this was of no avail and by 1750 the elephant trade fetched little more than 25,000 guilders per year. By the end of the century the trade was no more.

The Dutch realised that in order to dominate the trade of the island and to fashion it according to their wishes, they had to extend their control to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> On the economy of the Jaffna region see S Arasaratnam, The Historical Foundations of the Economy of the Tamils of North Sri Lanka, (Jaffna, 1982)

remaining ports of the island. Kalpitiya was occupied and fortified in 1659 from which the entry to Puttalam could be checked. In 1666 the east coast port and fort of Trincomalee was taken and in 1668 Kottiyār and Batticaloa. With the construction of look-out posts in Panama and Māgama in the southeast the whole coastline was dotted with strategic points of control and inspection. The territorial expansion of 1665 to 1670, which doubled the territory and population under Dutch rule, secured a market for textiles and arecanuts which they began to exploit, at first in competition with the existing traders. These years of competition were not a great success. The margin of profit considered satisfactory for the Indian traders was not sufficient for a large Company. There were problems of distribution in the villages and problems of supply in the Indian mainland.

A major decision was taken in 1670 to monopolise a predominant part of the island's trade.<sup>11</sup> The following export articles were declared Company's monopolies: cinnamon, elephants and elephant tusks, arecanut, chanks and pearls; and for import: cotton goods, pepper, tin, zinc and other minerals. Rice was the only major item of import left out of the monopoly. The main purpose of these regulations was to capture the textile import market and the arecanut export market exclusively. It was estimated that a monopoly of this trade would produce a revenue of 1 1/2 million guilders. A series of regulations were put into effect to enforce this monopoly. All vessels sailing into Sri Lanka had to secure passes from the nearest Dutch Factory in India. The passes would state the port of destination and the goods carried. Passes were given only to the large, well-policed ports of Colombo, Galle and Jaffna where they could be put under surveillance. Vessels were intercepted in the high seas and if found carrying textiles to Sri Lanka or taking arecanuts from there were seized and confiscated. The vessels plying in the narrow straits between Sri Lanka and the Indian mainland were the most difficult to police. So it was ordered that boats sailing northwards to Coromandel from the west coast ports should go through the narrow channel between Mannar island and the mainland of Sri Lanka. As boats could not sail through this shallow Mannar channel fully loaded, they had to unload and have their cargo carried by land to the northern end of the channel where they would reload. At this point customs inspection was carried out, comparing their cargo with their passes and checking for contraband.

In addition to these punitive measures, efforts were made to keep the country supplied with textiles and to collect and export all the areca nut in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> See S Arasaratnam "The Kandyan of Kandy: Aspects of its External Relations and Commerce, 1658-1700," CJHSS, 3(1960), pp 109-27.

Dutch vessels. Capital was released for investment in cotton goods in Madura and Tanjore for the Sri Lanka market. These were distributed through the company's stores. The areca nut produce of the villages was bought through native officials.

In ten years of the operation of this monopoly, adverse economic consequences of Dutch policy became visible. Prices of textiles, even of the course varieties, shot up as the Dutch were unable to supply at the very low prices charged by the Indian traders. As monopoly buyers of arecanut, the Dutch thought they could reduce prices offered to the peasants and this left these peasants with little incentive to sell their produce to the Dutch.<sup>12</sup> An overall decline in this trade was noted in the 1670s and 1680s. The inevitable increase in smuggling by those boats that could sail in shallow waters and avoid Dutch cruisers caused dents in the monopoly of textiles and areca nuts. An expensive cruising operation with armed sloops had to be mounted which went on well into the 18th century.

A more drastic consequence was the interruption of the large scale traffic from Bengal and north Coromandel. These merchants found that they could not buy or sell goods in the open market any more. They had to sell to the Dutch and buy from Dutch stores and some of the items they had traded in were now contraband. Their operations were hampered and so they stopped coming as regularly and in as large numbers as before. One of the effects of this was the shortage of rice supply which they had brought in amplequantities. The Dutch found that they had to transport rice in their own vessels to relieve this shortage, both for their own personnel and for the community. An overall decline in trade and traffic was reported in the 1680s, causing hardship to a number of people who had lived on trade and general shortage of food and clothing in the community at large.<sup>13</sup>

A partial liberalisation of trade was begun in 1694, with the relaxation of some of the earlier restrictions. The boat traffic from Madura and Tanjore was eased with a more liberal issue of passes and a greater freedom to import textiles with a high tariff. More importantly, the Bengal shippers were encouraged to resume their sailing to Jaffna and Galle with greater freedom to deal with Sri Lankan private traders and permission to import certain varieties of cloth. Duties on cotton goods of 20 per cent were lowered for these Bengal merchants to 7½ per cent. The restriction to sail only to the capital ports was also relaxed and trade in the lesser ports was reactivated once again. These reforms had their desired effect. The Bengal traffic was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon ..., op.cit., pp 160-77.

<sup>13</sup> ibid.

resumed. The Coromandel and Madura boatmen came back in larger numbers though their freedom was still restricted. The supply position, as far as rice and textiles were concerned, improved enormously.

From the experience of these years, the policy was evolved of separating the boat traffic of South India from the rest and dealing strictly with the former. Their operations were seen to be the most harmful to Dutch trade. They glutted the market with cheap textiles and they were able to pay a higher price to the peasant for his produce. They had better contacts in the villages and were able to sail into shallow waters. All this affected the sale of cloth imported by the Dutch and the purchase of areca nut, pepper and other peasant products. Hence in 1704, selective controls were imposed. While the Bengal, Surat and North Malabar traders were encouraged with incentives, the South Coromandel boatmen were put under restrictions, though not as severe as in 1670. The number of ports they could sail into was stipulated and they were forbidden from landing on the east coast. It was impossible to police them here as the Dutch had only two ports in this whole coastline. A duty of 15 per cent was imposed on the cotton goods they brought and certain varieties of cloth were prohibited. They had to buy the arecanuts from the Dutch at a fixed price and not elsewhere. They could not land at any other port. The ports they were permitted to sail into and the goods they carried were inscribed in their passes which were subject to inspection on the high seas. Under these restrictions, these traders continued to carry on their trade, largely because of their resilience, the corruption that was endemic among Dutch officials, and the great familiarity of these boatmen with every nook and crevice along the island's coastline where they could take shelter from Dutch cruisers.

In the imposition of duties on their goods, in the inspection of the volume of their merchandise, in the issuing of passes, a great deal of corruption was possible by agreement between trader and official. The authorities in Holland were well aware of this and this was the reason why they constantly exhorted that the regulations be severely administered. Governor Becker discovered that in Galle the chief officers of the Company had formed a partnership which they called the 'Small Company' to carry on illegal private trade in textiles. Such corruption was the chief reason why this traffic was able to continue till the end of the 18th century - a source of comfort to the local Despite the advantage of regulations heavily biased in their community. favour, the Dutch profits on textiles, in the mid-18th century, amounted only to around 100,000 guilders a year. This compares with a turnover of about 250,000 guilders which it was expected the trade would produce. In the second half of the 18th century, it declined even further to around 40,000 guilders, caused partly by the situation in the textile-producing villages in

southern India creating problems of supply. The profits on the areca nut trade amounted to 200,000 guilders in the good years in the first two decades of the 18th century. It later declined gradually to no more than 100,000 guilders in the second half of the century.

Governor Baron van Imhoff (1736-40) had visions of making the island a major emporium of trade in South Asia.<sup>14</sup> He wanted the freedom to sell a wide variety of merchandise in the ports of the island so that traders from all over South Asia may be attracted there and the island would become a centre for the exchange of goods from many regions of Asia. He suggested that the Company's expensive establishments on the Indian mainland and in Persia could be reduced because the functions performed there could well be performed from Sri Lanka. These changes were too drastic and involved a major overhauling of Dutch Asian commercial policy which the Directors were reluctant to undertake. But, during his tenure, he did lift some of the restrictions to encourage Indian traders and even the trade of other Europeans. This policy was continued by Governor van Gollenesse (1743-51) and led to some recovery of trade in Sri Lanka.<sup>15</sup>

Two instances of trade to specific places in certain items may be noted. There was a regular traffic between Sri Lanka and the Maldive Islands. This continued throughout this period without interruption. The vessels sailed from the Maldives at the break of the north-east monsoon bringing *cowries* and *kumbelamas*. *Cowries* were used in the Indian trade and exported to Europe. *Kumbelamas* was a particular variety of dried fish much desired by the Sinhalese. The *cowries* had to be sold to the Dutch and were a monopoly article. On their return, the vessels took spices, arecanut, rice and some trifles. *Cowries* were in demand in the Indian and the European market. The Dutch wanted more of them and in the 1730s equipped an annual voyage to the maldives. After a few years the market for *cowries* dropped in Europe and the voyage was abandoned. In recognition of a traditional obligation, the Sultan of the maldives sent the Dutch, as sovereign of coastal Sri Lanka, a tribute of *cowries*.

Another such trade was the tobacco trade between Jaffna and Malabar. The tobacco grown in Jaffna was in great demand in Travancore. Tobacco

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> S Arasaratnam, "Baron van Imhoff and Dutch Policy in Ceylon, 1736-1740," BKI, Deel CXVIII, pp 454-66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> See S Arasaratnam, "Introduction: The Dutch in Ceylon and South India, 1700-1750" in Memoir of Julius Stein van Gollenesse, 1743-1751, (Colombo, 1974), pp 1-41.

was a monopoly of the Rāja of Travancore and the trade was carried on, on his behalf, by the merchants of Quilon. About 120,000 pounds were transported each year. The tobacco merchants of Quilon had agents from Travancore resident in Jaffna who went to the tobacco farms in April when the crop was ready for harvest. They made advance payments for the entire crop to be sold to them at market price. On harvest the price was fixed and the agents bought up all the produce. The tobacco was transported to their warehouses in Jaffna in August and September where it was sorted out and bundled in bales. The entire cargo was taken to Quilon and sold to the Rāja who then sold it within the kingdom at a fixed price. This was a monopoly he carefully guarded and neither the merchants of Jaffna nor the Dutch had any share in the transactions. This trade continued well into the 19th century.

Towards the end of the 18th century, tobacco grown in Sri Lanka found a good market in Acheh and in some Malay ports. Traders from Nāgapatnam and Nagore controlled this export trade. They bought tobacco in Jaffna from the growers, just as the exporters to Travancore did, and shipped it to the two south Indian ports and then on to Southeast Asia. The Dutch imposed a heavy export duty on tobacco and this duty was farmed out annually for a sum of 60,000 to 100,000 guilders.

There was a possibility of a flourishing export trade in coffee but again Dutch policy and interests came in the way and stifled its growth. Coffee was encouraged in the 1720s but its cultivation did not catch on for some time and production was negligible. It progressed gradually in the 1730s and by 1739 substantial quantities were being collected for export. It was a Dutch monopoly and was shipped to Indian and Persian ports where it competed successfully with Arabian coffee. At the same time Javanese coffee production increased phenomenally and the Dutch were over-supplied with this bean. So in the 1740s Governor Gollenesse was instructed from Batavia to discourage its cultivation. He sharply reduced the purchase price to the peasant producers and production declined immediately. During the Javanese wars of the 1750s coffee production was set back and the Dutch could not secure enough for export to Europe. So they instructed Company officials to once again encourage production in Sri Lanka but the response was poor. In the last decade of the 18th century, about 60,000 to 100,000 pounds of coffee were exported from Sri Lanka, mainly to Europe.

The strategic location of Galle seems to have been used to tap into the international trade of Asia in the 18th century. Increasingly the Dutch allowed long-distance shipping across the Indian Ocean to call at that port and carry on an exchange of goods. Thus Portuguese and English free-merchants called at that port and were permitted by the Dutch to trade under

supervision. Portuguese shippers sailing from Goa to Macao regularly stopped at Goa and purchased goods suitable for the Chinese market. These would include Dutch monopoly items such as cinnamon, pepper and cardamom and other goods such as pearls, ivory and woodwork. They were not allowed to import goods into Galle except rice which was always in demand. On their return these ships would also call at Galle and they were allowed to import Chinese goods and take away goods of Sri Lankan origin Later in the 18th century, English freefor western Indian markets. merchants were allowed to sail into Galle and trade there in the course of their Indian Ocean exchanges. The long-distance shipping calling at Galle created a demand for marine stores, especially coir ropes which were produced along the south-west coast of the island. This trade provided an opportunity for Dutch officials in the port to engage in some clandestine private ventures outside the strict controls exercised in Colombo. It also increased the shipping and trade activity in a place which had languished for long as a minor port.

Sri Lanka was affected by the general slump in Indian Ocean trade in the middle decades of the 18th century caused by conditions of instability in the Indian subcontinent and the Anglo-French wars fought on land and the surrounding waters. After the establishment of English supremacy in India in the 1760s, economic conditions began to improve and there was some revival in overseas trade. In the wake of this revival, India's coastal trade and Indo-Sri Lankan trade seem to have picked up in the last three decades of the century. There was an increase in consumption of Sri Lankan produce in India, especially arecanuts, coir and coconut produce and palmyrah timber. This was seen in the increase in the purchase price of these goods in Sri Lanka. The trade was conducted by the traditional carriers based in the ports of Coromandel and Malabar. By now the Dutch had abandoned the shipment of these goods in their own vessels and concentrated their efforts on engrossing the supply from the producers, fixing prices and profiting from sales and export duties. By the end of the century annual arecanut exports had increased to over 15,000 amunams, producing an export duty of 360,000 guilders. In an attempt to increase production and direct supply to the Company's stores, the officials increased the purchase price of nuts but strictly controlled the avenues of purchase to ensure that the entire product was channelled through the Company. This was always difficult as private purchasers were prepared to pay higher prices and there was considerable smuggling outside the Company's control.

The inhabitants of the Kandyan kingdom, as major suppliers of arecanuts as well as of other produce such as cardamom and pepper that was taken in by this trade, were encouraged to participate in it. After the Dutch-Kandyan wars of 1761-66, the borders were reopened to trade and interchanges between the lowlands and the hill country increased. Itinerant traders, mainly domiciled Muslims, facilitated this trade bringing Kandyan export produce to the coast and taking imports deep into the kingdom. The Kandyan court and some members of the nobility participated in this trade through Muslim and *Chetty* middlemen who were their contacts with overseas merchants who sailed into the ports. The Dutch steadfastly refused freedom of trade to the Kandyans but permitted occasional ventures which the Kandyans organized through the Muslim and *Chetty* middlemen. The influence of Nāyakkar relatives of the reigning Kandyan monarchs in the kingdom facilitated the trade with south India on behalf of Kandyan interests.

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The coastal trade of Sri Lanka also showed signs of expansion in the last decades of the 18th century. It consisted of the transport of goods of consumption from one coastal region to another in small boats which sailed across short distances from port to port. This trade was primarily in the hands of coastal traders, Sinhalese from the western and southern coasts, Tamils of the north and east and Muslims domiciled in ports all over the island. This coastal trade involved the transport of rice from surplus to deficit areas, salt, fish and dried fish, coconut produce and betel nuts. Rice was transported from the west coast to other parts and salt from the southeast to other parts. Palmyrah produce was transported from the north southwards and coconut produce from the west to other parts. The coastal trade functioned to supply hinterland districts of the island as well as to ship goods to the major ports for transhipment overseas. The expansion of coastal trade could not be prevented by the Dutch as they were unable to police it in the way they did successfully with overseas trade flowing out of the major ports. To local merchants it was a means to beat the control system operated by the Dutch and goods such as betel nuts and tobacco could be exported in this way without paying duty. The coastal trade led to the increasing importance of local ports at the expense of the major large ports of the island. It also enabled coastal communities of boatmen to survive in the restricted system imposed by the Dutch.

The overseas and coastal trade of Sri Lanka in this period brought the island into the wider network of international trade. The Dutch contributed to this but their restrictive policies also stifled the close integration of the island with Indian Ocean trade. By their direct exports from Sri Lanka to Europe they enlarged the markets in the west for some of the island's products. Likewise they exported Sri Lankan produce to Asian markets and performed a similar function. But in the way they did this, they ensured that

the benefits did not accrue to the island's economy.<sup>16</sup> While the price of Sri Lankan products rose in overseas markets, the benefits of this were not derived by the island's producers or middlemen. The Company kept purchase prices of cash crops to peasants at a low level and set itself up as the sole buyer. It permitted slight increases in prices only when demand outstripped supply. This has its consequence of restricting the demand for imports by reducing the purchasing power of the community. The Company attempted to take over the import of textiles but was unable to maintain the volume of exports as they had been when free trade was operating. Towards the end of the century, a general expansion of trade in the region contributed to an increase in overseas, coastal and inland trade of the island.

In spite of its fluctuations under a stifling state policy, trade had the effect of an overall increase in productivity and internal exchange. Peasant agriculture responded to changes and cash crops such as pepper, arecanuts, coffee and cardamom were cultivated when price incentives were given. There was an increased circulation of money in the 18th century and all classes of society entered the money economy, if only in modest proportions. Taxation was levied increasingly more in cash than in kind. Merchants from Bengal, Golconda, Coromandel, Goa and Malabar brought in bullion to pay for their exports. In the second half of the 18th century, there was a wide circulation of copper coins of small denomination. In particular, the south Indian merchants conducted their transactions with peasant producers in copper coins of small denomination. The large-scale shippers, those for example who bought elephants in large numbers, brought in pagoda and rupee coins. When the transactions of small scale increased and there was a greater need for circulating coins of small denominations, the Dutch minted coins from copper imported from Japan. Copper coins were also brought by south Indian boatmen from their own territories adding to the money supply. In this way trade increased the circulation of money and enabled more to participate in a money economy.

Thus the trade of Sri Lanka operated in these two centuries partly as a Dutch Company monopoly and partly as a competitive trading system. The monopoly sector embraced all the valuable cash crops and this skimmed the cream of the island's commercial potential.<sup>17</sup> In the competitive sector,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> S Arasaratnam, "Dutch Commercial Policy in Ceylon and its Effects on Indo-Ceylon Trade 1690-1750," IESHR, IV(2) June 1967, pp 109-30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> S Arasaratnam, "Monopoly and Free Trade in Dutch-Asian Commercial Policy: Debate and Controversy within the VOC," Journal of South East Asian Studies, IV(1), March 1973, pp 1-15.

traditional trading patterns continued despite severe intrusions by the monopoly sector. The age-old nexus between India and Sri Lanka was preserved and, towards the end of the period, showed signs of getting even closer. Traditional carriers of the trade continued to operate, though vastly disadvantaged by restrictive regulations. Expatriate commercial groups became more domiciled and struck roots in local soil. They established linkages with coastal groups, both Sinhalese and Tamil, and an entrepreneurial class of merchants and middlemen emerged which took off in the 19th century.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>-18</sup> For discussion of this see S Arasaratnam, "Elements of Social and Economic Change in Dutch Maritime Ceylon (Sri Lanka) 1658-1790," *IESHR*, XXII(1) 1988, pp 35-54; and "The Indigenous Ruling Class in Dutch Maritime Ceylon" in the same journal, VIII, (1971), pp 57-71.

# **CHAPTER XV**

# THE VOC IN SRI LANKA, 1658-1796: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE IN THE MARITIME REGIONS

## **D** A Kotelawele

The Dutch East India Company monopolised the most important product of the island, cinnamon, but the profits from the cinnamon trade were not accounted in the trade books of the Company's establishments in the island. Monopolising the trade of the island was one device to meet the shortfall in the income from the territories controlled by the Dutch. The internal resources of the island in terms of land and its products as well as the labour services of the inhabitants the Company came to rule, were the other traditional revenue sources available to the Dutch.

In dealing with this aspect of Company's policy in the island one important factor has to be kept in mind, namely, the position of the Company as the ruler of a large extent of territory, and the consequent assumption of the role of "the lord of the land," the traditional position of ancient rulers in relation to land. Among the attributes of this position was the ability and right to the disposal of land. This system had evolved over centuries from the days of the Anurādhapura and Polonnaruva kingdoms. In those times government revenue was raised by means of a produce tax which was carefully calculated depending on the soil conditions and the crops grown. From the twelfth century onwards the nature of the state-landholder relationships underwent a change owing to the interaction of political and economic factors. By the time of the arrival of the Europeans in the island a new system had evolved: the grain tax as the connecting link between the state and the landholder had gradually given way to service. The principle that had emerged was that every plot of land had attached to it a service that its holder was obliged to perform for the state. Conversely, this meant that

every service was rewarded with land.<sup>1</sup>

The VOC inherited this system and through it had control over land as well as labour in the lands they came to rule. The Company in all its requirements of services, whether in the basic tasks of administration, or in military or other requirements such as the production of cash crops for sale abroad, or in obtaining its requirements of timber or of any other services of whatever nature, inherited this virtually endless resource. Even the services of higher Dutch officers were augmented by the grants of villages in the form of dispense villages which were enjoyed by Governors, Commandeurs and *Disāvas*. As a result the Company did not have to spend cash for the greater part of the tasks and services it needed to perform in the island.

Getting to know this resource accurately through a systematic recording of it was one of the tasks of the Company regime: the compilation of land and family registers with all the encumbrances on them - the *tombo* registration work - played a great part in the administration of the Company, especially in the eighteenth century.

As the ruler of extensive land areas the Company also inherited various other taxes and dues. Among the most important of these were the paddy taxes. In the populous southwest of the island these fell into three categories:

- (a) a tax of one tenth of the produce on lands brought under the plough with government consent,
- (b) a tax of one half of the produce of paddy lands cultivated without consent of the government, and
- (c) the entire crop of certain villages which in the time of Sinhalese Kings were royal villages, and which were cultivated for the Company by holders of service tenure lands.

At the beginning of Dutch rule these taxes were collected through the local headmen but by the mid-eighteenth century they were farmed out at annual auctions. These paddy incomes were primarily important for the Company to provision the garrisons for which otherwise paddy had to be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> H W Codrington, Ancient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon, (Colombo, 1938), pp 59-61; see also, Ralph Pieris, Sinhalese Social Organisation: The Kandyan Period, (Colombo, 1956).

### imported from India.<sup>2</sup>

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The Company also collected a number of miscellaneous dues and taxes. These varied extensively and depended on the resources of various regions, the caste groups that lived there and their traditional occupations, as well as the raw materials available. For instance, in the Colombo *Disāvany* taxes were levied on fishnets used both in salt water and freshwater fishing, fishing boats and arecanut gardens. In the Mātara *Disāvany* government dues included iron produced in the villages of Katuvāna, Kirama and Urubokka, coconut oil and roof tiles. The Dutch did not make an attempt to systematize these though they insisted on collecting them for their useful contribution to the maintenance of the Company establishments.

The task of ascertaining and recording the various taxes and dues on land and individuals was first attempted in the Dutch territories in the north of the island in 1677, and some sections of the Gālu  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}$  in the south had been summarily registered in 1698. It must be noted that this task had its origin in the Sinhalese land rolls upon which the Portuguese built their own records, the *tombos*, which term continued to be used by the Dutch. The systematic attempt at the compilation of the land and family *tombos* was undertaken during the Governorship of van Imhoff in 1741.<sup>3</sup> The following passage from the Memoir left by Governor Schreuder to his successor is expressive of the aims of the Company in the task of compiling the *tombos*.

> I must, however, briefly indicate.... that it, i.e. the tombo, consists of a Head and Land Register of all persons and their holdings in the country in which each province and district is shown separately, and where we can see at the first glance how considerable and extensive the Company's territories are, what number of inhabitants reside therein, what services they are under obligation to perform for the Company, what maintenance and privileges they derive thereby, what dues the inhabitants render to the Company as lord of the land both from their gardens and fields, what and how many uncultivated lands are there still to be found in the  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}s$  and districts which are suitable for conversion into gardens and fields, and with what rights of ownership and under what categories the inhabitants possess their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> D A Kotelawele, "Agrarian Policies of the Dutch in the Southwest of Sri Lanka, 1743-1767." A A G Bijdragen, Vol. 14 (1967).

R L Brohier, Lands, Maps and Surveys, 2 Vols, (Colombo, 1950), I, pp 10-5.

lands, according to which the farmers of these dues recover them yearly from the inhabitants."<sup>4</sup>

The first years of registration work illustrated some of the difficulties of the task involved as well as giving revealing insights into the system of land tenure itself. The Company officers found it difficult to distinguish between the two types of service tenure lands, the *pravēnis* and *accommodessans: pravēni* lands literally meant heritable lands and *accommodessans*, a word derived from Portuguese, meant maintenance lands. There was also confusion with regard the various types of *pravēnis*, and a definition of the three types was arrived at which came to be accepted by subsequent registration work. The three types were:

- (a) service *pravēnis* held by inhabitants in return for services rendered to the state, (while these were difficult to distinguish from the *accommodessans* which were also granted for service to the state, the essential difference was that whereas the latter were given to individuals for services in higher ranks and were subject to withdrawal at the death of the grantee, the former were given to and could be held in families and were heritable in families so long as state services continued to be performed),
- (b) lands purchased by individuals which came to be called purchase *pravēnis* and
- (c) lands granted by Governors which were termed gift *pravēnis*. From 1745 these distinctions were noted in the *tombos*.

Apart from grappling with terminological difficulties the officials also had to deal with the problems caused by interested social groups. A constant complaint was that Sinhalese headmen were hindering and misleading the commissioners in charge of registration work. It was also reported that persons lower in the caste hierarchy were trying to register themselves in higher castes. The registration work also was retarded by a series of natural disasters that befell the southwest of the country in the mid-1740s.<sup>5</sup>

The registration of the Colombo Disāvany was completed in August 1759 and the Governor ordered a revision of the completed *tombos*, and periodical revisions were undertaken till the year 1771. Slow progress only

Memoir of Jan Schreuder, p 61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> D A Kotelawele, "Agrarian Policies of the Dutch...", op.cit., pp 28-9.

was made in the Gālu koralē and the Mātara Disāvany. The rebellions and the war of 1760-66 would have greatly hindered this work. However there was a Board of Tombo commissioners in the Galle district as a permanent feature of the administration since the war.

The completion of the tombos of the Colombo Disāvany brought up the question of garden taxes, particularly of newly cultivated lands. This category was known as land cultivated with and without permission. The taxes calculated on these lands according to the new registration had come to a sizeable sum of 163,952 florins and the Governor ordered the Disāva of Colombo to collect them. The Disāva soon reported that it was impossible to collect them since they were wrongly computed: as much as two thirds of the lands classified as newly planted lands were in fact praveni and accommodessan lands. The owners of these lands maintained that they had been held in the families for generations and refused to pay any taxes on them; they would rather return such lands and be free from such service. This situation posed two problems: one of ascertaining the true extent of praveni and accommodessan lands, and the other of regularising the status of newly With regard to solving the question of praveni and planted lands. accommodessan lands it was decided to give the people an opportunity to prove their claims. They were asked to do this by providing documentary evidence, or the evidence of respected village elders of the area. The headmen of respective administrative divisions (korales and pattus) were to compile lists of praveni and accommodessan lands on the basis of the evidence thus given and these lists were to be compared with the tombos.

Lists of *pravēni* and *accommodessan* lands were accordingly prepared and examined by the *Landraad*. At the same time the question of how the Company could derive advantage from these lands without causing hardships to the people was given serious consideration. Ways and means of dealing with *malapālu* and *nilapālu* lands (i.e. lands abandoned after the death of a holder and escheated lands respectively) too were considered at the same time. Finally the ability of the inhabitants to pay dues on gardens planted with and without consent was considered.

As for taxes on newly planted gardens, it was revealed that while the well to do segments of the population, such as *mudaliyārs*, *mohandirams*, *kōralēs*, *atukōralēs*, *vidānēs*, *appuhāmys* and *saparamādus*, and the caste headmen (of fisherman, native carpenters, gold and iron smiths, and washers) could continue to pay the dues at the old rate, the poorer among the inhabitants who spent most of their time fulfilling government service obligations, minor village officials, (mayoraals and naindes), lascarins,

'labourers, toddy tappers; carpenters, and mahouts, were allowed to pay a reduced tax and in some instances even exemptions were permitted. The tax was based on the two most important crops on the land, coconut and jak. It was decided to leave the *pravēni* and *accommodessan* lands as they were since the *Landraad* reported that under the old system no taxes were levied on them. With regard to *malapālu* and *nilapālu* lands, it was decided to treat them as other lands planted with and without consent.

The Company policy on grants of land to the inhabitants affected the rural economy considerably. In the latter part of the seventeenth century large tracts of the Dutch ruled territories came to be depopulated as a result of the wars between the Dutch and the kingdom of Kandy. The Dutch at this time were faced with the problem of inducing the people to move into their territories to improve agricultural production. Van Goens the elder (1664-75) even went to the extent of bringing slaves from south India to meet the In the early eighteenth century the situation changed and the situation. Company took a cautious attitude towards granting lands to the inhabitants. This was due to the awareness of the need to preserve land for the growth of cinnamon, in and around villages. At this time there were no cinnamon gardens or plantations and all the cinnamon that the Company collected was from what grew in and around villages as well as in the jungles: cinnamon was collected by the government agency, the Mahābadda. Governors like van Imhoff were not in favour of leaving large tracts of land wild for the growth of cinnamon, without putting them to other productive uses. He promoted the idea of land grants to the people to grow coconuts which would enhance the production of arrack which in turn, in his view, could augment revenues from arrack rents. In fact, at this time, the Company did have coconut gardens in the Matara Disavany which produced coconut oil, a commodity of daily use in Company establishments as well as sold to traders from India. Even though the Directors of the Company endorsed van Imhoff's ideas on land grants for coconut growing, later on during the Governorship of Loten (1752-57) this policy was abandoned. Under Loten's successor Schreuder (1757-62) strong measures were taken to preserve cinnamon which reversed these policies and which in turn resulted in a rebellion and the subsequent war.

Two important developments that significantly affected land grant policy need to be noted. First, the price of cinnamon in Amsterdam as the sole supplier of the article to European markets. The average annual price of the article remained stable for the first three decades of the eighteenth century, at around 2.55 florins per pound. Prices began to rise in the 1740s and by 1767 it had risen to 6.92 florins and till the end of the century this level of prices held firm. As prices soared the Directors requested steady

supplies from Colombo. But by the mid-eighteenth century cinnamon peelers and their headmen complained that they were finding it increasingly difficult to produce the required quantities for the return ships since and lands were allowed for gardens and other purposes. There was inevitably a decline in the amount of cinnamon shrubs available for peeling. The *tombo* keeper reported in 1761 that in the preceding 30 years the number of plots of land held by the inhabitants had increased from 12,000 to over 30,000 and that most of the increase had been held by well to do Sinhalese, some of whom held as many as 35 plots.

Behind this expansion of land for the needs of the people which included the conversion of *chēnas* to gardens, was the increase in the population of the lowlands held by the Dutch. The *tombo* keeper gave three reasons for the increase of the population in the southwest. The first was natural increase; the second was the sizeable influx of Moors and *Chetties* from south India, and the third being the migrations from the lands of the king of Kandy. The last reason needs some explanation. It is possible that those who left for the Kandyan Kingdom during the Dutch wars with Rājasimha II were returning to their old homes: the trek back had gone on from the late seventeenth century. The other reason could be the continuing migrations of the populations from the dry zone regions of the island to the wet zone which had begun with the decline of the irrigation civilisation of the island.

The pressure of the demand for cinnamon and constant claims by headmen of peelers that the increasing clearing of lands for *chēnas* and gardens reduced the availability of cinnamon, made Governors take a close look at the problem. When Batavian authorities suggested to Governor Loten that land sales be commenced in the southwest as was done in the Jaffna territories the Governor opposed the suggestion on the ground that land was necessary for cinnamon. Furthermore Loten sent out commissioners to investigate the conversion of *chēnas* into gardens and the extent of gardens and *chēnas* made with or without government permission. The commissioners were also authorized to destroy any gardens made in the last five years without government permission.

Loten's successor, Schreuder continued this policy. In December 1757 he decided to systematize the basis of tenure of a large number of lands cultivated with and without government permission. The object of the exercise was to reclaim as much land as possible for the growth of cinnamon. It was decided to confirm the ownership of three types of such lands and give their holders title deeds. They were as follows:

- (a) lands granted by Governors whether paid for or not irrespective of whether they constituted an obstacle to the growth of cinnamon,
- (b) gardens made in areas suitable for cinnamon if paid for by 24 December 1757, and
- (c) gardens made in localities considered unsuitable for cinnamon whether paid for or not.

Hitherto the *Disāvas* too had been making land grants. With regard to such grants it was decided to give title deeds to holders who had completed the payments in respect to such grants. Finally it was decided that all lands for which title deeds could not be given under the above guidelines should be searched and destroyed.

Governor Schreuder appointed commissioners to investigate the entirety of the southwest territories held by the Dutch, in order to find out the extent of the availability of cinnamon, and also to determine those areas which would be suitable for the growth of the cinnamon shrub according to the notions of the time. These commissioners were instructed to visit villages, consult registers of cinnamon yielding villages, and seek the assistance of the headmen of cinnamon peelers and village headmen.

In August 1758 the commissioners presented the reports of their survey on 1197 villages in the Colombo *Disāvany*. Basing himself on the information in the survey Schreuder further tightened government control over lands considered suitable for cinnamon. On this occasion, even service tenure lands held in families for generations came to be affected. The new measures, which were by way of modification to the decisions of 24 December 1757, were as follows:

- (a) with regard to the lands for which title deeds were to be given according to the decisions of 24 December 1757, the ownership was to devolve on the children or full brothers or sisters of the current holders: the devolution of ownership was not to go beyond this degree of relationship. Failure of heirs within this degree of relationship was to result in the government resuming these lands. But the government was to refund the value of the land to the next of kin.
- (b) in case the lands for which deeds of ownership were to be given according to the decisions of 24 December 1757 were put up for sale, the Company was to get first preference, if the land was suitable for cinnamon.

With regard to service tenure lands Schreuder's measures laid down

that,

(a)

those service tenure lands for which claims could not be proved according to the procedures to be laid down, would revert to the government, and

(b)

in case of service tenure lands for which title could be proved, if situated in localities suitable for cinnamon, such lands were to be resumed by the Company on the death of the current holder; and the heirs were to be given lands in areas unsuitable for cinnamon.<sup>6</sup>

These measures to conserve cinnamon were indeed harsh. They threatened to disinherit large numbers of landholders of lands made productive newly in localities considered suitable for cinnamon. And the determination of suitability itself had been done rather arbitrarily, on eye estimates, as the reports themselves bear witness to. And in a region such as the southwest where the ecological conditions did not vary greatly, except in the deep south, many localities could be considered suitable for cinnamon. In the Adikāri pattu of the Siyana korale of the Colombo Disavany, which had 32 villages, cinnamon had been traditionally peeled in 18, and in all others there was at least some cinnamon as well as land suitable for cinnamon according to the report of Schreuder's commissioners. The situation was very similar in much of the rest of the Colombo Disāvany and the Galu koralē; but in the drier regions of the Matara Disavany where cinnamon was not collected the situation was not so threatening. Lands already planted were under threat as well as the future expansion of arable land. What is more the government went on to destroy gardens already made in accordance with the decisions In the Alutkuru korale of the Colombo Disavany, for which taken. information is available, 71 gardens were condemned to be destroyed. Most of these were enclosed, and mainly planted with coconut along with a few other garden crops. The extent of the gardens varied from 10 to 4000 coconut trees.

The measures concerning service tenures tended to tear asunder the traditional social fabric first by disinheriting near relatives who according to tradition had the right to succeed to such lands, and also by the proposals to give lands in areas unsuitable for cinnamon in exchange for lands in localities suitable for cinnamon. In the Colombo *Disāvany* where cinnamon could grow almost anywhere, no service tenure or other holding was safe. They faced the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> D A Kotelawele, "Agrarian Policies of the Dutch...", op.cit., pp 28-9.

prospect of being eventually resumed by the government and what grew on them being destroyed for cinnamon to grow in place of them. The situation in the Gālu  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}$  and the Mātara *Disāvany* could not have been very different.

These measures of Schreuder led to widespread rebellions in the Dutch territories of the southwest beginning in 1758, and Schreuder's successor found it impossible to continue with them. The policy concerning cinnamon production and the land policy that was developed to assist it was abandoned on the instructions received from Batavia dated 4 December 1767. The new instructions from Batavia contained many novel features affecting cinnamon production as well as land grants.

Before turning to the elaboration and implementation of the new policy laid down in Batavia it is necessary to deal with another aspect of Company policy in the island: namely the promotion and monopolistic control of the other agricultural products of commercial value in the southwest. Some of the products that the Company monopolised were traditional in the external trade of the island. Elephants, arecanut, pepper and cardamom can be counted among these while coffee was a new introduction. Arecanuts had a ready market in India and continued to be so till the end of Company's rule in the island. Around 3000 amunas (each amuna contained 2600 nuts), were collected in the island: of this quantity some 800 amunas were from the Colombo Disāvany and the rest presumably from Galle and Mātara. Of the quantity collected in the Colombo Disāvany, nearly two thirds were purchased, at the rate of rix dollars 4/5 per amuna, and the remainder was collected as a tax due to the government from earlier times. The relative position of arecanut purchased as against those collected as dues is not known in respect of the Galu korale and the Matara Disavany, but could not be very different from that of the Colombo Disāvany. The average selling price of arecanut to the Indian merchants who called in the Dutch controlled harbours of the island in the mid-eighteenth century was 9 rix dollars.

Arecanut deliveries even for payment continued to be a problem. Payments for deliveries were unsatisfactory. When part deliveries of the commodity were made, no payments were effected until the full quantity due was delivered. This discouraged people from making deliveries of the balance due. When this situation occurred during the governorship of van Gollenesse he issued orders asking people who had made part deliveries to come forward and make claim for the deliveries made. Deliveries of arecanut even for payment continued to be problematic due to the tardiness of payments, so much so that in Galle and Mātara people simply allowed the nut to rot under the trees without even bothering to collect. This made some Moors come up with a proposal in 1750 to collect and deliver arecanut dues at 4/5 rix dollars an *amuna* of 2700 nuts on the condition the Company agreed to buy other arecanut collected in the Company territories as well as in the King's lands at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  rix dollars an *amuna*. This arrangement was accepted by the Company authorities.

Arecanut exports continued to be profitable in the post 1766 period too and lands were even granted to plant arecanut. The importance of the crop was underlined in the instructions issued to higher headmen, which requested them to encourage plantations and collect the produce diligently and make payments for deliveries promptly. The chiefs were even allowed an incentive for enhanced collections.<sup>7</sup> Among the crops strongly promoted on the orders of Governor van de Graaf in 1787 was arecanut: the order exhorted the people to take to crops like cinnamon, pepper, coffee and arecanut in order to earn profits which would enhance the welfare of their families.

However the collection of arecanut continued to be a problem and consequently the government decided to give up collecting the item both as tax and for payment in 1790. Even arrears due to the government were canceled. The Company agreed to pay for arecanut deliveries at the rate of 3 rix dollars per amuna of 30,000 nuts, and anyone who wished to sell at a higher price to a private party was free to do so. The Company also authorized people to buy areca in the country and sell it to the Company, at the Company price.<sup>8</sup> And the Company continued to sell the item to the traders who called at the harbours of the island. The new arrangement freed the people from delivering tax areca and areca for which paltry payments were made in the most unsatisfactory manner. The Company itself was saved the burden of collecting the item for which purpose they had to maintain garden and tree registers and utilise the entire government machinery. The new arrangement was more beneficial to the producer as the persons authorized to buy in the villages had a vested interest in maximizing collections and hence of treating the peasant producer better.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> L Hovy, Ceylonee Plakkaatboek, 2 Vols, (Hilversum, 1991), (hereafter referred to as Hovy I or Hovy II), II, pp 843-50, instructions to the chief of Moravak korale, 31 May 1785.

ibid., pp 932-3, Placcaat cancelling area taxes, 12 September 1790.

Pepper was another product of the island that the Company found profitable to promote. Even though pepper was procured in other parts of the Dutch empire and trading stations in Asia, in Sri Lanka too relatively large quantities were collected for export. Not all Dutch officers in the island were agreed on the active promotion of the crop in the island. Governor Schreuder for example was of the opinion that if pepper cultivation was strongly pursued in the island, it would lead to the Company losing its interests in pepper in Malabar which would result in the Company's rivals gaining a monopoly position of the pepper trade there which could well result in a glut of pepper in the European market. Nevertheless pepper culture was promoted right through the eighteenth century in the island by the Dutch.

A good deal of the pepper collected in the island by the Dutch came from the Kandyan kingdom. For example of the 95,898 pounds of pepper collected in 1750 as much as 75,175 pounds came from the Kandyan kingdom.

Thus the Company took to the promotion of the crop in its own territories. Pepper was to be intercropped with other products in the existing gardens, but governors like van Gollenesse went on to make grants for the sole cultivation of pepper. It would appear that the population had not taken As result of the failure of the inducements and readily to the crop. exhortations to the headmen and the inhabitants, the government was even forced to punish village chiefs. This happened in 1743 when the Governor dismissed several village chiefs for not paying attention to the promotion of pepper. However, Governors like Schreuder realised that exhortations were not sufficient to induce a reluctant peasant population to take to a crop rapidly. As Schreuder put it: "nothing conduces so much to the promotion of a product than the raising of its price, nothing makes it decline more than the lowering of the same." Apart from the lack of an adequate price inducement there were other disincentives in the way of progress. The activity necessary to propagate a new product did mean that more of the labour services of the people would have to be deployed there. Governor van Gollenesse observed that the people were averse," to all novelties through fear of government services being increased, in which they are not wholly mistaken." In addition the brusque treatment meted out by officials and the delays in making payments for deliveries made the people generally reluctant to take to cultivation for the Company.

In 1752 the purchase price of pepper was increased from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  stivers a pound to 4 stivers a pound when the government realised that this was the best way to obtain enhanced deliveries. The following figures of pepper purchased by the Company in the mid-eighteenth century give an indication of the level of deliveries in the middle of the eighteenth century. These figures include deliveries from the kingdom of Kandy.

1743/44	31,978	1752/53	57,564
44/45	78,748	53/54	198,495
45/46	122,004	54/55	87,388
46/47	116,008	56/57	243,521
47/48	57,884	57/58	127,173
48/49	135,916	58/59	298,218
49/50	95,498	59/60	218,252
51/52	226,240	60/61	199,282

# Table 1Pepper deliveries in lb.9

Under the changed policy in the post 1766 period too pepper continued to be demanded by the Company. The promotion of pepper culture was given an important place in the instructions to leading headmen. By 1785 the price paid for deliveries had risen to 5 stivers a pound. In van de Graaf's instructions to headmen he exhorted them to grow pepper and promote the crop among the inhabitants. The order spoke in glowing terms of the advantages that would accrue to the inhabitants by taking to the crop in improving their welfare, noting that it took only three years for a vine to bear fruit. Schools were encouraged to take to the production of the crop and rewards were promised even to the school children.<sup>10</sup>

Cardamom was another crop that the Company was interested in collecting in the island. In the eighteenth century the European demand for the product increased sharply. Cardamom also had demand in the Asian market. Between 1702 and 1721 the annual requirement from Amsterdam for cardamom increased from 5000 pounds to 8000 pounds and by 1749 this had risen to 10,000 pounds. This level of demand remained well into the 1790s. Cardamom was collected mainly in the Mātara *Disāvany* although the

<sup>9</sup> D A Kotelawele, op. cit.

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Hovy II, pp 885-7, Governor van de Graaf's instructions 12 May 1787.

production there was very little. From early 18th century the Company tried to propagate a variety brought from Cochin in the Colombo *Disāvany* and this effort continued well into the 18th century although with very little results. Thus the bulk of the cardamom collected in the island came from the lands of the Kandyan kingdom. By the middle of the 18th century the delivery of cardamom had become the obligation of the people of the Moravak  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}$  of the Mātara *Disāvany*. The Company officers advanced money to certain groups of people in the Moravak  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}$  who went into the Sabaragamuva *disāvany* of the Kandyan kingdom to collect cardamom. Over and above the money given by the Company these people took such items as liquor, copper items, arecanut knives, some items of textiles, partly as gifts and partly as dues to be paid for entry and exit to and from the Kandyan kingdom. There is evidence that even after the Dutch left, the people of the Moravak  $k\bar{o}ral\bar{e}$  had some trading relationships with Sabaragamuva.<sup>11</sup>

In mid-18th century the Company was able to collect the 10,000 pound requirement, for Europe at 2 3/5 stivers a pound. Governor Schreuder raised the purchase price to 4 stivers a pound but this was disallowed by Batavia. By 1780 it was found difficult to collect the requirement of 10,000 pounds even though the price had been raised to 4 stivers a pound again. A leading Sinhalese headman from Mātara, Tennakoon *Mudaliyār*, went into the causes of the decline of cardamom purchases at the request of the *Disāva* of Mātara van Angelbeek. He reported that the persistent drought in the producing areas had reduced the productivity of the plants which grew wild. The increasing resort to *chēnas*, and higher demands by the Court of Kandy as well as temples made the situation worse.<sup>12</sup> Thus by the end of the period of Dutch rule the quantity actually collected was less than what was required for trade in Europe.

