

CEYLON
UNDER WESTERN RULE

PART I
(1500 — 1796)

BY
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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Additional Chapters to Codrington's History of Ceylon (Macmillans)

Ceylon and World History — Book I (Wahids)

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(In collaboration with Mr. M. Ratnasabapathy)

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PREFACE

In 1952 I gave a series of Talks over the Schools Service of Radio Ceylon. These dealt with various aspects of Portuguese, Dutch and British rule in the island. In response to letters of appreciation and to requests for copies of the manuscripts I decided to publish them in the form of a brochure entitled "Ceylon under Western Rule." The matter had to be completely re-written, most chapters being enlarged, and an entirely new chapter on the Kandyan Kingdom added.

This booklet aims at giving the average Ceylonese some idea of the History of our island under Portuguese and Dutch rule. An attempt has been made to present the matter in very simple language and to see events in Ceylon not only from our point of view but also from the point of view of the Europeans who ruled parts of the island for over four hundred years. An effort has also been made to estimate their contribution to our civilisation as well as to examine the interaction of the vigorous Post-Renaissance civilisations of Western Europe on our own.

If this book furnishes the general reader with some idea of our Island's History under the impact of the West, and stimulates a greater interest in our past, the author will feel that his purpose has been achieved.

I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. M. Ratnasabapathy, B. A. Hons. (Lond.) for his perusal of the scripts before publication; to Miss Roshan Dadabhoy, B. A. (Cey.) for her valuable criticism on the chapters dealing with the Dutch in Ceylon and to Mr. C. M. Austin de Silva, B. A. (Lond.) for the time he so generously devoted to the elucidation of some doubtful points concerning the Religion and Literature of the Kandyan Period. Finally I cannot adequately express the debt of gratitude I owe to the past and present Directors of St. Benedict's College who helped and encouraged me in every way in the pursuit of my study of Ceylon History. In fairness to all the above mentioned I must, of course, state that they are in no way responsible for the shortcomings of this book.

L. H. HORACE PERERA.

11th February, 1954,
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Colombo 13.

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CHAPTER I

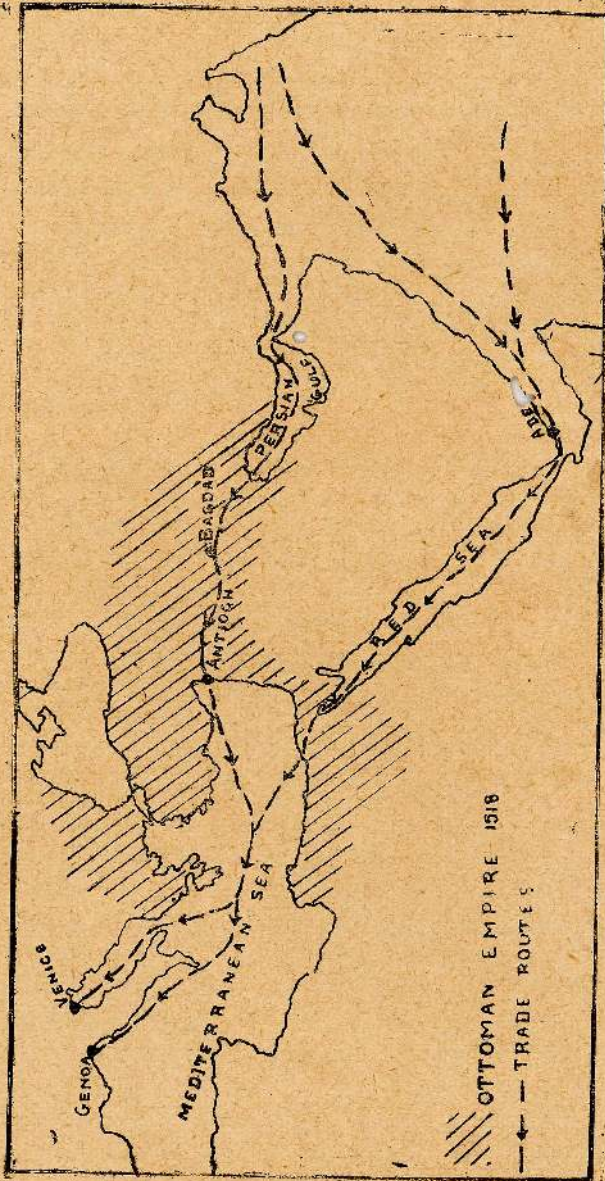
The Portuguese Come To The East

The civilisation of Ceylon upto 1500 was influenced by India. With the coming of the Portuguese a new influence is brought to bear on our civilisation. The Portuguese being a European people naturally brought a European civilisation to Ceylon and from 1500 onwards our island came under European influence. This Chapter will deal with two questions *First*—Why the Portuguese came to the East? *Second*—How they established their power in the Indian Ocean for a century and a half?

From very early times various articles of trade from the East such as incense, pearls, precious stones, spices, dyes, gold and silver, silks, cottons and carpets were taken to Europe. For a long time only the wealthy classes were able to purchase these articles. But with the Crusades large numbers of Europeans came to the "Near East", lived there and got accustomed to some of these articles, specially spices. Thus one time luxuries became necessaries and a great trade in spices developed between the East and the West. Map I shows the sea routes along which this trade was taken to Europe. One route lay through the Persian Gulf and the other through the Red Sea.

By the middle of the 14th century the Ottoman Turks had conquered the whole of Asia Minor. These Turkish conquests closed one door—viz., the Persian Gulf route—between the East and the West leaving only the Red Sea open to the trade. The Sultan of Egypt was delighted to see the entire spice trade passing through his territory as he levied duties on all articles of trade passing through his kingdom. Instead of being satisfied with the large revenue he was now getting he tried to increase it by raising the duties. The merchants too tried to increase their profits and the spices reached Europe at a very high price—a price which was far beyond the means of the average

Map I



TRADE ROUTE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

man. People in Europe realised that this had happened because there was now only one sea route between the East and the West. If only another route to the East could be discovered the price of spices could be considerably reduced.

Meanwhile in 1356 the Turks crossed the Dardenelles into Europe. They soon dominated the whole Balkan peninsula except Constantinople. Here was a threat to Christianity and European civilisation. European nations naturally looked for ways and means of meeting the Turkish peril. For a long time stories had been current in Europe of a powerful and wealthy Christian Kingdom in the East ruled by a Christian King called "Prester John". The story was nothing more than a traveller's tale but it was believed by the people of the time and they began to think that if only the Christians of Europe could join this Eastern Christian King the Turks who were now threatening Europe could be attacked in the flank and in the rear and thus the Turkish peril might be effectively dealt with.

Thus there were two strong reasons for discovering a new route to the East. One was to get spices and other articles of trade, the other was to contact that "Christian Kingdom" and launch a dual attack on the Turks. Hence it is not surprising that Vasco da Gama when he landed at Calicut is reported to have declared "we have come for Christians and spices". In fact Portuguese activity in the East was all along influenced by this curious mixture of religious and economic motives.

How is it that to Portugal went the honour of discovering the route round Africa to India? Upto this time the spice trade from the East, whether by way of the Persian Gulf or Red Sea, came through the Mediterranean to Europe. A glance at a map of the world will reveal that a new route could not be found through the Mediterranean. It had to be through the Atlantic. Portugal projected most into this sea and therefore it was geographically best suited among Western European countries to undertake this enterprise. Politically too Portugal was at an advantage. By the 15th century she had developed into a nation state while other countries were absorbed with

various domestic problems of their own. Portugal was a country, small, poor and sparsely populated. Its land was not suitable for large scale agriculture and her manufactures were negligible. It was on the sea that she was of some consequence. Her harbours were ports of call between the Mediterranean and the North European ports. Thus there was a naval and sea faring tradition among the Portuguese.

Other factors made it necessary for the Portuguese to build a fleet. The Moors, who in 700 A.D. had invaded and later swept through Spain and Portugal, had been driven out of Portugal by the end of the 14th century. From their strong holds such as Tangier and Ceuta on the North African coast the Moors had attacked and harassed Portuguese shipping. In order to deal with the piratical activity of the Moors the Portuguese were forced to build a fleet. Prince Henry, the Navigator, later decided that a more effective way to check the depredations of the Moorish pirates would be to attack and capture their strong holds in North-West Africa. Hence in 1415 Ceuta was captured. This was the first time that Europeans had conquered land overseas and with the conquest of Ceuta European expansion began. Once they were on the African coast the idea naturally suggested itself that by sailing southwards along the west coast of Africa they might be able to sail round that continent and come to the East.

Prince Henry, therefore, set up research stations at the Universities of Lisbon and Coimbra and an observatory at Sagres. All possible information was gathered; better and stronger ships were built; aids to navigation were introduced; devices to measure time and distance and to determine location and direction were discovered and the voyages of discovery begun. The progress, however, was very slow. Portugal was handicapped by a lack of capital, by limited man power, by the fact that they were sailing into unknown seas, by an un-friendly climate, and finally by the hostility of the native tribes along the African coast. It was only in 1486 that Bartholomew Diaz reached the southernmost part of Africa which was named Cape

of Good Hope by the King of Portugal as its discovery signified that their hope of sailing to the East was on the point of being realised.

Meanwhile Spanish attention had been directed to discovering a new route to the East across the Atlantic and in 1492 Columbus discovered the islands today known as the West-Indies. It now became necessary to adjust the claims of these two powers to lands outside Europe and so in 1493 Pope Alexander VI assigned to Spain all lands beyond a line 100 leagues west from the Azores while all lands east of that line were assigned to Portugal. This was altered to 270 leagues by the Treaty of Tordesillas in the following year. Roused by the success of Spain, Portugal now forged ahead with her enterprise and in 1498 Vasco da Gama crossed the Indian Ocean, landed at Calicut and called on its ruler, the Zamorin.

The Portuguese could not have come to India at a more favourable moment. North India was divided among a number of Muslim states. In the south was the Hindu Empire of Vijayanagar. On the western coast of south India there were a number of petty states such as Goa, Calicut, Cochin, Cananoor, Quilon etc. separated from the Vijayanagar Empire by a range of mountains called the Western Ghats. The Muslims and Vijayanagar in fear of each other dared not involve themselves in a struggle with the Portuguese. The states along the Malabar Coast were divided by petty rivalries and jealousies and could never combine against the foreigner. Thus the only people the Portuguese had to contend with in the Indian Ocean were the Mohamedan Arabs who saw the ancient enemies of their religion now coming to threaten their trade and commerce.

Vasco da Gama tried to get the trade by peaceful means but he had to face the hostility of the Arabs who set up the officials of the Zamorin's Court against him. In spite of these difficulties and in spite of the fact that he lost two-thirds of his men by the time he returned to Portugal the profits from that first expedition amounted to sixty times the expenditure incurred.

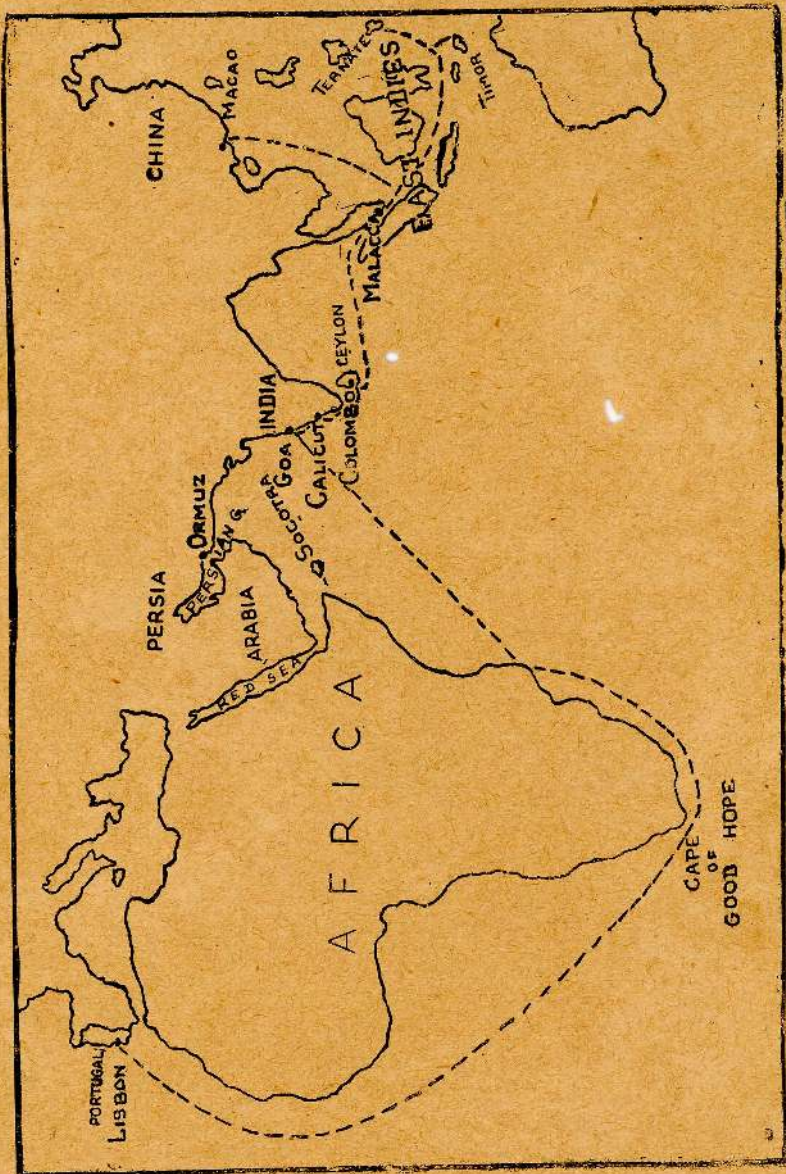
In 1500 A. D. a second expedition was sent under Pedro Alvarez Cabral. In the course of his voyage he was driven by a storm to the North Eastern coast of South America and he claimed that territory (later called Brazil) for the King of Portugal.

In 1505 Almeida set out for India determined to dominate the Indian Ocean and wrest the entire spice trade from the Arabs. He hoped, by effectively patrolling the Indian seas and attacking and destroying Muslim ships at sight to drive the Muslims out of the Indian Ocean. Thus he could obtain for the Portuguese the monopoly of the spice trade. Hence there resulted an incessant conflict on the sea, the brunt of which was borne by his gallant son Lourenzo de Almeida. Within three years this young man defeated the Zamorin's fleet, entered into a trade agreement with Dharma Parakramabahu of Kotte and suffered defeat and death in action against the united fleets of Egypt and the North Indian states. This defeat was avenged by the Battle of Diu in 1509 after which Portuguese naval supremacy in the Indian Ocean was more or less established.

Almeida's policy of naval patrols soon proved unsatisfactory. To begin with, it was not possible to patrol a wide expanse of water like the Indian Ocean. Secondly, the Portuguese were at a disadvantage in engaging in naval battles in the Indian Ocean thousands of miles away from their headquarters at Lisbon. Hence in 1505 Albuquerque was sent to study conditions on the spot and devise a new policy for securing the monopoly of the spice trade. Albuquerque's plan received the approval of the authorities in Lisbon. It was not entirely original as some aspects of it had been suggested earlier. He pointed out that the Portuguese must have a suitable headquarters in the Indian Ocean and in 1510 Goa was captured, and a naval and military base established there. Albuquerque also pointed out that patrols were ineffective. He drew attention to the fact that there were three narrow entrances to the Indian Ocean viz., the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Malacca. These should be guarded, he said, and thus Portuguese naval supremacy could

be secured and maintained. The Portuguese failed to get Aden but they got Socotra which gave them fairly effective control of the Red Sea. They captured Ormuz and thus sealed off the Persian Gulf. In 1511 they conquered and fortified Malacca, the key to the trade of the Indies and the Far East. With these three posts under their control the Indian Ocean was practically closed to the Muslims and it became more or less a Portuguese lake. On the basis of Albuquerque's policy Portuguese naval and commercial supremacy in the Indian Ocean lasted for close on a century and a half till a stronger European naval power, the Dutch, crept in early in the 17th century.





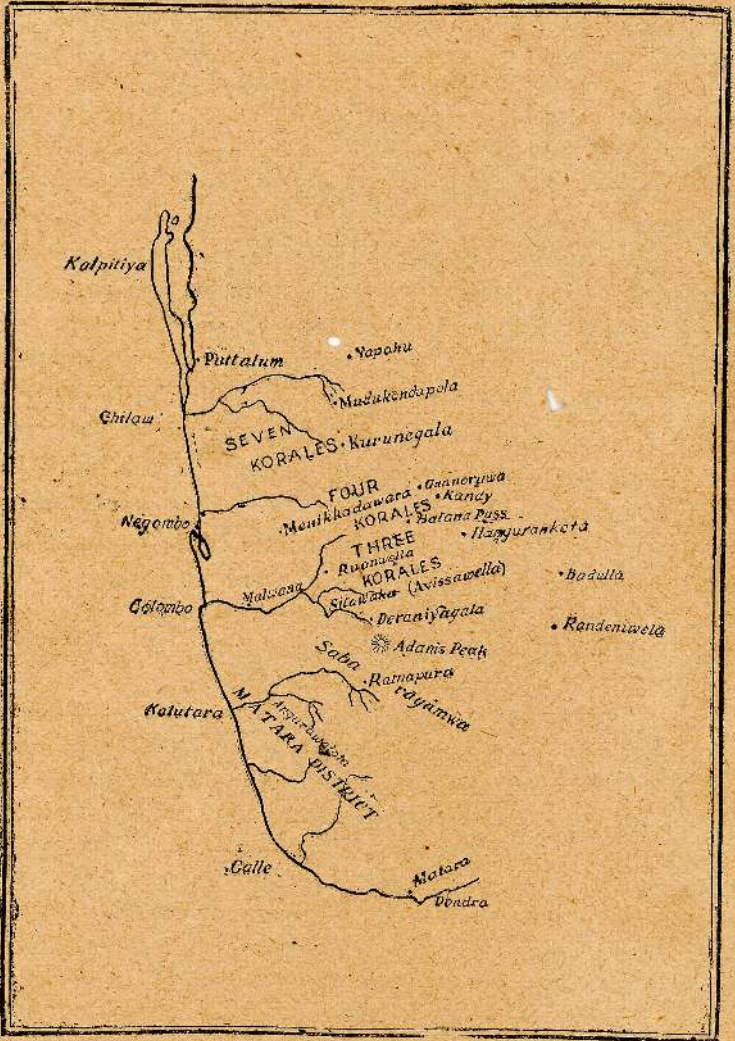
PORTUGUESE TRADING CENTRES IN THE EAST

CHAPTER II

The Portuguese in Kotte

It is true that a gale brought Lourenzo de Almeida's ship to Ceylon in 1505. It may, therefore, appear that the coming of the Portuguese to Ceylon was more or less accidental. At the moment it certainly was so but sooner or later the Portuguese would have come to our island. The Portuguese wanted the entire spice trade. They went to the Malabar coast because the chief spice there was pepper. There were two other important spice areas in the East. They were Ceylon, where grew the world's best cinnamon, and the Indies, where cloves, nutmeg and cardamons were cultivated. The Portuguese aimed at getting the produce of all these areas. It was just a matter of time before they did so.

