

# THE CEYLON JOURNAL OF HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES

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### Reviews

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*Managing Editor*  
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**Reviews**



### LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

- W. I. Siriweera, B.A. (Ceylon), Ph.D. (London), Lecturer in History, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.
- A. C. L. Ameer Ali, B.A. (Ceylon), M.Sc. (London), Lecturer in Economic History, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.
- R. A. L. H. Gunawardhana, B.A. (Ceylon), Ph.D. (London), Senior Lecturer in History, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.
- G. H. Peiris, B.A. (Ceylon), Ph.D. (Cantab.), Senior Lecturer in Geography, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya.



# LAND TENURE AND REVENUE IN MEDIAEVAL CEYLON (A.D. 1000-1500)

W. I. SIRIWEERA

## I

### INTRODUCTION

In the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. Aryan speaking migrants from India colonized Ceylon and their descendants came to be known as the Sinhalese. These early settlers brought along with them the customs, institutions and some aspects of the social structure of contemporary India. As part of this legacy, the ideas on land tenures which prevailed in their homeland at the time of their departure were transported and used, with some modifications in Ceylon.

There were no pre-Aryan irrigation works in Ceylon which suggests that it was probably the early Indian colonists who first introduced paddy cultivation into this country and later spread the practice throughout the island. Extensive dry cultivations were also begun, including various kinds of fine grains. The earliest centres of their agricultural operations were at places like Mahātīttha, Uruvela, Upatissagāma, Anurādhapura, Vijitapura and Māgama and it was in these centres that their land customs and land tenures began to evolve.

In the course of time as a result of invasions, migrations, trade and cultural contacts, the Sinhalese came under Dravidian influences. Their socio-economic system was also influenced, and profoundly changed throughout the centuries,

#### Abbreviations in notes

A.L.T.R.	<i>Ancient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon</i> , H. W. Codrington, Colombo, 1938.
A.S.C.A.R.	<i>Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Annual Reports</i> .
A.S.C.M.	<i>Archaeological Survey of Ceylon Memoirs</i> .
C.C.C.	<i>Ceylon Coins and Currency</i> , H. W. Codrington, Colombo, 1924.
C.J.S.G.	<i>Ceylon Journal of Science, Section G</i> .
C.V.	<i>Cūlavamsa</i> .
E.I.	<i>Epigraphia Indica</i> .
E.Z.	<i>Epigraphia Zeylanica</i> .
J.R.A.S.C.B.	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch</i> .
J.R.A.S.G.B.	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Great Britain</i> .
M.V.	<i>Mahāvamsa</i> .
P.jv.	<i>Pūjāvalīya</i> , ed. Bentota Saddhātissa, Panadura, 1930.
SDHRV.	<i>Saddharmaratnāvalīya</i> , ed. D. B. Jayatilaka, Colombo, 1930.
S.I.I.	<i>South Indian Inscriptions</i> .
U.C.R.	<i>University of Ceylon Review</i> .
U.H.C.	<i>University of Ceylon; History of Ceylon</i> .

by various cultural and economic forces in the regional environment of Ceylon. By degrees a distinct and autonomous society and economy evolved in Ceylon which displayed considerable variations from the parent Indian institutions, through the fact of separation and partial isolation and partly through the various Indian influences brought upon the island.

As in India, caste played an important role in Ceylon as the basis of social stratification. "Caste, did not originate in Ceylon, it was transplanted in concept and grew both by infution and maturation".<sup>1</sup> In the course of this maturation caste groups, some of which do not even resemble Indian castes or subcastes were formed.

The conventional fourfold caste hierarchy, i.e. the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sūdra divisions, is occasionally mentioned in the Ceylonese sources of the period between A.D. 1000-1500<sup>2</sup> (as well as in those of the earlier periods), but it is doubtful whether Sinhalese Society was actually organized on the basis of these four castes.<sup>3</sup> On the contrary, literature and inscriptions indicate that the segmentation of Sinhalese society into some of the numerous caste groups that exist today took place before or during the period under review. The *Janavamsa*, which was most probably written in the fifteenth century, refers to various castes such as *Govi*, *Pēsakāra* or *Salāgama*, *Radā*, *Durāvo*, *Kumbal*, *Kevul*, *Beravā*, *Hakuru*, *Padu* and *Roḍi*.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately the available evidence gives us no help in determining the exact period of this segmentation.

Caste groups in the period under consideration are sometimes denoted by such general terms as *jāti*, *gōtra* and *kula*.<sup>5</sup> But these are also used in the texts to indicate family, race or tribe.<sup>6</sup> However, if we mean by caste system a social organization or structure functioning through generally endogamous hierarchical birth status groups, and possessing functional and ritual roles,<sup>7</sup> such a system seems to have existed in this period.

A Tamil inscription from Badumuttāva datable to A.D. 1122, records a judgement passed by five chiefs (*pañca pradhāna*) of King Sri Virabāhudēvār in a dispute between washermen and blacksmiths. The cause of the dispute was the refusal by washermen to perform their caste services to blacksmiths.

1. Bryce Ryan, *Caste in Modern Ceylon*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick 1953, p. 5.
2. *E.Z.* IV no. 2, *Saddharmālanakāra*, edited by Kirielle Gñānawimala, Colombo 1954, p. 776; *Dasajātakavastava*, edited by Gunānanda, 1928, p. 158.
3. Even in India, these remained chiefly in books and were used as generic terms rather than as actual caste names.
4. Hugh Neville, *The Janavamsa*, *Taprobanian* I, (3) Feb. 1886, pp. 74-93; I, (4) April, 1886, pp. 103-114.
5. M. B. Ariyapala, *Society in Medieval Ceylon*, Colombo, 1956, p. 284.
6. *Ibid.*
7. See Bryce Ryan, *op. cit.*, p. 19 and M. B. Ariyapala, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-92.



The inscription states that the five chiefs, having inquired into the former custom and having seen reason for the blacksmiths to receive various services from the washermen, made the latter perform such services to the former.<sup>8</sup> This clearly suggests the existence of a caste hierarchy, but it would be difficult to determine the exact or even the approximate place of each caste in the hierarchical system. The Ambagamuva rock inscription of Vijayabāhu I (1055-1110) also indicates the existence of a caste hierarchy. According to this inscription, Vijayabāhu I had a platform constructed on Adams Peak below the main terrace of the sacred foot to facilitate worship of the footprint by low castes (*adhamajātin*).<sup>9</sup>

The Badumuttāva inscription explicitly asserts that the washermen were bound to perform their caste duties to members of certain other castes and that no refusal was tolerated. The phrase "...having inquired into the former custom" again shows that relationships between members of two castes were defined by custom and social usage.

Most castes had a service role or occupation as their primary distinguishing feature. Ceylon, like India, emphasized these vocational and service aspects of caste much more than ritual aspects. Caste groups were brought into a service system in which birth status was the genesis of role and function. Caste obligations or services had to be performed by members of a lower caste towards a higher, and by all to the temple and to the king. There were also obligations on the part of higher castes towards the lower ones.

The king sometimes remunerated caste services by grants of land. For example a goldsmith (*ācāri*) in the service of Parākramabāhu VI (1412-1467) was given a plot of land by the king in return for his services.<sup>10</sup> The Oruvala copper plate, datable to the fifteenth century, refers to a grant of some land to two Brahmin *purohitas* by the same king in lieu of their services.<sup>11</sup>

Remuneration in consideration of certain regular services to the temple by members of various professional or caste groups was also made by assigning land from the temple estates. According to a ninth century Sanskrit inscription from the Abhayagiri monastery, stone cutters and carpenters engaged in the services of that monastery were to be allotted one and a half *kiri*<sup>12</sup> of fields from

8. *E.Z.*, III, no. 33; The term *pañcapradhāna* occurs in an inscription at the Lankātilaka temple and in the *Kandavuru Sīrita* as well. But it is not known precisely who these five officials were. Paranavitana surmises that *pañca pradhāna* is a corruption of *vañśa-pradhāna*, the term applied to the heads of various caste organizations. *U.H.C.* Vol. I, Pt. II, p. 732.

9. *E.Z.*, V, no. 35.

10. *E.Z.*, III, no. 24.

11. *E.Z.*, III, no. 3.

12. A measurement of land. *Kiri*, Pāli *karisa* is equivalent to four *amunas*. Before the eleventh century *paya* and *kiriya* were the most common land measurements but thereafter these terms fell into disuse and terms such as *yāla*, *amuna* and *pāla* were introduced in their place.

the lands set apart to finance renovation work at the monastery. In addition they were given a plot of dry-land for sowing 'inferior grains'. The temple official who supervised such work was given a plot of land on similar terms.<sup>13</sup>

As shown in the Mihintale tablets, datable to the tenth century, five potters were given one *kiri* each from the lands of the Mihintale monastery for the service of supplying five vessels a day to the monastery. Another potter was permitted two *kiri* of land and a daily allowance of two *admanā*<sup>14</sup> of rice in return for supplying ten bowls and ten water pots every month. One *kiri* and two *payas*<sup>15</sup> of land with two *admanā* of rice were allotted to the master carpenter (*vaḍu mahādura*) who was employed by the monastery. To each of the two goldsmiths, three *kiriya*s of land were allotted and one *kiri* of land was given to each of the two blacksmiths who worked for the monastery.<sup>16</sup>

It seems clear that a connection between land holding and service obligations with reference to both secular and religious authorities, was present in Sinhalese society as it was in European feudal society. The main difference between the two was that only in the former case were obligations determined by the caste status of individuals as well as in relation to land.

Caste services however, were not always attached to land. They were tied to land holdings only in relation to certain services performed to the king or his officials and to religious and charitable institutions. In other cases members of lower castes, in return for their services or caste obligations, received some payment mostly in kind, sometimes in cash from those of higher castes.<sup>17</sup> A clear example of such remuneration is to be found in the thirteenth century *pūjāvāliya*. This text states that cultivators (*Govi*) had to pay a certain quantity of grain at harvest times to washermen (*radavun*), drummers (*beravāyin*) etc.<sup>18</sup> In this manner the system of caste duties provided an institutional framework through which members of different castes were brought into relationships with one another.

Various castes or occupational groups, such as *Sāḍol* or *Helloli* (scavengers), *Kēvaṭṭa* or *Kevulu* (fishermen), *Pesakāra* (weavers), *Kumbhakāra* or *Baḍāl* (potters) and *Beravā* (drummers), lived in separate villages.<sup>19</sup> It is not easy

13. *E.Z.*, I, no. 1, p. 5.

14. A measurement of capacity. *Admanā* is probably another name for Pali *nāli*, Sinhalese *nāli*. According to Sinhalese system of measuring capacity *lāssa* or *lahassa* consist of four *nālis*.

15. A measure of land, Sinhalese *paya*, Pali *pāda* is one fourth of a *kiri*, see footnote 12.

16. *E.Z.*, I, no. 7.

17. SDHRV., p. 6, p. 243, p. 336, p. 350.

18. *Pjv.*, p. 356, 357.

19. *Pjv.*, p. 709; *Rasavāhini*, Lankādīpupattivatthūni ed. by Saranātissa, Colombo, B.E. 2434, p. 7, p. 100; *Saddharmālanakāra*, edited by Bentara Sradhātisya, Panadura 1934, p. 612, p. 628, *Sinhala Bōdhivamsa*, ed. Veragoda Amaramoli, Colombo, 1951, p. 212; *CV.*, XLI, 96, *E.Z.*, IV, no. 25; *Saddharmaratnāvāli*, ed. Bativantudawe, Colombo, 1925, p. 245; *Pjv.*, p. 333.

to determine whether all villages were organized on such a mono-caste pattern. In all probability there were also multi-caste villages, occupied by people of various castes, since a village group established at considerable distance from any other village would need some purely local means of providing for its daily requirements. Villages of a multi-caste type may have arisen when the core group attracted to itself a body of resident artisans, such as a blacksmith, potter, washerman, carpenter etc., each being given a house site in the village, or in some cases, in a sort of suburb outside it. In the cases of towns, different castes, it is known, had separate living quarters.

Villages were generally denoted by the term *gama* which, in the system of land tenure, had several other connotations. A collection of land holdings or a plot of land demarcated by boundaries also came to be known by this term. A tenth century pillar inscription of Mahapā Udā records that *attāni* pillars<sup>20</sup> were set up on the boundaries of a *payala*<sup>21</sup> of land.<sup>22</sup> Subsequently the same *payala* is referred to as *me* (this) *gama* in the inscription. The Kapuruvaḍuoya pillar inscription of Gajabāhu II,<sup>23</sup> too, uses the term *gama* in a similar context. The term *gamvara*, occurring in inscriptions and literature<sup>24</sup>, meant both a holding which covered a whole village and a holding amounting to a small plot of land. The nature of these and many other terms relating to land tenure can be properly understood only by an examination of various types of tenures reflected in inscriptions and literary works.

## II

### OWNERSHIP OF LAND

Historians writing on the system of land tenure in South Asia have devoted much attention to the crucial theme of the king's precise position in the complex of tenurial relationships. These writers have tended to assume either that all land belonged to the king<sup>25</sup> or that individuals or groups of individuals held proprietary rights over certain categories of land.<sup>26</sup> There are, however, several

20. Stone pillars on which decrees of immunity had been indited.

21. A measurement of land which denoted a quarter of an *amuna*; *payala* and *pāla* are the same.

22. *E.Z.*, V, no. 25.

23. *E.Z.*, V, no. 38.

24. *E.Z.*, II, no. 36, 42; *Butsarana*, ed. Sorata, Colombo, 1931, p. 172; *Pjv.*, p. 90.

25. *A.L.T.R.*, pp. 5-6; Julius de Lanerolle, "An Examination of Mr. Codrington's Work on Ancient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon". *J.R.A.S.C.B.* XXXIV, 1938, pp. 203-205; J. N. Samaddar, *Lectures on the Economic Condition of Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1922, p. 55 ff; V. A. Smith, *Early History of India*, fourth edition, 1957, p. 137 ff; F. W. Thomas, *Cambridge History of India*, 1962, p. 428.

26. J. B. Phear, *The Aryan Village in India and Ceylon*, London, 1880, pp. 197 ff; B. H. Baden Powell, *The Indian Village Community*, Behaviour Science Reprints, New Haven, 1957 p. 1 ff; 202 ff; 398 ff.; K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, pt. II, Calcutta, 1924, pp. 174-83; A. Appadurai, *Economic Conditions in Southern India*, I, Madras, 1936, pp. 98-178; Premnath Banerjea, *Public Administration in Ancient India*, London 1916, p. 179 ff.; Lallanji Gopal, "Ownership of Agricultural Land in Ancient India", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, IV, 1961, pp. 240-63; H. S. Maine, *Village Communities of the East and West*, London, 1907, p. 76 ff., 103 ff., 160 ff., 226 ff.

factors which make an acceptance of these two assumptions a difficult matter for the student of history. Not least is the danger of intruding one's own contemporary notions of ownership and proprietary rights into the study of a past age to which they are quite irrelevant.

A further difficulty centres on the absence of a well-defined terminology in the records of the land grants. Some of the phrases used are ambiguous, so that the inscriptional evidence of the grants needs to be interpreted with care. This largely accounts for the inability of modern writers to provide an exact definition of terms crucial to the subject, such as "Ownership" and "proprietaryship". H. W. Codrington, the pioneer in this field of study, states in his book *Ancient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon*, "In the following pages it will be understood that the words 'ownership', 'proprietor' and the like are used with no legal significance. Whether the European conception of ownership prevailed in ancient India and Ceylon is doubtful".<sup>27</sup> Again, L. S. Perera, while using the terms such as "owner", "Ownership" and "inalienable ownership" in his paper "Proprietary and Tenurial Rights in Ancient Ceylon",<sup>28</sup> neglects to provide a definition of them. This deficiency is shared by several other writers on the theme.<sup>29</sup>

The concept of "ownership" as it exists in modern Ceylon, is derived basically from Roman-Dutch law. The following extract, quoted at length from a modern standard legal text gives an idea of how the meaning of ownership is currently defined:

"Dominion or Ownership is the relation protected by law in which a man stands to a thing which he may : (a) possess, (b) use and enjoy, (c) alienate. The right to possess implies the right to vindicate, that is, to recover possession from a person who possesses without title to possess derived from the owner. Grotius selects this right as the most signal quality of ownership, which he says is the relation to a thing by virtue of which a person not having the possession by legal process. This analysis of ownership is more particularly applicable to the ownership of a material thing,.... In an extended sense the word is also applied to the analogous relation in which a man stands to an incorporeal thing such as patent-right or copyright, or to a *universitas juris* such as inheritance. To constitute full ownership all the above mentioned rights must be exclusive. Where all these rights are vested in one person to the exclusion of others he is sole owner. Where all these rights are vested in two or more persons to the

27. *A.L.T.R.*, p. 6.

28. L. S. Perera, "Proprietary and Tenurial Rights in Ancient Ceylon", *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, vol. 2, 1959, pp. 1-32.

29. M. B. Ariyapala, *op. cit.*, p. 140; W. Geiger, *Culture of Ceylon in Mediaeval Times*, ed. by Heinz Bechert, Wiesbaden, 1960, p. 50; T. B. H. Abeyasinghe, *Portuguese Rule in Ceylon*, Colombo, 1966, p. 101; H. W. Tambiah, *Sinhala Laws and Customs*, Colombo, 1968, p. 159.

exclusion of others they are co-owners. If one or more of these rights is vested in one person, the remainder in another or others, the ownership of each such person is qualified or restricted. Thus, if you have by contract or otherwise acquired the right to : (a) possess, or (b) use, or (c) alienate my property, my ownership is, so far, restricted ; and ownership is, so far, vested not in me but in you. But since to speak of us both as owners would be misleading, unless the degree of ownership of each of us were on every occasion exactly specified, it is usual to speak of one of us only as owner of the thing and as having a restricted ownership in it, while the other is spoken of as owner of the right, and as having a *right* of possession, a *right* of use and enjoyment, a *right* of alienation, in or over the property of another. Hereupon the question arises which of two or more such competitors is to be regarded as owner, which not as owner. The answer depends not so much on the extent of the right or of the profit derived from it as on the consideration where the residue of rights remains after the deduction from full ownership of some specific right or rights of greater or less extent. Thus, if I give you a right of way over my field, clearly your right is specific and limited, mine is unlimited and residuary. I therefore am owner, you not. The same applies if you have the usufruct of property, the residuary rights over which are vested in me, or even if you have an inheritable right of the kind termed emphyteusis. In all these cases the *dominium* remains in me, but in two last, being reduced to a mere shadow, at all events for the time, it is ownership (*nuda proprietas*), i.e. ownership stripped of its most valuable incidents. All the above mentioned rights, it must be noted, whether greater or less, are rights of property, and as such protected by appropriate remedies against all the world (*jura in rem*) ; but while the residuary right, however reduced, is a right of ownership (*dominium-jus in re propria*), the specific rights, however extended, are rights inferior to ownership (*jura in re aliena*). Such, at least, is the analysis commonly accepted".<sup>30</sup>

The provisions regarding landed property or 'ownership of Land' embodied in the Roman-Dutch law, however, have been modified from time to time by successive legal enactments. These changes and modifications could very often be of fundamental importance. This would render the indiscriminate use of comparatively modern legal concepts in relation to ancient conditions an extremely hazardous venture in historical analysis and interpretation.

In an earlier essay "The Theory of the king's ownership of land in ancient Ceylon—An essay in Historical Revision", the present writer made an attempt to examine the nature of proprietary rights by defining the term 'ownership' to mean 'the right to alienate land by means of sale or gift or other means

30. R. W. Lee, *An Introduction to Roman-Dutch Law*, fifth edition, Oxford, 1953, pp. 121-122.

such as mortgage'.<sup>31</sup> This definition now appears unsatisfactory for a variety of reasons. The crucial question is whether terms such as 'ownership' can really be applied meaningfully to problems of ancient land tenure. Numerous references in inscriptions regarding land grants, land sales and other land transactions by individuals<sup>32</sup> and donations and assignments of land by the king<sup>33</sup> may superficially suggest the existence of ideas of land 'ownership' in ancient Ceylon similar to those prevalent in modern times. Nevertheless, despite a close study of inscriptional and literary evidence, the ideas of land 'ownership' prevalent among the ancient Sinhalese remain—to the modern scholar—as hazy as they ever were. The gradations between 'ownership' and tenancy were so subtle that it is sometimes difficult to know exactly where to draw the line between the two.

For example a pillar inscription from Mihintale, datable to the reign of Sena II (853-87), states that certain dues in respect of plots of land which had been previously enjoyed by the royal family were now donated to the Sāgiri monastery.<sup>34</sup> In this manner the monastery was put in possession of certain rights in those plots of land and cultivators or tenants of those plots also had some rights in them. To whose right the term 'ownership' can be applied here is uncertain. Again, an inscription of Sāhasamalla (1200-1202) records a royal grant of *gamvara hā parivāra hā siyalu sampattiya*<sup>35</sup>, i.e. *gamvara*, retinue and other forms of wealth to an official named Lakvijayasingu ābōnā. Codrington has shown that the term *vara* in inscriptions bears the meaning due or tax.<sup>36</sup> Here, the recipient of the grant came to possess certain rights in land amounting to a share in the revenues. If there were any former cultivators in these plots they also would have had certain rights over the same. Whether the term 'ownership' as we use it today, is applicable to either of their rights is a debatable point.

This difficulty can be illustrated further. Almost all writers on land tenure in ancient Ceylon are agreed that land held by various officials of the king were to be retained only for the period of service.<sup>37</sup> In the period between A.D. 1000-1500 these were known as *divel*.<sup>38</sup> An inscription from Gaḍalādeniya

31. Some of the limitations of this definition also have been pointed out in this essay. see; W. I. Siriweera, "The Theory of the king's ownership of land in Ancient Ceylon—An Essay in Historical Revision, *The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, New Series, vol. I, no. 1, (January-June, 1971) pp. 48-61.

32. *E.Z.* III, 18; IV, 12, 25, 28; V, 5.

33. *E.Z.* 1, no. 4; II, 13; 36, 42; III, 24, 25, 34; IV, 11, 14; V, 17, 38, 46, 48.

34. *E.Z.* V, no. 29.

35. *E.Z.* II, no. 36.

36. *A.L.T.R.*, p. 23.

37. *A.L.T.R.*, pp. 17-18; *U.H.C.*, I pt. 2, p. 560; D. M. de Z. Wickremasinghe, *E.Z.* II, p. 127, note 5; M. B. Atiyapala. *op. cit.*, p. 140; *E.Z.* IV, p. 127; note 5; *E.Z.* I, p. 105, note 4.

38. for details see below pp. 25-28.

which could be datable to 1344 A.D., refers to two donations of certain plots of land by two officers which they held on service tenure (*ṭamanta divelata sīṭi*).<sup>39</sup> Thus, at least in certain instances, rights in land held temporarily for the period of service were also alienable. According to this inscription, the grantee, the Gaḍalādeniya temple received the rights held by the donors. But it was not a right of ownership as it is understood today. A similar instance of a grant of a plot of land held for maintenance by a certain Ayittān who was in the service of Gaḷabāhu II has been recorded in a Tamil pillar inscription at Hingurakgoda.<sup>40</sup>

The Gaḍalādeniya inscription records that a certain Anurā Attara granted land to an image house at Gaḍalādeniya by reserving certain rights in the land for his relatives to enjoy, provided they paid some dues to the image house.<sup>41</sup> The term 'ownership' in its strict sense cannot be applied to this right or to the right of the image house. A Tamil inscription from Hingurakdamana records that a palanquin bearer of the Akampaṭi community in the service of Gaḷabāhu Tēvar (Gaḷabāhu II 1132-53) sold a part of his *jīvita* (land held in return for service for the period of service) at Mānanālay.<sup>42</sup> In this instance the palanquin bearer was selling his rights to land which he held only for the period of service. It is hazardous to define this right by the term 'ownership' even though it was exchanged for money. Thus, the land rights in ancient Ceylon reflect only an extremely vague notion of ownership in the soil, although a feeling of 'right' in some sense did exist. Most likely, a claim to a certain share of the produce was the tangible element and apparent symbol of 'right'. There were, however, different degrees of this right which we shall examine later.

The theory of the king's ownership of land rests mainly on terms such as *bhūpati*, *vathimi* and *bhūpāla*. Codrington, writing in 1938 argued that "The king was *bhūpati* or *bhūpāla*, 'lord of the earth' . . . The king, though having the supreme disposal of land, was bound by the law . . ." <sup>43</sup> L. S. Perera while suggesting that the right of private individuals to own property emerged before the end of the eighth century states that "In the inscriptions of the ninth and tenth centuries the king was often called *vathimiyavahansē* (Skt. *vastusvāmi*) or 'owner of land' thus emphasising his ownership of property. It is possible, therefore, that the king gradually extended his rights over land along with the growth of his influence and power."<sup>44</sup> M. B. Ariyapala states that "...the king was the sole owner of land, which was given out to people by his grace either for a payment or in return for some kind of service."<sup>45</sup>

39. *E.Z.* IV, no. 12.

40. *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions*, ed. A. Velupillai, 1971, Peradeniya, pp. 132-134.

41. *E.Z.* IV, no. 12.

42. *Epigraphia Tamilica*, no. 1, Jaffna Archaeological Society, ed. K. Indrapala, pp. 14-17.

43. *A.L.T.R.*, pp. 5-6.