The difficulties of collecting the crop which had declined in productivity and for which the demand had increased in the Kandyan areas made those people responsible for the deliveries come under pressure from the Dutch authorities. This became a cause of complaint in the Mātara rebellion of 1790. The 4 stiver price advanced to the people who went to collect cardamom proved inadequate to meet the various demands made by headmen of the areas where the cardamom was collected: these were in the form of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> D A Kotelawele, "Agrarian Policies of the Dutch...," op. cit.

SLNA 1/639, unpaginated, Report of Mudaliyār Tillekeratne to Disāva van Angelbeek, 27 January 1790.

gifts mainly. Thus it was pointed out that the price paid by the Company was inadequate. Furthermore when there was a shortfall in the deliveries for moneys taken from the Company those who failed had to pay an interest of 50 percent on the advances for which no deliveries were made. During the course of the rebellion of Mātara the government agreed to raise the price as well as do away with the interest charged.<sup>13</sup>

A new crop that was introduced to the island by the Dutch was coffee. In 1722 the Company launched the crop promising the inhabitants that the crop "would provide you both great and small within a year or two with abundant money sufficient to make you rich, or at least for the ample maintenance of you and your families." A price of 3 stivers a pound was promised. Growers in service tenure lands were to be paid for only half the deliveries and the others for nine tenths. From 1723 to 1738 Amsterdam requested the Company authorities in the island to collect as much coffee as possible in the island. From 1738 the instructions were merely to collect what was delivered and not to encourage further growing. The note changed again in the period 1745 to 1759 when Colombo was instructed to reduce cultivation of the crop. From 1760 this trend was reversed and Colombo was once again asked to buy as much coffee as possible in the island. In the latter half of the 18th century coffee cultivation continued to be encouraged but on a minor key, the Company only promising to pay 2 stivers a pound.

The vagaries of Company demand had their effect on the prices and the growers. In 1745 the purchase price was reduced from 3 to 2 stivers a pound. In the same year it was reported that coffee growing was virtually abandoned in the Mātara *Disāvany*. In 1753 coffee purchases had ceased in Colombo and Galle. In 1757 the Company had ordered the resumption of coffee growing but no deliveries had been made that year. In the post-1766 period coffee was only encouraged on a minor scale. Thus despite large promises made at the beginning of the second decade of the 18th century the Company failed to sustain the same interest in the crop throughout. Despite these vagaries of Company policy it is remarkable that large quantities of coffee were delivered in the mid-eighteenth century.

<sup>13</sup> SLNA 1/2908.

43/44	78,135 153,975	1749/50 52/53	95,698 108,000
44/45	89,000	53/54	53,750
47/48	62,250	54/55	37,750
48/49	198,904	55/56	592,250

# Table 2Coffee deliveries in lb.14

To return to the major changes in policy on production of cinnamon in the post 1766 period, Batavian authorities in their instructions of 4 December 1767 decided to cancel Schreuder's measures enacted in 1757 and 1758 on the protection of cinnamon. With the new instructions the policy of collection of cinnamon in the villages, through the exclusive caste services of the salāgamas, was given up. The new instructions declared cinnamon to be a "general product," the cultivation of which was encouraged to everyone, the salāgama caste remaining responsible only for the peeling and preparation of the cinnamon. The practice of peeling cinnamon in private gardens was given up and the government was to buy the cinnamon produced in private lands the peeling and curing being left to the salāgama caste for a payment. The principle of granting lands for the cultivation of cinnamon and other products was accepted but careful examination of lands to be granted was insisted upon in order that existing cinnamon was not destroyed.<sup>15</sup> This policy was further articulated in a placeaat issued in March 1776, which laid down that makers of cinnamon gardens would have the right to bequeath them to their descendants. These lands could not be sold, mortgaged or gifted but could remain in the possession of the developer who could leave them to his descendants; but they could not be divided upon the death of the holder. Families could inherit them undivided. They could be held by heirs in common, evidently to ensure that there would be no fragmentation. When the cinnamon in a private land was ready for peeling the owner had to inform the authorities who would arrange for the peelers to go to the land and peel and prepare the cinnamon. The cinnamon had to be made into bundles of 30 pounds each. The headmen of peelers would give receipts for the quantity

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> D A Kotelawele, "Agrarian Policies of the Dutch...," op.cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> K A 924 fos. 53-64, GG&C Batavia to G&C, Colombo, 4 December 1767.

prepared and transport the cinnamon to the Company stores. The owner of the land had to go to the Dutch authorities with the receipts who would then be paid at the rate of one rix dollar per bale of 30 pounds.<sup>16</sup>

The interest of the Company in the production of cinnamon in the new scheme was such that even illicitly held lands if put to cinnamon production could be granted deeds of ownership on the same conditions as others. New lands were granted to cultivate cinnamon on the condition that one third of the produce was given free to the Company.

In order to further encourage the headmen to take a greater interest in the production of cinnamon and less importantly of other crops as well, the headmen were promised gold chains and medallions and honorary titles as rewards for good performance.<sup>17</sup> The intensive interest taken in promoting cinnamon and other crops is further emphasized in the order of Governor van de Graaf's of 1787. This order is of special significance as it deals with cinnamon specifically. Realising that the making and maintenance of cinnamon gardens was labour intensive, in which not many could succeed in the conditions of the times, an offer was made that they could apply to the senior Dutch officials to obtain money and paddy necessary to pay for the labour required on a monthly basis. The Company was to keep a separate account of these disbursements which could be recovered when cinnamon was delivered.<sup>18</sup> Thus the emergence of a form of paid labour for the development of cinnamon gardens was encouraged through this measure.

These measures to encourage crops, principally cinnamon, resulted in headmen taking great interest in obtaining lands for development. The more enterprising headmen as well as others utilized the opportunity to acquire control over land. On an application made by him the titular *Mudaliyār* of the *Mahābadda*, Nanediri Simon de Soyza, was made the chief *Mudaliyār* of Katupitiya Mādampe with authority over the salāgamas living there. The *Mudaliyār* was granted all the lands in Katupitiya Mādampe on the condition that he cultivated them with coconut, coffee and pepper. The salāgamas who had earlier fled to the king's territories were to be invited to live in these lands. Another land grant made in 1785 also reflected the spirit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Hovy II, pp 781-4, Instructions to the Chiefs and inhabitants of the disāvanies... regarding ownership and management of cinnamon gardens, 22 March 1776.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Hovy II, pp 843-50, Instructions to the chief of Moravak korale, 31 May 1765.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, pp 885-7, Instructions of Governor van de Graaf, 12 May 1787.

of the new policy - this was made to Jeronis Rowel Mahavidane Mohandiram of the fishers in the Alutkūru koralē. The grant was 70 amunas in extent about 140 acres. Jeronis Rowel had fenced and developed the land as required by the Company and the Governor's Council in 1789 decided to direct the Landraad to issue him a title deed. In the same year as many as 14 school masters requested and obtained lands for the cultivation of crops, mainly cinnamon. Land grants in the Colombo Disāvany for the years 1787-89 are summarised and presented in the minutes of the Governor's Council. This helps us to gauge the interest in land development in the period. In the Siyana korale 131 lands were granted; in the Alutkuru korale 81 lands were given; and in the Raigam and Salpiti korales 75 and 45 grants were made: in the Hapitigam korale 14 lands were granted; while in the Pasdun korale and Kalutara 16 pieces of land were alienated. The majority of the lands were for cash crops, mainly cinnamon, while there were a few grants for paddy. These grants were small in extent and even though there were 6 Mudaliyārs among the grantees the majority were to minor officials with even a few Moors and Burghers being grantees.<sup>19</sup>

The principle of combining land grants with award of titles became a feature of this period. This principle was applied with vigour in the late 1780s in the Mātara *Disāvany*. Here officeholders were made to sign contracts to develop lands with a cash crop and even timber yielding trees. The emphasis on timber is also a feature in this period due to the Company's necessities of boat-making and domestic and office requirements. When new appointments were made the person obtaining the office was made to sign a contract agreeing to develop a specified extent of land within a given period of time. Failure to fulfil these contracts entailed dismissals. This became a major cause of dissatisfaction in the Mātara *Disāvany* which ended in the rebellion of 1790. The other causes of the rebellion too were connected with the drive to develop land as a result of which holders of service tenure lands became burdened with new services connected with the clearing and maintenance of new lands.<sup>20</sup>

However, the new policy of expanding cinnamon production was successful according to evidence available. Cinnamon production in private

<sup>20</sup> SLNA 1/2908.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> VOC 23844, unpaginated, Resolutions (inlands department), 9 January and 9 March 1789, 3 February 1789; also lists of lands given between September 1788 and August 1789 in the same volume.

holdings which was non-existent in the pre-1767 period had grown by leaps and bounds by the 1780s. In the figures submitted for the cinnamon produced in Colombo from private lands and from government collections in the traditional manner, it was revealed that in 1787 the Company collected 1790 bales (of 30 pounds each) while 1375 bales came from private gardens. In Galle the figures were 1939 and 1682 bales respectively; and in the Mātara *Disāvany* the figures were 116 bales in the traditional manner and 95 bales. Thus a considerable portion of cinnamon came to be collected from privately held land.<sup>21</sup> This is indeed a phenomenal development.

Parallel to the developments outlined so far, changes in service tenures occurred during the period of Company rule that made the society of the southwest of Sri Lanka so different from that of the contemporary Kandyan kingdom. The service pravenis were land held by all who had to perform a service to the state or community based on the caste status usually: these services could be as soldier, smith, washer, potter or labourer. These services were heritable in families just as the lands to which these services were usually attached. The service lands could be held in families as long as the services attached to the lands were performed. The underlying assumption sometimes overtly expressed, was that if the lands were relinquished one could relinquish the service attached them. This was the position taken by the inhabitants of the Colombo Disāvany in the mid-eighteenth century when they found that their service pravenis were registered as lands on which taxes were due. The inhabitants protested that they held the lands as service pravenis and if taxes were imposed on them they would relinquish them and free themselves from the service obligations.22 The same assumption is underlined in a government order of the late 18th century. This order prohibited the chiefs from buying, taking mortgages or taking over in any other way the service pravenis of poorer service tenure holder.<sup>23</sup> The reason for this interdiction was the government's loss of valuable services of service tenure holders once they were alienated. Thus the service tenure system while it tied the holder to the land to which the services was attached also accepted the idea that the holder of a service tenure could relinquish his service by giving up the holding.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> VOC 3845, pp 284-5, Cinnamon deliveries, 3 March 1789.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> D A Kotelawele, "Agrarian Policies of the Dutch...," op. cit.

<sup>23</sup> Hovy II, Instructions to the higher native chiefs of Galu korale and Matara Disavany, 30 December 1784.

However in the late 18th century, due to hectic land development work, for increased production of cinnamon, coffee, pepper, arecanut and even timber there was an increasing demand for labour. In addition to the traditional services, the service tenure holders were now burdened with clearing, planting and maintaining the newly developed lands. A primary cause for the rebellion in the Matara Disavany in 1790 was connected to these changed circumstances. Among the first of the complaints of the rebels of the Matara Disavany was that many heavy, unusual and previously unheard of services were imposed on the minor headmen and the ordinary inhabitants who performed them through fear. Further, they maintained, that in return for holding service tenures, the services of all the able bodied members of a family were required whether the number in the family was 5 or 10. Van Angelbeek the Disāva of Mātara replied that he merely imposed the old obligations, only more strictly. The Commissioners who were appointed to examine the grievances of the rebels admitted that additional services had been increasing in the circumstances; in the Matara Disavany these included fortification and plantation development work. The Commissioners also admitted that additional people had been called up. The manner in which the additional services had been used by the Disāva in plantation development work is illustrated in another complaint of the inhabitants. The Disāva had cleared a land in a place called Kolotte, so ran the complaint, which was 3/4 miles in width and 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> miles in length, and had enclosed it with the services of some 470 men: and the land has been planted with cinnamon, coffee, arecanut, timber bearing trees, and pepper. Those employed had been given provisions from the Company's stores and the work had gone on for two years. Even though van Angelbeek in his reply disputed the extent of the land and the number of people employed, the example illustrates the lot of the service tenure holders under the new policy on opening more and more lands.24

Thus by the end of the 18th century the lot of the service tenure holders had become worse because their ability to free themselves was considerably reduced. There was another accompanying development in relation to the condition of the service tenure holders. It was noted that van Angelbeek supplied the people whom he put to work developing the land in Kolotte, with provisions. The giving of provisions to work was an admission that the work itself did not come within the ordinary service obligations of a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> SLNA 1/2908, unpaginated, Proceedings of Commission of Fretz and Samlant, 4,25, 26 & 27 May 1790.

service tenure holder. In the Colombo *Disāvany* a parallel development was taking place. The *Disāva* of Colombo, Billing, reported in 1786, that to maintain the current extents of government owned cinnamon lands he needed the services of 1334 men; for the opening up and development of new lands he needed another 1000. Nevertheless he found that the village headmen and the *salāgama* chiefs who had to find the service tenure holders for these tasks were hard pressed to find this level of labour to assist the cinnamon plantation work. In order to overcome the reluctance of service tenure holders to work in the new development work, it was agreed to make a payment of one rix dollar and a parra of paddy per month per person for work in plantation development work.<sup>25</sup> Thus by the end of Dutch rule in the country, on the one hand the service tenure holders found themselves more tightly bound to the services; on other hand they developed characteristics of wage labour.

The lands granted for the services of headmen came to be known as *accommodessan* lands. These land grants were made for holding specific posts and had to revert to the government on the death, dismissal or resignation of the holder. At the beginning of Dutch rule these grants tended to be more liberal on the assumption that more liberal grants would make them more loyal to the Dutch. Even though the *accommodessans* had to revert to the government when the holder ceased to hold office, the fact that even higher and middling offices tended to be held in family lines made this category of land too more akin to the service *pravēnis*.

There were attempts to reduce and regulate the extents of *accommodessans* held by headmen especially after Governor van Imhoff pointed out the excesses. Even if they were effectively controlled other avenues were available for obtaining lands for the families of headmen; also it was they who could develop lands with the labour of the service tenure holders under their control. There has also been the tendency for headmen to buy, take in mortgages or otherwise take control of, the lands of the poorer service tenure holders which was serious enough for the Dutch authorities to legislate against.<sup>26</sup>

By the mid-eighteenth century accumulation of considerable holdings in the hands of the headmen, especially the higher ones became a feature of

<sup>25</sup> SLNA 1/702, unpaginated, Resolutions G&C Colombo (inlands department), 12 August 1786.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Hovy 11, Instructions to the higher native chiefs of Gālu koralē and Mātara Disāvany, 30 December 1784-esp, article 25, pp 834-8.

the lowland Sinhalese territories ruled by the Dutch; they were also noted as those who could pay their garden taxes in cash referred to earlier. This group was identified by the *Disāva* of Colombo as *Mudaliyārs*, *kōralēs*, *vidānēs*, *appuhāmys*, *saparamādus* and headmen of castes of fishermen, native carpenters, gold and iron smiths as well as washers.<sup>27</sup> The headmen of the *salāgamas* who were engaged in cinnamon peeling could be added to this list. By mid-eighteenth century the *Disāva* reported that some of these headmen held as many as 35 land holdings each. Even though the exact extent of these is not available the landholdings of these headmen must have been considerable. The post 1766 period, with its feverish activity in developing cinnamon and other products, saw a great accentuation of this tendency and we have some examples of the land acquired by headmen in the preceding section.

Indications of the wealth of the headmen are found in contemporary sources. An early nineteenth century writer who was an officer under the Dutch, remarked that the Sinhalese headmen "fit up their houses in the European style and burn wax candles in silver candlesticks instead of the lamp which served them before."<sup>28</sup> Lists of movable properties of the Sinhalese headmen of the period confirm this view. Accurate estimates of wealth of Sinhalese headmen cannot be made in the present state of our knowledge. However an estimate made by the Governor van de Graaf in the course of a discussion of the headmen of Mātara *Disāvany* in 1790 may give a useful indication. It was stated that the assets of Tennakoon *Mudaliyār* who served in the Mātara *Disāvany* for a long time and whose ancestors had held similar positions, were worth 150,000 guilders.<sup>29</sup>

An important parallel development in the southwest of the island was the development of firm titles to land. By the mid-eighteenth century there was a phenomenal growth of non service tenure holdings in the Colombo *Disāvany* and the situation could not have been very different in the Gālu *kōralē* and Mātara *Disāvany*. Of a total of some 30,000 holdings only 4667

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> K A 2874 fos. 627-30, Disāva Cramer's Report on the Colombo Disāvany, 1 February 1760.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Burnand's "Memoir on Ceylon, 1809," The Monthly Literary Register, 1895, Vol. 3, pp 269-70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> SLNA 1/780, unpaginated, Resolution of the Governor and Council, (Secret), 15 November 1790.

were considered service tenures.<sup>30</sup> Thus freehold tenures had grown significantly.

The development of legislation went hand in hand with this. In the ordinance establishing the very first tribunal in the island, the Commissioners of Daily Causes, provision was made for the registration of transactions in immovable property. It was laid down that such transactions should be conducted in the presence of two members of the tribunal and registered with the said Commissioners. Since the Commissioners were confined to Galle, it was laid down that in the countryside, such transactions would be done in the presence of headmen of villages where the land belonged; and these transactions were to be reported annually to the said Commissioners and properly registered with the secretary to the tribunal. In the same legislation rules governing prescription too were laid down.<sup>31</sup>

In 1663 it was found that many among the Burghers and other inhabitants were transferring their lands, gardens and houses with simple notes, and due to their unlawful nature, many purchasers of such properties had come to grief. Consequently procedures were laid down to register the transfers in the presence of two members of the *Raad van Justitie*. A time limit of six months was given to complete the registration formalities.<sup>32</sup> This regulation pertained primarily to city dwellers.

A development that is connected with property transfer was the introduction of stamped paper by a *placcaat* of 1676. The practice of using informal notes was remedied in the *placcaat* referred to earlier. The *placcaat* of 1676 goes further in this direction. The new *placcaat* following the practice in The Netherlands and in Batavia laid down that no acts or instruments of a public or judicial nature would be valid unless they had the Company's seal and were duly signed by authorized persons. Consequently, the "respective secretaries and clerks and other public persons," were instructed to regulate themselves accordingly: all those who had the responsibility of accepting documents for transfer and similar transactions were notified of the manner of implementation of the decision. A stamp fee for each transaction was also laid down in the *placcaat*. The documents that

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, *Placcaat* of 21-25 May 1663, p 107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> K A 2795, Unpaginated Resolutions, 4 May 1757.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Hovy 1, Ordinance for the Commissioners of Daily Causes..., 16 July 1648, pp 14-6.

come within the purview of this *placcaat* were, all contracts of purchase and sale, of movable and immovable properties, compromises, judgements of courts, testaments codicils and last wills, marriage conditions, inventories of movable and immovable properties and a host of similar matters. All secretaries, notaries and other authorized persons of the courts, including the Orphans Chamber were required to be guided by this order.<sup>33</sup> In this way the use of formalised paper in conveyancing may be said to have been introduced. This order strengthened the existing rules on the transfer and alienation of landed property.

During the *tombo* registration work it was found that there were many cases where false claims to private and Company lands were wrongfully registered with the *tombo* by usurpers. In order to forestall such happenings it was decided that the sale and alienation of immovable properties must have the prior approval of the *Landraad* in the future.<sup>34</sup>

In mid-18th century the question of legal transfer of properties came up once again when it was discovered that the legislation of 1663 was widely disregarded. The underhand transfer and alienation by sale and mortgages of lands, houses and boats had not only led to confusion with regard to the determination of ownership, but had also deprived the government of incomes from such transactions. Thus once again, the procedure for all manner of alienation of movable and immovable properties, whether by gift sale or mortgage was laid down.<sup>35</sup> The enactment of these rules referring to older legislation is no doubt a result of increasing number of transactions in properties.

In the late 18th century due to increasing transactions in lands, numerous instances occurred that shed light on the nature of problems in land transfers. One such case reported in the Governor's Council concerned the sale of a paddy land. The purchaser refused to pay the tax of one tenth on it since the deed of sale did not mention it. The Governor's Council decided that in future, in issuing deeds to transactions of this nature the tax

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, *Placcaat* regulating the use of stamped paper, 16-21 July 1676, pp 184-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Hovy 11, Advertisement prohibiting the alienation of gardens and lands, 9 October 1743, pp 485-6 & 749.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, *Placcaat* forbidding the alienation, mortgaging... etc., 4[1] May 1757, pp 585-9.

encumbrances on the lands concerned must be indicated in the deed.<sup>36</sup>

Thus by the end of the period of Dutch rule the rights of private property over land and movable goods were well established, along with instruments concerning their possession and transfer: the manner of transfer also has been laid down. This is a major development in landholding in the lowland areas of the country, especially when compared with the developments in the contemporary kingdom of Kandy where rights of private property were altogether at a different level of evolution.<sup>37</sup>

We need to turn now to the main features of the economic policy of the VOC in the Jaffna Commandment - on which there is relatively less information in the records than on other parts of the VOC's territories in Sri Lanka - and to assess its impact on the people. From the outset a total ban on free trade in the region had been imposed and the Company resorted to and insisted on a, monopolisation of the trade of the commandment. Again, from the very outset of its rule in Jaffna the Company sought to enhance its revenues and to collect them more efficiently through improvements in the device of land and population records - the head and land tombos. As we shall see the implementation of these policies in the first half century of its rule led to a great deal of dissatisfaction, and to unrest which contributed to the eruption of a rebellion: it also led to a great deal of discussion and debate among the company servants the records of which yield much information on the society and economy of the period. The main lines of policy decided upon at this time also greatly influenced the policy of the subsequent period. There was no significant change in it through much of the late 17th century, and over the 18th century, despite all the evidence available that the people at large were too poor, and the economy of the region too weak, to sustain the increased demand in taxes imposed by the Company.

The territories of the Commandment of Jaffnapatnam consisted of the Jaffna peninsula and the inhabited islands around it and some territories to the south across the lagoon, not all of which was directly governed by the Company. The peninsula was divided for administrative purposes into four provinces: Välikamam, Tenmarachchi, Vadamarachchi and Pachilaipalai. Each of the provinces generally had a local headman known as the collector as its head: but the province of Valikamam had two since it was the most

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> SLNA 1/1702, Resolutions, G&C Colombo, 18 April 1786.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Ralph Pieris, "Title to Land in Kandyan Law" in Sir Paul Pieris Felicitation Volume, (Colombo, Sir Paul Pieris Felicitation Volume Committee, 1956), pp 92-114.

extensive and fertile of the provinces. Under the collectors were the headmen often referred to as *mayoraals*, a term derived from Portuguese usage: the *mayoraals* were supported by an equal number of assistants known as *kayaals*. At the beginning of Dutch rule in the north, there were around 150 of each of the above categories of village officials, all of whom were paid a small salary. The collectors were entitled to a percentage -- one percent -- of the taxes collected. Unlike in the southern territories there were no land grants for their maintenance. It was the responsibility of the *mayoraals* to collect and deliver taxes and dues from the villages every quarter to the collectors who in turn delivered them to the Dutch authorities. Timely dispatch of people obliged to render service to the state, known as *uli*, was also an important part of their duties.

The territories immediately to the south of the lagoon that separated the peninsula from the mainland were known as the "borders of Vanni" and were directly administered from Jaffna. These territories do not seem to have been very thickly populated at this time. South of these lands was the territory of the Vanniyārs who owed allegiance to the Dutch. They were semi-feudal rulers who were allowed to administer their territories and collect taxes as well as administer justice there, on condition that they delivered annually a specified number of elephants to the Company.

From the very beginning of Company rule in the north, these territories proved to be a profitable source of revenues despite the poverty of the population and the relative weakness of the economy in comparison with the Company's territories in the southwest of the island. The main regular sources of income for the Company were derived from personal and land taxes as well as the *uli* labour obligations of the people; in addition, there were other revenue sources such as import and export duties, taxes on textiles, rents of fishing rights, and all these augmented the Company's revenues. Trade in elephants proved to be extremely profitable especially in the seventeenth century. Renting of pearl fisheries too yielded good though occasional profits because of the intermittent nature of that enterprise.

Despite natural disasters of wind and weather the decade from 1660 to the early 1670s proved to be peaceful and relatively prosperous. Some land reclamation work done on the initiative of the Commandeurs increased agricultural production, and the total revenue from the province fluctuated between 200,000 and 300,000 guilders. However the need for a new set of *tombos* was being felt for more effective collection of revenue, as the Dutch were still - in the 1660s - using the old Portuguese *tombo* compiled in 1645 and the records available with the *mayoraals*. Even though orders were

given to commence work on a new *tombo* in 1670 it was actually started only in 1673. A committee of four was put in charge of the work which was to be carried out in two stages. At first the *mayoraals* and the *kanakapulles* (the book keepers) went round to the villages and noted the names of individuals, their taxes, landholdings and rents. On the basis of this information the Dutch officials took up the task of checking and finalising the *tombos* one province at a time. They accompanied the native officials round the villages and checked every item entered in the *tombo*. These parties also took with them surveyors who would measure the land and finalise the entries in the *tombos*. The verified information was entered a finalised form in head and land *tombos*. The committee commenced its work in Valikamam and also proceeded to Vadamarachchi. This was in 1675 and the time when serious resistance and a rebellion occurred.<sup>38</sup>

However the rebellion was not entirely caused by the activities of tombo work and the fear it induced of enhanced taxes and labour obligations. The Jaffna peninsula, generally poor in water resources, was stricken by a continuous drought from 1671, the years 1674 and 1675 being particularly bad. Crops withered in the fields and the animals too were badly affected.<sup>39</sup> These conditions would have gravely affected the livelihood of the people who were now threatened with exposure to higher taxes. Meanwhile the population had been performing excessive uli service. In 1671 when van Goens visited Jaffna he found the fortifications in a dilapidated condition and persuaded the headmen to increase the uli service of the people to attend to work on the fortifications. Thus instead of one day in the month three days of uli service was imposed. The inhabitants found that to perform 3 days of uli service they had to spend up to five days, the additional days being spent on travelling. On many complaints being received the Company decided to reduce the number of days of uli service to the original one day in 1675. However at the same time the amount of poll tax payable by the people was doubled in order to compensate for this.<sup>40</sup> The heavy increase of the poll tax now became a cause of complaint. In fact when the rebellious activity began

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> S Arasaratnam, "Trade and Agricultural Economy of the Tamils of Jaffna during the latter half of the Seventeenth Century" in *Tamil Culture*, Vol. IX, No. 4, 1961, pp 371-86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> VOC 1308 fos. 385, Commandeur and Council (hereafter C&C) to G&C Colombo, 8 December 1675; VOC 1316 fos. 236-7, C&C to G&C Colombo, 2 January 1675; VOC 1321 fos 842-6, Commandeur's Report to Governor, 25 April 1676.

<sup>40</sup> VOC 1370 fos. 1805-7, Short narration and description of the situation of the Company etc., 10 July 1681.

this was one of the grievances mentioned in the *olas* that the rebels hung and displayed in bazaars.<sup>41</sup>

We need to examine the role played by the native headmen in this outbreak. As often alleged by the Dutch officials it was the richer and more powerful sections of the population who held most of the land who stood threatened by the tombo compilation work, and that these sections of the population, consisting of the mayoraals and their relatives had a natural reluctance to reveal the full extent of their holdings, in common with the others; they also had a vested interest in concealing from Dutch officials accurate information on what they actually collected from the people. This was so even with regard to uli service. Once more reliable information was available to the Company through the tombos it was not only assured of the full extent of services but it became more difficult for the headmen to utilize, for their own use, the labour services of the inhabitants that were truly due to the state. Thus the native headmen had their grievances against the improved system of revenue extraction being imposed by the Dutch, and may have encouraged popular resistance; certainly they appear to have done little to check it.

It was well known that the headmen both at the receiver levels as well as the mayoral level had connections with the Vanniyārs. While many leading Vellālan families in Jaffna had ties of kinship with the leading Vanniyārs, the population in general held the Vanniyārs in high regard and esteem.<sup>42</sup> It is possible that the Vanniyārs did at least connive at the doings of the rebels. Certainly the rebels, when they fled to the Vanni, were looked after by Vanniyārs who at this time were being recalcitrant and defying Dutch authority. One of them, Kayla Vanniyār had a hand in fomenting the rebellion not least by helping the rebelling mayoraals to send some of their leaders to Rājasimha II of Kandy to seek assistance. At the beginning of the rebellion Tennakoon,the king's Disāva of Seven Kōralēs, had invaded the Vanni and destroyed all the Dutch fortifications there, marching all the way to Elephant Pass.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> VOC 1308 fos. 378-9, C&C to G&C Colombo, 8 December 1675.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> VOC 1308 fos. 383-4, C&C to GG&C Colombo, 8 December 1675.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Memoir of Zwaardecroon, pp 25-6.

The first evidence of trouble had come in October 1675. The Commandeur reported that the whole land was in uproar and that he could not obtain the people required for manning of vessels. Coincidentally the Kandyans had invaded the Vanni and were causing havoc with the Dutch defences there. The Commandeur was unable to do much because of his concern for the defences of the Commandment and also because of rumours of French ships being sighted in the seas around Jaffna.<sup>44</sup> The mayoraals were refusing to bring receipts for the taxes they had collected and were fleeing to the Vanni where they were protected by Kayla Vanniyār. A Vanniyār friendly to the Dutch, Nellamapane, reported that the mayoraals had gone on to the king's Vanni and were seeking support there. Meanwhile rumours were being spread in the peninsula itself that those mayoraals who remained in office would be killed. In fact one mayoraal who returned and saw the Commandeur was killed and his family injured in the attack.<sup>45</sup> However no other acts of rebel violence are reported. Unable to sustain the rebellious stance the mayoraals began to return by the end of 1676. The Dutch on their part could not go in force against the Vanniyārs or the rebels due to the fear that the Kandyans may exploit the situation to their own advantage.46

What is perhaps the last episode of the protest against the Dutch in these areas occurred in mid-1679. While the Commandeur was away visiting the pearl banks in Mannar, four people described as "devil binders," who were perhaps lowly priests of popular Hinduism, were reported to be working "miracles." They were attracting large gatherings ranging from twelve to fifteen thousand people at a time. Among the "miracles" attributed to them were making cripples walk and the blind regain their sight. The populace had been making offerings in money and food in response. The "miracle workers" had proclaimed the coming of the *Nagathaivan*, the cobra god of that ancient cult, with the aim of ridding the land of the Hollanders. This had gone on for a long time without any Dutch officials knowing about it. In fact when the oracles of the coming redeemer had gathered a large crowd near a church the *predikant* had asked what the crowd had gathered for and received the reply that there was a wedding ceremony! However on the return of the Commandeur the miracle makers were arrested with the

<sup>46</sup> VOC 1316 fos. 234-5, C&C to G&C Colombo, 10 December 1676.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, fos. 358-60, C&C to G&C Colombo, 8 December 1675.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> VOC 1321 fos. 878-9, C&C to G&C Colombo, 14 September 1676.

assistance of Brahmin Timmerasa, an influential personality in Jaffna at the time, who was also the Company's broker in the elephant trade.<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately more information is not available about this episode which seems to belong to the realm of millenarian movements. It is likely that the people in the Jaffna peninsula turned to an ancient cult for redemption from their worldly miseries brought about by dire economic circumstances.

Despite all the problems that the gathering of accurate information had entailed, and the rebellion accompanying it, the new *tombo* was completed in 1677 and resulted in a greatly enhanced assessment of the lands as seen in the figures provided below:

	Old tombo	New tombo	Increase
Välikamam	15,750	38,610	22,860
Vadamarachchi	6,111	8,940	2,829
Tenmarachchi	7,107	13,965	6,858
Pachilaipalai	4,575	5,532	957
Islands	2,478	5,583	3,105

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The above were assessments on land. When it came to poll taxes the assessment had increased by 35,160.<sup>48</sup> Thus the worst fears of the rebels had come to be justified. The people at large found that the *tombos* made it much more difficult to avoid the services due from them.

In the period following these events there was a great deal of debate over the ability of the inhabitants to bear these tax burdens especially in the context of the restrictions on trade imposed by the Dutch. Some of the leading Dutch officers themselves realised the utter hopelessness of the people and argued for relief. In general there was little or no relief granted.

The land taxes in the Jaffna commandment consisted of the garden tax and the grain tax. These taxes were paid in cash as in the past and were

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> VOC 1343 fos. 137-8, C&C to G&C Colombo, 12 September 1679.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> S Arasaratnam, *op.cit.*, The figures are in guilders. Three guilders made a rix dollar at this time. Note, however, that guilders were interchangeable with florins at this time.

levied depending on the fertility of the land and the crops. Of the grain taxes those on paddy and small grains were levied on the basis of one tenth of the harvest - this was known as the tithe. The most important field crops were tobacco, margosa and palmyra which supplemented, and indeed formed a substantial part of, the diet of the people in an area which was generally deficient in rice. Garden taxes were determined on the quality of the land on which these were grown.

The most commonly levied personal tax was the "hoofd geld" or poll tax. Almost every caste was obliged to pay it at a uniform rate. How the increase of the poll tax came about was seen earlier. Due to incessant complaints by the people and appeals by sympathetic administrators the increase was rescinded from 1690 for a period of ten years, and in 1699 on orders from Batavia this remission - or rather the return to the rate of payment of 1675 - was made permanent.<sup>49</sup>

There were other taxes levied on persons. Of these the officie, was levied on those who practiced a craft or a trade. In earlier times, - this tax had been levied even in the days of the kings of Jaffna - the collection of the tax had been on a communal or group basis, most likely by caste. However the Dutch found that this gave room for the headmen to withhold part of the taxes collected and also that when the numbers in an artisan group increased, the government did not get any benefit out of it. Hence it was decided to levy the tax on a personal, individual basis. The castes obliged to pay the officie tax included, the *Chetties* (who, by and large, were pedlars), iron smiths, silversmiths, carpenters, washers, weavers, potters, dyers, painters, fishers, cowherds and Moors who were not strictly a caste but a trading group. Generally those who paid officie were exempted from uli service; yet when some artisan castes like potters, carpenters and smiths who were made to do uli service requested freedom from it they were denied this exemption.<sup>50</sup>

A tax known as the *adigāry*, again coming down from the days of the Jaffna kingdom, was another of the personal levies. Earlier the tax has been paid in kind for the maintenance of the king's chiefs, known as *adigārs*, and the levies had been made only from the highest of castes who considered it

<sup>50</sup> VOC 1506 fos. 956, Blom Report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> VOC 1506 fos. 925-6, Report and proposals on many matters concerning the Commandment... made at the request of Governor van Rheede... by Floris Blom... Commandeur, 20 August 1692, (hereinafter referred to as the Blom Report). *Memoir of Zwaardecroon*, p 20.

a privilege to pay for the maintenance of the king's ministers. The castes that were obliged to pay this tax were, the Vellāla, Chandar and Tanakarar. Under the Dutch this tax too was doubled in the 1670s.<sup>51</sup>

Apart from the taxes levied in money from persons, the uli service was the other form of taxation of persons. According to a report prepared in 1692 by a Dutch official, Floris Blom, the following castes were obliged to perform this service to the state, the extent of which and the changes from the earlier system introduced by the Dutch have been discussed earlier: the Vellālas (agriculturists, who appear to have constituted the majority in the population), the Paradesis who were of similar status, Madappalis, Agambadis, Malayalis and Kovias. Those who were exempt from uli were mostly those castes that practiced a trade or a craft or groups like the Moors. The labour services of the inhabitants were used in many of the Company's establishments, such as the harbours, in the loading and unloading of vessels, work in coral kilns and in the fortress, fetching water for the garrison, in carpentry workshops, powder mills and a host of other duties. Antipathy to this kind of work was well known: output of this kind of labour was very poor and during the harvesting season of paddy as well as palmyra it was extremely difficult to obtain them. The absentees had to pay a fine known as sicos at the rate of two stivers a day.<sup>52</sup>

Company policies seeking to maximise profits with monopolistic and restrictive rules on some of the trades and occupations can be illustrated with a few examples. Weaving was an old industry practiced in the Jaffna peninsula and was the occupation of two castes - the *pariars* and *kaikulas*. It was thought that the government could enhance its profits from the import of cloth over which it had established a monopoly. With this in view the Company imposed a heavy duty of 25 per cent on cotton imported on which the weavers depended for the making of cloth: the idea was that the locally manufactured material would go up in price as result of which the cloth imported by the Company would have no competition from the locally manufactured cloth. But soon the Company realised the folly of the decision. The inhabitants of Jaffna much preferred the coarser locally manufactured cloth to the imported expensive varieties. Furthermore, the weavers finding it difficult to buy cotton at the higher rate of duty were reduced to destitution and began to leave for the Vanni where they set up their looms. In the Vanni

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> VOC 1506 fos. 927-8, Blom Report.

<sup>52</sup> VOC 1506 fos. 950-1, Blom Report.

they could obtain the cotton produced locally and in the Kandyan areas, without any duty. Thus they produced cloth which came not only into Jaffna but was also sent to Batticaloa and Trincomalee where the Company's sales of cloth were adversely affected. Finally the desertion of the weavers deprived the Company of the personal taxes due from them. Consequently the Company was forced to reduce the duty on cotton to seven and half per cent, the old rate. This measure is said to have encouraged the weavers to return to the province.<sup>53</sup>

Tobacco was grown extensively by the Jaffna peasant and had a lucrative market within the island as well as abroad and it enabled them to pay their garden and personal taxes. The latter was especially important in the context of a lack of free navigation which reduced the incomes of the population. Tobacco was exported to the Malabar coast which was the largest market as well as to the Coromandel coast and to the lands of the Thevar just across the narrow seas from the peninsula. Locally, the inhabitants of the Vanni, Pooneryn and Mantota came with their pack animals loaded with such items as paddy and cotton and engaged in barter for tobacco. It was estimated that the annual export trade was worth rix dollars (Rds) 24712 and the local sales were worth around Rds 10,000. In 1689 the Company decided to ban private sales and began purchasing tobacco at a price determined by it. The price of seven fanums as against the earlier price which was around 12 fanums a pack of 24 pounds<sup>54</sup> was not attractive enough and the production dropped significantly. Many gave up tobacco cultivation and took to food grains. This affected their ability to pay personal taxes and the government was forced to abandon its attempt to become the monopoly buyer of tobacco and the trade was once again put on the old footing.55

Fishing was an important occupation of the people of the Jaffna peninsula and a fair portion of it depended on it for a livelihood. The officie tax on the fishers was previously collected on a communal basis but the government decided to levy the tax on an individual basis and rent out its collection. When it was collected on the communal basis it yielded a paltry

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> VOC 1506 fos. 934-7, Blom Report; VOC 1492 fos. 118-21 C&C to G&C Colombo, 7 February 1691.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> 3 fanums made a rix dollar; the Dutch pound used at this time was equal to 0.494 kg and 1.09 lb avdp.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> VOC 1506 fos. 939-41, Blom Report; VOC 1492 fos. 118-21, C&C to G&C Colombo, 7 February 1691.

Rds 50, but when the government rented this tax in 1690 the rent yielded Rds 1100. This caused a great deal of complaint among the fisher folk, the majority of whom were among the poorest in the land with little or no landholdings at all. It was reported that the fishers lost as much as a quarter of their incomes under the new scheme, in addition to being subjected to extortions by the renter's servants. Also since very little of the fish harvest was actually sold but in fact exchanged for palmyra based food items like *pinatoo* and *klengan*, what was left after the renter took away the tax was hardly sufficient for the fisherfolk to obtain their food. Thus the introduction of renting led to great hardships for the fisher people of the peninsula. Their plight was all the more unbearable since the banning of free trade. A good part of the fisher population had engaged in the coastal trade and the restrictions imposed on coastal trade by the Dutch affected their livelihood in this manner also.<sup>56</sup>

The main principles of the economic policy of the Company in the Jaffna territories were clearly laid down by the end of the eighteenth century. That policy, in general, had adverse effects on an economy which had once been relatively prosperous if somewhat fragile, because of its great dependence on overseas trade, quite apart from the fact that agriculture in the Commandment was often seriously affected by poor rainfall if not drought conditions.

Some effects of the monopolistic policies of the Company have been discussed above. The general adverse effects of the policy of restricting the trade of the land and bringing all overseas trading under Company control needs to be emphasised as this was a matter much debated among Company officials at the time and since it had the effect of impoverishing the Many of the people had depended on an active and very population. remunerative overseas trade for a livelihood: Moors, fishers, smiths, and other artisans and even many Vellalas. The Company's monopoly over overseas trade had adverse effects on large sections of the population, and it was frequently reported by its own officials that the people were finding it difficult to pay their land and personal taxes. This created a situation where there was less and less money coming into circulation among the population. While at the beginning of Dutch rule in the province it was reported that much money was in circulation in the economy, the situation after the imposition of the restrictions on free trade was such that money was drawn Consequently land values declined and in away from the economy.

56 VOC 1506 fos 938-39, Blom Report.

desperation people were often reduced to selling their jewellery, slaves and animals for mere survival. Despite the arguments of free traders among Company officers about this situation of the people growing poorer as a result of the Company's monopolistic policies, there was a general reluctance to make any changes.<sup>57</sup>

57

VOC 1370 fos. 1781-1837, short narration and description ..., 10 July 1681.

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## **CHAPTER XVI**

### RELIGION AND THE STATE IN THE KANDYAN KINGDOM: THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

### L S Dewaraja

The religion and the religious institutions of the Kandyan kingdom are more accessible to study than any other aspect of its history. Because the *literati* of the land were *bhikkhus*, or laymen who had received instruction from them, most of the literary works of the period deal with Buddhism and Buddhist institutions.<sup>1</sup> In addition numerous epigraphic records which deal with land grants to religious institutions form a rich and reliable source which throw much light on royal relations with the *samgha*.

In matters concerning religion the Kandyan kings of the eighteenth century followed the accepted traditions of the land. The last Sinhalese king, Narēndrasimha, had not been an enthusiastic supporter of Buddhism, but in contrast the Nāyakkars displayed an intense devotion to the faith and became lavish benefactors of the *samgha*. Their aim, undoubtedly, was to stabilize their position amidst a powerful nobility by gaining popularity with the *samgha* and thereby with the people. Their attempt was self-defeating for the *samgha* was not a force apart; it was part and parcel of the Kandyan aristocracy. But their religious zeal certainly did win for them the support of the Sinhalese people. The Nāyakkar rulers were aliens in every respect and the only bond which united ruler and ruled was that of religion. It becomes clear therefore that politics more than piety prompted the Nāyakkar kings and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For a study of the literature of the period see, P B Sannasgala, Sinhala Sāhitya Vamsaya, pp 382-507.

their queens to embrace Buddhism soon after their accession, even when their relatives in the court remained openly Hindu.

The monks, especially those in the higher ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, were kith and kin with the nobility. When youths were selected for admission to the order stress was laid on "good birth." This birth qualification, a total violation of the injunctions of the Buddha, was not an innovation of this period but more evidence is available at this time of its widespread observation. The kinship ties between the samgha and the nobility were preserved by the system known as  $nait sisya parampara^2$  in the samgha according to which, succession descended from teacher to pupil, the latter being a blood relation of the former. During Kandyan times we see it in full operation due to the anxiety of the monks to preserve monastic property in their own families. The system of nait sisya parampara was widespread; so that the monastic property tended to accumulate in the incumbents' families. Since this system also ensured that the connection with the aristocracy was maintained, wealth and influence both tended to centre round the *vihāras*.