It was explained in the last chapter how the divisions in India helped the Portuguese to establish their commercial supremacy in the Indian waters. When they came to Ceylon conditions in the island were as favourable. The island was divided into three main Kingdoms—the Kingdom of Jaffna in the North, the Kingdom of Kotte in the South-West and the Kingdom of Kandy stretching from the centre to the Eastern coast. The rivalry between the rulers of these Kingdoms was so great that they never combined against the foreigner. To make matters worse in 1521 Kotte, the most powerful of the three Kingdoms, was divided into Kotte proper, Raiygama and Sitawake (see page 16). Thus in 1521 there were five kingdoms in the island and the rivalries of their rulers only helped the Portuguese to establish themselves in the country.



KOTTE UNDER THE PORTUGUESE

In some respects Ceylon was similar to Portugal. Both were small countries, both were sparsely populated, and in both agriculture and manufactures were negligible. There were however important differences. While Ceylon split up into three, and later five, rival Kingdoms, and was divided between two races—Sinhalese and Tamil, Portugal was a country politically united and inhabited by a people almost all of whom belonged to the same race and spoke the same language.

Another important difference lay in the fact that the Portuguese had one of the best European navies of the time and her armies consisted of well trained and well equipped soldiers led by capable generals. On the other hand none of the Ceylonese Kingdoms had a fleet while the armies in the island consisted of untrained troops who were mostly peasants and who in time of war carried whatever weapons they had and marched into battle at the summons of the King. When these facts are taken into consideration it will be clear that the Portuguese forces were in many respects superior to the Sinhalese and one will normally expect the Portuguese to win any encounter in the island.

In spite of this superiority of theirs the Portuguese had no intention of conquering Kotte. Though they were involved in many wars in Kotte they fought none to secure that Kingdom for themselves and it is only as a result of the civil wars in that Kingdom that it finally passed into their hands in 1597.

Two instances will be sufficient to prove that the Portuguese had no intention of conquering Kotte for themselves. In 1505 when Lourenzo de Almeida came to Ceylon he entered into a trade agreement with the then King of Kotte, Dharma Parakramabahu. With his permission they built a factory (i.e. a store house) in Colombo. The Muslims who were now the greatest enemies of the Portuguese roused the Sinhalese to attack the factory. The Portuguese drove back the attack quite easily and then destroyed the factory as they thought that it was the cause of all the trouble. Thirteen years later, i.e. in 1518 the Portuguese erected a fortress in Colombo.

This too was attacked by the Sinhalese. Of course the attack was repelled and quite surprisingly the Portuguese demolished the fortress. It will have to be admitted that the destruction of the factory and the demolition of the fortress, specially after the attacks were repelled, was not the action of a people who intended to conquer the Kingdom.

Let us now see how the rivalry of native rulers in Kotte helped the Portuguese to establish themselves in that Kingdom. In 1521 Kotte was subdivided. This is how it happened. The King of Kotte in that year was Vijayabahu. He had three sons, Bhuvanaikabahu, Madduma Banda—later called Raiygam Bandara—and Mayadune. Vijayabahu tried to make an adopted son of doubtful parentage the heir to the throne of Kotte. The three brothers led by Mayadune rose against the Father and got him assassinated. Then not being able to agree as to who should be King they divided the Kingdom among themselves. Bhuvanaikabahu got the portion called Kotte, Raiygam Bandara got Raiygama and Mayadune became King of Sitawake (see page 16.)

Mayadune was not satisfied with the portion of Kotte which he received. His ambition was to be King of the whole island and he knew that to achieve that position he should first make himself King of the whole of Kotte—for Kotte was the most powerful Kingdom. Hence in 1527 he attacked Bhuvanaikabahu. He knew very well that his brother would seek Portuguese help and that he would never be able to defeat him as long as the Portuguese were his brother's allies. He also knew that the Portuguese would get reinforcements from Goa. Hence he sought the help of the Zamorin of Calicut who had already been hostile to the Portuguese. The Zamorin had a fleet and Mayadune wanted him to use it to prevent the Portuguese bringing reinforcements to Ceylon from Goa. The Zamorin was not only prepared to assist Mayadune with his fleet but he was also willing to send troops to fight in Mayadune's army. Thus in the war which broke out in Kotte in 1527 and lasted till 1539 Mayadune was assisted by the Zamorin, while the Portuguese helped Bhuvanaikabahu.

Mayadune knew very well that the Portuguese forces were superior to those of the Sinhalese. Hence he was not very anxious to fight them. His only chance of annexing Kotte was to conquer the Kingdom before Portuguese reinforcements arrived. This he was never able to do, as the Zamorin's fleet was never strong enough to hold up Portuguese reinforcements. As soon as Portuguese troops landed in Kotte Mayadune withdrew to his Kingdom of Sitawake. Finally when in 1539 the Portuguese pursued him and took the war into his own Kingdom, Mayadune sued for peace. The Portuguese were ready to make peace with him on condition he surrendered the Zamorin's chiefs who were now in his army. Mayadune knowing fully well that it was useless fighting against the Portuguese basely got the Zamorin's chiefs murdered and sent their heads to the Portuguese. Thus he came to terms with them but he lost for ever whatever help the Zamorin could give him. Meanwhile Raiygam Bandara had died and Mayadune seized his Kingdom which he added on to the Kingdom of Sitawake. (see page 16.)

According to the Sinhalese law of succession a King was normally succeeded by his brother. Hence as Raiygam Bandara was dead, Mayadune was heir to the throne of Kotte. Bhuvanaikabahu was very fond of his grandson, Dharmapala, and wanted the throne to pass to him and not to Mayadune. The Portuguese too were not very happy at the prospect of Mayadune succeeding to the throne. They had fought against him so far and they knew that he would not give them the cinnamon of Kotte if he became King. Hence they were willing to join Bhuvanaikabahu in any scheme for keeping Mayadune off the throne. Bhuvanaikabahu knew that Mayadune was a very capable general and that unless he secured Portuguese help for Dharmapala. Mayadune could easily attack Kotte after his death, defeat Dharmapala and seize the throne. Hence in 1542 he sent a golden image of Dharmapala to Portugal to be crowned King of Kotte by the King of Portugal himself. To please the King he asked for

Christian missionaries to be sent to preach Christianity in Ceylon. The King of Portugal fell in with the scheme. He saw here an excellent opportunity not only for obtaining cinnamon from Kotte but also for spreading Christianity in that Kingdom. John III of Portugal was, therefore, quite willing to accede to Bhuvanaikabahu's request. The image was duly crowned with all royal pomp and ceremony and Christian missionaries were sent to Ceylon.

In 1551 Bhuvanaikabahu died. Normally Mayadune should have succeeded to the throne and the civil war in Kotte would have come to an end. But in accordance with the plot between Bhuvanaikabahu and the Portuguese to keep Mayadune off the throne Dharmapala became King. Mayadune was not going to be deprived of his legitimate right to the throne so easily and consequently Civil War broke out in Kotte again.

Dharmapala, however, was too young to rule and so his Father, Vidiye Bandara, was appointed Regent of Kotte. Vidiye Bandara adopted a hostile attitude towards the Portuguese for more than one reason. To begin with the Portuguese Viceroy who came to investigate into the murder of Bhuvanaikabahu was more anxious to seize the late King's treasures than to find out who was guilty. Moreover Vidiye was anxious to be King and he knew that the Portuguese would not allow him to do so as they had undertaken to maintain Dharmapala on the throne. He, therefore, decided to annoy and harass them. He refused them the cinnamon trade, and he destroyed churches and persecuted Christians. The Portuguese had come for "Christians and spices". They were prepared to support any King who gave them both. They were also ready to go to war with anyone who tried to interfere with their trade or missionary activity. Hence war broke out between the Portuguese and the Regent of Kotte. What may appear surprising is that Mayadune joined the Portuguese in their war against Vidiye Bandara. This is not difficult to understand. Mayadune quite rightly considered himself the legitimate heir

to the throne of Kotte and was quite ready to join the Portuguese in their war against Vidiye Bandara who was now trying to seize the throne for himself. Vidiye Bandara was defeated quite easily as the combined forces of the Portuguese and Mayadune proved too strong. The Portuguese now placed Dharmapala on the throne.

RISE AND FALL OF SITAWAKE

Common opposition to Vidiye had brought the Portuguese and Mayadune together. With his defeat however the allies fell out once more. Mayadune and his son Rajasinghe now made repeated attacks on Kotte and the Portuguese had to defend Dharmapala who had become a Catholic in 1557. At this particular moment the Portuguese were heavily involved in war in India too. Hence they found it difficult to defend two fortresses—Colombo and Kotte—in Ceylon. So in 1565 they abandoned Kotte and taking Dharmapala with them they withdrew to Colombo. Mayadune straightaway annexed the whole of Kotte except Colombo and the coastal strip. This constitutes the second stage in the expansion of Sitawake, which now included Raiygama and the major portion of Kotte. Mayadune and Rajasinghe now pitted their strength against Colombo but they could not dislodge the Portuguese from there. After Mayadune's death his son, Rajasinghe, continued to attack Colombo and failing to capture it turned to conquer Kandy. In 1582 he marched an army into the highlands, defeated Karaliadde Bandara, King of Kandy, and added that whole Kingdom to Sitawake. The annexation of Kandy was the third and final stage in the expansion of Sitawake. It was now the largest Kingdom in the island and Rajasinghe was the most powerful King. (see map page 16.)

We shall now study how this mighty Kingdom of Sitawake declined and how the former Kingdom of Kotte was restored. Karaliadde Bandara whom Rajasinghe defeated in Kandy fled to the Portuguese taking with him his nephew (Yamasinha) and his daughter. After Karaliadde Bandara's death these children were baptised under the names of Don Philip and Dona Catherina and brought up as Catholics.

Meanwhile Rajasinghe was attacking Colombo with the forces of Sitawake, Raiygama, Kotte and Kandy. But he found it impossible to dislodge the Portuguese from their fortress. He now became very bitter about his repeated failures and began to tyrannise over his people. There were a number of revolts against him both in the highlands and in the low country. The Kandyan rebels invited Don Philip, (Yamasinha)



RISE OF SITAWAKE

the lawful heir to the Kandyan throne, to be their ruler and appealed to the Portuguese for help. The Portuguese, realising that the accession of Don Philip to the Kandyan throne would mean "Christians and spices" for them in Kandy, were only too ready to help the rebels. Rajasinghe was defeated, Kandy separated from Sitawake and placed under Don Philip. Thus the first blow was struck at the mighty Kingdom of Sitawake. It now consisted of Sitawake, Raiygama and the major part of Kotte. In 1592 Rajasinghe died leaving no direct heir to the throne of Sitawake. Civil war followed between various claimants to the throne. The Portuguese profiting by these troubles, defeated the rival claimants and brought Sitawake, Raiygama and the rest of Kotte under Don Juan. Thus the Kingdom of Kotte was restored to its former size and the Kingdom of Sitawake ceased to exist.

THE DONATION OF DHARMAPALA

Don Juan Dharmapala, though King of Kotte, was really a puppet in the hands of the Portuguese. He had no children and so he drew up a will leaving his Kingdom to the King of Portugal. This will is referred to as the Donation of Dharmapala. In 1597 Dharmapala died and, in accordance with the Donation, Kotte passed under the King of Portugal. Hence it will be seen that the Portuguese became the masters of Kotte although they did not fight a single battle to secure it for themselves. It is true that they fought quite a number of wars in Kotte but they always fought on behalf of a King from whom they expected to get "Christians and spices" easily. They fought for Bhuvanaikabahu against Mayadune, they fought for Dharmapala against Vidiye Bandara, for Dharmapala against Mayadune and finally for Dharmapala against Rajasinghe. It was the rivalry of the native rulers that helped the Portuguese to establish themselves in Kotte till in 1597 the Kingdom passed under their rule.

CHAPTER III

The Portuguese in Jaffna

In the last chapter we studied Portuguese activity in Kotte and saw how largely as a result of the rivalry of native leaders the Kingdom of Kotte passed under Portuguese rule. We shall now deal with the Portuguese in Jaffna. To a large extent the sad story of Kotte is repeated in Jaffna too. Rivalry of native leaders brought in the Portuguese and helped them to obtain control over the Kingdom.

Although we are dealing separately with Portuguese activities in Kotte, Jaffna and Kandy these events did not take place in succession. While the Portuguese were in Kotte they also had dealings with Kandy and Jaffna. If Portuguese activities in the three kingdoms are separated here it is purely for the sake of convenience.

When the Portuguese came to Ceylon the King of Jaffna was a person called Pararasasekeram. In 1519 he was assassinated by a man called Sankili who then seized the throne. The lawful heir, like all other Kings in Ceylon at this time who found themselves in difficulties, fled to the Portuguese and asked for assistance to get back his throne. The Portuguese were only too willing to help him provided he paid tribute and gave them permission to spread Catholicism in his Kingdom. This he was willing to do and in 1543 a Portuguese army was sent to Jaffna. Sankili, like Mayadune, was too shrewd to fight the Portuguese as he had heard of their power. Hence he met the Portuguese Captain and promised to pay tribute to Portugal and to allow the Portuguese to spread Catholicism in his country. This satisfied the General. The lawful heir was abandoned and Sankili was allowed to remain on the throne. Sankili paid tribute while Portuguese Missionaries began to preach and convert the people in Jaffna to Catholicism.

As the conversions increased Sankili got alarmed. He began to realise that the converts to Catholicism might prefer Portuguese rule in Jaffna; that if the Portuguese ever attacked him the converts would support them and thus he began to feel that the converts constituted a potential danger to his position as king. Taking advantage of the fact that the Portuguese were busy in Kotte with the civil wars there he sent an army to Mannar where a large number had become Christians and put to death all those who refused to return to Hinduism. It is said that about 600 Christians were massacred on that occasion.

It has already been emphasised that the Portuguese came to the East for Christians as well as for spices; that they supported any king who gave them both and were prepared to go to war with any ruler who interfered with their trade or missionary activity. They now felt that not only must Sankili and his successors be taught that they could not persecute Christians and get away with it, but that prospective converts must also be assured of Portuguese protection. Hence a Portuguese army was sent to Jaffna but instead of punishing the King the Captain and soldiers went to plunder a treasure ship which they heard had been wrecked on the coast of Jaffna. Thus Sankili escaped for the time.

The Portuguese were too busy with the wars in India and in Kotte to pay any attention to Jaffna till 1560. In that year an expedition was sent under Constantine de Braganza. Sankili hearing of the proposed Portuguese invasion of his kingdom fled to India where he was pursued by the Portuguese. He sued for peace and was allowed to remain on the throne after he had accepted the King of Portugal as his overlord, promised faithfully to pay tribute and undertook not to interfere with Portuguese missionary activity. Although the Portuguese allowed him to remain on the throne they did not trust him very much and so they left a Portuguese garrison in Jaffna. The behaviour of these soldiers soon turned the people

of Jaffna against them. The soldiers went about destroying Hindu Temples, robbing them of their wealth and committing all sorts of crimes against the people themselves. The people roused by all these crimes attacked the garrison and forced the soldiers to flee to Mannar.

After this the political history of Jaffna becomes rather confused. Sankili turned out to be a cruel tyrant and was deposed by the people who placed Kasi Naynar on the throne. He proved to be no better and the people appealed to the Portuguese to free them from this new tyrant. The Portuguese came to Jaffna, got Kasi Naynar assassinated and raised Periya Pulle to the throne. Thus once more the Portuguese were called upon to interfere in the politics of Jaffna and this time they even became "king makers" in the sense that they raised people to the throne. Periya Pulle owed his throne to the Portuguese and so was loyal to them. He paid tribute and allowed the missionaries to spread Catholicism in the country. A person called Puviraja Pandaram now seized the throne and refused to submit to the Portuguese or to allow missionaries to spread Christianity in the kingdom. The Portuguese attacked him in 1591 and put him to death. Then at Nallur the general Furtado summoned the chief men of Jaffna. This meeting is referred to as the Convention of Nallur 1591. He proposed to the chiefs that they should accept the King of Portugal as their King. He in turn promised to maintain the laws and customs of the people. These terms were accepted and the King of Portugal was proclaimed the King of Jaffna with Hendaramana Sinha, son of Periya Pulle, as the local ruler. After Periya Pulle's death, civil war broke out in Jaffna over rival claimants to the post of Regent. The Portuguese did not hesitate to take advantage of this to place another Sankili on the throne. Once safely on the throne Sankili, like the former king of the same name, violated his promises of "tribute and Christians" and so in 1618 Constantine de Sa, the Captain General, sent Phillip de Oliveyra who brought Sankili a prisoner to Colombo.

Constantine de Sa finding the rivalry of the chiefs as great as their opposition to the Portuguese, decided to put an end to the troubled politics of Jaffna by bringing the kingdom directly under Portuguese rule. Jaffna was exhausted by almost a century of political rivalry and Portuguese invasions and was not in a position to resist. Thus in 1621 Jaffna was brought under Portuguese rule with Phillip de Oliveyra as its first Captain Major. Political rivalry in Jaffna had brought in the Portuguese. The tyranny of kings like Sankili and Kasi Naynar forced the people to appeal to the Portuguese. Finding the country incapable of resistance owing to a succession of political troubles the Portuguese occupied it and brought it under their direct rule.