44. L. S. Perera, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

45. M. B. Ariyapala, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

He provides very scant supporting evidence to buttress his adherence to this theory. More recently, T. B. H. Abeysinghe, who apparently has based his statements on the writers quoted above, has casually stated—once again without providing any substantial evidence in support of his views—that: “The central fact was that the king was the *bhūpati*, the lord of the land. He had absolute control over the manner of its disposal”.<sup>46</sup>

It may be useful to examine the contexts in which these terms are found in the literature and inscriptions of Ceylon. The terms *bhūpati*, *bhūmipāla*, *bhūmīpa*, *bhūmissara*, *mahīpāla*, *mahīpati* and *paṭhavīpati*, all of which may be rendered literally as ‘ruler of the earth’ or ‘lord of the earth’ are found in the *Mahāvamsa*.<sup>47</sup> The *Saddharmaratnāvalī* written in the thirteenth century, refers to the king as *prthuvīsvara*,<sup>48</sup> which may be rendered literally as ‘lord of the earth’. The Kahambiliyāva slab inscription of Vikramabāhu I (1111-32) refers to the king as *bhūpati*.<sup>49</sup> The terms *bhūpālenḍrān* and *bhūpah* are found respectively in the Polonnaruva Galpota slab inscription of Nissankamalla and the prīti-dānaka Mandapa rock inscription of the same king (1187-96).<sup>50</sup> It should be noted that in all these instances the terms *bhūpati*, *bhūpāla*, *prthuvīsvara*, *mahīpati* etc., are used as conventional epithets to denote the king. The crucial question is therefore, whether these rhetorical usages can really support the theory that the king was the sole owner of land in his kingdom.

In the texts of Indian jurists of ancient times there are some references to the king as ‘lord of the earth’. Most notable of these are the works of *Manu* and *Kātyāyana*. According to *Manu* the king is entitled to a share of treasure troves found beneath the ground and of the produce of mines, because he affords protection and because he is the lord of the earth (*bhūmer adhipatir*).<sup>51</sup> *Kātyāyana* states that the king should receive one sixth of the produce of the fields for he is the lord of the soil.<sup>52</sup> But U. N. Ghoshal has shown that these references do not necessarily support the theory of the king’s ownership of land; indeed Ghoshal suggests that statements in these texts are laid down not as definite heads of law, but as arguments for justifying or explaining the king’s right to levy specific taxes on the land.<sup>53</sup>

At the same time classical Indian jurists provide evidence which tends to support a rejection of the theory of the king’s ownership of land. *Kautilya* states that land could be sold by individuals and he uses the word *svāmīyan*

46. T. B. H. Abeysinghe, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

47. *Me.*, XV 26, 31, 37; XXI, 7; XXXIII, 23; XXXIV, 7, 51, 82; XXXV, 47, 126.

48. *SDHRV.*, p. 755.

49. *E.Z.*, V, no. 39.

50. *E.Z.*, II, no. 17, no. 19.

51. *Manu*, VIII, 39.

52. *Kātyāyana*, 26-27.

53. U. N. Ghoshal, *Agrarian System in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1930., pp. 89-99.



meaning complete proprietary rights when dealing with disputes about the sale of land.<sup>54</sup> According to *Nārada*, "A house-holder's house and his field are considered as the two fundamentals of his existence. Therefore let not the king upset either of them ; for that is the root of the house holders".<sup>55</sup> *Byhaspati* declares that both movable and immovable property are vendible commodities.<sup>56</sup> There are also rules in the texts of some of the jurists relating to legal problems connected with land such as boundary disputes,<sup>57</sup> inheritance,<sup>58</sup> dispossession of a cultivator's plot by another<sup>59</sup> and using one's field as a pledge.<sup>60</sup>

It seems from all this evidence that there is no uniform theory in Indian texts regarding the king's sole ownership of land. Those who have advanced the theory have either based their arguments on isolated statements in these texts, quoted without reference to context and without regard to other statements which contradict them or they have attempted to read too much into conventional terms, such as *bhūmer adīpathir*, used in these texts.

The existence of certain rights of individuals to land is implicit in the land grants of ancient Ceylon, and they would seem to support the view that the king was not the sole owner of land. In the first place, there is no mention of the king's consent being made a prior condition to alienation of land by individuals in any of these grants. An inscription from Eppāvāla, which could be dated to the tenth century, provides the information that one *paya*<sup>61</sup> of paddy land was sold (*vikinā*) for eight *kalandas*<sup>62</sup> of gold by a certain Velātme Mihindu to a person named Ukunūhasa Kōttā.<sup>63</sup> A Tamil pillar inscription from Mahakirindegama, datable to the reign of Gajabāhu II (1132-53), refers to a purchase of a plot of land from a certain vallapar. The buyer's name is not mentioned in the record.<sup>64</sup> Another Tamil inscription from Hingurakdamana, datable to the reign of the same king, also refers to a sale of a plot of land by one Uṭṭagamu Ayittāṇ.<sup>65</sup> The Galapātavihāra rock inscription, datable to the reign of Parākramabāhu II (1236-70), which records a grant made by Demela Adhikāri Mahinda and his family, is even more specific : it states that the

54. *Arthasāstra*, Bk. III, Chs. 9-18.

55. *Nārada*, XI, 42.

56. *Byhaspati*, XVIII, 2.

57. *Mamū*, VIII, 245-266 ; *Nārada*, XI, 1-4 ; *Vishnu*, V, 172 ; *Kautilya*, Bk. III, ch. 9.

58. *Nārada*, VIII, 1-2 ; *Gautama*, XXVIII, 1.

59. *Mamū*, VIII, 264.

60. *Mamū*, VIII, 143 ; *Nārada*, I, 125 ; *Gautama*, XII, 32.

61. A measure of land. A *payā* is one fourth of a *kiri*, (Pali *Karīsa*) the standard land measurement of ancient Ceylon and is equivalent to an *amuna* (sowing extent) according to the present usage. see *E.Z.* III, pp. 189-90.

62. A measure of weight equal to 1/6 oz. of troy. see *E.Z.* III, p. 336.

63. *E.Z.* III, no. 18.

64. *Epigraphia Tamilica*, Jaffna Archaeological Society, ed. K. Indrapala, Vol. I, pt. 1, pp. 6-9.

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-17.

donors bought (*ran dīlā gat*) some plots of land from ordinary individuals before gifting them to the Vihāra.<sup>66</sup> A rock inscription from Gaḍalādeniya, datable to 1344 A.D. states that a plot of land granted to the monastery there by a certain dignitary was purchased by him (*panam*<sup>67</sup> ...*kḍi gat*) from another individual before donation.<sup>68</sup> Neither in these instances, nor in any other instance of individual transactions, is any reference made to obtaining prior permission from the king.

There are, even a few inscriptions which show that the king bought property for subsequent donation. The *Mahāvamsa* records that Gajabāhu I (114-36 A.D.) bought the plots of land which he donated to the *saṅgha* at Issarasamana and Mariccavaṭṭi monasteries.<sup>69</sup> According to the *Ūlavamsa*, Kassapa I (473-91) bought lands and dedicated them to the Issarasamanārāma.<sup>70</sup> The Nāgirikanda inscription records that king Kumārādāsa (508-16) bought certain plots of land for the purpose of donating them to the *saṅgha*.<sup>71</sup> An inscription of Nissankamalla (1187-96) records a grant of a paddy field called Yaktuḍukumbura, and the text makes it clear that the land was first purchased by the king before it was donated (*an minisun satu vū heyin vikuṭa gat Yaktudu Kumbura*).<sup>72</sup>

As these examples show, there is no sound basis for the theory of the king's ownership of land. Similarly, it is hazardous to assume the existence of individual ownership of land; the very term 'ownership' is one which it is difficult to employ without introducing modern ideas which seem hardly likely to have existed in the minds of the ancient Sinhalese. Ancient Sanskrit, Pali and Sinhalese literature afford no evidence of a juristic analysis of "ownership" which is a refinement of western jurisprudence. Therefore any examination of the nature of the proprietary rights in ancient Ceylon should seek to avoid the term "ownership" as much as possible.

### III

#### THE KING'S RIGHTS OVER LAND

The king, in his position as ruler, had certain claims over most of the land in his kingdom. He could claim a portion of the produce as tax in return for the services he rendered to the people in maintaining order in the kingdom.<sup>73</sup> This right naturally put him in a position to exercise a degree of control, the limits of which in fact depended on his own sense of what was right and on customs and traditions of the kingdom.

66. *E.Z.*, IV, no. 25.

67. *Panam* or "fanam" was a coin in continuous use in Ceylon from the middle of the fourteenth century (*C.C.C.* pp. 80-81).

68. *E.Z.*, IV, no. 12.

69. *M.V.*, XXXV, 118-21.

70. *C.V.*, XXXIX, 10-12.

71. *E.Z.*, IV, no. 14.

72. *E.Z.*, V, no. 17.

73. see below pp. 33-34.

Apart from direct taxes obtained from cultivated land the king had various rights to certain other categories of land. Unoccupied waste, for example both fallow and cultivable, were under the king's possession.<sup>74</sup> The *Arthasāstra* lays down elaborate rules for the settlement of new, or abandoned tracts by the king,<sup>75</sup> and the kings of Ceylon, whenever opportunities arose, had jungle and waste land cleared and cultivated. The king could grant these lands with what amounted almost to complete proprietary rights possible, to any individual or institution he desired. Mānavamma (684-718) is mentioned as having founded two villages (*katvā gāmadvayan*) and made donations of these to the monasteries.<sup>76</sup> It is said that the minister Dēvappatirāja of Parākramabāhu II (1236-70), had the "whole of the vast forest called Mahalabujagacca, cleared by the roots a fine village built there and in its neighbourhood a large grove of jak trees planted."<sup>77</sup> This village was subsequently granted by the king to Dēvappatirāja as a *pamunu* holding.<sup>78</sup> It is evident from such instances that waste land and land newly cultivated by the initiative of the king or his officials became royal property as there was no antecedent right of a private individual. For the king, the prerogative of having complete rights over waste or jungle land must have served a number of useful functions, allowing him to promote expansion into new areas or the rehabilitation of older areas which had been deserted or devastated by disasters, natural and human.

However, the king or his officials must also have given permission for certain forests to be used for *chena* cultivation and for the setting up of new paddy fields<sup>79</sup> by private individuals. Most probably, in practice, such appropriation was simply tacitly allowed or even encouraged because the king's revenue, which was primarily derived from the grain tax, was thereby increased. It is also likely that there were prohibited forests, sanctuaries etc. such as prevailed in later times, and there may also have been a prohibition on felling certain trees with the object of preserving useful timbers. But, unfortunately, available evidence is so limited that nothing definite can be said on these important aspects of forest law.

Abandoned land and land to which there were no claimants (*purappāḍu* in the time of Kandyan kings) also belonged to the king. Thus, the *thera* Sanghamitta in persuading Mahāsena (274-301) to seize the land of the Mahāvihāra

74. In Armour's *Grammar of the Kandyan Law* the same principle is recognised. It states that "forests and wilderness, unreclaimed and untenanted by men belong to the king". (Armour, p. 5).

75. *Arthasāstra*, Bk. II, ch. 1.

76. *Cv.* XLVII, 64.

77. *Cv.* LXXXVI, 49-50.

78. *Cv.* LXXXVI, 53-54.

79. The practice of growing paddy on dry land (in addition to the wet field cultivation) is referred to in the thirteenth century *Saddharmaratnāvalīya* which states that the varieties of paddy grown on wet fields were not suitable for dry land and vice versa. (*S D H E V.* p. 125; p. 869). It also refers to *chena* lands where *hāl* paddy was grown. *Ibid.*, p. 556.

said "Claimless land belonged to the king".<sup>80</sup> In commenting on this phrase, L. S. Perera observes :

"This was apparently the accepted practice because the Mahāvihāra monks combated the threat, not by calling in question the principle invoked but by trying to prove that the land was never abandoned. They claimed that there were monks hidden within the premises in an underground chamber."<sup>81</sup>

An inscription from Gaḍalādeniya (end of the fifteenth century) which records certain proclamations of Sēnāsammata Vikramabāhu implies that the king could dispose of property to which there were no claimants as he liked. According to this inscription, in the absence of any lawful claimant, the heriot of those who died in battle or in the elephant hunt should be offered for the restoration of monasteries.<sup>82</sup>

It is noteworthy also that in the texts of *Kautilya* and *Āpasthamba* the same principle is recognised. *Kautilya* states that a holding for which no claimant is forthcoming shall be taken possession of by the king, and that property for which no claimant is found shall go to the king.<sup>83</sup> According to *Āpasthamba*, in the absence of any relatives the property of a deceased devolved on the ruler.<sup>84</sup>

In the case of land without heirs, the king could probably exercise a residual right and cultivate the land. This would have been an integral function of the king's responsibility to assure the well-being and productivity of the land.

The confiscation of land and other property was recognised as one of the royal prerogatives. If any subject in the kingdom committed a heinous crime, especially treason, the king could confiscate the property of the offender. According to the *Cūlavamsa*, Dhātusena (455-75) after his victory over the Tamil kings, deprived of their lands those dignitaries who had supported the Tamils.<sup>85</sup> The regulations promulgated by Kassapa V (914-23) state that the plots of land granted to the monks should not be confiscated even if the members of the order acted against the king.<sup>86</sup> The Panākaḍuva copper plate which has been attributed to Vijayabāhu I<sup>87</sup> (1055-1110) by Paranavitana embodies an order delivered by the king granting certain privileges to one

80. *MV.* XXXVII, 8. Classification of certain lands as belonging to the king would mean that others were regarded as falling outside that category and this too, goes against the theory of the king's ownership of all land.

81. L. S. Perera, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

82. *E.Z.*, IV, no. 2.

83. *Arthasastra*, Bk. III, ch. 5 and ch. 9.

84. *Āpasthamba*, II, 6, 14.

85. *Cv.* XXXVIII, 38-39.

86. *E.Z.* I, no. 4.

87. *E.Z.* V, no. 1. In a review of the *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. V, pt. 1 which appeared in the *JRASGB.*, parts 3 and 4, 1956, pp. 237-240, C. E. Godakumbure stated that the Panākaḍuva copper plate was a forgery. Paranavitana's reply to this review appeared in the same journal parts 3 & 4, pp. 213-14 and a rejoinder by Godakumbure appeared in parts 1 & 2, 1958, pp. 51-52.

Badalnāvan and his family. This charter states that even if an offence is committed by Budalnāvan and his family their share of land holdings should not be confiscated (*dōsayak kalada pet pamunu nogannā koṭaca*). These instructions were obviously meant to bind the kings who came to the throne after the demise of the promulgating king. But it is not certain whether such instructions were always honoured. In the Dādīgama slab inscription which records certain amnestics proclaimed by Bhuvanekabāhu VI (1470-78) the king decreed that those who offered their submission to him after the *sinhala sange* (Sinhala rebellion) should not suffer loss of property and loss of life.<sup>88</sup> An inscription from Gaḍalādeniya datable to the reign of Sri Jayavīra Parākramabāhu (1467-69) records a somewhat similar proclamation.<sup>89</sup> The implication here is obviously that the property of those rebels who did not submit to the king was confiscated once the rebellion was suppressed.

The king, it would appear, had also certain plots of land for his private use. The *Mahāvamsa* refers to a plot of land that belonged to the family of (*kulasanta*) king Kūṭakannatissa<sup>90</sup> (44-22 B.C.). A pillar inscription from Mihintale which has been dated to the reign of Sena II (853-87) refers to a donation of certain revenues derived by the royal family to the monastery at Sāgiri, i.e. Mihintale.<sup>91</sup> Parākramabāhu I (1153-86) is said to have laid out a private garden in a region close to his palace.<sup>92</sup> In another instance Parākramabāhu I made a number of villages for the royal use (*kārāpetvā rājabhoge anekepi ca gāmake*).<sup>93</sup> Particularly in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such royal villages were known as *gabāḍāgam*,<sup>94</sup> and a reference to this term is found in a palm leaf manuscript, the original of which may be dated back to the fourteenth century.<sup>95</sup> But the absence of any other reference in the contemporary sources casts doubts on the authenticity of the term used in the manuscript. Most probably copyists of later periods had added the word to the original context.

Paranavitana, while commenting on the word *muttettu*<sup>96</sup> of the time of Kandyian kings, states that it "is a corruption of the Tamil *murrūttu*, which

88. *E.Z.* III, no. 29.

89. *E.Z.* IV, no. 3.

90. *Mv.* XXXIV, 36.

91. *E.Z.* V, no. 29.

92. *Cv.* LXXXIII, 95-102.

93. *Cv.* LXXXIV, 49.

94. Ralph Pieris, *Sinhalese Social Organization*, p. 44, p. 50; *A.L.T.R.*, p. 2, p. 4, 25, 32, 38, 40.

95. *Kurunāgala Vistārya*, MS (OR 5042) British Museum, foll. 11 b.

96. *Muttettu* is the "field which is sown on account of the king, or other proprietor, temporary grantee, or chief of a village, as distinguished from the fields of the other inhabitants of the village, who are liable to perform services or render dues. *Muttettu* land is of two kinds: viz.

(1) *Ninda Muttettu* which is sown entirely and gratuitously for the benefit of the proprietor, grantee or chief by other persons in consideration of the lands which they possess.

(2) *Anda Muttettu* which is sown by anyone without obligation, on the usual condition of giving half the crop to the proprietor".

D'Oyly, *A Sketch of the Constitution of the Kandyian Kingdom*, p. 54,

means 'complete (*muru*) eating (*uttu*), and is akin in meaning to the Sinhālese *batgama*, applied to estates of which the produce was reserved for the king. The documents of the fourteenth century and after contain references to *batgam*.<sup>97</sup> In discussing the validity of this statement it may be pointed out that the term *batgam* occurs in the thirteenth century *Saddharmaratnāvalī* as well.<sup>98</sup> In some cases, it appears, however, that *batgam* were not necessarily land whose produce was reserved for the king, as Paranavitana concluded. The *Saddharmālankāra* records that King Kalakandētatis (A.D. 263-73) gave Māgama as a *batgama* to his minister Sangha.<sup>99</sup> The same text states that the hero Nandimitta received a village as a *batgama* from King Kāvantissa.<sup>100</sup> Until new sources come to light therefore, it is difficult to ascertain what precise Sinhālese term was used to denote the plots of land set apart for the private use of the king. As seen earlier such plots were known in Pali as *rājabhoga*.<sup>101</sup>

Royal grants of land falls into at least three categories. Firstly, the king could grant land to institutions as well as individuals with the most complete proprietary rights which the tenure system allowed. Originally those plots had belonged to the king. According to his wishes, such property could be enjoyed by the donees free of taxes. Particularly in the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries, immunities from taxes were often granted by the king along with proprietary rights.<sup>102</sup> Secondly, the king could transfer merely the tax from land which was due to him.<sup>103</sup> In such cases original individual holders or cultivators of those plots remained undisturbed by the grant. Thirdly, a grant of the king could mean that the income of a particular plot was commuted to the grantees. When land belonging to the king was granted to individuals on service tenure, such land mostly fell into this category. It is also noteworthy here that in certain inscriptions which record royal grants there is some confusion as between taxes due to the king and income drawn on the basis of proprietary rights by the king. Very often no clear distinction is made between income or proprietor's share and taxes in the use of terminology in inscriptions.

Even though the evidence on the procedure adopted in land transactions between individuals is extremely limited, there are a number of references to the corresponding procedures of royal grants. The procedure in grants of *divel*<sup>104</sup> and that of *pamunu*<sup>105</sup> seems to have varied as the conditions of these

97. *U.H.C.*, I, Pt. II, pp. 741-742.

98. *SDHRV*, p. 339, p. 712.

99. *Saddharmālankāra*, ed. Bentara Sradhātissa, 1934, p. 621.

100. *ibid.*, p. 494. *Batgam* in the Kandyan Kingdom were villages inhabited by *padu* caste people whose principle service it was to bear palanquins. Ralph Pieris, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

101. See above, p. 15.

102. See below, pp. 18-19.

103. See above, p. 8.

104. See below, pp. 25-26.

105. See below, pp. 19-20.

tenures differed. *Divel* involved transfer of rights only for a limited period and they were recorded probably on ola leaves only.<sup>106</sup>

When permanent land grants (*pamunu* or *paraveni*) were made by the king details of such grants were also sometimes written on ola leaves.<sup>107</sup> On other occasions they were inscribed on a rock or a pillar and in some cases on copper plates. The practice of using copper plate inscriptions for grants of privileges and land or for the transfer of land by royal edicts, seems to have started with the reign of Vijayabāhu I.<sup>108</sup> Subsequently Nissankamalla claims to have recorded *pamunu* grants on copper plates<sup>109</sup> though none of the copper plates datable to his reign has been found so far. However, this practice was customary in the time of the Kotte kingdom<sup>110</sup> and the Kandyan kingdom.

In most of these grants, just as in a deed of today, the names of the donors, recipients and witnesses, giving their identity and occupations, are recorded.<sup>111</sup> In certain cases precise boundaries of the plots of land transferred are also stated.<sup>112</sup> But it is interesting that in these grants the description of boundaries begin from the east and go on to south, west and north. The present order in Geography and notarial deeds is north, east, south and west. The practice of setting up of boundary stones prevailed<sup>113</sup> as at present. Some records also refer to the exact date, month and year in which the grant concerned took place.<sup>114</sup>

The royal grants of land were delivered in the king's presence as well as in his absence. The Panākaduva copper plate, which records special privileges given to lord Budal by a king identified as Vijayabāhu I, provides a graphic picture of the king delivering his order in the assembly, and furnishes us with the information that the king, while delivering the order, held an iron mace in both hands and poured water on the hands of the donee.<sup>115</sup> This practice was in existence in the time of the Anuradhapura kings as well.<sup>116</sup>

The more frequent custom, however, was to deliver the order of the grant by the king in the midst of the dignitaries assembled together by word of mouth (*vadāla*).<sup>117</sup> The officers detailed for the purpose implemented it by performing the symbolic ceremony of pouring water on the hands of the donee

106. See below, pp. 25-26.

107. See. *E.Z.*, II, no. 27, p. 154.

108. *A.S.C.A.R.*, 1949, pp. 28, 34; See also note 87.

109. *E.Z.* II, no. 27.

110. *E.Z.* III, no. 3, no. 25; *E.Z.* V, no. 46.

111. *E.Z.* IV, no. 25; *E.Z.* V, no. 26; *E.Z.* V, no. 46.

112. *E.Z.* IV, no. 11; *E.Z.* V, no. 26.

113. *E.Z.* III, no. 23; *E.Z.* V, no. 46.

114. *E.Z.* IV, no. 30, 35; *E.Z.* V, no. 21; *E.Z.* II, no. 37; *E.Z.* IV, no. 5; *E.Z.* IV—no. 7.

115. *A.S.C.A.R.* 1949, pp. 28-34.

116. *MV*, XXV, 24-25; *E.Z.* III, no. 6, no. 12.

117. *E.Z.* V, no. 39, no. 46; *E.Z.* I, no. 16; *E.Z.* II, no. 12.

and by recording the grant. In certain cases the order regarding a grant is addressed by the king to an intermediary officer. He then informs those who are to carry it out of the grant. Inscriptions which record such grants are mostly composed from the point of view of the officials who enacted the grant though the actual order came from the king.

Such officials were numerous and among them *Meykāppar* and *Kuḍasalā* were the most prominent in the ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>118</sup> The latest reference to the *Meykāppar* is found in the Ambagamu inscription of Vijayabāhu I<sup>119</sup> and to *Kuḍasalā* in the Kapuruvaḍuoya pillar inscription of Gajabāhu II.<sup>120</sup> Thereafter these terms, or any other term similar to them are not found in the records of the Polonnaru Kings. But, from the fourteenth century onwards, the official known as *Sanhas Tiruvarāṅgan* or *Sanhas Tiruvarahan* is frequently mentioned in inscriptions as executors of the king's land grants.<sup>121</sup>

In certain cases the king granted various concessions and privileges regarding land which have come to be called 'immunities'. Granting immunities was a special prerogative of the king or of one in a position of similar authority, such as the local rulers or heirs-apparent. Grants of such immunities commence from the time of Sena I (833-53) and were in vogue in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

After the thirteenth century, inscriptions do not record such immunity grants. These immunities, which guaranteed freedom from interference by royal officers, exemption from taxes and other privileges, were granted to individuals as well as monasteries and charitable institutions<sup>122</sup> such as hospitals (*vedhala*), lying in homes (*timbirige*) and dispensaries (*behetge*).<sup>123</sup> There was no set formula or series of immunities applicable to every grant; the king decided what immunities were to be given in each case. Some of the immunities and concessions have a direct relation either to the location of the land granted or to the type of land for which these privileges were made. For instance, the Mannar Kacceri pillar inscription, which enlists immunities granted to three villages belonging to the Mahāvihāra in the northern coast, records such immunities as that these villages were not to be entered by the officers in charge of Mahātittā or Mannar port.<sup>124</sup>

118. *E.Z.* I, nos. 11, 22; *E.Z.* II, nos. 2, 5, 7, 8; *E.Z.* III, 27, 31a; *E.Z.* IV, 23; *E.Z.* V, nos. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37.

119. *E.Z.* II, no. 35.

120. *E.Z.* V, no. 38.

121. *E.Z.* III, nos. 25, 29; *E.Z.* IV, no. 2; *E.Z.* V, no. 46; Bell, *Report on the Kegalle District*, pp. 84-85, 96-97.

122. *E.Z.* I, no. 11; *E.Z.* II, nos. 4, 5, 12; *E.Z.* III, nos. 28, 32; *E.Z.* IV, nos. 6, 23; *E.Z.* V, no. 25.

123. *E.Z.* I, no. 11; *E.Z.* II, no. 5; *E.Z.* III, no. 28.