The relationship between the king and the *samgha* had always been one of mutual interdependence. The king defended the faith and the faith legitimized the king. It was the duty of the king to promote religion, to build places of worship, to contribute to the maintenance of the *samgha* and to use his power to enforce religious regulations relating to doctrine, ritual or social observances. Religious functionaries were expected to advise, support and help the king and invest the king with an aura of religious sanctity, which made him more acceptable to the people. As Donald Smith has pointed out the Western phenomena of sustained power struggles between church and state, each armed with its own weapons, had no real counterpart in South Asia.<sup>3</sup> The reciprocal relationship of interwoven interests which prevailed right through Sri Lankan history was manifest during the Nāyakkar period as well.

It was the king's duty to maintain the continuity of the sampha by admitting young men to the Order, and also by holding the ceremony of Higher Ordination from time to time so as to ensure that there were sufficient bhikkhus in the island. The Nāyakkar kings recognized this duty as one of prime importance. In the reign of Narēndrasimha the valid ordination of the samgha had become virtually extinct. The last bhikkhu, Hulamgamuvē Jinadāsa, head of the Asgiriya Vihāra, died in 1729. From this date till 1753

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *ñāti* (kinsman), *šiṣya* (pupils) *paramparā* (lineage). An explanation of this term is given in the Appendix to the Report of Service Tenure Commissioners, 1871, PRO CO/57/54.

Donald E Smith (ed.), South Asian Politics and Religion, p 29.

when the Order was re-established, there were only sāmanēras who had not taken the higher vows of a bhikkhu. In addition, our sources reveal the appearance of a class of pseudo-monks known in contemporary documents as gana or ganinnānsēs who resided in monasteries enjoying the temple lands and very often following unpriestly professions and leading dissolute lives. These ganas did not receive the respect and recognition given to the orthodox bhikkhu but in the absence of the latter they were often the beneficiaries of the munificence of the kings.<sup>4</sup>

The sampha was provided with the fourfold requisites for daily life namely robes, alms, lodgings and medicines. There are numerous references in inscriptions and literary works to the king making such gifts. The king interested himself in the education and training of the monks. In the quaint words of the Cūlavamsa, "Bhikkhus and Sāmanēras were afflicted by two kinds of disease, mental and physical; in order to cure mental disease the king saw to it that the scriptures were studied and preached."5 The entire institution was thus maintained at state expense. Learning and scholarship among members of the samgha was always recognized and encouraged and there were several instances where erudite monks were rewarded by the king. Ample provision was made for the copying of sacred texts, the king himself taking a personal interest in the matter. This was of particular importance at that time since religious works were very scarce. Many of them had been burnt during the anti-Buddhist regime of Rajasimha I, and during the period that followed conditions were not favourable for the development of religion and literature. The credit for preserving the remnants of Buddhist literature which had withstood the ravages of man and nature goes to the Nāyakkar dynasty. Kīrti Srī Rājasimha got many religious works from Siam which were not available in Sri Lanka at the time, and employed scribes to make copies of the sacred texts. A contemporary land grant records that the king requested a goldsmith to transcribe certain portions of the Buddhist texts on leaves of gold. Gold and gems were supplied for the purpose and when the work was completed the craftsman was paid by a grant of land. The Cūlavamsa too refers to a magnificent book of gold which was inscribed with Buddhist texts at the request of the king and at a cost of nine-thousand six hundred kahapānas or gold coins. The craftsmen were always liberally rewarded by the king for such work, even though they had already been paid for their services by the lands they held. The reason for these special

<sup>5</sup> Cv, Chapter 99, vs 173-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> For a study of this aspect of Kandyan Buddhism, see K Malalgoda, Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750-1900, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1976).

payments was the belief that unless the patron bore the cost, the merit would accrue to the craftsmen and not to the king.

Another duty which the Nāyakkar kings continued to perform was royal participation in religious festivals. Here the king was following an established usage, though there were political motives for doing so. The royal presence at religious gatherings focused the attention of the people on the king as the chief layman and added glamour to his person. The festivals not only provided an opportunity to display royal pomp and pageantry in public but also provided common ground on which the monarch and his people could meet. At the conclusion of any Buddhist festival it was customary for the monks to extol the virtues of the patron, who bore the cost, even if he was not present on the occasion. Together the bhikkhus and lay participants would bless the king and transfer the merit acquired to him. This sort of activity would have regularly taken place in every monastery all over the kingdom, so that even when the king did not actually participate in the act, his role as Defender of the Faith was made clear to every one. Thus because of their strategic position, wide organization and multiple functions, the sampha could influence the people politically and mobilize their support for the king.

From early times kings had to establish their authority even in spiritual matters, which lay outside the strict sphere of their competence. From time to time the kings would request the leaders of the sampha to formulate rules for the guidance of monks, and then lent their authority to the elders to enforce these rules. The sampha lacked the machinery to enforce the observance of ecclesiastical laws among its members, so that the elders had to depend on the coercive powers of the temporal head for this purpose. During the early half of the eighteenth century there was a serious laxity of discipline among the monks, and after the re-establishment of the Order in 1753, Kīrti Srī Rājasimha in accordance with the practice of former kings found it necessary to rehabilitate the sampha. He gathered the support of monks like Saranamkara and "ordered according to precept, an investigation, took strong measures against (the impious monks) and had them seriously admonished that from now onwards those who had renounced the world should forever avoid unseemly tasks, like astrology, medical activity and the like and should foster the study of the words of the Buddha. As the king was minded to further the Order which had fallen into decay, he strengthened the influence of the high principled, and in many ways gave the Order support."6 It is said that the king tried and banished from the kingdom certain monks of Sītāvaka and Moravaka who had distorted the dhamma and misled the laity.

6 *ibid.*, chapter 100, vs 50-4.



After this convocation the king requested the elders to frame a set of regulations for the guidance of the monks. A committee of *bhikkhus* headed by the samgharāja compiled this code of discipline known as the  $K\bar{r}ti Sr\bar{r}$   $R\bar{a}jasimha Katikāvata.^7$  But these injunctions did not prove adequate to rectify the undiscipline within the Order, for very soon the next ruler, Rājādhi Rājasimha, had to convene another assembly of monks and promulgate a further set of disciplinary rules for the monks. The king as the mainstay of the samgha evidently had the power to enforce discipline among its members and even to disrobe recalcitrant monks.

The elders of the samgha had a moral obligation towards the king not only because of his financial support, but also because all higher appointments among them were made by the king at his discretion. After the establishment of Siyam nikāya (the Siamese chapter) it was seen that the king appointed the samgharāja and his deputy, as well as the heads of the two important monastic establishments in Kandy, Malvatta and Asgiriya. All the monasteries in the kingdom were loosely affiliated to these two institutions. These scattered monasteries were separately endowed and their incumbency passed as usual from teacher to pupil. But if any dispute arose regarding the incumbency or a benefice, an appeal could be made to the king who was the final arbiter.

The many ostensible acts of piety attributed to the Nāyakkar kings may also have served purely political ends. The monks were obliged by self interest to remain faithful to the king. They rendered no secular service, paid no *däkum* on appointment as the chiefs did; but the king depended very much on their support. Just as the monasteries needed the protection and help of the state for the maintenance of their position, the state needed the basic legitimation and support which could be provided only by the religious *elite*.

Royal endowments and private donations made the monasteries the most affluent institutions in the island. The preservation of these alone must have made the *samgha* deeply interested in the vicissitudes of court politics. A stable government maintaining law and order, was a prerequisite not only for the spiritual advancement of the *samgha* but also for the peaceful enjoyment of monastic property. However much established religions may try to eschew politics, they cannot wholly succeed: they are too much a part of the social order. Religious institutions must necessarily dabble in politics whether to sustain or change that order and the Buddhist *samgha* in eighteenth century Sri Lanka was no exception. It should be remembered at the outset that the relationship between the king and the *samgha* in Srī Lanka was very

D B Jayatilake (ed.), Katikāvat Sangara, p 22. This document is sometimes known as the Mahanuvara Katikāvata. A Katikāvata is a set of rules prepared for the guidance of monks.

different from that which existed between the state and the church in medieval Europe, for in no period in Sri Lanka history did the *bhikkhus* try to gain political power for themselves though on more than one occasion they tried to influence the succession or bring pressure to bear on those in power so as to ensure continued support for themselves. The intervention of a monk was one of the factors behind the accession of the first Nāyakkar.

The *bhikkhus* could act not only at the local and provincial level but at the centre of the political struggle - the court and the higher echelons of the bureaucracy. The *bhikkhus* had access to the ruler and his chief advisors and were summoned when necessary to the king's council. Thus they were provided with ample opportunity to participate in court cliques and struggles and to have a say in many political decisions.

The education of princes from ancient times was partially entrusted to monks and the Nāyakkars conformed to this pattern. This placed the monks in an advantageous position, for when the princes ascended the throne they generally continued their devotion to their former teachers who henceforth remained their informal advisors. Srī Vijaya Rājasimha and Kīrti Srī Rājasimha were both, as heirs to the throne, under the tutelage of the sāmanēra (later the samgharāja) Saranamkara. The former conferred on his teacher the title of rājaguru or royal preceptor. It is said that the latter king studied the Buddhist texts and the secular sciences under this monk. After his death the title was aptly borne by Moratota Dhammakkhanda, whose most illustrious pupil was the next ruler Rājādhi Rājasimha, the scholarly king, who, in his poem, the Asadrsa Jātaka Kāvya, pays glowing tribute to his saintly preceptor.<sup>8</sup>. The same king refers to another monk, Kobbäkaduvē Srī Nivāsa, who made him proficient in many branches of learning. Their position as mentors to the throne certainly gave the bhikkhus power to influence the king. But this relationship was different in character from that which existed between the Indian kings and their brahmin purohitas. The brahmin connection was official and related to court ritual and politics, while in Sri Lanka the connection between ruler and bhikkhus appeared to be more personal, intimate and friendly. Rājadhi Rājasimha refers to the bhikkhu Moratota Dhammakkhanda as his "best friend."

The *bhikkhus* served the king not only as tutors but in other capacities too. They were the most literate people in the land and it is not surprising that responsible assignments were sometimes given to them even though such work was contrary to monastic precepts. Thus on one occasion *bhikkhus* were

D R R Samaranayake (ed.), Asadrsa Jātaka Kāvya, vs 43-64. The Degaldoruve sannasa of 1786 mentions the Buddhist texts which the king studies under this monk.

sent as emissaries from the Kandyan court to the Dutch in Colombo. Just before Rājasimha's death in 1687, he sent Ganē Bandāra, a prominent bhikkhu in Kandy as his special emissary. The Dutch recognized that the sending of a man of such high connections was a singular honour done to them. Ganē Bandāra was employed upon a similar errand in the next reign also. Sometimes the types of services rendered by the bhikkhus and the manner in which they were rewarded were an open violation of the injunctions laid down by the Buddha, for the bhikkhus were debarred by monastic precepts from undertaking any remunerative employment.

An important aspect of the interplay between religion and politics is revealed in a study of the many maintenance grants to *bhikkhus* of this period. A *bhikkhu*, as his name implies, is a mendicant, who has taken the vow of poverty and cannot therefore own property or engage in any profit-making employment, not even agriculture. According to monastic precepts, every gift of whatever nature made to a monk must be treated as *sanghika*, that is, as belonging to the entire community of the *samgha*.

The vow of poverty by which the monastic Order was bound seems to have defeated its own purpose. For kings and laymen dedicated so much property to its support, that in the course of time, paradoxical as it may sound, the bhikkhu samgha or the fraternity of beggars became in Weberian phraseology, "monastic landlords." The practical ownership of the lands dedicated to the various monasteries was vested in the chief bhikkhu or in the sampha resident within the monastery; and any surplus after the needs of the fraternity had been met came to be regarded as the private property of the monks, pudgalika as opposed to sanghika. During this period certain monks even earned private incomes by accepting paid employment. A bhikkhu could bequeath private property to a relative, but not sanghika property dedicated for the use of the monastery and its residents. But this difficulty was surmounted when the system of ñāti śisya paramparā became widespread and sanghika lands came to be handed down in the families of the incumbents. With this ordination lineage, which regulated the inheritance of monastic property from pupil to pupil within the same family, "monastic landlordism" had come to stay.

When the king granted a gabadāgama or royal village to a monastery it henceforth became a vihāragama and the chief monk became the landlord, and a resident landlord, for most of the temple villages were adjacent to the monasteries and the chief monk always resided in their monastery. The unit of allocation whether to a chief or to a monastery was always a village or gama. The grantee or gamladda received only that portion of the village which was reserved for the holder, the muttettu, which is equivalent to the lord's demesne in European feudalism. The muttettu roughly comprised one

fifth or one sixth of the village. It consisted of mada bim or wet land on which paddy was sown and goda bim or dry land on which grew arecanut, coconut and vegetables. All the cultivable land outside the muttettu was divided into nila pamgu or service shares, each of which consisted of mada bim and goda bim. Each pamguva was held by a pamgukāraya or shareholder who performed certain services to the temple in return for the lands they held.

The muttettu were of two kinds, ninda<sup>9</sup> muttettu and  $and\bar{e}^{10}$ muttettu. The first was usually the proprietor's share of a very large village, and when this was transferred to a temple, the shareholders who lived in the pamgu were bound to cultivate the muttettu gratuitously for the new landlord in return for the lands they held. The and $\bar{e}$  muttettu usually consisted of few amunams of paddy land gifted without any service share attached to it. It could be sown by anyone on the usual condition of giving half the crop to the proprietor, hence  $and\bar{e}$ . The second class of muttettu was chiefly given to local vihāras which could profit by the produce and seldom to the  $d\bar{e}val\bar{e}s$  for reasons which will be mentioned hereafter.

An examination of the types of services rendered by the temple tenants would illustrate how the monasteries were maintained and also how the caste system entered the monastic organization. It is worthy of note that apart from ploughing and sowing which could be performed by any caste, all other services were rendered by tenants according to their caste. The personal services of the superior caste, radala and mudali, were exclusively reserved for ceremonial occasions, when they had to take part in public processions. The higher sub-castes of the govikula made certain annual payments either in cash or kind which went towards the upkeep of the bhikkhus and the repair of the temples. The inferior castes who held land on the tenure of temple service seldom paid dues in money or produce; instead personal services were exacted from them in the form of cultural practices or menial work. Since the service was attached to the land and not to the individual, whoever occupied the land had to perform that particular service connected with the pamguva he occupied. It followed that the pamguva always remained within a caste and this explains why a pamguva, even though transferable, tended to be hereditary. Here again we see how the monastic organization as it developed in Sri Lanka upheld the social and economic differences based on caste.

'Aňdē' Sanskrit 'aardha', Pali addha, half, Codrington, op.cit., p 9.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ninda is from Tamil nintam, ones own exclusive right, which itself is derived from sanskrit nija which means native, one's own. See H W Codrington, Ancient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon, pp 8-9.

The working of the vihāragam necessitated a close connection between the bhikkhus and the villagers. In general the bhikkhus do not appear to have been hard task masters; and the tenants of the temple lands had less to do than their counterparts in the nindagam. Knox states,

"These Farmers live the easiest of any people in the Land, for they have nothing to do, but at those set times to bring in their dues and so depart, and to keep in repair certain little Vehars [vihāras] in the Country. So that the rest of the Chingulais [Sinhalese] envy them and say of them, though they live easy in this world, they cannot escape unpunished in the life to come, for enjoying the Buddou's land doing him so little service for it."<sup>11</sup>

The *bhikkhu* was revered not only as a *bhikkhu* but recognized by the villagers as the landlord as well. Besides they had other holds on the affection of the villagers. The monasteries were the schools for village children and the sons of even superior village headmen were educated in them. A monk frequently had some knowledge of medicine and he generally gave his advice free of charge. It is seen that the position of the *bhikkhu* was a strategic one. He not only had easy access to court circles, but was influential among the lower strata of the population which were beyond the reach of the rulers themselves.

The role of the *bhikkhu* in society partly explains why the kings deprived themselves of a substantial part of their economic assets to provide for the *samgha*. The temple lands were of considerable extent. In Knox's time "they impaired the Revenues of the Crown, there being rather more Towns belonging to the Church than unto the King."<sup>12</sup> In the eighteenth century it is reasonable to suppose that an increase in the acreage of temple lands occurred due to the numerous grants and re-grants to religious institutions. As estimated by Pridham in 1844, "one third of all the paddy lands in the Kandyan provinces are ostensibly in the possession, of temples, together with large tracts of adjoining forests, numerous villages and a large population who do them suit and service for their lands."<sup>13</sup>

The vihāra system in its practical working necessitated a harmonious integration of all the various elements in society. Even the Muslims, aliens

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Knox, 1911, p 118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, pp 116-7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Charles Pridham, An Historical, Political Statistical Account of Ceylon and its Dependencies, p 403.

in race and religion, were welded into this organization. The Muslims were traders and owned herds of pack oxen to transport their merchandise. Accordingly we find the Muslim tenants of the temple lands occupying the *patavili pangu* or transport shares. Their main duty was to convey the temple produce from the *muttettu* fields to the granary, for instance. Some of them paid dues in the form of salt and dried fish, the chief items of trade which they brought from the coast near Puttalam. The tenants in the village of Rambukandana, for instance, belonging to the ancient monastery of Ridī vihāra, were all Muslims. They rendered transport services to the vihāra and their own priest was supported by a farm set apart by the Buddhist landlord for that purpose. There were thus Muslim tenants performing service to a Buddhist vihāra without any reluctance, and that vihāra freely supported a priest for its Muslim tenants. This was pointed at as a case of remarkable religious tolerance by the Service Tenure Commissioner in 1870.<sup>14</sup>

The vihāra lands were exempt from taxation by the king. All the paddy land in the kingdom was divided into units, each of which contributed a pingo load of rice at harvest time to the royal stores. This was called kada rājakāriya which literally means a pingo load given to the king. Once a land was granted for a religious purpose it became exempt from kada rājakāriya. The only service which the king reserved from the vihāragam and dēvālagam were labour services, in the construction of roads or tanks or any other work of public importance, and military service in any national emergency. Except for these two reservations the king relinquished his rights for all practical purposes on the vihāragam and dēvālagam. "On that there is never any more Tax or Duty to be imposed, as being sacrilegious to take ought from one that belongs to the Temple."

Whenever the king granted a *nindagama* to a chief it was as reward for exceptional loyalty or as remuneration for service to the state, but grants of *vihāragam* required no such exceptional merit or service from the *bhikkhu* recipients. Except for the maintenance of the institution, its customary rites and ceremonies no other services was expected of the *bhikkhu*. Sometimes the king specified the purpose for which the revenue of the temple lands should be utilized. The king as the chief layman and the economic support of the *samgha* thus assumed the role of guardian of the morals of the *bhikkhus* and reminded them that although they had no secular service to perform, they had a deep moral obligation towards the society which provided so amply for their maintenance.

The focus of the vihāra system was the Daladā Māligāva or the Temple of the Tooth situated next to the king's palace in Kandy. From the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> PRO/CO/57/51, Report of the Service Tenure Commissioner, 1870, p 285.

twelfth century onwards the Tooth Relic of the Buddha was regarded as the insignia of royalty, and its possession alone conferred on its owner a substantial claim to the sovereignty of Sri Lanka. Accordingly the Nāyakkar kings even surpassed their predecessors in their attempts to protect and show veneration to the relic. They jealously guarded it especially when foreign invasions threatened its safety, and in the reigns of Srī Vijaya Rājasimha and Kīrti Srī Rājasimha public exhibitions of the relic were held.<sup>15</sup> On both occasions a pavilion was erected in front of the Temple and the king himself exposed the relic to public view placing it on the palm of his hand. The king not only "heaped up a store of merit", as the chronicle says, but also impressed on the populace his right to the throne he occupied. The practice which persists even today of displaying the relic to distinguished visitors from abroad prevailed even at this time, for Kīrti Srī Rājasimha held a special exhibition of the relic for the benefit of the bhikkhus and dignitaries who came from Siam.<sup>16</sup> The relic was held in great esteem in Siam, for the king sent a model of it to the Siamese monarch, much to his delight. His role as guardian of the relic gave him security at home and enhanced his prestige elsewhere in the Buddhist world.

The Daladā Māligāva owned extensive lands called māligāgam and the administration of these was entirely in the hands of the diyavadana nilamē, a radala, and always an important official in the court. The māligāgam which were given over for the maintenance of this Temple were scattered in the ratas of Hārispattuva, Dumbara and Yatinuvara and in the disāvanies of Udapalāta, Mātalē, Four Kōralēs and Seven Kōralēs. The appointment of diyavadana nilamē was sometimes made by the king as a reward for exceptional loyalty. The occupants of the māligāgam were the tenants of the diyavadana nilamē and they served, each according to his caste, to maintain the elaborate daily rituals as well as the periodical ceremonies connected with the relic.<sup>17</sup> These tenants came under the sole jurisdiction of the diyavadana nilamē.

During the course of centuries of evolution, Buddhism had peacefully incorporated into its fold ancient vedic and post vedic gods. The climax of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Cv, Chapter 98, vs 48-57, and Chapter 100, vs 24-38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, Chapter 100, vs 123-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> For a detailed account of the ceremonies and ritual connected to the Temple of the Tooth see, H L Seneviratne, *Rituals of the Kandyan State*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978).

this harmonious relationship is seen in Kandyan times when the vihāra and devale organizations were both recognized and supported by the state. The situation of the principal devales dedicated to the four chief deities, in the heart of the city in close proximity to the Temple of the Tooth further illustrates this fusion. The chief deities at this time were Maha Visnu, Nāta, Pattini and Skanda. Loosely affiliated to the four chief devales there were other shrines scattered all over the kingdom housing one of these deities. Lay priests known as kapurālas officiated at these shrines, but they were never accorded the veneration due to a bhikkhu. The devales like the viharas owned large tracts of land granted to them by the king for their maintenance. Each of the four chief devales and a few of the larger ones in the provinces had a separate lay officer called the basnāyaka nilamē to administer the dēvalē lands. He was appointed annually by the king from among the radala The basnāyaka nilamēs of the dēvalēs in the ratas were aristocracy. appointed by the king and those of the disāvanies by the respective disāvas. Each appointee paid to the king or disāva a large sum as däkum and a further monthly payment while he remained in office. The appointments were annually by the king from among the radala aristocracy. The basnāyaka nilames of the devales in the ratas were appointed by the king and those of the disāvanies by the respective disāvas. Each appointee paid to the king or disāva a large sum as däkum and a further monthly payment while he remained in office. When the appointments were annually renewed a sum generally smaller than the first was paid. The head of the well-known Sabaragamuva dēvalē was appointed by the disāva of Sabaragamuva, for a period of one year on the payment of a fee varying from two to three thousand ridis. Obviously the office was a very lucrative one; for the entire hierarchy of officers, connected with the shrine, kapurālas, mohottālas and vidānēs purchased their appointments from the tenants of the dēvālagama, or misappropriated the offerings made to the gods. The basnāyaka nilamē's emoluments consisted of certain lands set apart for his use, regular dues paid to him by the tenants of the devale, and as we have seen the fees that he in turn received from the distribution of all appointments which were at his disposal. The system worked in the same manner as the vihāragam; various shares of land being occupied by tenants who provided the services and supplied the needs for the upkeep of the devale. The kapurala who officiated at the ceremonies was the most important of the service tenants under the basnāyaka nilamē. The latter had unlimited jurisdiction over the inhabitants of the devalagam and was the recipient of all fees, fines and forfeitures. There were cases where tenants were punished by fines and imprisonment for non-performance of services and even for disobedience of orders by the devale authorities.

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It is seen that the *devale* establishment formed collectively a kind of imperium in imperio. In the local monasteries the resident bhikkhus were bound by a vow of poverty and consequently the muttettus that were given to them were sufficient for their sustenance and were in proportion to their number. The devalagam were comparatively very extensive and were given not merely to supply the labour and paraphernalia for the devale but also for the maintenance of a number of lay chiefs who ranked next to the royal disāvas and consequently needed a corresponding retinue. Most of the land belonging to the four chief devales were located not in the ratas but in the disāvanies of the Four Korales, Seven Korales and Matale. It was the policy of the Kandyan government to attach the state services to the people who occupied the lands in the districts contiguous to Kandy in order that their services might be more readily commanded and the authority of government more readily exerted over them; whereas those dedicated for religious purposes were as far as possible in the more remote parts of the kingdom. The creation of these landed interests in the areas outside the sphere of the disāva's influence in effect provided a means of limiting the local power of the disāva and checking his ambitions, as no disloyalty could have spread in the provinces without the knowledge of the authorities of the dēvalē.

The system by which services and dues were exacted from the *dēvalē* tenants required the intervention of a great number of petty headmen. Unlike the *bhikkhu*, the *basnāyaka nilamē* was an absentee landlord, and the exacting of services was very often left in the hands of the *kapurāla* who held the highest acreage of land. It was necessary to provide guards for the local granaries, carriers to transport grain from the village to the headquarters of the *basnāyaka nilamē*, messengers and many others, besides. It should be remembered that neither the *basnāyaka nilamēs*, nor the *kapurālas* received the traditional reverence that was due to a *bhikkhu*.

The four principal gods who were installed in the city had different origins. As far back as the fourteenth century, long before Kandy came into political prominence it was the seat of the Nāta cult.<sup>18</sup> The Nāta dēvalē would thus be the earliest historical building now existing in Kandy. Nāta or Lōkēśvara Nāta as he is frequently called, has been identified with Avalokitesvara Nāta, the great Mahayana Bōdhisatva. During the eighteenth century the cult of Nāta was predominant in Kandy. At the annual Äsala celebrations Nāta was given pride of place, till in 1755, Kīrti Srī Rājasimha

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> S Paranavitana, "Mahayanism in Ceylon" in Ceylon Journal of Science, Vol.II, 1928-1933, see also J C Holt, Buddha in the Crown, Avalokitesvara in the Buddhist traditions of Sri Lanka, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1991).

ordered that the gods should follow the Tooth Relic in the procession.<sup>19</sup> An important ceremony connected with the royal consecration, that of naming the ruler and girding the sword took place in the Nāta dēvalē. Another rite connected with the New Year celebrations, that of preparing medicinal juices for anointing the head at the auspicious hour was also done at this *dēvalē*. This practice shows that Nāta was considered a god of healing like one form of Avalokitesvara.

According to the *Mahāvamsa*, Upulvan the lotus head deity, was originally entrusted with the guardianship of Sri Lanka. Today he is considered the same as Visnu and is also a candidate for Buddhahood. The transformation of Upulvan to Visnu which look place somewhere in the fifteenth century was the result of the influx of South Indian *brahmins* who transformed the local gods honoured by the Sinhalese into gods of the Hindu pantheon. In the period under survey Visnu was officially recognized and was given great prominence specially in the Äsala celebrations.

The god of Kataragama and the goddess Pattini<sup>20</sup> are two other deities who had shrines dedicated to them in the city. They owed their popularity and prestige undoubtedly to the Tamil influence at the time. Apart from the main shrine in the south-east of the island many other shrines were dedicated to this deity, the most famous being the one at Ämbäkkē.

Even more widespread at this time was the cult of Pattini, who in Sri Lanka, was and still is, regarded as the ideal of womanhood because of her chastity and devotion to her husband. As the legends associated with the cult show, it was South Indian in origin. She had many devotees in Kandyan society; her shrine was installed beside the *Daladā Māligāva* in Kandy and she had become influential enough to secure a prominent place in the Äsala festival. The folk literature of the time is an index to the popularity of the cult. e.g. Pattini Hālla, Pālaňga Hālla, Salamba Sāntiya, Amba Vidamana and Pāňdi Naluva.<sup>21</sup> Most of these are invocations to the goddess appealing to her to effect cures by her divine powers.

Apart from these four great gods who had achieved national status, the folk literature of the time shows that the belief in local deities, demons and spirits was widespread. These popular beliefs were moulded into a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Cv, Chapter 99, vs, 63-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> G Obeysekere, The Cult of the Goddess Pattini (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> P Sannasgala, Sinhala Sāhitya Vamsaya, p 507.

regular religion, arranged and systematised and carefully preserved in writing. The shrines of these supernatural beings were called  $k\bar{o}vil$  and the priests who officiate at them called, *yakdessas*,<sup>22</sup> are socially inferior to the *kapurālas* in charge of the *dēvalēs*. Unlike the *dēvalēs* the *kōvils* have no revenues attached to them. This inferior category of spirits are not venerated by the people, but they endeavour to obtain from them by flattery, threats and offerings.

The dread of demons and the methods of influencing them and overcoming their evil powers by means of offerings (bali) and charms (mantra) first became widespread in Sri Lanka during the Polonnaruva period. These practices gained such a strong foothold that when we came to the Dambadeniya period even bhikkhus had taken over the functions of the yakdessas. Royal orders were necessary to prevent bhikkhus from indulging in the arts of sorcery and divination which the Buddha had branded as tiracchina vijja or despicable arts. Notwithstanding royal injunctions it was seen that bhikkhus continued to practise sorcery and witchcraft as highly developed arts, in Kandyan times. Nevertheless there was a section of orthodox Buddhists who were opposed to these practices. Thus late in the eighteenth century Rājādhirājasimha made an attempt to prohibit bhikkhus from the practice of such "despicable arts."<sup>23</sup>

Although they disapproved of the sampha resorting to such practices, the Nāyakkar kings did not hesitate to practise black magic and witchcraft in their personal matters. There are numerous mantrams or charms written in Sinhala and Tamil (and sometimes in a mixture of both languages) designed to cure maladies that had afflicted members of the royal family.

These healing ceremonies were more popular among the ordinary folk and Knox gives elaborate descriptions of sacrifices made to appease the demons who were supposedly the cause of sickness among human beings.

Apart from the significant impact made by Hinduism on the religion of the Sinhalese both at an elitist and a popular level, it was formally professed and practised in court circles as well as among the Tamil subjects of the king. As it is today the Tamils of Sri Lanka favoured Saivism. The Nāyakkar relatives of the king who lived in Kandy practised Saivism and it is possible that the queens who hailed from South India, though ostensibly Buddhists, practised their own religion in private. The Tamils who lived in the northern coastal areas were all Hindus and there were many of them

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Knox, 1911, p 120 calls them Jadessas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> D B Jayatilake (ed.), Katikāvat Sangara, p 32.

serving the king in different capacities. The Kandyans, both king and people were remarkably tolerant of other faiths. Knox, who was no admirer of the Sinhalese writes:

> "as they are not bigoted in their own Religion, they care not of what religion strangers dwell among them are of. They do believe there is a plurality of Gods and more than they know of, for all nations have a free liberty to use and enjoy their own Religion with all or any manner of ceremonies thereto belonging without the lest [sic] opposition or so much as Ridiculing."<sup>24</sup>

The same attitude of tolerance was extended to the Muslims who flocked to Kandy in large numbers to escape the persecution of first the Portuguese and then the Dutch. Senarat settled 4000 Muslims in Batticaloa, gave them lands and encouraged them to practise agriculture.<sup>25</sup> There are a number of mosques in the Kandyan areas built on land donated by kings for that purpose e.g. Katu palliya, Maddulbova and Kahatapitiya mosques. There are instances where the *bhikkhus* had permitted mosques to be built on Buddhist monastic lands for the benefit of Muslim villagers. For instance the Pangollamada mosque was built on land belonging to the Degaldoruva *vihāra* and the mosque at Rambukandana on land belonging to the Ridī *vihāra* at Kurunāgala. Several responsible and confidential assignments were given by Kandyan rulers to Muslim officers. It was because of the cooperation of the kings, the *saṃgha* and the people that the Muslims, who to begin with were aliens in race and religion, became part and parcel of Kandyan society while preserving their religious identity.<sup>26</sup>

Ever since the Dutch established their power in the lowlands, the practice of Roman Catholicism was prohibited in their territories and Roman Catholic priests were prevented from entering Dutch controlled areas. Many of the Roman Catholics who fled from Dutch territory found refuge in the Kandyan kingdom in the towns of Kandy, Mātalē, Vahakōtte, Kundasāle, Kirioruva, Lallogalla, Nārangoda and Väuda. Some of them settled down in the frontiers of the kingdom in Ruvanvälla, Sītāvaka, Mahiyangana, Kendangamuva, Ratnapura, Galgamuva and in the interior of the Seven

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Knox, Interleaved Edition, 1989, Vol.II, p 219.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> de Queyroz, p 742.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> For details see, L S Dewaraja, The Muslims of Sri Lanka: One Thousand Years of Ethnic Harmony, 900-1915, Colombo, 1994, Chapter iv.

Kōralēs and in Tamankaduva.<sup>27</sup> The king at the time, Rājasimha II, having been tutored by Christian friars retained a lifelong respect for Christianity, '...both the king and people do generally like the Christian religion better than their own; and respect and honour the Christians as *Christians*."<sup>28</sup> It was in the reign of his son Vimaladharmasūriya II, that Father Joseph Vaz of the Oratorian Mission entered Kandy, with the ruler's blessings, to minister to the spiritual needs of the Roman Catholics. The royal support gave honour and legitimacy to the Roman Catholic church not only within Kandy but also in the Dutch controlled areas. Following the tradition of tolerance, the next king Narēndrasimha welcomed Father Jacome Gonçalves, successor to Joseph Vaz and granted him many privileges. The Sinhalese kings of Kandy even appointed Christians to high offices and they were not required to change their religion.<sup>29</sup>

Events took a different turn with the accession of the Nāyakkars. The proselytizing activities of the missionaries and their anti-Buddhist writings such as Jacome Gonçalves' *Mātara Pratyakshaya* alarmed the *bhikkhus* and nobles who brought pressure on the king to withdraw the privileges granted to the missionaries.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Father S G Perera, Life of the Venerable Father Joseph Vaz, Apostle of Ceylon, Colombo, 1953, p 78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Knox, Interleaved Edition, 1989, Vol.II, p 243.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p 221.

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# **CHAPTER XVII**

## LITERATURE IN SRI LANKA: THE SIXTEENTH, SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

### **K N O Dharmadasa**

In the preamble to the 12th century Sinhala poem Sasadāvata, the author identifies the conditions most conducive, in his view, to the flowering of literary activity.

Poetic composition arises from knowledge, to gain which there needs be comfort. That in turn comes from the prosperity of the people which can be accomplished only by the power of a king who has wise and virtuous ministers.<sup>1</sup>

The reign of Parākramabāhu VI (1415-67) was a clear illustration of the general validity of this postulate. He extended his suzerainty over the whole island and his reign was characterised by a political stability which the island did not enjoy for many decades thereafter. Under the patronage of the king who himself was a scholar, and the encouragement provided by the leading ministers of the day, who also took a keen interest in literary activity, there was a remarkable efflorescence in the literary arts. Centres of learning such as the great *pirivenas*, the Vijayabāhu at Totagamuva, the Padmāvatī at Kāragala, the Gatārā at Kālaniya, the Srī Ghanānanda at Vīdāgama, the Irugalkulatilaka at Mulgirigala and the Sunētrā Dēvi at Päpiliyāna flourished, and provided the setting for creative talents of scholar monks like Totagamuvē

<sup>1</sup> 

Cumaratunga Munidasa (ed.), Sasadā Vivaranaya, (Colombo, Gunasena, 1954), p 2.

Srī Rāhula, Kāragala Vanaratana, Vīdāgama Maitreya, Mangala Sangharāja and Vāttāve.<sup>2</sup> The efficient maintenance of these centres of learning and the excellence achieved by the creative and scholarly works of the period illustrate one significant fact, that is, the near total dependence of learning and literary activity on the fortunes of the Buddhist sāsana.

Antithetic to this state of affairs were the conditions prevailing during the period of about two and half centuries that followed the reign of Parākramabāhu VI - political instability, fragmentation of the kingdom and strife among rival factions for supremacy, a situation further aggravated by the involvement of the Portuguese and, later, the Dutch in the fray. Under these conditions, with the kings and nobility preoccupied with the grim reality of survival in the face of heavy odds, it was virtually impossible to provide for the continuance or even security of the monastic tradition of religion and scholarship. It was not until the mid-eighteenth century, during a period of comparative peace, that the authentic form of the sāsana and the almost extinct tradition in learning and literary activity were revived under the leadership of Välivita Saranamkara who was actively supported by the first two Nāyakkar kings, Srī Vijaya Rājasimha (1739-47) and Kīrti Srī Rājasimha (1747-80). Thus, in a survey of the literary activity during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we need to emphasise the point that the period opens with the decline and near extinction of the Great Tradition<sup>3</sup> that had continued from the Anurādhapura period. Literary activity came to be solely confined to the Little Tradition. In the renaissance of the eighteenth century the Great Tradition was reinstated to the best of the ability of the leading figures of the revivalist movement.

The main features of the Great Tradition in Sinhalese literature are a high standard of learning in the classical Indian languages, Pali and Sanskrit; a narrative prose form devoted to the extolment of the Triple Gem -The Buddha, his doctrine and the order of monks - and a verse form adhering to the tenets of Sanskrit mahākāvya. Nurtured mainly in the seats of monastic learning under the patronage of royalty and the aristocracy, it reflected the taste and talent of an erudite elite. This was especially true of the narrative poems, which followed the Sanskrit mahākāvya form and the

<sup>2</sup> For details see K D P Wickremasinghe, Kötte Yugayē Sinhala Sāhitya, (Colombo, Gunasena, 1964).

<sup>3</sup> For the Great Tradition and Little Tradition see Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture*, (Chicago, 1963), pp 41-2.

sandēsa ("message") poems. Nevertheless, in some works of the classical period there was an obvious influence of the Little Tradition. For example, in the Saddharmaratnāvaliya (a prose work of the 13th century) the Pansiya Panas Jātaka Pota (a prose work of the 14th century) and Guttila Kāvyaya (a poem of the 15th century), the authors sometimes leave aside the conventions of the accepted erudite literary tradition and resort to the language, idiom and literary devices of folk literature.<sup>4</sup>

During the sixteenth century when the decline in scholarship and literary activity was setting in because of unsettled political conditions, the poet Alagiyavanna appeared as the last flicker in the flame of a poetic tradition that had flourished since the Muvadevdāvata and Sasadāvata of the twelfth century. Alagiyavanna is credited with the authorship of the Sävul Sandēsaya, a "message poem" whose principal aim is to sing the praises of Rājasimha I of Sītāvaka; Dahamsoňda Kava, a Jātaka story in verse, sometimes attributed to Dharmadvaja, Alagiyavanna's father; the Subhāsitaya, a collection of didactic verse and Kusa Jātaka Kāvyaya, a jātaka in verse. These works, replete with stock descriptions and imagery heavily indebted to earlier Sinhalese poems, are evidence of a qualitative decline in literary activity. Alagiyavanna himself, the only learned poet of the 16th century, seems to have had a poor control of the classical idiom and his poetic diction appears forced and artificial. It is only when, at times, especially in some sections of the Dahamsoňda Kava and the Kusa Jātaka Kāvyaya he forgets the role of the erudite litterateur and adopts the style of a folk poet that his real Against the sombre background of the political talents are revealed. instability of the Kotte period, the decline of a knowledge and understanding of the classical languages, Sanskrit and Pali, that had set in seems an almost inevitable consequence. As a result there was a concentration on earlier Sinhalese works for inspiration, and of literary talent concentrated on one genre-verse. Even so there were just a few compositions. All this points to the decline of a long standing poetic tradition.

Alagiyavanna's works may thus be considered as signifying the end. of one epoch and the beginning of another. In poetry, with the decline of learning and the extinction of the classical tradition a balladic type of narrative poem came into prominence. Alagiyavanna himself may be considered the forerunner of this *genre*. His latent talents as a narrative poet come to the fore only in the later sections of the *Kusa Jātaka Kāvyaya*, where he rid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See Martin Wickremasinghe, Landmarks of Sinhalese Literature, (Colombo, Gunasena, 1963), pp 93-138.

himself of the shackles of ornate poetry and proceeded in the style of a ballad singer, concentrating on the narration of the story and dwelling at length only on dramatic situations.<sup>5</sup> A large number of similar jātaka and other Buddhist stories in verse appear during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: Vidura Jātaka Kāvyaya, Padmāvatī Kathāva, Vessantara Jātaka Kāvyaya, Padamānavaka Jātaka Kāvyaya, Kāpiri Kathāva, Yasōdara Vata and Ālavaka Damanaya, to mention just a few.<sup>5</sup> The authorship of most of these works These poets, who obviously had little book-learning, is not known. nevertheless demonstrated a mature poetic imagination. In contrast to the poems of the classical tradition where the main concern of the poets was the inclusion of stock ornamentation (alankāra), these works are characterized by the concentration on a straightforward narration of the story. In place of the stereotypical images and figures of speech in classical poetry these narrative poems contain a new poetic imagery drawn from the poet's own environment, and, in place of the archaic poetic diction, a highly evocative language based on folk-speech. Thus, unlike the classical poems which were no doubt elitist in appeal, the narrative ballad of the folk poets appears to have been a very popular genre.

As the works mentioned above would suggest, the popular narrative poems usually had, like the classical type, themes drawn from Buddhist sources, particularly, the *Jātaka* collection. It appears, however, that in their search for stories with a more mundane appeal, the writers of these narrative ballads turned to other sources as well. Ready at hand was Tamil literature which had become popular as a result of several centuries of cultural contact with South India. Thus a number of poems with stories from Tamil sources were produced during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries: *Vētālan Kathāva, Mahā Padaranga Jātaka Kāvyaya* and *Harichchandra Kathā Kāvyaya* being some of them.<sup>6</sup>

Other poetic works produced during the period are, significantly, those concerned with folk custom and folk religion: Goyam Mālaya and Kamat Hālla deal with facets of paddy cultivation, Päduru Mālaya described the various motifs that are woven into mats and Kalagedi Mālaya comprises of verses sung during 'the dance of pots' by women - all these activities had

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> For other works in the same genre see C E Godakumbura, Sinhalese Literature, (Colombo, Apothecaries Co, 1955), pp 155-78; A H Mirando, 17-18 Siyavashi Sinhala Sāhitya, (Colombo, Godage and Co., 1988), pp. 34-61.

<sup>6</sup> 

See Godakumbura, op. cit., pp 178-82 and Mirando, op. cit., pp 83-92.

a semi-religious character. Another type of verse composition of this period, is connected with the rituals in the folk-religion. Thus, Maha Sohon Samayama, Kohombā Yakkama, Devol Devi Upata, Dalumura Upata and Gala Käppū Sähälla consist of invocations chanted during spirit propitiation and healing rituals in the folk-religion. Attributed to this period is also a considerable body of literature, dealing with the cult of goddess Pattini: for example Pattini Hälla, Pălanga Hälla, Vayanti Mālaya, Gajabā Kathāva, Amba Vidamana and Nānumura Hälla. It needs mention here, that although these appear as separate works, most if not all of these compositions are included in a large collection, the Pan Tis Kōlmura (the thirty five invocations) sung during the night long gammaduva ceremony held in praise of Goddess Pattini.<sup>7</sup>

A remnant of the classical tradition, albeit in a degenerate form, that appeared in profusion during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was the panegyric. It had its forerunner in Pärakumbā Sirita written in praise of Parākramabāhu VI during the heyday of the Kotte kingdom. It is generally accepted that the panegyrical compositions of the Kandy period were the work of bards maintained by the court through the Kavikāra Maduva "(the Assembly of Poets)." The most eulogized monarch of the Kandy period is Rājasimha II whose triumphs against the Portuguese at Randenivela and Gannoruva seem to have fired the imagination of many a poet. Some of the panegyrics in this monarch's honour are Rājasimha Sirita attributed to Uvē Kudā Mohottāla; another Rājasimha Sirita attributed to Bintännē Sāmi; Maha Hatana or Rājasimha Varnanāva and Rājasimha Hatana by anonymous poets; the Maha Hatana by Kirimätiyāvē and Parangi Hatana by Vēväldeniyē Mohottāla. A characteristic feature of these poems is the appearance, sometimes in one, of stanzas from another, so that the authorship becomes blurred. Also, portions of longer poems have sometimes been presented under different titles so that it is difficult to ascertain the limits of the contents either.<sup>8</sup> A unique composition in this sense produced in the second decade of the seventeenth century is Kustantinu Hatana, written, according to some

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> For details see Paravahera Saddhajiva and P B J Hevavasam (ed.), Pantis Kolmura Kavi, (Colombo, Pradeepa, 1974); Gananath Obeyesekere, The Cult of the Goddess Pattini, (Chicago, 1984), pp 22-35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> For details see P B Sannasgala and Leel Gunasekera (eds), Prasasti Ha Hatan Kāvyaya, (Colombo, Dept. of Cultural Affairs, 1966); K H de Silva (ed.), Sinhala Hatan Kavi, (Colombo, Sri Lanka Prakasakayo, 1964); Godakumbura, op.cit., pp 222-42.

authorities, by Alagiyavanna.<sup>9</sup> This poem is a laudatory description of the triumph of the Portuguese Captain General Constantine de Sa over the rebel Antonio Baretto. Of panegyrics on the Sinhalese kings the second largest number appear in praise of Srī Vīra Parākrama Narēndrasimha, a pleasure loving monarch with no military achievements to his credit. Some of these compositions are Srangārālankāraya, Narēndrasimha Rāja Stuti and Narēndrasimha Rāja Varnanāva. Generally, the panegyrics contain descriptions in hyperbolic terms of the lineage, victories in battle, fame, physical attraction and sexual prowess of the hero. There is little originality, the same poetic concepts being often used repeatedly. If the Kustantinu Hatana stands at one extreme being in the main a description of the military exploits of Constantine de Sa, the panegyrics in praise of Narendrasimha where the erotic content looms large are at the other extreme. Compositions in honour of Rajasimha II fall in between - because they also contain more material on the king's prowess in war.