CHAPTER IV

The Portuguese in Kandy

While all these events were taking place in Kotte and Jaffna the Portuguese had dealings with the kingdom of Kandy too. Although they had come to Ceylon in 1505 their relations with Kandy began very much later. This may appear surprising as not only was there a good deal of cinnamon there but Kandy was also a suitable field for missionary activity. The first fifteen years of Portuguese dealings with Kotte was taken up with overcoming the opposition of the Muslims and with establishing their relations with the king on a sound footing. In 1521 took place the partition of Kotte followed in 1527 with the war between Mayadune and Bhuvanaikabahu. As the Portuguese were involved in this war they could not pay any attention to Kandy for some time. When Kotte was partitioned in 1521 the King of Kandy was one Vikramabahu. The internal political situation of Kandy was peaceful and he had no need for Portuguese assistance till after 1539.

In that year Mayadune had come to terms with the Portuguese by surrendering to them the heads of the Zamorin's chiefs. Realising that he was too weak now to attack Bhuvanaikabahu who was strongly supported by the Portuguese, yet hoping some day to be King of the whole island Mayadune turned on Kandy. In this attack on Kandy Bhuvanaikabahu decided to join his brother. It is surprising that Bhuvanaikabahu who had so long been attacked by Mayadune should agree to join him in an attack on Kandy. It is difficult to give a reason for this. Mayadune hoping to conquer Kandy probably thought that he could do so more easily with the help of Bhuvanaikabahu and somehow or other persuaded the brother whom he had attacked four times in twelve years to join him.

Whatever the reason, Vikramabahu realised that the combined forces of Mayadune and Bhuvanaikabahu would prove too strong for him. Hence as other kings in similar circumstances had done he too appealed to the Portuguese for help. He even went to the extent of promising to become a Christian, in addition to giving them the cinnamon of Kandy and permission to spread Catholicism in his kingdom. The Portuguese, were anxious not to lose such an excellent opportunity of getting "Christians and Spices" in the highlands, specially as the king's conversion would lead to many conversions among the people. They readily agreed to send help but at the moment they were engaged in wars outside Ceylon. Hence there was a delay and when finally a Portuguese expedition reached Kandy it was a paltry force of fifty men, but it was too late. Vikramabahu had waited in vain for Portuguese help and as it did not arrive in time he had been forced to come to terms with the invaders. He paid the ransom Mayadune demanded and promised his daughter as bride to Bhuvanaikabahu's grandson Dharmapala. After this, the Portuguese, as we have seen, were far too involved in the politics of Kotte and Jaffna to pay any attention to Kandy. They had a fine opportunity of getting Christians and spices there but had missed it.

The next opportunity came after 1582. In that year Rajasinghe, Mayadune's son, had conquered Kandy forcing the king, Karaliadde Bandara to flee to the Portuguese taking with him his nephew and daughter. These children had been baptised as Don Philip and Dona Catherina and were brought up as Catholics. Rajasinghe not being of the Kandyan royal line met with much opposition in Kandy. Instead of trying to conciliate the chiefs and priests of the highlands he decided to crush all opposition and soon became an insufferable tyrant. The Kandyans rose in revolt and invited Don Philip to claim his throne. They also appealed to the Portuguese for help. Urged on by a man called Konnappu Bandara who had become a Catholic under the rather high sounding name of Don Juan

of Austria the Portuguese marched into Kandy. The Kandyan rebels flocked to their standard. Rajasinghe was easily defeated and Don Philip was placed on the throne,

The Kandyans were now quite satisfied as a scion of their royal line was once again on the throne. So were the Portuguese as a Catholic King on the throne meant "Christians and Spices" for them quite easily in Kandy. One man, however, was dissatisfied. He was Don Juan of Austria. He hoped to be king and was very disappointed at the turn of events but he kept his disappointment to himself and secretly canvassed support among the people against the Portuguese. Don Philip died under mysterious circumstances and was succeeded by his son. It was thought that he had been poisoned by Don Juan of Austria. Don Juan of Austria now seized the throne and with the help of the people he had won over forced the Portuguese to withdraw from Kandy. He had no legitimate claim to the Kandyan throne. Hence he tried to make himself as acceptable as possible to the Kandyans. He gave up his foreign name and proclaimed himself as King Vimala Dharma Suriya. He also abandoned Catholicism and returned to Buddhism.

This action of Don Juan of Austria appeared to put an end to all Portuguese dreams of "Christians and Spices" in Kandy. Moreover, from their point of view Vimala Dharma Suriya was "an apostate" and could not be allowed to remain on the throne as his apostacy would be a bad example to the Kandyans. Hence the Portuguese decided to remove him and they marched an army into Kandy taking with them Dona Catherina as the lawful heir. To the Kandyans Dona Catherina was the daughter of Karaliadde Bandara, their former King. Hence they flocked in large numbers to her standard. Vimala Dharma Suriya was defeated quite easily and he escaped into hiding. Dona Catherina was then proclaimed Queen and Portuguese hopes of "Christians and Spices" in Kandy were very bright.

Now the Portuguese made a fatal mistake. The Kandyans soon found that their Queen was a mere puppet in the hands of the Portuguese. They were more upset when they heard that the Portuguese intended marrying her to one of their noblemen. The Kandyans favoured Jayavira Bandara as a suitable husband for their Queen. When Jayavira Bandara realised that the Portuguese had no intention of allowing him to marry the Queen he readily fell in with a scheme of Vimala Dharma Suriya for betraying the Portuguese to him. The Portuguese got wind of this and they put Jayavira Bandara to death for what they called treachery. The Kandyans now began to go over to Vimala Dharma Suriya who came out of hiding, attacked the Portuguese and defeated them. Dona Catherina was captured and Vimala Dharma Suriya married her thus making himself the lawful King of Kandy.

[Note:—This chapter has been called "The Portuguese in Kandy". So far they had gone to Kandy to support the Kandyan King or some claimant to the throne who would give them "Christians and Spices". After this they decided to conquer Kandy and the rest of their dealings with that kingdom will be the subject of the next chapter called "The Portuguese against Kandy."]



CHAPTER V

The Portuguese against Kandy

In the last chapter we studied Portuguese activities in Kandy. We saw that so far the Portuguese had gone to Kandy either to help a King against invasion, to liberate a people from a tyrant or to place a lawful heir on the throne. Of course they took all this trouble because they hoped to get "Christians and spices" in Kandy. They were successful till they turned the Kandyan people against them by attempting to control the Queen, Dona Catherina, and by putting to death Jayavira Bandara, the man whom the Kandyans favoured as a suitable husband for their Queen.

We also learnt of a very colourful personage called Konnappu Bandara who had changed his name once to Don Juan of Austria and changed it a second time to Vimala Dharma Suriya. We saw how he had come out of hiding and led the dissatisfied Kandyans against the Portuguese, defeating them at Gannoruwa. We also saw how he captured Dona Catherina and married her thus making himself the lawful King of Kandy.

So far the Portuguese had no intention of conquering territory in Ceylon. We saw in earlier chapters that Kotte had passed under their rule and that they annexed Jaffna chiefly because its troubled politics was proving a nuisance to them. Now we find the Portuguese deciding to conquer Kandy. In making this decision they were deviating from their usual policy of "no territorial conquest" and, therefore, they must have had some special reasons for doing so.

Let us examine the reasons the Portuguese had for deciding to conquer Kandy when Vimala Dharma Suriya was on the throne. To begin with they were opposed to Vimala Dharma Suriya. His accession to the throne was a blow to their hopes of

getting "Christians and Spices" in Kandy. Moreover in their eyes he was an apostate and they felt that his apostacy would have a bad effect on their missionary activity in that the converts might follow his example and return to Buddhism. They also had high hopes of victory. Their forces were far superior in training, experience and equipment to the Ceylonese troops. They had won most of the wars in Kotte and Jaffna and they saw no reason why they should not be successful in a war against Kandy. Moreover Kotte and Jaffna had passed under their rule so easily that they expected the annexation of Kandy to be carried out without much difficulty. They had also begun to realise that Ceylon was a more suitable place for their headquarters than Goa. A glance at any map of the lands round the Indian Ocean will reveal that Ceylon is more or less in the centre and that from Ceylon it is quite easy to control the whole Indian Ocean. If however the Island was to be their headquarters it was necessary for the whole of Ceylon to be under their rule. It would have been very unwise for the Portuguese to make Ceylon their headquarters as long as there was in the centre a kingdom whose King was hostile to them. Therefore, for commercial, religious and strategic reasons the conquest of Kandy was necessary. The possibility of an easy victory merely strengthened the decision to attack it and bring it under their rule. Once they decided to conquer Kandy they referred to Ceylon as "Conquista", (i.e.: a land which they intended to conquer) and after that every Portuguese Captain General sent to Ceylon was called a "Conquistador" (which meant—conqueror.)

PORTUGUESE INVASIONS OF KANDY.

We shall now study briefly some of the major Portuguese expeditions to Kandy. Already in 1594, **Pero Lopes de Souza** had been appointed a conquistador and sent to Kandy to remove the apostate from the throne and to proclaim Dona Catherine the Queen of that Kingdom. We saw how this expedition was successful, but how the Portuguese antagonised the Kandians and how they were attacked by Vimala Dharma

Suriya and defeated. The defeat of the Portuguese at Gannoruwa was a severe blow to their military prestige and the Viceroy was determined to conquer Kandy. In addition to the reasons already given it was now thought necessary to restore their military reputation. Moreover Vimala Dharma Suriya had proclaimed himself the King of the Island. From the Portuguese point of view he appeared to be contesting the validity of the Donation of Dharmapala. For, according to that will, the King of Portugal was the King of Kotte, and naturally they had to assert his claims over that Kingdom. Finally the people of Kotte were beginning to look upon Vimala Dharma Suriya as their King and at his instigation they were rising in revolt against the Portuguese. It will be seen, therefore, that there were now additional reasons for the Portuguese determination to conquer Kandy for the King of Kandy was becoming a danger to their rule even in Kotte. Hence in 1602, **Jeronimo de Azavedo** marched an army into Kandy. He captured Ganetenna and advanced on Balane. There he hatched a plot to assassinate the King, when this failed he marched back to Colombo.

In 1602 an event took place which made the Portuguese realise that an independent kingdom of Kandy was definitely dangerous to Portuguese rule in Ceylon. In this year two Dutch envoys visited the King. The Dutch had come to the East for the spice trade and the visit of the Dutch to Kandy alarmed the Portuguese. They knew very well that some day or other the Dutch would attack them from the sea. When they did so Kandy would assist them by attacking the Portuguese from behind. Thus attacked by the Dutch and Kandy the Portuguese felt they would have a very poor chance of defending themselves and they would be expelled from the Island. Hence the determination of the Portuguese to conquer Kandy only increased. Therefore, in 1603, **Azavedo** once more marched into Kandy. Balane was captured and the general prepared for an attack on the capital itself. It looked as if the Portuguese would succeed in conquering the kingdom. Then

quite suddenly the Sinhalese troops in the Portuguese army deserted and went over to the King. Azavedo was forced to retreat and was attacked by the Kandyans all along the route. He however managed to cut his way back to Kotte.

Meanwhile the King had been trying his best to get Dutch help to expel the Portuguese from Ceylon. One of the Dutch envoys, Sebald de Weert, was murdered in a drunken brawl in Kandy and the King now felt that his chances of getting Dutch help were remote, so he tried to come to terms with the Portuguese. He had already shown himself a man who was prepared to change his religion to gain his own ends and now he sent word to the Viceroy that he was prepared to become a Christian once more and to accept the overlordship of the King of Portugal if his position on the Kandyan throne was guaranteed by the Portuguese. The Viceroy, however, was not prepared to come to terms with the apostate and was more determined than ever to conquer Kandy. Vimala Dharma Suriya died a year later in 1604 and was succeeded by his brother, Senarat. In spite of Senerat's desire for peace, Azavedo marched into Kandy in 1611. He sacked and burnt the city and then withdrew to Balane. After this Senarat and the Portuguese came to terms.

In 1618, came **Constantine de Sa** as Captain-General. He was easily the most capable officer the Portuguese sent to Ceylon. He restored order in Kotte, won the goodwill of the people by treating them and the Portuguese on an equal basis, and brought Jaffna directly under Portuguese rule.

Constantine de Sa now began to take precautions to prevent the Dutch from giving any help to Kandy. He strengthened the existing fortresses, and constructed new ones at Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Kalpitiya. These were in the Kandyan Kingdom. The King of Kandy took offence at this action and attacked Kotte in 1627. De Sa was able to beat back the attack and in 1630 he marched into Kandy. Badulla was conquered and sacked and while he was preparing for the attack on Kandy four of his Mudaliyars and 2000 of the

deserted and joined Kandy. De Sa was forced to retreat; the Portuguese were surrounded by hoards of Kandyans; a grim battle ensued in which De Sa was killed and the Portuguese army completely routed. After this in 1633 Senarat and the Portuguese came to terms again. Two years later Senarat died and was succeeded by his son Rajasinghe. The Portuguese now made their last attempt to conquer Kandy and in 1636 *Diogo de Mello* marched an army into Kandy. This expedition met with the same fate. The Sinhalese troops deserted and at Gannoruwa his army was surrounded and cut to pieces. After this the Portuguese were too busy fighting the Dutch to pay any more attention to Kandy. Thus several expeditions to the highlands had been made and all, but one met with disaster.

We shall now discuss how the Portuguese whose armed forces were far superior to those of the Sinhalese were defeated over and over again in Kandy.

Failure to conquer Kandy

Loyalty of the Kandyans

It has already been made clear that the early Portuguese successes in Kandy were due to the support they received from the Kandyans themselves. But as explained earlier, by 1594 they had antagonised the people of the highlands and after this whenever they marched into Kandy they had the people against them. The loyalty of the Kandyans was an important factor in these Kandyan wars. Vimala Dharma Suriya (alias Konappu Bandara) had no legitimate claim to the Kandyan throne and so when Pero Lopez de Souza marched into Kandy in 1594, taking with him Dona Catherina, the lawful queen, the majority of the Kandyans flocked to her standard. Supported by large numbers of Kandyans the Portuguese were able to command Kandyan help against a hated tyrant or a usurper on the throne. It has been explained in the last section how, in a short time, the Portuguese lost whatever support they had in the highlands.

Natural Fortifications

There were other factors too that contributed to the failure of the Portuguese to conquer the highland kingdom. The paths to the hill capital lay through dense forests and over rugged mountains. The Kandyans were thoroughly conversant with the land in which they were fighting and were adepts at guerilla tactics for which the nature of the land afforded ample opportunities. Every big tree, huge rock or cave provided cover for the Kandyans and from the shelter that these afforded they discharged their missiles against the invading armies. On the other hand all the odds were against the Portuguese. They were ignorant of the nature of the land through which they were marching. Behind every tree, rock and mountain there lurked danger and they themselves had hardly any training or experience in jungle warfare. It was not an unusual feature of these expeditions for the Portuguese to find themselves quite suddenly surrounded by hordes of Kandyans. Thus surrounded and cut off from all retreat they were defeated and almost annihilated at places like Balane, Vellavaya and Gannoruwa.

Desertions of Sinhalese troops.

Their limited man power had always been a problem to the Portuguese. A nation with a population of 1, 200,000 could not for long stand the strain of continuous warfare. Hence they were forced to employ a large number of natives in their armies. For example in 1630, Constantine de Sa had as many as 2,000 Sinhalese soldiers in his army while there were only 700 Portuguese. Having to depend on such large reinforcements of native troops, the Portuguese administration hardly did anything to win their loyalty and goodwill. If anything at all their Government appears to have been conducted with a view to antagonise the people under their rule. Moreover the majority of the Sinhalese in the low country looked upon the King of Kandy as the champion of the Sinhalese race and of Buddhism against foreign interference in politics and religion and they did not

hesitate to desert in large numbers to the King. Azevedo's raids on Kandy were always hampered by desertions of his lascarins. In 1603 he had marched as far as Balane only to be forced to return by large scale desertions of his Sinhalese forces. In 1630 Constantine de Sa's defeat was largely due to the desertion of as many as 2000 Sinhalese troops to Kandy. In 1635 when Diogo de Mello's army was surrounded at Gannoruwa, the lascarins deserted and joined Kandy in the attack on the Portuguese.

Declining strength of the Portuguese

Portuguese men and material too was wasted by the frequent revolts in the low country. Every reverse to Portuguese arms in Kandy was followed by widespread revolts in the low country. Some of these assumed dangerous proportions and a good deal of Portuguese men and material was used in quelling them. These activities gradually wore down the military strength of the Portuguese. Portuguese man power could not stand the strain of over a century of constant warfare in Ceylon alone, not to speak of their commitments in Brazil, Africa, India and the Indies. But it is difficult to understand how the Portuguese could have continued to rely on native levies in the face of repeated desertions of these troops to Kandy.

Portuguese courage

In this doleful picture of repeated defeats, retreats and massacres there is one bright feature as far as the Portuguese are concerned. They seldom or never surrendered. Many a bloody battle was fought with heavy odds against them till almost the entire invading force was wiped out. No European nation in Ceylon displayed the bravery and gallantry of Constantine de Sa and his troops at Vellavaya in 1630. Heavily outnumbered and completely out manoeuvred they were called upon to surrender but they refused and fought to the last.

Similar bravery and courage was shown by all Portuguese expeditions to the Udarata. But courage and gallantry alone was not enough. Ignorant of the nature of the land in which they were fighting, marching through dense forests and over rugged mountains inexperienced in jungle warfare, out manoeuvred by the guerilla tactics of the Kandyan troops and finally abandoned by their native levies, every Portuguese invasion of Kandy was doomed to failure. Even the generalship of an Azevedo or a Constantine de Sa was of no avail against all these. Kandy remained free and independent.



CHAPTER VI

Portuguese Rule in Ceylon

At the Nallur and Malvana Conventions the Portuguese had given an undertaking to rule according to the laws and customs in force in these areas. The greatest defect in Portuguese Rule was that they never made an attempt to find out what these laws and customs were and consequently they ruled as they liked with the result that they violated the laws and customs of the people and naturally turned the Sinhalese of Kotte and the Tamils of Jaffna against them.