124. *E.Z.* III, no. 5.



Immunities were also granted to individuals and institutions in consideration of land held by them previously, and thus some of these grants were not land grants but only immunity grants. Large number of these immunity grants have been found regarding lands held by monasteries. These and other immunities were inscribed on stone pillars and erected on the land which was immune from royal interference.

The immunities generally forbid entrance of various officials of the king who were in charge of the administration to the lands, and also forbid the exaction of various services from the inhabitants of these lands. There were sometimes further concessions such as exemption from taxes. These immunity lands can be compared with *brahmadeya* lands in ancient India. One requisite, which a large number of the immunities demand in respect of the land to which they apply, is that the boundaries should be properly defined. This was essential because the immunities most often given were those prohibiting officials from entering such lands.

## IV

## PAMUNU, ANDA, UKAS AND PÄTTA TENURES

Inscriptions mainly after the ninth century, contain references to a type of tenure known as *pamunu*<sup>125</sup> or *paraveni*.<sup>126</sup> Between the beginning of the ninth century and middle of the fourteenth century *pamunu* was the popular term in vogue but in the subsequent period *paraveni* gained wide currency and the former gradually fell into disuse.

Both terms are akin to Sanskrit *pravani* and Pali *pavani*. In Sanskrit the word *pravani* denotes a 'braid of hair'. In Pali 'braid of hair' is given a metaphorical twist so that *pavani* (Pali for *pravani*) meant 'series, succession, line, tradition, custom, usage'. In the context of land tenure the terms *pamunu* and *paraveni* conveyed the meaning heritable right in perpetuity. Thus, the Devanagala rock inscription of Parākramabāhu I (1153-1186) records a *pamunu* grant made to the General Kitnuvaragal in recognition of his services in the Aramana campaign<sup>127</sup> which he was to enjoy as long as 'the sun and moon endure'. It is evident that the king intended to grant proprietary rights over this land to Kitnuvaragal to be held in hereditary succession. A similar grant is enlisted in the Mādavala rock inscription datable to A.D. 1458.<sup>128</sup> An inscription of Nissankamalla (1187-96), which records a *pamunu* grant made by the

125. *E.Z.* I, p. 105; p. 179; *E.Z.* II, pp. 139-147; pp. 219-29; *E.Z.* IV, no. 11; *E.Z.* V, no. 1, no. 17 and no. 46.

126. Bell, *Report on the Kegalle District*, p. 96; S. Paranavitana, *Lankatilaka Inscriptions*, U.C.R. Jan-April 1960, pp. 1-45. Kirielie Gñānawimala, *Saparangamuwe Parant Liyavili*, Colombo 1942, pp. 75-76.

127. *E.Z.* III, no. 34.

128. *E.Z.* III, no. 24.



king to an officer named Vijaya, expressly states that the land should be held by him and his descendants in perpetuity.<sup>120</sup> It is noteworthy that at the end of the record the same *pamunu* grant is referred to as *me* (this) *ninda* (possession). The term *ninda* is derived from Sanskrit *nija*, which means 'one's own'. Hence it is evident that very often *pamunu* was the most complete right possible within the tenure system.

Inscriptions as well as literary sources contain references to various terms similar to *pamunu* and *paraveni* such as *paveni* or *pravēni*,<sup>120</sup> *pamunu parapuru*,<sup>121</sup> *hirasanda pamunu*,<sup>122</sup> *him pamunu*<sup>123</sup> and *bim pamunu*.<sup>124</sup> An examination of these terms and the contexts in which they are used suggests that all these terms refer to only one type of tenure, i.e. the *pamunu* tenure.

Of these, *pavēni* and *pravēni* present no difficulties. As seen earlier *pavēni* and *pravēni* are the Pali and Sanskrit forms of *pamunu* or *paraveni*. However, the terms *pamunu parapuru* and *hirasanda pamunu* have been misinterpreted by certain scholars. Wiekramasinghe translates the term *pamunu* as 'permanent grants' and *parapuru* as 'heritages'.<sup>125</sup> He renders Sinhalese '*hirasanda pamunu*' into English as 'grants which are in force so long as the sun and moon exist'.<sup>126</sup> Codrington while commenting on *pamunu* and *parapuru* states that the two were not identical.<sup>127</sup>

But Codrington himself agrees that *pamunu* was to last as long as the sun and moon exist,<sup>128</sup> and this implies heritable rights over land in perpetuity. The term *parapura* in the context of land tenure implies exactly the same. Though the terminology used in various instances differs, it is justifiable to assume that *pamunu* and *parapura* or *pamunu parapuru* are identical.

The same argument may be applied in explaining the term *hirasanda pamunu*. If the holdings were to be in force as long as the sun and moon exist,

129. *E.Z.* V, no. 17.

130. *E.Z.* V, 46, *Cv.* LV, 31, *C.V.* LX, 75.

131. *E.Z.* II, p. 105, 126; *Pūjāvaliya*, 34th chapter, ed. Medhankara, p. 33.

132. *E.Z.* I, p. 179; *E.Z.* II, p. 132; *E.Z.* IV, p. 87, p. 308; *E.Z.* V, no. 46.

133. *Sinhala Thūpavaṃsa* ed. Vataddara Medhananda, Colombo 1960, p. 158; *Saddharmā-lankāra* ed. Bentara Saddhatissa. Panadura 1934, p. 485.

134. *SDHRV*, p. 315.

135. *E.Z.* II, p. 127.

136. *E.Z.* II, p. 229, note 1.

137. *A.L.T.R.* p. 12. According to Codrington "the word (*pravēni*) occurs in its Pali form as *paveni-gāmu* in the reign of Vijayabāhu I (1055-111 *Mhv.* Lv., 31, Lx., 75). Under Parākramabāhu II (1234-1269) *Kulappavēni* in *Mhv.*, LXXXIV, 12; LXXXVII, 19, 31, 22 is rendered in the contemporary *pūjāvaliya* by *pamunu parapuru* and *Mav-piyan-ge kula parapura*, property in unbroken succession (Sanskrit *paramparā*) in the family of mother and father. The word *parapura* is common in Nissankamalla's inscriptions (1187-96), preceded by and perhaps qualified by *pamunu*, but *Mhv.* Lv., 31 referred to below in the sections on *pamunu* shows that the two were not identical."

138. *A.L.T.R.* p. 13.

they had to be passed in hereditary succession. Therefore, *hirasanda pamunu* must be identical with *pamunu* and *parapurū* or *pamunu parapurū*. The Devanagala rock inscription, which records a land grant made to Kitnuvaragal by Parakrāmbāhu I (1153-86), confirms this view. At the end of the record it is clearly stated that this was a *pamunu* grant. The same record states that the grant should endure 'as long as the sun and moon exist' (*hira sanda pavatinā tek siṭinā paridi*).<sup>139</sup> Hence it is clear that *pamunu* and *hirasanda pamunu* were the same. Further evidence in support of this view is found in an inscription from Kōṭṭange. This inscription, which records a grant of *hirasanda pamunu* made by king Lokesvara to a certain Arakmenā, contains the provision that the land should be enjoyed by descendants of the Māpandi family and it is implied that the grantee belonged to this family.<sup>140</sup>

There are only a few vague reference to *him pamunu*<sup>141</sup> and *bim pamunu*<sup>142</sup> in the literary sources. It may be surmised however, on the above analogy that these two terms also denoted the same type of tenure.

The king as well as individuals donated *pamunu* properties to monasteries, charitable institutions etc. The king also granted *pamunu* properties to individuals generally as rewards. According to the Kantalai Gal āsana inscription of Nissankamalla (1187-96) *pamunu* properties were bestowed on those who had performed extra ordinary deeds (*daskam kalavunṭa pamunu dena...*).<sup>143</sup> A rock inscription from Kōṭṭange records that king Siri Sangbō Lōkēsvara granted *pamunu* properties to the General Arakmenā for his valour shown in disposing the Colas.<sup>144</sup>

*Pamunu* were subject to no service except in cases where the king stipulated at the time of the grant that a comparatively small payment should be made to a religious or charitable institution. According to the Gonnāva Devale Pillar inscription, datable to the first half of the tenth century, the payment of a share of one *amunam* on every four *amunams* of sowing extent at each harvest had to be made to the Mahāvihāra.<sup>145</sup> The Devundara Devale copper plate of Vijayabāhu VII, which refers to a *paraveni* grant by the king, required the recipient of the *paraveni* to pay ten *funams* (Sinhalese *panam*) a year to the Vishnu temple at Dondra.<sup>146</sup> Another inscription records a grant of *pamunu* by the king to a certain Mahaya Kitambavā on condition that the latter supplied an yearly rental of oil to the servants of the Bagiri vihāra for the use of the

139. *E.Z.* III, p. 321.

140. *E.Z.* IV, no. 11.

141. *Sinhala Thūpavaṃsa*, ed. Medhananda, p. 35.

142. *SDHRV.* p. 315.

143. *E.Z.* II, p. 285.

144. *E.Z.* IV, no. 11.

145. *E.Z.* IV, no. 23.

146. Bell, *Report on the Kegalle District*, p. 96.

image house there.<sup>147</sup> The Polomaruva council chamber inscription, which records a grant of *pamunu* to a physician named Rak Tumā, laid down the condition that the regular supply of a quantity of dried ginger should be made to a hospital.<sup>148</sup>

Religious and charitable institutions received *pamunu* properties mainly through royal and individual benefactors. Individuals could acquire *pamunu* properties in at least three ways, viz. royal grant, purchase and inheritance. The first two of these have already been illustrated but the points on inheritance remain to be clarified. Inheritance of land normally took place within a framework of kinship. The Rambāva slab inscription, datable to the reign of Mahinda IV (956-72), which records a land grant made by that king to a certain Milingurad Pirivat Hambu, states that lands donated should be enjoyed by the donee, his children, grandchildren and their descendants.<sup>149</sup> An inscription of the twelfth century, which can be assigned to the reign of Nissankamala, records a *pamunu* grant by the king to an officer named Vijaya. In this grant the king lays down that the plots of land granted should not be given to those who are neither Vijaya's descendants nor his relatives.<sup>150</sup> Some of the plots of land which were donated to the Galapāta monastery in the thirteenth century by the members of Kahambalkulu Mindalnā's family were the hereditary property of the grantors—*apa sī parapurāva valandā ā*.<sup>151</sup> The Mādavala rock inscription of A.D. 1458 states that *praveni* granted to the smith Paramanayā was to be enjoyed by his son named Sūriya in succession.<sup>152</sup>

This inscription also suggests that inheritance took place along the male line, but this was not a hard and fast rule, and there are instances in which females too appear to have had rights of inheritance in immovable property. The above mentioned Galapāta Vihāra rock inscription which records certain land grants made to the monastery there by Mahinda and some of his relatives including his mother, records that some of the lands donated were the hereditary property of the grantors, and indicates that Mahinda's mother also inherited land.<sup>153</sup>

The evidence for joint family tenure is very meagre in the period under review. It is possible that when the first Aryan speaking people formed villages there was some general idea of tribal union, and that every member of the clan was entitled to receive an allotment sufficient for his wants. But there is no trace of any common holdings of the land occupied.

147. *E.Z.* II, no. 4.

148. *E.Z.* IV, no. 5.

149. *E.Z.* II, no. 13.

150. *E.Z.* V, no. 17.

151. *E.Z.* IV, no. 25.

152. *E.Z.* III, no. 24.

153. *E.Z.* IV, no. 25.

Two inscriptions belonging to the thirteenth and the fourteenth century respectively throw some light on the question of joint tenure. Those associated in the grant recorded in the Galapāta vihāra rock inscription were Kahambalkulu Mindalnā, his mother, his nephews, called Kandānā and Vijayānā, and another relative named Kaṭuvitāna Sātambā.<sup>154</sup> It is noteworthy that in this grant other relatives of the family of Kahambalkulu Mindalnā, such as Kaṭuvitāna sātambā, also participated along with the members of the nuclear family. The second inscription, which is recorded on the rock wall of the cave temple at Nākolagane, refers to a land grant made to the Nāgala monastery. In this grant the participants were Sumēdhādēvi, her two sons named Parākrama Ambara and Mind Ambara and another donor called prince Girihaṇḍa Sāta.<sup>155</sup> From this it would seem that in certain cases members outside the nuclear family also had land rights jointly with those of the nuclear family. On the other hand, it is possible that the donors referred to above donated their individual right in certain plots of land, all inscribing their grants on one inscription. Even if the balance of probability favours the first supposition, we have little basis to assume that such joint family tenure was a regular feature in the land tenure system of ancient Ceylon.

When a plot of land was granted by the king to more than one individual, as suggested in the Oruvala copper plate datable to the reign of Parākramabāhu VI<sup>156</sup> (1412-1467), each of them received either a share in the total yield of the land or a portion of the whole plot earmarked as his own. If it was the former, the whole plot was held and enjoyed jointly by the recipients acting together as share holders. This may also amount to a form of joint tenure.

From all this evidence currently available, it appears that there is in Ceylon no proof, direct or even covert, of the existence of the collective ownership which Maine claims to have existed in Indian villages.<sup>157</sup>

Three other types of tenures known as *andē*, *ukas* and *pāṭṭa* are occasionally found and must be given attention. The term *andē* occurs in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth century literary texts.<sup>158</sup> This term corresponds to Sanskrit *ardha* and Pali *aḍḍha* which mean half. Thus, the tenant who cultivated a plot of land held by another had according to this system to pay half of the crop to the latter.<sup>159</sup> In certain cases the crop was divided in the proportion of two thirds for the land holder and one third (*tunen andē*)

154. *E.Z.* IV, no. 25.

155. *C.J.S.G.* I, p. 170.

156. *E.Z.* III, no. 3.

157. Sir H. S. Maine, *Village Communities in the East and West*, 3rd edition, John Murray 1876, pp. 12-13, 107, 123, 175, 177, *Early History of Institutions*, John Murray, 1875, pp. 77-82.

158. *SDHRV*, p. 540; *PJV*, p. 348, p. 356; *Pansiya Panas Jātaka Pota*, ed. by W. A. de Silva, Colombo, 1915, p. 864.

159. *PJV*, p. 348, p. 356.

for the tenant cultivator.<sup>160</sup> Those belonging to the higher rungs of society, and those engaged in occupations other than agriculture often entrusted their land for cultivation to tenants on *ande* tenure or crop sharing system. This method was practised also in relation to monastic lands. But the great majority of the people held only small plots of land to meet the needs of their families and they themselves cultivated these plots with the help of their family members.

The term *pāṭṭa* occurs only in the inscriptions of the ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>161</sup> According to Paranavitana, it is derived from Sanskrit *pāṭhya* which denotes the instrument of lease. He suggests that *pāṭṭaladdan* in inscriptions were "middlemen who farmed the revenue due from the tenants on behalf of the lord of the village."<sup>162</sup> Codrington too, suggests that *gam pāṭṭa* in the inscriptions of the ninth and the tenth centuries may be interpreted to cover the farming of village revenues.<sup>163</sup> This system of revenue farming, however, does not seem to have taken root in the island during the time of latter Sinhalese kings for there are no references to the existence of middlemen who farmed revenue after the tenth century.<sup>164</sup> If anything of the kind of revenue farming had existed, it is hardly possible that it should have escaped all mention.

The term *ukas* in relation to land indicates the common mortgage in Ceylon in the present day, by which the mortgagee receive all or part of the revenue of the land in lieu of interest, the mortgager having right to redeem the property within any specified period or after any specified period by paying the debt. It is also possible to enter into an agreement on *ukas* basis to pay the interest periodically till such time as the property may be redeemed. In the inscriptions of the ninth and tenth centuries,<sup>165</sup> too, the term *ukas* has been used to denote the same meaning. In the period between A.D. 1000-1500 there are references to mortgaging movable property<sup>166</sup> but not to immovable property. It is likely that the practice of mortgaging land too existed though our sources do not directly refer to it.

160. *PJV*, p. 356.

161. *E.Z.* II, no. 2, 3; *E.Z.* V, no. 34.

162. *E.Z.* V, p. 127.

163. *A.L.T.R.*, p. 14, 23.

164. But we hear more of revenue farming after the advent of the Portuguese in the island. Under the Portuguese rule the major items of revenue were collected directly by officials but the smaller items to collect it would be uneconomic to employ a separate officer, were rented out. However, these were much less important. (Tiliri Abeyasinghe, *Portuguese Rule in Ceylon*, Colombo 1966, pp. 90-91). Revenue was also farmed during the time of the Kandyan kings (Ralph Pieris, *op. cit.* pp. 116-17) and under the Dutch and the British.

165. *E.Z.* I, no. 7, no. 8., *E.Z.* III, no. 27.

166. *Saddharmāṅkārā*, ed. By B. Saddhatissa, Panadura, 1934, p. 660; *Rasavahini Lankāḍḍipuppattivatthuni*, ed. Saranatisa, Colombo, B.E. 2434, p. 169.

## V

## SERVICE TENURE

Inscriptions, especially after the ninth century, refer to a form of tenure known as *divel*.<sup>167</sup> The term *divel* is akin to Sanskrit *jivita* and Pali *jivana* which mean life, existence, subsistence and livelihood, and *divel* tenure therefore could be taken to mean land held for subsistence for the period of service. According to the inscriptions of Nissankamalla, ministers were provided with *divel* lands.<sup>168</sup> The Oruvala copper plate of the fifteenth century refers to *sēvā divelata dun Banagama Oruvala*,<sup>169</sup> i.e. 'Banagama Oruvala which was given on service tenure.' Unlike *pamunu* properties *divel* holdings were not heritable in perpetuity.<sup>170</sup> The Oruvala copper plate, for example, records that the village Oruvala which had earlier been granted to two Brahmanas in return for their services was later assigned by the king to one of them as a *pamunu* holding.<sup>171</sup>

Land was given in consideration of services not only to officials but also to those who performed various functional duties to the king, such as supplying various provisions to the palace, carrying palanquins, etc. A Tamil inscription from Hingurakdamana suggests that even mercenaries were given land in consideration of their services. This inscription refers to a plot of land held on *divel* tenure by a palanquin bearer of the Akampaṭi community in the service of Gajabāhu II (1132-53).<sup>172</sup> But soldiers, especially mercenaries, did not always receive land or a part of the revenue accruing from land in lieu of their services. The Mannar Kacceri pillar inscription, datable to the latter half of the ninth century, probably means mercenaries when it refers to those of the paid services (*paḍi mehe*).<sup>173</sup> The *Cūlavamsa* account of General Mitta's temporary seizure of the throne in the second year of the reign of Vijayabāhu IV (1270-72) reveals that mercenaries were sometimes paid in cash. Mitta, on his accession to the throne, at first tried to win the support of the Sinhalese as well as foreign soldiers by giving them their pay.<sup>174</sup> The *Saddharmālakāra*, too, refers to the king paying wages to his army in cash.<sup>175</sup> Cash payments would have been convenient for the mercenaries and for those native soldiers in the small regular army as it was difficult for them to cultivate and maintain their land while being in military service.

167. *E.Z.* II, p. 105, p. 147, pp. 165-178; *E.Z.* IV, p. 102; *E.Z.* V, no. 43.

168. *E.Z.* III, p. 165.

169. *E.Z.* III, no. 3.

170. *Divel* holdings were heritable only if a member of the same family continued the service attached to the holding.

171. *E.Z.* III, no. 3.

172. *Epigraphia Tamilica*, Jaffna Archaeological Society, ed. K. Indrapala, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 14-17.

173. *E.Z.* III, no. 5.

174. *Cv.* XC, 1-20.

175. *Saddharmālakāra*, ed. Bentara Sradhatissa, Panadura, 1934, p. 647.

The system of service tenures had many advantages to the king. It eliminated to a large extent, the payment of wages in cash to officials which was an important consideration as specie was in short supply. It also helped the king to minimize difficulties of revenue collection. This same difficulty was later to compel the rulers of the Delhi Sultanate to resort to the *jagir system* and to force the English East India Company to undertake the Permanent Settlement in Bengal with Zamindars. A third advantage was that it allowed for the easy commutation of grain tax or revenue. This process was also undertaken more readily as the payment of certain amount of grain by each and every land holder subject to the tax, would have brought in an abundance of grain which was of little use to the king.

The size of *divel* holdings depended on the status of the officer. Higher officers received from the king extensive grants of land or revenue accruing from large areas or villages.

This transfer of land revenue to the king's officers also carried with it, unavoidably, some administrative power over such plots or villages since the recipient was to enjoy the revenue which the king received before. It created a class of local lords wielding power over the peasants. These lords were a powerful class of intermediaries between the king and the peasant somewhat analogous to, but far from identical with, the landlords of later times. Since the office by virtue of which a village lord held his *divel* might be hereditary, the relationship between him and his longstanding 'tenants' was usually of an amicable character. When the connection remained unbroken for several generations, it gave rise to a strong feeling of attachment and loyalty on the part of villagers.

No taxes were paid on *divel* holdings but in certain instances *divel* holders had to pay a gratuity fee to a charitable institution as stipulated by the king. According to the *Daladāsivita*, *divel* villages or land had to supply the Temple of the Tooth relie yearly with lampwicks and oil.<sup>176</sup> Doratiyāva copper plate also stipulates that *divel* holders should pay tribute of oil to the Temple of the Tooth relie.<sup>177</sup>

In order to ensure that service duties were regularly and duly performed registers known as *divel pot*, showing details of every individual *divel* holding and of the services or dues for which the *divel* holders were liable, seem to have been maintained by a government department. The *Cūlavamsa* refers to an office known as *jīvita potthakin*.<sup>178</sup> The term *potthaka* is derived from Sanskrit *pustaka* and, as shown earlier, the term *jīvita* means life, existence, subsistence.

176. *Daladāsivita*, ed. Vajira Ratnasooriya, Colombo, 1949, p. 52.

177. H. W. Codrington, "Doratiyava Sannasa", *JRASC*, XXIX, no. 77, 1924, pp. 307-323.

178. *Cv.* LXXXI, 161-162; 173-174; LXXIV, 90.



maintenance and livelihood. *Jīvītapotthakin*, therefore, may have designated an officer who kept records of *divel* holdings and of those who were bound to serve the king. An inscription datable to 1105 A.D. refers to an officer who had the designation *divel pot karana*.<sup>179</sup> This office is clearly similar to the office of *jīvīta potthakin*.

The palm leaf manuscript *Lakdivūvidhiya*, the original of which was most likely written in the fourteenth century, contains a reference to *sātara lēkam balā*,<sup>180</sup> i.e. 'consulting four registers'. According to Ralph Pieris, four kinds of registers or *lēkammiṭi*, were maintained throughout the 'Kandyan Period'. These were known as the *kat hāl lēkammiṭiya*, or register of pingo dues; the *disāvē maha lēkam pota*, which was a comprehensive register of villages in each *disāvanē*, the *hī lēkam miṭiya*, a small register of ploughed lands; and the several departmental registers, such as the *dunukāra lēkammiṭiya*, compiled for the convenience of departmental chiefs in marshalling their labour forces.<sup>181</sup> It is not certain, however, whether these same four kinds of *lēkam miṭi* were extant in the fourteenth century. If they were, details laid in *divel pot* or *jīvīta potthaka* prior to the fourteenth century would have been included in one or more of these four registers.

Rights held on land in consideration of services to the king could be transferred by individuals who held them. The Hingurakdamana Tamil inscription and the Gaḍalādeniya rock inscription record such transfers of *divel* land.<sup>182</sup> The transfer of land, however, did not entail transfer of service; the services had to be continued by the original recipient of the grant.

Persons who were not in possession of land on service tenure were, in general, not liable to regular services or duties. Temple lands, too were exempt from royal service. But every layman in the kingdom (unless exempted by special proclamation of the king) was bound to turn out to perform gratuitous service on public works such as construction of roads, bridges, tanks, etc. They were also required to serve in the army in war-time. This system of conscription was necessary because the Sinhalese kings had only a small standing army, a few hundred strong forming the personal bodyguard of the king.

These compulsory services were known as *rājakāriya* or service for the king. The earliest direct reference to *rājakāriya* is found in the thirteenth century *saddharmaratnāvalī* which indicates that all laymen had to perform *rājakāriya*—*gihī geyi vasana kala rajadarwanata rājakāriya hō kala mānava*.<sup>183</sup>

179. *E.Z.* V, no. 26.

180. *Lakdivūvidhiya*, OR. 6606 (42) British Museum, fols. 9 b-10.

181. Ralph Pieris, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

182. See above, pp. 8-9.

183. *SDHRV*, p. 819.

The *Pūjāvāliya* belonging to the same period refers to this practice by the term *sevākam* which means service.<sup>184</sup>

It is quite clear from the inscriptions that the king had the right to impress labour for state service, at least from the beginning of the ninth century A.D. One of the immunities or concessions that is granted by the king after this period to certain lands and villages is that various types of labour should not be impressed by the royal officials from people living in such lands. *Vāri*<sup>185</sup> or *Vāriyan*<sup>186</sup> is the general term used for such labour and this was also related to *maṅgmahavar*<sup>187</sup> and *gangkaṇḍat vāri* or *vāv mehe*<sup>188</sup> which mean labour on the roads and labour for irrigation works respectively. The term *vāri sāl*<sup>189</sup> found in these inscriptions is probably the impost on the villagers to feed this labour force. It may be that when those who performed *rājakāriya* went to various areas for the performance of their duties they were to be maintained by the villagers of the area they visited.