There panegyrics are characterized by a variety of metres and a language full of sound effects, most probably to harmonize with the drums and other musical instruments that were used as accompaniment when they were recited in court. With the prominence given to such poetic features, the intellectual content and aesthetic quality were almost totally eclipsed. Sometimes there is a lack of refinement when for instance the enemies of the hero are disparaged or when in order to highlight his physical attraction and sexual prowess entreaties for union are made ostensibly by ladies of the harem. Without a knowledge of the classical tradition and with the poets having to compose for a purpose - to amuse and exhilarate the royal patron the panegyrics of this period are generally of a very poor literary quality.

A work which stands out in many respects from the other poems of the period is the historical poem *Mandārampurapuvata*. It consists of eleven chapters which were composed in three stages by different authors. The first section consists of four chapters composed in 1647 by Vikum Äduru, narrating the story of a city built in the central highlands during the reign of Rājasimha I to house some Saivite priests from India who had won the king's favours. It also contains historical information on the reigns of Vimaladharmasūriya I and Senarat. Chapters five and six were composed by a monk named Unambuvē in 1702 to include material pertaining to the reigns of Rājasimha II and Vimaladharmasūriya II. The last five chapters by an

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> P B Sannasgala, Sinhala Sāhitya Vamsaya, (Colombo, Lake House Investments, 1963), pp 305-7.

anonymous poet is an updating of the chronicle till the middle of the reign of king Kīrti Srī Rājasimha (1747-82). It is particularly noteworthy that the *Mandārampurapuvata* contains a wealth of information on Kandyan history not found in the main historical sources such as *Mahāvamsa* and *Rājāvaliya*. Although not uniform in language and style when compared with the other poetical works of the time, it often demonstrates a more sophisticated command of the classical poetic idiom.<sup>10</sup>

Only a few prose works date from this period and in them history and legend figure prominently. The Rajaratnakaraya deals with the lineage and life of a king of Kandy named Vīravikrama who is said to have ascended the throne in 2085 of the Buddhist era (1542 A D). The Rājāvaliya is a chronicle on the line of Sinhalese kings from the legendary Vijaya to the accession of Vimaladharmasūriya II (1687-1707).<sup>11</sup> The Kadayim Pot and Vitti Pot, a large number of which were produced during this period were primarily documentations of boundary demarcations in traditional administrative units, and collections of folklore connected with such divisions. These books generally yield a great deal of information not available in the major literary works, on royal lineages, the leading families and the origin of important landmarks and territorial divisions. The bulk of the descriptions are in prose but on occasion verses are interpolated. While the first Kadayim Pota was written during late 14th or early 15th centuries, the large bulk of these works available today belong to the 17th and 18th centuries. Obviously, there was a pressing need at the time to put this subject matter on record. On the whole the language of the Kadayim Pot and Vitti Pot is devoid of literary pretensions and is heavily influenced by the contemporary colloquial idiom.<sup>12</sup>

With the gradual decline of the orthodox form of Buddhism from about the seventeenth century we notice a growing popularity of the cult of deities, who received veneration as supra-mundane forces capable of providing worldly benefits to their adherents and supplicants. In his wellknown study of the Kandyan kingdom in the time of Rājasimha II, Robert Knox records how the great annual festival called "Perahar" in the capital

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> See Labugama Lankananda (ed.), Mandārampurapuvata, (Colombo, 1958).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> See, A V Suraweera (ed.), *The Rājāvaliya*, (Colombo, Lake House Investments Ltd., 1976).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> See H A P Abhayawardena, Kadayim Pot Saha Vitti Pot, (Colombo, Dept. of Cultural Affairs, 1978).

Kandy was held in honour of the deities, Alutnuvara (Vishnu-Upulvan), Kataragama and Pattini.<sup>13</sup> Clearly, the worship of the Buddha had receded to the background. Over six hundred manuscripts alluding to local deities, such as Vīramunda, Pitiyē, Oddisa, Dala Kumāra, Kadavara among others, all composed during the period 16th-18th centuries have been recorded.<sup>14</sup> This literature also records obscure folk rituals, such as Ratikan Yādinna, Wesamuni Däpane, Hat Adiya, and Sūvisī Yāgaya among others, which appear to have been popular at the time.<sup>15</sup> Apart from the linguistic interest of these documents, as compositions by anonymous poets with little scholarship, this substantial literature is indicative of the massive presence of a folk religion, which while being peripherally connected with Buddhism, was greatly influenced by Hinduism and South Indian folk cults.<sup>16</sup>

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we see a new genre in Sinhalese literature, works produced by Christian missionaries, the Roman Catholics in particular. The first Sinhala Christian literary works appears to have been plays, translated or adapted from works in European languages. Thus, mention is made of "The Life and Death of St. John the Baptist," "Conversion of Constantine" and "The Creation of the World and the Incarnation of Christ" enacted at Christian festivals in the littoral during the early years of the seventeenth century.<sup>17</sup> Of the other early Christian Sinhalese works the largest number was produced in the eighteenth century by the Roman Catholic missionary Fr Jacome Gonçalves, a Konkani Brahmin from Goa. Arriving in the island as a missionary in 1705 he studied Sinhalese and Tamil and proceeded to make a singular contribution to Christian literature in these two languages. Gonçalves is credited with the writing of twenty six prose and verse works in Sinhalese, covering a wide range of themes such as Christian scripture and theology, devotional hymns, lexicography and anti-Buddhist polemics. The best known of his works are

<sup>13</sup> Knox, (1681).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> See Hugh Nevill, Sinhala Verse (Kavi) Collected by the Late Hugh Nevill 1869-86, P E P Deraniyagala (ed.), (Colombo, Ceylon National Museums, 1954), 3 Vols.

<sup>15</sup> Nevill, op.cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> See K N O Dharmadasa and H M S Thundeniya, Sinhala Dēva Purānaya, (Colombo, State Printing Corporation, 1994), pp 23-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> See Edmund Peiris, "Sinhalese Christian Literature of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries," JCBRAS, XXXV, No.96. The following account is based on this source.

 $D\bar{e}va \ V\bar{e}da \ Pur\bar{a}naya$ , a compendium of the Bible;  $Dukpr\bar{a}pti \ Prasangaya$ , nine sermons on the passion of Christ;  $Dharm\bar{o}dy\bar{a}naya$ , the life stories of fifty saints;  $Bh\bar{e}dak\bar{a}raying\bar{e} \ Tarkaya$ , a refutation of 'heresies';  $V\bar{e}da \ K\bar{a}vyaya$ , the material of the  $Pur\bar{a}naya$ , in verse;  $Mangala \ G\bar{u}tiya$ , a collection of hymns; and the word-books, Sinhalese-Portuguese, Portuguese-Sinhalese and Portuguese-Tamil-Sinhalese. He produced sixteen similar works in Tamil. In the meantime, the Dutch established in 1737 at Colombo the first printing press in the island, and several books were published including a Sinhalese prayer book (1737), the four gospels in Sinhalese (1739) and a Sinhalese hymn book (1755),<sup>18</sup> all of which were attempts to popularise the Protestant form of Christianity associated with the Dutch Reformed Church.

The sixteenth century dawned in the kingdom of Jaffna free from the troubles of the type that beset the kingdom of Kotte at that time. Jaffna had shaken off the domination by Kotte soon after the death of Parakramabahu VI and a vigorous policy of reconstruction and consolidation was set afoot under Singai Pararājasēkeran (1478-1519). Part of this policy was the revival of learning and literary activity. In this Pararajasekeran was ably supported by his brother, Segarājasēkaran. Scholars were invited to Nallūr the capital of the kingdom, and manuscripts were brought down, from South India; copies of standard works were made; and a library was established at Nallūr. Also, the assembly of poets attached to the court, which had become defunct during the period of Sinhalese rule, was reinstituted. The literary works attributed to this period are indicative of the success of the revival. They are, Irakuwamsam, a Tamil translation by Arasekesarī of Kālidāsa's Raghuvamsa; Taccina Kailāsa Purānam, a Tamil adaptation by Panditarāsar of the Sanskrit Matsya Purāna; Kadiramalai Pallu, a poem in praise of god Skanda, Kannakā Valakkurai, an eulogical poem on goddess Pattini, Vaiyāpādal a poem depicting legends of the Vanni regions and Pararājasēkeran, a treatise on the indigenous sitta medicine.19

With the advent of the Portuguese in Jaffna and the consequent disruption of civil life during the sixteenth century there was a decline in literary activity. The establishment of Portuguese rule in Jaffna in 1621 saw

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> See Peiris, op.cit.; Sannasgala, op.cit., pp 724-32; S G Perera, Historical Sketches on Church History, (Colombo, Catholic Book Depot, 1962), pp 110-2; Sunil Ariyaratna, Jacome Gonçalves: Torāgat Kruti, (Colombo, Ministry of Socio-Cultural Integration, 1993).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> K Kanapathipillai, "Ceylon's Contribution to Tamil Language and Literature," UCR, VI 4, 1948, pp 217-28. I am also indebted to Professors S Pathmanathan and S Thillainathan for their generous assistance in the preparation of these paragraphs relating to Tamil literature.

the launching of a vigorous drive for Christian conversion and as part of this movement a number of books were published to popularize Roman Catholicism. As in Sinhalese, so also in the earliest Tamil Christian literary works, the operatic *nādagams*, the traditional folk drama, were utilized for the propagation of the new faith. Other early Tamil Christian works are a life of Saints by a priest named Henry Henricus; *Santiyōku Maiyōr Ammānai* celebrating the shrine of St James the Great at Kilali by Peduru Pulavar; and *Gñānappallu* (sacred songs) - a story poem extolling the Roman Catholic form of Christianity by an anonymous author.<sup>20</sup> Here we find the traditional literary forms *ammānai* and *pallu* being adapted to serve the interests of the new faith.

The traditionalist literati who were Hindu by religion also contributed to the literary output of the seventeenth century. Ñanapirakasa Tēsikar, a Hindu who had fled to South India in the face of religious persecution is said to have written a commentary on the *Sivañāna Sittiyar*, a work on Saiva Siddhānta philosophy while in India. Other Hindu works produced during the period are Varatha Panditar's *Sivarāttiri Purānam*, Vaithinanātha Tampiran's translation from Sanskrit - *Viyākkirapāta Purānam* and *Kadiraimalaippallu*, a poem in praise of god Skanda by an anonymous author.

With the Dutch take-over of Jaffna in 1658 there followed a period of systematic persecution of Roman Catholics, which brought Tamil literary activity associated with Roman Catholicism to a virtual halt. The officially sponsored faith was that of the Dutch Reformed Church. Its most prominent propagandist was Philip de Melho (1723-90), the son of a high ranking official in the services of the Dutch and considered to be the first Sri Lankan to be admitted to the office of Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. Among his works are, a Tamil translation of the New Testament and a Tamil history of the Dutch Reformed Church. His Sattiyattin Jeyam, a polemical work, is a refutation of the beliefs of the Church of Rome while upholding those of his own denomination. Also, De Melho with the assistance of several other scholars, enlarged the thirteenth century lexicographical work Cintāmananī Nikantu. He is also credited with the compilation of a panegyric named Marutappā Kuravañci in praise of a dignitary named Marutappā Pillai who was in the services of the Dutch administration.<sup>21</sup> Again, as in Sinhalese, the Dutch used the printing press they established in 1737 to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> D Rajarigam, The History of Tamil Christian Literature, (Madras, The Tamil and Christian Council, 1958), p 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Rajarigam, op.cit., Simon Casie Chitty, The Tamil Plutarch, second revised edition, (New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1982), pp 82-8.

produce a number of Tamil works for the propagation of Protestant Christianity. A short catechism (1748) a Tamil translation of the gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles from Greek (1748), a Tamil Catechism (1744), the Epitome of the Christian Religion (1754), a translation on the psalms (1755) and a Tamil Liturgy (1760) are some of the works published by this press.<sup>22</sup>

In the early eighteenth century Roman Catholic missionary activity in Jaffna was revived by Fr Joseph Vaz and Fr Jacome Gonçalves. It was Gonçalves, as he did in Sinhalese, who produced the largest number of Tamil Christian works by any single author. Among these were, Dēva Arulvēda Purānam (1725), a compendium of Christian history interspersed with dissertations on the doctrine of the Church of Rome and refutations of 'heretical' beliefs; Suvisesha Viritturai (1728), an explanation of the Gospels; Viyākūla Prasangam (1730), nine sermons on the passion of Christ; Tarma Uttiyānam (1736) - the life-stories of thirty saints. Gñāna Unarchy (1734), spiritual exhortations; Sukruta Tarpanam (1735), "mirror of virtues"; and Christiāni Ālayam "(the Christian's treasure house)."23 He is also credited with the production of several polemical works such as Nava Tarkan (1732) and Nalu Vedam refuting the doctrines of the other systems of religious beliefs in the country. A comparison of the Tamil and Sinhalese works of Gonçalves reveals that he presented more or less the same material in both languages. Another Roman Catholic writer of the period is a layman, Arulappā Poologasimha Mudaliyār, who composed Tiruchchelvar Kāviyam in which he utilized the conventions of the Tamil epics to present the story of a Christian saint. Sattiya Virōdi Sankāram written towards the end of the eighteenth century as a Roman Catholic response to De Melho's Sattiyattin Jeyam, is attributed to Gabriel Pacheco, another Goanese priest who had followed the example of Fathers Vaz and Gonçalves. Pacheco is also believed to be the author of Tevappirasaiya Tirukkatai - a history of the Church of Rome - and Yōsēvās Caritam a Tamil translation of a life of Fr Vaz and Gñāna Appan a popular catechism. During this same period Kūlankait Tampiran, an erudite Hindu scholar from Kanchipuram in South India, who associated freely with the Christians and who had come to reside in Jaffna, wrote Yosep Puranam, an epic on the life of Patriarch Joseph.24

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Rajarigam, op.cit., F Kuipper, "Dutch Students of Tamil" in First International Conference Seminar on Tamil Studies, (Kuala Lumpur, 1969), pp 309-14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Rajarigam, op.cit., Casie Chitty, op.cit., Kuipper, op.cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> K Kanapathipillai, op.cit., Casie Chitty, op.cit.

Towards mid-eighteenth century the Dutch relaxed their opposition to other faiths. The works mentioned above show how the Roman Catholics used this opportunity. In the same vein there was a remarkable resurgence of Hindu literary activity. Drawing inspiration from South India the traditionalist literati produced a large number of Hindu works. The classical literary forms patikam, antāti, kovai, kuravañci, pallu and tūtu were utilized frequently and the Rāmāyana, the Mahābhārata and the Purānas were tapped again and again as sources. Thus V Sinnatampi Pulavar's Marasai Antāti, Kalavalai Antāti and Parālai Vināyakar Pallu are devotional poems in adoration of local Hindu temples and their presiding deities. Other similar works are Senātirāja Mudaliyār's Nallai Antāti, Nallai Kuravañci and Māvittapuram Ūncal Patikam, Kanapathy Aiyar's Vannai Vaitiyalingar Kuravañci, Mailvākana Pulavar's Puliyoor Yamaka Antāti and C Sinnatampi Pulavar's Innuvai Sivakāmi Ammai Patikam. Closely following the conventions of the Sangam classics is V Sinnatampi Pulavar's Kāravai Vēlan Kōvai. Inspired by the Indian sandēsa genre C Sinnatampi Pulavar wrote Pancavarnat Tūtu and Sittampala Pulavar Killai Vidu Tūtu. Sittampala, as tradition demanded, was keen to present the poem to king Srī Vikrama Rājasimha in Kandy and was on his way to the Kandyan capital from Jaffna when he heard about the capture of the king by the British, and he returned home, a disappointed man.<sup>25</sup> A number of dramas based on stories from the Hindu epics were produced during this period: for example, Kanapathy Aiyar's Vālapiman Nātakam, Malaiyakānthinī Nātakam and Alankārapūpa Nātakam, C Sinnatampi Pulavar's Aniruthira Nātakam, all based on stories from the Mahābhārata, P Kanapathipillai's Irāma Vilāsam based on the Rāmāyana and C Sinnatampi Pulavar's own Kōvalan Nātakam based on the Silappatikāram. Other noteworthy literary products of the period are Mailvākana Pulavar's Kāsi Yāttirai Vilakkam, presenting the story of a pilgrimage to Kāsi, the highly venerated centre of Hindu worship in North India. Mailvākana's own Yālpana Vaipava Mālai (1736), was the first attempt to produce a systematic history of Jaffna. It was compiled on the request of the Dutch Governor van Domburg and the author had to put together material from various sources oral and written to produce a systematic account.<sup>26</sup>

To return to the field of Sinhalese literature in the eighteenth century we need to consider the contribution of the sāmanēra Välivita Saranamkara

<sup>25</sup> K Kanapathipillai, op. cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> K Kanapathipillai, op. cit., Mudaliyār C Rasanayagam, Ancient Jaffna (1926), reprint, (New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1984), p 45 ff.

to the revival of the authentic practices of the Buddhist order and of learning in Sinhalese, Pali and Sanskrit. Having salvaged, with great difficulty, the little knowledge in these spheres which lay scattered in various parts of the country and which faced extinction, he began training a small group of sāmanēras who had joined him in the enterprise of religious and literary revival. Contemporary accounts written after his mission succeeded depict in vivid detail the early trials and tribulations he overcame, when patronage which had made it possible for Buddhism and scholarship to flourish in earlier For, king Srī Vīra Parākrama times was not readily available.27 Narendrasimha (1707-39) was not interested in fostering Buddhism or in a revival of the type Saranamkara had in mind, and the aristocracy which had vested interests in temple property controlled by scions of their families in the role of the degenerate monkhood, the ganinnanses, do not appear to have viewed the reformist movement with much kindness either. It was only during the reign of Srī Vijaya Rājasimha, the first Nāyakkar ruler of Kandy, that royal patronage came to be fully extended to the mission of Saranamkara. Srī Vijaya's successor Kīrti Srī Rājasimha became the most magnanimous patron of Buddhism and the arts during the Kandy period and was a keen supporter of the revival. Rājadhi Rājasimha who followed him not only continued this support of the national religion and of classical learning but contributed to the latter himself by his own literary works. Thus a religious revival and a literary renaissance was effected in Kandy under the first three Nāyakkar rulers who sought to compensate for their marginal status by extending lavish patronage to the revival of Buddhism and Sinhala scholarship.

Since the sampha had traditionally been the custodians of learning, a revival of earlier monastic practices involved the revival of scholarship as well. The study of the classical literatures in Sinhalese, Pali and Sanskrit was resumed. Deriving inspiration from the literature of the past, literary forms which had gone into abeyance were faithfully revived. Saranamkara himself revived the art of narrative prose. He was the author of Sārātha Sangrahaya, on the theme of the word Buddhō "(the Enlightened One)" on the same lines as Amāvatura (twelfth century) and Pūjāvaliya (thirteenth century).<sup>28</sup> Tibbotuvāvē Buddharakṣita, a pupil of Saranamkara, followed suit with Śrī

<sup>27</sup> As narrated in Sañgaraja Vittiya (1778); Sangharāja Sādhu Cariyava (1774) and Saňgaraja Vata (1778-9).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Amāvatura was written on the theme purisadhamma-sārathī (capable of taming difficult personalities) and Pūjāvaliya on araham (worthy of worship).

Saddharmāvavāda Sangrahaya, on the theme of the word Satthā "(the Teacher)", i.e., the Buddha. Saranamkara again gave the lead in reviving the writing of exegetical works with the paraphrases Bhēssaja Mañjusā Sannaya, Bodhivamsa Sannaya and Satara Banavara Sannaya to be followed by Tibbotuvāvē with Sathipatthāna Sannaya, Kumburupitiye Gunaratana with Hatthipadopama and Kalakarama sannayas, Sitinamaluve Dhammajoti with Bālāvatāra Sangrahaya and Diyahunnata Dhammajōti with Bālāvatāra Liyana Many others followed suit.<sup>29</sup> Reviving the tradition of Sannaya. Saddharmaratnāvaliya (thirteenth century) where a Pali narrative prose work is freely rendered into Sinhalese, Hinatikumbure Sumangala wrote Śri Saddharmādāsaya based on the Pali Milindapañño. The choice of this work is of interest, Milindapañño being a depiction of an ancient polemical discussion in India between king Milinda, a non-believer and the Buddhist monk Nāgasēna ending in the conversion of the former. This was an appropriate choice for the contemporary social milieu. The inroads of Christianity were being felt especially in the maritime regions and in court circles there was a marked Hindu influence where the South Indian relatives of the kings were a powerful factor. Furthermore, some Christian propagandists such as Jacome Gonçalves, had produced polemical works, criticizing Buddhism. In this context the authors of Srī Saddharmādāsaya, Sārātha Sangrahaya and Śrī Saddharmāvavāda Sangrahaya appear to have been inspired by the need to provide the Sinhalese with a much needed affirmation of the integrity and cogency of their traditional faith.<sup>30</sup>

In the sphere of poetry the revival of the genre of mahākāvya poems is seen with Pattāyamē Lēkam's Kavmiņi Koňdola (1773) Katuvānē Dissānayake's Kavmiņi Maldama (1773) and Sāliälē Maniratana's Kav Mutu Hara (1778). These works follow the classical works of Sinhala poetry in having a Jātaka story as the theme with the Bōdhisatva as the hero; with stock descriptions such as those of cities, kings, and seasons; poetic imagery based on stereotyped concepts; and the use of classical poetic language. The division into cantoes known as sarga which was another feature of the classical mahākāvyas is found only in Kavmiņi Koňdola. Some other verse compositions which followed the same pattern except in the division into sargas were Rājadhi Rājasimha's Asadisa Dā Kava, (1782-7) and Dikvälle Buddharahkihta's Kāvya Dīpaniya (1778).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> For details of other sannayas see Sannasgala, op.cit., pp 491-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> See Ananda Kulasuriya, "Udarata Sinhala Sāhitya" in UCR, XVIII, Nos. 1&2, January 1960, pp 67-95.

Another revived verse form was the sandēsa, an ostensible message in verse, addressed to a deity, sent through a bird messenger, asking for his blessings on a king or same important personage. Thus Dikvälle Sāmanēra wrote Hēmakurulu Sandēsaya (1707-39) and Barana Ganitāchārya wrote Nīla Kobō Sandēsaya (1780-9). Other poems of the same genre are Käṭakirili Sandēsaya (1788) by a poet from Dorapanē and the Diya Sävul Sandēsaya (1813) by bhikkhu Tal Arambe Dhammakkhanda. All four of these sandēsa were addressed to the deity of Kataragama which indicates that he had surpassed in popularity Upulvan, the deity to whom sandēsas were addressed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and Saman, to whom the Sävul Sandēsas (16th century) was addressed.

A bhikkhu named Ranasgalle revived the didactic poem, a popular feature in the Kōṭṭe and Sītāvaka periods, through his Lōkōpakāraya (1799). For his subject matter Ranasgalle is sometimes indebted to the Tamil poem *Tirukkural* (circa 5th century),<sup>31</sup> and in his revivalist zeal he used the  $g\bar{t}$  metre which was the most popular metrical form during the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries.

Although there was an avid resuscitation of traditional literary genres we need to remember that the quality of the revivalist literature was not in any way comparable to the classical models. The narrative prose works, while being heavily indebted to the earlier works, contain many aberrations in grammar and style which indicate that the new writers had not fully mastered the classical idiom. The decline in standards is much more clearly marked in the sphere of poetry. The revived genres often contained only the outward trappings of the works of the classical period. Preoccupied as they were with formalism the revivalist poets added long and tedious descriptions which contained ideas and phrases freely borrowed from the classics. Since these poets lacked full control of the classical idiom their creations often sounded awkward and naive. Prompted by a desire to display erudition, symptomatic perhaps of a revivalist endeavour, they regularly ventured to use a large variety of metrical forms, alliterative devices, obscure words, and acrostic feats of versification, sacrificing in the process whatever capacity they had for creativity in poetic thought. Such features are often found in Kavmini Koňdola (1773), Kav Mini Maldama (1773) and Kav Mutu Hara (1778) which were among the most widely acclaimed creations of the revivalist era.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> See Sri Charles de Silva's Sinhalese translation of *Tirukkural* as Siri Giiya, (Colombo, Sri Lanka Sāhitya Mandalaya, 1964), Introduction, pp XXXIII-VI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> For details see P B J Hevavasam, Mātara Yugayē Sāhitya-Dharayan Hā Sāhitya Nibandhana, (Colombo, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, 1966), pp 135 ff.

The revival also witnessed the restoration of the study of the classical languages, Pali and Sanskrit, essential ingredients of traditional scholarship. The study of Pali had a special significance in the contemporary context: as the medium of the Buddhist scriptures its study was a sine qua non in a project of authentification of the Buddhist order. It was again Saranamkara who gave the lead in this effort. His biography, the Sangharāja Sāduchariyāva, describes in vivid detail how as a young novice he had to revive the knowledge of Pali language and literature, which were virtually extinct in the Kandyan kingdom, and, having mastered them himself, proceeded next to teach his pupil associates. He compiled several beginners' courses such as the Rupamala, the Rupamala Vannana the Pali-Sinhala Artha Kathana, and the Pali-Sinhala Kathā Mālā for this purpose. The last was a guide to Pali-Sinhala conversation which was essential for communicating with the Siamese preceptors who arrived in the island to help in the work of the revival of the monastic tradition.

The same procedure was followed with regard to Sanskrit. Saranamkara's pupil Attaragama Rājaguru Bandāra subsequently attained great fame as a teacher of Pali and Sanskrit. He prepared several works for use by beginners in the study of these languages, among which were *Sudhira Mukha Mandana*, *Kāraka Puppha Mañjarī* and *Sadda Mālā* on Pali and *Sanskruta Nāma Varanāgilla*, a paraphrase of the *Hitōpadēsa* and a Sanskrit-Sinhala Dictionary. A large number of Sinhalese paraphrases of Pali and Sanskrit classics prepared by Saranamkara and his senior pupils, Tibbotuvāvē, Attaragama, Kamburupitye Gunaratana and others were prepared as guides to the study of these languages and their literatures.<sup>33</sup>

Subsequently several literary compositions in Pali were produced by Saranamkara and others. Thus mention may be made of Saranamkara's own *Abisambodhi Alankāraya*, a Pali eulogy of the Buddha, Tibbotuvāvē Buddharaksita's continuation of the *Mahāvamsa* from the reign of Parākramabāhu IV to the middle of the reign of Kīrti Srī Rājasimha and Kunkunāvē Sumangala's *Srī Rāma Sandēsa*, a Pali *sandēsa* invoking the blessings of god Vishnu at Haňguranketa Dēvālaya on king Srī Vikrama Rājasimha. Only a very few original works in Sanskrit seem to have been written during the period. Saranamkara himself is believed to be the author of a short poem named *Sīhalīndrāstaka*.

Apart from the revival of classical models there were some novel features as well in the literature of the period. The most notable among them are biographies in prose and verse and the descriptions of contemporary events. The life of Saranamkara is depicted in eulogistic terms in prose in

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<sup>33</sup> Sannasgala, op.cit., pp 481-5

Sangharāja Sādhucariyāva by Āyittāliyäddē Lēkama, and in verse, in Saňgaraja Vata by Munkoţuvē Abēysinghe. The life of Moratoţa Dhammakkhanda one of the most eminent pupils of Saranamkara is depicted in the poem Moratoţa Vata again by Munkoţuvē. There are two major prose works which deal with the efforts of Saranamkara and his associates to reestablish higher ordination with assistance from Siam. They are, Syāmdūta Varnanāva and Syāmōpasampadā Vata. A poem dealing with a contemporary event is the Gangārōhana Varnanāva, a description of a Buddhist festival held in the Nilvalā river at Mātara in 1806.

Another novel feature in the field of verse composition is the erotic poem which emerged towards the end of the eighteenth century. It may be considered an offshoot of the panegyrics referred to earlier in this chapter, which contained, among other things, descriptions of the erotic appeal and the sexual prowess of the hero sometimes with anecdotal proof provided. The erotic poem seems to have developed upon this feature. Also, there were models to follow, in Tamil literature. The erotic poem usually presents a story containing a theme of love, estrangement, lamentation and re-union with lavish descriptions of the sexual exploits of the hero and the heroine. The most famous among the erotic poems of the period are Viyovaga Ratna Mālaya (1768) of Pattāyamē Lēkam, Makaradhvajaya (c 1772) of Katuvānē Dissānāyake and Ratiratnālankāraya (1811) of Dunuvila Gajanāyaka Nilamē. Other erotic poems compiled during this period are Viyoga Mālaya, Kāmālankāraya, two poems titled Rati Ratna Mālaya, Kovul Saka, two poems titled Kavi Andaraya and the Ranahasa Mālaya.<sup>34</sup> The erotic poems as a whole display the lack of a finer sensibility and good taste and may be considered as symptomatic of a decline in literary standards. Their appearance in the literary scene, however, is significant. They mark a departure from the religious and edificatory subject matter traditionally considered suitable for literary composition. The concept now emerges of literature purely for the purpose of personal pleasure or entertainment.

With the unsettled political conditions towards the close of the eighteenth century, scholarship also suffered and the maintenance of traditional literary standards was once more becoming difficult. This tendency became more pronounced during the early decades of the nineteenth century. In this context there was a tendency among some poets to be less burdened with traditional tenets of versification. The poems of Kirama

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Mirando, op.cit., some of these are printed in the collection Sinhala Māla Kava Sangrahaya, (ed.), Teripähä Somananda, (Colombo, Sri Lanka Unesco National Council, 1986).

Dhammananda (d 1883) whose more creative works were written during the early decades of the nineteenth century are a good example of this trend. His Siyabas Maldama (1820) depicting the story of Suppa Devi and the lion, the legendary precursors of the Sinhalese people and Kav Mutu Hara or Kānchana Dēvi Kathāva (1820-33) based on a story from the Saddharmālankāraya (fourteenth century) are attempts to present in verse straightforward narratives with descriptions reduced to the minimum. Other similar stories in verse by Kirama are Dēvadhamma Jātakaya and Sambulā Jātakaya. In these works we note a relaxation of the attempts by earlier poets to adhere to classical poetic diction, the preference now being for a simpler language.<sup>35</sup> In the works of Mihiripännē Dhammaratana (1768-1851) we note the most marked departure from traditional poetic norms. Mihiripännē, although a master in wielding the classical poetic form as is evident in his early compositions, is best known as the writer of simple verses in silo metre where he gives vivid descriptions of folk beliefs and contemporary events using a highly colloquialized idiom. Gajaman Nona, a poetess from Mātara who flourished during the early decades of the nineteenth century is also remembered for her short compositions in the form of ballads, elegies, lyrics and petitions.36

The revival accomplished under the guidance of Saranamkara was thus a landmark both in the history of the Buddhist order and the world of learning and literary activity of the Sinhalese. It arrested a decline that was almost complete and gave a new lease of life to these facets of national culture. Although the vigour of the revival subsided considerably by the turn of the eighteenth century the resuscitated traditions were kept in continuity by a system of pupillary succession to undergo further authentification, elaboration and modernization in a second wave of revivalism during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The period we survey, characterized as it was by a turbulent political history, also witnessed uneven and varied developments in literary activity. In the history of Sinhalese literature the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are generally considered a period of decline after a highly productive Kōtte era which witnessed the production of many works of literary excellence. The works of Alagiyavanna in the sixteenth century were the last products of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Godakumbura, op. cit., pp 169-77, 265 and 277; Hevavasam, op. cit., pp 229-66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Godakumbura, op.cit., pp 272-3 and Hevavasam, op.cit., pp 423-49; T S Dharmanandhu (ed.), Mihiripännē Dhammaratana Svāmin Vahansēgē Prabandha, Vällampitiya, Navajīvana, 1949. The silō metre is an imitation of a Sanskrit form.

a literary tradition, which had been nurtured in the Buddhist monasteries and maintained unbroken by a system of pupillary succession from the Anurādhapura period onwards.

With the collapse of the Great Tradition there emerged during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries a folk literature, particularly in verse. Composers with little or no knowledge of classical literary norms ventured to produce poems, particularly story poems, using themes from the Buddhist *Jātaka* collection as well as from Tamil sources which were also popularly known at the time. With the revival of Buddhist monastic life and the tradition of classical scholarship in the eighteenth century vigorous attempts were made to re-introduce traditional literary genres such as the prose compendiums, exegetical works, the *Mahākāvya* poems and so on. Although many of these genres were revived in form the products that emerged were in no way equal in quality with the works of the classical period.

During the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries while Sinhalese literature was resuscitated and a literary revival was nurtured and sustained because the indigenous kingdom survived in the Kandyan interior, Tamil literature could not continue with a similar vigour due to the fall of the Jaffna kingdom to the Portuguese during early seventeenth century.

As a whole in the Sinhalese literature of the period under survey we find a great variety of literary forms and styles and the introduction of completely new features, in particular due to the influence of Tamil literature and the advent of Christianity. The great variety of the literature of the period is noted with edificatory prose compendiums in the Buddhist tradition (Sārārtha Sangrahaya) exegetical works (Satara Banavara Sannaya); aids to language study (Pali Sinhala Artha Kathanaya); history in verse (Mandārampurapuvata); compendiums of traditional lore (Kadayim Pot and Vitti Pot); panegyrics (Narēndrasimha Raja Varnanā); war poems (Mahā Hatana); Mahā Kāvyas with jātaka stories as the theme (Kavmini Koňdola); story poems (Vētālan Kathāva); translations of poems (Mahā Padaranga Jātakaya); life stories in verse (Saňgaraja Vata); life stories in prose (Sangharāja Sāduchariyāva); travel descriptions (Syāmadūta Varnanāva); message poems or sandesa (Hemakurulu Sandesaya); edificatory poems (Lokopakāraya); poems connected with the worship of Buddhist deities (Pitye Surindu Puvata); and so on. The Christian literature introduced by the South Indian immigrant missionary Fr Jacome Gonçalves brought in a completely new genre into the fields of Sinhalese and Tamil literatures.

In the Sinhalese literature of the period one of the most noteworthy features the is influence of Tamil literature. The borrowing of words from Tamil is evident in Sinhalese literature from about the thirteenth century and we find that during the Kötte period (15th century) Tamil was studied in the

*pirivenas*. From the sixteenth century onwards the influence of Tamil language and literature became stronger. There are translations of Tamil originals, (the *Mahā Padaranga Jātakaya*, and the *Vētalan Kathāva* for example); the borrowing of literary genres found in Tamil and a much more frequent borrowing of Tamil words in literary compositions. Alagiyavanna's edificatory poem *Subhāsitaya* indebted in many instances to the Tamil classics *Nāladiyar*, *Nanneri* and *Tirukkural*, and Ranasgalle's *Lōkōpakāraya* indebted to the Tamil classic *Tīrukkural*, are two well known cases. The panegyrics (*prasasti*) and war poems (*Haṭan Kavī*) which proliferated during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and their offshoots the erotic poems of the eighteenth century again indicate the influence of Tamil literary models - the *viruttam* and *parani* forms found in Tamil literature.<sup>37</sup>

Several new types of Sinhalese lyrical compositions emerged during this period, many of them based on Tamil verse forms - the vannam and savudam lyrical compositions in set melodies which are used as singing accompaniments to Kandyan dancing. There are eighteen vannams, most probably composed during the period under survey; and some of them bear Tamil names (kudiradi, ūradi, musaladi and naiyadi). The māla type of verse composition which became very popular during this period may also be traced to Tamil sources.<sup>38</sup>

The sindu, a type of lyrical song, is yet another form borrowed from Tamil. The earliest extant Sinhalese sindu are found in some panegyrical compositions in praise of Rājasimha II. Jacome Gonçalves's Mangala Gītiya (c 1730) is a collection of Christian sindu to be sung during church service. Several other compositions are found in the panegyrics composed during the reigns of Narēndrasimha and Srī Vikrama Rājasimha. The adoption of the sindu form by the Buddhists is found with Kirama Dhammananda's Stuti Pūjā Kāvyaya (1806). Many other early sindu with Buddhist themes composed during the eighteenth century are found in manuscript form.<sup>39</sup>

In the nineteenth century, with the establishment of British rule the stage was set for the emergence of new literary trends particularly due to the influence of English and other European literatures.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> See D E Hettiarachchi, "Sinhala Prasasti Kāvya," Sanskruti, 1957, January-March, pp 11-7; Hissälle Dhammaratana, Sinhalaye Dravida Balapääm, (Colombo, Gunasena, 1963), p 98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> See Teripähä Somananda (ed.), op.cit., p. XVII.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> See Sunil Ariyaratna, Sindu Vistaraya, (Colombo, Dayavansa Jayakody, 1989), pp 43-67.

# **CHAPTER XVIII**

## SRI LANKAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE DURING THE SIXTEENTH, SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES\*

### Sirima Kiribamune

Political landmarks in a nation's history do not often coincide with significant cultural changes, a generalisation which is to some extent true of sixteenth century Sri Lanka. This however is not the only problem which confronts the art historian of the three centuries during which the Portuguese and the Dutch wielded political authority in the maritime areas of the island. The search for evidence on the indigenous art history of this period leads one to a geographically limited area, concentrated by and large in the central regions of Sri Lanka which formed the independent kingdom of Kandy. In these areas too, certain constraining factors do not allow a totally satisfactory picture. Their continued existence as centres of population up to modern times, subject to the usual phenomena of growth and change is a factor to be reckoned with. Earlier buildings have been sometimes re-structured to suit changing aesthetic tastes or for more practical reasons, so that the modern researcher is somewhat handicapped. The vagaries of time have also effaced some of the monuments which belonged to this period, domestic architecture being a notable casualty. It has often been said that we know less about the art and architecture of the later capitals of Sri Lanka than we do of Anurādhapura or Polonnaruva. These ancient cities, when they ceased to be seats of government, were covered by the jungle, and no human hand could obliterate those features peculiar to their age. The same cannot be said of cities such as Kandy and Kötte.

This discussion excludes the Portuguese and Dutch buildings situated in the coastal cities of Sri Lanka.

The uneven distribution, in spatial terms, of the indigenous monuments of this period should not be allowed to pass without comment. It is common knowledge that it was Buddhism and to some extent Hinduism which inspired the more permanent artistic achievements of Sri Lanka under the patronage of her local rulers. The maritime areas under the Portuguese and later the Dutch, were not only starved of such patronage but suffered large scale destruction at their hands, more particularly under the Portuguese. The ecclesiastical Council of 1567 held in Goa decreed that all non-Christian temples in Portuguese territories should be demolished. It was this policy of the Portuguese which resulted in the destruction of the temples at Navagamuva, Māpitigama, Wattala, Devinuvara and at Munnesvaram. The desecration of temples and the destruction of images, the confiscation of temple lands and the denial of public worship in the maritime areas drove the Buddhist clergy to the haven of the hill country.<sup>1</sup> The conquest of the Portuguese territories in Sri Lanka by the Dutch did not change the situation very much. Though not as ruthless in their persecution of Buddhism and Hinduism, the Dutch at the out-set did not permit the building of Buddhist<sup>2</sup> or Hindu<sup>3</sup> temples in their territories. A certain relaxation of this policy is noticed towards the latter part of Dutch rule in Sri Lanka and the repair and maintenance of the temples was not interfered with. It is due to such small mercies that the art historian of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can speak of a temple art in coastal Sri Lanka, the provenance of such temples being largely in the south of the island. However, the fact remains that the number of new religious structures built in these areas was not large and those that have survived are not numerous. Even these few derived their inspiration from Kandy, where the indigenous culture was allowed a relatively Therefore the emphasis placed on untrammelled growth and existence. Kandyan art in this chapter is not through choice but through compulsion.

The political forces operative in the maritime areas, gave the rulers of the hill country a distinctive role, a role of which they were supremely conscious. The central regions not only became the last bastion of political independence but also the last stronghold of traditional culture, a situation which gave a sense of urgency to its rulers. Kings like Kīrti Srī Rājasimha (1747-82) and Rājādhi Rājasimha (1782-98) engaged themselves in prolific building activity giving their patronage to a resurgence of culture. They were

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Tikiri Abeyasinghe, Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, pp 206-7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> K W Goonewardena, The Foundation of Dutch Power in Ceylon, p 146.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> S Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon, p 229.

often called upon to undertake large scale reconstruction work, especially in the capital city destroyed by invasions led by the Portuguese and Dutch.

Much of what is extant of the art and architecture of the Kandyan period is attributed to Kīrti Srī Rājasimha. It is generally believed that there was a political agenda behind the vast programme of construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation undertaken during his reign. By following the Asokan model of kingship, it is argued that he tried to convince his subjects that he was a genuine Buddhist.<sup>4</sup> According to James Duncan, Asokan kingship is expressed through the building of Buddhist structures and works of public utility such as tanks. The other model of kingship was the divine or Sakran model which was concretised in the form of palaces, parks and ponds which beautify the city, giving the king enhanced status, perhaps with no tangible benefit to the people at large. He argues that this latter model was followed by the last king of Kandy, Srī Vikrama Rājasimha to his great detriment.<sup>5</sup> What ever the merits of this argument may be, tradition has it that 'the divine city' concept was very much in the mind of the king when he summoned his chief architect, Devendra Mulacarya, and entrusted him with the challenging task of making the capital look like a celestial city.<sup>6</sup> It is evident from the work accomplished in temples like Dambulla, that Srī Vikrama Rājasimha did not totally neglect his religious obligations. By and large most rulers of Kandy maintained a judicious balance between the Asokan and the so-called Sakran models of kingship, which provided ample scope for many a skilled artist and craftsman. Considering the traditional infrastructure which made possible the development of the arts, the direct interest of the ruler was a sine qua non of such progress. Artists and craftsman practised their professions in pupillary succession within the tight framework of social groupings and held hereditary land for their services. In addition, they were most generously rewarded on completion of any undertakings such as the building of a vihāra or the sculpting of an image. These men did not have to commercialise their art for a living, with the result that "the craftsman brings to his work a contentment of mind and leisure and pride and pleasure in it for its own sake which are essential to all artistic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> John Holt, The Religious World of Kīrti Srt Rājasimha, (unpublished Mss), pp 27-34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> James Duncan, The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyan Kingdom, (Cambridge University Press, 1990), p 78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Nimal de Silva, "Kandy the historical hill capital," The Cultural Triangle of Sri Lanka, (UNESCO, 1993), p 159.

excellence."7

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The artist of the sixteenth to the eighteenth century Sri Lanka was heir to a rich tradition which went back to the early kingdoms of Anurādhapura and Polonnaruva, a tradition which continued through such periods as that of the Gampala kingdom. The cave temple, the structural image house, the carved pillar and decorative motifs are some of the features which link Kandyan art with an earlier epoch. Variants of earlier forms such as the re-designed moonstone, popular adoptions such as the temple on pillars (*tām-pita vihāra*) and a recognisable style in mural paintings all go together to form what is traditionally designed 'Kandyan Art.' There is no major shift in style at a precise moment or a great revolution in art and architecture. Basic rules were laid down in the Sanskrit texts, *silpa śāstras* as they were called, such as the *Sāriputra*,<sup>8</sup> the *Māyāmataya*<sup>9</sup> and the *Rūpāvaliya*<sup>10</sup> of which there were Sinhala paraphrases. Such rules as were laid down did not hinder the individuality of the artist nor did they produce a sameness in art.