Most of the Portuguese who came to the island were either soldiers or priests. The soldiers fought bravely and courageously while the priests spread their religion very zealously. The Portuguese Captains General who were sent to Ceylon were Conquistadors. Very few of them possessed any administrative ability. The only Captain General who was a capable administrator was Constantine de Sa. He restored peace and order in Kotte and won the good will of the people by treating them and the Portuguese on an equal basis. The other Captains General were certainly capable of leading their troops to battle but when it came to administration they were not capable of studying the laws and customs of the people and governing Kotte and Jaffna accordingly. Moreover, for the hundred and fifty years that the Portuguese were in Ceylon they were constantly fighting in some part of the island or other. This constant warfare naturally absorbed all the attention of the officers and so they had no time at all to devote to a study of local law and custom. Consequently all the Portuguese officers in the island ruled Kotte and Jaffna as they would have ruled some part of Portugal. Another reason why they ignored the customs of the people in their administration of Kotte and Jaffna was due to the fact that

they thought that the system of government in Portugal was similar. Portugal was a land just shedding its feudalism while Ceylon was steeped in it. Hence in both countries there was a system of government suited to a feudal society. For example in Ceylon, Kotte was divided into four dissavanis each under a dissava; the dissavanis were divided into korales under korales; then came the pattus under atukorales and finally there were the villages under the native headmen. The system of government in Portugal was similar and the Portuguese had no difficulty in continuing this system. The only change they made was the appointment of a few new officers such as the *Vedor da Fazenda* and *Ouvidor*. The two systems appeared so similar that the Portuguese thought they were identical and so they made no attempt at all to study the laws and customs of the people. They did not realise that while the laws of Portugal were based on the idea of the equality of man, some of the laws and customs of Ceylon were based on the caste system. Consequently in their administration of these two areas they constantly violated the caste system, thus antagonising the people. In the making of appointments, in the enforcing of rajakariya, and even in the law courts the native rulers had observed the caste system. The Portuguese now ignored it completely. For example whenever they wanted any work done they would summon anyone who was close by to do it. Thus they would employ high caste people to carry their palanquins or to carry their baggage. When the high caste people refused to do this the Portuguese would subject them to the most cruel punishments till they agreed to do the work allotted. Fr. Queyroz, a Jesuit priest, who wrote a detailed account of Portuguese activities in Ceylon, stated that the people preferred to die rather than perform work which they considered below their caste. Now it is very interesting to examine the results of this. When a man of a so called high caste was forced to do some work below that of his caste he was not the only person whom the Portuguese antagonised. All the people of that caste felt that such an action was an insult to them too

and the result was that all the members of that particular caste were displeased with the Portuguese. Thus by violating the rules of caste through sheer ignorance the Portuguese antagonised sections of the people in Kotte and Jaffna.

In the time of the Sinhalese and Tamil Kings natives held the offices of Dissave, Korale, etc. but now Portuguese were appointed to most of these posts. There were various laws which regulated the powers of these officials and thus protected the people against the arbitrary rule and oppression of the chiefs. In the past the kings knew these laws and enforced them punishing any chiefs who violated them. The Portuguese were ignorant of these rules and consequently they neither knew the limits of their power nor could they check the misrule and rapacity of their junior officers and the native mudaliyars under them. The worst offenders in this respect were the tax collectors. In the time of the Sinhalese Kings the taxes were fixed. Now there was no limit to the taxes levied. Queyroz records that "the poor peasants had often times to pawn or sell their children to meet the exactions of these officers."

When people are thus harrassed by officers they normally turn to the Law Courts for redress. There was no point in Sinhalese and Tamils under the Portuguese doing this for the Portuguese judges were no better than the other Portuguese officers. Presents were accepted freely and the verdict was usually in favour of the one who gave the more valuable gift. It was not unusual for an ouvidor (a judge) "to return from circuit with more money than even his bags would hold", says Fr. Queyroz writing about the Portuguese system of Justice in the island.

Thus it will be seen that although the Portuguese maintained in form at least, the earlier Sinhalese system of government they did not keep its spirit. Portuguese rule in the island was characterised by inefficiency due to the lack of administrative ability of the officers; maladministration due to their ignorance

of local law and custom; bribery and corruption and finally by harshness and cruelty. Thus they antagonised the people and never won their loyalty and good will. It is not surprising that the Sinhalese of Kotte, deserted to Kandy or were ready to rise in revolt against the Portuguese at the instigation of the King and did not support the Portuguese when they were attacked by the Dutch.

The Religious Activities of the Portuguese

Let us first see what were the religions in Ceylon before the Portuguese came to the island. The majority of the inhabitants in Kotte were Buddhists while in Jaffna the people were largely Hindus. In these two kingdoms there was also a sprinkling of Muslims.

One of the reasons why the Portuguese came to the East was to link up with that mythical Christian Kingdom and to attack in the rear the Turks who were advancing into Europe. They looked upon the Muslims as the enemies of their religion and their rivals in trade and consequently they were ready to attack them wherever they came across them. Thus in 1505 and in 1518 when the Sinhalese in Kotte attacked their factory and their fortress the Portuguese burnt the muslim quarter of the city. With their fleet they attacked and sank muslim vessels at sight and later by controlling the strategic points they prevented muslims from entering the Indian Ocean. They even went to the extent of getting Bhuvaneikabahu to expel the muslims from Kotte. Thus towards the muslims the Portuguese displayed a fierce hostility both for religious and for commercial reasons.

The Portuguese attitude to Buddhists and Hindus was different. To begin with they were completely ignorant of these great religions of India and Ceylon before they came to the East. Even after they came they made no attempt to study the philosophies of these religions but merely judged them both from the practices they saw. Thus they formed a wrong opinion of these religions, treated them as "superstitions", called their

adherents "pagans" and felt it was their duty to bring these people into the Catholic faith. Hence members of religious orders such as the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits came to the island and began to propagate their faith. These priests, in a remarkably short time, studied the language of the people and went about preaching and trying to convert them to Catholicism. They went out into the villages, lived among the people, spoke to them in their own language, ate with them, looked after the poor, the old and the infirm and thus won the sympathy of the people for their cause. Having done this, they were able to convert many to Catholicism, specially in the coastal areas.

There is some misunderstanding about the Portuguese missionary methods. The charge has been levelled that the Portuguese used force to convert people to their religion. There is no evidence at all for such a view. A consideration of the following facts will bear out the view that most of the conversions were genuine. Six hundred Catholics at Mannar suffered death rather than give up their faith. Over a hundred years of Dutch persecution could not destroy Catholicism in the island. If the conversions had been brought about by force the converts would never have stood the acid test of persecution. It must, however, be admitted that the Portuguese did not hesitate to attack a ruler who interfered with their missionary activity. For instance they were determined to punish Sankily for the massacre of the Christians at Mannar. For the same reason they attacked Vidiya Bandara and later Vimala Dharma Suriya because they felt that their converts had to be protected against the tyranny of such rulers. The Portuguese, however, employed one method which anyone must condemn. They were prepared to give offices in their service and other rewards to converts. Thus there must have been people who accepted the Catholic faith in order to get these rewards. They and their descendants, however, would probably have embraced Presbyterianism at the first signs of Dutch presecution.

Let us now examine briefly how the missionaries achieved some success in the propagation of their faith. When Kotte and Jaffna passed under Portuguese rule the Catholic religion being the religion of the rulers became the most important religion in these areas. This gave Catholicism an advantage over the others. It now received the patronage of the government and consequently made some headway. On the other hand Buddhism and Hinduism were deprived of the royal patronage they had enjoyed for centuries. They were so used to this patronage that without it these religions began to languish and decline. Another reason is the zeal with which the missionaries worked. Inspired with the spirit of the Counter-Reformation the priests who came to Ceylon were prepared to lay down their lives for their religion. Hence nothing was an obstacle to them. With an enthusiasm and zeal which no other European people displayed the Portuguese spread their religion in the island. Another factor which helped the Portuguese was that Catholicism like Buddhism and Hinduism at the time, had a good deal of ceremony and ritual and so the people who were used to religious ceremonies such as the respect paid to images, relics etc., did not find it difficult to adapt themselves to the new religion. Still another reason may be adduced for the success that attended Portuguese missionary activity in Ceylon. The civilisation of Ceylon had from 1235 A. D. suffered a slow decline. On the other hand the Portuguese brought to the island the vigorous civilisation of Europe of the Renaissance Period. Consequently the people of the island looked upon everything the Portuguese brought as superior and began to imitate them. This factor too must have contributed to the success of the missionaries. While all these factors certainly counted the zeal of the Portuguese missionary was the major factor. Finally the missionaries were bringing a highly organised religion into competition with comparatively unorganised religions. Here too Catholicism was at an advantage.

While these factors facilitated the spread of Catholicism there were others which hindered its propagation. To begin with Buddhism and Hinduism had flourished in Ceylon for centuries and consequently had become part and parcel of the life of the people of the island. Hence it was not easy to induce prospective converts to break away from the "Faith of their Fathers". Moreover Catholicism was looked upon as a foreign importation while Buddhism and Hinduism were looked upon as our own. Finally the behaviour of the Portuguese soldiers in Ceylon and the harshness of the Portuguese administration was anything but conducive to missionary activity for people tend to judge a religion not on the merits of its teachings but by the behaviour of its members. In conclusion it must be stated that to the Portuguese goes the credit for laying firmly the foundation of the Catholic Faith in Ceylon. A century of disabilities imposed upon Catholics in Ceylon by the methodical Dutch was not able to destroy it.



CHAPTER VII

The Decline of the Portuguese Power in Ceylon

Results of Portuguese Rule in Ceylon

Before we deal with the "Decline of the Portuguese power in Ceylon" let us study briefly the results of Portuguese rule on the life of the people of the island. Let us see whether Portuguese rule had any effect on the political history of the island. Before they came there were three main Kingdoms in Ceylon. These were Kotte, Jaffna and Kandy. The King of Kotte claimed overlordship of the whole island and the Kings of Kandy and Jaffna paid tribute to him. Thus Kandy and Jaffna were looked upon as subordinate Kingdoms. By the time the Portuguese were expelled from Ceylon Kandy was the only independent Kingdom left and thus it became the last bastion of Sinhalese independence against foreign domination. After this Kandy became an important factor in the politics of Ceylon. Moreover the Portuguese failed over and over again to conquer Kandy. This led to the development of a sense of superiority among the Sinhalese of the highlands. They began to look upon themselves as the invincible Sinhalese and to look down upon their unfortunate brethren, in the low country, who were subject to foreign rule. This also led to a division among the Sinhalese themselves into Kandyan Sinhalese and low country Sinhalese.

The strongest influence exerted by the Portuguese on the life of the people of the island was in the sphere of religion and its influence on society. The Portuguese brought to Ceylon the Catholic Faith and took great pains to spread it throughout their territory. Naturally Catholic ideas began to influence the lives of the converts and even in some cases of the non Catholics. In spite of the fact that in 247 B.C. Mahinda had brought to

Ceylon the idea of the equality of man, by 1500 A.D. society in the island was regulated by the rules of the caste-system. The spread of Roman Catholicism in Kotte and Jaffna resulted in a fresh emphasis being given to the idea of equality. The converts did not abandon the caste-system at once. Even today in spite of all this talk of democracy and religion in Ceylon traces of the caste system still linger. Old habits die hard. But with the spread of Catholicism the first cracks began to appear in the barriers raised up between different groups of people by the caste-system.

The spread of Catholicism also had an influence on the peoples' ideas of marriage. There were no definite rules about marriage in Ceylon before the Portuguese came. Knox writing on the subject stated that marriages in Kandy in the 17th century "were loose unions terminable at will". This must have been the state of affairs throughout the island before the advent of the Portuguese. The Catholic Church has always been very strict about the laws regulating marriage. It insists on monogamy and emphasises the permanency of the union. The converts to Catholicism had to submit to the rules and regulations laid down by the Church. This had an influence even on the non-Catholics. The Dutch more or less enforced similar rules and regulations and in 1805 Rev. Cordiner was able to state that as far as marriages were concerned "permanency and conjugal fidelity were the rule in the maritime provinces". The introduction of Catholicism also led to the introduction of western church architecture, of western styles of painting and sculpture, and western church music to Ceylon.

Portuguese rule also had an influence on the dress of the people of the island specially the dress of the women. The European skirt and jacket were introduced and even ladies of rank in Kandy dressed in Portuguese style. Rajasinghe himself was dressed in a curious combination of styles in which features of Portuguese dress were evident.

A very slight influence was exerted on the language and literature of the country. Some Portuguese words such as saphathu, kalisam, keju, ayah etc. crept into the Sinhalese languages while a few literary works dealing with Catholic themes were written. Portuguese names like Perera, Fonseka, Fernando, Peduru, Paulu, etc. were introduced and gradually came to be looked upon as Sinhalese names.

The most important and the lasting contribution they made to the island's history, however, was the introduction of the Catholic Faith and its influence on the life and thought of the island's people.

The Decline of the Portuguese Power in Ceylon

The Portuguese had built up a vast trading system in Brazil, Africa, the Indian Ocean, in the Indies and in China and Japan. This task, however, soon proved far too much for a small nation like the Portuguese who evidently had bitten more than they could chew.

There existed in Portugal a highly centralised form of government which certainly proved sufficient for the small country that Portugal was. But it proved totally inadequate for governing the vast commercial and naval empire they had built up. We have already seen that Portugal was largely a land of soldiers and priests. Their soldiers certainly displayed admirable qualities in time of war while their priests showed a remarkable zeal. They were, however, incapable of setting up an efficient system of government even for their own country. The following is a very good example of the lack of administrative ability of the Portuguese. Their harbours were crowded with ships from four continents. Those from Africa, America and Asia brought merchandise, those from Europe came to take this merchandise. The port dues and custom dues alone should have brought a considerable revenue to the country. The Portuguese, however, were never able to set up a suitable

organisation for collecting all these dues. One cannot expect a people who were unable to collect these dues to govern efficiently their far-flung possessions and their trade in an area stretching from Brazil, across South Africa and the Indian Ocean to the Indies.

The wealth that all this trade brought also had a bad effect on the people of the country. The Portuguese began to neglect their fishing, their agriculture and their manufactures and began to take to a life of luxury and ease. This had a demoralising effect on Portuguese society, and the spirit of adventure, the powers of endurance and the courage and bravery which made the Voyages of Discovery possible began to disappear in the race.

Portuguese man power also was seriously affected by the end of the 16th century. Almost a century of continuous warfare in three continents had led to a serious decline in Portuguese manpower. Even their attempts to supplement this deficiency by building up a new population of Eurasians and Euraficans proved a thorough failure. Thus while her manpower was seriously depleted there was no way of replacing the losses.

The Portuguese had even neglected their navy. Their fleet was easily far superior to any Eastern fleet. With a powerful navy and the entrances to the Indian Ocean in their hands, they were supreme in the Indian waters. They never anticipated the arrival of another European power, like the Dutch, in the East. Lulled into a sense of complacency they neglected their navy and did nothing to improve it. While the English and the Dutch were fitting their ships with the latest devices in navigation and naval warfare the Portuguese shipyards were building huge floating store houses to bring their merchandise from the East to Lisbon.

In 1580 there was no Portuguese prince to succeed to the throne. The closest of kin was Philip II of Spain who thus became King of Portugal as well. In spite of the promises he

had made the man-power and the resources of Portugal came to be used to serve Spanish interests and the Portuguese possessions in the East came to be more and more neglected. The men and the material they needed to defend their stations in the East were not sent out regularly and the might of the Portuguese in the East gradually declined.

The inefficiency and corruption noticed in the administration of Portugal soon made its evil effects felt in the East too. Of the Viceroys who came to India only Albuquerque had some claims to be considered a great administrator. The others were men of mediocre ability for whom the government of stations scattered along a coastal line of 15,000 miles was far too much a task. Moreover the Portuguese by their harsh and cruel rule antagonised the natives under them and by their pride and arrogance alienated native rulers who were only too willing to assist the Dutch to expel the hated Portuguese from their shores.

Taking all these points into consideration-i.e., the inefficiency and corruption that characterised the Portuguese administration, the demoralisation of Portuguese society, the depletion of her manpower, the deterioration of her naval strength and the opposition of the native peoples it is not surprising that Portuguese naval and commercial supremacy in Indian waters crumbled when challenged by the superior forces of the more efficient and capable Dutch East India Company.

The decline of the Portuguese power in the East, in general, and in Ceylon, in particular, was brought about by the Dutch. Hence it will be useful to compare the relative strengths of the Portuguese and the Dutch as then it will be easier to understand the decline of the Portuguese.

To begin with the Dutch had been merchants for centuries and consequently were more capable administrators than the Portuguese. Moreover, while Portugal was, after 1580, subordinate to Spain and her man-power and resources were being

utilised to serve Spanish interests the Dutch had fought against Spanish tyranny and had freed themselves from Spanish rule. The merchants of the new and independent Dutch Republic showed more enthusiasm, and displayed more initiative than the soldiers and sailors of a Portugal that was on the decline. Dutch man-power had not suffered the heavy losses that the Portuguese had suffered by over a century of warfare in widely scattered areas in the East. While the Portuguese had neglected their navy the Dutch had built better and stronger vessels and had fitted these with all the latest instruments for navigation and naval warfare. Thus from the point of view of administrative ability, political strength, initiative and enterprise and naval and military might the Dutch were far superior to the Portuguese. Only in two respects did the Portuguese display any superiority over the Dutch. They were well established in the East when the Dutch came and this gave them an advantage over their Dutch rivals. In addition to this they certainly fought more bravely and courageously than the Dutch. The superiority of the Dutch in the other respects, however, told on the Portuguese and by 1658 the Portuguese were expelled from Ceylon.



CHAPTER VIII

The Dutch Come to the East

The Portuguese had for close on a century controlled the major part of the spice trade. But they took the spices only as far as Lisbon. It was left to merchants of other European countries to call at Lisbon for the spices which their countrymen needed. Among the merchants who did so the traders of the Netherlands were the most prominent. Very soon Dutch merchants came to control the greater part of the spice trade between Lisbon and the ports of Western and Northern Europe, and they reaped great profits from it.