It is difficult, however, to determine precisely the character of the functioning of the *rājakāriya* system during the period under discussion. The *Cūlavamsa*, in describing *Parākramabāhu's* irrigation works in the Rattakara district of Dakkhinadesa, states: "as in this district there was a lack of stone masons the far famed (king) called altogether in great number coppersmiths, blacksmiths and goldsmiths and made them lay down a dam."<sup>190</sup> This may suggest that *rājakāriya* services were used close to the village from which such servicemen came. But in the *Cūlavamsa* itself it is stated that on one occasion Vijayabāhu IV brought together, from all over the island, turners, potters, bamboo workers, goldsmiths, painters, brick layers and carpenters to restore the ruined city of Polonnaruva.<sup>191</sup>

Judging from the functioning of the *rājakāriya* system in more recent times, one may be justified in surmising that normally *rājakāriya* services were used as close as possible to the village of the service supplier.<sup>192</sup> Utilizing

184. *Sēvākam ādi noyeka kaṭayuttehi niyuktava giya kalat gama hinda upayā kām nāttēmaya. Pūjāvāliya*, ed. Denipitiye Jinaratana, Valigama, 1937, p. 348 "When the farmers have to leave for various activities such as *rājakāriya* there is no opportunity to stay in the village and earn a livelihood".

185. *E.Z.* I, no. 2, no. 7, no. 11, no. 15, no. 21; *E.Z.*-II, nos. 4, 5, 22; *E.Z.* III, no. 10, no. 27; *E.Z.* V, no. 25, no. 31, no. 37.

186. *E.Z.* I, nos. 4, 7, 12, 13, 16, 17; *E.Z.* II, nos. 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 35; *E.Z.* III, nos. 10, 21, 28; *E.Z.* V, 25, 31, 37.

187. *E.Z.* V, no. 29.

188. *E.Z.* I, no. 7a; *E.Z.* II, no. 2.

189. *E.Z.* II, no. 9; *E.Z.* III, no. 10; *E.Z.* V, no. 25.

190. *Cv.* LXVIII, 25-26.

191. *Cv.* LXXXVIII, 105-108.

192. For the construction of forts and roads, the British in the early nineteenth century compelled the villagers to work in areas far away from the locality of their homes. This caused deep dissatisfaction and resulted in protests and disturbances. The reason given by the people for their protests was that working outside their provinces was contrary to the ancient usages of the country. See *The Colebrooke-Cameron Papers, Documents on British Colonial Policy in Ceylon*, ed. G. C. Mendis, Oxford University Press, 1956, vol. 1, p. 190.

*rājakāriya* far away from the localities of the service suppliers during times of warfare and for special projects may be considered exceptional.

## VI

## TEMPLE LANDS

Land attached to religious establishments held a significant place in the tenurial system. The Buddhist Sangha, the main ecclesiastical body of Ceylon, was one of the institutions which had the largest vested interests in land. The Hindu priesthood, too, received some patronage from a certain section of the population but its over-all influence was less than that of the Buddhist. Buddhist and Hindu religious institutions received donations of land, serfs and villages from pious kings and the nobility during this period<sup>193</sup> as well as in earlier periods.

Land was held by these institutions under various forms of tenure. Over certain plots of land they had the most complete rights possible within the tenurial system. Grants of the king made out of his private land<sup>194</sup> and the donations of plots held by individuals on *pamunu* tenure<sup>195</sup> would fall into this category.

Since temple lands were exempted from services to the crown, the king lost dues from private dedications to religious establishments. One might expect, therefore, to find regulations prohibiting individuals from dedicating their land holdings to religious establishments without the king's sanction. Surprisingly, no evidence is available on this point for the period between 1000-1500. Ralph Pieris has shown, however, that in the "Kandyan kingdom" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was necessary to obtain the king's prior sanction in such donations.<sup>196</sup>

A royal grant of a village or land to a religious establishment might involve the right to extract labour from its occupants along with the right to receive the whole or part of the revenue accruing from it. Vijayabāhu I granted to the community of Bhikhus the whole district of Ālisāra together with the services of the people living there.<sup>197</sup> An inscription from Lankātilaka, datable to the fourteenth century, records that certain plots of land were donated to the temple there along with the services of the people living in them.<sup>198</sup> The Polonnaruva Hātādage portico slab inscription of Nissankamalla records that he dedicated land to that establishment along with serfs.<sup>199</sup>

193. *E.Z.* III, no. 30; *E.Z.* IV, no. 19, 25; *E.Z.* V, no. 26; *C.J.S.G.* II, p. 21; *A.S.C.M.*, VI, p. 67; *CV*, LX, 14; LXXX, 35-36; LXXXV, 71-72.

194. see above, p. 15.

195. see above, pp. 19-21.

196. Ralph Pieris, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

197. *Co.* LX, 14.

198. S. Paranavitana, "Lankātilaka inscriptions" *U.C.R.* 1960, p. 14.

199. *E.Z.* II, pp. 82-88.

In certain cases, temple lands had special privileges, stipulated in immunity grants.<sup>200</sup> These privileges were, of course, not granted by the king only to some of the temple lands, but were also given to lands held by other institutions and individuals. But it is noteworthy that, of these grants, the large majority refer to immunities granted to temples.

Monasteries also seem to have received part of the produce of land for temporary periods. For instance, a plot of land held on service tenure (*divelata sifi*) was donated to the Gaḍalādeniya temple by an officer of the king.<sup>201</sup> As observed earlier,<sup>202</sup> land held on service tenure by officials was to be enjoyed only for the period of service. In this grant, therefore, it was not the land that was donated to the temple, but only its produce, and that, too, for just a temporary period. However, this type of grant to religious establishments does not seem to have been very common in ancient Ceylon.

In some rare instances temples held land rights jointly with private individuals. An inscription from Gaḍalādeniya, datable to the third year of Bhuvanekabāhu IV, refers to a grant of five *amanams* of land made to an image house at Gaḍalādeniya by a certain Anurā Attara. This inscription states that Anurā Attara reserved the right of his relatives to enjoy the land by paying dues for it to the temple.<sup>203</sup>

In most cases, a grant to the Saṅgha would mention the particular monastery for which the donation was made.<sup>204</sup> Some grants went further and not merely mentioned a monastery but assigned the donation to a particular institution within a monastery, such as an image house or a *parivena*. Land granted to individual monasteries belonged to them alone and not to the priesthood as a body. This fact is well attested in the boundary disputes which arose between monks of the Mahāvihāra, Dakkhina vihāra and the Abhayagiri vihāra recorded in the chronicles.<sup>205</sup>

Religious institutions sometimes held land at a considerable distance from the location of their establishments. The Lankātilaka temple, for instance, held fourteen *yālas* of paddy land at Badalagoḍa, (modern Batalagoḍa) in the Kurunegala district,<sup>206</sup> about forty miles from the Lankātilaka temple.

200. For details see above, pp. 18-19.

201. *E.Z.* IV, no. 12.

202. see above, pp. 25-26.

203. *anurā attaram aya otu dī bandhānut prayōjana vindinā lesata pidū kumburu pasamunak.* *E.Z.* IV, no. 12. It may be noted that the earliest reference to *otu* which was an important term in land tenure after the fifteenth century occurs for the first time in this inscription.

204. *Cv.* LXXX, 39-40; *E.Z.* II, pp. 87-88; *E.Z.* III, no. 3; *E.Z.* IV, no. 12.

205. The information contained in this whole paragraph was originally brought together by R. A. L. H. Gunawardhane in his unpublished Ph.D. thesis, *The History of the Buddhist Saṅgha in Ceylon from the reign of Sena I to the invasion of Maḅha*, University of London, 1955, p. 68.

206. S. Paranavitana, "Lankātilaka Inscriptions", *U.C.R.* January-April, 1960, p. 5.

Property held by religious establishments was not expected to be alienated by sale. Likewise no villages or lands belonging to these establishments were allowed to be mortgaged or gifted away. According to the Mihintale tablets of Mahinda IV, anybody who acquired land from the Mihintale monastery by purchase had to forfeit it as such land was to be held by the monastery itself. Further, those who transferred the lands were liable to be exiled.<sup>207</sup> It is reasonable to assume that such rules were applicable to all monastic land. These prohibitions were proclaimed presumably because their illegal alienation had taken place. None of the records show that any plot of land belonging to a monastery was alienated by sale or gift. The Hinguregala rock inscription, datable to either the fourth or the fifth century, does suggest, however, that monasteries could purchase property. The purpose of this inscription was to record the names of a number of rice fields which the ancient monastery of Hinguregala had purchased from a company of soldiers stationed at a military camp closeby. Lay officials of the monastery transacted the business with the soldiers.<sup>208</sup>

The religious establishments used a form of service tenure similar to that of the king. The Kaludiyapokuna inscription and several other records<sup>209</sup> indicate that monastic employees were granted maintenance land by the monastery. A certain share of the produce from the plots of land permanently held by these religious bodies was given to those who performed various services to them. It is probable that the recipients themselves had to cultivate such land. Tablets of Mahinda IV at Mihintale state that the officials of the Mihintale monastery must not exact personal services from the people engaged in that monastery nor should they send such people out on other services in the neighbourhood.<sup>210</sup> Some of the land of temples, however, was cultivated by serfs (*vahala* or *dasun*) attached to these institutions and there was no tenurial contract between them and the temple. There are numerous references in inscriptions to serfs in monasteries.<sup>211</sup> and it is likely that these serfs were fed by the monasteries themselves.

Most of the inscriptions which record immunities granted by the king to religious establishments show that the peasants cultivating such lands were not expected to provide services to the king.<sup>212</sup> The grant of immunities from service due to the king implies that these obligations were to be performed for the monastery instead.

207. *E.Z.* I, no. 7

208. *E.Z.* V, no. 8.

209. *E.Z.* I, no. 1, no. 7; *E.Z.* III, no. 27.

210. *E.Z.* I, no. 7a.

211. See S. Paranavitana "Interpretation of Vaharala", *E.Z.* V, pp. 35-65; also *E.Z.* IV, no. 12, 16 and no. 25.

212. See above, p. 19.

Service in temples took three main forms, occasional, continuous and periodical. Occasional services involved such duties as assisting at a festival or maintaining temple buildings. Continuous services might involve such works as keeping the accounts of the temple, or drumming etc. Supplying of commodities to the temple comes under the category of periodic services. It seems likely that land was given for maintenance mostly in consideration of the services under the second and third categories.

Records on temple lands, services and dues<sup>213</sup> were kept by temple authorities and were similar to the *diveḷ pot* of the central administration. An inscription from Kaludiyapokuna, datable to the reign of either Sena III or Sena IV, states that lands attached to the Dakinigiri monastery were not to be given as maintenance land for those in the service of that monastery without duly recording them.<sup>214</sup> The Ruvanvālisāya slab inscription of Queen Kalyānavatī refers to scribes (*hiyannavun*) who were in the service of temples.<sup>215</sup>

The question remains as to whether individual monks had any rights over land. According to an inscription from Kōṭṭango of the thirteenth century, chief priest Abhaya of Vilgammula granted some plots of land including the *pamunu* called Kalama to the *Sangha*.<sup>216</sup> It is recorded in an earlier inscription from the same place that this Kalama had previously been granted by king Lokesvara to a certain Loke Arakmēnā for valour shown in campaigns against the Colas.<sup>217</sup> As R. A. L. H. Gunawardana has pointed out, this land could have come into the possession of the monk in any one of a number of ways. In the first place, he could have held the land before he entered the order. Secondly, the right could have devolved upon him through inheritance after he joined the order. This explanation presupposes the right of a monk to inherit property belonging to a layman. Thirdly, he could have been offered the land but if this were so he must have received the offer much earlier as he refers to the land as a *pamunu* held by him, not as recently received.<sup>218</sup> Another inscription from Buddannāhela, datable to the tenth century, records a land grant made to an individual monk<sup>219</sup> which also seems to suggest that individual monks had proprietary rights over land. There are further references in inscriptions to land held by clergy in common (*gana satu*) and by individual monks (*puṅgulsatu*).<sup>220</sup> According to *Cūlavamsa*, Parākramabāhu II ordered that the

213. These may be synonymous with the *Māligāva Lekam Māṭṭiya* (Ralph Pieris, *op. cit.*, p. 119) of the time of the Kandyan kings.

214. *E.Z.* III, no. 27.

215. *E.Z.* IV, no. 33.

216. *E.Z.* IV, p. 89.

217. *E.Z.* IV, pp. 82-90.

218. R. A. L. H. Gunawardana, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

219. *E.Z.* I, no. 16.

220. *E.Z.* I, no. 20.

land which had been assigned for the provision of priestly requisites and those which belonged to monks in common (*gama santaka*) and to individuals (*puggalika*) should be clearly distinguished.<sup>221</sup>

Monks, however, could not individually appropriate property belonging to monasteries or to a particular institution within a monastery. Nor did monks have the same rights as laymen over the lands held by them individually. But it is not clear in what ways the rights of individual monks were restricted. The property of chief priest Abhaya, mentioned in the Kōṭṭange inscription, is termed *pamunu* and involved the most complete rights possible within the tenurial system but it remains questionable whether a monk could transfer his property to a layman by way of sale or even gift.

## VII TAXATION

This section on revenue derives naturally from the discussion on tenures since the taxes on land formed the bulk of state finances. This subject is also linked to the immunities on taxation granted by the king to individuals and institutions under various tenurial conditions. One fundamental theory of ancient Hindu jurists was that taxes were the king's dues for the protection he afforded to his subjects. This theory is based upon a corresponding conception of a contract between the ruler and the ruled. Thus, *Gautama* justifies the king's levy of taxes on the ground that he is charged with the duty of protecting the subjects.<sup>222</sup> According to *Vishnu*, a *Kshatriya* should protect the world and receive due reward in the form of taxes.<sup>223</sup>

This relation between taxation and protection must have been known in Ceylon from ancient times for the institution of kingship in the Island was influenced to a considerable extent by the ideas of Buddhist canon and Indian Literature.<sup>224</sup> According to U. N. Ghoshal, the versions of the origin of kingship occurring in the Buddhist canon, *Arthasāstra* and *Mahābhārata* make the payment of certain specific taxes by the people and the protection offered

221. *Cv.* LXXXIV, 3-4.

222. *Gautamā*, X, 28.

223. *Vishnu Smṛti*, III, 12.

224. Some of the kings in the fourth to tenth centuries bore the title of *Budadasa* (*Buddhadāsa*) indicating that they wished to be known as devoted followers of the Buddhist faith. (*E.Z.* I, No. 2; *E.Z.* IV, No. 13; *U.H.C.* I, Pt. II, p. 364). An inscription of the tenth century states that only a *Bōdhisatva*, i.e. a future Buddha, would become a king of Ceylon. (*E.Z.* I, No. 20). The Galpota inscription of Nissankamalla echoes the *Manusmṛti* in declaring that though kings appear in human form, they are divinities and must therefore be regarded as gods. It further states that the appearance of an impartial king should be welcomed as the appearance of the Buddha (*E.Z.* II, No. 17). According to the *Cūḷavamsa* prince Parākramabāhu was taught Buddhist scriptures and works of Kautilya and others (*Cv.*, LXIV, 2-3).

by the king as two sides of the original contract between the ruler and the ruled.<sup>225</sup>

While taxation subserves the essential needs of the kingdom it involves a diminution of the people's wealth so that the statesman's task is to reconcile the needs of the rulers with the interests of the ruled. Hindu texts on polity also consider this aspect and prescribe the amount of taxes that should be exacted from the people by the king. According to *Vasistha Dharmasūtra* the king who rules his subjects justly shall take one sixth of the crops.<sup>226</sup> The *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* enjoins the king to protect the subjects with the sixth part as his share in return.<sup>227</sup> The *Vishnu Smṛiti* and the *Arthasāstra* also lay down this amount as one sixth.<sup>228</sup> According to the *Mānava Dharmasāstra* the king is justified in demanding one-fourth of the produce, instead of the usual one-sixth, during emergencies.<sup>229</sup>

Similar theoretical beliefs regarding taxation seem to have prevailed in Ceylon. In the *Butsarana* the equitable levy on the produce of the soil is given as one-sixth.<sup>230</sup> Shortly after the accession of Vijayabāhu I, the king is said to have directed his officials to collect taxes in accordance with the customs and traditions (*yathā nāyam karaṃ ganhituṃ yōjēsi*).<sup>231</sup> The Velaikkāra inscription at Polonnaruva refers to the same king as having ruled in accordance with *dasarājadharmā* for fifty five years.<sup>232</sup> The *pūjāvāliya* indicates that taxes were to be exacted according to *dharmā*.<sup>233</sup> It is possible that *dharmā* in these contexts corresponded to *rājadharmā* referred to in Indian texts such as the *Arthasāstra* and the *Mānava Dharmasāstra*. The references in the *Cūlavamsā*<sup>234</sup> suggests that the *Arthasāstra* and the *Mānava Dharmasāstra* were known and studied in Ceylon during the times of Polonnaruva kings. The *Kandavuru Sīrīta* states that kings should exact taxes without oppressing people, as a bee who sucks honey from a flower,<sup>235</sup> echoing here the maxims of *Manu*. *Manu* states that just as the leech, the calf and the bee take their food little by little, thus should the king collect the annual taxes in his kingdom.<sup>236</sup>

225. U. N. Ghoshal, *Contributions to the History of the Hindu Revenue System*, Calcutta 1929, p. 18.

226. *Vasistha Dharmasūtra*, I, 42.

227. *Baudhāyana*, I, 10, 18.

228. *Vishnu Smṛiti*, III, 28; *Arthasāstra* ed. R. Shamasastrī, 1923, p. 108.

229. *Manu*, X, 118.

230. *Butsarana* ed. Labugama Lankānanda, Colombo 1923, p. 281.

231. *CV*, LIX, 13.

232. *E.I.* XVIII, No. 38.

233. *Pjv.* p. 685.

234. *CV*, LXIV, 2-3; LXXX, 9.

235. *Kandavuru Sīrīta*, *Sinhala Sāhitya Līpī* ed. D. B. Jayatilake, Maharagama 1956, p. 66.

236. *Manusmṛiti*, VII, 129.



In practice, however, the amount of the produce collected in the form of taxes was not uniform in all periods and in all the localities in the Island. While certain rulers avoided the imposition of burdensome taxes others were extortionate in their demands and still others too lenient. Under a number of weak rulers the collection of tax appears to have been ineffective. During the period of fratricidal wars, between the reigns of Vijayabāhu I and Parā-kramabāhu I, Vikramabāhu and Mittā's sons oppressed the people with heavy taxes. According to the chronicler ".....In their insatiability and money lust they squeezed out the whole people as sugar cane in a sugar mill by levying excessive taxes".<sup>237</sup> The chronicler also accuses them of "causing evil" to their subjects by levying arbitrary taxes (*abaddhakara*).<sup>238</sup> Nissankamalla, while stating that former kings had oppressed the people by inordinate exactions,<sup>239</sup> claims to have followed a lenient policy on taxation. He abrogated taxes on *chena* lands and repealed the tax called *pisāmburuvata*.<sup>240</sup> He also abolished the tax on paddy fields which had newly been brought under cultivation (*val koḷā gat ket aya*).<sup>241</sup> In some of his inscriptions he claims to have remitted taxes for five years,<sup>242</sup> while some other inscriptions state that he did so for seven years.<sup>243</sup>

The general Pali terms used for taxes are *bali*<sup>244</sup> and *kara*.<sup>245</sup> In certain Sinhalese texts, taxes are denoted by such terms as *aya paṇḍuru*, *karavuvāra*, *bali*, *kara* and *aya*.<sup>246</sup> The *Saddharmaratnāvalī* uses the term *sungam*<sup>247</sup> and

237. *CV*. Tr. LXI. 53.

238. *CV*., LXXIII, 3.

239. *E.Z.* II, p. 131, p. 135.

240. see below, pp. 40-41.

241. *E.Z.* II, No. 15, p. 93. A similar practice was prevalent in South India during the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. An inscription from Bangalore datable to 1379 A.D. records that a reclaimed land was exempted from taxes for a period of two years. Krishnadevaraya exempted taxes from such land for nine years. (A. Appadurai, *Economic Conditions in Southern India*, Vol. I, Madras 1936, p. 190).

242. *E.Z.* V; pt. III, No. 44; *E.Z.* II, p. 105, p. 135, 165-178.

243. *E.Z.* V, pt. III, No. 43; This is not the first time that we hear of abolition of taxes by a king. The *Rājāratnākaraya* states that king *Bhātiya* remitted taxes from the people. (*Rājāratnākaraya*, ed. B. N. Tissera, Colombo 1929, p. 15). According to the *Rājāvaliya*, king Mahadaliyā also did the same (*Rājāvaliya*, ed. W. Pemananda, Colombo 1923, p. 43).

244. The term *bali* frequently occurs in Vedic texts according to which it was used to denote taxes as well as tribute, (U. N. Ghoshal, *op. cit.* pp. 3-10). Both terms *kara* and *bali* occur in the *Arthasāstra*.

245. *CV*., LIX, 13; LXI, 53-70; LXVIII, 54-56.

246. *Daladāsivīta*, ed. Vajira Ratnasooriya, Colombo 1949, p. 18; *Jātaka Atvā Gāṭapadaya* ed. D. B. Jayatilake, Colombo 1943, p. 168; *Dhampiyā Atvā Gāṭapadaya*, ed. D. B. Jayatilake, Colombo 1932, p. 80; *Pūjāvaliya*, 34th chapter, ed. Medhankara, Colombo 1932, p. 31; *Kankhāvitarani Piṭṭapota*, ed. K. Pannasekara, Colombo 1936, p. 22; *Atadāsannaṇṇa* ed. Vimalakitti and Sominda, Colombo 1954, p. 184.

247. *SDHRV*, p. 473. The term *sungam* occurs in South Indian inscriptions of this period. Kulottanga I is given the title *sungam taviṛṛa*. (he who remitted tolls) (the *Cholas*, 1955, p. 331). In Tamil, *sungam* means tolls and customs. The Sanskrit term *sulka*, from which *sungam* is said to be derived means tolls and it occurs in Indian inscriptions in that sense.

the *Rājaratnākara* and *Rājāvalī* denote taxes by the term *ayabadu*.<sup>248</sup> According to the *Ruvannal Nighandūva*, *ayabadu* was synonymous with *bali*, *badu*, *kam* and *kara*.<sup>249</sup> Inscriptions also use the terms *aya*,<sup>250</sup> *karavuvura*<sup>251</sup> and *badu*.<sup>252</sup>

Land tax which was the primary tax of the kingdom, was exacted from different categories of cultivations and, of these, the tax levied on paddy fields was the most important. Nissankamalla, in some of his inscriptions—in the Galpota inscription and Vanduruppe slab inscription for example—states that tax levied should not exceed one *amuna* and three *pālas* in grain and six *akas* of *mandāran* in cash<sup>253</sup> per *amuna* sowing extent of land of the most fertile grade, one *amuna* and two *pālas* in grain and four *akas* of *mandāran* in cash per *amuna* sowing extent of land of the middle grade; and one *amuna* and one *pāla* in grain and three *akas* of *mandāran* in cash per *amuna* sowing extent of land of the least fertile grade.<sup>254</sup> Some scholars have taken these references as pertaining to land tax in general,<sup>255</sup> but it would be more correct to interpret them as taxes falling on paddy fields. Nissankamalla, in the same inscriptions,<sup>256</sup> and in many others, states that he abrogated taxes on *chena* lands. Further, if there was any tax on gardens (as distinct from paddy fields) such as those of coconut and arecanut, the method of assessment would have been different from that of the paddy fields.

The introduction of the new taxation system on paddy fields by Nissankamalla must have involved the collection of a large mass of data regarding these lands. Presumably, even before his reign a share of the gross produce of each paddy field was taxed, but whether this share of the king was always one sixth is not easy to determine. However, in such a system there was no

248. *Rājaratnākara*, ed. P. N. Tissera, p. 15; *Rājāvaliya*, ed. W. Pemananda, p. 43.  
 249. *Ruvannal Nighandūva*, ed. D. P. Abwis Wijesekera, Colombo 1914, p. 65.  
 250. *E.Z.* II, pp. 86–87; p. 105; p. 135.  
 251. *E.Z.* I, No. 9; *E.Z.* III, No. 27, *A.S.C.M.*, VI, pp. 66–68.  
 252. *E.Z.* III, No. 32.  
 253. One of the earliest references to land tax in the Trincomalee area is found in an inscription of Rājarāja I and it contains a record of certain grants made by Rājarāja I to the Tanjore temple from land in Koṭṭiyāram (*S.I.I.*, II, pt. IV, No. 92; see also *A.L.T.R.* p. 53). According to this edict land tax was paid partly in kind and partly in cash in the district of Trincomalee as well. This system was in vogue under the Cola rule and was probably introduced in Ceylon by the Colas.  
 254. *E.Z.* II, p. 105, p. 117, p. 285; *E.Z.* V, pt. III, No. 4. In the *Epigraphia Zeylanica* volumes the phrases *mandāran sāka* (*sā aka*) *Mandāran sataraka* (*sataraka aka*) and *mandāran tunaka* (*tun aka*) have been translated as six *mandāran* four *mandāran* and three *mandāran* (*E.Z.* II, p. 105, p. 285). *Mandāran* according to Forbes, signifies "a fine paid by a cultivator, to a proprietor of land on receiving it for cultivation". (Quoted in *E.Z.* I, p. 133, note 2). But the *Ummaggajātākaya* suggests that *mādhā ratran* or *mandāran* was the term used to denote pure gold. (*ē raniṣa nīla karshāpana yay kiyati. En satara akek mādhā ratran ya. Satara akek pas lōya.*—i.e. That gold is known as *nīla karshāpana*. It (*nīla karshāpana*) consisted of four *akas* of *mādhā ratran* and four *akas* of five kinds of metals. *Ummaggajātākaya*, ed. K. Paññāsara, Colombo 1929, p. 126. *Aka* was a measure of weight. (see *C.C.C.* p. 191).  
 255. D. M. De Z. Wiekramasinghe, *E.Z.* II, p. 105.  
 256. *E.Z.* II, p. 285; *E.Z.* V, pt. III, No. 4.

question of any complicated calculation of tax, whatever the land produced, was heaped on the threshing floor, and the king's officers superintended its division in kind. Under the system introduced by Nissankamalla, the payments of the peasant were determined by the crops sown and the fertility of the soil and not by the harvest gathered. It is not known whether this system gave any allowance for crop failures and poor harvests. If there was no such relief, the peasant would have undoubtedly suffered. On the other hand, this system minimized seasonal fluctuations of the king's revenue and also increased the peasant's interest in the success of his undertaking because the surplus belonged to him. The part played by human labour in agriculture, however, underwent little change in ancient Ceylon. On the whole the same methods have been used and probably the same amount of energy expended in the process. The response of the land too did not change much, so there was little material change in the average income per head of the rural population.