The question of foreign influence on Kandyan art is extremely pertinent. The close relationships which the Kandyan royal families had with South India, the religious ties with countries like Burma and Thailand as well as the presence of Europeans in the coastal areas all contributed towards the cultural developments of the period in varying measure. In the sphere of art, South and Southeast Asia represent a common cultural zone with a long history of intercultural links. Sometimes this makes it difficult to determine the extent of influence and also the source of inspiration when confronted with a monument of a definite foreign mould. The Galmaduva vihāra in Pāta Dumbara in the district of Kandy can be cited as an example where both Indian and Southeast Asian influences have been suggested. However, foreign influences, though noticed, are not an all-pervading phenomenon in

<sup>9</sup> A Sanskrit work with astrological information relating to building work. There is a Sinhalese translation of this dated in A.D. 1837. See A K Coomaraswamy, (1956), op.cit., pp 120 ff.

A Sanskrit text containing instructions for the drawing of images of gods and mythical animals. See A K Coomaraswamy, (1956), op.cit., pp 111 ff.

Quoted from George Birdwood by A K Coomaraswamy, "Kandyan Art: What it meant and how it ended," Ceylon National Review, No. 1, January 1906, p 7.

A Sanskrit work of unknown date. It deals with the dimensions of images, more particularly the Buddha image. See A K Coomaraswamy, *Medieval Sinhalese Art*, (New York, 1956), pp 150 ff.

the art and architecture of this period, the artist taking recourse to the rich cultural inheritance from the past and his own innovative skills.

A noticeable feature of the art and architecture of Sri Lanka, and certainly not peculiar to the period under review, is the seemingly heavy concentration on religious structures. It would seem that the secular buildings such as domestic houses were mostly built of perishable material and have not survived. Even of the palace architecture, very little has withstood the ravages of time and only a very rough idea of the houses of the elite in society can be had. The artist is almost exclusively bound by religion and the outcome is mostly a religious art.

The architecture of post sixteenth century Sri Lanka is neither sumptuous nor with one or two exceptions, monumental. We have seen the reasons for this in the coastal areas. As for the independent kingdom of Kandy, the country did not have the political peace nor the economic resources to attain the heights that the kingdoms of Anurādhapura or Polonnaruva had reached earlier. Despite the political instability caused by invasions and the constant fear of invasion by the Europeans from the maritime regions, and the economic dependence on the not so fertile hilly tracts of the island, the Kandyan architect can be credited with a certain artistic achievement, which merits our attention.

The planning and lay-out of the architectural landscape of the city followed certain time-honoured principles. The close association between the palace complex and the Temple of the Tooth reflects the importance of that relic as a palladium of rulers whose legitimacy depended on its possession. This was a principle inherited by the Kandyan rulers from a past epoch. The location of these buildings on the auspicious eastern side of the city, and their construction on high terraced ground overlooking the residential area of the people to the west is a significant hierarchical arrangement. The temples dedicated to the Bodhisatva Nata, to the goddess Pattini (also considered a Bodhisatva) and to Vishnu are built on artificial terraces, once again emphasising their sanctity and higher status vis a vis the ordinary people. The situation of the temple of Skanda (Kataragama) in the residential sector, away from the sacred area, according to Duncan, conforms to the mythical story that he was cast out of heaven by his father, god Siva.<sup>11</sup> He was perhaps a later addition to the pantheon of Buddhist gods. Looking at the overall arrangement of religious structures, it has been observed that the Hindu gods Vishnu, Pattini and Skanda have been subordinated to the Buddha in the

<sup>11</sup> James S Duncan, (1990), op. cit., pp 115-6.

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hierarchically structured cosmology of the Buddhists.<sup>12</sup> However the significant place given to the temples of these gods within the city throws a great deal of light on the syncretic nature of Buddhism that prevailed during this time. The architectural landscape is also an eye-opener to the centralisation of both political and religious authority in the capital. Just as much as the king and his chief ministers had their residences in the capital so did the two Buddhist fraternities have their residential headquarters in Kandy, the Malvatte and Asgiriya monastic complexes.

In a general survey of the architecture of this period one notices a certain fragility in the buildings largely due to the materials used in construction work. Apart from the conversion of rock-caves into image houses and to some extent the lavish use of stone in a few buildings like the *Daladā Māligāva* at Kandy, stone is not noticed as a regular building material during this time. In a fair number of temples, the use of stone is limited to a few steps flanked by stone balustrades and a carved moon-stone in front of the building. There are some temples where stone is used for monolithic pillars and basement revetments, and a few temples are built on the bare rock, using it in place of a foundation. But on the whole Kandyan architecture is typically one of wood, prominently displayed in the construction of doors and door-ways, windows, pillars and roofs. The wood so used is more often than not carved, an area in which the Kandyan artist excelled.

The above features are particularly noticed in the image house or vihāra, the centre piece of all temple complexes of this period. There are three types of image-houses; the timber-framed or mixed timber and masonry buildings with tiled roofs, the structures which are entirely of masonry work, and the rock-cut image houses. The mixed timber and masonry image-house, which is the most popular type, has a rich variety of form, the simplest being a rectangular shrine in which the Buddha image is housed, with a sculptured makara-torana above the entrance door-way coupled with an extended porch or vestibule.<sup>13</sup> The Ambulugala vihāra is a good example of this type of temple. It is usual for the central Buddha image to be flanked by other attendant images of disciples and gods and the walls and ceiling to be painted over with scenes from the life of the Buddha, his previous births etc. A variant of this same type of image-house is the vihāra which has a circumambulatory path round the central shrine with the walls flanking it

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> John Holt, (Unpublished Mss), op. cit., p 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Senake Bandaranayake, "Sri Lanka and Monsoon Asia: Patterns of Local and Regional Architectural Development and the Problems of the Traditional Sri Lankan Roof" in Senarat Paranavitana Commemoration Volume (eds), Prematilleke, Indrapala and Lohuizen de Leeuw, (Leiden, 1978), p 40.

being painted over. Among the temples which bear this feature is the Rajamahavihāra at Muppane in the Monerāgala district.<sup>14</sup>

The two storeyed image-house is another feature of the architectural landscape of this period. Extant temples of this type can be dated from about the fourteenth century A.D., a noteworthy example being the Aludeniya *vihāra* which is assigned to the reign of Bhuvanekabāhu IV (1347-61) of Gampala.<sup>15</sup> The lower storey conforms to the type of image-house with a circumambulatory path discussed above. The upper storey which is reached by an outer stair-way also houses a Buddha image. In the two-storeyed image-house at Dodantale the image-house is in the upper storey, the ground floor being used as a preaching-hall.<sup>16</sup>

A special type of image-house typical of this period is the temple on pillars or the '*tām-piţa-vihāragē*.' These buildings usually stand on stone pillars of varying height and number. One does however meet with the occasional structure on wooden pillars<sup>17</sup> as well. One of the tallest of this type of temple is built on pillars, which are as much as eight feet high,<sup>18</sup> while at the other end of the scale is a temple with pillars rising upto only one foot four and a half inches.<sup>19</sup> The number of pillars depends largely on the dimensions of the shrines which are on the whole of modest proportions. The smaller temples stand on about six to eight pillars but some of the larger temples have as many as twenty pillars, the Nāgarukkhārāmaya in Pahala Baladora in the Kurunāgala district, being a good example.<sup>20</sup> This temple measures twenty two feet by sixteen feet. It is not unusual to find that the stone pillars used in these buildings have been taken from older structures

- <sup>14</sup> ASCAR, 1965-6, p 94.
- <sup>15</sup> J P Lewis, "Kandyan Architecture" in H W Cave, *The Book of Ceylon*, (London, 1912), pp 356-7.
- <sup>16</sup> A K Coomaraswamy, (1956), op.cit., p 118.
- <sup>17</sup> An example of this is seen at the Kirivehera, Wendaruwa in Lower Dumbara. J P Lewis, "Some Kandyan Temples," CALR, Vol. VII, Pt.II, p 110, ASCAR, 1952, p 35.
- <sup>18</sup> Purāna Rajamahavihāra at Gondiwela in the Kegälla district, ASCAR, 1964-65, p 99.
- <sup>19</sup> The Sudharmārāma vihāra in Watagedara, Mātara district, ASCAR, 1966-7, p 66.
- <sup>20</sup> ASCAR, 1965-6, p 90.

which were in ruins.<sup>21</sup> The pillars support a grid of wooden beams over which are placed very thick floor-boards. The walls, usually made of wattle and daub, are raised on this wooden platform. Round the central shrine is a circumambulatory passage, enclosed by a short wall<sup>22</sup> or much more picturesquely by a carved wooden railing.<sup>23</sup> Pillars rising from the half-wall or railings support the roof which is often of the double-slope type.<sup>24</sup> Flat or round tiles cover the roof which terminates in one or two finals. A flight of steps leads up to the main shrine. The essential features of the shrine conform to the mixed timber and masonry type image-house described earlier. The main components of these shrines are a *makara torana* or arch with the dragon motif sculptured in high relief over the entrance door-way with door 'reepers moulded in clay on either side, an elaborately carved wooden door frame, Buddha images and images of gods in the inner sanctum and elaborate paintings on the inner and outer walls of the shrine as well as on the wooden ceiling.

Occasionally one does meet with variant forms of the *täm-pita-vihāragē* slightly different from what has been described earlier. For instance the image house at the Sūriyagoda *vihāra* near Kiribathkumbura in the Kandy district, although it conforms to the traditional architecture of an image-house on pillars, has an open hall in front, used as an *Uposathaghara* or confession hall by the monks. This section of the building is also raised on pillars.<sup>25</sup> An open hall for an *Uposathaghara* is in itself an unusual feature and rarer still is its attachment to a *täm-pita-vihāragē*. The Purāna *Rajamahavihāra* at Kolambagama in the Kurunāgala district is different in that one notices that the *vihāragē* is not actually raised on pillars but anchored on large pieces of granite placed on a flat rock outcrop in the village.<sup>26</sup> The image-house of the *Rajamahavihāra* at Bingiriya in the Kurunāgala district although built on pillars about seven feet high, has a wall running round it at ground level with doors on the four sides. It is possible that this wall is a subsequent addition.

- <sup>22</sup> ASCAR, 1967-8, p 89.
- <sup>23</sup> EZ, Vol. V, plate 35.
- <sup>24</sup> ASCAR, 1959, Plates 3a and 3b, A K Coomaraswamy, (1956), op.cit., p 118.
- <sup>25</sup> ASCAR, 1952, p 35.
- <sup>26</sup> ASCAR, 1965-6, p 92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> ASCAR, 1963-4, p 87-8, EZ, Vol. V. pp 288-9.

The shrine room with ambulatory which conforms to the usual pattern gives the appearance of an upper storey.<sup>27</sup>

It is unfortunate that some of the *täm-pita-vihāragēs* have been distorted by later construction, such additions giving them an almost grotesque appearance. At Danture for instance an image-house of a later date has been attached to the original structure on pillars.<sup>28</sup> Protecting but nevertheless distorting the *vihāragē* at the Purāna *Rajamahavihāra* in Kolambagama,<sup>29</sup> is a large structure of later date. Similarly at the Sudharmārāma *vihāra* in the Mātara district the *täm-pița-vihāragē* is enclosed by another building of subsequent construction. These later builders motivated by a protective instinct to preserve the relics of a past age were no doubt lovers of art but sadly, they themselves lacked a sense of art.

Archaeologists and art historians have offered some comment on the provenance of the täm-pita-vihāragēs in the general scheme of Sri Lankan architecture. The popular view is that the architect derived his inspiration from the traditional grain-stores or granaries.<sup>30</sup> It was common practice for the royal store, the temples and the larger houses to have a separate building to store grain. This building known as 'atuwa' or 'atu-bissa' was raised on low stone pillars as a protection against termites. Even if one concedes that the idea for a vihāragē on pillars was derived from the "atuwa," one cannot agree with the view that the image-house was raised on pillars, for the specific purpose of protecting it from termites.<sup>31</sup> We have already noticed that there was the occasional temple raised on wooden pillars. Also the architects who designed these temples did not stop at the short pillars of the "atuwa," but went on to construct them on pillars which were sometimes seven or eight feet high. An attempt has been made to relate the temple on pillars to the rural tree-house or watch-huts built by farmers to guard their fields at night, and certain hill side structures supported on stilts in the

27 *ibid.* 

- <sup>29</sup> ASCAR, 1965-6, p 92.
- <sup>30</sup> H C P Bell, ASC, XIX, 1892, Report on the Kägalle District, Colombo, 1904, p 17, A K Coomaraswamy, (1956), op.cit., p 117.
- <sup>31</sup> H C P Bell, op.cit., p 17; A K Coomaraswamy, (1956), op.cit., pp 117-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> ASCAR, 1967-8, p 83.

country side.<sup>32</sup> Attention has also been drawn to the fact that buildings on stilts are best known in the countries of East and Southeast Asia.<sup>33</sup> It is tempting to advance the thought that the inspiration for the täm-pita-vihāragēs came from Southeast Asia and this with good reason. Sri Lanka and the countries of Southeast Asia have had a long history of cultural links, links which became specially strong between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries A.D.<sup>34</sup> Whatever the origins of the täm-pita-vihāragēs were it is fairly obvious that by the Kandyan period this type of image-house had became integral to Sri Lankan religious architecture. The noticeably wide distribution of the vihāragē on pillars during this period also suggests that it was not a recent innovation or borrowing. Structures of this type have been noticed in an extremely wide area covering the present districts of Kandy,35 Kurunāgala,<sup>36</sup> Ratnapura,<sup>37</sup> Colombo,<sup>38</sup> Mātalē,<sup>39</sup> Mātara,<sup>40</sup> Kägalle<sup>41</sup> and Anurādhapura,42 the largest number being located in the Kandy and Kurunägala districts. The majority of these buildings can be assigned to roughly the eighteenth century, giving rise to the view that the täm-pita-

- <sup>34</sup> W M Sirisena, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, (A.D. 1000-1500), (Leiden, 1978), Chs. IV-VI.
- <sup>35</sup> ASCAR, 1952, p 35; ASCAR, 1959, pp 42-3.
- <sup>36</sup> ASCAR, 1964-5, p 92; ASCAR, 1965-6, pp 90, 92.
- <sup>37</sup> ASCAR, 1967-8, p 87.
- <sup>38</sup> ASCAR, 1959, pp 45-6; ASCAR 1967-8, p 89.
- <sup>39</sup> ASCAR, 1966-7, p 62.
- <sup>40</sup> ASCAR, 1966-7, p 66.
- <sup>41</sup> ASCAR, 1960-1, p 31.
- <sup>42</sup> ASCAR, 1962-3, p 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Senake Bandaranayake, Sinhalese Monastic Architecture, (Leiden, 1974), p 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> *ibid*.

vihāragē was an architectural style which evolved in that century.<sup>43</sup> However, the reasons adduced already and the fact that there is at least one temple of this architectural style which has been dated in the fifteenth century makes this view untenable. It is on record that the image-house on pillars at the Sūriyagoda temple was originally built by Parākramabāhu VI of Kōṭṭe in the fifteenth century and subsequently received the attention of Narēndrasimha in the eighteenth century.<sup>44</sup> At least three layers of paintings have been discovered on the walls of this temple, the first layer datable in the fifteenth century.<sup>45</sup> Therefore the *täm-piṭa-vihāragē* goes back to at least the Kōṭṭe period.

The next type of image-house is the fully masonry structure noticed somewhat sparsely in the period under survey. Such temples were technically known as 'Gedige Vihāras.' It has been pointed out that originally the term 'gedige' was used to indicate an entirely brick building with a vaulted dome but that subsequently it was also applied to buildings which were built of stone with brick vaulted roofs.<sup>46</sup> In the Kandyan period it is seen that this term was applied even to structures with stone vaulted roofs as is illustrated by the image-house at the Adahana-maluva in Kandy, known as the Gedige vihāra. This is a two storeyed shrine with an open drumming hall attached to it at one end. The ground-floor serves as the image-house, where there is a seated Buddha image, and the upper storey houses a dagoba,47 a rather unusual feature. The architectural style of the Gedige vihāra resembles that of the Gadaladeniya temple, a two storeyed image-house completed in the fourteenth century A.D. The Nāta dēvalē in Kandy also belongs to the same architectural pattern and is thought to be a work of the 14th century. Imagehouses with vaulted roofs are known in Sri Lanka even as early as the Anurādhapura period, but they were never popular at any time. The general consensus is that these structures are clearly outside the ambit of traditional Sri Lankan architecture and are "importations representing various schools of

 A C Lawrie, A Gazetteer of the Central Province of Ceylon, (Colombo, 1896), Vol. II, p 801.

- <sup>45</sup> L Maranzi, "Preservation of Mural Paintings (Ceylon)," UNESCO Report, (February-May 1972), p 1.
- <sup>46</sup> S Paranavitana, 'Gedige,' JCBRAS, Vol.36, No.99, 1945, pp 126-9.
- <sup>47</sup> A C Lawrie, op. cit., Vol. I, p 72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> C E Godakumbura, Medawela Vihāra Frescoes, Department of Archaeology, Art Series, No.3, (1964), p 12.

### South Indian architecture."48

A unique structure which was meant to serve as an image house is the Galmaduva vihāra in the village of Gunnāpāna, a few miles from Kandy. This building is also known as the Gedige vihāra and conforms to the accepted formula of a stone structure with a brick vaulted roof. Conformity with any known architectural style in Sri Lanka stops here for in outward design it seems to stand alone. The temple is square at the base and takes the appearance of a pyramidal tower or vimāna in seven receding stages, forming a brick vault inside. The central tower is surrounded by a massive stone wall pierced by five cusped arches on each side. The central arch on one side, slightly larger than the rest forms the door way.<sup>49</sup> The Galmaduva vihāra is dated in the reign of Kīrti Srī Rājasimha. According to tradition the king began its construction but abandoned it before completion having sensed a plot to trap him inside the building.<sup>50</sup> That it was left unfinished is fairly clear, for the stone seat for the Buddha image was left bare (An image has been installed here in recent times). Also, some believe that there would have been a roof between the outer wall and the base of the vimāna in the original design, a roof which was never constructed.<sup>51</sup> There is no gainsaying that the Galmaduva temple represented the importation of a foreign design although there is some controversy as to the source of this inspiration. J P Lewis calls it the most Hindu looking Buddhist temple in Sri Lanka.<sup>52</sup> That the central vimāna was influenced by the Nāyakkar temples at Tanjore and that the cusped arches are of Dutch inspiration has been suggested.<sup>53</sup> While some scholars relate the Galmaduva temple to the general scheme of South Indian architecture,<sup>54</sup> others have gone further north, bringing out affinities

- <sup>50</sup> ASCAR, 1940-45, I 12.
- 51 ibid.
- <sup>52</sup> J P Lewis, op. cit., (1912), p 354.

53 ASCAR, 1940-45, I 12.

<sup>54</sup> A C Lawrie, op.cit., Vol. 1, p 258.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Senake Bandaranayake, op. cit., (1978), p 42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> For a description of this building see J P Lewis, op. cit., (1912), pp 353 ff.

with the Buddhagayā vihāra.<sup>55</sup> Temples in the form of pyramids rising in diminishing stages is a familiar feature in Southeast Asian architecture. During the reign of Kīrti Srī Rājasimha Sri Lanka was turning to the countries of Southeast Asia for its Buddhist revival and the Galmaduva design may well have been derived from this same region.

Image-houses with the most picturesque setting are those situated among the rock outcrops found scattered in various parts of the country. During the earliest phase of Buddhism in Sri Lanka the natural caves at many of these sites were used as residences for monks. But with a growing preference for structural monasteries, the cave dwelling fell out of vogue. Some of these caves were later converted into image-houses. The rock-cut vihāra is an architectural device familiar throughout the Buddhist world and is not a peculiarly Sri Lankan phenomenon and the Kandyan architect was only following traditional practice in designing this type of image-house. The ancient drip-ledges and Brāhmi inscriptions on the rock face at temples such as Bambaragala,<sup>56</sup> Dambulla,<sup>57</sup> Kandegama<sup>58</sup> etc., show that many of these caves were originally used as residences of monks. Others no doubt were noticed for the first time during this period. Like the täm-pita-vihāragēs, the rock-cut image-house too has a fairly wide regional distribution during this period, being noticed in the districts of Kandy,<sup>59</sup> Kurunägala,<sup>60</sup> Mātalē<sup>61</sup> and Anurādhapura.<sup>62</sup> One of the most typical and perhaps the best known example of a cave vihāra of the Kandyan period is the temple at Degaldoruva near Kandy.63 Here the natural cave has been somewhat enlarged and a

56 S Paranavitana, Inscriptions of Ceylon, Vol. 1, (Colombo, 1970), p 63.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, pp 64-6.

- 58 ASCAR, 1962-3, G 72.
- <sup>59</sup> A C Lawrie, op. cit., p 123.
- 60 ASCAR, 1962-3, G 72, ibid., 1963-4, G 85-86.
- 61 ASCAR, 1961-2, G 72; ibid., 1962-3, G 70; ibid., 1966-7, G 62.
- 62 ASCAR, 1963-4, G 87-8; ibid., 1964-5, G 94.
- 63 A C Lawrie, op. cit., pp 137 ff.

<sup>55</sup> Andreas Nell, "Things to see round Kandy," Ceylon Observer Annual, 1935.

verandah built in front with a tiled roof heaning against the cave and supported by carved wooden pillars. Covering the front of the cave is a wall with an entrance doorway. This wall is profusely painted over both on the inside and outside and so are the walls and ceiling of the cave. The central object of worship is a recumbent Buddha image. Placed against the cave walls are many seated Buddha images as well. Dambulla presents a number of cave shrines belonging to different periods. Kandyan kings from Senarat to Srī Vikrama Rājasimha are said to have contributed toward the embellishment of these shrines.<sup>64</sup> The rock caves both at Dambulla and at the Ridī vihāra show signs of continuous occupation from very early times. With respect to many other cave shrines, the conversion into places of worship seems to date back only to the Kandyan period.

Closely related to the image-house architecture is the devale or the shrine of the gods, whose worship was an important aspect of religion during this period. The housing of these gods or devas was done in a variety of ways suggesting that there were differences in emphasis in their worship from place to place. The simplest method was to assign the gods a subordinate place under the same roof as the Buddha image and this was done in many instances.65 Another device was to build a separate structure within the premises of the Buddhist temple, where once again the devale occupies a subordinate status.<sup>66</sup> The most important devales, however, are those buildings which are situated distinctly away from a vihāra complex, to which are sometimes attached small shrines housing Buddha images. In these buildings the image-house of the Buddha occupies a secondary place.<sup>67</sup> The dēvalēs<sup>68</sup> attached to the Daladā Māligāva in Kandy technically belong to the third category of devales, although in terms of ritual status they occupy a subordinate position vis-a-vis the main Buddhist shrine which is the Temple of the Tooth. A striking difference between the devale and the vihara is that as a general rule the former is completely lacking in painted ornamentation,

66 A K Coomaraswamy, op. cit., (1956), p 120.

67 ibid.

<sup>68</sup> One should however note that many new structures have been added on within the precincts of these *dēvalēs*. Here we are concerned only with those features which reflect conditions of the sixteenth to the eighteenth century period.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Nandana Chuttiwongs, Leelananda Prematilleke and Roland Silva, Paintings of Sri Lanka:Dambulla, (Colombo, 1990), pp 51-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> The Bambaragala vihāra can be cited as an example, A C Lawrie, op. cit., Vol. 1, p 337.

the decorative embellishments in them being mainly limited to carved pillars in the  $digg\bar{e}$  or vestibule area and carved doorways.

Just as the Buddha images, the images of the gods were housed in single or double storeyed timber and masonry structures, in entirely masonry structures as well as in rock caves although the last mentioned was not a very popular mode.<sup>69</sup> The commonest type of  $d\bar{e}val\bar{e}$  was the single storeyed timber and masonry building, not very different to a Buddhist *vihāra* in its ground plan and outward appearance. This type of  $d\bar{e}val\bar{e}$  consists of a square or rectangular inner sanctum with a vestibule known as the *diggē* in front. This section is somewhat elongated in a  $d\bar{e}val\bar{e}$  although some like the  $d\bar{e}val\bar{e}$  at Dodanwela have the same proportions as a *vihāra*.<sup>70</sup> Typical of this double-platform type of shrine are the  $d\bar{e}val\bar{e}s$  at Danture and Ämbäkkē.<sup>71</sup> Although the Ämbäkkē  $d\bar{e}val\bar{e}$  is traditionally assigned to the fourteenth century, the sculptural evidence makes it fairly clear that the date of the present building is closer to about the seventeenth century.<sup>72</sup> The pillared *diggē* of this *dēvalē* presents one of the best specimens of wooden architecture of the Kandyan period.

Of much more elaborate construction and complexity of style are the double storeyed (and rare treble storeyed)  $d\bar{e}val\bar{e}s$ , notable examples being the Saman  $d\bar{e}val\bar{e}$  at Ratnapura<sup>73</sup> and the Ammaduva  $d\bar{e}val\bar{e}$  of god Kataragama also at Ratnapura.<sup>74</sup> The upper storey of these buildings is known as the *udumahalgē*. Apart from the main sanctum and the *diggē* various rooms are set aside for different ritual purposes. Food offerings to the God are prepared in the *multängē* or kitchen and there is also a separate storeroom known as the *gabadāge*. The *rittagē* is used as a halting place for the sacred insignia during *dēvalē* processions. In some of the smaller *dēvalēs* the *multängē* or kitchen Nāta

- <sup>71</sup> Senake Bandaranayake, op. cit., p 40, fig. 18.
- <sup>72</sup> S Paranavitana, ASCAR, 1940-5, I 13.
- <sup>73</sup> A K Coomaraswamy, op. cit., (1956), p 120.
- <sup>74</sup> ASCAR, 1967-8, G 86.
- <sup>75</sup> H C P Bell, op.cit., p 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> The Kirikaňdura-lena is an example of a cave *dēvalē*, ASCAR, 1964-5, G 83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> J P Lewis, *op.cit.*, p 349.

dēvalē in Kandy which is attributed to the 14th century is an example of a complete masonry structure built entirely of stone. Its architectural style is comparable to the image-house at the later *Gedige vihāra* in Kandy. The Bärändi Kōvil at Sītāvaka built by Rājasimha I in the sixteenth century, which seems to be yet another example of a stone masonry structure, is unfortunately in ruins.<sup>76</sup>

A building which has very close affinities to the double storeyed image-house and to the devale type architecture is the Dalada Maligava in Kandy. It is actually closer to a *devale* in the terminology applied to its component parts as well as in the ritual associated with the Tooth Relic. According to tradition this temple was built by king Narendrasimha of Kandy in the seventeenth century,<sup>77</sup> and the section known as the Pattirippuva or Octagon and the surrounding moat were added by Srī Vikrama Rājasimha, the last king of Kandy. The central shrine is a two-storeyed structure built on a stone platform. The use of stone for the walls of the lower storey makes the Daladā Māligāva a little different from the traditional double storeyed structure described earlier. The lower storey is divided into two chambers. The ante-chamber referred to as the  $digg\bar{e}$  and the room behind it known as the maha-aramudala where the gold vessels of the temple are stored. In most *devales* it is usual to use the *digge* as a drumming hall but here the *digge* is walled in and cannot be used for this purpose. Instead there is a large pillared hall in front of the digge for the drummers. The upper floor of the central shrine is built largely of wood and plaster. It is slightly larger than the bottom floor, which is once again unusual, and is divided into three sections, the sanctum which houses the Tooth Relic and two ante-chambers. On the same floor but at a slightly lower elevation than the main shrine room are two sanctuaries, one housing a Buddha image and the other a stūpa. Round the main building are structures housing the usual appurtenances of a dēvalē such as the kitchen or multängē and storeroom or gabadāgē<sup>78</sup> The Daladā Māligāva is replete with carved pillars, door-ways and moonstones and many other embellishments. Mural and ceiling paintings bring the temple of the Tooth closer to the image-house model. Situated at the end of the palace buildings, it is understandably the most impressive structure of this

76 ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Cv II, Chapter 97, vs 36-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Modern structures have replaced these attendant sections in recent times. For a comprehensive description of the temple as it originally stood see A M Hocart, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Vol. IV, (London, 1931).

period. The temple as it stands today has had many new sections added to it during British rule and after independence.

It is interesting to note that the  $st\bar{u}pa$  which dominated the architectural scene in the old kingdoms of Anurādhapura and Polonnaruva did not occupy the same eminent position during this time, and that  $st\bar{u}pas$  of gigantic proportions were not constructed any more. In fact the most important member of a Buddhist temple complex at the time was the imagehouse and on this the Kandyan architect, sculptor and painter focussed maximum attention. The  $st\bar{u}pa$  had receded so much to the background that some temples do not have a  $st\bar{u}pa$  at all.<sup>79</sup> Whenever they were built, the  $st\bar{u}pa$  architect, by and large, followed conventional practice. They were usually constructed on square or circular platforms and were mostly built of brick but sometimes of stone<sup>80</sup> as well and covered with lime plaster. The building of a  $st\bar{u}pa$  within the main shrine or image-house was quite wide-spread during this time. Examples can be cited from Hiňdagala, Daňbulla, Däraniyagala and Sasseruva. As noted earlier, even at the Temple of the Tooth, the  $st\bar{u}pa$  is housed within.

The poyagē is a building set aside for monks to meet for their periodic religious observances. Such a building is normally constructed in temples with a fairly large population of monks. It is normal practice for the monks of smaller temples to visit a common poyagē in one of the larger temples. These buildings were usually rectangular structures as is indicated by the remains of the poyagē at the Gedige vihāra in Kandy. It is marked by eight carved stone pillars forming a rectangular space forty nine feet by thirty four feet.<sup>81</sup> In some instances the living quarters of the monks are constructed round the poyagē.<sup>82</sup> Few temples have indulged in building separate permanent structures as preaching halls (banamaduva) which were for the most part temporary buildings and therefore have not survived. Where such buildings have been noticed, they are found to be open pillared buildings.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>79</sup> H C P Bell, op.cit., p 17.

- <sup>81</sup> A C Lawrie, op.cit., Vol. 1, p 72.
- <sup>82</sup> A K Coomaraswamy, op. cit., (1956), p 119.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> A granite dagoba was built by Kīrti Srī Rājasimha at the Dehigama vihāra, A C Lawrie, op.cit., Vol. 1, p 144.

No Buddhist temple is complete without a Bō-tree (ficus religiosa) in its premises and there always has been some construction work round it. The ground round the tree or the  $B\bar{o}$ -maluva as it is called, is raised and held in place by a square or rectangle retaining wall of stone. This wall sometimes rises up in the form of two, three of four terraces.<sup>84</sup> Placed round the Bōtree are flower altars. The  $B\bar{o}$ -maluva architecture of the Kandyan period corresponds to this general pattern.

Surrounding a temple complex is a parapet wall and at the entrance is a gate-way known as the  $v\bar{a}halkada$ . The  $v\bar{a}halkada$  at the entrance to the Daladā Māligāva is an entirely masonry structure, square in shape. The walls are of brick, faced with stone. Gate-ways at other vihāras are covered by tiled roofs which are supported on pillars. Above the structural walls of the  $v\bar{a}halkada$  at the northern entrance to the Nāta dēvalē is a balcony formed by wooden pillars over which is a tiled roof.<sup>85</sup>

In close proximity to the temple is the monastery or *pansala* which is the residence of monks. It is a plain structure with little or no ostentation, perhaps a reflection of the simple lives the monks were expected to lead. In style, the *pansala* bears a close resemblance to the dwelling houses of the nobility of this period. It is usually a rectangular building with rooms arranged round a central courtyard. Typical examples of the *pansala* are seen at the temples of Suduhumpola and Kundasale.<sup>86</sup> Sometimes the living quarters are arranged round the *poyagē*.<sup>87</sup> It is not unusual to find a row of rooms under one roof forming the residence of monks.<sup>88</sup>

Secular architecture is almost unknown territory for the art historian of early and medieval Sri Lanka. Of court architecture, the remains of a few palace walls and the stone components of royal council-halls are practically all that is left in the ancient cities of the island, and in the sphere of domestic architecture, nothing survives. The use of relatively perishable material for secular buildings is the obvious explanation for this. The situation is a little different in the Kandyan period for being closer to our times there are some survivals. Also a few contemporary accounts of the secular architecture of

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, p 369.

<sup>87</sup> A K Coomaraswamy, op. cit., (1956), p 119.

88 *ibid.* 

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> H C P Bell, op.cit., p 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> J P Lewis, op. cit., (1912), p 346.

the period are available. These do not however give a wholly satisfactory picture and on the subjects of court and domestic architecture one has to restrict oneself to a few general statements.

The only court edifices about which one has a clear idea is the Audience Hall situated to the north of the Daladā Māligāva in Kandy. As a rule, the early Sri Lankan artist has remained anonymous but in the case of the Audience Hall its architect Dēvēndra Mūlācārya is known largely because of his tragic death consequent to a dispute he had with the chiefs regarding this very structure.<sup>89</sup> Said to have been completed during the reign of the last king of Kandy, the Audience Hall is one of the most impressive buildings of this period. It is an open hall with no walls. Two rows of wooden pillars flanking the two sides, support a roof with a double slope. The pillars are exquisitely carved. Recent excavations have shown that the Audience Hall was extended by 10.33 metres during British times. The earlier dimensions were 19.75 metres by 11.65 metres.<sup>90</sup>

Only a very small section of the royal palace of the Kandyan rulers has survived the ravages of the invaders and of time, that it is almost impossible to attempt a reconstruction of the palace structure, its plan and appearance. The fear of invasion and the experience of the two Kings Vimaladharmasūriya and Senarat whose palaces were burnt down by the Portuguese<sup>91</sup> certainly did not create a suitable climate for elaborate palace buildings by the rulers who followed. However Rajasimha II is known to have built two palaces, one in Kandy and another at Hanguranketa. Although neither has survived, the palace at Hanguranketa has been described by Knox in some detail. The palace complex which was enclosed by a wall seems to have consisted of both single and double storeyed buildings with open gate-ways with beautifully carved pillars galleries, and other embellishments.<sup>92</sup> The palace at Kandy was enlarged by Kīrti Srī Rājasimha but this again was burnt down by the Dutch. It was rebuilt later by Sn Vikrama Rājasimha but once again it suffered destruction at the hands of the British. What remains today of this palace structure is its southern section

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Nimal Silva, "Kandy the Historic Hill Capital" in The Cultural Triangle of Sri Lanka, (UNESCO, 1993), p 168.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Fr S G Perera, "The Royal Palace of Kandy," Ceylon Observer Annual, 1935. This contains an illustration of the front view of the palace of Narēndrasmiha sketched by a German, Johann Wolffang Heydt who visited Kandy in 1736.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Robert Knox, (1911), pp 54-5.

which consists of a number of small rooms. This is thought to be an improvisation after its destruction by the British and is not considered representative of typical palace architecture of this period.<sup>93</sup> The archaeologists' spade has exposed several foundations of buildings which once formed the palace complex.<sup>94</sup>

Domestic architecture was extremely unostentatious. This has been attributed to the strict regulations which governed the construction of dwelling houses. The ordinary villager built his house on a mud foundation with mud and timber walls and thatched roof. The floor projected outside the walls forming a narrow edge called the *pila*. The elite had more substantial houses, *valavvas* as they were called. These houses follow closely the *pansala*, architecture described earlier which is roughly a set of rooms arranged round a rectangular open courtyard, or *mäda midula*. Carved wood was sometimes used for the beams and verandah pillars. The windows of houses were very small leaving the rooms quite dark. It is said that according to the rules laid down by the king, no one was allowed a two-storeyed dwelling house and the chiefs had to get his permission to have windows, to white-wash walls, or use tiles for the roofs. Finials over roofs were allowed only for temple or palace buildings.<sup>95</sup> The houses of the not so affluent in society had one to three rooms, the larger houses having many more.

A familiar building which marked well chosen spots on the highways during this period was the *ambalama* or way-side rest-house. Many of these structures have disappeared and some are in ruins. A few, however, have been repaired and conserved for posterity, the *ambalama* at Panāvițiya in the Kurunāgala district being a good example.<sup>96</sup> These buildings were a great boon to pilgrims and traders on their travels, and even to the village folk who used the *ambalama* as a meeting place. The average *ambalama* is a purely wooden building placed on four large stones as at Panāvițiya or on a rough stone base as at Yakgahapițiya in the Kandy district.<sup>97</sup> On this base are placed four thick wooden beams forming a grid. At the four intersections of

93 ASCAR, 1953, G 19.

94 Nimal Silva, 1993, op.cit., pp 161-3.

<sup>95</sup> Major Forbes, Eleven Years of Ceylon, Vol. 1, (London, 1840), p 78.

<sup>96</sup> L K Karunaratne, "Architecture in Wood," Ancient Ceylon, No. 1, January 1971, pp 121 ff.

97 ASCAR, 1966-67, G 61.

the floor beams are placed wooden pillars, which support a thatched or tiled roof. Some of the larger structures have more supporting pillars. In fact the ambalama at Yakgahapitiya has a double grid at two levels separated by a distance of about four and a half feet. Four and twelve pillars rise from the inner and outer grids respectively. This double grid obviously allowed more sitting accommodation in the building. A great deal of care seems to have been taken in building these structures for almost all the pillars as well as the roof beams are carved. One does occasionally meet with an ambalama the roof of which is supported on stone pillars<sup>98</sup> but this is rather rare. Usually the ambalama is square in plan and of modest proportions, ten<sup>99</sup> or twelve feet<sup>100</sup> square being an average size. The Yakgahapitiya ambalama is somewhat large being roughly seventeen and a half feet square. The rectangular ambalama is not completely unknown and example of which is found at Pita-Kotte. The usual Kandyan high pitched roof is almost always in evidence in these buildings.

The so called Kandyan roof has been a topic of great interest among archaeologists and art historians. The reconstruction of the tiled roofs of the Anuradhapura and Polonnaruva kingdoms has been a difficult proposition, for, apart from those buildings with masonry domes, the super-structures of other buildings have disappeared, giving rise to some controversy regarding their exact form. It is in this respect that the Kandyan roof, which is known from surviving examples, has roused great interest. There is a certain variety in the superstructures of Kandyan buildings. The concave masonry roof or the vaulted dome has been noticed already,<sup>101</sup> this being a form known from examples spread out over a long period of time. It is usually regarded as a direct importation of the Indian sikhara style. As for the timber and tile roof, there are three distinct types noticed during this period, the rectilinear, the hipped and the double pitched roof. The rectilinear, roof is normally seen over dwelling houses of both monks and laymen. The more distinctive hipped and double-pitched roofs are evident in court edifices and structures built for religious worship. The hipped roof is noticed in temples which have a verandah round the central shrine. While a peaked roof crowned the central

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Ambalama at Pita-Kötte, C M de Alwis, Antiquities of the Kingdom of Kötte, (Colombo, 1976), p 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> Ambalama at Meddagammedda, Kandy district, ASCAR, 1964-5, G 83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> Ambalama at Godamunne, Kandy district, ASCAR, 1963-4, G 79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> See p 11.

shrine, there was over the verandah, a structurally different roof, starting lower down forming a lean-to roof against the wall of the main building. The structural distinction is sometimes emphasised by different tiling.<sup>102</sup> The image-house at the Gangārāma temple is a very good illustration of the hipped roof.<sup>103</sup> In certain temples with verandahs, one finds that these two roofs merge into a structurally single roof with a double slope. The change of slope takes place over the inner wall, and from this point the roof extends down at a less acute angle. In the case of open pillared buildings, the angle of the roof changes over an inner series of pillars, the Audience Hall at Kandy illustrating this type of roof. An inner wall or row of pillars was not always a prerequisite for this because, in many buildings with no verandahs or pillars, the double-pitched roof has been used. Peculiar to the Kandyan roof are overhanging eaves. The eave-tiles, some with carvings in relief, are shaped like bō-leaves. They serve as a weather-boarding, while playing a decorative role as well.

Ananda Coomaraswamy has attempted to reconstruct the possible stages in the evolution of the so-called Kandyan roof. According to him the first stage was the lean-to roof over the verandah of the cave temple, followed by the hipped roof over the verandah of structural temples. The third stage suggested is where the verandah roof is merged with the main roof but at a different angle and finally the same form being adopted even when there is no verandah. To this stage he also adds a secondary lean-to roof where a hipped roof is added to a building which already has a roof with a double slope.<sup>104</sup> This seems to be a fairly plausible view except that one is struck by the fact that all the stages of this evolutionary process are represented in the architecture of the period under review. A M Hocart has suggested that the high pitched double angled roof was already known during the period extending from the tenth to the twelfth century A.D. He assigns the pillars round the Thuparama dagoba to this period and these pillars according to him indicate a sloping roof.<sup>105</sup> Also the use of flat tiles goes back to the early periods of Sri Lankan history.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Senake Bandaranayake, Sinhalese Monastic Architecture, pp 363-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> ASCAR, 1967-8, G 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> A K Coomaraswamy, op. cit., (1956), plate VII, No. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, p 131.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> A M Hocart, Ceylon Journal of Science, (1924-28), Vol, I, p 145.

The two roof types, rectilinear and curvilinear, are depicted in contemporary mural paintings. Both these forms are also noticed among the murals of the Thūpārāma, Lamkātilaka and Tivamka temples at Polonnaruva. However, actual evidence of these roof types is only found in respect of the rectilinear roof, which has been described as the "classic form<sup>107</sup> of the Sri Lankan roof. No examples of the curvilinear roof, except for the vaulted dome, have been found. It has been said the curvilinear illustrations are "purely artistic conceit" and 'a mere stylistic device.'<sup>108</sup> That the curved roof presented severe difficulties in a country with monsoon rains is clearly seen from the fact that it was found necessary to build tiled roofs over some of the vaulted structures as at the temple at Gadalādeniya.<sup>109</sup> It can be safely said that the curvilinear roof is not traditional to Sri Lanka.

Certain similarities have been noticed between the Kandyan roof and the roof structures of the Buddhist temples of Nepal and Burma,<sup>110</sup> which display Chinese influence. It has been pointed out that the two-tiered hipped roof gives some of the Kandyan buildings a pagoda-like appearance, and as in the Chinese roof, the roofs of certain buildings seem to almost turn up at the edges:<sup>111</sup> this is perhaps one more instance of cultural similarities spread throughout the countries of monsoon Asia.

Among the architectural features of Kandyan buildings some attention has been focussed on the wooden doors and windows. The doors, most of them of large proportions, were single or double-winged, a noticeable peculiarity being the fact that they are fitted without hinges. Two short rounded projections at the top and bottom of the inner edge of the door fit into loose sockets in the door-frame and the door swings on this contraption. A number of ingenious bolts were devised to fasten doors and windows. The doors and door-frames were carved. Sometimes windows were constructed in the form of miniature doors, but there were long windows with bars of lacquered turned wood, in some buildings.

It is in the sphere of carving, particularly of wood carving that the Kandyan artist is seen at his best. This special skill is amply displayed, not

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, p 362.

<sup>109</sup> J P Lewis, op. cit., (1912), p 345.

<sup>110</sup> A K Coomaraswamy, op. cit., (1956), p 118.