The Dutch had for some time been under Spanish rule but a growing spirit of Nationalism and a resentment to Spanish attempts to suppress Protestantism in the Netherlands had by 1572 resulted in revolts against Spain. The Dutch in the seven Northern provinces of the Netherlands continued a heroic resistance to Spanish tyranny and in 1581 they renounced their allegiance to Philip II, King of Spain. In 1580, on the royal line of Portugal becoming extinct, Philip II of Spain became King of Portugal also and he thought that he could strike a blow at his rebellious Dutch subjects by depriving their merchants of the profits of the Spice trade. Hence he forbade them to come to Lisbon. The Dutch who had reaped large profits from the spice trade were not going to abandon it just because a "Spanish tyrant" closed Lisbon to them. As they could not now get the spices from Lisbon they decided to come to the East. They tried to seek a new way to the East through the Arctic and when they realised that this was impossible they decided to sail round Africa to the Indian Ocean. Two other considerations also induced them to take this course of action. Philip II as King of Portugal was also King of the Portuguese

possessions overseas. Therefore an attack on these overseas territories would really be an attack on Spain with whom they were at war. Moreover the Dutch were Protestants and they saw no reason why they should submit to the Delimitation Bull of Alexander VI by which lands east of a line 100 leagues of the Azores were assigned to Portugal. Induced by these motives the Dutch decided to come to the East.

Information about the route was obtained from two Dutchmen who had been to the East with the Portuguese. One of these was Jan Huyghens van Linschoten who had gone to the East in the train of the Archbishop of Goa. The other was Cornelius van Houtman who had been in the Portuguese service and had made the Journey to India. A geographer called Petrus Plaucius was commissioned to draw a map of the trade route and the lands in the East. Armed with all this the Dutch were ready to sail round Africa to the Indian Ocean. In 1594 the Compagnie van Veere was formed and in 1595 a fleet set sail from Texel under the command of Cornelius Van Houtman. Entering the Indian Ocean Houtman decided to avoid all Portuguese stations and sailed through the Sunda Straits to Bantam in Western Java. He returned to Holland two years later having lost four ships and one hundred and eleven men out of his crew of two hundred. The proceeds just covered the cost of the expedition but the experience and knowledge gained was very valuable. Soon new companies were formed to trade with the East. In the five years that followed Van Houtman's return no less than thirteen such expeditions were sent to the East.

The Dutch soon realised that though they were reaping large profits they were doing so in spite of heavy odds. To begin with the rivalry of the different companies was making it difficult for them to challenge the Portuguese monopoly of the trade. They also realised that war with the Portuguese was inevitable but this was impossible without a powerful fleet, naval and military bases, fortified stations and powerful armies.

These could not be built, organised and maintained by rival companies competing among themselves. Moreover in 1600 their English trade rivals had formed an East India Company which was given by Royal Charter, the "exclusive right to trade beyond the Cape of Good Hope". Influenced by all these factors and largely as a result of the initiative of Van Oldenbarneveldt the existing Dutch Companies were amalgamated into the *Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie* (The Dutch East India Company) The letters V. O. C. were used as an abbreviation for this term and they are found on all the seals and coats of arms of the Dutch officers in the East.

Dutch Policy in the East.

The Portuguese had, we saw, secured a monopoly of the trade by controlling the entrances to the Indian Ocean and dominating the Indian waters. They were able to do this as theirs was the only European Navy in the Indian seas and there was no naval power in the East to rival theirs. The Dutch too wanted a monopoly of the trade but they realised that they could not adopt the same method as the Portuguese for theirs was not the only European fleet in the Indian Ocean. There were, besides their own the Portuguese, and English fleets too. It was not possible for them to dominate the Indian Ocean as the Portuguese had done. The seas would have to be kept open. This being so the only method by which they could obtain a monopoly of the trade was to **control the areas of production**. This naturally involved political activity. Treaties of a political and commercial nature were entered into with native rulers who were only too anxious to secure Dutch assistance against rival rulers or against the Portuguese. Only when these methods were not successful were spice areas conquered and occupied.

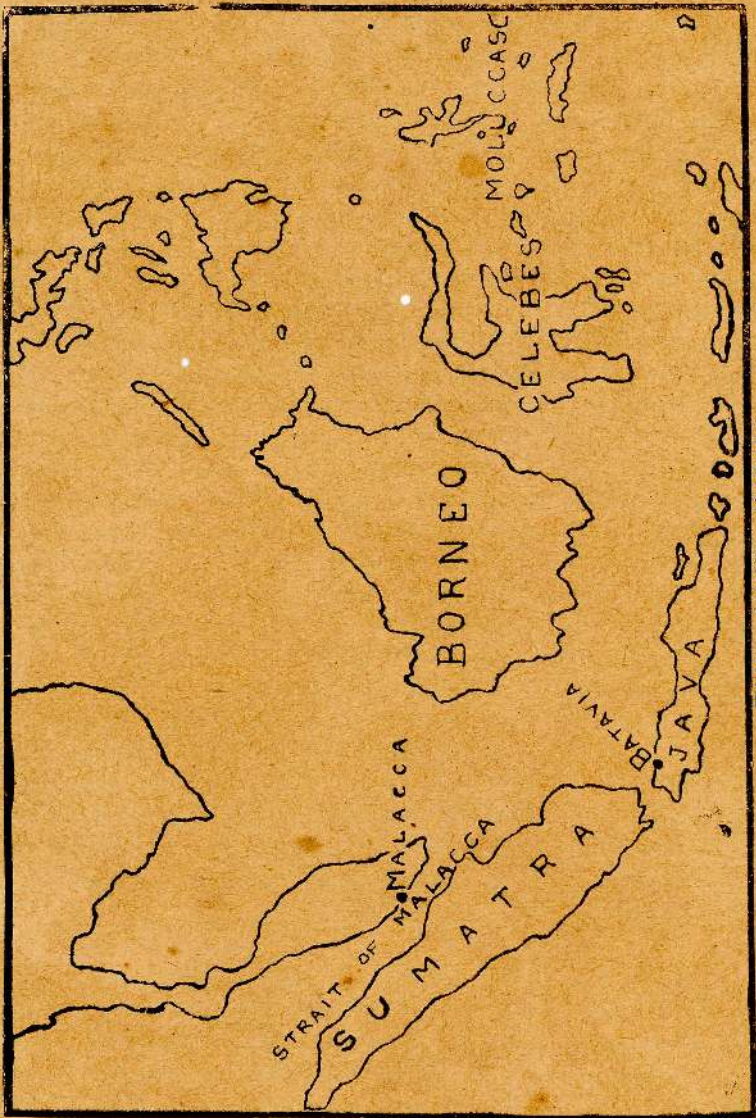
There were other important differences between Portuguese and Dutch policies. While the former normally concentrated on the trade between the East and the West the latter were anxious to secure in addition to this the trade between the

different countries in the East. They did this for two reasons. Being the agents of a trading company their standard of judgment was naturally the balance sheet and their aim maximum profits with minimum expenditure. Hence they exploited every avenue of trade. Nothing was insignificant provided it brought a return. They were also reluctant to bring gold and silver from Holland to pay for the spices and other articles needed in the west. Hence it was their plan to use the profits of the trade in the East to pay for the commodities they hoped to take to the West.

Finally we find the Dutch anxious to avoid warfare as much as possible. Our study of Portuguese activity in Ceylon revealed that they were almost constantly at war. To the agents of the Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie in the East war was an item of heavy expenditure and therefore it was to be avoided at all costs. We find them conciliating native rulers, at times humbling themselves before them and at other times trying to bully them in the attempt to secure the trade of their countries. Only when these means failed and they found themselves in danger of losing control of the areas of production did they resort to war.

The Dutch establish themselves in the East

The first step in the attempt to challenge Portuguese supremacy in the Indian Ocean was obviously to establish their own headquarters in the East. As soon as conditions were favourable Jan. P. Coen conquered Jacatra in Western Java and fortified it very strongly. Its name was changed to Batavia and it was made the chief Dutch naval and military base and the centre of their administration in the East. By the middle of the seventeenth century they brought under their control the Banda Islands, the Moluccas, and Amboyna. In 1641 Malacca, the great Portuguese stronghold, the gateway from the Indian Ocean to the Far East and a great emporium of trade, fell into their hands. Now they were ready to sail into the Indian Ocean and make an all out attack on Portuguese stations in Ceylon and India.



THE EAST INDIES.

The Expulsion of the Portuguese from Ceylon.

Dutch envoys had come to Ceylon as early as 1602 but they were not in a position to promise King Vimala Dharma Suriya I of Kandy the military assistance he needed to expel the Portuguese. Not till they had established their headquarters at Batavia, obtained control of the trade of the Indies and taken Malacca were the Dutch in a position to move into the Indian Ocean and attack Portuguese stations in Ceylon and India. In 1638 Admiral Westerwold returning from the annual blockade of Goa attacked and captured Batticaloa and entered into a treaty with the King of Kandy, now Rajasinghe II. The Dutch promised to assist the King to expell the Portuguese from the island. The King was to meet all the expenses of the Dutch and to give them a harbour and the monopoly of the cinnamon trade. There was, however, a clause in the treaty which resulted in much misunderstanding between the allies. According to the King's copy the Dutch could occupy the Portuguese fortresses only *if the King so desired*. These very significant words were not found in the Dutch copy of the treaty. Hence when the Dutch garrisoned each fortress as it was conquered the King protested that they had no right to do so. In 1639 Trincomalee was captured and in 1640 first Negombo and then Galle fell to the Dutch. Galle was made the headquarters of the company's possessions in the island and Coster was appointed President. While the King was certainly glad that the Portuguese were being gradually expelled from the island he resented the Dutch occupation of the fortresses as he considered it a violation of the treaty. Moreover he saw that he was really exchanging one European power for another.

In 1640 Portugal freed herself from Spanish rule and signed a ten year truce with Holland. Hostilities in Ceylon, however, continued as the Dutch and the Portuguese here could not agree on a division of territory in the island. In 1642 they were able to reach an agreement. The Dutch

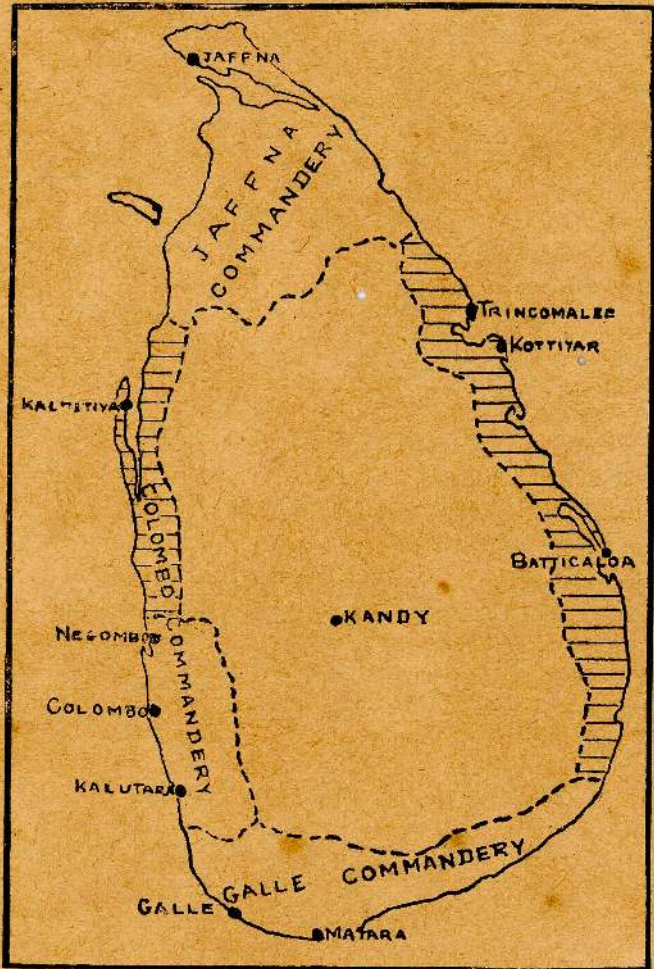
retained the fortresses they had so far conquered, and all the land south of the Bentota river. The Portuguese had the Kingdom of Jaffna and that part of Kotte north of the river.

The Kings of Kandy from the time of Vimala Dharma Suriya had claimed that they were Kings of the whole island. They never admitted the Portuguese right to Kotte which was based on the donation of Dharmapala who was never the legitimate ruler of that Kingdom. Hence the King was furious when he heard of this treaty. He had brought in the Portuguese to expel the Dutch and now he found them dividing what he claimed was his territory and signing a truce with the Portuguese without even consulting him. The displeasure that resulted almost led to war in the time of Thyssen and the matter was settled only by a fresh treaty negotiated by Maetsuyker in 1647. According to the clauses of this treaty the Dutch were to retain the fortresses till Colombo fell; the King was not to give the cinnamon to anyone but the Dutch till the expenses of the expedition were paid.

In 1652 the truce between the Dutch and Portuguese in Ceylon came to an end and hostilities broke out again. Gradually the remaining Portuguese fortresses fell to the Dutch. Colombo was captured after a stout resistance by the defenders in 1656; two years later Jaffna fell and Portuguese rule in Ceylon came to an end.

The Question of the Fortresses.

Although the Dutch expelled the Portuguese from the island they were not going to have a easy time with the King of Kandy. The King and his subjects resented the presence of the foreigner in the maritime areas. They were also suspicious of Dutch intentions. "Would the Dutch, now that they were settled in the coastal areas, attempt the conquest of Kandy as the Portuguese had done." To the King the retention of the fortresses was a violation of a treaty. The Dutch on the other hand protested that they were retaining the fortresses till the



DUTCH TERRITORIES IN CEYLON.

(The shaded portions are those acquired by the Treaty 1763)

expenses of the expedition were paid. But whenever the King asked for the bill it was never submitted. Actually the Dutch had no intention at all of surrendering the fortresses. It was their policy to control areas of production. The fortresses they held gave them effective control of the chief harbours in the island. The only ports left to Kandy were Kalpitiya and Kottiyar both of which could easily be blockaded if the need arose. Moreover they held the valuable cinnamon belt stretching from Negombo to Galle. Thus the fortresses ensured for them the control of the areas of production and of the trade of the island. Consequently there was no question of surrendering them to Kandy. Moreover there were other European powers in the Indian Ocean and these fortresses were necessary for the Dutch to protect themselves and their interests in the island against an attack by any of these powers. Finally the attitude of Kandy was unpredictable. Having got the Dutch to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them it was just possible that Kandy might attack the Dutch or get another foreign power to expell them from the island. In either event the Dutch would need the fortresses. Thus from the Dutch point of view the retention of the fortresses was essential for their control of the trade of the island. That being so there was no question of their giving them up. This however was to prove a source of much trouble with Kandy because the King and his courtiers never admitted the Dutch right to the fortresses or to whatever territory they occupied. Hence with the expulsion of the Portuguese from the island there begins a long period of conflict (diplomatic, economic and political) between Kandy and the Dutch.



CHAPTER IX.

The Kandyan Kingdom 1594-1797.

It is necessary to pause in our study of Dutch activities in Ceylon to review briefly the history of the Kandyan Kingdom in order to understand fully the nature of Dutch relations with Kandy.

Political

Vimala Dharma Suriya I (1594-1604) was the king of Kandy when the first Dutch envoys arrived in the island. He was the famous Konnappu Bandara who had become a Catholic under the name of Don Juan of Austria and had seized the Kandyan throne after the death of Don Philip. Profiting by the growing resentment against the Portuguese following on the murder of Jayavira Bandara, he led the dissatisfied Kandyans against the Portuguese, defeated them and married Dona Catherina thus establishing his position on the Kandyan throne. He ruled Kandy from 1591 to 1604 and proved himself a capable ruler. In 1597 when Don Juan Dharmapala of Kotte died Vimala Dharma Suriya proclaimed himself King of the whole island. His one ambition was to expel the Portuguese from Ceylon. Although he was never able to do this, he preserved the independence of the highland kingdom against all attempts of the Portuguese to conquer it. He was naturally quite pleased to receive the Dutch envoys in 1602 but they were not yet in a position to promise him any effective assistance against the Portuguese. In 1604 he died and was succeeded by his son Senarat.

Senarat (1604-1636) had been a Buddhist monk and his monastic training and education made him try to come to terms with the Portuguese but Azavedo, the Portuguese Captain

General, was determined on war and consequently the King looked for an alliance with the Dutch, but once more the Dutch were not in a position to help. In 1611 Azavedo marched into Kandy and sacked the city but was forced to withdraw. Portuguese raids on Kandy, however, continued till in 1617 Senarat was able to come to terms with them. He became a vassal of Portugal and agreed to pay a token tribute of two elephants. Thus for some time there was peace between the Portuguese and Kandy. In 1618 Constantine de Sa was appointed Captain General and he decided to strengthen the position of the Portuguese in Ceylon. With this in mind he occupied and fortified Batticaloa and Trincomalee. Senarat got alarmed. He felt that the Portuguese were trying to surround his Kingdom and cut him off from all foreign contact with the ultimate intention of invading Kandy. There was nothing, however, that Senarat could do at the moment besides organising a few plots against the Portuguese. De Sa undertook a series of expeditions to Kandy all of which met with the usual fate till in 1630 he was killed in a fierce battle at Vellavaya (page 30)

Rajasinghe (1635-1687) In 1635 Senarat died and was succeeded by the youngest of his sons, Rajasinghe. Rajasinghe realised how much his people had suffered from the successive invasions of Kandy by the Portuguese and he decided to come to terms with them. But he wanted a treaty with the King of Portugal, not with a Captain General. He tried to send a friar to negotiate such an agreement, but when the Portuguese obstructed him he decided to seek Dutch assistance. His early dealings with the Dutch (1638-1658) have already been dealt with in the previous chapter.

Rajasinghe's one ambition was to get rid of the Portuguese and make himself sole ruler of the island. The chiefs and people of Kandy too were looking forward to the day when foreign rule over Ceylon would cease. Hence when in 1658 the Portuguese were finally expelled and the Dutch more or less stepped into their shoes the people were very disappointed and

they suspected the King of having allowed the Dutch to do so. Consequently there was growing opposition to the King and Rajasinghe adopted severe repressive measures which only served to antagonise chiefs and priests still further, and opposition to the King manifested itself in plots and conspiracies. Attempts were even made to assassinate him and place his son on the throne. The plots miscarried; the King fled to Galauda and secretly sent his son away to be brought up in a monastery. The plots, however, did not cease and in desperation he sought the assistance of the Dutch against what he called "domestic traitors". The Dutch governor at the time, Rycloff van Goens, and after him his son, took the opportunity to seize valuable Kandyan territory.

The Rise of the Kandyan Chiefs

In the latter part of Rajasinghe's reign a new factor is noticed in the Kandyan political scene. The chiefs gradually became a power in the country. Rajasinghe was so obsessed with the idea of getting rid of the Dutch that he neglected to control and check his chiefs with the result that they began to exercise more power in the areas under their control than custom and tradition warranted. The King's tyranny and his increasing unpopularity only served to increase the power and influence of the chiefs. Towards the end of his reign he became addicted to opium and began to leave even matters of state to them; so much so that even negotiations between the King and the Dutch were carried on through them.