Evidence is lacking as to whether the type of taxation adopted by Nissankamalla was continued by subsequent rulers without change. Paranavitana thinks it was not : "The absence in our period of a class of rentiers corresponding to the *pāṭṭaladdan* of the late Anurādhapura period is thus explained. The reference in the *Pūjāvalī* to agriculturists at times cultivating a paddy field of which the entire harvest belonged to the lord indicates that this practice of the king or the lord receiving the total produce of an allotment, instead of a share of the produce of the whole village, was in vogue in the Daṁbadeṇi period."<sup>257</sup> This view cannot be proved conclusively. Even though there is no reference to a "class" of rentiers during the time of the Polonnaruva kings, Nissankamalla's inscriptions clearly indicate that there was a land tax during their times.<sup>258</sup> The passage which Paranavitana quotes from the *Pūjāvalī* merely states that, after the harvest was gathered, the cultivator had to pay a half, a third or the full amount to the 'owner' of the land, according to the terms of this tenure.<sup>259</sup> It does not specifically refer to the king's lands. The phrase which suggests that the full amount of the harvest was given to the 'owner', *balāpu vī nam hāmama vī himiyanṭa duna mānava*, implies that certain farmers cultivated fields which were owned by others for conditions other than the share of the produce. The employment of agricultural labour was not unknown in ancient Ceylon, for example, the *Saddharmālakāra* refers to a person who harvested another's fields for daily wages.<sup>260</sup>

The *Pūjāvalī* itself informs us that royal officials went to collect taxes from the people,<sup>261</sup> and the *Saddharmaratnāvalī* suggests that the king collected

257. *U.H.C.* I, pt. II, p. 741.

258. *E.Z.* II, p. 77, p. 105, p. 285.

259. *P.J.V.*, p. 355.

260. *Saddharmālakāra*, ed. Bentara Sradhātissa, Panadura 1934, p. 595.

261. *Pūjāvalīya*, 34th Chapter, ed. Medhankara, p. 31.

annual taxes in the kingdom.<sup>262</sup> These could be references to the land tax, though it is not mentioned specifically. The *Lakdivividhiya*, an ola manuscript the original of which may go back to the fourteenth century,<sup>263</sup> states that kings fixed the amount of the tax (*aya paṇḍuru*) due from the inhabitants of the country by ascertaining the full sowing extents of their plots of land and by examining the four registers (*satara lēkam balā*).<sup>264</sup> The Saman Devale copper plate of the Kotte period refers to—*me gamvāla badu da pali da marāla da niyama vū gam paṇḍuru*<sup>265</sup>—the *buddas* (taxes), the fines, death duties and fixed *gampanḍuru* of these villages. In this document *me gamvāla badu* could be the land tax as some of the other taxes are mentioned specifically. The same grades of paddy land introduced in the time of Nissankamalla for purposes of taxation seem to have continued in the time of Kotte kings, for we find the terms *utte*, *mādde* and *passe* in the Pāpiliyāna records datable to this period.<sup>266</sup>

Nissankamalla's claim to have abolished taxes on *chena* land implies that prior to his reign there was a levy on the produce of the *chenas*. This tax is referred to as *sehen kaṭusara aya*,<sup>267</sup> *sehen koṭā gat tāna aya*<sup>268</sup> or *kāti ada*<sup>269</sup> and *keṭu kanaba aya*,<sup>270</sup> but no evidence is available to determine the amount levied. Nissankamalla's abolition of the tax, however, must have given a great impetus to *chena* cultivation. From the date of his reign to the end of the period under discussion there is no reference to a tax on *chenas*, in any of the sources.

Paranavitana surmises that the *Kolavel aya*, mentioned in the Galapāta vihāra inscription was a tax on gardens, similar to the *vatu badda* of later times.<sup>271</sup> Among certain plots of land given by an officer named Kahambalkulu Mindalnā and his family to the Galapāta monastery and which are recorded in this inscription, there were some plots in which *kolavel aya* was included. These plots of land had earlier been enjoyed by the donors in hereditary succession. The phrase *apa sīparapurāva valandā ā . . . . . kumburu hā mehi pol puvak ātulu vū kolavel aya*<sup>272</sup> may suggest that 'owners' donated the fields and the income (*aya*); (not the tax) of gardens such as coconut and arecanut. If

262. *SDHEV*, p. 68.

263. *A.L.T.R.* p. 29.

264. *Lakdivividhiya*, OR. 6606 (42), B.M., fols. 9b-10.

265. *Sābaragamuve Pāraṇi Liṅgavilī*, ed. Kirielle Gāṇavimala, Colombo 1942, p.43.

266. H. W. Codrington "Some documents regarding Pāpiliyāna", *Vidyodaya* Vol. I, 1926, pp. 374-375.

267. *E.Z.* II, p. 105.

268. *E.Z.* V. pt. III, No. 42.

269. *E.Z.* II, p. 77, p. 87, pp. 138-139, p. 285.

270. *E.Z.* I, No. 9.

271. *U.H.C.* I, pt. II, pp. 548-549.

272. *E.Z.* IV, No. 25.

this interpretation is accepted, it is difficult to agree that *kolavel aya* was a tax levied on gardens by the king, but if Paranavitana's interpretation is acceptable it would mean that the king had previously commuted his share of tax<sup>273</sup> from the said land to Kahambalkulu Mindalnā's ancestors to be enjoyed in succession, and that, subsequently Mindalnā and his family donated their right to the monastery. It may be mentioned here in passing that certain references in the tenth century Mihintale tablets and in the Daladāgē inscription have been interpreted by Codrington as references to taxes on gardens.<sup>274</sup>

Apart from the land tax, taxes on trade, the most important of which were custom dues, formed the bulk of the king's revenues. The Dondra inscription, datable to the reign of Parākramabāhu II, states that the port of Devinuvara was administered by an officer who had the title *mahapaṇḍite* and that customs duties were imposed by him.<sup>275</sup> We learn from Cosmas Indicopleustes that as early as the sixth century A.D. there were customs officers in the ports of Taprobane.<sup>276</sup> The *Saddharmāṅkārā* of the fourteenth century indicates that the king appointed an official for the collection of taxes at *Mahāvīttha*.<sup>277</sup> These vague references are the only extant pieces of evidence on the details of customs duties. Nothing more is known of even such important questions as the amount charged on the various types of commodities exported and imported.

One inscription, the Nainativu inscription of Parākramabāhu I, provides evidence on the imposts levied by the king on wrecked merchandise drifting to his ports. This edict proclaiming that foreign traders should be given protection, contains two regulations regarding wrecked merchandise. Wrecked vessels which had brought elephants and horses for the king had to surrender a fourth share of their cargo to the treasury. Those laden with ordinary merchandise had to pay a half share to the treasury.<sup>278</sup>

As regards tolls there is the evidence of the Badulla inscription of the tenth century A.D. This edict states that tolls were not to be levied on merchandise that was merely being transported through the market place at

273. See above, p. 16.

274. *A.L.T.R.*, p. 42; The Mihintale tablets (*E.Z.* I, No. 7), which record certain proclamations of Mahinda IV, state that one third of the produce of trees and plants of Kiribaṇḍpav (garden) shall be appropriated by the Mihintale monastery. This may suggest that the king commuted the taxes on the above mentioned garden which amounted to one-third of the produce to the monastery. Since the Daladāgē inscription published in the *Epigraphia Zeylanica* (*E.Z.* I, No. 8) is partly damaged it cannot be read accurately and it is difficult to base conclusions on the undamaged sections alone.

275. *A.S.C.M.*, VI, pp. 66-70.

276. *The Christian Topography of Cosmas*, ed. J. W. McCrindle, Hakluyt Society, London, M.DCCC.XC.VII., p. 368.

277. *Saddharmāṅkārā*, edited Bentara Sraddhātissa, p. 670.

278. K. Indrapala, "The Nainativu Tamil Inscription of Parākramabāhu I", *U.C.R.*, April, 1963, Vol. XXI, No. I, pp. 63-70.

Hōpitigama and that goods liable to tolls (*sutvat*) were not to be sold at unauthorized places.<sup>279</sup> This suggests that tolls were levied only on certain kinds of trade commodities. Of course, tolls may have been charged on merchandise at other market places or towns and at various gravets (*koḍavat*). An inscription from Anurādhapura, datable to the latter half of the tenth century, states that one *pata* of paddy should be taken from each sack brought into the city of Anurādhapura.<sup>280</sup>

Since the peasants had to pay a stipulated amount for their share of water, the king derived considerable revenue from his irrigation works. This payment was called *dakapati* until the beginning of the seventh century A.D. and was paid not only to the king but was also collected by private 'owners' of small reservoirs and canals.<sup>281</sup> During the period under discussion there are no references to the payment of water dues to individuals. In the ninth and tenth centuries the payment for the share of water made to the king was called *diyabedum*<sup>282</sup> and it was termed *diyadaḍa* in the time of Polonnaruva kings. A slab inscription of Nissankamalla, which records certain land grants made to an officer named Vijaya by the king refers to Tungabhadra canal from which water rates were not levied, (*diya ḍaḍa nudun Tungabhadrā āla*)<sup>283</sup> indicating that it was the normal practice to levy dues on irrigation canals and reservoirs. Here, too, the amount collected as water dues is not known.

Nissankamalla in several of his inscriptions, claims to have abolished the levying of an impost called *pisāmburuvata* or *visāmburuvata*.<sup>284</sup> This implies that prior to his reign there was a levy denoted by this term. According to D. M. De Z. Wickramasinghe, this was a tax on fallow or barren land.<sup>285</sup> But since this levy was associated with great reservoirs (*mahavātāna*) his view cannot be maintained. In the Vanduruppe slab inscription of Nissankamalla it is stated that the *pisāmburuvata* levied from *mahavātāna* (*mahavātānin gannā pisāmburuvata*) was abolished by the king.<sup>286</sup> Godakumbure renders the term *mahavātānin* as "from the great tanks" and states that the *pisāmburuvata* is a tax levied on fishing in reservoirs.<sup>287</sup> As Nissankamalla refers to tax on land separately in the same inscriptions, in which the terms *pisāmburuvata* and *visāmburuvata* occur,<sup>288</sup> the latter cannot be a tax levied from the areas

279. *E.Z.* V., No. 16.

280. *E.Z.* III, No. 9.

281. L. S. Perera, *Institutions of Ceylon from Inscriptions*, unpublished, Ph.D. thesis, University of Ceylon, 1949, pp. 271-274.

282. *E.Z.* I, pp. 167-70; p. 171, Note I; *E.Z.* I, No. 16 & p. 199, Note 8.

283. *E.Z.* V, pt. II, No. 17, p. 204.

284. *E.Z.* II, p. 93, p. 105, pp. 138-139, p. 144, p. 147, p. 154, p. 285.

285. *E.Z.* II, p. 117, Note II.

286. *E.Z.* V, pt. III, No. 42.

287. *E.Z.* V, pt. III, No. 42, p. 429.

288. *E.Z.* II, No. 15; *E.Z.* V., pt. III, No. 42.

irrigated by the great reservoirs. Thus it must have been either a water tax or a tax levied on fishing in the great reservoirs.<sup>289</sup> Paranavitana suggests that *pisaṃburuvata* or *visaṃburuvata* was the king's share of the fish caught in irrigation reservoirs.<sup>290</sup> Even as early as the first century of the Christian era, there was a tax levied on fishing in the reservoirs and canals. The phrase *matera-maji-baka* in the Perimiyanakulam rock inscription of Vasabha (67-111) has been interpreted by Paranavitana as share of the fish caught in canals and reservoirs.<sup>291</sup> The term *macca-bhāga*, which means the same, occurs in the fifth century *Papañcasūdanī* the commentary of Buddhagosa on the *Majjhima Nikāya*.<sup>292</sup> However, in some of the inscriptions, Nissankamalla claims that he bestowed freedom from fear on living beings in the jungle and on the fish in large reservoirs.<sup>293</sup> One can point out, therefore, that if the *pisaṃburuvata* was a tax levied on fishing in reservoirs its abolition would have encouraged fishing in them. This does not accord with Nissankamalla's claim that he gave freedom to living beings in the reservoirs. On the other hand, it is possible that the statements in his inscriptions regarding giving freedom to animals and fish were included as mere panegyric phrases to eulogise Nissankamalla. If this was not the case the *pisaṃburuvata* or *visaṃburuvata* must have indicated a levy charged for the use of the water of reservoirs.

The terms *isran*, *masran* and *davasran* occur in the *Daladā Sīrita*.<sup>294</sup> The *Pūjāvaliya* also refers to *isran* and *masran*.<sup>295</sup> These terms cannot be explained with any degree of precision. The *Jātaka Aṭṭvā Gāṭapadaya* describes the term *hisran* as *hisakata massak duna mānavay nūtahot metek ran duna mānavay kiyā minisun atin gannā hisran*,<sup>296</sup> which suggests that the king levied tax of a *massa* or a certain amount of gold upon each individual. Codrington equates *isran* with the *āngabadda* of the 'Portuguese period'.<sup>297</sup>

The terms *masran* and *davasran* could be literally rendered into English as 'levies exacted monthly' and 'levies exacted daily.' Codrington has rendered these as 'month money' and 'day money'.<sup>298</sup> According to Hindu works on

289. In southern India at this time a levy charged on fishing in reservoirs was called *paṣipāṭṭam* or *mīnpāṭṭam* (A. Appadurai, *op. cit.* p. 221).

290. *U.H.C.* I., pt. II, p. 548.

291. S. Paranavitana "Perimiyanakulama rock inscription of Vasabha" *J.R.A.S.C.B.*, N.S., V., pt. II, pp. 129-137.

292. *Papañca Sūdanī*, P.T.S. II, London 1928, p. 349.

293. *E.Z.* II, No. 14, No. 18, No. 21, No. 22, No. 23, No. 24, No. 25, No. 27.

294. *Daladāsīrita*, ed. Vajira Ratnasuriya, p. 52.

295. *P.IV.*, p. 22, p. 685.

296. *Jātaka Aṭṭvā Gāṭapadaya*, ed. D. B. Jayatilake, p. 12.

297. *A.L.T.R.*, p. 47 : In the Jaffna kingdom too, a poll tax known as *talavari* was collected from each individual by the Tamil rulers and its equivalent in Southern India were the taxes known as *ālvāri* : *Pillālvāri* and *pērkāṭamāi* (S. Pathmanathan, *The History of the Jaffna Kingdom*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1969, pp. 377-378).

298. *A.L.T.R.*, p. 37.

polity, artisans and craftsmen paid their contributions to the king in two forms; first, in the form of service; and second, in the form of tax in cash. *Gautama* and *Manu* state that one day's work every month should be done for the king by artisans.<sup>299</sup> *Vishnu* states that artisans, manual labourers and *Sūdras* should do work for the king for a day in each month.<sup>300</sup> According to *Vasistha*, artisans had to pay a monthly tax.<sup>301</sup> Similarly *masran* in Ceylon may have been a monthly payment made by artisans and craftsmen. In the fifth century—*Papañcasūdanī*, the term *māsakahāpana* occurs in relation to dues received by a certain lord of a village.<sup>302</sup> This is probably the same as *masran* of the *Daladāsīrita* and the *Pūjāvāliya*.

The term *davasran* is more difficult to explain. It may have meant levies exacted daily in the form of tolls, customs dues etc. But this explanation is essentially a tentative one.

The Mihintale tablets of Mahinda IV, which contain certain proclamations of the king, state that the house tax of Saṅgvālla (*saṅgvāllehi gekulī*) was granted to the monastery at Mihintale.<sup>303</sup> An inscription from Kataragama, datable to the first quarter of the tenth century, refers to *getaḍ* which is most likely a variant form of *gedaḍ*, which means house tax.<sup>304</sup> The Lankātilaka inscription of Buvanekabāhu IV (1341-51) also indicates that the levy on houses known as *pidenī panam* of a certain area, which was exacted at the rate of one *panam* from each house, was commuted to the Lankātilaka monastery by the king.<sup>305</sup> The counterpart of the house tax in the Tamil system in Jaffna was the *vācalpanam* and the *manakulī*.

## VIII

### OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUE AND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

Apart from direct taxes there were other sources of royal revenue, such as fines, which were generally denoted by the term *dada*.<sup>306</sup> Fines were required to be paid in cash,<sup>307</sup> but tablets of Mahinda IV at Mihintale record that in

299. *Gautama*, X, 31; *Manu*, VII, 138.

300. *Vishnu*, III, 32.

301. *Vasistha*, XIX, 28.

302. *Papañcasūdanī*, P.T.S. edition, pt. II, p. 349.

303. *E.Z.* I, No. 7.

304. *E.Z.* III, No. 21, pp. 219-25.

305. S. Paranavitana, "Lankatilaka Inscriptions", *U.C.R.*, 1960, pp. 5-6.

306. *Dada* is derived from Sanskrit *danda* which means fine or punishment. *Pūjāvāliya* chs. 12-16, ed. D. E. Hettiaratchi, p. 73; *SDHEV*, p. 826; *E.Z.* V., No. 1, p. 20. *Atadāsannaya*, ed. Vimalakitti and Sominda, p. 103; *Jātaka Aṭṭvā Gāṭapadaya*, ed. D. B. Jayatilake, p. 235.

307. *Jātaka Aṭṭvā Gāṭapadaya*, p. 235; *Atadāsannaya*, p. 103; *E.Z.* I., No. 6; *Pūjāvāliya*, chs. 12-16, ed. D. E. Hettiaratchi, p. 73.



lieu of an assessed fine offenders could be made to perform various duties like constructing and repairing reservoirs.<sup>308</sup>

The king may have also derived revenue from treasure troves found beneath the ground as found in the stories of *Rasavāhīnī*, *Saddharmālakāra* and *Saddharmaratnākara*.<sup>309</sup> Indian treatises on polity contain various details on the king's rights over such treasure troves but similar details are lacking in the literature and inscriptions of Ceylon. One should, therefore, consider the possibility that the references in the texts mentioned above are either based upon Indian stories, not necessarily relevant to Ceylon, or reflect practices that may have been from time to time introduced by the kings on the basis of Indian texts.

*The Pūjāvalī* and *Ummaggajātakaya*<sup>310</sup> indicate that the theory of the king's complete rights over 'ownerless' property, as found in India, was known and practised in Ceylon too. As Ghoshal points out, this theory is propounded by Indian law givers such as *Vasistha*, *Gautama*, *Byhaspati*, *Baudhāyana* and *Manu*.<sup>311</sup> These texts give details of the amounts that should be given to a finder of lost and 'ownerless' property, the period for which the king should safeguard such property till a claim is made, and the share that should be taken by the king if a claim is made etc.,<sup>312</sup> but unfortunately, similar details are not to be found in the literature of Ceylon.

In the case of the estate of a deceased, a death duty, which was known as *marāla* or *malāra*<sup>313</sup> was collected by the king, at least from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards. The earliest inscriptional references to *malāra* are found in the Gaḍalādeniya slab inscription of Śc̄nāsammata Vikramabāhu and Dādigama slab inscription of Buvanekabāhu VI (1470-78). The former, states that where there was no heir "for the heriot of any one who shall have fallen in warfare and in the elephant hunt, (this heriot) shall be offered" for the restoration of religious buildings which are out of repair.<sup>314</sup> This suggests that the king could determine what should be done with the property of a deceased. Even if there were inheritors for the property of a dead person, a stipulated amount seems to have been charged as death duty. In the Dādigama inscription of Buvanekabāhu IV, it is stated that of one *malāra*, half shall be left to the heir.<sup>315</sup>

308. *E.Z.* I, No. 7.

309. *Rasavāhīnī*—Lankādīpuppattivathūnī, ed. Saranātissa, p. 31; *Saddharmālakāra*, ed. Suddhatissa, p. 436; *Saddharmaratnākara*, ed. D. Wimalakitti, Colombo 1955, p. 455.

310. *P.J.V.*, p. 395; *Ummaggajātakaya*, ed. K. Paññāsāra, Colombo, 1929, p. 34.

311. U. N. Ghoshal, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115.

312. *Ibid.*, pp. 112-117.

313. *E.Z.* III, No. 3; No. 29; *E.Z.* IV, No. 2; *Saparagamuvē Pāraṇi Līyavilī*, ed. Gūṇanavimala, Colombo 1942, pp. 41-45.

314. *E.Z.* IV, No. 2, p. 15.

315. *E.Z.* III, No. 29.

The term *malāra* is derived from Sanskrit *mṛta* 'dead' and *hāra* 'what is taken', and etymologically means 'what is taken from persons who have died'.<sup>316</sup> According to ancient Hindu texts, the king is to seize the property in the absence of any heirs. Exception was made in favour of Brahmanas whose property devolved in such a case upon the community of learned Brahmanas.<sup>317</sup> In Ceylon, Brahmanas were not a powerfully organized group, as in India, and it is unlikely that they had similar privileges except under foreign Hindu rulers.

The king also derived income from his own lands and monopolies over certain trade commodities. The sources of revenue under the first category have been discussed elsewhere.<sup>318</sup> and here it would suffice to deal with only the trade monopoly of the king.

The king's trade monopoly was largely on important exports, such as gems, pearls, cinnamon and elephants. The mining of gems was also a royal monopoly, carried out seasonally under the supervision of the king's officers. To protect the monopoly, permanent settlement in regions where gems were found was prohibited.<sup>319</sup> Abu Zaid, writing in the tenth century, has stated that there were men appointed by the king to guard the gem mines.<sup>320</sup> According to an inscription from Gaḍalādeniya, datable to the last two decades of the sixteenth century, even the chiefs of the king were prohibited from mining for precious stones.<sup>321</sup> Individuals were allowed, however, to mine for gems on the payment of a fee, but the king had the prerogative right to all gems which exceeded a certain value and weight. According to Ibn Baṭūṭā, the custom was that all rubies which exceeded a hundred *fanams* in value to be reserved for the king, while those of lower prices were kept by the finders.<sup>322</sup> *Varthema* whose travel account can be dated to the first decade of the sixteenth century, states: "when a merchant wishes to find these jewels (gems), he is obliged first to speak to the king and to purchase a *braza* of the said land in every direction and purchase it for five *ducats*. And when he digs the said land a man always remains there on the part of the king. And if any jewel be found which exceeds ten *carats*, the king claims it for himself and leaves all the rest free."<sup>323</sup>

316. S. Paranavitana, *E.Z.* III, p. 285.

317. U. N. Ghoshal, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

318. See above, pp. 12-16.

319. C. W. Nicholas, "Historical Topography.....", *J.R.A.S.O.B.*, VI, N.S. 1959, Special Number, pp. 124-125.

320. E. Renaudot, *Ancient Accounts of India and China by Two Mohammedan Travellers*, London, M. DCCXXXIII, p. 83.

321. *E.Z.* IV, No. 3.

322. *The Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, ed. Mahdi Hussain, Baroda, 1953, p. 220.

323. *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, ed. J. Winter Jones, Hakluyt Society, M.DCCC.-LXVII, p. 190.

Friar Odoric and Sir John Mandaville state that the king did not take the gems for himself but allowed poor people once or twice a year to search in water and take away whatever stones they could find.<sup>324</sup> Such statements should not be taken at their face value and it may be that these writers heard of the practice by which individuals obtained permission from the king to search for gems and that they misinterpreted the information.

Pearl fishery, too, was a royal monopoly and was conducted on the same basis as the gem monopoly. According to Wang-ta-yuan, pearl fishers had to give one half of their collection to the king.<sup>325</sup> When Ibn Batuta went to see the Āryacakravarti, the king's employees were busy sorting out and classifying the best pearls.<sup>326</sup> Duarte Barbosa, writing in the second decade of the sixteenth century, stated that little pearls belonged to the pearl fishers and great ones to the king. The pearl fishers paid the king a certain fee to obtain his permission to fish for pearls and the king derived an immense income from the pearl monopoly.<sup>327</sup>

The same writer informs us that the sale of elephants was also a royal monopoly, and the Gaḍalādeniya slab inscription confirms this information.<sup>328</sup> At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the king sold elephants to the merchants of Coromandel (Cholmondal), Vijayanagar (Narsyngua), Malabar, Decan (Decan) and Cambay.<sup>329</sup>

The earliest foreign reference to cinnamon of Ceylon is found in one of the letters of John of Montecorvino written in the last quarter of the thirteenth century A.D.<sup>330</sup> Subsequently, Ibn Batuta stated that the people of Mabar (Coromandel Coast) gave to the king gifts of cloth and took away cinnamon from the island.<sup>331</sup> This may suggest that at least from the fourteenth century the cinnamon trade was also a royal monopoly. Barbosa, writing about two centuries later, stated specifically that cinnamon was a royal monopoly.<sup>332</sup>

With regard to revenue administration, the main source of information is the *Cūlavamsa*. It refers to various official titles such as *bhaṇḍārapoṭṭhakin*,<sup>333</sup>

324. *Cathey and the Way Thither*, ed. Yule, pp. 98-99; *Travels of Sir John Mandaville*, ed. A. W. Pollard, London, 1923, pp. 131-132.