111 ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, pp 370-1.

only in contemporary temples and palaces, but even in the lowly kitchen, where the house-wife would use a knife with a carved handle or even in the paddy-field where the farmer would use a plough with some delicate carving. In certain temples such as the Ämbäkke devale the most arresting feature is the wood carving on the pillars. Not only the pillars but even the brackets or pēkadas which intervene between the pillars and the beams, are carved, often in the form of a drooping lotus. The beams themselves are carved at the terminal. The pillars have a rectangular base and an octagonal shaft which is punctuated by rectangular cubes. It is here that the carving is largely concentrated. The most popular design that is employed here is the floral motif. Among the other carvings are geometrical designs, rope designs, wrestlers, dancers, musicians, acrobats and figures of animals and birds. Another area where the wood-carver's skill is demonstrated is at the entrance to buildings where door-frames are profusely carved. Usually animal or human figures are carved at the base of the door-jamb and an elaborate foliage design, sometimes the nārilatā (the creeper adorned by women) spirals up the door-jamb up to the lintel, which is itself carved with some crowning motif such as a nārigätaya (combination of females), the figure of a god or the mythical animal, makara. The door frames of temples display a great variety of design. Sometimes ivory inlay is used to decorate door-frames instead of the usual wood carving. The door itself was made of carved panels of wood. Carving in wood was not limited to the adornment of temples and court buildings but was adopted to satisfy the aesthetic sense of people in all strata of society. In the sphere of domestic furniture head rests and legs of beds were carved and even stools did not go unattended. Among other domestic items on which wood carving is noticed are tables, game-boards, boxes and kitchen utensils. Although there is no great predilection towards the use of stone in the buildings of this period, the architectural and sculptural remains bear ample testimony to the fact that the stone-carver's art was not a neglected field. One of the few buildings where stone is used much less sparingly than in others is the Daladā Māligāva in Kandy. Here on the ground floor, stone pillars replace the wooden pillars noticed in most other buildings. The carvings on them follow traditional patterns. Another instance where stone is used in place of wood is in the door frame with a sūryavanka or double curved lintel at the Daladā Māligāva. The carved granite door-way at the Pitiye devale at the village of Dambarava in the district of Kandy is thought to belong to this period.<sup>112</sup> The stone door-frame at the Hanguranketa vihāra is of special interest, being a carved monolith. This door-way is said to have originally belonged to the seventeenth century royal

<sup>112</sup> ASCAR, 1960, G 88.

palace at Haňguranketa.<sup>113</sup> Among the other notable stone relief sculptures at the *Daladā Māligāva* are two *makara toraņas* or arches noticed above the door-ways and two elephants and guardsmen on either side of the main entrance. Stone steps are an ubiquitous feature at the entrance to most temples and flanking them sometimes are stone balustrades, some plain and others taking the form of the composite animal figure known as *gaja-sinha* or elephant-lion combination.<sup>114</sup>

The moonstone or the semi-circular slab of stone placed in front of the steps of religious buildings is known in Sri Lanka from the earliest historical period. Originally a plain semi-circular slab, with time, it became a very ornate piece of sculpture, carved with animal and floral designs. Up to about the fourteenth century the moonstone retained its completely semicircular shape with a half-lotus decorating the centre, round which were the other designs. By the fourteenth century there is a change both in shape and design. The semi-circle becomes somewhat elongated and takes on a semielliptical shape, "as if for relief from the wearisome monotony of the semicircle."115 A variation of this is where the moonstone retains its earlier semi-circular shape, but to this is added a small circular step which is connected to the moonstone by a short narrow strip of stone. As for design, the central motif becomes a full lotus, round which the other designs too are depicted in full circle. Another noticeable feature is that the animal designs become less frequent and in most instances the entire decoration consists of foliage designs. The makara motif is also seen creeping into the moonstones of this later period. The moonstones of the post-sixteenth century follow these same trends and become somewhat stereo-typed in shape and design. The moonstones at the Daladā Māligāva in Kandy are typical examples of this phase in the evolution of the moonstone. Here one meets with both the elongated type and the semi-circular with a separate circular step in front. It is perhaps note-worthy that the lotus design at the centre remained an abiding factor in respect of the moonstone. A great deal has been written on the symbolism of the moonstones of the Anurādhapura and Polonnaruva periods<sup>116</sup> but by this time it was a purely ornamental piece of sculpture

<sup>114</sup> H C P Bell, op.cit., p 19.

- <sup>115</sup> D T Devendra, "Moonstone Motifs," JCBRAS (n.s.), Vol. IX, pt. 11, p 227.
- <sup>116</sup> S Paranavitana, Artibus Asiae, Vol. XVII 3/4, 1954.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> C E Godakumbura, Sinhalese Doorways, Art Series, No. 9, (Department of Archaeology, 1966), p 51.

with conventional designs.

The galvaduva or stone carver, like his counter-part in wood, did not only concern himself with demonstrating his skill on public and royal buildings such as temples and palaces, but even articles of domestic use such as stone-pestles and grinding stones received his attention. A beautifully carved *haňdungala* or grinding stone on which sandal-wood paste was made, can be seen at the Kundasale temple in the Kandy district and there is one in the Colombo Museum.<sup>117</sup>

With so much emphasis on image worship and the building of so many image-houses, it is rather unfortunate that the image itself, the central object of worship during this time, fell far short of the standards set by earlier artists. Images were made in the round and at times were carved in relief. They were hewn out of rock, most of them were made of brick and masonry, yet others were made of wood, and clay, and also of metal. But, whatever the form, whatever the material, the artistic delineation of the human body eluded the sculptor of this period. Even Coomaraswamy, the great protagonist of Kandyan art, is compelled to say, compared with earlier sculpture, "the eighteenth century images though possessed of dignity and other qualities are generally not beautiful and are sometimes even grotesque."<sup>118</sup> This he attributed to the slavish dependence of the artist on texts like the Sāriputra. Whatever the reason, by the sixteenth century, a great tradition had been lost, and the sculptor who could claim lineal descent from the line of artists who fashioned such images as the samādhi statue at Anurādhapura or the images at the Gal vihāra in Polonnaruva were no more.

The practice of making colossal Buddha images was not forgotten, but examples of such images are few and far between, for the average temple of this time did not extend to very large proportions. Most of the larger Buddha images have been made in the recumbent position as seen at places such as the Dambulla temple,<sup>119</sup> the Ridī-vihāra,<sup>120</sup> the Kaballälena vihāra,<sup>121</sup> and

<sup>119</sup> A K Coomaraswamy, op. cit., (1956), p 149.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, p 148.

121 ASCAR, 1937, J 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> A K Coomaraswamy, op. cit., (1956), plate L11(7).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, p 150.

the Gangārāma at Mātara.<sup>122</sup> A rare example is the twenty-seven foot standing Buddha statue at the Gangārāma in Kandy, but many scholars date it in the 8th century AD.<sup>123</sup> The central image in most of the temples of this period is usually depicted in a recumbent or seated position, the latter being the commonest form in the *täm-pita-vihāra* image houses. The recumbent statue is favoured in the cave temples, though there are exceptions to this rule. The central image is usually flanked by other images of the Buddha, *Bōdhisatvas*, monks, Gods and lay benefactors. These attendant images are often depicted in the round but sometimes they are carved in relief. The Buddha images flanking the central image are seen in both standing<sup>124</sup> and seated postures.<sup>125</sup> The other attendant figures such as those of the gods Vishnu,<sup>126</sup> Nāta,<sup>127</sup> Kataragama<sup>128</sup> and Saman<sup>129</sup> as well as royal benefactors<sup>130</sup> are in the standing position. Over seated images the *makara torana* is carved in relief.

The commonest materials used in the Buddha images of this period are brick and mortar, or clay with a wooden core. All images were plastered and painted over or gilded in a few instances. A gilt Buddha statue can be seen at the *Daladā Māligāva* in Kandy. Bronze statues of the Buddha are known and some statues are said to be of gold although it is more likely that such statues are gold plated.<sup>131</sup> As has been already observed, the Kandyan Buddha image does not have many claims to artistic distinction. By and

122 ASCAR, 1963-4, G 82.

- <sup>123</sup> Nandana Chuttiwongs, et.al., op.cit., Gangārāma, (UNESCO, 1990), p 32.
- 124 ASCAR, 1962-3, G 72.
- <sup>125</sup> *ibid.*, 1963-4, G 82.
- <sup>126</sup> *ibid.*, 1963-4,G 82; 1964-5, G 87.
- <sup>127</sup> *ibid.*, 1965-6, G 91.
- <sup>128</sup> *ibid.*, 1963-4, G 82; 1964-5, G 87.
- <sup>129</sup> *ibid.*, 1961-2, G 75.
- <sup>130</sup> Nandana Chuttiwongs, et.al., op.cit., Dambulla, (UNESCO, 1990), p 58.
- 131 ASCAR, 1964-5, G 91.

large, the sculptor, kept to the traditional rules laid down in texts such as the *Sāriputra*, but very little of his own individuality seems to have been brought to play. The robe covering one arm, the halo at the back of the head, the *siraspata* or flame-like protrusion on the head and the wavy folds of the drapery are the salient features of the Buddha images of this period. None of them are innovations, the Kandyan sculptor taking his cue from the images of the preceding period. The gradual decline in standards in this sphere noticed from the time of the Polonnaruva kingdom is further accentuated, and a certain stiffness and frigidity in the lines of the drapery,<sup>132</sup> "irritatingly wavy" according to one authority, <sup>133</sup> has been noticed.

Among the relief sculpture in stone and stucco are figures of guardsmen or *dvārapālas* carved at the temple entrance. With one hand on the hip and the other raised bearing a sword, these *dvārapālas* are quite different from the *nāga* figures carrying pots of plenty on guardstones of the Anurādhapura and Polonnaruva periods. The Kandyan figures are extremely stiff and most often crudely executed.<sup>134</sup> In some temples such as the Dippitiya *vihāra* in the Kägalla district and the Buddhist temple at Vākirigala, the guardians carved on the door jambs are *dvārapālikās* or female deities in a dance pose.<sup>135</sup>

An area in which the Kandyan artist excelled is ivory carving. The repertoire of the ivory carver ranges over a wide field and is employed in the service of both religious and secular needs. In the temples are noticed small ivory figurines of the Buddha as well as ivory plaques and panels on door jambs for instance. In temple libraries are seen finely carved ivory book-covers and among the possessions of some temples are relic-caskets made of ivory. Very intricate designs of foliage and geometrical patterns, animal and human figures have been skillfully executed on ivory objects. In the domestic sphere, carved ivory is used for combs, boxes, handles of fans etc. Toys and flutes were sometimes made of ivory and women wore ivory bracelets, necklaces and hair-pins. The museum at Kandy is a veritable treasure-house of objects carved in ivory dated to the period under review. Also well known is an ivory casket sent as tribute by Dharmapala, king of Kōtte, to the king

- <sup>134</sup> ASCAR, 1937, J 4.
- <sup>135</sup> Sirima Kiribamune and Harsha Seneviratne, 'The Female in Art,' Mimeograph, (ICES, 1987), p 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> UCHC, Vol.1, Part II, (Colombo, 1960), pp 788-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> A M Hocart, op. cit., (1924-28), p 60.

of Portugal now stored in the Residence Museum in Munich.<sup>136</sup> It has been noticed that the ivory carver of this period adopted Portuguese and Dutch motifs in certain instances.<sup>137</sup>

A sense of art is also displayed in the metal work of this period. Silver and gold jewellery was done with extreme patience and care and the results in style and design were extremely pleasing. Silver boxes, water-pots and lamps were carved with traditional Kandyan designs and so were brass trays, vessels, betel stands etc. Kandyan metal-work, though greatly commercialised today, still draws its inspiration from this early tradition. In this area of intricate design and ornamentation the Kandyan artist excels and is seen at his best.

Mural painting constitutes one of the more distinctive elements of post-sixteenth century art in Sri Lanka. One can boldly speak of a Kandyan school of painting, a tradition centred in the capital city of the hill country and radiating into many outlying regions. It would seem, from the evidence available, that this tradition is best represented in the murals of the eighteenth century and that it owes much of its existence to Kīrti Srī Rājasimha, perhaps the greatest royal patron of Buddhism and the arts during this period. In fact, much of what remains of the paintings of this tradition, is attributed to the reign of this monarch. Largely limited to temple walls and ceilings, these murals are associated with the eighteenth century Buddhist revival in the Kandyan kingdom when there was frenzied building activity, both in respect of new temples and the repair of old structures. While acknowledging the huge burst of artistic activity ushered in under Kīrti Srī Rājasimha, there is evidence to suggest that the Kandyan school of painting pre-dates his reign. The Cūlavamsa states that one of his predecessors, Narendrasimha (1707-39) had the Jātakas painted on the walls of the Daladā Māligāva.<sup>138</sup> Although much repainting has been done, some of the paintings of the Daladā Māligāva may still belong to the days of Narendrasimha. It has also been observed that a German visitor (Heydt) who travelled in Sri Lanka in the 1730s had noticed mural paintings in the cave shrine at Mulgirigala.<sup>139</sup>

Traditionally known as sittara art, this form of decoration was almost

138 Cv II, Chapter 97, vs 39-45.

<sup>139</sup> Senake Bandaranayake and Gamini Jayasinghe, The Rock and Wall Paintings of Sri Lanka, Lake House, (Colombo, 1986), p 110.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> J Tilakasiri, 'Ivory Carvings of Sri Lanka,' Arts of Asia, July-August 1974, pp 44-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> *ibid.*, p 45.

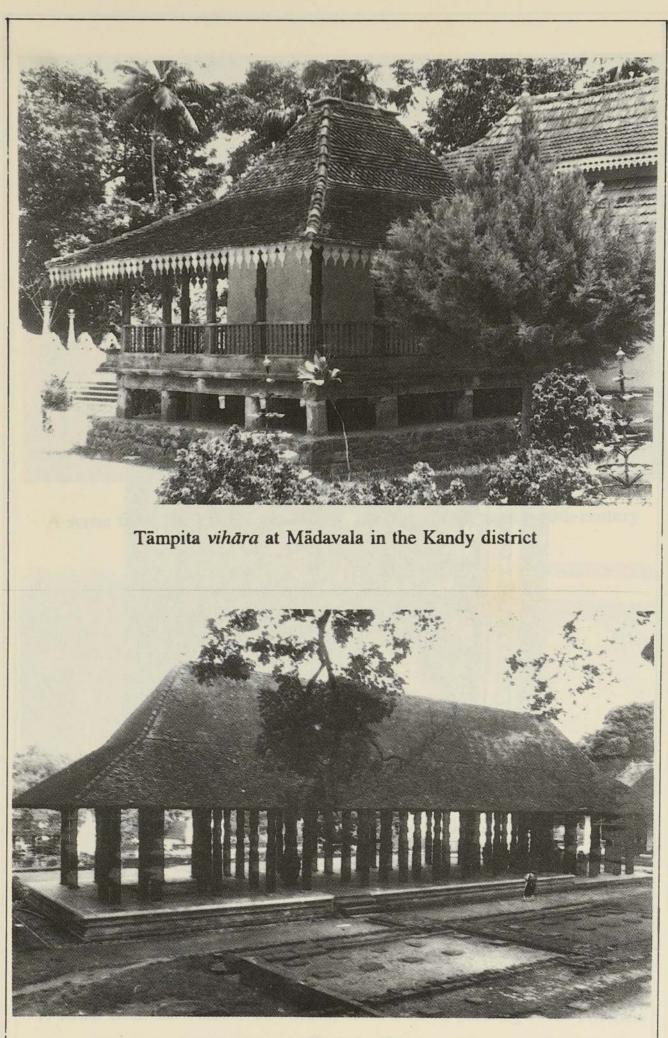
a sine qua non of Buddhist temples at this time. Even if they did without other forms of ornamentation such as wood and stone carving, the sittara painter appears to have been greatly sought after. It is rather unfortunate that a great deal of the Kandyan paintings are lost to us today. This, according to one authority, was due both to the repair and disrepair of temples.<sup>140</sup> Modern restoration has often obliterated the old murals and much has been lost due to neglect and disrepair. Recently, however, there has been some awareness of the problems involved and consequently there is some abating of the process of destruction and decay. The photo-documentation of the paintings of nearly 40 temples by the Lever Brothers Cultural Conservation Trust in 1982 has been a laudable undertaking in the service of posterity.<sup>141</sup>

A careful study of the murals belonging to the Kandyan school of art has led to the identification of a principal centre in the city of Kandy and its neighbourhood and provincial centres further afield. Some of the better known temples which belong to the central tradition are Degaldoruva, Ridī Vihāra, Bambaragala, Dambulla, Mädavela and Gangārāma. A provincial school of this same tradition has been recognised in the Uva-Sabaragamuva area, the paintings at the Omalpe and Valalgoda temples being typical examples of this style. Another area with a provincial style is the Kurunägala-Dambulla region and its environs, although the paintings of the Dambulla temple itself belong to the central Kandyan tradition. Among the significant temples in this region are Kaballälena, Niyaňdavane and Nāyindanāva. The paintings of such temples as Totagamuva and Mulgirigala represent a coastal tradition, basically belonging to the main Kandyan school, but with identifiable differences. It has been suggested that the differences between the principal school and the sub-schools arose not from a difference in techniques but due to poor knowledge of them. Another reason attributed to it is foreign influence,<sup>142</sup> for some of these centres were in close proximity to the regions occupied by first, the Portuguese and later the Dutch

<sup>140</sup> Siri Gunasinghe and L T P Manjusri, Second Report of the Survey of Temple Paintings submitted to the Arts Council of Ceylon, (Mimeo, 1960), p 1.

<sup>141</sup> Colour transparencies produced by this project have been deposited in the National Archives, Colombo. In 1990 the Archaeological Survey undertook the production of 30 monographs (authored by Nandana Chuttiwongs, Leelananda Prematilleke and Roland Silva) on the Paintings of Sri Lanka with commentary and colour photographs, each dealing with a single temple. The large majority of the temples in this series belong to the Kandyan period.

<sup>142</sup> Siri Gunasinghe, An Album of Buddhist Paintings from Sri Lanka (Kandyan Period). A Publication of the National Museum of Sri Lanka, 1978, pp 34 ff.

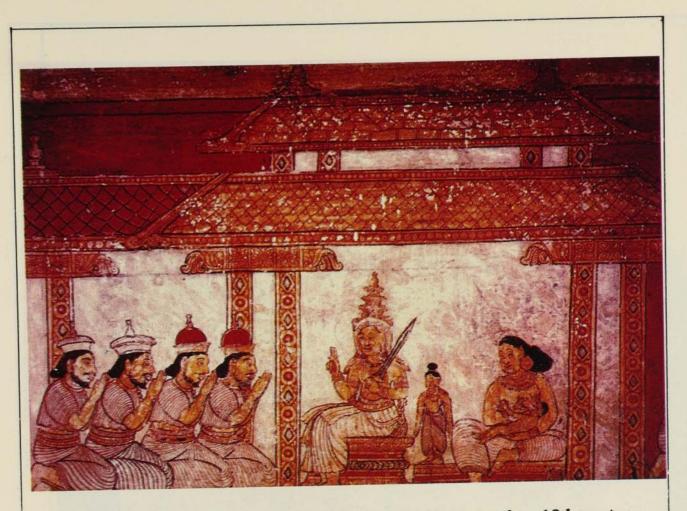


The Audience Hall of the Kandyan kings

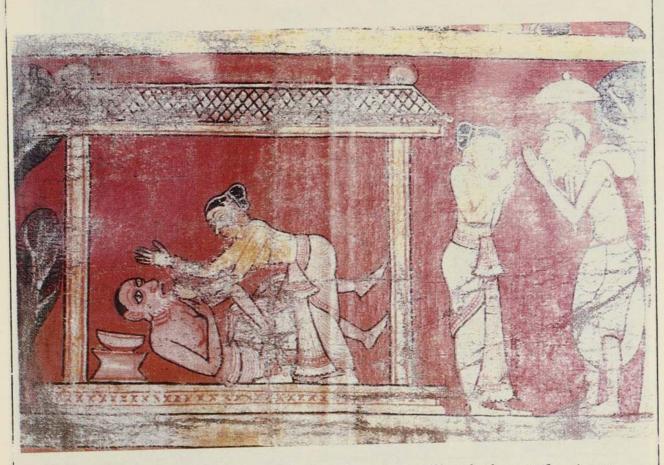
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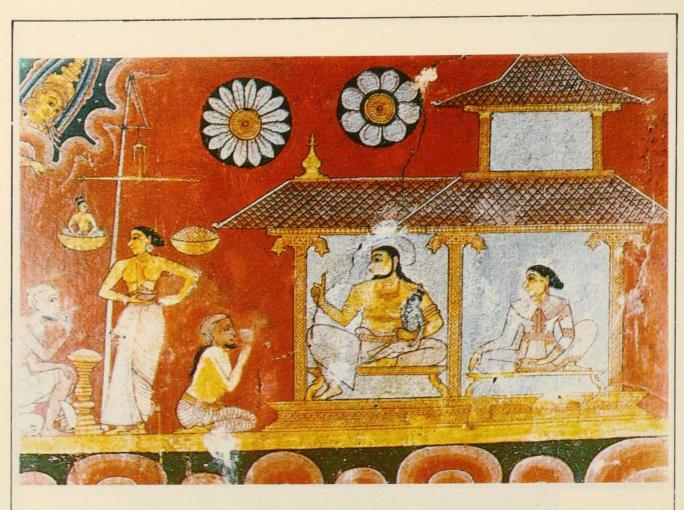
17th century woodcarving of a female figure holding a musical instrument Ämbäkkē dēvālaya



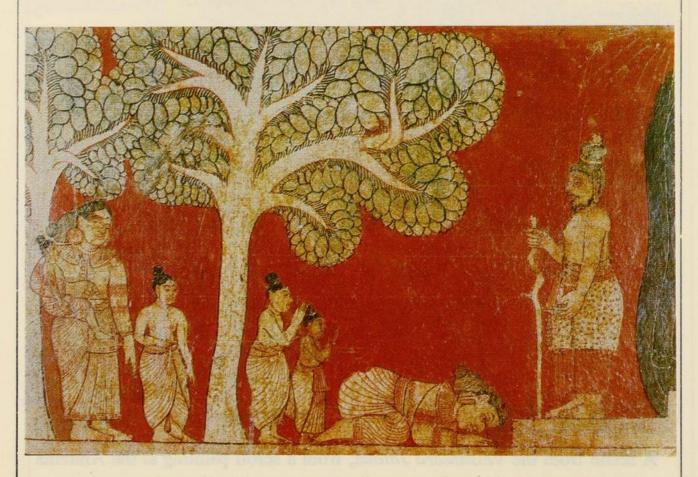
A scene from the Vessantara Jātaka, Degaldoruva temple - 18th century



A scene from the Vessantara Jātaka, from a scroll painting at the Arattana vihāra in Haňguranketa

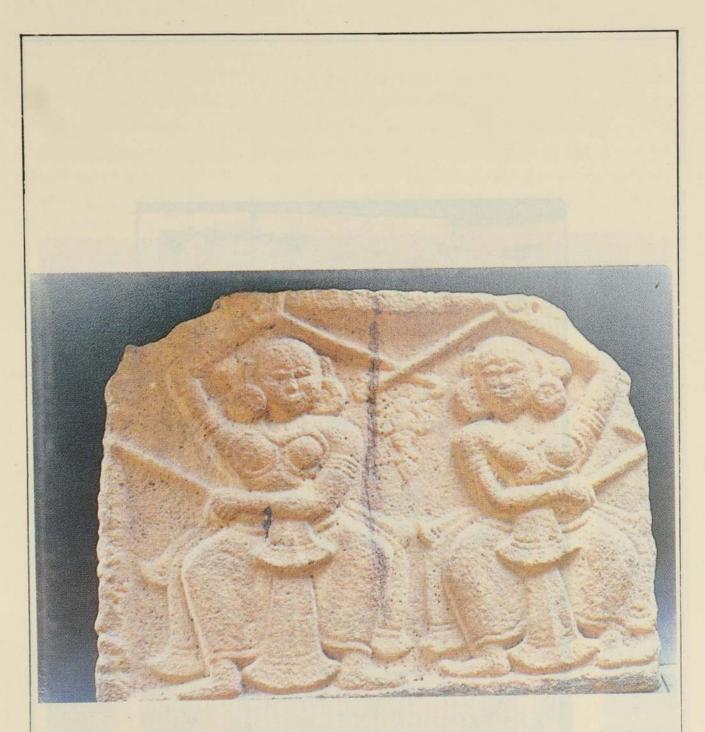


A scene from the Vessantara Jātaka at the Mädavala vihāra

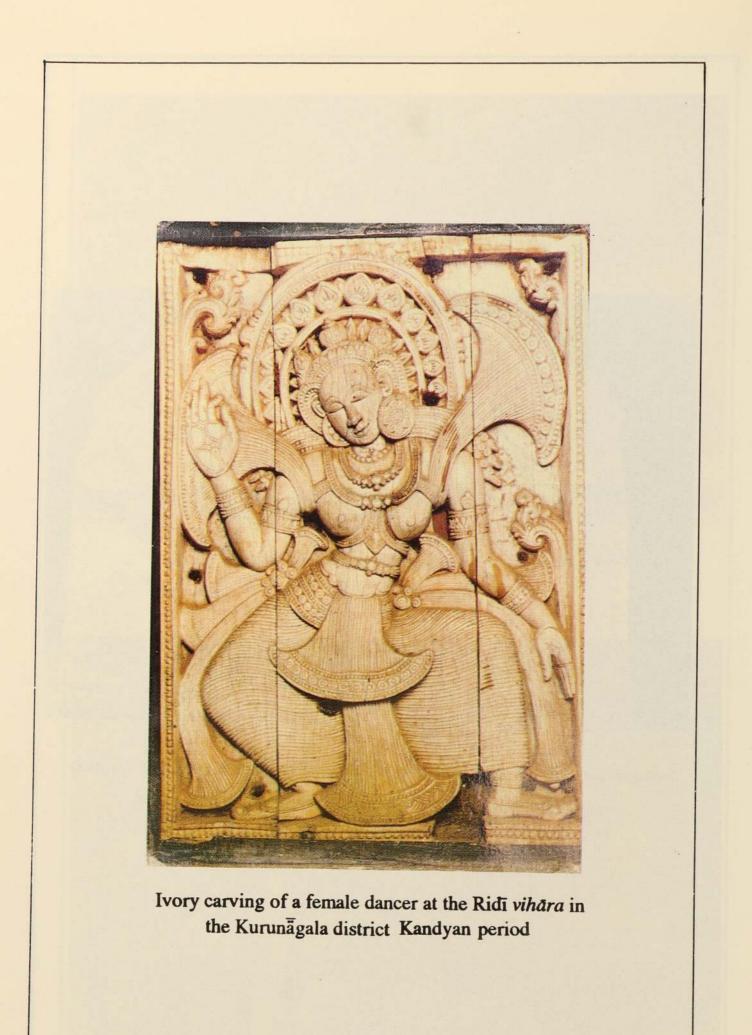


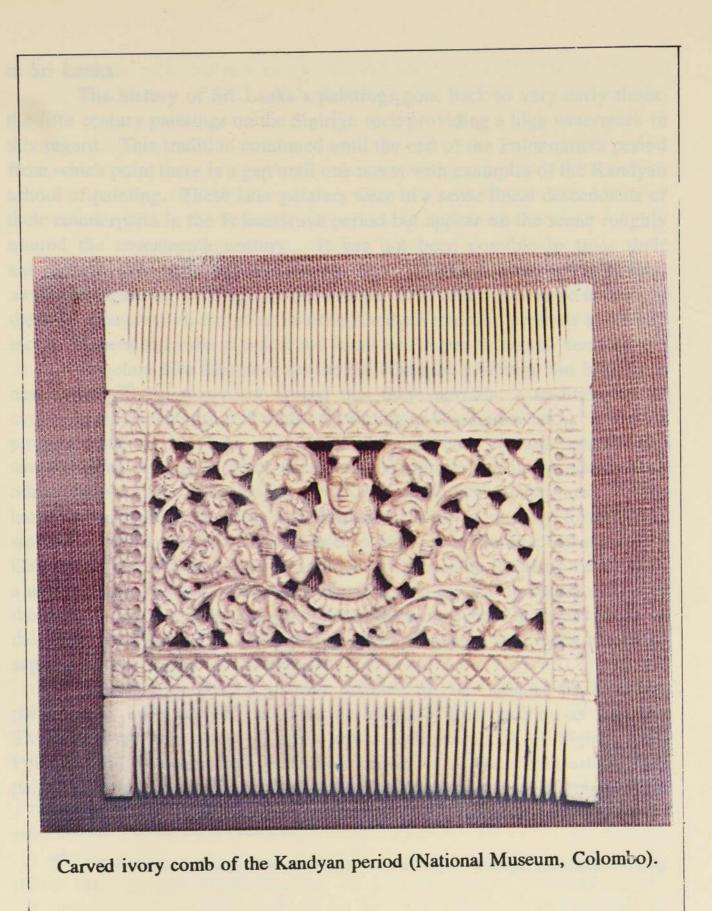
A scene from the Vessantara Jātaka at the Degaldoruva temple

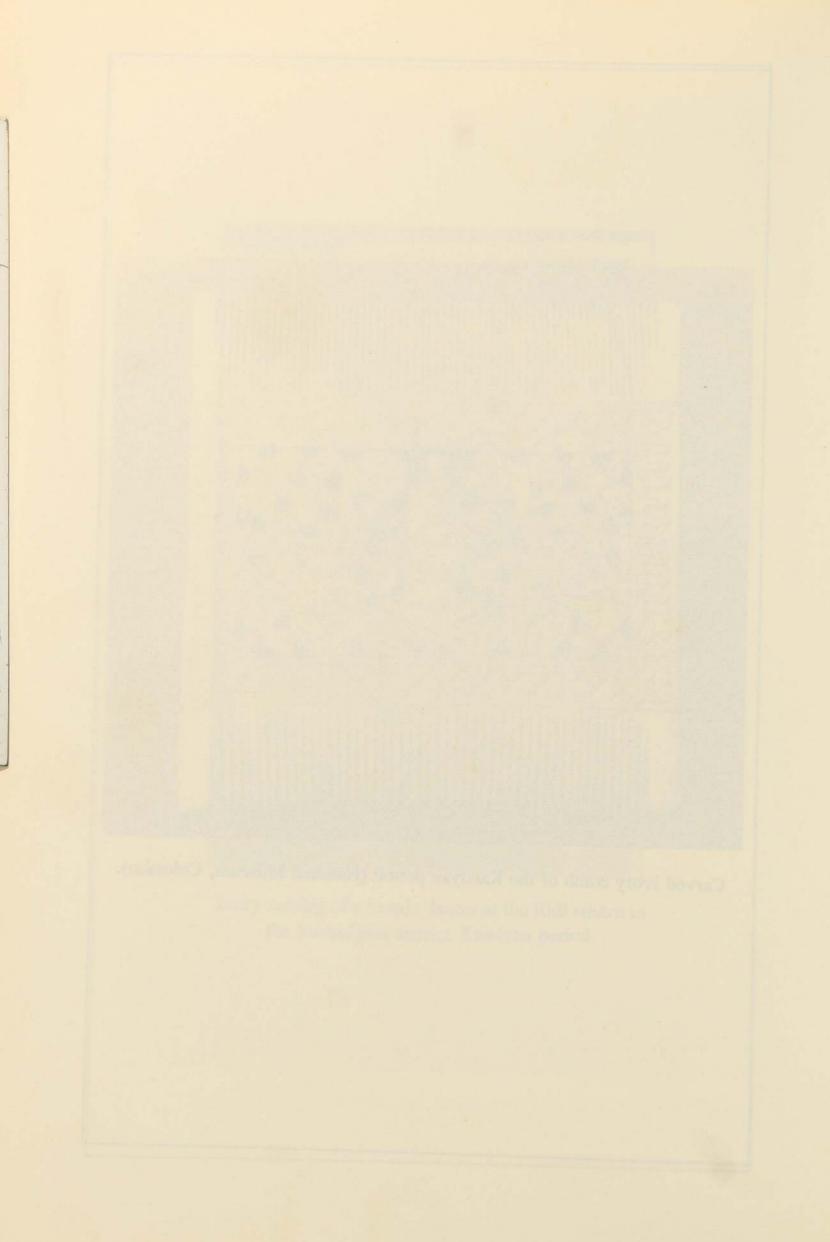
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Female dancers from a relief carving at the National Museum, Colombo originally from an 18th century building at Hanguranketa.







Digitized by Noolaham Foundation. noolaham.org | aavanaham.org in Sri Lanka.

The history of Sri Lanka's paintings goes back to very early times, the fifth century paintings on the Sigiriya rock providing a high watermark in this regard. This tradition continued until the end of the Polonnaruva period from which point there is a gap until one meets with examples of the Kandyan school of painting. These later painters were in a sense lineal descendants of their counterparts in the Polonnaruva period but appear on the scene roughly around the seventeenth century. It has not been possible to trace their antecedents with any degree of certainty. Various theories have been advanced regarding the origin of this school. It should however be noted that there is agreement on the point that the Kandyan tradition presents a stylistic mode different from the classical art forms of the pre-thirteenth century.

Scholars like Manjusri see in the Kandyan paintings the birth of a new school,<sup>143</sup> but many are agreed that they represent a tradition which evolved over a long period of time. According to Coomaraswamy, "it is most probable that the Kandyan painting of the eighteenth century represents a survival of an early style which has continued more or less independent of the other schools of more developed art which existed at various times."<sup>144</sup> He looks at Kandyan painting as "the lineal descendant of an early formal style similar in feeling to that of the *Jātaka* sculptures at Barāhat (Bharhut)."<sup>145</sup> Characteristics such as the representation of trees in an idealistic rather than a natural form, the use of rosettes of lotus flowers to fill up vacant spaces in the designs and the method of continuous narration, where the main points of the story are depicted in a successive series of panels have been shown in support of the Bharhut connection.<sup>146</sup>

Siri Gunasinghe, a pioneer scholar on the subject of Kandyan paintings, is quite categorical in his definition of this tradition as folk art. They are "not the work of great artists such as those of Sigiriya and Polonnaruva, but of village craftsmen known as *sittaras*, folk artists who painted for folks of their own class."<sup>147</sup> The Kandyan school of painting did

A K Coomaraswamy, op. cit., (New York, 1956), p 179.

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.*, p 254.

- <sup>146</sup> A K Coomaraswamy, 'Some Survivals in Sinhalese Art,' JCBRAS, Vol.19, No.57, 1906, pp 72-89.
- <sup>147</sup> Siri Gunasinghe, op. cit., (1978), p 2.

L T P Manjusri, Design Elements from Sri Lanka Temple Paintings, (Colombo, 1977), p
 21.

not, in his view, spring up suddenly as a result of the cultural renaissance ushered in the eighteenth century, but was an artistic mode known to the not so sophisticated from times past. He sees a link between the Kandyan paintings and the 12th/13th century A.D. Jātaka paintings of the vestibule wall of the Tivamka Image House at Polonnaruva which he identifies as a folk tradition. The paintings of the inner sanctum at the Tivamka are ascribed to the classical school of Sri Lankan painting, but the vestibule paintings are thought to belong to the genre of folk art. Apart from similarities between the Kandyan school and the Tivamka vestibule paintings, Gunasinghe is also conscious of an indirect link with the Bharhut and Sanchi bas reliefs of the second century B.C. in India. The yawning gap between them precludes any direct connection. What is suggested is that the Sanchi-Bharhut style of narrative art lingered on and the Sinhalese artist was in some way aware of What Gunasinghe postulates is a continuous and persistent folk art it. tradition to which the Tivamka vestibule paintings and the Kandyan paintings are linked.148

That the Kandyan school of painting was the result of past processes and experience also finds confirmation in the work of Senake Bandaranayake and Gamini Jayasinghe.<sup>149</sup> While they recognise the hiatus in the history of Sri Lankan painting between the 13th and the 18th century, an attempt is made to show some traces of continuity through paintings on 14th century manuscript covers and the ceiling paintings at the Gadaladeniya temple. Elements of a transitional style are also detected in certain ivory carvings of the 15th to the 18th century, the 14th century wood carvings at Aludeniya and the stone reliefs of friezes at temples such as Gadaladeniya, Niyangampāya and Alavatura. A notable departure in the Senake Bandaranayake thesis is his preference for a sequential development of Sri Lankan painting rather than the growth of two parallel traditions. The early Indian art is defined as a 'formative stylization' moving to the mature naturalism of the classic mode followed by the post-classic mode (represented by the Kandyan school) which partakes of "the forms, themes and motifs of the classic tradition, but is quite different from either the archaic or the classic mode." According to this interpretation the outer murals of the Tivamka shrine represent "a further development of the classic style" and the Kandyan paintings follow "only after

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> *ibid.*, pp 7-16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> Senake Bandaranayake and Gamini Jayasinghe, The Rock and Wall Paintings of Sri Lanka, Lake House, (Colombo, 1986).

a significant and historical transformation."<sup>150</sup> The results of this transformation was in his opinion "a fully fledged and highly developed artistic tradition of professional and self-conscious painters."<sup>151</sup> This is contrary to Gunasinghe's characterization of Kandyan art as a folk art of village craftsmen, a view which is also challenged by Anuradha Seneviratne who believes that Kandyan paintings are the work of great artists who had a unique style of their own about which there can be no comparison.<sup>152</sup>

Paranavitana and Archer believe that the Kandyan *sittara* art is derived from a contemporary tradition in South India. They have noted similarities between the Kandyan paintings and 16th to 17th century paintings at places such as Lepakshi, Kanchi and Tanjore in South India.<sup>153</sup> The close dynastic links of the Kandyan kings with South India could be advanced as an argument in favour of this view. Even those scholars who reject a diffusionist approach, are nevertheless conscious of the fact that there was a common genre of post-classic painting spread throughout South and Southeast Asia during this time. Stylisation and formalism, characterized as a movement away from naturalism, have been noted as common traits of this style. While conceding that similarities may have "their origin in a common cultural matrix and the parallel historical development of the societies that produced them,"<sup>154</sup> one cannot completely rule out the possibility of some form of cross-cultural influence.<sup>155</sup>

An important aspect of Kandyan painting is its religious import. Gunasinghe sees these creations as "the visual expressions of what must... be considered the simplest religious experience of a peasant community without pretensions to higher learning and deep philosophical thought."<sup>156</sup> John Holt understands them as an expression of the fundamentals of the religious

151 *ibid*.

- 152 Anuradha Seneviratna, Golden Rock Temple of Dambulla, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, (Colombo, 1983), pp 80-1.
- <sup>153</sup> W G Archer and S Paranavitana, Ceylon Paintings from Temple Shrine and Rock, UNESCO, (New York, 1957), pp 14-5.

<sup>154</sup> Senake Bandaranayake and Jayasinghe, (1986), op. cit., p 105.

<sup>155</sup> Siri Gunasinghe, (1978), op.cit., p 17.

<sup>156</sup> Gunasinghe, (1978), op.cit., p 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> *ibid.*, p 109.

world view of 18th century Theravada Buddhism in the Kandyan kingdom.<sup>157</sup> It is quite clear that the thematic content of the paintings offers to the devotee simple sermons, illustrated with narrative stories from Buddhist texts. The short legends which identify each episode in the paintings show that they were intended for religious edification. One could aptly borrow a phrase from the Pali Chronicle, the Mahāvaṃsa, and say that these striking visuals were intended to evoke 'the serene joy and emotion of the pious.'

Although sometimes described as fresco painting,<sup>158</sup> Kandyan murals are done in tempera. The surface for painting was first plastered with a composition of a light coloured clay (kirimäti), fine sand and cotton fibres. Paddy husk was sometimes used. Over this was applied a coat of hydrous magnesite (makulu), making the surface pure white. The paintings are sketched on this, the artist using a fine line of black paint. A distinctive feature is the fact that this line is not covered by the painter when the mural is complete but is left to be seen. The Kandyan artist had a limited palette, red, yellow and black being the most popular colours with the occasional blue, green or white. All dyes used were prepared from local mineral or vegetable substances except perhaps the red which was made from imported cinnabar. The red and yellow stand out with great brilliance, clearly outlined by a firm black line.<sup>159</sup> The use of straight colours makes the picture appear flat, there being no shading to produce relief. The colours are mixed with a local gum (divul lātu) and water. Shades of colours such as pink, grey and light blue made by mixing in white to the original colours are used, but rarely. Mixed colours such as pinkish yellow, yellowish brown and greyish blue are noticed at times.

Some of the temples of this period are veritable picture galleries, thematically religious, but at the same time decorative as well. Relating a story seems to have been one of the chief preoccupations of the artist and the regular device that is adopted is the *kathāpați* or the story frieze - the story unfolding as if in a scroll. There is a difference between these narrative wall registers which are often as narrow as 50 or 60 centimeters in width and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> John Holt, Unpublished Mss., op. cit., p 63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> C E Godakumbura, Medawala vihara Frescos, Department of Archaeology, Art Series, No.3. n.d.

<sup>159</sup> Siri Gunasinghe, "Kandyan Painting" in Some Aspects of Traditional Sinhalese Culture, Ralph Pieris (ed.), Peradeniya, 1956, pp 47-54. L P Goonetilleke, "Moments with Memorable Murals," Times of Ceylon Annual, 1966. R H de Silva, "The Evolution of the techniques of Sinhalese wall painting and comparison with Indian painting methods," Ancient Ceylon, No.I, January 1971, pp 95 ff and p 103.

ceiling paintings which cover a vast expanse. The ceiling paintings are spectacular displays which can be considered truly monumental. As one authority puts it, "the austerity of the paintings on the side walls is compensated by the vigor and spontaneity of the ceiling paintings."

According to the Degaldoruva Sannasa, dated 1786, the master painter responsible for the paintings at this temple was Devaragampola Silvattäna, an unordained monk who is traditionally associated with the paintings at Ridī-vihāra as well. Two other artists at Degaldoruva were Nilagama Patabända of Balavatvala and Kosvatta Hittara Navide. The Nilagama artists had their strongest connection with the Dambulla vihāra, a connection which continues to date through the UNESCO sponsored Cultural Triangle Project in Sri Lanka. These artists wielded an enormous influence on the painting styles throughout the 18th and 19th centuries and even after. One of the Nilagama painters at Dambulla was Balavatvala Bodhinārāyana Bhuvanekabāhu and among the artists at Gangārāma was Nilagama Ābarana Appu.<sup>160</sup> The fame and prestige of the Nilagama School continued into the nineteenth century for Heratgama Ratanapala, who repainted the Dambava murals is said to have learnt his art from the Nilagama painters.<sup>161</sup> The artistic stamp of this group has been noted in many metropolitan and regional temples, Bambaragala<sup>162</sup> and Sassēruva<sup>163</sup> being two notable examples. The chief artist at the Gangārāma vihāra was Gannoruva Lokumuhandiram with whom was associated a painter of the Nilagama family, noted earlier and two others, Hiriyāle Navide and Kaliyalpitiya Gurunnānse.<sup>164</sup>

As noted earlier the Kandyan artist displayed his best skills in the ceiling paintings of this period. It is very likely that the master painters handled these spectacular visuals which cover vast expanses of space in the ceilings of temples. One of the most popular themes in this regard was the defeat of  $M\bar{a}ra$  by the Buddha at the time of his enlightenment. An impressive painting of this theme can be seen at Degaldoruva and the same scene at Dambulla is considered to be one of "the grandest visual expressions"

- <sup>162</sup> *ibid.*, Bambaragala, (Colombo, 1990), p 39.
- <sup>163</sup> *ibid.*, Sasseruva, (Colombo, 1990), p 40.
- 164 ibid., (1990), op.cit., Gangārāma, p 36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> Senake Bandaranayake and Gamini Jayasinghe, (1986), op.cit., p 283, n. 42 & n. 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> Nandana Chuttiwongs, Leelananda Prematilleke and Roland Silva, Paintings of Sri Lanka: Dambāva, (Colombo, 1990), p 38.

known of this episode."<sup>165</sup> The *Bōdhisatva Maitrēya* in the *Tusita* heaven is the next most popular episode displayed on temple ceilings. The Buddha preaching to arahants and deities, the *Sūvisivivaraņa* or predictions of the 24 Buddhas and the 'thousand Buddhas' are some of the recurrent themes noticed among the ceiling paintings. A few temples such as Dambāva, Sūriyagoda and Gangārāma however have been redone in the 20th century and what they conceal is difficult to conjecture.