Vimala Dharma Suriya II (1687-1707) In 1687 Vimala Dharma Suriya succeeded Rajasinghe. This young man had been brought up in a monastery and his monastic training and education did not in any way prepare him for dealing with the troubled politics of Kandy at the time. His lack of political training made him more and more dependent on his chiefs and this led to a further increase of their power and influence. He would do nothing without consulting them. In 1688 when



RAJASINGHE II OF KANDY

the Dutch sent an ambassador, Abelos, to negotiate a treaty with the King he was directed by Vimala Dharma Suriya to discuss the terms with the chiefs. The Dutch officials were soon aware of the change that had taken place in Kandy and we find them trying to conciliate this new and powerful element in Kandyan politics.

Narendra Sinha (1707-1739). After Vimala Dharma Suriya's death a young man of seventeen, Narendra Sinha, ascended the throne. His youth gave the chiefs an opportunity of consolidating the power which they had gradually acquired during the last two reigns. Narendra Sinha too did nothing without consulting the chiefs and priests. He allowed them to deal with the Dutch and he did not check their arbitrary power over the people of the highland kingdom. In the latter part of his reign fairly harmonious relations existed between the Dutch and Kandy.

The Nayakar Kings of Kandy

Narendra Sinha died in 1739 leaving neither a brother nor a son to succeed him. The Kings of Kandy, from the time of Senarat, had been in the habit of choosing their Queens from the families of the Nayaks of Madura or Tanjore. These ladies normally came to Ceylon with a host of relatives who constituted an important element in the Kandyan court. When Narendra Sinha lay dying he nominated his wife's brother as his successor. The accession of a foreigner was naturally repugnant to the Kandyan chiefs and an attempt was made by some ministers to elevate an illegitimate son of the King to the throne. Others opposed this because they did not want a descendant of a rival Sinhalese family to be above them. Thus owing to the rivalry and jealousy of the Kandyan chiefs a Nayakar ascended the throne of the last Sinhalese Kingdom in Ceylon.

Sri Vijaya Raja Sinha (1739-1747), the first Nayakar, knew the weakness of his position and tried his best to conciliate the

people. He adopted a Sinhalese name and posed as a great patron of Buddhism. He ruled only for eight years and his reign is uneventful except for marked hostility towards the Dutch. The Nayakars being from South India, knew the prices of various articles of trade and were not prepared to allow the Dutch to enjoy the profits of the island's trade. Moreover they were friendly with the English and hoped to seek English assistance against the Dutch if necessary. Hence with the accession of the new dynasty relations between Kandy and the Dutch deteriorated culminating in the war of 1760.

Kirti Sri Rajasinha (1747-1782) ascended the throne at the age of fourteen and at the beginning of his reign the Sinhalese chiefs continued to exercise much power in the country. Meanwhile the Nayakar element in the court was increasing and the South Indian relatives of the King came to constitute a new aristocracy. As the King grew older he showed an increasing tendency to be influenced by them. This was resented by the Sinhalese chiefs whose power and influence had been increasing since the time of Rajasinghe II. A conspiracy was soon on foot to dethrone the King and place a Siamese prince on the throne, but Gopala Mudaliyar informed the King about it, the plot was foiled and the leader, Modalande, was executed.

Kirti Sri's reign is noted for a great religious revival. He continued towards the Dutch the hostile policy of his predecessor and made attempts to contact the English who sent an ambassador to Kandy in 1762. The hostility of the Nayakars, their refusal to trade with the Dutch, their habit of assisting rebels in Dutch territory, and finally their attempts to bring in the British made the Dutch realise that there was now a definite threat to their control of the areas of production in Ceylon. Hence they declared war against Kandy. Hostilities were finally terminated by the Treaty of 1766.

Rajadhi Raja Sinha (1782-1798) succeeded his brother in 1782. Nayakar influence increased and with it Sinhalese opposition to South Indian rule which now began to manifest itself in acts of disloyalty and treachery. When the King tried to secure French assistance to get rid of the Dutch Pilima Talauwe informed the Dutch about it. In 1795 the English attacked the Dutch territories in the island and by 1796 they occupied all the Dutch stations in Ceylon. With the advent of a strong naval and military power in the maritime provinces the conquest and occupation of Kandy was just a matter of time.

The Kandyan System of Government

The King. All legislative, executive and judicial power was vested in the king and theoretically he was a despot. In actual practice he had to abide by the laws and customs of the country. The throne normally passed to the King's younger brother or to his son. If a King died leaving no brother nor son the chiefs met in Council and the First Adigar proposed the name of a suitable person who was then accepted by the others. In the government of the country the King normally consulted his chiefs and high priests who, we saw, had gradually acquired much influence and power in the Kingdom.

The Chiefs. The King carried on the government of the country through a hierarchy of officers. For purposes of administration the country was divided into two sections each under an **Adigar**—the North and East under the Pallegampahe Adigar, the South and West under the Udagampahe Adigar. The Adigars had to see that the King's orders were carried out in their divisions. They supervised all public works, and were the chief judges and military commanders for their areas. They also advised the King on all matters of state and on the appointment of headmen below their rank. All these functions gave them much influence in the country.

The Kingdom was subdivided into twenty one divisions, twelve of which were called dissavanis each under a **Dissave**;

the other nine were called **Ratas** and each of these was under a **Ratemahatmaya**. These officers had to maintain peace and order in their areas, carry out the King's orders, collect the revenue, attend to agriculture and trade, perform minor judicial functions, and recommend the appointment of headmen below their rank. They were also military officers and ranked lower than the **Adigars**.

Below the **Dissaves** and the **Ratemahatmayas** there were the **Korales** in charge of korales, the **Atukorales** in charge of pattus and finally there were the **Vidanes** whose area was the village. All these officers carried out the King's orders, collected revenue, and performed minor judicial functions in their areas. Unlike the **Adigars**, **Dissaves** and **Ratemahatmayas** they had no military functions. In the army next to the **Adigar** and **Dissave** and **Ratemahatmaya** came the **Mudaliyars**, the **Muhandirams** the **Aratchies** and the **Kankanams**.

All officers were paid in land. Such land was called **Nindagam**. Besides this, there were other sources of income such as appointment fees and judicial fees, and fines levied in the courts. The **Adigars** were also entitled to duties levied at frontiers. These fees and dues were paid in money or in kind. When various officers were on circuit the people in the village through which they passed had to supply them with meals. The revenue from their **nindagam**, the various fees and dues and the privileges they were entitled to provided these officers with fairly good incomes.

Departments. Besides the officers in charge of divisions of the country there were a host of officers in charge of various activities of the government. At the head of each of these great departments was a high ranking officer. To give a few examples: there was the **Maduve Lekam** in charge of those owing military service, the **Madige Lekam** in charge of the bullock department, the **Nanayakara Lekam** who maintained a record of the taxes received; the **Vedikara** and **Kodituvakku Lekams** in charge of the artillery and infantry etc. These officers were personally responsible to the King and were paid in land.

The Judiciary—The King was the fount of justice. Cases were heard by him personally or by his officers. Normally only cases between chiefs, those between priests, and cases of sacrilege, murder and treason, were heard by him. All other cases, civil as well as criminal, were heard by the Adigars, Dissaves, Ratemahatmayas and minor headmen in their respective areas. The Gansabhas as of old settled disputes in the villages. Appeals were possible from a lower court to a higher one and finally even to the King. Such appeals to him the King heard personally or referred to the **Mahanaduwa** which was presided over by the First Adigar. Trial by ordeal was also resorted to to settle some cases.

The system had certain inherent defects which sometimes led to gross abuses. Executive officers were also judges, hence it was not easy for any to get redress for any injustice committed by the executive. The fact that records were not kept and the absence of roads made it difficult for people to resort to an appeal in case they felt there had been a miscarriage of justice. The system whereby the parties to a dispute paid the judge a fee was also open to abuse as there would have been a strong temptation for the decision to be given in favour of the litigant who paid the higher fee. Finally as the fines levied formed part of the income of the judge there may have been a tendency to levy as heavy fines as possible.

Social and Economic Conditions

The chief occupation of the people was **agriculture**. Grains of various sorts were cultivated the chief of which was rice; other grains were menneri, thanahall, kurrakan, and green gram. The people do not appear to have been very industrious as nature supplied them with an abundance of food. They did not even cultivate all the rice they needed as Knox records that they "ate many meals of yams to make up for their shortage of rice". Jak, coconuts and other foods also served as substitutes for rice. Toddy was obtained from coconut and kitul and juggery prepared out of it.

There was very little internal trade as the life of the people was very simple, their wants very few and almost everything they needed was produced in the village. As a matter of fact the Kingdom of Kandy was really a collection of economically self-sufficient villages. The only link between them were foot-paths used chiefly by officers of the administration who went from place to place on governmental work or by the peddler. In the "cities" there were a few shops where cloth, rice, salt, tobacco, limes, drugs, fruits, tools, weapons, earthenware, metal vessels etc. were sold. These articles were paid for in cash or in kind. Portuguese coins, pieces of silver shaped like a fish hook, and coins turned out by the royal treasury was the currency in circulation but the normal method was to buy and sell on a system of barter.

A number of articles were manufactured in the country. Cloth, iron tools, steel weapons, earthen and metal vessels and jewellery of gold and silver were among these.

Society was dominated by the caste system and almost all aspects of life was regulated by it. One was born into a particular caste; marriage was normally possible only within one's caste; one's occupation was regulated by caste. The system even laid down the type of dwelling, the amount and the nature of one's clothing and the ceremonies one was entitled to.

There was no definite law of marriage. Monogamy appears to have been the normal thing but there is evidence of polygamy and even of polyandry. In the relations between the sexes there was a good deal of laxity. Divorce was quite simple and easy. Mutual consent was sufficient and in such an event the daughters went with the mother and the sons with the father.

Women appear to have held an inferior position in society. They were drawers of water and hewers of wood. They did all the cooking, served the menfolk first and ate afterwards. There

were, however, no restrictions on their movements and except for acknowledging an inferior position in the presence of men they had a great deal of freedom.

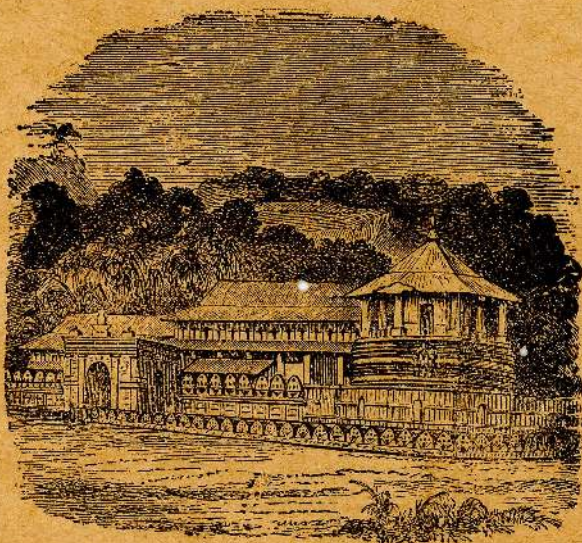
Religion. The religion of the Kings and of the people was Buddhism and the average Kandyan was very devoted to his religion. There were Hindus too and Hindu temples were places of worship not only for them but also for Buddhists. Of Muslims there was quite a good number, while Portuguese missionary activity had resulted in a fair sprinkling of Catholics in the highland Kingdom. The Kings were great patrons of Buddhism. They donated lands for the maintenance of temples, helped to enforce the discipline of the Sangha, got Buddhist missions from abroad whenever there was a need to restore the Upasampada and took a prominent part in temple ceremonies. Rajasinghe and Narendra Sinha were two exceptions in that they did not support Buddhism to the extent that other Kings did. Towards Muslims and Catholics the majority of Kings followed a policy of tolerance but sometimes under the influence of powerful elements in Kandy, or like the Nayakars, to ingratiate themselves with the people they departed from this policy of tolerance enjoined by Buddhism and persecuted Catholicism.

The spiritual leaders of Buddhism were the Sangha but the standard of the Sangha appears to have deteriorated occasionally and steps had to be taken by the Kings to restore the Upasampada. Vimala Dharma Suriya II in 1697 brought priests from Burma to restore the valid ordination. He is also said to have built a three storied Temple for the Tooth Relic at Kandy. Under his successor Buddhism once more suffered from insufficient royal support. In 1739 the Nayakars ascended the throne. They embraced Buddhism and took various measures to check the deterioration that had set in in the Sangha and to restore it to the high standard it maintained in the Anuradhapura period. There was at this time a general dissatisfaction with the type of lives the monks were living. Complaints and criticisms were made of their worldly and material outlook, of their luxurious

mode of living and their open violations of the Vinaya. Moreover temples and vihares had been neglected and Buddhism in general suffered. Sri Vijaya Rajasinha began to attend to all this. Temples and vihares were built, old ones repaired, Buddhist festivals revived and celebrated with much pomp and splendour. He also took measures to improve the standard of the Sangha. In 1741 a mission to Siam to bring monks to Ceylon failed because the vessel was wrecked. Another mission was sent in 1747 but before it could return the King died and was succeeded by Kirti Sri Raja Sinha.

The reign of Kirti Sri Raja Sinha is marked by a great Buddhist revival which was largely due to the energy, enthusiasm and devotion of a Buddhist monk called Velivita Saranankara. Born in 1698 he joined the Sangha at the age of 16. His austere life, his zeal, his sincerity and his scholarship made people look up to him, and crowds collected to hear him preach. He, however, had to remain a Samanera as the valid Upasampada had lapsed. In 1753 Kirti Sri Raja Sinha got a Buddhist mission from Siam. The Upasampada was restored and Saranankara received into the Sangha at the age of fifty-five. He was appointed Sangha Raja and under his direction there was a great revival of religion and letters in Kandy. Within three years of the restoration of the Upasampada as many as 700 monks are said to have been ordained. It was in this reign too that the Devale processions were made subordinate to the Maligawa procession and the Sacred Tooth and other Buddhist relics were given the most important places in the procession. This has been a distinctive feature of the Kandyan Perahera ever since. The tooth relic temple put up by Vimala Dharma Suriya II had been destroyed in the Dutch invasion of Kandy in 1765. Kirti Sri Raja Sinha built a new temple for the Tooth which was brought with much pomp and ceremony from the Kewulgama cave where it was preserved during the invasion. Adam's Peak which the "heretical" Rajasinghe had taken away from the Buddhist monks was once more restored to them with Saranankara in charge. This generous and munificent patro-

nage of royalty to Buddhism was continued in the reign of Kirti Sri's successors.



DALADA MALIGAWA

Literature. The deterioration noticed in the Sangha naturally affected the standard of learning in the monasteries and the output of literary works. The Kingdom of Kandy had hardly made any worthwhile contribution to the literature of Ceylon till the appearance of Velivita Saranankara on the scene. The only works of merit before his time were the *Maha Hatane*—a panegyric on Rajasinghe II—by Kirimettiyawe Mantri, and the *Sara Sangrahaya* which appeared early in the eighteenth century.

Narendra Sinha, although he was more or less indifferent to Buddhism, gave his patronage to Saranankara who towers over the religious and literary figures of the age. Gradually there gathered around the Sangha Raja a group of eminent

scholars who have made a notable contribution to the literature of the period. The Sangha Raja himself is the author of quite a number of works, chief of which are the *Bhessajja Manjussa Sannaya*, the *Bodhivamsa Sannaya*, and the *Sararthasangraha*—a Sinhalese work on Buddhism. He is also the author of the *Rupamali*, a treatise on the declension of Pali nouns and the *Abisambodhialankara*. Most famous of the Sangha Raja's pupils are Tibbotuwawe who continued the *Culavamsa* from the time of Vannibhuvanekabahu of Kurunegalle to the time of his patron Kirti Sri Raja Sinha, and Moratota, the tutor of Kirti Sri's brother who later became King under the name of Rajadhi Raja Sinha. Other eminent pupils of his are Dhammarakkhita, Sangharakkhita and Rambukkwellla.

Rajadhi Raja Sinha was a great patron of education and he not only held out rewards to literary men but set the example himself by composing a beautiful poem the *Asadrisa Jataka*. Ranked with the monk scholars of the time is a layman, Dunuwille Gajanayake Nilame, the author of two fine poems, the *Ratiratne Alankara* and the *Dunuwille Hatane*.

The literary revival in the capital of the highland kingdom appears to have influenced the scholars in the south and among the great writers of the time are some members of leading families in the Matara district. Dissanayake Mudaliyar of Matara composed the *Makkaraddja*; Samarajiva Pattayame Lekama is the author of a love poem, the *Viyovagaratnamalaya*, and of the *Kavminikondala*, a poem based on the Alinacitta Jataka. Finally there is the *Kavminimaldama*, a metrical version of the Sonska Jataka, by Samarasekera Dissanayake Muhandiram of Katuwana. Among the other works of note of the period are a Sinhalese translation of the *Milinda Prasna* and the translation of a Tamil tale the *Vallimata Katawe* into Sinhalese verse. The South also boasted of a poetess, Gajaman Nona, also known as Dona Isabel Cornelia Perumal, who composed some beautiful lyrics such as the one on the Nuqa Tree.

Kandy in the 16th, 17th & 18th centuries was still a mediaeval state. Its whole organisation was feudal and its society dominated by the caste system was static. The people's economy was a purely domestic agricultural one and their standard of living was very low. The only redeeming feature was the great revival of Buddhism and literature that followed the appearance of Velivita Saranankara. With the occupation of Dutch territory in Ceylon by the English the absorption of Kandy under British rule was just a matter of time.



CHAPTER X

Kandyan-Dutch Relations. 1658-1796.