325. Lionel Giles, "Notices of Ceylon in Tao-I-Chih-Lueh, *J.R.A.S.C.B.*, 1920, XXVIII, No. 73, Parts I-IV, pp. 31-36.

326. *The Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, ed. Mahdi Hussain, Baroda 1953, pp. 217-218.

327. Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the Coast of East Malabar in the beginning of the sixteenth century*, translated by Henry E. J. Stanley, Hakluyt Society, London M.DCCC. LXVI, p. 170.

328. Barbosa, pp. 167-168; *E.Z.* IV, No. 3.

329. *Barbosa*, pp. 167-168.

330. *Cathey and the Way Thither*, ed. Yule, p. 213.

331. *The Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, Hussain, p. 217.

332. *Barbosa*, p. 167.

333. *CV.*, LXXXII, 182-196.

*ādi*potthakin.<sup>334</sup> *mūlapotthakin*<sup>335</sup> and *jīvitapotthakin*.<sup>336</sup> As stated earlier, the term *potthaka* is derived from Sanskrit *pustaka* which means book, and therefore, *potthakin* may have been an officer who kept accounts or records. *Bhaṇḍāra* or *bhāṇḍāra* is used in several instances to denote the treasury.<sup>337</sup> *Bhaṇḍārapotthakin* may therefore be interpreted as keepers of the accounts in the treasury. An inscription of Nissankamalla, found in Polonnaruwa also refer to *bhaṇḍārapotun*.<sup>338</sup> The term *bhaṇḍārapota* is found in a slab inscription of Queen Kalyānavati as well.<sup>339</sup> Any discussion of the term *jīvitapotthakin* is not necessary here as it has already been pointed out that this term designated an officer who kept records of *divel* grants or wages.

Both terms *ādi* and *mūla* could mean chief, first or principal, and therefore these two terms may indicate chief of the *potthakins*. However, *mūla* may also mean money and it is possible that the title *mūlapotthakin* was a general term used for a keeper of accounts concerning money.<sup>340</sup> The term *mudalpotun*, which means the same, occurs in the fifteenth century Pāpiliyāna inscription.<sup>341</sup>

There were several individuals who held the designation *bhaṇḍārapotthakin*. The *cūlavamsa* refers to at least two different individuals under Parākramabāhu I who held this office contemporaneously. They were *bhaṇḍārapotthakin bhūta*<sup>342</sup> and *bhaṇḍārapotthakin kitti*.<sup>343</sup> Similarly, there were at least three individuals who held the designation *jīvitapotthakin* during the same period. These were *jīvitapotthakin Mandin*,<sup>344</sup> *jīvitapotthakin Sukkha*<sup>345</sup> and *jīvitapotthakin kitti*.<sup>346</sup> These titles seem to have been in vogue during the reign of Nissankamalla, too. for one of his inscriptions refers to *bhaṇḍārapotun*.<sup>347</sup> As shown above, the Ruvanvāli Sā slab inscription of Queen Kalyānavati also refers to the title *bhaṇḍārapotā*.<sup>348</sup>

The *bhāṇḍārapotthakin* not only supervised the accounts of the treasury but undertook also the entire treasury administration. The Ruvanvāli Sā slab

334. *CV.*, LXXII, 27, 160.

335. *CV.*, LXXV, 139-140.

336. *CV.*, LXXII, 161-162; 173-174; LXXIV, 90.

337. *E.Z.* IV, No. 33; *Pje.* p. 689; *SDHRV*, p. 220, p. 609.

338. *E.Z.* III, No. 11, pp. 149-152.

339. *E.Z.* IV, No. 33.

340. M. B. Ariyapala, *op.cit.*, p. 109.

341. *Katīkavat Saṅgarā*, ed. D. B. Jayatilake, Colombo 1922, p. 43.

342. *CV.*, LXXII, 196.

343. *CV.*, LXXII, 182.

344. *CV.*, LXXIV, 161-162.

345. *CV.* LXX, 173-174.

346. *CV.* LXXIV, 90.

347. *E.Z.* III, No. 11.

348. *E.Z.* IV, No. 33.

inscription informs us that a certain Vijayānāvan, who had the designation *bhaṇḍarapōtā* had administered the treasury of many kings including that of Parākramabāhu I.<sup>349</sup> The *Dhampīyā Aṭuvā Gāṭapadaya* renders the Pali term *bhāṇḍāgārikatthāna* as *bhaṇḍāra pot tanaluru*.<sup>350</sup>

The chief treasurer is denoted by different terms in various sources. The *Dambadeni Asna* refers to him as *bhaṇḍāranāyaka*.<sup>351</sup> The *Elu Attanagalu Vamsaya* uses the term *bhaṇḍāgāranāyaka*.<sup>352</sup> The *Kandavuru Sirita* uses two different terms, *bhaṇḍāranāyaka* and *mudal nāyaka*.<sup>353</sup> According to Parānavitana "... perhaps the *mudal nāyaka* dealt with matters relating to money, while the *bhaṇḍāranāyaka* concerned himself with stores".<sup>354</sup>

Reference is made to *bhaṇḍāgārika āmati*, minister in charge of the treasury in the *Jātaka Aṭuvā Gāṭapadaya*<sup>355</sup> and *ayakāmi āmati*, minister in charge of revenue in the *Sinhala Bōdhivamsa*.<sup>356</sup> There is no way of ascertaining whether these two titles were applied to the officers who bore the titles *bhaṇḍāranāyaka*, *bhaṇḍāgāranāyaka* and *bhaṇḍāgāranāyaka* or whether they were ministers who were above the treasury officers.

Apparently village authorities were entrusted with the collection of taxes due to the king from each village. The Kapuruvaduoya Pillar inscription of Gajabāhu II (1133-53) indicates that royal officers went to villages annually to collect taxes.<sup>357</sup> The *Saddharmaratnāvalī*, too, states that taxes were collected annually (*raja toṭavalin havurudu noikmarā badda nannannā sēma*).<sup>358</sup> The *Cūlavamsa* refers to officers who went to collect royal dues from various villages during the time of Parākramabāhu II.<sup>359</sup> Probably taxes were collected by each village headman and were delivered to the royal officers during their annual tours.

Though an official hierarchy controlled the collection of land taxes this tax system did not become a machine of extortion. This was mainly due to the fact that money was scarce and dues were, in part at least, paid in agricultural produce which, being more or less perishable, could not be hoarded indefinitely by avaricious chiefs.

349. *E.Z.* IV., No. 33.

350. *Dhampīyā Aṭuvā Gāṭapadaya*, ed. D. B. Jayatilaka, p. 160.

351. *Dambadeni Asna* ed. D. D. Ranasinghe, Colombo 1928, p. 5.

352. *Eluattanagahwamsaya*, ed. M. Kumaranatunga, Colombo, B.E. 2404, p. 14.

353. *Kandavuru Sirita* in *Sinhala Sahitya Lipi*, ed. D. B. Jayatilake, pp. 65-66.

354. *U.H.C.* I, pt. II p. 734.

355. *Jātaka Aṭuvā Gāṭapadaya*, ed. D. B. Jayatilake, p. 7.

356. *Sinhala Bōdhivamsa*, ed. Vaṭaddara Medhananda, Colombo 1950, p. 4.

357. *E.Z.* V., pt. III, No. 38.

358. *SDHRV*, p. 85.

359. *CV.* LXXXVII., 50.

The collection of taxes in the sea ports was one of the responsibilities of the officers in charge of the port. The *Saddharmāṅkāra* refers to an officer who was assigned the duty of collecting taxes and administering the port of Mahatittha.<sup>360</sup> The Dondra inscription, datable to the reign of Parākramabāhu II, refers to the title *Mahapanḍite* whose duty was to administer the port of Devinuvara.<sup>361</sup> Similarly, in the market places, there were officers who were appointed to collect toll dues.

On some occasions the king agreed to the commutation of taxes<sup>362</sup> to individuals and institutions. A considerable number of this type of grants imply that the king allowed the grantee to deal directly with the peasants. Probably the grantees were expected to make their own arrangements to collect revenue, and the king on his part commanded the inhabitants to pay the grantee what they had paid to him directly before the time of the grant. The Baudulla pillar inscription, datable to Udaya IV (946-54) suggests that the market place named Hōpiṭigama had been given as a fief to a high military officer and that this officer's bailiffs exacted illegal dues contravening traditions and customs. The king, therefore, ordered that a statute of council be promulgated prohibiting such illegalities.<sup>363</sup> It seems clear that officials who received the right to collect king's dues were bound by certain rules and could not exact revenue as they wished.

## IX

### CONCLUSION

The problems of land tenure and revenue in medieval Ceylon are not so simple as earlier writers have imagined. In place of their highly centralized, autocratic model a more multi-centred and complex pattern has emerged in this study. Land and rights accruing from land were shared by a wide number of individuals and institutions and held under a wide variety of tenurial obligations. The king as the ruler exercised certain rights over land but his power did not obstruct private individuals from purchasing and alienating land. There are also instances where royal personages, including the king himself, purchased land from private individuals. Institutions, mainly Buddhist monasteries, held large extents of land which tended to expand, throughout this period, from a variety of sources. A category of land known as *divel* was granted to the functionaries employed by the king and by monasteries. A *divel* grant by the king to one of his functionaries could mean granting the revenue of a particular piece of land or granting the revenue along with the services of the people living

360. *Saddharmāṅkāra*, ed. Saddhatissa, p. 670.

361. *A.S.C.M.* VI, p. 66.

362. See above, p. 16.

363. *E.Z.* V, No. 16.

on the land. A *divel* grant by a monastery to one of its functionaries would mean granting only the revenue of the land concerned. In both cases property rights were terminable once the service of the recipient or of his descendants ended. Service duties were based both on caste and on *divel* holdings; caste duties were solely determined by the caste to which an individual is born. Further, service duties attaching to *divel* lands were performed over and above the general form of *rājakāriya*—work for the king—which was the obligation to *corvée*.

A multi-centred socio-economic structure is revealed in the revenue administration too. The commutation of the tax of a certain area or land by the king to his officers, in consideration of their services, both delegated to these officers certain rights over land and some power over the people living on such land. The king also transferred to religious institutions and to charitable institutions such as dispensaries some revenue due to him. The immunity grants of the period between the ninth and the thirteenth century also reveal the transfer of the control over a section of the population to religious establishments, together with the right to exact taxes. Such transfer of taxes and transfer of rights to exact services, it can be maintained, introduced a feudal element into the body politic.<sup>364</sup>

364. The author is grateful to Professor K. M. de Silva, Drs. Tom Barron, V. K. Samara-weera, K. Malagoda and K. Indrapala for their comments.

## PEASANT COFFEE IN CEYLON DURING THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

A. C. L. AMEER ALI

Coffee had been a peasant crop in Ceylon long before the British made it an estate crop in the 19th century. Even before the Dutch introduced its cultivation on commercial lines, the people of Ceylon had known its cultivation.<sup>1</sup> To trace the origin of coffee culture is not the aim of this article. The intention here is merely to study its growth and decline during the British period and to assess the role it played in Ceylon's economic growth.

During the opening decades of the 19th century, although cinnamon dominated Ceylon's export scene, coffee also found a place there but on a small scale. From an average of 1,116 cwts. between 1800 and 1804 coffee exports increased to an average of 10,246 cwts. between 1822 and 1825.<sup>2</sup> And during the first period exports of coffee contributed nearly 61,000 rix dollars per year to the Country's national income.<sup>3</sup> The village coffee, grown "in the gardens surrounding the peasant homes, and along the road side" was collected by the Muslims who brought it to Colombo and Galle to be bartered for cutlery, cotton goods and trinkets.<sup>4</sup> However, the superiority of cinnamon over coffee as a cash earner and the monopoly regulations of a trade-oriented government did not encourage the peasantry to embark on latter's cultivation extensively.

But with the abolition of the monopoly regulations and the coming of a plantation economy in the thirties peasant coffee entered a new era. From then onwards its history can be treated in two separate periods. The first falls roughly between 1830 and 1860, and the second continues from 1860 to the late eighties of the 19th century.

The first period itself had three different phases, 1830 to 1841, 1842 to 1849 and 1850 to 1860. The earliest of these was one of increasing prices and increasing exports. Prices swelled from 15s. 3d. per bushel in 1834 to 22s. 6d.

1. Tennent, Sir J. E., *Ceylon: An Account of the Island, Physical Topographical with notices of its Natural History, Antiquities and Production*. 2nd ed. London 1859. Vol. II, p. 226.
2. C.O. 54/93, Barnes to Bathurst 2. Aug. 1826; enclosure.
3. Bertolacci, A., *A View of Agricultural Commercial and Financial Interests of Ceylon*. London, 1843. Tables I—VII pp. 520—549.
4. C.O. 54/146, Horton to Glenelg, 2. Jan. 1836; Tennent, Sir J. E.—op. cit. Vol. II, p. 227.



in 1836, 30s. in 1838 and to 36s. per bushel in 1841.<sup>5</sup> In response to this price rise the annual exports of coffee also went up from an average of 22,600 cwts. between 1831 and 1835 to an average of 50,115 cwts. between 1836 and 1840.<sup>6</sup> And the total export for 1841 was nearly 80,500 cwts.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately separate statistics are not available for the exports of plantation and peasant coffee until 1849. Yet, according to an official report only a "very few of the plantations" had been productive even by 1842.<sup>8</sup> Therefore it might be safely assumed that the bulk of the coffee exports during the first phase had come from the peasant sector.

The prosperity that ensued in the first phase was slowly evaporating in the second. The years 1842 to 1849 were a period of falling prices for peasant coffee.

TABLE I  
Prices of peasant coffee<sup>9</sup>

1842 — 57s. per cwt.	1846 — 40s. per cwt.
1843 — 49s. " "	1847 — 28s. " "
1844 — 55s. " "	1848 — 20s. " "
1845 — 42s. " "	1849 — 17s. " "

This alarming decline was the combined result of an increase in the supply of coffee in Great Britain as well as a depression there in the demand for it. Britain's abolition of the differential duty in 1844 and 1846, which hitherto provided the necessary market protection for her colonial coffee, brought foreign produce specially from Java and Brazil to compete with the British colonial coffee almost on equal terms. At the same time, the new plantations opened in Ceylon during the mid and late thirties also began to yield their crops in the forties. Hence, the annual export of coffee from Ceylon increased from an average of 121,559 cwts. between 1841 and 1845 to an average of 302,724 cwts. between 1846 and 1850.<sup>10</sup> In this increase the share of the peasant sector is not known. But the statistics for 1849 and 1850 suggest that it was just above 40 per cent.<sup>11</sup> However, if one realizes the fact that the entire

5. C.O. 59 series—Ceylon Blue Books.

6. Pridham, C., *Ceylon and Her Dependencies* London, 1849, Vol. II, p. 849.

7. *Ibid.*

8. C.O. 54/199—Campbell to Stanley 18 Nov. 1842. According to the *Ceylon Times* of 8 Dec. 1846, only 1809 acres of a total of 25,730 had been productive plantation in 1839.

9. C.O. 54/235—Tennent to Grey, 10 May 1847. Figures for the last two years were taken from Vanden Driessen L. H., 'Some Aspects of the History of Coffee Industry in Ceylon with Reference to the Period 1823-1886'. (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1954), p. 33.

10. C.O. 59 series; *The Ceylon Directory* 1866-68, p. 152; Pridham, C., *op. cit.* p. 849.

11. In 1849, 210,187 cwts. of plantation coffee and 113,580 cwts. of peasant coffee were exported. In 1850, it was 219,137 cwts. of the former and 173,768 cwts. of the latter. *Ceylon Directory* 1866-68, p. 152.

coffee exports from Ceylon was only a fourth of Java's and an eighth of Brazil's,<sup>12</sup> one can visualize the severity of the competition. The inflated supply of coffee in the British market pushed the prices down, and this downward trend was not checked but aggravated further by a depression in the demand for coffee. The general economic depression in Britain during the forties had an adverse effect on her consumers' income. They were therefore compelled to economise their expenditure. As a result the coffee drinkers were now seeking cheaper varieties of coffee and even resorted to adulterating coffee with chicory.

True, that the fall in prices was a general phenomenon common to both plantation and peasant coffee. But while the price of plantation coffee fell from 55s. per cwt. in 1843 to 32s. in 1849 i.e. by about 42 per cent, that of peasant coffee fell by more than 65 per cent over the same period.

A rational producer would cut down his supply in times of falling prices. But the peasant producer in Ceylon did not do that. Even though the export of coffee by the peasant sector during the second phase was less than that of the plantation sector, yet, the quantities exported by it in 1849 and 1850 show that peasant production had increased. Two possible explanations can be given to this backward sloping supply curve. One is the usual attempt made by all peasants to maintain their total income by supplying more at lower prices, and the other is the time lag involved in many agricultural products. The first is exogenous to coffee cultivation, while the second is endogenous. Regarding the latter, it is probable that the peasant would have planted a large number of coffee bushes in his garden or *chena* during the period of high prices before 1845. And since a coffee plant took about four years to yield a crop,<sup>13</sup> those planted between 1840 and 1844 would have started yielding between 1844 and 1848. In the absence of storage facilities with the peasants to stock and preserve the berries he brought them to the market for sale. Hence, the supply increased while prices decreased. Even then when the prices continued to fall to the very minimum we find him neglecting the care of his crop. The price was "so unremunerative" wrote the Governor, that in some districts the berries were "never picked but allowed to drop neglected from the trees".<sup>14</sup>

The third phase from 1850 to 1860 was one of recovery and increasing prosperity. Prices for coffee in general started increasing. That for peasant coffee was rising from 17s. per cwt. in 1849 to 28s. in 1852, 35s. in 1854, 39s. in 1858 and to 40s. per cwt. in 1859.<sup>15</sup> In response to high prices exports of peasant

12. Sullivan, E., *The Bungalow and the Tent or A Visit to Ceylon*. London, 1854, pp. 121-122.

13. Suckling, H. J., *Ceylon. A General Description*. London, 1876. Vol. II, p. 310.

14. C.O. 54/249, Torrington to Grey 4 July 1848.

15. C.O. 59 series; *Ceylon Directory* 1866-68, p. 152.

coffee also increased from about 211,200 cwts. a year between 1851 and 1855 to about 328,250 cwts. a year between 1856 and 1860.<sup>16</sup>

The second half of the forties was actually the peak period of peasant coffee. About 50,000 acres of land were said to have been under peasant coffee during this period,<sup>17</sup> and the peasant producers were said to have received an average income of about £250,000 to £330,000 a year from their coffee sale.<sup>18</sup> Since at this time the total value of peasant coffee exports averaged some £630,000, it implies that the peasant producer received only about one-half of that value, the rest going in transport and marketing charges and as profits to the middlemen. Given the peasants' habit of borrowing from the middlemen in advance of the harvest, that distribution does not seem improbable.<sup>19</sup>

Rising prices and increasing exports show only some aspects of the peasant coffee picture: the aspects of marketing, but not those of production. To study the profitability of peasant coffee, data regarding the latter are important. Some essential statistics such as the size of peasant holdings and their productivity are unfortunately not available. However, a few tentative conclusions can still be made from the scanty information available.

The estimates already cited suggest that an acre of peasant coffee normally produced about 6 cwts. a year. But according to Ferguson the average for plantation coffee was only 5 cwts.<sup>20</sup> And Van Spaal's description of peasant production implies low productivity. The "plantations of the natives", consisted "of a few little gardens, lying about or near their residences, within their villages and along the roads" were "always in a neglected condition—the young plants being hidden by weeds and grass; the old trees grown so much together and so covered with moss and creepers", that they formed one mass, impervious to sun, air and light.<sup>21</sup> Hence, it is reasonable to suppose that the estimate of 50,000 acres for peasant coffee is too low, and that the income per acre was less than £6.10s. which that estimate implied.

It is believed that after 1850, the Sinhalese coffee producers followed the example of Europeans in adopting the practices of weeding and pruning in

16. Ibid.

17. C.O. 54/327, Ward to Labouchere, 20 June. 1856; Suckling, H. J., op. cit. Vol. II, p. 311; Ceylon Directory 1866-68, pp. 7-8.

18. C.O. 54/328, Ward to Labouchere 20 Jan. 1857; C.O. 54/331, Ward to Labouchere 27 Nov. 1857.

19. With regard to the profit of the middlemen, see Van Spaal, *Verslag Over de Koffij en Kaneel—Kultuur op het Eiland Ceylon*. I am thankful to Dr. V. Kanapathipillai, Lecturer in History at the University of Ceylon for helping me in translating the relevant chapters of this book to English. Certain sections of this book were also translated and published in a review article in the *Ceylon Observer* of 14, 17, 21 and 28 of Mar. 1866.

20. Ferguson, J., *Ceylon in the Jubilee Year*. Colombo 1887, p. 63.

21. Van Spaal, op. cit. Also see *Ceylon Observer* 21 Mar. 1866.

their estates. This must have been so in those few big estates owned by the rich Ceylonese, but since those practices were both labour expensive and time consuming, it is doubtful whether the ordinary peasant small holder practised any of them. The fact that peasant coffee always fetched a lower price than plantation coffee in the export market also shows that the quality of the former was inferior.

However, despite the low productivity per tree, the increase in total production and the revival of prices after 1850 made coffee a substantial cash earner and many of the hill country peasants continued its cultivation.

During the second period from 1860 to 1886 the history of peasant coffee was one of dramatic collapse. The following table speaks for itself.

**TABLE II**  
**Contribution of Peasant Sector to The Total Export of**  
**Coffee (Absolute totals)<sup>22</sup>**

<i>Period</i>	<i>Total Exps.</i> <i>(cwt.s.)</i>	<i>Exps. of</i> <i>Peasant Coffee</i> <i>(cwt.s.)</i>	<i>% of Peasant</i> <i>Coffee to total</i> <i>exps.</i>
1861-1865 .. ..	4,315,978	1,417,907	33
1866-1870 .. ..	4,780,768	873,995	18
1871-1875 .. ..	4,284,651	613,730	14
1876-1880 .. ..	3,707,901	307,529	8
1881-1885 .. ..	1,834,433	112,588	6

Although the years 1868, 1869 and 1870 saw the climax of prosperity in coffee enterprise in general,<sup>23</sup> that in the peasant sector was reached much earlier; and while the industry on the whole was expanding upto 1870, peasant coffee production was already on the decline. The chief reason for the general decline of coffee in Ceylon was the well-known leaf disease *Hamilea Vestatrix*. And Van den Driesen in his pioneering study on the coffee plantation industry in Ceylon concludes that the leaf disease was "mainly responsible" for the collapse of the peasant sector of coffee.<sup>24</sup> But the leaf disease came in the seventies and not in the sixties although its first appearance was in 1869.<sup>25</sup> His conclusion fits very well for the decline in the total exports of coffee in general and for the exports of plantation coffee in particular, but does not explain adequately the early collapse of peasant coffee. It may be that the disease

22. Compiled from statistics provided in the Blue Books and in the Ceylon Directory 1866-68.

23. Ferguson, J., op. cit. p. 62.

24. Van den Driesen, I. H., op. cit. p. 78.

25. op. cit. p. 104.

itself had started much earlier among the peasant crops and came to be noticed only in the late 1860s and seventies when it infected the plantations. But no recorded evidence suggests this possibility.

After 1860 the average price of peasant coffee remained constant at 40s. per cwt. until 1872 and increased to 70s. and over there after. Thus, the collapse had come at a time of stable if not increasing prices. Could this be another case of a backward sloping supply curve? It could not have been so, because by now many of the peasants in the coffee growing districts who volunteered to pay their grain taxes in cash were complaining that they were finding it difficult to obtain money,<sup>26</sup> which suggests the existence of a demand for cash income at this time.

A somewhat more plausible reason for the early collapse of peasant coffee seems to lie in the difference between the geographical distribution of the peasant holdings and that of the plantations. Before 1850, the plantations that were opened at places like Gampola, Matale, Kadugannawa, Kandy and Hewabetta were on low or medium elevations. These lands were partly village *chenas*, which were bought by the early planters for their easy accessibility and low expense of clearing.<sup>27</sup> Hemmed in by these large estates in some places and by the supposed crown lands in others lay the peasant coffee holdings. Many of them were surrounded by properties either owned by large planters or claimed by the government. However, most of those estates opened up at the early stages were a failure. Some plantations "were formed on villainous quartz rock, where there was very little mould, and this was washed away by thunderstorms, when the brushwood, which kept it in its place, was removed"; and in others "phosphates in the soil were exhausted in a few years, and the plants withered; districts which seemed all that was desirable at first, proved to be unsuited for the continued profitable cultivation of the plant . . ."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, many planters abandoned those lands after the fifties and moved up to an elevation of 3000 to 5000 feet above sea level and into the wilderness of the Peak extending from Nuwara Eliya through the Upland valleys of Dimbulla, Dickoya and Maskeliya to the Adams Peak.<sup>29</sup> While the plantations moved towards the virgin forests in search of a more suitable climate of the mountains, the peasant holdings which were not scientifically cultivated and unable to expand because of the lack of ready cash to buy crown lands for this purpose, remained stagnant at the bottom of the hills to their disadvantage.