Among the earliest temple paintings are those at the Mädavala vihāra, which is situated about 9 kilometers from Kandy. A copper plate grant dated 1755 A.D. records its restoration by the chief Dunuvila on the orders of Kīrti Srī Rājasimha. The paintings are found in their original state, with only some retouching of the feet of the arahant figures on one wall.<sup>166</sup> It is noteworthy that the traditional repertoire of temple murals was in place at the very outset of Kīrti Srī Rājasimha's artistic endeavours. Among the themes painted on the walls at Mädavala are the seven weeks after enlightenment, arahant worshippers headed by the two chief disciples walking towards the main Buddha image, the sixteen sacred sites of pilgrimage within the island and the Uraga and Vessantara Jātakas. The ceiling painting depicts Maitrēya Bōdhisatva in the Tusita heaven attended by deities. The expansive ceiling painting stands in contrast to the friezes on the walls, and so do the portrait figures of the donor and the chief incumbent of the temple.<sup>167</sup>

If Mädavala represents one of the earliest examples of the Kandyan school, Degaldoruva and Dambulla are considered to be among its most mature expressions. Ridī vihāra, Bambaragala, Hindagala, Sūriyagoda, Gangārāma and the Daladā Māligāva are some of the other Buddhist shrines where the Kandyan artist is seen at his best. The temples in the capital city and its environs had greater resources through royal and elite patronage and employed the best talent that was available. Stylistic similarities which can be attributed to a particular "guild" of painters can be detected in many of them. Also different styles within the same temple complex demonstrate the coming together of painters of different traditions in a common enterprise. It is also possible to detect varying levels of artistic talent and maturity in these temple paintings. Such differences could reveal the work of the master craftsmen as against the lesser attainment of their pupils. But they can also show the level of expertise of the principal painters themselves, the resources

<sup>165</sup> ibid., (1990), op. cit., Dambulla, p 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>166</sup> *ibid.*, (1990), *op.cit.*, Mädavala, p 35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>167</sup> Gunasinghe, (1978), op. cit., pp 29, 92, 100.

available and sometimes the chronological sequence of the paintings. It is generally believed that the Kandyan school reached its high watermark during the 18th century, more particularly under the enormous patronage of Kīrti Srī Rājasimha. The cave paintings of Dambulla which span about 200 years of art history are a good example of a variety of styles, belonging to different periods, where the styles of the 18th, 19th and early 20th century are clearly discernible.<sup>168</sup>

The friezes on the vestibule and sanctum walls at the Degaldoruva temple depict 4 Jātaka tales, one of which is the ubiquitous Vessantara Jātaka. A popular subject of the Kandyan painter, it finds its most detailed exposition at the Degaldoruva temple. The Vessantara Jātaka also occupies a significant place among the paintings at Mädavala and Dambāva. Decorating temple walls with Jātaka stories is first referred to in the Mahāvamsa account of the embellishments to the relic chamber of the Ruvanvälisäya in the second century B.C. Extant murals on the vestibule walls at the Tivamka temple attest to their continuing popularity in the 12th/13th century. During the period under survey Narendrasimha is said to have commissioned the painting of 22 Jātakas at the Daladā Māligāva. Although no longer extant, reference to it in the historical tradition illustrates the extensive use of the Jātaka for religious edification. There are a few temples where Jātaka illustrations are conspicuous by their absence. The Sūriyagoda, Danagirigala and Gangārāma temples fall into this category. At Dambulla scenes from three Jātakas are found, but they are used to illustrate the relic chamber of the Ruvanvälisäya and are not illustrations of Jātaka stories per se.

The life story of the Buddha with all its supernatural and miraculous elements has had great emotional appeal for the faithful. It inspires a sense of awe regarding the Buddha, who is the principal object of veneration in the image house. Practically every single temple of this period portrays a selection of episodes from the Buddha's life before and after his enlightenment. It is the super-normal that is mostly expressed through portrayals of his conception, birth, renunciation, enlightenment, the first seven weeks after Buddhahood and the exposition of the doctrine to gods, arahants and monks. The narrative interest however is not totally absent in some illustrations such as that of Queen Mahamāyā's preparations for departure for her confinement and her journey home seated in a palanquin at the Sūriyagoda temple and Siddhārtha and Yasōdhara returning home after their marriage at the Dambāva temple.

One of the most striking themes at a number of Kandyan temples is

<sup>168</sup> Nandana Chuttiwongs, et.al., (Colombo, 1970), op. cit., Dambulla, pp 65-8.

the concept of the 'thousand Buddhas.' Numerous panels of framed Buddha images around the temple walls and sometimes extending to the ceiling make the devotee conscious of the presence of the Buddha all around him. This theme is given great prominence at the Ridī vihāra and in cave 3 at Dambulla and to some extent at the Gangārāma temple. The presence of the Buddha in the form of numerous sculptured images in standing, recumbent and seated postures, scenes depicting the 24 annunciations by former Buddhas and the framed Buddha panels suggest the need to emphasise the omnipresent nature of the Buddha in cosmological terms, perhaps a Mahāyāna belief absorbed into the Theravāda world view.

The presence of the Buddha in the country in times past is projected symbolically by the *solosmasthāna* or the 16 sacred places which are displayed in the main temples of this period. Perhaps the simple devotee could make a mental pilgrimage to these hallowed spots which were not within his reach during this time. The 19th century sponsors of some of the Dambulla paintings took the representation of Buddhist history a step further by introducing scenes relating to the introduction of Buddhism, the peopling of the island and the preservation of Buddhism from the perceived threats of opponents.

Paintings of various deities such as Vishnu, Siva, Indra and Saman enhance the position of the Buddha for they are mostly shown in attendance or in attitudes of worship. Some deities may have been objects of worship, but they are mostly presented in the form of sculptured images.

Decorative motifs are a distinctive feature of Kandyan painting. The wide range of floral, creeper, geometric, bird and animal patterns represent a wealth of design. Designs formed by entwining animals or various combinations of women were a special feature of these decorative schemes. Hamsa-cakra or the swan wheel and hamsa-pūttuva, the swan-combine, the pañca-nāri ghata, the five-woman vase, the navaņāri-kunjara the nine-woman elephant are some of the better known of these designs. The woman and creeper combination known as nārilatā is also a familiar motif which is at times used to decorate ceilings and doors. The lotus medallion is popularly employed to fill up blank spaces in the narrative friezes. On some occasions lotus medallions form the major decorative device on ceilings. It is noteworthy that close attention to detail is a hallmark of the Kandyan painter, whatever the subject he is handling. This is particularly noticed in the designs of ornaments, borders and decorative motifs on clothing.

Thematically, the provincial centres of the Kandyan school of painting reveal a very close resemblance to the main centres. This is not surprising considering the fact that the content of the paintings of this period form part of the traditional repertoire of the Sri Lanka artist. An area in which the provinces strike out on their own is in the use of colour. Apart from the

traditional palette of the metropolis there is greater use of blue and green and lighter washes of the usual colours. The penchant for blue is noticed in such temples as Kaballälena and Nayiňdanāva in the Kurunāgala district.<sup>169</sup> Even the reds and yellows used are not as bright as in the main city centres. Dull blues and muddy browns are particularly noticed in the paintings of the Vellassa-Bintänna region and so is green.<sup>170</sup> The use of black instead of the usual red as the back-ground colour, though extremely rare in the main centres, is not uncommon in the regional areas.<sup>171</sup> At the Omalpe and Valalgoda temples in the Sabaragamuva province, red and black alternate as the background colour of the story panels clearly demarcating one scene from the next.<sup>172</sup> There are, however, some temples, which closely follow the colour scheme of the main school of painting. The temple at Kotasara-Piyangala and the Mudalindārāmaya in the Monerāgala district can be cited as examples.<sup>173</sup> The thin application of the paints and the consequent lack of lustre in the painting of the provincial centres contrast with the thicker paint and brilliant colours of the main schools. It would seem that the provincial artists used water instead of the usual gum (divul lātu) to mix their paints.<sup>174</sup> On the whole they lack the sophistication of their counterparts in Kandy and its neighbourhood. The human figure is badly delineated in most temples, revealing a poor aesthetic sense. Some of the differences in the provincial style of painting have been attributed to European influences<sup>175</sup> as for example the more liberal use of blue and green. Also kings are made to wear European crowns in the paintings at Omalpe and Mulgirigala. These paintings are interesting not for their innate artistic merit but as testimony to the pattern of cultural diffusion in the island from its pivotal centre in Kandy.

174 ibid.

<sup>175</sup> D B Dhanapala, The Story of Sinhalese Painting, 1957, p 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>169</sup> Siri Gunasinghe and L T P Manjusri, Second Report of the Survey of Temple Paintings, pp 3, 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>170</sup> Siri Gunasinghe and L T P Manjusri, op.cit., First Report, p. 4, Siri Gunasinghe, 'Kalā Sangarava,' June 1963, p 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>171</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>172</sup> *ibid*.

Siri Gunasinghe and L T P Manjusri, First Report of the Survey of Temple Paintings, pp 8, 12.

Paintings on cloth or '*petikadas*' belonging to this period are known from temples, such as Mutiyangana, Katārangala, Dambāva and Arattana.<sup>176</sup> Very few '*petikadas*' have survived owing to the perishable nature of the material. The colour scheme, designs and themes are the same as those noticed in temple murals. Furniture too was painted. An extremely good example of painting on wood is the large book-box at the Ridī vihāra. Lacquer paint was used on wooden window-bars, fan-handles etc.

The art and architecture of the Kandyan period constitute a distinctive phase in the cultural history of Sri Lanka. Although hampered by external invasions and restricted by limited resources, nevertheless, Kandyan rulers felt bound by the duties and obligations of traditional kingship, a significant aspect of which was the patronage of religion. Setting aside economic resources for religious construction, and giving such work royal patronage was politically judicious and conformed to traditional practice. Keenly aware of the cultural inheritance of the past, the Kandyan artist and craftsman continued those traditions, introducing much that was innovative. The outcome of these endeavours which brought together the *samgha*, state and the people was an artistic contribution which was recognizably Kandyan carrying the distinctive mark of its own identity.

<sup>176</sup> Siri Gunasinghe, op. cit., First Report, p 5, Second Report, pp 4, 8.

# PART 5

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## **CHAPTER XIX**

## THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY AND SRI LANKA 1760-1796

## SinhaRaja Tammita-Delgoda

In 1762 an English diplomatic mission led by John Pybus arrived at the court of King Kīrti Srī Rājasimha. This embassy marks the first official contact between the English East India Company and Sri Lanka. It was the beginning of a 34 year relationship which would eventually result in the occupation of the maritime regions of the island. This chapter documents the story of this relationship, hesitant and distant at first, ridden with mistrust and conflicting priorities but gradually quickening towards the end of the century until its climax in 1796. The most important element in this process was the changing nature and role of the East India Company itself; more than anything else it was this which shaped the course of Sri Lanka's history during the latter part of the eighteenth century.

The Seven Years War (1756-63) saw a complete transformation in the East India Company's position on the Indian subcontinent. Previously it had been only one of several European trading companies competing for Indian goods and markets. However, by the time hostilities had ended the East India Company found itself the master of a vast territorial empire and a near sovereign power in its own right. Not only had it become the dominant European nation, it was also well on its way to becoming the paramount political power.

The disintegration of the Mughal empire in India had forced the various European trading companies to fend for themselves. They became increasingly involved in local politics and found themselves being drawn into hostilities with rival companies and local rulers. From 1744 onwards the English and French settlements of Madras and Pondicherry had been locked in a bitter struggle for the mastery of the Carnatic. This conflict finally reached its peak in 1761 when after many fluctuations of fortune the English

decisively defeated the French at the battle of Wandewash. Pondicherry, the capital of French India, was besieged soon afterwards and its capture in 1762 signalled the end of France's dreams of dominion on the subcontinent. The rise of British power in Bengal was even more spectacular.

In 1756 the simmering tension which had long existed between the rulers of Bengal and the English at Calcutta finally boiled over. Determined to teach the English a lesson, the new Nawab Siraj-ud-daula captured and sacked the city. However, Calcutta was quickly recovered by an expedition from Madras led by the celebrated Robert Clive. Clive advanced against the Nawab and at the historic battle of Plassey (1757) Siraj-ud-daula was defeated and overthrown, and a puppet ruler installed in his place. Within a few years even this semblance of an independent regime had been destroyed and the East India Company found itself the real ruler of Bengal, the richest and more populous state of the subcontinent. In 1765 the Mughal Emperor recognized the reality of the situation and bestowed upon the East India Company the Diwani of Bengal - the right to administer the province and collect its revenues. By the time the Pybus mission reached Sri Lanka, the East India Company already held sway over the makings of an empire which stretched from the Coromandel coast deep into north eastern India. No longer a simple trading body, it was now an organisation in the throes of change and transition; on the verge of transforming its entire raison d'etre away from trade and commerce towards political dominion.

However, these huge territorial gains were regarded with great unease and foreboding in many quarters. Eighteenth century opinion had come to see the idea of conquest and over-expansion as a highly dangerous and debilitating activity.<sup>1</sup> Haunted by the example of the decline of Ancient Rome, many Englishmen felt that a nation which indulged in conquest in Asia would ultimately meet with the same fate. Asiatic wealth and luxury would corrupt the very fabric of society and they feared that Britain, like Ancient Rome before it, would eventually become a degenerate and enslaved nation. This was the moral of Edward Gibbon's great work *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776-88)*. In 1769 Sir George Colebrooke, Chairman of the East India Company, warned the House of Commons of the fateful consequences of unrestrained expansion.

"By extension of territory the Roman Empire was dissolved. Let us try to give a permanency to these acquisitions and by doing so secure

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> P J Marshall, "A Free Though Conquering People, Britain and Asia in the Eighteenth Century," Inaugural Lecture in the Rhodes Chair of Imperial History, (Kings College, London, 1981), pp 6-7.

the prosperity of Great Britain."2

By this he meant that the conquest and acquisition of new territories must be curbed. Like many of his contemporaries, Colebrooke believed that real prosperity could stem only from trade, only by concentrating on this could the East India Company benefit from the diwani. The facts seem to support his case. By the early eighteenth century the East India Company had already established a commanding commercial position on the subcontinent. The Company shipped more Indian goods to Europe than any of its rivals and its ports were already winning a considerable share of India's seaborne trade with other parts of Asia. Clearly the Company believed that it had much to lose and little to gain by further military adventure; not only was it expensive, it also threatened to destroy the fragile networks on which its profits depended. Peaceful trading moreover, was not deemed a threat to the future of society, in contrast it was widely accepted as a source of virtue and vitality. As John Campbell, a mid century writer reviewing a collection of voyages observed:

"We may trade with people without subduing them, and we may become potent, rich and happy from the effects of our own industry."<sup>3</sup>

In this cause attempts to establish peaceful commercial relations with countries like Tibet, Western China and Borneo were vigorously encouraged but the idea of any military involvement was shunned. As Robert Jones, the Secretary of the Company declared in 1767: "We don't want conquest and power, it is commercial interest only we look for."<sup>4</sup> This ingrained reluctance to use force dominated British political thinking throughout the 1760s and 1770s and it is very clearly reflected in the doubt and hesitancy which surrounded the Pybus mission. It helps explain why, despite its hunger for new markets, the Company remained so reluctant to commit itself.

The rise of the English East India Company was accompanied by the rapid decline of its most formidable rival in Asia, the Dutch Vereenidge Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC). Throughout the seventeenth century the English had viewed the naval and military power of the Dutch with the greatest respect and apprehension. The English had stood almost in awe of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Quoted in H V Bowen, Revenue and Reform: The Indian Problem in British Politics 1757-1773, (Cambridge, 1991), p 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Marshall, "A Free Though Conquering People," p 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Quoted in Bowen, Revenue and Reform, p 68.

commercial success of the Dutch and throughout the 1680s the East India Company's servants had been repeatedly enjoined to follow their example.<sup>5</sup> By the mid-eighteenth century however, it was clear that Dutch fortunes were waning. Political and economic decline at home meant that Holland could no longer maintain the pace she had once set.<sup>6</sup> By 1770 if not earlier, the VOC's once commanding commercial position had been usurped by the British, who gradually captured its trade and its markets. The maritime strength which had once sustained Holland had evaporated and in Java, Indonesia and India Dutch power crumbled away as the VOC found itself overstretched and exhausted, its finances and organisation unequal to the burdens it was called to shoulder. The British destruction of the Dutch fleet at Chinsura in 1759 and the subsequent land action at Bederra underlined the new balance of power. Up till now the East India Company had avoided all official contact with Sri Lanka for fear of displeasing the Dutch. The Seven Years War however, had left the East India Company confident and increasingly conscious of its new found power. It was now ready and eager to challenge the Dutch commercial monopoly on the island.

The accession of the South Indian Nāyakkar dynasty to the throne of Kandy in 1739 marked the end of the isolation which had for so long surrounded the politics of Sri Lanka. The new dynasty hailed from the district of Madura which in 1743 became a province of the Nawab of the Carnatic, a longstanding ally and later client of the East India Company. Henceforth Sri Lanka would be inexorably drawn into the orbit of southern India and its politics. The new rulers maintained their relationship with the main centres of power in South India and kept up a constant correspondence with the Nawab of Arcot, the Raja of Tanjore, the French at Pondicherry and the English at Madras.<sup>7</sup> It was out of these connections that the origins of the Pybus Mission derived. In a desperate search for aid against the Dutch, King Kīrti Srī Rājasimha's uncle, Konnama Nāyakkar, first approached the princes of Tanjore and Madura, when they refused to commit themselves, he turned to the British.

In 1761 the longstanding tension between the Dutch and the Kandyan kingdom broke out into open war. The Dutch who controlled most of the coastline decided that the time had come to reduce the Kandyan kingdom and

<sup>7</sup> L S Dewaraja, Sri Lanka Through French Eyes, (Kandy, 1989), p 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> P J Marshall, "British Assessments of the Dutch in the Age of Raffles," *Itinerario*, Vol.12, 1988, p 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> C R Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600-1800, (London, 1965), pp 275-87.

subjugate the whole island. At first the Kandyans had the upperhand but they were gradually driven back and forced on the defensive. Faced with a mounting crisis they resorted to their traditional tactic of soliciting the aid of another European power; in 1638 it had been the Dutch, now it was the English.

Kīrti Srī Rājasimha's appeal to Madras came at just the right time. For Madras it was a time of widening horizons. On the crest of a wave of success since the final defeat of the French, Madras was now on the point of launching a great expedition against the Philippines. Dutch affairs moreover, because of the Dutch presence on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, were of far greater concern to Madras than anywhere else. Eager to explore new horizons and expand its influence, the Madras Presidency seized on this opportunity to challenge Dutch supremacy in Sri Lanka. These first steps were part of a wider process which became more pronounced as the century wore on. As they consolidated their position in Bengal and Madras, the British gradually began to strike out from the bridgeheads they had established and to venture further afield. Madras, which had always been in the thick of South Indian politics, now became the focus of the East India Company's interests and activities in this part of the world. Over the next three decades it was from here that Britain's policy towards Sri Lanka would be directed.

This formative period in the East India Company's evolution was characterised by a strong spirit of *laissez-faire*. Each Presidency saw its interests quite differently from the other settlements and was determined to make its own initiatives and pursue its own policies, often quite regardless of the consequences. Madras was no exception. Acting entirely on its own initiative, the Madras Council decided to respond to the King's invitation and send an ambassador to his court. The prior authority of the Court of Directors back in London was not sought and they were informed only after the mission had been sent.<sup>8</sup> In Bengal the British were under strict instructions to maintain good relations with the Dutch. A Dutch alliance was important to Britain's interests in Europe and both home governments were now anxious to be on the best of terms. This injunction however, was completely lost on Madras. The Pybus Mission left for Kandy in the same month that the Commissioners who had been appointed to resolve Anglo-Dutch differences began meeting in London.

As far as Madras was concerned the Pybus Mission was intended primarily as a fact finding operation, a spying mission whose purpose was to accumulate as much authentic information as possible about Sri Lanka and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> V L B Mendis, The Advent of the British to Ceylon 1762-1803, (Dehiwala, 1971), pp 49-50.

Kandyan kingdom. Pybus was given a list of 10 to 15 points which he was to observe and inquire into, so that the Company could form a clear idea of how it was likely to benefit now and in the future.<sup>9</sup>

The whole episode was essentially a test case: an attempt to challenge the economic stronghold which the VOC had established. Lured by the prospect of sharing in the lucrative cinnamon trade, the East India Company hoped to obtain a territorial footing on the island. At the same time it was equally determined not to have to commit itself against the Dutch. On this issue the Court of Directors was adamant. "We should not draw upon ourselves the odium of involving the nation in a new war."<sup>10</sup> What the Company wanted was a base of its own, not one which already belonged to the Dutch.

Beyond this however, there does not seem to have been any definite purpose or any real plan to apply. Pybus had no power to enter into any undertaking beyond a treaty of friendship and he was specifically enjoined to avoid all promises or proposals. At the same time he was also instructed to behave as if the Company genuinely meant to enter into an agreement, even to the extent of preparing a draft list of proposals. These differing sets of instructions reveal the fears lurking in English minds. On the one hand, the East India Company was determined not to give any definite promise to aid the King against the VOC, the only effect of such an action would be to drive the Dutch into seeking French help. On the other hand it was also feared that if military assistance was declined, the King would be driven into the waiting arms of the French.

The Kandyans on the other hand, faced with the prospect of a disastrous war against the Dutch had very definite expectations. They welcomed the mission warmly and did their best to honour and accommodate the notoriously difficult Pybus, even to the point of relaxing their normally rigid laws of protocol.<sup>11</sup> It was pointed out to Pybus that the only reason for this special treatment was the "desire the King had to enter into an Alliance and Friendship with the English Nation."<sup>12</sup> The Kandyans made their position very clear, they wanted an alliance with the British and wanted to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> R Raven-Hart, The Pybus Embassy to Kandy, 1762, National Museums of Ceylon Historical Series, Vol. 1, (Colombo, 1952), p 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Quoted in Mendis, Advent of the British, p 33.

<sup>11</sup> Raven-Hart, The Pybus Embassy, pp 60-1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p 64.

know "in what manner and how far both by land or sea" the British were prepared to assist them.<sup>13</sup> Pybus understood that in return they were prepared to offer almost anything. Unfortunately Pybus had no authority to respond and in accordance with his instructions he was deliberately vague and hesitant.<sup>14</sup> All he did was to insist on knowing what exactly the Kandyans were willing to concede, even though he himself had nothing substantial to offer. This only served to convince the Kandyans that Pybus wanted something for nothing. The talks became deadlocked and eventually broke down. Pybus's own boorish behaviour did little to help his cause and the only result was to leave a deeply unfavourable impression in the eyes of the Kandyans, who had now every reason to doubt the Company's *bona fides*.

The Pybus mission proved counterproductive in almost every respect. The Madras Presidency had hoped to establish good relations with the Kandyans and a share in the cinnamon trade without alienating the Dutch. All it had achieved was to antagonise the Dutch and inflame their suspicions, resulting in a series of sharp exchanges between the two powers.<sup>15</sup> The prospect of British intervention brought home to the Dutch the insecurity of their position in the face of growing British power in India. Once it became known that the mission was a bluff, Dutch attitudes hardened and they became markedly more aggressive.<sup>16</sup> The Kandyans too were left feeling deeply disillusioned. The whole episode had only succeeded in intensifying the hostility of the Dutch, whom they now had to face alone and unaided. Having lost all confidence in the British, the Kandyans now turned to the French at Pondicherry, exactly what the British had hoped to prevent.<sup>17</sup> There were also repercussions back in England where the Court of Directors was sharply reprimanded by the government for acting against the national interest and jeopardising its continental policy. An apologetic council at Madras was left trying to justify its actions to the Court of Directors.

 J H O Paulusz (ed.), Secret Minutes of the Dutch Political Council 1762, (Colombo, 1954), p 18.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p 143.

<sup>17</sup> C Rasanayagam, Report on the Tamil Documents in the Government Archives, Second Report of the Ceylon Historical Manuscripts Commission, Sessional Paper 21, (Colombo, 1935), p 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, pp 65-8.

The end of the Seven Years War enabled the Dutch to relax their vigilance in other parts of the world and they poured fresh troops into Sri Lanka. Haunted by the memory of the Pybus episode they launched a series of offensives against the Kandyans, determined not to stop until they had gained control of the whole coastline. The sheer unrelenting nature of this pressure finally brought the exhausted Kandyans to their knees and forced them to come to terms. By the treaty of 1766 the VOC obtained possession of the entire coastline of Sri Lanka. This reduced the Kandyan kingdom to the level of a landlocked client state, completely dependent on the Dutch for its supplies, its trade and its links with the outside world. Although it marked the peak of Dutch power in Sri Lanka, this treaty also opened the way for its final undoing. The severity of the terms left the Kandyans too resentful and too humiliated to ever reconcile themselves with the situation. Its only result was to inspire a passionate desire for revenge, which would leave the Kandyans more willing than ever before to listen to overtures against the hated VOC.

The War of American Independence (1775-83) marked the next phase in the East India Company's dealings with Sri Lanka. In 1778, France, eager to avenge her losses in the Seven Years War, entered the conflict on the side of the American colonists. In 1780 the Dutch, goaded by British excesses against their shipping, joined the French and also declared war against Britain. Holland's entry into the war brought a completely new dimension to the VOC's possession of Trincomalee. With the East India Company's establishment of its supremacy in Bengal and on the Coromandel Coast, its centre of gravity shifted to the eastern side of the subcontinent. As a result the significance of this great natural harbour on the eastern shoreline increased enormously. Trincomalee now became of vital strategic importance to the British, who saw it as the key to the defence of their Indian empire and its trade. Since 1746 however, the harbour had been freely accessible to the British, who had become accustomed to calling there for wood, water, repairs and shelter against the monsoon.<sup>18</sup> The Dutch declaration of war meant that almost overnight they found themselves denied the use of Trincomalee, which now became a potential base for French attacks on India. The danger of the situation was heightened by Britain's reverses in America. Encouraged and emboldened by these signs, the French began preparations for a great military and naval offensive which would restore their position in India. Throughout 1782 a large expeditionary force assembled on the island of Mauritius, France's headquarters in the Indian Ocean. It was supported by a French

<sup>18</sup> H A Colgate, "The Royal Navy and Trincomalee - The History of their Connection 1750-1958," CJHSS, Vol.6, Part I, 1964, pp 2-3. naval squadron led by Admiral Baillie de Suffren, which sailed into Indian waters in 1781.

At Madras the Governor of the settlement, Lord MacCartney, decided to take action before this armada reached India. To meet this threat he formulated a plan to seize Trincomalee and capture all the Dutch possessions on the Coromandel coast. On hearing in October 1782 that further reinforcements under the command of General Medows were on their way east from the Cape of Good Hope, MacCartney expanded his original plan to include the capture of all the Dutch settlements in Sri Lanka. The possession of the whole coast of the island he felt, was absolutely essential for the protection of Britain's fleet and the security of her territories in Bengal and Coromandel.<sup>19</sup>

The success of MacCartney's plan depended on the earliest possible capture of Nāgapatnam. After this had been achieved the land forces, by then hopefully reinforced by Medow's arrival, were to assist Admiral Sir Edward Hughes and his naval squadron in the conquest first of the coastal territories and then the whole island. It was as an auxiliary to this great expedition that the East India Company decided to send its second mission to Sri Lanka. The British were aware that relations between the Kandyans and the Dutch were even more tense and strained than ever following the Treaty of 1766. They expected that in the hope of recovering what he had lost the king would now be only too glad to help them. Acting on Admiral Hughes' suggestion that an able man should be sent to negotiate with the King, MacCartney appointed his secretary, the Irishman Hugh Boyd, as the head of the mission.

The choice of Hugh Boyd reflects the new priority which the British now attached to their dealings with the Kandyans. Unlike the boorish Pybus, Boyd was a gentleman of culture, personality and grace, hardly the average Company servant. This combination of qualities made him the ideal man for the job. Mindful of the bad impression which had been left by Pybus' behaviour, this time the Company's envoy was warned to conform to local customs and to observe every form of ceremony. In marked contrast to Pybus, whose mission had been to probe the King's mind and keep him guessing, his brief was relatively straightforward. His main task was to convince the king of the Company's good faith and its sincere desire to cultivate his friendship. He was to convey the Company's desire to conclude an alliance and defence treaty against the Dutch. In return for military assistance against the VOC, the king would have to furnish the British troops left behind on the island with provisions. The whole embassy was specially tailored with Kīrti Srī Rājasimha in mind. As he had been the one ruler who

<sup>19</sup> Mendis, Advent of the British, p 64.

had defied the Dutch with some success, it must have been doubly humiliating for him to have to put up with the terms of the 1766 treaty. The whole tenor of the campaign was designed to capitalise on this resentment and the letter which Boyd took with him emphasized Britain's determination to vindicate the king's rights against the usurpation of the Dutch and protect him against all his enemies.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately for Boyd and the British, Kīrti Srī Rājasimha was killed in a riding accident before Boyd could reach Kandy.

Boyd arrived in Sri Lanka in January 1782, in the train of the naval expedition under Admiral Hughes which captured Trincomalee. Although he did experience great difficulty in obtaining supplies en route to Kandy, there is no evidence that he was anything but well received. As Boyd himself observed, the shortage of provisions was due more to scarcity than neglect.<sup>21</sup> Called on to draw the Kandyans' attention to the British record in India, Boyd stressed the great success which the English had enjoyed against their mutual enemies, the Dutch, whom they had driven entirely from the coast of Coromandel. It was, he underlined, to carry on their victories that Admiral Hughes was now in the island.<sup>22</sup> Under instructions to convince the Kandyans of Britain's good conduct and character, Boyd did his best to persuade them that this time they could put their trust in the Company's word. He laid great stress on the reliability and loyalty of the English, sparing no pains so he tells us to "Impress them (the Kandyans) in the most forcible manner in my power with the conviction of our unshaken firmness and fidelity to our allies."23

The terms offered by Boyd would have delighted the Kandyans in 1762 but now they no longer seemed very attractive. In 1782 British power in South India seemed to be tottering. The Mysore War (1780-82) had seen Haider Ali overrun the whole of the Carnatic and in September 1780 he had virtually annihilated the Madras army at the battle of Polilur. In February 1782 Suffren's squadron had appeared off Madras and in a series of devastating encounters had rapidly got the better of the English fleet. By the time Boyd returned to Trincomalee in March Admiral Hughes had been forced to withdraw and in August 1782 the town fell to the French. The loss

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> L D Campbell (ed.), the Miscellaneous Works of Hugh Boyd, Vol.2, (London, 1800), pp 278-81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p 107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p 279.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p 220.

whole position in India: the capture of Madras itself followed soon afterwards. Although most of these events took place after Boyd's return from Kandy, the signs of British decline must have been only too clear. It must have served to only undermine all Boyd's representations of British power and could not have inspired much confidence in the eyes of their prospective ally.

There is no doubt that the Pybus fiasco had left behind a legacy of suspicion and resentment which all Boyd's declarations of good faith could not erase. He was reminded by the Kandyans that the Pybus mission had gained them absolutely nothing and that they had had to support themselves without any assistance or communication from Madras.<sup>24</sup> · As a result, after months of waiting Kandy had had to suffer the consequences of a disastrous war and a humiliating treaty. It was only now, 20 years later, when the position was reversed, that the British had come to seek their friendship. "In the circumstances," admitted Boyd, "they could not but think that our attention to their interest was governed only by adherence to our own."25 It was clear that they felt that they could not rely on the British and they did want to repeat the same mistake. Indeed in view of the political and territorial ascendancy which the treaty of 1766 had placed the Dutch, the Kandyans could not afford to antagonise the Dutch without being absolutely sure of the British. However, the cordial tone of their dealings with Boyd suggests that the Kandyans did not want to antagonise the British altogether. Instead the Kandyans played for time and adopted a middle line, neither accepting Boyd's terms nor rejecting them out of hand. The Kandyan King's request that any overtures for a treaty should come directly from the King of England was an obvious pretext. In the past the King's predecessors had been well aware of the status of the Governor of Madras and they had only been too willing to negotiate with him.

The realities of the situation were not lost on the East India Company. At Madras it was noted that although the embassy itself had been graciously received, the Kandyans remained too apprehensive of the Dutch to risk allying themselves with the British. Madras acknowledged that this was likely to remain the case for the foreseeable future: "Until we shall have such a force on the island as will afford us a certainty of success:"<sup>26</sup>

25 ibid.

Madras to Court of Directors, 5 September 1782, quoted in Mendis, Advent of the British, p 77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p 248.

In November 1781, after a delay of several vital months Nāgapatnam finally fell and the British fleet proceeded to Trincomalee. Meanwhile the eagerly awaited reinforcements under Medows were scattered by bad weather and failed to arrive. These factors together with the unexpected return of Haider Ali to the fray finally sealed the fate of the proposed invasion. At the time of Haider Ali's reappearance General Munro had been preparing to send a force to occupy Jaffna as a prelude to Hughes' capture of Trincomalee. The change in circumstances made it impossible for Munro to leave his station and the expedition had to be abandoned. It meant that Hughes' capture of Trincomalee was an isolated operation and Boyd's mission to Kandy a futile one.

The significance of the Boyd Mission lies in the fact that it was the East India Company's first attempt at direct political and military intervention in Sri Lanka. It marks the end of the inhibitions which had hitherto governed its dealings with the Dutch. By 1780 the weakness and corruption of the VOC was common knowledge. Attitudes towards the Dutch hardened and with the outbreak of war many within the East India Company were convinced that its old rival was now "quite ripe for destruction."<sup>27</sup> The seizure of Trincomalee in 1781, Britain's first acquisition of territory in Sri Lanka, was the first sign that a new era had begun. Had the whole offensive been properly co-ordinated and better executed, it is all too likely that the East India Company would have conquered Sri Lanka thirteen years earlier.

From 1766-84 the East India Company underwent a process of reform and reorganisation which ushered in a new chapter in the history of British political power in India. The realisation gradually dawned that India was too great a national asset and the issues of Indian government too weighty to be left entirely to a trading company acting on its own judgement. The Company's relationship with the state, its activities and the behaviour of its servants came under intense public scrutiny and became the subject of bitter prolonged debate. The result was a series of full scale inquiries into the Company's affairs, in 1767 and 1772-73, bringing in its wake an increasing degree of government control. The Regulating Act of 1773 was followed in 1780 by Pitt's India Bill. These bills brought the Company under Parliamentary control and set up an administrative framework under the overall control of a Governor General out in India and a Board of Control back in London. The supreme authority out in India was vested in Bengal, which through the Governor General, was now made responsible for the other two Presidencies. British activity on the subcontinent had hitherto been uncontrolled and uncoordinated and the various Presidents had become

Marshall, "British Assessments of the Dutch," p 3.

accustomed to doing almost as they pleased. 1784 however, saw the beginnings of a single guiding policy, one far more carefully in step with Britain's overall interests and priorities than ever before. The latitude which had characterised the despatch of the Pybus Mission increasingly became a thing of the past. In future the Madras Presidency would find its dealings with Sri Lanka keenly watched and closely supervised.

This gradual change in the East India Company's structure brought with it a growing acceptance of Britain's territorial acquisitions and an increasing sense of responsibility towards them. The Governor Generalship of Lord Cornwallis (1786-93) saw the establishment of a new system of administration and taxation run by a specialized administrative corps of Company servants. Until now the Company had been content to share the business of government with local rulers and landowners. This change however, signified a complete break with the past. It was clear that the powerful old inhibitions about the moral consequences of conquest and territorial empire had almost completely melted away. As Britain and the East India Company gradually came to terms with their new dominions, recognition finally dawned that the business of government was now their concern and they had a duty towards the millions of Indians who were now their subjects.

With this change in attitudes came an increasing belief in the beneficial and equitable nature of British power. The system established by Cornwallis was seen as the embodiment of this new ethos. The Permanent Settlement, as it became known in Bengal, saw the creation and preservation of assured property rights, the establishment of the rule of law and the institution of free trade within the Company's provinces. It enabled the British to see themselves in a new light, as the agents of justice and improvement, their prosperity closely allied to the well-being of the peoples they governed. In 1793 John Bruce the official Historiographer of the East India Company wrote fulsomely of the advantages which the population of the Company's new Indian provinces were receiving from British government.<sup>28</sup>

In this spirit British popular opinion now began to actively encourage the idea of further expansion. Thus the new climate of the 1790s saw mounting calls for conquest and dominion in the name of justice, order and progress.

Convinced of their new role as a progressive force for improvement and modernity, the British increasingly came to regard the Dutch as a decadent and stagnant relic of an older order. The Dutch they felt, were a

J Bruce, Historical View of Plans for the Government of British India, (London, 1793), p
 39. Quoted in Marshall, "A Free Though Conquering People," p 3.

commercial people whose obsession with money and profit had eroded their virtue and their vitality.<sup>29</sup> As Robert Percival noted in his *Account of the Island of Ceylon*, this was particularly so of the Dutch in Sri Lanka, who had become a debased and degenerate version of their former selves.<sup>30</sup> It was generally believed that by ruthlessly extracting the highest possible profit, the Dutch systematically impoverished all those they came into contact with.

"The ruling passion of the Dutch, however, their avarice, soon began to overreach itself; and by rapaciously seizing upon every opportunity of gain they quickly disgusted and alienated the natives."<sup>31</sup>

Dutch rule, preoccupied as it was with maximum and immediate gain, had become identified with oppression and exploitation. British rule on the other hand symbolised a new order.

The War of American Independence and the consequent Anglo-French War had underlined the vital importance of Trincomalee to the future of British India. The desire to gain Trincomalee dominated British policy from now on and it became a principal issue in Britain's relationship with Holland. From 1784-88 the British engaged in long drawn out negotiations with the Dutch in the attempt to come to an understanding. However, British demands for Trincomalee proved a major stumbling block and was ultimately responsible for the breakdown of negotiations. As a result tension between the two powers remained at a heightened level, with the British deeply uneasy about their future security and ever ready to contemplate military action. Had negotiations succeeded the history of Sri Lanka might well have been different.

The outbreak of the French Revolution saw the development of increasingly strong ties between France and Holland. In 1795 this culminated in the occupation of the Netherlands by French Revolutionary armies and the establishment of the Batavian Republic. Britain now found herself faced with the danger that Jacobinism would spread to the Dutch colonies abroad, making them easy prey for the French. Once again, the spectre of strategic Dutch territories like the Cape of Good Hope and Sri Lanka becoming French bases loomed large in British minds. This was the overriding concern which governed the next phase in the East India Company's relationship with Sri Lanka: "What was a feather in the hands of Holland will become a sword in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Marshall, "British Assessments of the Dutch," p 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> R Percival, An Account of the Island of Ceylon, (London, 1805), p 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p 40.

the hands of France."32

Upon the French invasion of Holland the Stadtholder Prince William V fled to England. Here he signed the Kew Letter, placing Holland's possessions overseas under Britain's protection for the duration of the war. The British used the Kew Letter as their authority to mount a comprehensive operation against almost a dozen Dutch territories in Africa, India and South East Asia. For the East India Company Trincomalee was the priority. War with the Marathas and Mysore was imminent and there was the possibility that a French fleet might arrive at any moment to support the Indian rulers. The British could not risk the enemy forestalling them at Trincomalee, thus an expeditionary force was assembled and dispatched to the island hard on the heels of the notification of the Kew Letter.

The military campaign against the Dutch in Sri Lanka lasted from July 1795 to February 1796. The largest and most protracted operation of its kind, it was entrusted to the direction of the Madras Presidency and its Governor Lord Hobart (1794-98). On the strength of the Stadtholder's letter Hobart had immediately claimed possession of all the Dutch settlements on the island. In accordance with his instructions, Hobart assured the Dutch that their independence would be restored upon the conclusion of a peace treaty and that in the meanwhile the existing status quo would be maintained. All laws and customs would remain as they were, no new taxes or duties would be imposed and most of the personnel would be retained. In one respect however, Hobart exceeded his brief. Acting on his own authority, he issued an ultimatum threatening the use of force if the letter was not accepted. Should the Dutch decline to surrender their settlements peacefully, it was pointed out to them that a military force had already set out for Trincomalee. The home government had hoped for a peaceful occupation. However, Hobart's threat militated against the spirit of the Stadtholder's letter and put the Dutch on the defensive. His action earned him the disapproval of the Supreme Government in Bengal, which took him to task for not having used conciliatory tactics from the very outset.

On 26 August 1796 a British force under the command of Colonel James Stuart, one of the most experienced officers in the Company army, seized and occupied Trincomalee. As in 1782, the military offensive was accompanied by a concerted diplomatic effort. Exercising his own judgement once more Lord Hobart dispatched another senior Madras servant, Robert Andrews, to negotiate with the King of Kandy. Arriving like Boyd before him, in the train of an attack on Trincomalee Andrews reached Kandy in

Quoted in H Furber, Henry Dundas, First Viscount Melville 1742-1811, (Oxford, 1931),
 p 105.

September 1795. He found the Kandyans far more receptive than Boyd had. Since 1792 Madras had had considerable contact with the Kandyans and there is evidence of intensive negotiations over the prospect of British aid.<sup>33</sup> Dutch-Kandyan relations had deteriorated drastically since 1782 and had reached their lowest ebb during the governorship of de Graaf (1785-93) who had made no secret of his aggressive intentions. Things became so bad that in 1791 the King, complaining bitterly of Dutch harassment, had entreated the French to take action.<sup>34</sup> The British occupation of Pondicherry in 1793 cut these links and enabled the British themselves to capitalise on Kandyan resentment.

Andrew's instructions were to negotiate a treaty of friendship and alliance with Kandy, the purpose of which was to secure the King's assistance in supplying the British expedition with provisions.<sup>35</sup> In return for the King's help Andrews held out the possibility that the Company would return the territories which had been illegally wrested from him by the Dutch. Mindful of the long and deliberate delays which had greeted the Boyd Mission, Andrews took pains to emphasise that this would depend on the speed and activity with which the Kandyans responded.<sup>36</sup> To reinforce his message Andrews used much the same tactics as Boyd before him, reiterating Britain's power and military success as well as the unjust and oppressive actions of the Dutch. However, his warnings about French expansion and the danger of French Revolutionary ideology struck a new note. In a very pointed echo of the fears that dominated this last mission, the Company's envoy went to great pains to convince the King of the subversive nature of French revolutionary zeal, and the threat it posed to his own life.

The framework in which Andrews now operated was very different to what it had been in Boyd's time. For all Hobart's show of independence, strictly speaking the Madras Government no longer had the power to make its own decisions and conclude treaties on its own. Any agreement would have to be referred to the Supreme government in Bengal; this in turn would have to be reconciled with the wider political situation. Andrew's mission thus found itself in a very ambivalent position. Not knowing whether the Dutch

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> C Rasanayagam, Second Report of the Ceylon Historical Manuscripts Commission, p 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> J P Lewis (ed.), "Andrews Embassies to Kandy in 1795 and 1796," JCBRAS Vol. 26, No.70, 1917, pp 59-60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p 86.

were going to accept or reject the terms of the Kew Letter, he had to balance his mission between two prospective courses of action. If the Dutch agreed to British protection he could hardly commit himself to hostilities against them. On the other hand he knew that the Kandyans themselves would never be won over without a firm undertaking against the Dutch, especially in view of their past dealings with the British and their own current situation. In the circumstances Andrews' brief was to come to a preliminary understanding with the Kandyans which would act as the prelude to a comprehensive treaty to be submitted to Bengal.

The Andrews Mission met with a markedly warm welcome from the Kandyans, who as Andrews noted were both friendly and attentive. In contrast to 1782 this time the Kandyans went out of their way to be helpful and accommodating.<sup>37</sup> Andrews found the Kandyan king very keen to conclude a treaty against the Dutch as soon as possible. On one issue however, the Kandyans were adamant. Before any agreement could be concluded, they demanded the capture of all the VOC's settlements and the total expulsion of the Dutch from the island. They also insisted on an absolute guarantee that the Dutch would never again be allowed to re-establish themselves in Sri Lanka. For the Kandyans this was the most vital feature of any treaty.

That without this material point was effected they could only look forward to a temporary relief by any immediate connection with the English;<sup>38</sup>

On the face of it the two positions appeared irreconcilable, but Andrews finally managed to persuade the Kandyans to agree to a draft treaty and to send their ambassadors to Madras for further discussions.