In Chapter VIII a study was made of Kandyan-Dutch relations from 1602 to 1658. There were frequent disagreements between the allies (Kandy and the Dutch) over the interpretation of treaties, the retention of the fortresses captured from the Portuguese, the payment of expenses incurred by the Company in expelling the Portuguese and the truce between the Dutch and the Portuguese. By 1658 the Portuguese had been expelled from their fortresses in the island and the Dutch occupied most of the Portuguese territories in Ceylon (see Map on page 54). It has already been seen (Ch. VIII) that in keeping with their policy there was no need for the Dutch to conquer the whole island. They held the most important harbours and they hoped to control easily the entire trade of Ceylon. The Island's export trade was fairly extensive. For cinnamon, precious stones and pearls there was a demand in Europe. Elephants, precious stones, pearls, conch shells, dyes and arecanuts were taken to India, wax and shark skins to China and Japan. Imports too were fairly considerable. Rice, cloth and dried fish were imported from India; coffee, cardamoms and sugar from Java.

The trade of the territories under their control they obtained quite easily. However, as they wished to control the entire trade of the island they were dependent on Kandy for part of the cinnamon, for the major portion of the arecanuts, for precious stones, wax, timber and dye roots. In addition to this they had to obtain Kandyan permission to transport the elephants, caught in the Matara district, to Jaffna as between Mannar and Negombo the route lay through Kandyan territory (see map page 54). It was when they tried to get this trade that difficulties arose with the Kandyan court.

If the King and his courtiers on the one hand and the Company's officials on the other took a realistic view of the situation, harmonious relations could have been established to the mutual benefit of both. The Dutch should have tried to get the trade by giving the King a reasonable price for the articles they wanted. On the other hand the King should have realised that he could not expel the Dutch from Ceylon without the assistance of another European power and there was always the danger of the power that was called in settling down as masters of the maritime areas. Hence the King should have tried to strike a fair bargain with the Dutch. Instead of coming to terms on a basis that would have been fair and just to both, the Company and the Court were frequently in conflict with each other. The Dutch tried to drive a hard bargain and aimed at getting the Kandyan trade free or at least as cheap as possible. The King and his courtiers, on the other hand, always held the view that the Dutch were occupying territory in the island in violation of treaties. They never admitted the Dutch claim to the fortresses and lands occupied by them and their one aim was to get rid of the Dutch. Realising that they could not do this without foreign help and finding that foreign help was not forthcoming they decided to annoy and harass the Dutch in the hope that they would go away when they found that they were not getting the trade they so badly wanted. Consequently the history of Kandyan—Dutch relations is a history of conflict. Neither was prepared to give in and thus no compromise was possible between the political aspirations of the Kandyans and the economic aims of the Dutch. The Dutch Governor, Van Imhoff, in his memoirs reviewing the history of Kandyan—Dutch relations up to his time divides them broadly into three main periods. Although the features of the relations in one period are not found exclusively in that period it is proposed to adopt these divisions with some modifications for our purposes as they facilitate the study of the relations between Kandy and the Company.

Policy of Aggression

After the expulsion of the Portuguese from the island, Rajasinghe was involved in a series of internal troubles in Kandy (see Ch. IX). In spite of these he tried to harass the Dutch. He detained Dutch Ambassadors: he ordered the Kandyan not to trade with them and tried to get the Sinhalese in the low country to leave Dutch territory. When the internal troubles increased, however, he appealed to the Dutch to protect him against "domestic traitors". Rycloff Van Goens took advantage of the disturbances in Kandy and annexed fifteen korales from Kandyar territory. He also occupied Chilaw. These activities of the Dutch only drove the Kandyans to rally round their King and Rajasinghe attacked the Dutch frontiers. The Dutch retaliated by closing the harbours of Trincomalee, Kottiyar, Batticaloa and Kalpitiya, thus preventing the Kandyans from trading with the outside world. The Dutch officers at Batavia were against this aggressive policy of Rycloff Van Goens and his son. They saw that it did not help them to get the trade. Moreover there was the danger of frequent wars with Kandy. The Company was anxious to avoid war as much as possible as it considered war an item of heavy expenditure. So an order was sent to the Governor to restore to Kandy all lands occupied since 1665.

Conciliation

In 1679 Laurens Pyl was sent as Governor with instructions to conciliate Kandy at all costs. He was advised to avoid offending the King under any circumstances, and to try and obtain the various articles of trade by peaceful means. Pyl began by sending an embassy to Kandy and in order to win the good will of the King, tigers, lions and horses were sent to him as gifts as it was well known that Rajasinghe was anxious to have a collection of rare animals. Whenever the King wrote to the Dutch he addressed the Governor as "my Governor," referred to the Dutch as "my subjects," to the forts as "my forts," etc. Pyl never protested at these statements nor did he deny

these claims. On the other hand when he replied he signed himself as "Your Majesty's Faithful and Trusted Governor." When Rajasinghe died a "Memorial Ceremony" was held in Colombo which was attended by the Governor and all high Dutch officials. This policy of conciliation was carried out by Pyl's successors, Van Rhee and Geritt de Heere, during the reign of the next King, Vimala Dhama Suriya II. It was fairly successful as long as the Dutch had to deal with the King, but an important change was taking place in Kandy, viz., the chiefs were becoming very powerful and they began to make all sorts of demands from the Dutch. The more servile the Dutch became the more arrogant, haughty and recalcitrant the chiefs became. They had to be kept in good humour with expensive presents; but they never appeared to be satisfied and they continued to harass and annoy the Dutch. They asked for free trade at Kalpitiya. They insisted on an annual embassy being sent to Kandy to get permission to peel cinnamon, fell timber, transport elephants across Kandyan territory etc and they used their power to harass and annoy the Dutch. For example, permission to peel cinnamon would be given but the cinnamon peelers would be ordered not to do the work. Thus with the rise of the power of the chiefs the policy of conciliation began to fail and Batavia began to worry not only about the trade but also about their rights in the country. Hence it was decided to deal firmly with Kandy.

A Firm Attitude

In 1703 **Cornelius Joan Simons** came as Governor. He and his successors, chief of whom was Hendrick Becker, adopted a rather firm attitude in dealing with the King and his courtiers. They closed the only Kandyan harbours of Kalpitiya and Kottiyar. Thus making it impossible for Kandy to trade except with them. They never expected Kandy to retaliate in the way she did. The King and courtiers were not going to be bullied by the Dutch. They closed the thorn gates (Kadawats) at the frontiers and refused to trade with the Dutch. The King

adopted a surprising attitude. "Let the produce rot on the trees" he said, "the Dutch will not get it." The Dutch soon realised that the policy was not very successful as they were certainly not getting the trade. Worse was to come. The Sinhalese in Dutch territory looked upon the King of Kandy as their King and so he was able to rouse them to revolt against their Dutch masters. Thus not only were the Dutch not getting the trade but they had the additional trouble and expense of suppressing a series of revolts. The policy of dealing firmly with the court was soon proving a failure.

Harmony

In 1736 there came as Governor **Gustaf Baron Van Imhoff**. His aim was to harmonise the interests of the Company with those of the Court. He made Kandy realise that it was in her interests to trade with the Dutch. On the other hand he was prepared to pay Kandy a reasonable price for the commodities they wanted. For the first time harmony was established between the Company and the King and both the Court and Kandy benefitted. Unfortunately for the Dutch Narendra Sinha, the King of Kandy, died in 1739 leaving no Sinhalese heir to the throne. His wife's brother, a native of Madura, ascended the throne as Sri Vijaya Rajasinghe and the Nayakar dynasty was established in Kandy. These Nayakars were fully aware of the price at which the Dutch sold elephants, cinnamon, precious stones, pearls etc. in India and so they were anxious to secure these profits for themselves. Hence they were not prepared to trade with the Dutch. Moreover they had exalted notions of Kingship and insisted on their overlordship over the island being recognised. Finally they were friendly with the English in India and so they adopted a very haughty attitude towards the Company's officials. Hence with the accession of the Nayakars Kandyan-Dutch relations began to deteriorate very rapidly.

War

Meanwhile in Dutch territory there was increasing discontent with Dutch rule. Taxes, like the paddy tax, were framed and the renters normally exacted more than what was due from the people. This naturally caused much dissatisfaction, but the Company did nothing to check the injustices committed by the renters. In 1757 **Jan Shreuder** was appointed as Governor of the Co's possessions in the island. He was a remarkably able administrator and was able to grasp a situation at once and deal with it in a realistic manner. He was determined to protect, at all costs, the Co's cinnamon trade and to increase its income by a strict collection of revenue. He discovered that numerous coconut plantations had been opened by the people on cleared jungle land that really belonged to the Company. Hence he demanded half the produce of the lands cultivated without permission of the Company. He also tried to take over lands to which the people had no title although they had held them for generations. When the people refused to pay the exorbitant tax or to surrender the lands soldiers were sent to cut down the trees. The people in desperation rose in revolt. The rebellion was easily crushed but the King came in on the side of the rebels and the Dutch forts of Hanvella and Matara were captured by Kandyan troops.

Dutch policy towards Kandy now underwent a radical change. The Nayakars were refusing to trade with them. The King had openly assisted the rebels in Dutch territory and had by the attacks on Hanvella and Matara committed acts of aggression against the Company. Finally there was the possibility of their inviting the English to expel the Dutch from the island. If this was done there would be a definite threat to the Dutch control of the areas of production in the island. Hence the Dutch declared war and invaded Kandy, but soon withdrew. The arrival of an English ambassador, Pybus, in Kandy in 1762 made it clear to the Dutch that, if they were to retain their possessions in Ceylon, Kandy would have to be

subdued. Therefore Van Eck led an invasion of the Highlands in 1765. The King fled from the capital and sued for peace. Van Eck demanded that the King should surrender his crown and become a vassal of the Company paying annual tribute. The King refused to accept these terms. Van Eck proceeded with the invasion and occupied Kandy but sickness and inclement weather forced the Dutch to retreat. Van Eck died shortly afterwards and was succeeded by **Willem Falck**. The new governor decided to starve Kandy into submission. He blockaded her harbours, cut her off from all foreign intercourse and sent raids into Kandy to destroy crops. The King was forced once more to sue for peace.

The Treaty of 1766

Governor Shreuder in his memoir had reviewed Kandyan-Dutch relations and had outlined the main problems that had arisen and still remained unsolved. To begin with, the Court never admitted the Dutch right to the forts and territories held by them. Secondly, all sorts of vexatious and humiliating conditions had been laid down for securing the trade and even when permission was granted obstacles were placed in their way. Finally deserters from Dutch territory found a safe refuge for themselves in Kandy. In addition to these long standing differences a new problem had risen since Pybus' visit to Kandy viz., the English interest in Ceylon was a definite threat to the Dutch possession of the harbours and fortresses. Shreuder had also outlined the remedies and Governor Falck did not hesitate to draft a treaty solving all these problems and to impose it on Kandy.

1. The King acknowledged the "independent and paramount sovereignty" of the Dutch over the disavans of Matara, Galle, Colombo and Jaffna, and the districts of Kalpitiya, Mannar, Trincomalee and Batticaloa.
2. A strip of sea coast one *gawva* in width connecting the Dutch possessions was surrendered by the King.
3. The trade of Kandy and the permission to peel cinnamon, fell and transport timber etc. was granted to the

Dutch. 4. The Kandyan were to have free access to the salt pans and compensation was to be paid annually to Kandy for any revenue lost by surrendering the strip of seaboard. 5. Finally all deserters from Dutch territory and all Europeans found in Kandy were to be surrendered to the Company, while all deserters from Kandy would be sent back to the King.

It is one thing to impose a treaty on a people. It is an entirely different thing to enforce it. The King and his courtiers over and over again asked for a modification of the treaty but the Company would not agree. Finally they began to violate the terms of the agreement. The Company's affairs were now in a bad way and their forces were not sufficient to prevent the Kandyan from violating the treaty. Very soon, for all practical purposes, the treaty ceased to exist. In 1796 the Dutch possessions in Ceylon passed under the control of the English East India Company and Dutch rule in Ceylon came to an end.



CHAPTER XI.

Dutch Rule In Ceylon

The Dutch East India Company had been formed in 1602. The Board of Directors of the Company consisted of seventeen members appointed by the shareholders and was usually referred to as the "Seventeen". It appointed the Governor-General and the Council of India and laid down the policy of the Company. Being Directors of a trading company their primary aim was profits and to a certain extent they administered their eastern territories as any company would manage an estate. But although they were owners and administrators of land they also had people under them and they certainly did not neglect altogether the welfare of their subjects. While their dominant motive was profits there were also secondary aims as the propagation of the Dutch Reformed Faith and the settlement of their people in their colonies.

The chief Dutch officer in the East was the Governor-General who resided at Batavia. He was appointed by the "Seventeen" and he was assisted by a Council called the "Council of India." The members of the council too were appointed by the Board. The Dutch service in the East was divided into four branches. There was the *Merchant Service* consisting of three grades, *Opperkoopman*, or senior merchant, *Koopman* or merchant and *Onderkoopman* or junior merchant. There were also *Boekouders* (book-keepers) and *Aanquikeling* (clerks). The merchant service was more or less like the Public Service of today. Next came the *Naval and Military Service* consisting of the usual grades of naval and military officers. There was also the *Ecclesiastical Service* which consisted of *Predikants* (Ministers) and *Krankbezoekers* (Visitors to the sick). Finally there was the *Artisan Service* in charge of Public Works.

For purposes of government the Dutch divided their territories in Ceylon into the three Commanderies of Colombo, Jaffna and Galle. The chief Dutch officer in the island was the *Governor* who was a member of the Council of India. He was assisted by a *Politike Raad* or Political Council consisting of the *Hoofd Administrator* (the Controller of Revenue), the *Dissava* of Colombo, The Chief Military Officer, The *Fiscal* (Public Prosecutor) and five others. The Governor was in charge of all the Dutch possessions in Ceylon but the Commandery of Colombo was directly under his rule. All legislative and executive power was vested in him subject to the supervision and control of the Governor-General and Council of India. The chief officers in Jaffna and Galle were the *Commandeurs* who were under the direction and control of the Governor. They too were assisted in their areas by councils of senior officers. Each Commandery consisted of the forts in the area and a *dissavani*. The *dissavani* of Colombo extended from Kalpitiya to the Bentota river and was under a *Dissava*, while at Kalpitiya, Negombo and Kalutara there were *Opperhoofds*. The *dissavani* of Jaffna roughly extended from a line stretching across the island from Mannar to Trincomalee to the northern end of the Peninsular. It too was under a *Dissave* with *Opperhoofds* at Mannar and Trincomalee. Batticaloa too was under an *Opperhoofd* and was within the jurisdiction of the *Dissave* of Jaffna. The *dissavani* in the commandery of Galle was called the *dissavani* of Matara. This area too was under a *dissave*. All the *Dissaves* and *Opperhoofds* were Dutchmen.

In administering these *dissavani*s the Dutch followed the old system of government. The *dissavani*s consisted of *Korales*, two of which were under a *Korale*. Under a *Korale* were the *Atukorales* in charge of *Pattus* while the villages were in charge of *Vidanes*. These officers were trusted natives in these areas and usually they had to be of the Dutch Reformed Faith. They had to maintain law and order in their respective areas, collect revenue, and attend to agriculture and trade. As in the time of the Sinhalese Kings the officers were paid in land.

Cinnamon was the chief concern of the Dutch and a separate department was set up to attend to this trade. It was under a Dutch officer called the *Captain of the Mahabaddé*. The peelers themselves belonged to the Salagama caste and they lived in separate villages. At the age of twelve a cinnamon peeler had to supply the company with 62 pounds of the bark per year. This quota was gradually increased each year till it reached the maximum of 682 pounds. This amount had to be supplied free as it was considered part of the service due for the land they held. The peelers were, however, supplied with rations of rice, other provisions and arrack during the season. To induce the Sinhalese to bring more than their quota of the precious bark they were offered ninety cents for every six hundred pounds they brought over and above the quota. The Dutch protected their cinnamon monopoly by a series of laws, penalties for violation of which were very severe. A cinnamon plant in any part of their territories belonged to the Company while the penalty for destroying, damaging or stealing cinnamon was death.

The Judicial System

The most significant change the Dutch made in the system of government in their territories was the setting up of a system of Judicature and the introduction of Roman-Dutch Law. To begin with the inferior courts, there were the courts of the Fiscal or Dissave. All civil cases within the forts of Colombo, Galle and Jaffna between Europeans or natives, not involving a sum of more than one hundred rix dollars were heard by the Fiscal. Similar cases outside the forts were heard by the Dissave. These officers also heard minor criminal cases such as those dealing with assaults, petty thefts etc.

In Colombo, Galle and Jaffna were set up *Civil Raads* (Civil Courts). Civil cases between Europeans or natives not exceeding one hundred and twenty rix dollars throughout the respective commanderies were heard by these courts. The court consisted of the following:- a member of the Council who was president,

one merchant, a captain, a lieutenant and a few clerks of the company. All civil cases involving an amount over one hundred and twenty six dollars were heard by the Raad van Justitie (Court of Justice) at Colombo, Jaffna or Galle. These Courts of Justice also heard appeals from the Civil Raads.

Land Raads were established at Colombo, Jaffna, Kalpitiya, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Matara and Galle. These dealt with litigation touching land among the natives. The land Raad consisted of the Dissave, who presided, the Fiscal, the Thombo Keeper, the chief surveyor, and two Ceylonese. Appeals were possible from these land raads to the Raad van Justitie in the respective areas.

All *criminal cases* of importance were inquired into by the Fiscal with two members of the Court of Justice. If they thought there was some proof for the accusation they committed the case to the *Raad van Justitie* in Colombo, Jaffna or Galle. The court consisted of the President who was the Hoofd Administrator, the Auditor, two or three Captains, the Civil Paymaster and a few others. These courts could hear criminal cases and civil cases exceeding one hundred and twenty six dollars in the respective commanderies. They also heard appeals from the Civil Raads and from the Land Raads in their areas. Appeals were also possible from the Raad van Justitie in Jaffna and Galle to the Raad van Justitie in Colombo. A final appeal was possible from the Raad van Justitie in Colombo to the High Court of Justice in Batavia.

The Dutch did not impose their system of law on the country. It was introduced very gradually and very often it was modified to suit local conditions. It was normally applied to cases between Europeans; to cases where local law was vague or for which the local law made no provision; or where the Dutch considered the relevant local law too harsh and cruel. Thus gradually woven into the fabric of our local law and custom Roman Dutch Law came to constitute the major portion of our common law. Unlike the Portuguese the Dutch were very methodical and they were anxious not to allow their rule to run counter to the customs and traditions, ideas and prejudices of the people. Moreover the Dutch

officers were mostly merchants and were certainly better administrators than the soldiers whom the Portuguese sent. The Dutch made a serious attempt to acquaint themselves with the laws and customs of the people and, as far as possible, to govern in accordance with them. In Jaffna where there was greater uniformity than in the Sinhalese areas with regard to the laws and customs regulating marriage, inheritance, loans, mortgages etc. The Dutch were able to put into legal form the Thesavalamai—a compendium of the customs of Jaffna—and to base their administration on it. In the Sinhalese areas they were guided by Sinhalese officials who acquainted them with the local law in a particular case.