26. Ameer Ali, A. C. L., *Peasant Agriculture in Ceylon 1833-1893*, (Unpublished M.Phil. thesis, University of London, 1970). pp. 187-265.

27. C.O. 54/229, Captain Elphinston Dalrymple to Gladstone 4 Mar. 1846. For a list of the estates opened up in the early years and for their locations and elevations see *The Colombo Observer* of 29 Nov. 1855. Also see C.O. 54/213, Campbell to Stanley, 10 Oct. 1844 for a list of crown lands advertised for sale.

28. Suckling, H. J., op. cit. Vol. II, p. 306.

29. Ferguson, J., op. cit. p. 65; Ferguson J., *Ceylon in 1903* p. 62; Millie, P. D., *Thirty Years Ago: Reminiscences of the Early Days of Coffee Planting in Ceylon*. Colombo 1878, ch. II (Unpaginated). Pridham, C., op. cit. Vol. II, p. 871; Baker, S., *Eight Years in Ceylon*, new edition London 1895, pp. 89-95.

The results were disastrous. When the hill tops were invaded by estates and cleared of forests the natural water sources of the peasant lands were said to have been disturbed.<sup>30</sup> But whether that climatic cataclysm occurred or not, unscientific cultivation on an unsuitable soil was bound to affect productivity. It is here that one has to look for an adequate reason to explain the early decline in peasant coffee. The problem that confronts us is to explain why (as the following indices show) while the scientifically grown estate coffee had a strong resistance against the disease and therefore suffered a slow death, that grown in the peasant sector had a rapid extinction.

TABLE III  
Quinquennial Indices of Estates and Peasant Coffee Exports  
(1861-1865 = 100)

			<i>Estate</i>	<i>Peasant</i>
1866-1870	..	..	135	62
1871-1875	..	..	127	43
1876-1880	..	..	118	22
1881-1885	..	..	60	8

What significance can we attach to peasant coffee in the light of Ceylon's 19th century economic growth? True, coffee as an exportable crop had replaced cinnamon and had become the primary contributor to the country's national income. The share of coffee in the island's total value of exports had reached nearly two-thirds by the turn of the sixties. But as the table below shows, the contribution of peasant coffee to the total export value was rather minimal.

TABLE IV  
Contribution of Coffee in General and Peasant Coffee in  
Particular to the Total Exports of Ceylon.  
(Annual average values in £s.)<sup>31</sup>

1		2	3	4		
<i>Period</i>		<i>Val. of Tot. Exps.</i>	<i>Val. of Tot. C. Exps.</i>	<i>Val. of P.C. Exps.</i>	<i>% of 3 to 2</i>	<i>% of 4 to 2</i>
1850-53	..	1,916,267	659,597	180,324	34	9
1854-57	..	2,118,034	1,035,882	270,989	48	12
1858-61	..	2,527,584	1,507,339	331,503	59	13
1862-65	..	3,189,695	1,919,350	289,391	60	9
1866-69	..	3,633,616	2,412,115	372,909	66	10

30. Sarkar, N. K., *Demography in 20th Century Ceylon*. (Ph.D. thesis University of London 1954). p. 390; *Report of the Kandyan Peasantry Commission*. [Sessional Paper] XVIII of 1951, pp. 5 & 116-117.

31. Tabulated from figures provided in W. Sabonadiere's *The Coffee Planter in Ceylon*. London 1870. p. 213; and from C.O. 59 series.

Yet one should not belittle the significance of peasant coffee. On a micro-level, if we consider the house-hold economy of the small holder the impact of coffee on its activities had been very great. One of the important changes that occurred at this time was the voluntary effort of the peasantry living in the coffee districts to fulfill their tax obligations in cash. There was an increasing tendency at this time for the customary grain taxes to be commuted to cash voluntarily. Between this voluntary commutation and the peasant coffee earnings we notice a strong correlation. Though quantitatively not measureable, the correlation can be shown with qualitative data. Since the Central Province was the major coffee growing area, we shall consider only that part of the country in detail while observing similar relations in other coffee districts too.

In the Central Province, the commutation system was first introduced in the late twenties of the 19th century, at a time when export of coffee was only a secondary commercial activity. At the beginning it was proscribed that the commuted sum could be paid in kind. Coffee, cinnamon and pepper were also accepted in lieu of grain.<sup>32</sup> However, since commutation involved fixed payments, only those districts such as Udunuwara, Yatinuwara, Harispattu and parts of Kotmale which had a "constant command of irrigation from the mountain streams", and were free from "both the droughts and the floods which so frequently destroyed the crops of the provinces below the mountains" accepted the new system.<sup>33</sup> The others refused to accept it unless they were given "a remission of the amount of the tax of such fields, the crops of which might fail at each season".<sup>34</sup> This request was not granted because it meant the "destruction of the principal advantage of the new system"—i.e.: that of doing away with the problem of annual assessments.<sup>35</sup>

But with the rise of coffee as a prosperous income earner during the thirties, forties and fifties, bringing an estimated annual income of about £300,000 to £350,000, peasants in the coffee growing districts were increasingly volunteering to accept the commutation system even in terms of cash.<sup>36</sup> The low rates of commutation<sup>37</sup> and the short term periods of the agreements<sup>38</sup> made the

32. C.O. 57/109, S.P. 17 of 1890, p. 102, Turnour's advertisement of 1830.

33. C.O. 54/113. Turnour to Barnes, 3 Oct. 1831; enclosed in Barnes to Goderich, 11 Oct. 1831.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. C.O. 57/109, S.P. 17 of 1890, Appendix E.

37. In the district of Nuwara Eliya the commutation rate was kept at 37½ cents per bushel until 1856; and in the Badulla District it was 16 cents per bushel in the interior and 52 cents per bushel in the town areas until 1864. op. cit. Appendix E. Nos. 9 & 10.

38. In the district of Kandy the first commutation of 1826 was introduced for 5 years at the end of which a 3-year one was introduced which when expired was extended for another 3 years. In Nuwara Eliya the first commutation of 1829 was only upto 1833 when a new enquiry was held and the same was extended until 1838. In Badulla the first commutation was introduced in 1830 which was renewed in 1832 and extended till 1834. The second was introduced in 1835 for a period of 5 years. op. cit. Nos. 9, 10 & 11.

choice more attractive and profitable to the Kandyan peasants especially at a time when their cash income was increasing. Even though the periods of the contracts were lengthened<sup>39</sup> and rates of assessments raised<sup>40</sup> during later stages there was no protest from the great majority of the peasants. Nor did they revert to the old system of renting. As the profits from coffee increased the peasant coffee producer accepted the high rates and did not feel the burden of paying them. "It was the general prosperity of the people at that time, the success of coffee, superadded to the fear of renting system, that made the people indifferent to these high rates...."<sup>41</sup>

Two more coffee districts namely Kegalle in the Western and Ratnapura in the Sabragamuwa provinces reveal the same pattern of changes. By 1840 many peasants at Kegalle had opted to commute their grain taxes in money.<sup>42</sup> Even in the late sixties, during a period of decline in peasant coffee production, more than 50% of the grain tax revenue in that district was collected through the commutation system.<sup>43</sup> In the Sabragamuwa Province which produced between 40,000 and 50,000 bushels of coffee a year,<sup>44</sup> nearly 8,195 *amunams* of sowing area elected to commute as against 859 *amunams* which preferred the renting system.<sup>45</sup> Thus in a situation where the locally grown paddy—the primary village crop—had no export market and had only a very restricted local market, the onus of paying any tax in terms of cash had to fall outside the paddy sector. In this case it was coffee that actually bore the brunt.

The role that coffee played in making the peasant volunteer to commute his taxes and accept cash obligations, raises another very significant though controversial a question. Was coffee acting as the monetizer of the village economy? It is very difficult to provide a generalised answer to this question. Tax payment was only one of the numerous economic dealings carried out by the villager; and coffee was only one of the cash crops grown by the Ceylonese peasantry. Even then, within the coffee districts whether the village coffee producer used cash as the sole or primary medium of exchange, or as storer and measurement of value are problems that need very elaborate and intensive research. But one thing can be said of coffee with certainty. It provided a direct supply of cash for which a direct demand was created by the grain

39. op. cit. Nos. 9 & 10.

40. op. cit.

41. op. cit. No. 10.

42. op. cit. No. 4.

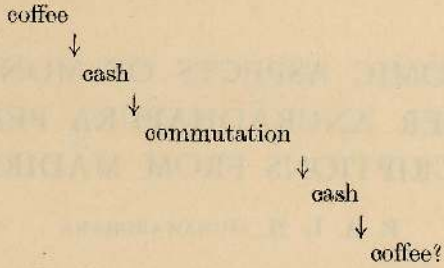
43. op. cit. No. 4.

44. C.O. 57/45, A[nnual] R[eport] of the A[ssistant] G[overnment] A[gent], Sabragamuwa. 1868.

45. C.O. 57/51, A.R. of the A.G.A. Sabaragamuwa, 1870.



tax. It is here we see the link between peasant coffee and the general economic development of Ceylon. Coffee sparked off a kind of chain reaction--i.e. :



which dragged the villager to a cash oriented economy. The incentive provided by peasant coffee induced the villager to commit for voluntary commutation, which when made compulsory in 1878, brought intensive sufferings because, by then the source that provided the incentive had disappeared. What happened thereafter will entail a discussion beyond the scope of this short article.

# SOME ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF MONASTIC LIFE IN THE LATER ANURĀDHAPURA PERIOD: TWO NEW INSCRIPTIONS FROM MĀDIRIGIRIYA\*

R. A. L. H. GUNAWARDHANA

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Excavation work sponsored by the Government Department of Archaeology at the breached *stūpa* directly in front of the well-known *vaṭadāge* at Mādirigiriya brought to light an inscribed slab which had lain buried among the rubble for a fairly long period of time. At present this slab is placed in an erect position, within a protective enclosure to the south-west of the *stūpa*, close to the place where it was originally found. The slab measures 41.5 inches from ground-level to its top and is 16.3 inches wide. Originally this inscription seems to have contained twenty-two lines of writing. The first twelve lines are fairly well preserved and, except for a few words, can be read without much difficulty. Unfortunately, there is a crack right across the slab below the twelfth line. The surface of the slab immediately around this crack has been chipped away and hence the thirteenth and fourteenth lines of the inscription are illegible. Further, the lower portion of the slab is weathered and much less clear than the upper part.

It becomes clear even after a cursory examination of the slab that the scribe had only begun working on the twenty-second line of the record when he abandoned his work. The twenty-first line ends abruptly before the sentence is completed and the only writing appearing on the next line is what may be identified as the upper part of an initial *ī*. In his early attempts to read this document, the present writer was intrigued by this peculiar characteristic. It conjured up in one's mind pictures of a sudden raid, making the scribe

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\*The estampages of the two inscriptions which form the subject matter of this paper were prepared during two visits to Mādirigiriya which were made possible by a grant made by the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, to a team of three members of the Department of History (Dr. Sirima Kiribamune, Dr. K. Indrapala and the author) for the study of the sites of historical importance in Ceylon. The author is much indebted to Dr. R. de Silva, the Commissioner of Archaeology, for his helpful assistance; to Dr. K. Indrapala whose expertise at preparing the estampages made this study considerably easier than it would have been otherwise; to Mr. D. B. Mahawatta for the photographs reproduced here; and to Professors P. E. E. Fernando and G. Obeyesekere for comments.

collect his tools and scurry away, abandoning his work even before he could complete the letter he began to indite. But the reading of the text of another slab inscription, found not so far from the site of this record, suggests a much less dramatic but more plausible explanation.

The slab bearing inscription No. 2 is to be found at the foot of a large tree by the main entrance, to the east of the group of shrines at Mädirigiriya. This slab is fragmentary and has suffered from weathering to a much greater extent than the one discussed earlier. It measures 20 inches across and its length is 29 inches on the left side and 38.5 inches on the right. Nineteen lines of writing can be recognized on this slab. Of these, the left portions of the first six lines are broken off while the remaining parts of these lines are also too weathered to yield a clear reading. Only a few characters can be made out in this portion and that, too, with much difficulty. The nineteenth line of the inscription comes to an abrupt end where the lower portion is broken off.

A comparison of the two records reveals that they are similar in the type of script they use as well as in their wording and arrangement. Further, despite the fact that two different individuals were responsible for these acts of patronage, they record the same type of endowment. A comparison of the text of these two records helps the epigraphist to construe how some of the damaged lines would have read and also provides a clue as to why inscription No. 1 came to be abandoned. It is clear from the arrangement of phrases in inscription No. 2 that *dehirā bulatak isā*, the phrase that the scribe of the other inscription was writing along lines 21 and 22 should have, if it were to be meaningful, appeared in line 11 after *tun mālvak isā*. It is most likely that the scribe realized that he had omitted this phrase only after he had worked halfway through line 21. He tried to rectify his mistake by inserting the missing phrase in line 21 but abandoned the slab when he found that the phrase had been inscribed out of place and, therefore, was meaningless.

## 2. DATE

The palaeography of the two inscriptions points to a date close to but later than the Tāmra-vāva and Mihintale pillar inscriptions which have been assigned to the reign of Sena II (A.D. 853-887).<sup>1</sup> The form of initial *i* in both inscriptions from Mädirigiriya is similar to that found in the Mihintale pillar inscription. Their initial *e* is more developed than the form found in the Tāmra-vāva inscription and comes closest to that found in the Mädirigiriya Pillar Inscription of Kassapa V (A.D. 914-923).<sup>2</sup> The *yain* inscription No. 1 is the usual type found in records of the tenth century. The same character appears in two variant forms in inscription No. 2. One of these is similar to, though

1. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. V, pp. 280-288, 320-326.

2. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. II, pp. 25-33.

less cursive than, the examples found in the Tāmrvāva and Mihintale inscriptions while the other resembles the form found in inscription No. 1. The characters *ka* and *va* in the Mādirigiriya slab inscriptions are more developed than the forms found in the Tāmrvāva and Mihintale inscriptions. Particularly the letter *ka*, which is of horizontal aspect, resembles the developed form found in inscriptions in and after the reign of Kassapa V. Hence it may not be too hazardous to assign the Mādirigiriya inscription No. 2 to the latter part of the ninth century or the earlier part of the tenth century. The inscription No. 1 may be assigned a slightly later date in the tenth century. It is dated in the ninth year of the reign of a king who bore the consecration name Abhāsalamēvan. Two kings fit this description: Kassapa V and Udaya IV (946-954). But the evidence in the inscription is not sufficient to determine exactly to which reign this record should be assigned.

### 3. TEXT

#### *Slab No. 1*

Line	1	Abhā salamevan mapu(r).
	2	kā navavanne hilā pura [da]
	3	savak davas rad madiyā
	4	mi māḍiligiri rad veheraṭ
	5	panās kaḷandak ran dī ba(t)
	6	vasagaṭ piḍin vasagak
	7	genā me vasagā davas pa
	8	tā ckkeneknaṭ (va) <sup>3</sup> radan
	9	tun aḍmanāk sāle
	10	bat isā tun maḷuvak is(sā)
	11	mēbat veherā pasa [na].
	12	[da] viyaguren sunad bamba
	13	(ya) .....
	14	.....
	15	n (vuva no) <sup>4</sup> [avasā] (vāṭiḷi) ..
	16	kāmiyan (vū sandā) <sup>5</sup> daḍ [kara] ..
	17	isā rad madiyāmi māḍiligi
	18	rī veherā mahasaṅṅnaṭ dī [n]
	19	mi mehi givisā vasag gat
	20	kenek (na)ṭ me siritin [paḷa]
	21	koṭ isā dehirā bulatak
	22	°

3. Only the three letters *radan* appear on this line. It can also be read as *radin*. If this reading is accepted it may be interpreted as qualifying *aḍmanā* to denote "royal measure." The phrase would then mean "three *aḍmanā* of raw rice by the royal measure." But a letter which can be read as *va*, and obviously a later insertion to correct a mistake, is discernible immediately below *t* on line 8.

4. Reading *no* is not clear. This word can be also read as *vutnā*.

5. Could also be read as *vuva no*. The characters are not easily readable.

6. The upper part of an initial *ḷ* can be detected here, at the beginning of line 22.

## Slab No. 2

Line	1	..... ra
	2	..... ma
	3	..... vaniya
	4	.....(o) ..... (ra,ya)
	5	..... ta kaḷandak ran dī
	6	..... vasagak gena me vasa
	7	... davas patā ekkeneknat
	8	radar tun aḍmanāk sāle
	9	bat isā tun māḷuvak isā
	10	dehirā bulatak isā me bat
	11	v(e)herā pasa [... da] viyaguren
	12	sunad bambadeyen pavatva
	13	nu isā me bat ḍahak kaḷa saṅgu
	14	n (vuva) [no] avasa (vaṭiti?) isā
	15	l kāmīyan (vū sandā) daḍ karanu ko
	16	ṭ rāṭ puyilemi māḍiligiri ve
	17	herā mahasaṅg (na)ṭ dinmi (me)hi
	18	givisā vasag gat (keneknat)
	19	me siritin sā .....

## 4. TRANSLATION

## Slab No. 1

On the tenth day of the waxing moon of the month of Hila<sup>8</sup> in the ninth regnal year of His Majesty Abhā Salamevan, I, Rad Madiyā, paid fifty *kaḷand*<sup>9</sup> of gold to the monastery of Māḍiligiri and bought an "aggregate share" to be operative as a "food share." From this "share," cooked rice from three *aḍmanā*<sup>10</sup> of raw rice and three curries should be provided as "endowed alms" for one person. Even if the . . . belongings of the monastery were to be destroyed in strife<sup>11</sup> this rice . . . *bamba* . . . I they be l . . . in the monastery . . . : if they be officials . . . be fined. I, Rad Madiyā, gave to the great community of monks of the Māḍiligiri monastery. These regulations should be implemented regarding one who received the "share" after agreeing to these conditions. A serving of betel at sunrise and sunset . . .

7. Variant reading : *paivi*.

8. Later Sim. II (October-November).

9. Codrington has estimated a *kaḷand* to be approximately 70-72 English grains in weight. H. W. Codrington, *Ceylon Coins and Currency*, Colombo, 1924, p. 9.

10. 1 *aḍmanā* =  $\frac{1}{2}$  *manā* =  $\frac{1}{8}$  *kuruyi* =  $\frac{1}{8}$  *lāha* =  $\frac{1}{2}$  *sēru* measure.

11. The term *vīyagura* occurs in place of Sanskrit *vīgraha* in the *Ruvanmalnighaṅṭṭuwa* where it is cited as synonymous with terms like *yuda*, *satan* and *kalaha*. (*Ruvanmalnighaṅṭṭuwa*, ed. P. P. de Alwis Wijesekara, 1914, pp. 63, 70).

*Slab No. 2*

...gave . . . *kaṇḍ* of gold . . . bought . . . a "share" . . . this "share." Cooked rice from three *admanā* of raw rice, three curries and at sunrise and sunset a serving of betel should be provided daily for one person (as "endowed alms"). If the . . . belongings of the monastery were to be destroyed in strife, this food should be provided from the income from *brahmadeya* holdings. If any obstruction is caused to this provision of food by anyone, if they be monks they should not . . . in the monastery; if they be officials . . . be fined. I, Rāt Puyiḷa, gave to the great community of monks of the Mādiligiri monastery. These regulations . . . to one who received the "share" after agreeing to these conditions . . .

## 5. DISCUSSION

The names of the donors appearing in these two grants, Madiyā and Puyiḷ are not common forms known in Ceylon. The first can be compared with Skt. Madriya and was probably connected with the name Madri (Pali Maddī) known to both the Sanskrit epic as well as the Buddhist canonical tradition. The second name is more probably of Dravidian rather than Indo-European origin. In certain Dravidian languages the verbal root *puy* has meanings like "to pull out" and "to tear" while in Kaṇṇaḍa it carries the meanings "to beat" and "to kill."<sup>12</sup> The term *puyil* occurs in the Parji dialect in the sense of "ploughshare" while in the Gadba (Ollari) dialect it takes the form *puyul*. In Parji *urum puyil* denotes "thunderboti."<sup>13</sup> The title *raḍ* that Madiyā bore is the Medieval Sinhalese equivalent of *rāja* while *rāt*, the term which occurs in inscription No. 2, has the same meaning in Kaṇṇaḍa.<sup>14</sup> Evidently, the titles *raḍ* and *rāja* were not reserved solely for the king; high officials and members of the nobility assumed these titles during this period.<sup>15</sup> It would seem from the preceding discussion that the donor of the second grant, if our reading of his title and name is correct, was probably a person of Dravidian origin. Though the presence of Dravidians among the nobility of Ceylon is not so remarkable, the fact that they extended their patronage to Buddhist monasteries during this period is significant.

Perhaps more important from a historical point of view would be the information in these records on economic aspects of monastic life. Inscription No. 1 records how a layman laid down conditions for the administration of a *vasag* which he had bought after paying fifty *kaṇḍ* of gold to the Mādiligiri, (Pali Maṇḍalagiri) monastery. Though inscription No. 2 is fragmentary, it is fairly clear that it, too, records a similar purchase.

12. T. Burrow and M. B. Emeneau, *A Dravidian Etymological Dictionary*, Oxford, 1961, p. 284, entry 3513; F. Kittel, *A Kaṇṇaḍa-English Dictionary*, Mangalore, 1894, p. 995.

13. Burrow and Emeneau, *op. cit.*, p. 284, entry 3514.

14. Kittel, *op. cit.*, p. 1338.

15. See *e. g.* *seneviraj*, *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. I, p. 203, l. A, 19.

In his translation of the Mihintale Tablets, Eduard Müller rendered the term *vasag* into English as "farm."<sup>16</sup> James de Alwis suggested "meal" as a translation of the same term.<sup>17</sup> Gunasekera put forward two interpretations: "residence or cell of a monk" and "a *pingo* load of boiled rice and curry."<sup>18</sup> D. M. de Z. Wickremesinghe, who considered the incidence of this term in the Vessagiriya inscriptions, suggested several alternative explanations. Comparing it with Pali *vassaggena*, he suggested that it could be translated as "seniority," "fixed quantity alms for the *vassa* season" or "a person receiving such alms." Secondly, he considered the possibility that it was derived from Skt. *varṣāgāra* and proposed "a house for the season of retreat" as another possible interpretation. A third source of derivation was sought in Pali *vāsāgarā* and, on this basis, another possible meaning, 'a cell or sleeping apartment' was suggested.<sup>19</sup> However, Wickremesinghe was not satisfied with this multitude of interpretations he had put forward. Later on, in the same note, he suggested three more possible interpretations: "permanent residence with fixed board," "a house with land adjoining it for one's maintenance" or "the receiver of such board and lodging." In another context, he translated *vasag* as "a measured quantity of provisions" and, in yet another instance, in translating the text of the Slab Inscription of Udā Mahayā he rendered it as "allowance."<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere, he has also translated the term as "the end of the *vassa* season."<sup>21</sup> S. Paranavitana translated *vasag* as "end of the year" in his edition of the Eppāvala inscriptions, but more recently, in his edition of the Kalkulam Rock Inscription, he has adopted the rendering "dwelling house."<sup>22</sup>

Two mistakes in particular are evident in these early attempts of scholars to explain the term *vasag* which have brought forth not a clarification of the term but a bewildering plethora of variant interpretations. One was the confusion of *vasag* with *vasāgin*, a similar term which occurs in the inscriptions of the ninth and tenth centuries. The latter was evidently considered to be the Instrumental Case Singular form of the former. The ancient Sinhalese *sunne* on the *Khuddasikkhā* where the term *vasag* occurs helps us to distinguish this term from another word, *vasegini* which is most probably the same as *vasāgin* in the inscriptions.<sup>23</sup> *Vasegini* occurs in a passage which is a quotation from a gloss on the *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī*. Both *vasegini* and *vasāgin* are comparable with the Pali term *vassaggena* which occurs in the *Kaṅkhāvitaraṇī* and the other

16. Eduard Müller, *Ancient Inscriptions in Ceylon*, London, 1883, Vol. I, p. 115.

17. James de Alwis, *A Survey of Sinhala Literature, being an Introduction to the Translation of Sīdal Saṅgarāva*, Colombo, 1966, pp. cxlviii—cxlix.

18. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. I, p. 100, n. 4.

19. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. I, p. 28, n. 5.

20. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. I, pp. 83, 196.

21. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. I, p. 56, n. 2.

22. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. III, p. 191; Vol. V, p. 265.

23. *Kudusika hā purātana vistara sunnaya*, ed. Moragalle Siri Nānobhāsatiṣṣa, Colombo, 1954, pp. 142, 150.

Pali commentaries<sup>24</sup> and it may be translated as "at the end of the year," "at the end of the *vassa* season," or as "in accordance with seniority." The contexts in which these terms occur suit these interpretations.<sup>25</sup> The undue emphasis that these scholars placed on etymological explanation and their failure to consider the contexts in which this term and the equivalents occur in Sinhalese and Pali literary works were the other shortcomings in these pioneer studies. In the following paragraphs an attempt would be made to arrive at a clear interpretation of the term by avoiding these mistakes.