On October 12 1795 a Preliminary Treaty of Alliance and Friendship was concluded between the East India Company and the Kandyan kingdom. The first ever agreement to be made between the two parties, this treaty represents an important landmark in their relationship. By its terms the Kandyans promised to assist the British forces and supply them with provisions. Contact between the two sides was frequent and a close understanding was rapidly forged between Stuart and the King's commanders.<sup>39</sup> Following the capture of Trincomalee and some time afterwards of Batticaloa, Stuart sailed right round the coast capturing Jaffna *en route* and a string of coastal stations as far south as Negombo. Although

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p 87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p 89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Rasanayagam, Second Report of the Ceylon Historical Manuscripts Commission, p 31.

the Dutch government in Colombo had officially decided to oppose the British, Stuart met with derisory resistance. This pattern was repeated almost everywhere and it accounts for the relative ease with which the final British conquest was achieved. The expedition itself was part of a three pronged attack and at Negombo Stuart joined up with the other two British consignments, Major Barbut's force from Mannar and a detachment of Bombay artillery under Colonel Petrie, which had arrived from Madras. True to their word the Kandyans did their best to keep the British supplied and at Stuart's request the Kandyan army encamped near Negombo. After the rendezvous had been effected, the British set out for Colombo with a large Kandyan force guarding their flank.<sup>40</sup> Although their route took them through difficult countryside, full of narrow defiles surrounded by thick jungle and intersected by many rivers, Stuart marched within four miles of Colombo "without encountering the slightest resistance."41 The mobilisation of the Kandyans had greatly alarmed the Dutch and it was this fear of a Kandyan threat to their communications which deterred them from trying to oppose Stuart.42

On 12 February barely five days after it had left Negombo, the invading army reached the outskirts of Colombo. After further desultory resistance outside the city, the Dutch Governor van Angelbeek (1794-96) capitulated and the British took possession of Colombo on 16 February 1796. The precipitate fall of Dutch Sri Lanka has been attributed to several causes. Of these, two factors weighed heavily on Dutch minds.<sup>43</sup> First and most important of all there was the overwhelming strength of the British forces, which altogether were said to have been almost 10,000 strong. Secondly there was the hitherto unprecedented fact of Kandyan support. In similar circumstances however, the Portuguese had held out against the Dutch for almost a whole year, from October 1655 to May 1656. In contrast the Dutch defence of Colombo, which was garrisoned by 2,500 Europeans, Moors, Malays and sepoys, lasted barely a week. This alone points to a far more serious underlying weakness. As many observers had already diagnosed, the Dutch in Asia lacked both the will and the energy to fight. Corruption,

<sup>40</sup> ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Col. James Welsh, Military Reminiscences, (London, 1830), p 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> L B J Turner, "The Capitulation of Colombo 1796, Some Dutch Official Documents," CALR, Vol.8, Part 2, 1922, p 94.

<sup>43</sup> ibid.

widespread discontent and poor morale were responsible for a malaise which sapped Dutch resistance not only in Sri Lanka, but also in other parts of Asia. This was compounded by the conflicting loyalties which existed between the adherents of the Stadtholder and the supporters of the new Jacobin regime. It was widely believed that the Governor, van Angelbeek and many of the principal military officers were so hostile to the new order that they were only too ready to surrender. Most of them held large properties on the island and a speedy capitulation was very much in their interest.<sup>44</sup> It is significant that van Angelbeek, one of the largest property owners of all, continued to reside in Colombo after the capitulation and did so right up to his death.

While the military operations were in progress, the prospective treaty became the subject of a long and bitter dispute between Madras and the Supreme Government. In Bengal the Governor General, Sir John Shore (1793-97) was sharply critical of the agreement and censured Lord Hobart at Madras for having exceeded his authority. The controversy revolved around the clauses which had been included to reassure the Kandyans again the possible return of the Dutch. In Shore's opinion these amounted to a perpetual guarantee of the King's position against all enemies. It overlooked the possibility that a European peace could restore the Dutch possessions and oblige the British to abandon the King.45 The object of the treaty said Shore, should have been to gain the King's goodwill, not to commit the East India Company to undertakings on his behalf. In the circumstances the Supreme Government deemed it "premature, unnecessary and dangerous."46 The Madras Presidency was directed to apologise to the Kandyan ambassadors, to explain that the current proposals were incompatible with Britain's international obligations and to offer a treaty of friendship instead. Shore was insistent that the treaty should be confined only to general expressions of friendship -- the more general the principles, the less embarrassing it was likely to be. However, as a saving measure and only if the Kandyan ambassadors refused outright to accept the situation, the Madras Government was authorised to accept the current treaty subject to its ratification in two years time by the East India Company. At Madras Lord Hobart reacted furiously to what he saw as an attempt to undermine his authority. He was fully aware of what had happened in the past and he emphasised that without a treaty it would be impossible to procure supplies

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> W Neil (ed.), The Cleghorn Papers, (London, 1927), p 232-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Mendis, The Advent of the British, p 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, p 159.

for which there was an urgent need at present.<sup>47</sup> This factor became even more important in the light of Britain's plans for a full scale military operation. Moreover, there was also the chance that if the king remained neutral he might eventually be persuaded to oppose the British.<sup>48</sup> The Madras government reiterated that this was the most favourable moment to accomplish what previous governments had attempted<sup>49</sup> and make an arrangement which would give the East India Company a proper footing on the island.

The change of direction nearly wrecked the whole process. Faced with what seemed like a repetition of the past, all the old doubts resurfaced and the Kandyans accused the British of luring them once again with false promises. British assurances of friendship were indignantly rejected and the ambassadors threatened to return home. Andrews however, finally managed to pacify the ambassadors with the prospect that Bengal might change its mind in the event of further military success in Sri Lanka. Reluctantly they agreed to stay and on 12 February 1796, after a great deal of intensive negotiation a new treaty was finally agreed on. This granted the East India Company much the same position on the island as the VOC had once enjoyed. Like the Dutch before them the British received possession of the maritime regions as well as the lion's share of trade with the Sinhalese. However, the complete stranglehold which the Dutch had achieved over the coastline was slightly relaxed. The British agreed to furnish the King with a harbour from where he could obtain his salt and fish and he was allowed to maintain a small fleet for trade with the outside world. The Company promised the Kandyans that all the inland districts which had been seized from them by the Dutch would now be restored. It undertook to protect the king and the Buddhist religion, binding itself not to take any action which would affect the King's interests without his consent. This assurance served to allay the immediate fears of the Kandyans about the possible return of Dutch and more importantly allowed the British room for manoeuvre. Both sides had two years in which to ratify the treaty, but neither did so. The Kandyans in particular remained dissatisfied and felt that they had obtained far too little. In the end it was they who were the losers, for never again were they to be offered such favourable terms. By August 1796, when Andrews returned to Kandy, the treaty already outlived its purpose for the British were now in command of the maritime regions.

48 *ibid*.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p 161.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p 160.

Nevertheless, the whole process represented the culmination of the relationship between the East India Company and the Kandyans. In spite of considerable difficulties on either side, the Preliminary Agreement of 1795 and the Treaty of 1796 were evidence that both parties now wanted the relationship to work.

As Hobart emphasised in his angry exchanges with Shore, an agreement with the King was the essential prelude to any British relationship with Sri Lanka, long term or short term.<sup>50</sup> It had finally been achieved in 1795, after more than three decades of trying. The level of cooperation and support extended to the invading British forces was the direct result of the Andrews Mission. Without Kandyan assistance it is doubtful whether the British would have ventured to attempt so ambitious an undertaking. The head on collision between Shore and Hobart reflects the changing nature of British policy in India. Hobart, looking to the future, was thinking of conquest and expansion with a view to a permanent British settlement on the island. Shore, however feared and hesitated to accept the logic of the forward policy which was being forced on him. For him the expedition of 1795 was a purely military operation, one with severely limited objectives. It had been Hobart's unauthorised dispatch of Andrews which had given the episode an extra dimension.

Shore's attempt to reverse the effect of the Madras government's actions vividly illustrates the lack of any real consensus within Company circles as far as Sri Lanka was concerned. This is the most striking feature of the East India Company's 30 year relationship with the island -- its lack of continuity and consistency. Each phase of this relationship was governed by its own immediate circumstances and priorities, as these varied so did the Company's policy. It is significant that in the course of his mission Andrews makes no mention of the diaries of either of his predecessors even though they must have both been readily available at Fort St. George. Each mission it is clear was governed by its own separate *raison d'etre* and was the product of its own particular environment.

Two external factors however, had a great bearing on the course of events. The first of these was the Anglo-French conflict. The advent of the East India Company to Sri Lanka was really the offshoot of a wider struggle for mastery between Britain and France in Europe and overseas. A process beginning with the Seven Years War and ending with the French Revolutionary War, it was in this setting that Sri Lanka, because of geographical location and her strategic importance, became of vital interest to the Company. It was the threat posed by the French which prompted the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p 160.

dispatch of the troops and the ships which played such an important role in the East India Company's policy towards Sri Lanka. Without this danger, it is unlikely that the home government would ever have sanctioned either the expedition of 1782 or that of 1795.

However, the Anglo-French conflicts in itself would not necessarily have involved Sri Lanka had it not coincided with another factor - the decline of Dutch power. The increasing vulnerability of Holland back in Asia and in Europe left a vacuum which both the British and the French attempted to fill. It was this struggle to be the first to gain possession of Dutch territories overseas which brought the British to Sri Lanka. The increasing military and commercial weakness of the Dutch in Asia was accompanied by a growing self-confidence and ambition on the part of the East India Company. As the Dutch grew weaker, the East India Company became ever bolder and more aggressive.

Expansion in India had involved the East India Company in a series of bitterly contested wars with powerful regional neighbours. From 1779-83 the Company had waged a longdrawn out struggle against Mysore in the south and the Marathas further to the west. By no means certain of victory, the Company had been forced to abandon wider horizons in what was often a fight for survival. By the last decade of the century however, the situation had been brought under control and in 1793 the Company's most dangerous enemy, Tipu Sultan of Mysore, was decisively defeated. The East India Company now had the peace of mind and the resources to venture further afield. Thus in 1795 the Company was finally able to deploy overwhelming military force in Sri Lanka. This ensured that its diplomatic initiatives would succeed where they had failed in 1762 and 1782. It was the combination of both these elements, successful diplomacy allied to overwhelming force, which characterised the final advent of the British to Sri Lanka.

## **CONCLUSION**<sup>1</sup>

### K M de Silva

In 1796 when the British conquered the Dutch possessions in the maritime regions of the island, the traditional Kandyan policy of seeking foreign assistance to oust the European power established in parts of the island led, on this occasion, to the substitution of the most formidable European nation of the day for the weak and declining power that the Dutch were. The British were also in the process of expanding their possessions in the Indian sub-continent at the expense of all rivals, indigenous and foreign, to the point where they had secured a dominant position in the region. Should they ever decide that the independent status of the kingdom of Kandy was in any way an obstacle, let alone a threat, to their territorial ambitions in South Asia, the British had the military and naval resources to subjugate that kingdom.

From the early 1780s to the Peace of Amiens in 1802 the coastal territories of the island of Sri Lanka were a pawn in European diplomatic negotiations.<sup>2</sup> There were inconclusive negotiations at Paris and Lille in 1796 and 1797, where the British contrived to secure the acquiescence of the Dutch in the loss of their possessions in Sri Lanka. France was not unwilling to see these territories handed over to the British but neither the Directors of the VOC nor the Batavian Republic would agree.<sup>3</sup>

It would appear that it was the failure of the Lille negotiations that finally convinced the British of the need to ensure permanent possession of the former Dutch territories in the island. The appointment of Frederick North

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Much of the material in this chapter is based on earlier works of the author, including chapters, I,II, and V in UCHC, Vol. III, A History of Sri Lanka, (London and California, 1981) and Social Policy and Missionary Organisations in Ceylon, 1840-1855, (London, 1965).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See V T Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, 2 Vols, (London, 1952-64), Vol. 1, pp 317 ff and Vol II pp 368 ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> V L B Mendis, The Advent of the British to Ceylon, 1762-1803, (Dehiwala, 1977), pp 196-212.

as the first governor of the British possessions in Sri Lanka in February 1798 was indicative of this strengthening of resolve. At Whitehall, Henry Dundas, the key minister in regard to colonial affairs, for one, was intent on the retention of these territories and succeeded in convincing the Prime Minister, William Pitt the younger, of the strategic importance of the island. Dundas's decision to appoint North as the first British governor of the former Dutch possessions in the island appears to have been a subtle move to force Pitt's The assumption was that it would be so much more difficult to hard. negotiate for the acquisition of the former Dutch possessions in the island of Sri Lanka if they were under the control of a commercial company, the English East India Company. These territories were finally ceded to Britain at the Peace of Amiens in March 1802. The Amiens settlement merely ratified the preliminary peace concluded in London on 1 October 1801 in which one of the articles related to the retention by the British of the Dutch territories in Sri Lanka.<sup>4</sup> It is perhaps evidence of the value Britain attached to the acquisition of these territories in the island that the article relating to them was one of the few in the London preliminaries to remain unchanged at the Peace of Amiens. Sri Lanka's coastal territories became a British crown colony largely, if not purely, for reasons of imperial strategy.<sup>5</sup> Addressing the House of Commons in November 1801 after the conclusion of the London preliminaries, Pitt declared that the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) was vital to the security of Britain's East Indian possessions (much more so than the Cape of Good Hope) because of the port of Trincomalee.<sup>6</sup>

On 15 February 1796 John Gerard van Angelbeek, the Dutch governor, had signed the articles of capitulation under which the Dutch possessions in the island were transferred to the British. As Paul Pieris, the Sri Lankan historian, remarked in his brief survey of *Ceylon and the Hollanders*, 1658-1796, van Angelbeek "... burnt less powder in defending Colombo, than Jan Schreuder had fired in honour of one letter to the Sinhalese king."<sup>7</sup> Indeed the contrast between the prolonged and gallant resistance of the Portuguese forces in Colombo against the Dutch and

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> G S Graham, A Concise History of the British Empire, (London, 1971), p 124.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Trincomalee's importance in British naval strategy did not survive beyond the first few years of the nineteenth century. See particularly, G S Graham, Great Britain in the India Ocean, (Oxford, 1967), pp 312-7.

P E Pieris, Ceylon and the Hollanders, 1658-1796, p 111.

Rājasimha II in 1656 and the almost perfunctory surrender of the Dutch forces to the British when their troops marched out of the fort of Colombo "with undamaged limbs and uncrumpled tunics..."<sup>8</sup> could not have been sharper. With the signing of this document the Dutch settlements were treated by the British as a conquered colony, surrendered under the articles of capitulation. Under the terms of these articles, and under the general constitutional principles operating in regard to ceded or conquered colonies, the laws of the conquered colony were to continue until altered, and the British accepted the obligation to support the ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church - at least more temporarily.

This reference to the Dutch Reformed Church provides us with an appropriate point of departure for a brief assessment of the impact of Dutch rule in the island beginning with the religious policy of the VOC. In agreeing to extend support to the ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church, the British made no secret of their intention to follow a more liberal religious policy. British rule in the island began with a general and deliberate relaxation of the more rigid religious practices of the Dutch, and a repudiation of many of the latter's policies in this regard. The compelling motives behind this reversal of policies were not entirely a matter of commitment to any abstract principle of religious toleration. There were practical advantages which the British expected from this -- that it would win the adherence to their cause of groups discontented by the intolerance that had generally been a feature of Dutch religious policy.

In the first few decades of the VOC's administration in Sri Lanka's littoral the Dutch Reformed Church, having replaced the Roman Catholic Church in the role of the 'established' religion, had embarked on a policy of hostility to Roman Catholicism,<sup>9</sup> an extension to Sri Lanka of the religious battles raging in Europe, the struggle between the forces of the Reformation and Counter Reformation. They also embarked on a concerted bid to proselytise among the Sinhalese and Tamils. Earlier chapters of this volume would have shown that neither of these processes was sustained for long, with the same enthusiasm, especially the process of proselytisation. The VOC's hostility to Roman Catholicism, in its origins, was motivated as much by political considerations as by religious convictions, for Portuguese power and the Roman Catholic church in the island had been so closely linked that the destruction of the first was impossible without the elimination of the other's

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.* 

See R Boudens, The Catholic Church in Ceylon under Dutch Rule, (Rome, 1957).

influence. Roman Catholic worship was soon prohibited by law, with severe penalties being imposed for any breach of it; priests were forbidden entry to the island, and all Roman Catholic churches were taken over and converted into chapels. There were, not surprisingly, many defections from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism, but a substantial number of Catholics appear to have remained steadfast to their faith. They were ministered to by priests who came in at great risk to themselves from India. As we have seen, the harried Roman Catholic clergy found a haven in the Kandyan kingdom in much the same way that Muslim refugees from Portuguese persecution had found a new home there in the past. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, however, this exercise in religious persecution was abandoned because it had proved so ineffective in practice. While the anti-Catholic *placcaats* remained in the statute books, they were seldom if ever observed in practice with the same vigour as in the earlier phases of the VOC's rule.

The Dutch were rather more tolerant of the indigenous religions than the Portuguese had been. While they did not actually harry the Buddhists (for fear of offending the Kandyan ruler, who regarded himself as the trustee of Buddhist rights in the island) they did not officially countenance Buddhism, and harassment of Hindus and Muslims continued - although not with the same virulence as under the Portuguese. Buddhist and Hindu worship was prohibited in towns but, it would appear, not in the villages. The extensive temple properties confiscated by the Portuguese were not returned to those who originally controlled them.

While the VOC encouraged the people over whom they ruled to adopt Calvinism,<sup>10</sup> and membership of the Dutch Reformed Church was made a prerequisite for high office this commitment to proselytisation was not continued for long with any great consistency. As time went on their aim was "the narrow one of keeping the Dutch community on the straight and narrow path of godly devotion."<sup>11</sup> Indeed, it became clear that the Dutch Reformed Church in Sri Lanka was not particularly well equipped for anything more than that. All its ministers were company servants, and the church itself did not enjoy the status of an independent mission. To the VOC religion was a matter of secondary importance, and its officials seldom gave their church much more than perfunctory assistance, although they kept a tight control over its activities. As a result the Dutch Reformed Church had limited financial resources, and suffered from a paucity of ministers. There was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> There was a measure of force used to see that baptised Christians, though not others, conformed to and practised their faith regularly.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> S Arasaratnam (ed.), Memoir of Julius Stein van Gollenesse, 1975, p 38.

therefore scarcely any possibility of a resolute campaign of proselytisation among the people at large; moreover, few of its ministers knew Sinhalese or Tamil. Nevertheless the Dutch Reformed Church did not lack converts. The material benefits anticipated from association with the established religion were a powerful attraction to elite groups seeking continuation in high office. But converts were by no means confined to the elite: in 1743 the church had a membership of 53,219 in Colombo, and in 1758, it had 200,233 members in Jaffna (there were thirty-seven churches in the consistory there). The bulk of these, as the Dutch records admit, were only nominally Calvinists and Christians.<sup>12</sup> Calvinism in fact did not develop any strong roots among the people, and its influence - in sharp contrast to that of Roman Catholicism *visa-vis* the Portuguese - did not survive the collapse of Dutch power.

The link between proselytisation and education established by the Portuguese was maintained by the Dutch. They took over the schools begun by the Portuguese, revitalised them, and added to their number by their policy of attaching schools to each church. The schoolmaster in charge maintained a register of students, and fines were imposed to ensure that pupils attended church regularly. The rigours of these requirements had been relaxed somewhat by the eighteenth century, but the regulations were re-imposed during van Gollenesse's administration.<sup>13</sup> The schools provided a simple system of instruction with reading and writing in the vernaculars, and arithmetic. Regular inspections by the local minister of religion and by civil officials ensured satisfactory standards in the schools.

The schoolmasters were paid by the state, and they acted too as registrars of births, marriages and deaths. The introduction of a regular system of registration in the villages was a major innovation of the VOC. Indeed the registration of marriages re-emphasised the concept of monogamy which Roman Catholic Christianity had introduced under the Portuguese, and gave it greater significance and formality.

Two seminaries were established in Jaffna and Colombo for higher education, and the more talented pupils from all over the island were sent there to be educated - and, at the same time, maintained - at state expense. The first of these was established at Nallūr in 1690, and lasted till 1709 when it was closed down and its students and teachers were transferred to Colombo.<sup>14</sup> These seminaries trained students as teachers and catechists in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, pp 38-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> C R Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, (London, 1965), pp 147-9.

the expanding school system, and as clergymen. Instruction was largely in the vernaculars, but some Latin and Dutch was also introduced. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the practice was begun of sending a few students for higher education in the Netherlands.

In 1737, during van Imhoff's administration, a printing press was established in Colombo with the avowed intention of making Christian literature available in the vernacular languages - a prayer-book in Sinhalese (1737), translations of the Gospels (1739), and simple catechisms - for schools, churches and other institutions. This was the foundation for more sophisticated polemical work in the next decade, and greater technical competence in printing and in the production of books. Under van Gollenesse the translation of the New Testament into Tamil was begun; this major undertaking was completed during Schreuder's administration. The education programmes initiated by the VOC achieved only limited success in the intended aim of spreading Calvinist Christianity among the youth of the country, but it had the profoundly important consequence of helping the spread of literacy in the lowlands - in the south west and the north of the island, an advantage which has been maintained and indeed consolidated throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The introduction of the printing press no doubt gave the Calvinists a considerable advantage in their campaigns against Roman Catholicism and the indigenous religions at least in the early stages, but these campaigns ran out of steam towards the end of the eighteenth century, by which time the VOC's religious policy was becoming less intolerant if not yet consistently liberal. Even opposition to the traditional enemy - the Roman Catholics - abated somewhat, and the latter was able to begin resuscitating the morale of their dwindling and demoralised flock. At the same time the resurgence of Buddhism in the Kandyan kingdom was to have a considerable impact. Although this was felt mainly among the Buddhists, the Hindus themselves were inspired by it to a revival of their religion after the long period of decline which had set in with the struggle against the Portuguese. Indeed the Tamil kingdom of the north had been a bastion of Hindu civilization and Tamil culture with a library in Nallūr and poets resident at the court. The rule of the Portuguese had been much more destructive in its impact on Hinduism in the north of the island than on Buddhism in the areas under their control even though they were harsh and intolerant enough in regard to the latter. The decline of Hinduism had continued under the VOC but in the late eighteenth century one saw at last the glimmer of a revival.

We need to return to the British. Under the first governor, Frederick North there was for a short time a reversion to some of the Dutch policies, especially with regard to the requirement that no native could be a *Mudaliyār* or hold high office under the government unless he was a member of the established church - Dutch or British.<sup>15</sup> North maintained an official connection with the Dutch Reformed Church as much because of strong religious convictions as well as for a very practical reason - the lack of clergy of his own religious persuasion, the Anglican church. At this stage it was considered impractical - for reasons of expense - to bring clergymen from Britain to Sri Lanka. But under North's successors the situation changed and clergymen from Britain began arriving in the island.<sup>16</sup>

The Dutch Reformed Church was soon deprived of state support (most of its clergymen refused to swear allegiance to the new rulers), and it lost the vast bulk of its flock who returned to their traditional faiths and to Roman Catholicism thus demonstrating the essential superficiality of conversions to Protestant Christianity under the Dutch. Tennent's assessment of the fate of the Dutch Reformed Church made in 1850 is as accurate as it was harsh. The Dutch Reformed Church, he asserted:

"contracted [its] missionary operations to the narrowest limits possible... and left behind a superstructure of Christianity prodigious... but so internally unsound.. and so unsubstantial that it has long since disappeared from the memory of the Natives of Cevlon."<sup>17</sup>

Once more there is the contrast with the fate of Roman Catholicism introduced by the Portuguese. In Sri Lanka it survived the persecution of the Dutch and the disdain of the British to emerge the largest Christian group, by far, in the island. When a survey was conducted by Governor Stewart Mackenzie in 1838 it was revealed that of a total of 74,787 Christians then attending public worship in Sri Lanka, no fewer than 72,870 identified themselves as Roman Catholics, statistics which provide testimony to the resilience of Roman Catholicism, and proof that its recovering from a desperately poor position under the Dutch was complete by the late 1830s.<sup>18</sup>

Just as the Dutch form of Protestant Christianity proved to be essentially ephemeral if not evanescent, so too was the fate of the Dutch language. Indeed, as Boxer has pointed out the "Dutch failed to implant their language firmly among the peoples of the East and West Indies [and only]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> K M de Silva, "Religion and the State in the Early Nineteenth Century," Chapter V in UCHC III, p 68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> ibid., and Social Policy and Missionary Organisations in Ceylon, 1840-1855, passim.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Sir James Emerson Tennent, Christianity in Ceylon, (London, 1850), p 71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> K M de Silva, Missionary Organisations and Social Policy, op.cit., p 30.

succeeded in doing so among the people of South Africa...<sup>"19</sup> Once more there is the contrast with Portuguese. A Portuguese dialect was spoken in Sri Lanka till well into the twentieth century. The Portuguese language had been indeed the *lingua franca* of Maritime Asia long after the expulsion of the Portuguese from Sri Lanka and most parts of the Indian sub-continent.

The Dutch had a much more lasting impact on the country through the legal systems and laws they introduced. The Roman Dutch law became firmly established as an integral part of Sri Lanka's legal system and its influence continues to the present day.<sup>20</sup>

Largely because they ruled the littoral for much longer than the Portuguese the Dutch left a more substantial legacy in architecture, and public In regard to the latter they shared with all colonial powers a works. proclivity to introduce to their colonies some of the more prominent features of public life in the metropolitan country, in this instance, the building of canals for transport. In fact, the very substantial achievement of the Dutch in canal-building in Sri Lanka completely overshadowed their work in irrigation, and these canals were among their most notable contributions to the island's economic development. We digress, at this point, for a brief look at this canal system. The first canal was the one from the Kälani river just north of the fort of Colombo through the Muturajavala swamp to Pamunugama. By the early eighteenth century this had been extended by way of lagoons, backwaters and rivers to the Maha-Oya on to Puttalam and 15 miles across the Puttalam lake to Kalpitiya. The development of inland river and canal communications over the low country south of the Kälani river was stepped up during the administration of van Imhoff.<sup>21</sup> A canal connecting Nädimāla and Kotte provided a continuous waterway from the Kälani to the Kalu ganga, while the latter was linked southwards to the Bentota ganga by a canal joining the Moran äla and the Polvatta ganga. The suburbs of Galle and Matara were also canalised to facilitate transport of agricultural produce and for floating timber down from the forests of the hinterland. Further south, a canal system of about 30 miles was based on the Polvatta ganga at Väligama and the Nilvalā gaňga which flows past the Mātara fort. The Colombo rendezvous of all canal traffic was Grandpass, the old ferry on the bend of the Kälani north of Colombo. Much the most valuable of these canals commercially was the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> C R Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, op.cit., p 267.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> See T Nadaraja, The Legal System of Ceylon in its Historical Setting, (Leiden, 1972).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> S A W Mottau, "Governor van Imhoff and his Scheme of Inland River Communication in the Colombo disāvany," UCR, V(1), 1947, pp 55-67.

San Sebastian from Grandpass through Bloemendhal by the base of Hulftsdorp hill to the Beira lake and thence to Colombo's waterfront.

The Dutch also developed a canal system north and south of Batticaloa in the east, a region which afforded an excellent combination of advantages for water navigation. There was a 31-mile stretch from Batticaloa to Samanthurai in the south, while in the north a canal linked Batticaloa with Vanderloos Bay 26 miles away, thus making possible a continuous line of 57 miles. Parts of these canal systems served also as flood-protection schemes: on the east coast between Batticaloa and Kalmunai; the Nilvalā gaňga in Mātara; and northern suburbs of Colombo. The Mulleriyāva tank in the lower reaches of the Kälani gaňga was an example of a combined floodprotection and irrigation scheme. These canals were not without some benefit to indigenous agriculture: the Mulleriyāva tank, for instance, was in part at least an irrigation project; and most of the others provided easier facilities for the transport of rice from areas which had a surplus to regions in need of it.

As with canal building, so in architecture, the Dutch introduced to Sri Lanka the styles and fashions in vogue in the metropolitan country. Their public architecture in Lanka was a more successful adaption of European modes to the requirements of a warm climate than that of the British during their rule in Sri Lanka.<sup>22</sup> This was seen to the best advantage in the simple and solid architecture they introduced in their forts and town planning. Of the castle-fort of Colombo few traces remain today. The ramparts of the old Dutch fort of Galle, and part of the wall which enclosed the town under the VOC, are still the dominant architectural features of this southern town. Also in the south is the star fort of Mātara<sup>23</sup> - its walls constructed in the shape of a six-pointed star - built by Baron van Eck in 1763-5. This structure is better preserved than most. A picturesque gateway still exists, its pediment decorated with the monogram of the VOC in an ornamental setting. Over the arch (carved in wood) are the arms of Baron van Eck. Till very recent times few monuments of Dutch rule in the island had weathered better than the ramparts, battlements and picturesque stone sentry-boxes of the castle-fort of Jaffna; it was also the most distinctive and most solid military structure of the Dutch surviving up to the very recent times. The destruction of this fort is one of the many unfortunate consequences of the current ethnic conflict in the island.

See particularly R L Brohier, "Ceylon-Dutch Domestic Art," Kalamanjari (1), 1950-1, pp 75-91 and Furniture of the Dutch Period in Ceylon, (Colombo, 1969), National Museum of Ceylon.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> W A Nelson, The Dutch Forts of Sri Lanka: The Military Monuments of Ceylon, (Edinburgh, 1984).

The churches built during the rule of the VOC are beautifully proportioned, yet simple in outline and plain if not severe in form. A closer look at them shows considerable variety in the ornamental fanlights over the lintels of doorways, and more important, the gables. The gable was an inspiration of the Renaissance, which the Dutch used in their colonies with every possible variation in detail. The Dutch architects relied on the gable to soften the overpowering sternness and solidity of the churches they built. The best examples of such gables may be seen to this day in churches they erected in their principal stations, Colombo (the Wolvendaal church), Galle and Jaffna. From the date of its dedication up to the end of Dutch rule in Sri Lanka the Wolvendaal church (built 1749-57) was their principal place of worship. The most distinctly Dutch building, with the best example of the Dutch gable, is the church built by the VOC in Galle. One other feature of these churches merits mention - the pulpit with its stair and hand-rail. The ribbons and tassels decorating the canopy over the pulpit are carved in wood with exceptional skill and sensitivity in style.

The Dutch introduced to the island a wealth of furniture in a variety of designs then popular in the metropolitan country, worked in ebony, *nädun* and calamander.<sup>24</sup> As Boxer points out "...several of the larger Dutch settlements, particularly the factories in Coromandel and Ceylon (Sri Lanka), also had the Ambachtskwartier where European and Asian artisans worked together under the supervision of Dutch foremen...<sup>25</sup> Devoid of the rococo embellishments inspired by Chinese decorative art which the Dutch copied, this was the oldest European furniture style to be introduced to the island.<sup>26</sup> Sinhalese and Tamil craftsman as well as those on the Coromandel coast produced "finely carved Indo-Dutch baroque furniture... superior to the best that the Company's slave labour could offer...<sup>27</sup> The Sinhalese and Tamil craftsmen also introduced traditional oriental motifs into carvings in this

<sup>24</sup> R L Brohier, "Ceylon-Dutch Domestic Art...," op.cit., and Furniture of the Dutch Period in Ceylon. See also the same author's "European chairs in Ceylon in the 17th and 18th centuries," JCBRAS, CLI(81), 1938.

<sup>25</sup> C R Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, op.cit., p 215; see also D A Kotelawele, "Furniture of the Dutch Period in Ceylon," a review of R L Brohier's book of the same title. The review was published in the Journal of the Vidyalankāra University of Ceylon, Vol. 1, 1972, pp 194-5.

<sup>26</sup> R L Brohier, Furniture of the Dutch Period in Ceylon, op.cit.

<sup>27</sup> C R Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, op.cit., p 214.

## furniture.28

There is, finally, the Dutch contribution to domestic architecture. In the larger towns under Dutch control the settlement within the walls sometimes overflowed out to the suburbs which came to be called the *pettah*. Clean and shaded streets were laid out in a rectangular grid and usually showed, in perspective, two long receding rows of slender pillars on either side. The pillars fronted deep verandahs or *stoeps* and one storied buildings with low-pitched roofs. A wooden trellis separated the verandahs from the road; the gardens of the houses were at the back. Through these houses the Dutch left a lasting impressions on the domestic architecture of the Sinhalese,<sup>29</sup> not to mention that of the British in Sri Lanka in the nineteenth century.

The success of the Kandyan resistance to repeated Portuguese and Dutch encroachment and the continued survival of the Kandyan kingdom as an independent state in the face of these threats engendered among the Kandyans a feeling of self-confidence bordering on a complacent assumption of invincibility. But the survival of the Kandyan kingdom as an independent state was due more to the inadequacy of the resources of the Portuguese and their successors - in the control of parts of the littoral and adjacent areas of the island - the Dutch, for the purpose of subjugating the Kandyan kingdom than to the inherent military strength of the latter. In the early years of their rule in Sri Lanka's coastal regions, the British showed no real anxiety to round off total control of the island. They were not seriously alarmed even when they discovered that the Kandyans, in pursuit of their traditional policy, were giving encouragement to the rebels during the rebellion of 1797. Indeed for a time British policy remained quiescent.

But an opportunity for interference in Kandyan affairs came sooner than might have been expected, and in Governor North there was an individual inclined, impulsively, to seek to exploit it. The opportunity came their way in August 1798 with the death of Rājādhi Rājasimha. Like his predecessor he died childless, but on this occasion, the succession was disputed, and offered countless opportunities for intrigue. The successor, Srī Vikrama Rājasimha, was the *protēgē* of the most powerful Kandyan aristocrat of the day, the First *Adigār*, Pilima Talavve.

What North had in mind originally was a scheme for the establishment of a controlling British interest in Kandy, and a policy of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> I owe this point to D A Kotelawele.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> This is seen in the many Dutch words absorbed into the Sinhalese language to describe parts of a house and the furniture in it.

"limited" interference in Kandyan affairs, on the lines of the subsidiary alliances which became the means, at that time, of establishing British paramountcy over large extents of the sub-continent of India.<sup>30</sup> But once the intrigue began North was no more in control of the situation than those in the Kandyan kingdom, principally Pilima Talavve, who sought to use the British for their own personal interests and against the king.<sup>31</sup> What began as an attempt at limited interference soon assumed the proportions of a purposeful bid to subjugate Kandy and to bring the whole island under British control. The first British expedition against Kandy which set out in 1803 suffered a humiliating defeat as had so many Portuguese and Dutch expeditions in the past. The principal cause of the disaster, however, was the inadequacy of North's planning for an expedition of this magnitude.

Within a dozen years of this successful resistance to invasion the Kandyan kingdom was ceded to the British in 1815. Largely because of divisions within the Kandyan kingdom the British were able to overthrow the Nāyakkar dynasty and establish their own control the whole island. The Kandyan monarchy, long established and cherished in popular sentiment was so easily and readily overthrown because of the alienation of all the conservative and influential elements in Kandyan society by the then ruler. Undoubtedly the major defeat inflicted on the British in 1803 had made Srī Vikrama Rājasimha dangerously complacent, and blind to the realities of the changed political situation in the island and in South Asia. "...One thing is certain, no foe be it English, Dutch, French or Kaffir, will conquer Lanka. Through the protection of the four gods, the Guardians of its Religion and the Merits of the kings, for five thousand years no foe will continue to reside here..."32 This proud affirmation of the Kandyan faith in their powers of survival was made in 1811, only four years, before the cession of the kingdom to the British.

The cession of the Kandyan kingdom to the British did not stem from some deep-rooted crisis of confidence in the institutional and ideological structure of Kandyan society but, from a political conflict confined mainly to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> On the system of subsidiary alliances in India at this time see K A Ballhatchet, "Relations with South and South East Asia" in the New Cambridge Modern History, Vol. IX, (Cambridge, 1965), pp 552-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> See particularly, P E Pieris, Tri Sinhala, the Last Phase, 1796-1815, 3rd ed., (Colombo, 1945).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Quoted in K Malalgoda, "Millenarialism in Relation to Buddhism," Comparative Studies in Society and History, XII(IV), 1970, p 433. This quotation is an extract from CO 54/42 enclosure in Wilson to Liverpool, 26 February 1812.

the king and the aristocracy. Because the British owed so much to the assistance rendered in this enterprise by the aristocracy and the *bhikkhus*, the Kandyan Convention of March 1815 which embodied the terms of the cession upheld many of their privileges and above all else promised support and maintenance to the Buddhist religion. One part of the political settlement was the expulsion and exile of Srī Vikrama Rājasimha and the Nāyakkar dynasty.

In his reminiscences published in 1830 a British officer in the Madras establishment of the English East India Company has the following description of the last king of Kandy in his days of exile in Vellore.

> "...He has many attendants, is liberally supplied, and permitted to go about the fort in the day time, with considerate state. Being an uncommonly large and corpulent man ...he has such an idea of the consequence attracted to corpulency, that he actually stuffs his garments in front with a large pillow, every time he goes out in an open palanquin. He is reported to have lost his kingdom by violence and oppression, his own subjects having joined the English in his overthrow; and even now, when a state prisoner, without a shadow of power, he at times gets into the most indecent and violent fits of rage, and makes the whole fort of Vellore resound with his voice, in terms of reproach or abuse of his attendants."<sup>33</sup>

The substitution of British control for Nāyakkar rule had the effect of reinforcing and deepening the commitment to the old society, and to the institutions, secular and religious associated with it. All strata of Sinhalese society in the old Kandyan kingdom were involved. Nostalgia for the traditional monarchical forces - the one element of the old system which the British quite deliberately eliminated - affected far more than simply the The passion for monarchical restoration re-kindled the old aristocracy. Kandyan traditions of resistance to the foreigner. And the sense of loss felt by the Kandyans at the removal of the monarchy became, within a very short time of the establishment of British rule, a powerful and combustible political force which needed only spark or two to be ignited. British administrators in the Kandyan provinces, although not deliberately insensitive to Kandyan feelings, nevertheless, gave adequate cause for dissatisfaction with the manner in which the undertakings given in 1815 were being carried out, and this eventually precipitated a major rebellion against British rule.

<sup>33</sup> 

Colonel James Welsh, Military Reminiscences, 2nd ed., (London, 1830), p 181.

The "Great Rebellion" of 1817-18<sup>34</sup> was much the most formidable insurrection during the whole period of British rule in Sri Lanka.<sup>35</sup> When after a long and ruthless campaign the resistance of the Kandyans was broken at last, the British were effectively the rulers of the whole of Sri Lanka. They had achieved what Kötte, the Portuguese and the Dutch had so signally failed to do and what Rājasimha of Sītāvaka had done for just a brief period -conquered the Kandyan kingdom. Thus the year 1818 was a truly significant defining moment in the history of Sri Lanka. From that point until 1947-8 there were, with the exception of the relatively minor disturbances of 1848, no episodes of violent opposition to colonial rule that had been such prominent features of Sri Lanka's history under the Portuguese and the Dutch. The century and a quarter (and slightly more) of British rule in Sri Lanka since 1815-18 is the longest period of undisturbed and unbroken control by a single power over the whole island for several centuries. The island's fortunes were linked to those of the most powerful imperial system of modern times, and a whole array of political, economic and social influences emanating from the metropolitan country had a powerful impact on the people of the country.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> On the rebellion of 1817-18, see P E Pieris, Sinhala and the Patriots, 1815-1818, (Colombo, 1950); and Colvin R de Silva, Ceylon under the British Occupation, 1795-1833, 2 Vols, 2nd ed., (Colombo, 1953) Vol.1, pp 168-200. The Kandyan campaigns of this period are reviewed in G Powell, The Kandyan Wars: The British Army in Ceylon, 1803-1818, (London, 1973).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> The rebellion which broke out in the maritime regions, close to Colombo, in 1797-1798 comes nearest to this in the intensity of opposition generated. It succeeded in its objectives, unlike the rebellion of 1817-1818 largely because these were limited to economic and administrative issues and not aimed at an expulsion of the British who had just replaced the Dutch in control of the littoral regions of the island.

# PART 6

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# Appendix I

# SRI LANKA'S RULERS A Chronological List

(Source, K M de Silva, A History of Sri Lanka, London, 1981, pp 569-72)

Bhuvanekabāhu V (King of Gampala in the	
early part of his reign)	1371-1408
Parākramabāhu VI	1411-66
Jayavīra Parākramabāhu	1466-9
Bhuvanekabāhu VI	1469-77
Paņdita Parākramabāhu VII	1477
Vīra Parākramabāhu VIII	1477-89
Dharma Parākramabāhu IX	1489-1513
Vijayabāhu VI	1513-21
Bhuvanekabāhu VII	1521-51
Dharmapāla	1551-97

# KINGS OF SĪTĀVAKA

Māyādunnē	1521-81
Rājasimha I	1581-93
Rājasūriya	1593-4

# KINGS OF THE UDARAȚA (THE KANDYAN KINGDOM)

Sēnāsammata Vikramabāhu	1469-1511
Jayavīra	1511-52
Karaliyaddē	1552-82
Vimaladharmasūriya I	1591-1604
Senarat	1604-35
Rājasimha II	1635-87
Vimaladharmasūriya II	1687-1707
Narendrasimha	1.07-39
Vijaya Rājasimha	1739-47
Kīrti Srī Rājasimha	1747-82
Rājādhirājasimha	1782-98
Srī Vikrama Rājasimha	1798-1815

### **KINGS OF JAFFNA**

The compilation of a reasonably accurate chronological list of the rulers of this northern kingdom presents enormous difficulties. Who ruled this kingdom and the regnal years of those identified as rulers are matters of scholarly controversy. From the last quarter of the fifteenth century up to the subjugation of the kingdom by the Portuguese we have more accurate information for the compilation of a list of rulers but even in this phase there are problems with regard to regnal dates.

Vijāya Kūlankaic Cakravartti Kulasekara cinkaiyārīyan Kulottunga cinkaiyārīyan Vikkirama cinkaiyārīyan Varotaya cinkaiyārīyan Marttanda cinkaiyārīyan Kunapūsana cinkaiyārīyan Virotaya cinkaiyārīyan Jayavīra cinkaiyārīyan Kunavīra cinkaiyārīyan Kanakacūriya cinkaiyārīyan Pararājasekaran Cankili I Puvirāja Pandāram Periyapillai Ethirimanna cinkam Cankili II

1478-1519 1519-61 1561-5, 1582-91 1565-82 1591-1616 1616-20

# **PORTUGUESE CAPTAINS-GENERAL**

1594
1594-1612
1612-14
1614-16
1616-18
1618-20
1620-3
1623-30
1630-1
1631-3
1633-5
1635-6
1636-8
1638-40
1640-5
1645-53

Francisco de Mello de Castro	1653-5
Antonio de Sousa Coutinho	1655-6
Antonio de Amaral de Menezes (Jaffna)	1656-8

# **DUTCH GOVERNORS**

Willem J Coster	1640
	1640-6
Jan Thyszoon (Payart)	1646-50
Jan Maatzuyker	1650-3
Jacob van Kittensteyn	1653-60
Adriaan van der Meijden (first term)	1660-1
Ryklof van Goens (first term)	1661-3
Adriaan van der Meijden (second term)	1663
Ryklof van Goens (second term)	1663-4
Jacob Hustaart	1664-75
Ryklof van Goens (third term)	1675-80
Ryklof van Goens, junr.	1680-92
Laurens Pyl	1693-7
Thomas van Rhee	1697-1703
Gerrit de Heere	1703-7
Cornelis Jan Simon	1707-16
Hendrik Becker	1716-23
Issac Augustin Rumpf	1723-6
Johannes Hertenberg	1726-9
Petrus Vuyst	1729-32
Stephanus Versluys	1729-52
Jacob Christiaan Pielat	1734-6
Diederik van Domburg	1736-9
Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff	1739-42
Willem Maurits Bruyninek	1742-3
Daniel Overbeek	1743-51
Julius V S van Gollenesse	1751-2
Gerard Jan Vreelandt	1752-7
Johan Gideon Loten	1757-61
Jan Schreuder	1762-5
L J Baron van Eck	1765-85
Iman Willem Falck	1785-94
Willem J van de Graaf	1783-94
J G van Anglebeek	1/94-0

# **BRITISH GOVERNORS**

The Hon. Frederick North

1798-1805

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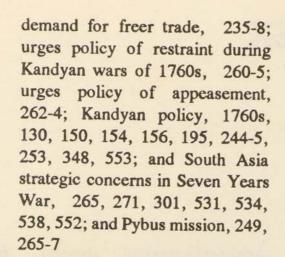
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