Revenue and Profits

As the chief aim of the company was maximum profits it is interesting to study the various sources of the company's income which could be divided broadly into (a) Revenue—proceeds from taxation; and (b) profits—the excess of income over expenditure in any commercial undertaking. As the Dutch continued to a large extent the native system of administration they also continued all the former taxes. Thombos (Registers) were compiled giving all details of dues and taxes were collected much more systematically than the Sinhalese or Portuguese had ever done. The chief tax was the land tax which ranged from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{10}$ of the produce of the land depending on the fertility of the soil. Other important taxes were the poll tax; the death duty which amounted $\frac{1}{3}$ of the estate of the deceased and the fish tax by which $\frac{1}{3}$ of the catch had to be surrendered to the government. Fishing boats and nets too were taxed. A cocount tax brought in a tenth of the yield of all cocount trees. Toddy and arrack rents were small but no source of income was too small to be ignored by the company. Even the ground tax at all bazaars was carefully collected. The most interesting taxes were the verandah tax and the tax levied on moors and chetties who wore sandals. They treated the moors and chetties as rival traders and subjected them to various disabilities, the chief of which was forced labour which they were allowed to commute by the payment of a tax.

Economic Development.

In discussing the sources of profits of the company in Ceylon it is convenient to deal with the economic development of the island by the Dutch as the two are closely connected. Centuries of commercial activity had taught the Dutch to exploit to the full every possible avenue of profit. The mercantile theory was in vogue in Europe and the Dutch were reluctant to take gold and silver out of Holland to pay for the spices and other articles from the east. Hence they were anxious to control the trade between the different countries in the east hoping with the profits thus obtained to pay for the spices and other articles they needed for the trade with the west. In keeping with the same theory they were anxious to reduce the imports to their territories in the island and increase its exports. Thus it will be easy to understand why the Dutch tried, on the one hand, to control the entire import and export trade of the island, on the other hand, to produce in their territories all the articles that were formerly imported. Their attempts to control the import and export trade in the island have been explained in the previous chapter. It is proposed now to deal only with the economic development of the lands under their rule.

The Dutch made attempts to produce in their lands all the articles they wanted. They needed the Kandyan supplies of cinnamon but had so much trouble in getting it that they decided to cultivate the plant in their territory. *Cinnamon plantations* were opened at Maradana and Averiawatte. Although these were successful they were never completely independent of the Kandyan supply. Attempts to cultivate *pepper, cardamons and coffee*, however, were not so successful and the King's subjects were persuaded to cultivate them in the highlands and sell them to the Dutch. Among other important imports to the country were *rice, cloth and sugar*. They tried to produce these articles too in the island. Irrigation works like the Giant's tank and the canals on the Deduru Oya were

restored and large tracts of land in these areas, and in Mutturajawela, Grandpass and the Matara districts were brought under cultivation. Two thousand slaves were imported from India for this work as additional labour was necessary. These efforts, except the Mutturajawela scheme, were attended with such success that the revenue from grain tax was more than doubled. The sugar cane too was cultivated and unrefined sugar was turned out with rum as a by-product. Finally cotton was cultivated in the Vanni and a textile industry was set up in Puttalam. Weavers and dyers were imported from India for this work and a coarse type of cloth was manufactured and sold to Kandy. A very important source of revenue as well as of profit was the pearl fishery and no opportunity of holding such a fishery was missed. To facilitate the internal trade in their lands the company built roads and canals. While harsh in enforcing their trading rights the company was ready to reward those who served them faithfully. Bonuses, medals, chains and titles were conferred liberally on a people who were inordinately fond of these trappings. When one studies how systematically the Dutch collected their dues and how carefully they organised the economic activities in the early days of their stay in the island it is not surprising that the company once paid a dividend of 132%, while the average dividend was in the region of 25%. How economically the Dutch administered their colonies can be judged from the fact that with the profits of the arecanut trade alone they were able sometimes to pay all the expenses of their garrisons in the island.

Dutch Missionary Activity.

In dealing with the religious policy of the Dutch it is convenient to describe their educational system also as the two are very closely connected. One of the secondary aims of the Dutch was the propagation of the Presbyterian form of Christianity. Dutch ministers, like the Rev. Baldeus, who came to Ceylon were sincere men anxious to convert Buddhists, Hindus and Catholics to the Dutch Reformed Faith. But Dutch

religious activity came under the control and direction of the Company whose primary aim was profits. While the attitude of the missionaries was spiritual the Company's aims were economic and political. The Company found that the Buddhists and Hindus in their lands had feelings of loyalty to the King of Kandy as he was the great benefactor of these two ancient religions of Ceylon. When the Dutch occupied Colombo the King had welcomed Catholic refugees and had allowed them to settle in various parts of Kandy. Consequently Catholics who remained in Dutch territory were well disposed towards the King. The King had traded on the loyalty of these people and had occasionally roused them to revolt against the Dutch. The Dutch felt that the link between these people and the King was religion and the Company considered it a matter of political expediency to convert these people to the Dutch Reformed Faith. Thus the link between them and Kandy could be broken and they could be made loyal subjects of the Company. If this could be done there would be less opposition to Dutch rule, more co-operation in their economic activity and ultimately more profits. The Company, therefore, aimed at speedy conversion rather than at firm conviction. Consequently while they converted large numbers the ultimate results of their missionary activity were not so lasting as those of the Portuguese. Quite a few Governors draw attention to the fact that the conversions were nominal and that in secret the "converts" continued to practise their former religion.

The normal method of preaching, convincing and converting the people to Christianity was employed but this was a slow process. A printing press was introduced and pamphlets and tracts were published in the native languages, while a Catechism and Bible too were translated and printed. As did the Portuguese the Dutch too held out temporal rewards as an inducement to conversion. Their chief method of conversion was, however, the school. Through these institutions conversion was carried out on a large scale. A school was set up for a group of villages, Attendance of the children in the area was

compulsory and parents were fined for non-attendance of their children in school. Each school had two to four teachers and a catechist was appointed to a group of schools. The children were taught in their own language. Reading, writing, catechism and prayers of the Dutch Reformed Faith were the main subjects taught. The schools in each Dissavani were under the direction and control of the Scholarchal Commission for that area. The Commission for each Dissavani consisted of the Dissava, the clergy and a few others appointed by the Governor. Twice a year two members of the board, one of whom had to be a clergyman, visited these schools. The School thombos were checked, the pupils were examined and those who were found to have a satisfactory knowledge of the religion were baptised. This was the first time that an organised system of education was set up in the country. In 1788 the number of schools in the Dissavani of Colombo alone was fifty-five. Special schools were set up for the education of European children as the Dutch were averse to the mixing up of "native" and European. In Colombo there was a Seminary for higher education. Here too religion figured largely in the syllabus but unlike in the elementary schools the medium of instruction was Dutch. Greek, Latin and Hebrew were important subjects in the curriculum. These schools were intended to train Ceylonese for the ministry and also to educate school masters and catechists. Besides these methods for spreading their religion the Dutch also resorted to force. In contemporary Europe Protestants and Catholics persecuted each other whenever the opportunity occurred. Moreover the Diet of Augsburg had in 1555 decreed that the ruler could dictate the religion of his subjects. This principle was adhered to by the princes of Europe. In keeping with these ideas the Dutch passed laws forbidding public worship in any religion other than the Presbyterian Faith. Disabilities of various sorts were imposed on Buddhists, Hindus, Catholics and Muslims. They were naturally most harsh with the Catholics. "Popery" had to be suppressed at all costs. Moreover at the beginning of their rule in the island there was the danger of the Portuguese

making an attempt to regain their territories in the island. In such an event the Dutch expected the Catholics to support the Portuguese. Catholic priests were forbidden under pain of death to come into Dutch territory. In spite of this priests like Father Joseph Vaz crept into the Dutch provinces to minister to the Catholics and thus helped to maintain the faith in Ceylon. Very often the administration became lax in enforcing these laws against the adherents of other religions and they were sometimes taken to task by the Clergy. By the time the Dutch left the island they had converted large numbers to the Dutch Reformed Faith but, as some governors feared, the majority of the conversions were nominal and with the end of Dutch rule in the island most of them returned to Buddhism, Hinduism, or Catholicism.



CHAPTER XII.

Decline of the Dutch Power in Ceylon.

A brief study of English activity in India is necessary in order to understand why they considered it essential to secure a foothold in Ceylon. The eastern trade had proved so profitable to the Portuguese that the Dutch were not the only other people who tried to secure its profits. An English East India Company had been formed in 1600 while in 1664 the French too had organised a Company for the same purposes. When the English and the French merchants came to the East there was no question at all of any attempt to conquer territory in India, for not only were these trading companies ill-equipped for such a vast programme of territorial conquest but they realised the impossibility of successfully fighting the Great Mughal dynasty that was at the time, all powerful in India. Hence they were satisfied with securing trading stations along the coast with the permission of the Emperor,

With the death of Aurangzebe in 1707 and the subsequent decline of the Mughal Empire in the XVIII century, however, the situation changed. India broke up into a medley of warring states. The governors of the French Company saw here a great opportunity. By interfering in these quarrels and helping one rival against another they hoped to place native rulers under an obligation to them. They planned to use the power thus obtained to get rid of the English from India and thus dominate all the trade of this vast subcontinent. The English were not going to be deprived of their trade so easily. They too took sides with native rulers and very often the French and English found themselves on opposite sides. This policy naturally led to war in India between the French and the English and the two powers did not hesitate to seize the opportunity of any war in Europe to fight and secure more political control in India.

It became increasingly clear to the English that the ultimate victory and the maintenance of power in India depended to a large extent on naval supremacy in the Indian Ocean, on having a harbour from which they could control the western coasts of India, and from which their ships could operate in the Bay of Bengal. A harbour in Ceylon would provide them with these strategic advantages. Hence the English turned their attention to Ceylon and as early as 1762 sent an ambassador to Kandy with the object of gaining a foothold in the island. Thus it will be noticed that the English interest in the island was primarily strategic and not so much political or economic.

The Decline of the Dutch.

For close on half a century the Dutch Republic led all Europe not only in trade and colonisation but also in literature and art. The Republic had grown on the spoils of the fallen Spaniards and Portuguese and the Dutch had been able to keep their greatness for a time because they had no rivals. England was busy with the great conflict between King and Parliament while France was fully engaged in Europe. When England and France had settled their affairs at home and turned their attention to America and the East there was no more hope for the Dutch.

Soon after 1650 England had finished her Civil Wars and, under the strong rule of Cromwell, began to look about for opportunities for trade abroad. The Dutch naturally would not surrender their trade without a struggle. Consequently three naval wars followed and by the end of the century the bulk of the world's shipping trade passed into English hands.

As it was the English who finally brought about the extinction of the Dutch power in Ceylon it will help to understand the decline of the Dutch if we compare conditions in Holland with those in England in the last quarter of the XVIIIth.

century. In 1794 the armies of the French Republic swept into Holland and set up the Batavian Republic. The new Republican government took over from the Company the administration of its territories in the East but its hands were so full stabilising its own position in Holland that it could pay no attention to its trade and colonies in the east. In England, however, political conditions were stable and the British Government was able to devote much attention to its eastern interests. Financially too the Dutch company had suffered considerably. As a result of the naval wars referred to and as a result of corruption in the company's service the finances of the company were at a low ebb. Consequently the company had to reduce the expenditure on its armed forces. In Great Britain, on the other hand, the Industrial Revolution had inaugurated a wave of prosperity and the English had no difficulty in organising, equipping and maintaining considerable armed forces in the East. Finally in the course of the French Revolutionary wars the English navy emerged supreme and there was no European fleet to challenge it. Hence a comparison of the political and economic conditions in Holland and England and of their relative armed strengths would reveal the superiority of the English over the Dutch. These differences noticed in the centre of the two imperialist systems naturally affected the extremities also and consequently the English power in the east was politically more stable, economically more sound, and from a military and a naval point of view far superior to the Dutch.

To make matters worse for the Dutch a serious deterioration had taken place in the affairs of the Dutch company in the East. The government had become moribund and effete. Underpaid officials took to private trade at the expense of the company. Every Dutch officer was torn between three objectives; to keep some kind of order in his district; to make a profit for the company and to make money for himself. If he neglected the first two he certainly did not neglect the last. These officers who, in the early days of the 17th century, were so enthusiastic and active had now degenerated into a corrupt and lethargic

set. Percival remarked that by the end of the eighteenth century most Dutchmen in Ceylon began the day "with gin and tobacco and ended it with tobacco and gin". Their hold over their native subjects too declined. Vexatious taxes imposed on the principle of maximum revenue at all costs and laws of unnecessary severity alienated the Sinhalese who expressed their opposition in frequent revolts. The attitude of Kandy too was dangerous. The Nayakkars were definitely hostile and violated over and over again the clauses of the treaty of 1766 by which the Dutch sought to hem them in and cut them off from all dealings with foreign powers. Finally the English for their own reasons were showing an interest in Ceylon. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the Dutch power in the island, with all these forces against it, "collapsed at the first touch of the advancing English".

As far as the English in India were concerned the need to secure a harbour in Ceylon was fully realised. By the treaty of 1766, however, the King had surrendered to the Dutch Company a strip of land along the entire coast. Hence English aims in Ceylon would necessarily involve them in conflict with the Dutch. But this was not possible as long as England was at peace with Holland. Only a war between the two countries would give the English in India an opportunity of attacking the Dutch stations in the island. The first opportunity came during the American war of Independence. France sent help to the colonists in 1780. Holland too expressed sympathy with them and declared war on England. The English in Madras seized the opportunity and sent a fleet to capture Trincomalee. The French, who in the War of Independence were the allies of the colonists and therefore of the Dutch, now came to the rescue of their Dutch allies in Ceylon and a French fleet recaptured Trincomalee which was returned to the Dutch in 1784. Thus the first opportunity to gain a foothold in Ceylon had come and gone. There was nothing else for the English to do but await a further opportunity.

This came in 1794 when the French Revolutionary armies entered Holland and set up the Batavian Republic forcing the Stadtholder to flee to England. The English now tried various diplomatic methods to get the Dutch to admit English troops into their stations in Ceylon. A letter was obtained from the Stadtholder to the Governor of Colombo asking him to admit English troops into the Dutch fortresses in the island. The Governor suspicious of English intentions tried various ways of evading the order and finally declared his allegiance to the new Republic. This made the Dutch in Ceylon the enemies of the English—not their allies—and the English forthwith attacked the Dutch possessions in the island. The attack began on the 26th of August, 1795. The Dutch hardly offered any resistance and by the 16th of February the following year all Dutch possessions in the island had passed under English control.

The Results of Dutch Rule in Ceylon.

When the Portuguese came to the island, Kandy was a subordinate kingdom and paid tribute to Kotte. There was no division of the Sinhalese into low country and Kandyan. Kotte and Jaffna had passed under Portuguese rule but Kandy remained Independent defying all attempts of the foreigner to conquer it. Hence Kandy came to be looked upon as the last bastion of Sinhalese independence against foreign domination. This naturally led to a consciousness of superiority among the Kandyan and a distinction came to be made between the invincible Kandyans of the Highlands on the one hand and the low country Sinhalese subject to foreign rule on the other. Dutch rule in the low country strengthened this division and gave more colour to the idea of Kandyan superiority.

The most notable, valuable and lasting contribution made by the Dutch to Ceylon was the introduction of Roman-Dutch Law. It has already been seen how Roman-Dutch Law was gradually woven into the fabric of our laws and customs and how it came to constitute the major portion of our common law. It also proved very helpful in the development of society in

Ceylon. With the development of trade and commerce the ideas of the people and the social structure were undergoing a gradual transformation and the ancient laws and customs were getting out of date. There was no need to alter the laws and customs of the country to suit these changes as Roman—Dutch law gradually came to supply the need.

Dutch rule also resulted in the spread of the Dutch Reformed Faith in the island. Although the results of Dutch missionary activity were not so lasting as that of the Portuguese nevertheless another century and a half of Christian domination led to the strengthening of Christian ideas that had, under the Portuguese, begun to influence the people. The emphasis on the monogamous and permanent aspect of marriage continued while the idea of the brotherhood of man tended to reduce the rigid distinctions of a caste ridden society. This was reinforced by the principle of the equality of man emphasised by Roman-Dutch law. It is of course obvious that Dutch missionary activity affected Buddhism, Hinduism and Catholicism adversely. Together with Dutch missionary activity went their system of education. Education of various types existed in Ceylon from very early times but it was under the Dutch that an organised system of education was for the first time set up in the country and a definite attempt made to spread literacy among the people.

A study of the economic development of the island under the Dutch will reveal that the main features of our present economic set up appears to have been laid down. It was they who introduced the plantation system to Ceylon with their cinnamon, pepper, cardamon and coffee gardens. Attempts were made to achieve selfsufficiency in food within their territories and industries like the textile, rum and sugar concerns were started. Finally roads and canals helped to improve transport and communications and develop trade,

A very slight influence was exerted on the Sinhalese language by the introduction of a number of Dutch words into it. But with the introduction of the printing press and the publication of pamphlets, etc., a Sinhalese and Tamil Christian literature was developed. The Dutch also introduced to the island a new type of architecture. Houses with high roofs, broad verandahs, and large windows were built and became very common in the island even after their rule. They set up the furniture industry at Moratuwa which still survives and they introduced into Ceylon the type of furniture fashionable in Europe in the time of Louis XIV. It is still referred to as "Dutch Furniture" in Ceylon.

In the island today there are many survivals of Dutch rule. Forts such as those at Galle, Matara and Jaffna, churches like those at Wolvendhal, Galle and Jaffna, and many other buildings are a silent tribute to the skill and ability of the Dutch as builders. The canal from Negombo to the Maha Oya and the one from Kotte to the Moratuwa lake as well as a few roads are a testimony to the development of trade under their administration. Finally the common law of the island which consists largely of Roman Dutch law is a lasting memorial of Dutch rule in Ceylon.



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