It appears that at the wealthier Buddhist monasteries, resident monks were entitled not only to lodgings and meals, but also to a share of the income left over after meeting the usual expenses. In his description of Buddhist practices in India, Fa-Hsien mentions that Indian monks received "yearly dues."<sup>26</sup> I-tsing is more specific. "The produce of the farms and the gardens and the profits arising from trees and fruits," he states in his account of Indian monastic life, "are distributed annually in shares to cover the cost of clothing."<sup>27</sup> In Ceylon, the Buddhist monastery which acquired property through donation as well as by purchase had, by the ninth and tenth centuries, turned into an institution owning extensive possessions in land, irrigation works and movables. The income of the monastery was used to keep the buildings in good repair, to pay for the maintenance of rituals and to provide the inmates with food, clothing and other requisites specified as "allowable" in the codes of monastic discipline. It is possible that what was left over from the income after meeting these primary commitments was distributed among the inmates. In fact, the Sinhalese *sanne* on the *Khuddasikkhā* quoted above not only alludes to this practice but also uses the term *vasag* when it speaks of the distribution of produce belonging to monasteries. It states that any monk who arrives at a monastery at the time of the distribution was entitled to half of a *vasag* that would normally be given to a resident of that monastery.<sup>28</sup> The context of the incidence of *vasag* in the *sanne* is noteworthy; for here it is used in the sense of a share of produce. Further, the same passage occurs in the *Vinaya-vinicchaya-saṅgaha-tīkā* of Sāriputta, and in this work the Pali term *bhāga*, also meaning "share," is used in place of *vasag*.<sup>29</sup> The *Sumaṅgalappāsadanī*, a Pali commentary on the *Khuddasikkhā*, too, uses the term *bhāga* in this context but states that the "non-resident" who arrives at the time of the distribution is entitled to only a fourth part of a "share."<sup>30</sup> Another work where the term *vasag* occurs is the *Sikhavāḷaṅḍavinisa*, a Sinhalese commentary

24. *Kaṅkhāvitaranī*, ed. D. Musckell, P. T. S., London, 1956, pp. 61, 92.

25. See *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. I, p. 48, ll. 40-41; Vol. III, p. 265, ll. 28-30; *Kudusika hā purātana vistara sannaya*, p. 150.

26. *Chinese Accounts of India*, trsl. Samuel Beal, Calcutta, 1957, Vol. I, p. 22.

27. I-tsing, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, trsl. J. Takakusu, Oxford, 1896, p. 193.

28. *Kudusika hā purātana vistara sannaya*, p. 142.

29. *Vinaya-vinicchaya-saṅgaha-tīkā*, ed. Kōṭṭagoda Dhammānanda, Colombo, 1907, p. 16.

30. *Saṅgā Khuddasikkhā*, ed. Sumanajoti, 1897, p. 131.



on monastic discipline which has been dated in the tenth century on consideration of its style.<sup>31</sup> It defines the term *samānāsānika*, "monks entitled to equal seats," as those who were colleagues of equal years and were of sufficient seniority to be entitled to one or two *vasag*.<sup>32</sup> It is possible to suggest on the basis of the preceding discussion that in Ceylon, too, the practice prevailed of distributing the net income from the common property of the monastery among the inmates in "shares" called *vasag* and that there were certain monks who were entitled to more than one *vasag*. However, only the more senior monks seem to have enjoyed the benefit of receiving one or more "shares." It is possible that others were entitled to "part-shares" but unfortunately this cannot be verified.

The term *vasag* is also known to occur in seven epigraphic records including the two inscriptions from Mädirigiriya under discussion. However, the contexts of its incidence in the Puliyankulam, Eppāvala and Kalkulam inscriptions yield hardly any information which would help to explain its meaning. Comparatively, the Mihintale Tablets and the slab inscription from Vessagiriya mentioned earlier are more useful.

While outlining the allowances enjoyed by the resident monks and the employees of the Cetiyagiri monastery, the Mihintale Tablets mention both monks and laymen among those entitled to *vasag*. Among the laymen were an astrologer, physicians, administrative officials and various types of workmen. Wickremasinghe and L. S. Perera have pointed out that certain employees received allotments of land and daily allowances of uncooked rice while others received land and *vasag*: *vasag* and rice are never allotted to the same individual. From this it has been inferred that *vasag* in this context denoted "a fixed quantity of provisions."<sup>33</sup> The interpretation "share of cooked food" seems to be more appropriate when considered in the light of the incidence of *vasag* in an earlier line of the same inscription where it is said that monks who are bedridden and too ill to come to the refectory should be served with *vasag* at times specified by the physicians.<sup>34</sup>

According to the very same Mihintale Tablets, monks who specialized in various sections of the Buddhist scriptures were each entitled to more than one *vasag*. Scholars versed in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* were entitled to five *vasag* and those versed in the *Sutta Piṭaka* to seven *vasag* while specialists in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* received the highest emolument—twelve *vasag*.<sup>35</sup> The *vasag* granted to these specialists in the scriptures are distinguished from

31. *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon*, Colombo, 1959, Vol. I, Pt. I, p. 395.

32. *samavas ātteyij ek vasagekin devasagekin evū mahaluwūyeyij saḡavūyeyij samānāsānika nam. Sikhavalaṇḍa hā Sikhavalaṇḍa-vinisa*, ed. D. B. Jayatilaka, 1924, pp. 63-64.

33. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. I, p. 83; L. S. Perera, *The Institutions of Ancient Ceylon from Inscriptions*, University of Ceylon Ph.D. thesis, 1949, pp. 1477-1478.

34. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. I, p. 91, II, A 11-12.

35. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. I, p. 91, II, A. 12-14.

those granted to lay employees by the qualifying term *kaṇḍin piṇḍin*. The terms *kaṇḍa* and *piṇḍa* occur in connection with *vasag* in the Vessagiriya inscription, too. Wickremasinghe compared *piṇḍa* and *piṇḍapāta* and interpreted it as "food." He thought that *kaṇḍa* which literally meant "piece" or "fragment" was an allusion to the "robes of rags" recommended for monks and interpreted it as "clothing."<sup>36</sup> However, the word *siṅgur*, the usual term for "robes" occurs in a latter line of the Mihintale Tablets. Further the two types of *vasag* mentioned in inscription No. 1 from Mādirigiriya are *bat vasag* and *piḍin vasag*. Obviously, the first refers to the share of food that the record goes on to outline. Hence the type of share described as *piḍin* or *piṇḍa*, too, will have to be given a different interpretation.

In Sanskrit the term *piṇḍa* had a wide variety of meanings. Perhaps the most common of these was "lump." In arithmetic, it was used to denote "sum" or "total amount."<sup>37</sup> It occurs in the *Arthaśāstra* in the conjoint form *piṇḍakara* to denote a tax. This has been interpreted by Kangle as referring to an "aggregate tax" collected from the village as a whole, as distinct from the tax collected from individual villagers.<sup>38</sup> One may be justified in suggesting that similarly *piḍin vasagak* denoted an "aggregate share" from the net income of the monastery which was annually distributed among the resident monks in the manner described in the commentary on the *Khuddasikkhā* as well as in the *Sumaṅgalappasādanī* and the *Vinaya-vinicchaya-saṅgaha-tikā*. On the other hand, the term *kaṇḍin vasag* ("share in fragments" "share in instalments") or *bat vasag* probably denoted the daily shares of requisites like food and betel leaves which a monk was provided with. It would seem from the evidence in the *Sikhavalāṇḍavinisa* that only monks of a certain seniority were entitled to *vasag* while the Mihintale Tablets make it clear that certain monks received emoluments as high as twelve *vasag*. The award of *kaṇḍin piṇḍin vasag* would mean either that the recipients could choose between "aggregate shares" and "shares in instalments" or that they were entitled to both these. If the monks had the choice between an "aggregate share" and a "share in instalments," it would imply that the former probably amounted to the annual value of the latter.

Evidence in South Indian inscriptions suggests that a similar and comparative system of "shares" (Tamil *paṅgu*) was known at South Indian temples, too. The Additional Tāñjāvūr Inscription No. 66 of Rājarāja gives a list of temple employees who were entitled to "shares" and places the annual value of a "share" at a hundred *kalam*<sup>39</sup> of paddy or the produce of one *vēli*<sup>40</sup> of

36. *Ep.Zey.*, Vol. I, p. 39 n. 3.

37. Monier Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1872, p. 573.

38. *The Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra*, ed. R. P. Kangle, Bombay, 1963, p. 140, n. 3.

39. 1 *kalam* = 12 *marakkala* = 96 *sēru* measures. I am indebted to Professor S. Vithiyannathan for this information. See also, G. U. Pope, *A Handbook of the Ordinary Dialect of the Tamil Language*, Oxford, 1905, p. 30.

40. One *vēli* is about 6.74 acres. *Tamil Lexicon*, University of Madras, 1936, Vol. VI, p. 3839.

land. The remuneration that the employees of this famous temple were entitled to varied from two shares to eight-twentieths of a "share." Superintendents of temple women, superintendents of musicians and senior accountants received two "shares" each. Certain teachers of dancing received two "shares" while others received only one and a half. All dancing girls received one "share" each. There were four grades of payment for singers and musicians: some received one and half "shares" while others were given one, three-fourths or half a share each. The lowest scale of eight-twentieth of a "share" was the remuneration made over to parasol-bearers.<sup>41</sup>

The two slab inscriptions from Mädirigiriya and the Vessagiriya inscription yield valuable additional information on the operation of the *vasay* system at monasteries in revealing that these "shares" had a cash value and that they could be bought. At Mädirigiriya, the purchaser who bought an "aggregate share" stipulates that it was to be operative as a "food-share." Since the value of a "share" would depend on the extent of the properties of the monastery and the number of its resident monks, it is but to be expected that its price would vary from time to time and from monastery to monastery. According to the Mädirigiriya slab inscription No. 1, a "share" was bought for only fifty *kaḷand* of gold while at Vessagiriya a "share" cost as much as two hundred *kaḷand* of gold. The prevalence of the practice of the sale of "shares" may imply that monks were entitled to the right of alienating their additional "shares." On the other hand, it is also possible that the purchase of a "share" merely amounted to the creation of a new endowment to maintain an additional monk or to enable the grant of an extra "share" to an inmate. In both the Vessagiriya and the Mädirigiriya inscriptions, the purchasers of "shares" make the payments to the monastery and not to individual monks. Evidence from other inscriptions of this period suggest that at least at certain monasteries the number of resident monks was fixed.<sup>42</sup> Further, the "share" system would have made the inmates of a monastery hesitant about adding to their numbers unless there was a corresponding increase in the income of the monastery. Hence, though the evidence is inadequate for one to arrive at a definite conclusion, it seems more likely that the purchase of a "share" amounted to the creation of an endowment and that the monastery invested the proceeds from such "sales" in enterprises that would augment its income. The purchase of land was one such economic enterprise. An inscription from Hiṅguregala datable to about the fifth century records an instance of the lay officials of a monastery investing three hundred and forty *kaḥāpana* to acquire land at the rate of twenty *kaḥāpana* a *paya*.<sup>43</sup>

41. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. II, pp. 278-303.

42. See for instance, *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. I, p. 48. *ll.* 40-41 and p. 187. *ll.* 28-32.

43. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. V, pp. 111-119. For *kaḥāpana*, see H. W. Codrington, *Ceylon Coins and Currency*, pp. 13-16, 53. A *paya* (= 1/8 *karīsa*) was one *amma* in sowing extent. According to Codrington's estimates this would be about one acre. See *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. III, pp. 189-190.

Inscription No. 2 from Mādirigiriya has a reference to *bambadeya* or *brahmadeya* holdings of the monastery. The other inscription, too, probably had a similar reference as evident from the letters at the end of the twelfth line and the beginning of the thirteenth. These references raise the problem of the type of tenurial rights that monasteries enjoyed over their property. The Buddhist canonical texts are the earliest sources to speak of *brahmadeya* grants. The Ambaṭṭha Sutta, Lohicca Sutta and the Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta of the *Dīgha Nikāya* and the Caṅki Sutta of the *Majjhima Nikāya* mention Brāhmaṇas who had received villages and towns on *brahmadeya* tenure from the kings of Kosala and Magadha. These sources state that the grants carried with them rights over "grain, wood, grass, and water."<sup>44</sup> According to the definition in the *Arthasāstra* of Kautilya, *brahmadeya* grants involved the transfer of rights of exemption from taxes and fines. Such property was heritable but alienation by sale was possible only if the purchaser, too, was entitled to similar rights.<sup>45</sup> More details on the *brahmadeya* tenure are found in the *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, the work of Buddhaghosa based on the Sinhalese exegetical tradition preserved at the Mahāvihāra. It explains that a *brahmadeya* grant was a transfer of rights over land which entitled the grantee to "raise the parasol" and enjoy it in royal manner (*chattam ussāpetvā rāja-saṅkhepe bhūñjitabbam*). He collected the taxes and tolls and administered justice within this area (*sabbam chejja-bhejjaṃ anusāsayantena naditittha-pabbatādisu suṅke gaṇhantena*). This grant was final and irrevocable (*na puna gahetabbam hoti nissatṭhaṃ pariccattam*).<sup>46</sup> The *Dīghanikāyatṭhakathā-līnatthavaṇṇanā*, a sub-commentary from the later Anurādhapura period, further explains that these judicial powers vested the grantee with the authority to levy all types of penalties including both fines and corporal punishments.<sup>47</sup>

The information cited above, drawn from the Buddhist exegetical works of Ceylon, perhaps reflect local conditions and hence help to clarify the nature of *brahmadeya* tenure in the Island. Immunity grants from the ninth and tenth centuries confirm that privileges of the type mentioned in these works were in fact transferred to the monasteries. The majority of these inscriptions record the award of exemptions from fiscal exactions and intervention by administrative officials of the king. But, in a number of instances like the Tāmravāva inscription of Sena II, the Iripimniyāva, Rambāva and Kukurumahandamana inscriptions of Kassapa IV, and the Ayitigēvāva and Bilibāva inscriptions of

44. *savinakalḥhodakam sadhaññam ..... rājadāyam brahmadeyyam*. *Dīgha Nikāya*, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids and J. E. Carpenter, London, 1890, Vol. I, pp. 87, 111, 224; *Majjhima Nikāya*, ed. R. Chalmers, London, 1951, Vol. II, p. 164.

45. *The Kauṭīliya Arthasāstra*, pp. 63, 257.

46. *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, ed. T. W. Rhys Davids and J. E. Carpenter, London, 1886, Vol. I, P. 246.

47. *sabbam chejja-bhejjanti sarīra-daṇḍa-dhana-dandādi bhedam sabbam daṇḍamāha*. *Dīghanikāyatṭhakathā-līnatthavaṇṇanā*, ed. Lily de Silva, London, 1970, Vol. I, p. 376.

Kassapa V, the rights that are transferred include exemption from intervention by judicial officials as well.<sup>48</sup>

Apart from the two inscriptions from Mädirigiriya, the term *bambadeya* is said to occur in a ninth-century inscription from the Vañdruppe Vihāra while its variant form *bambadesa* is found in an inscription from Eppāvāla for which a date in the tenth century has been suggested by Paranavitana.<sup>49</sup> The Vañduruppe Vihāra inscription has not been published so far. The inscription from Eppāvāla, though it deals with an endowment made at a monastery, yields no information on tenurial rights. The Polonnaruva pillar inscription of Mahinda V which records the grant of *brahmadeya* tenurial rights to an allotment of land belonging to the Tisaram monastery contains more details. It specifies certain officials who were forbidden to enter this property and states that draught cattle and buffaloes were not to be impressed within its precincts.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, the usefulness of this record is impaired by the fact that about twenty-two of its lines which probably outlined the other immunities granted to this monastery are damaged and illegible. However, a pillar inscription issued in the third regnal year of Kassapa V provides more definite information on the type of immunity rights that the Mädirigiri monastery enjoyed. According to this record, officials like *deruvana dekamtān*, *perenā-tiyam*, *dunumadula melātti velāyut pasdenā*, *maṅgdiva* and *piyadiva*<sup>51</sup> were not to enter the village Rantisa belonging to this monastery; provincial administrators and men bearing arms were not to "exercise their authority" within it; no food was to be commandeered and labourers, carts, cattle or buffaloes were not to be appropriated. Further, even if malefactors accused of committing criminal assault were to enter it, royal officials could arrest them only after they had been evicted from the village.<sup>52</sup>

It would be evident from the preceding discussion that certain monastic estates including some of the properties of the Mädirigiriya monastery enjoyed such extensive tenurial rights that the authority of the royal officials was virtually excluded from them. It appears that these instances represent the most complete property rights known in early medieval Ceylon. Such delegation of both fiscal and judicial authority tended to introduce a "feudal"

48. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. I, pp. 163-171, 172-175; Vol. II, pp. 19-28, 34-38, 38-43; Vol. V, pp. 280-288.

49. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. III, p. 190 l. 17. As Paranavitana pointed out (*Ep. Zey.*, Vol. III, p. 191 n. 12), certain manuscripts of the *Amāvatura*, the Sinhalese literary work from about the twelfth century A.D., has the variant form *bambadesa* in place of *bambadeya* (*Amāvatura*, ed. Kosgoḍa Nānavimala, Colombo, 1959, p. 95 n. 12). The form *brahmadesa* occurs with the meaning of *brahmadeya* in certain South Indian inscriptions, too. (*Madras Reports on Epigraphy*, No. 241 of 1927).

50. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. IV, pp. 59-67.

51. Of these, *velāyut pasdena* were probably local officials placed in charge of agriculture while *dunumadulamelātti* were in all likelihood connected with the archery division (*dunumadula*) of the army. For explanations of the other terms, see *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. III, pp. 143-144, 146; Vol. V, p. 140 n. 2.

52. *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. II, pp. 25-33.

element into the socio-political organization in the Island. Instances of similar transfer of authority to members of the laity are known but rare in Ceylon.<sup>53</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that in the Mādirigiriya pillar inscription *brahmadeya* rights are granted to only one of the villages held by the monastery. It suggests by implication that perhaps not all the estates in the monastery did enjoy such immunities. Inscription No. 2 from Mādirigiriya also implies that some of the properties belonging to this monastery did not enjoy *brahmadeya* tenurial status. For the donor of this grant stipulates that, if his endowment were to be destroyed in times of strife, the "food share" he instituted should be maintained with the income from the *brahmadeya* properties. While this statement underlines the confidence that the donor had in the inviolability of the *brahmadeya* holdings of the monastery, it would seem that the income from which the "food share" was to be maintained came from a source which did not enjoy the privileges of *brahmadeya* status.

Even if the evidence cited above is too scanty to warrant any definite conclusions, this discussion brings out in relief certain important aspects of the organization of the Buddhist monastery in early medieval Ceylon. The Buddhist monastery which was a community based on a common ideology and a common system of rituals had, by this period, developed into a corporate land-owning institution. Though its structure and organization had to necessarily conform to the restraints imposed by the demands of the ideology which governed the lives of monks, the monastic community invites comparison with the models of the "village community" characterized in the writings of Marx, and in particular, Maine and Baden-Powell.<sup>54</sup> More recently, the applicability to the Indian context of the concept of a "village community based on the communal ownership of land" has been questioned.<sup>55</sup> However, the organization of the Buddhist monastery in medieval Ceylon, which was probably derived from the institutions of the non-monarchical tribal communities of India, approximates closely to these models in certain respects.

Like in the "village community," monks at a monastery owned the monastic property in common (*saṅghika*) as an undivided estate, though certain parallel instances of individual monks enjoying "private" (*puggalika*)

53. See for instance *Ep. Zey.*, Vol. II, pp. 14-19.

54. The author has in mind the views that Marx held in the 1850's which found their most systematic exposition in *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, published in English for the first time in 1964 under the title *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations* (ed. E. J. Hobsbawm, London). For Sir Henry Sumner Maine's views, see his *Village Communities in the East and West* (London, 1871) and *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions* (London, 1874), and for E. H. Baden-Powell's views, see *The Indian Village Community* (London, 1896).

55. See I. M. Habib, *Agrarian System of Mughal India* (Bombay, 1963, pp. 111-136) and the two excellent papers by Daniel Thorner ("Marx on India and the Asiatic Mode of Production") and Louis Dumont ("The Village Community from Munro to Maine") in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (No. IX, December 1966, pp. 33-66, 67-89). For a somewhat different point of view on this problem, see G. Obeyesekere, *Land Tenure in Village Ceylon* (Cambridge, 1967).

property rights are also known.<sup>56</sup> Membership in the monastic community entitled all monks to supplies of daily requisites like food and clothing, while in the case of monks of a certain seniority, which cannot be specified in the present state of our knowledge, it also entitled them to a share of the net income from the common property of the monastery. Maine recognized two modes of allocation of shares in the "village-community," *per capita* and *per stirpes*, and noted that in certain special instances some of the members were assigned more than one share.<sup>57</sup> It is evident from the preceding discussion that the mode of allocating shares in a monastic community was not on a strictly "egalitarian" basis and was variable. The seniority of the monk and his knowledge of the scriptures seem to have been determinants of the number of shares he was allocated. It is most likely, though this cannot be verified, that the shares held by a monk returned to the common pool at his death.

At the monastery, a share entitled a monk to part of the income and not to a portion of land as was usual in most village communities. Marx speaks of certain village communities in India where "lands of the village are cultivated in common."<sup>58</sup> This statement is probably based on the authority of Wilks who, in an earlier work, had made a more specific reference to the existence of such communities in South India: "In some instances the lands of the village are cultivated in common, and the crop divided in the proportions of the labour contributed . . ."<sup>59</sup> Membership in such a village community, too, would entitle a person to a share of the produce and not to a specific piece of land. However, the monastic community in Ceylon differed from these, models of the "village community" by the fact that it was a land-owning corporation of "non-producers" and not of "owner-tillers." In this respect, the monastic community represents a group of superior landholders similar, to corporations of joint-owners of villages in the Rājput areas that Baden-Powell describes.<sup>60</sup> But even the Rājput landowners were not completely alienated from agricultural pursuits. They cultivated their own "home-farms" (*sīr*) while exercising their authority as "landlords" over the other cultivators who were their tenants. But the Buddhist monks were, owing to the very

56. The *Samantapāsādikā*, a commentary on monastic discipline written in the fifth century, distinguishes between *saṅghika* and *puggalika* types of property (*Smp.*, ed. J. Takakusu and M. Nagai, PTS, London, 1947, Vol. VI, p. 1246). Corroborative evidence is found in both inscriptions (*Ep. Zey.*, Vol. I, pp. 191-200; Vol. IV, pp. 82-90) and the chronicle (*Cūlavamsa* 84. 3-4).

57. Maine, *Early History of Institutions* (Fourth Edition, London, 1885), p. 195.

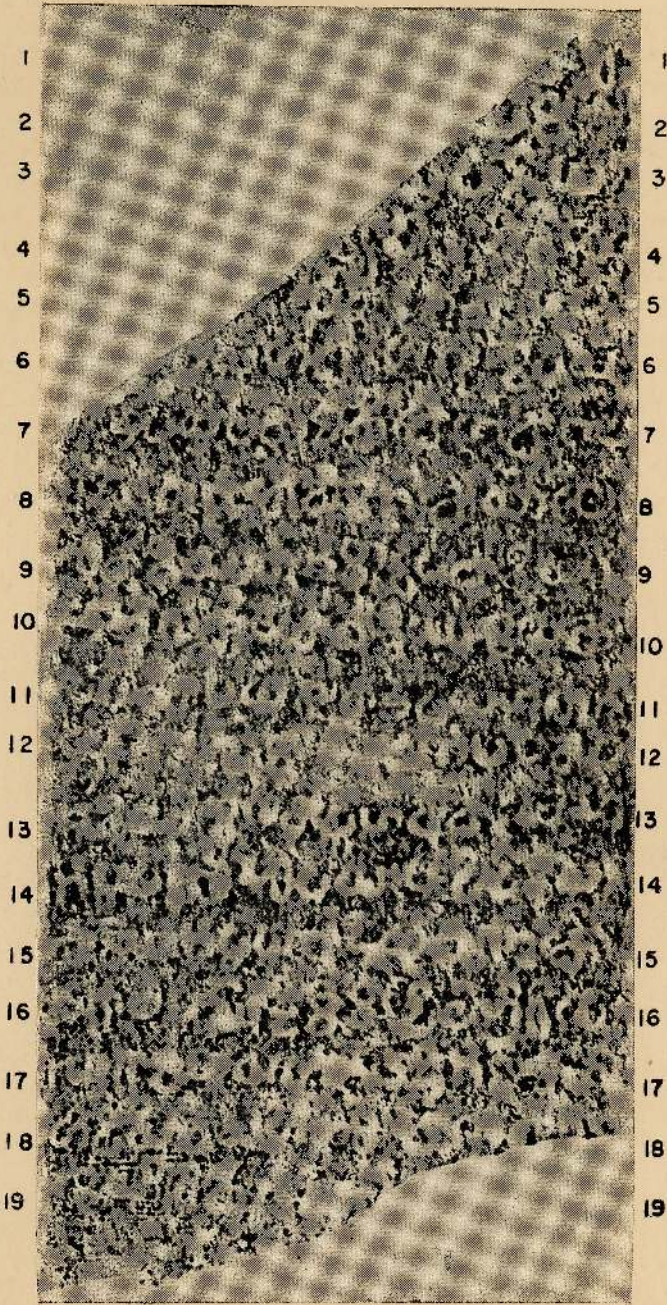
58. Letter to F. Engels dated June 14, 1853. K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 86. This view finds a more abstract formulation in *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations* (See p. 70). Marx's views on the Indian village community remained unchanged at least till 1867 when the first volume of *Das Capital* was published. "The constitution of these communities" he wrote in *Das Capital*, "varies in different parts of India. In those of the simplest form, the land is tilled in common and the produce divided among the members." *The Capital*, Moscow, 1954, Vol. I, p. 357.

59. Lieutenant-Colonel Mark Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India* ..... (1810-1817) Second edition, Madras, 1869. Vol. I, p. 73.

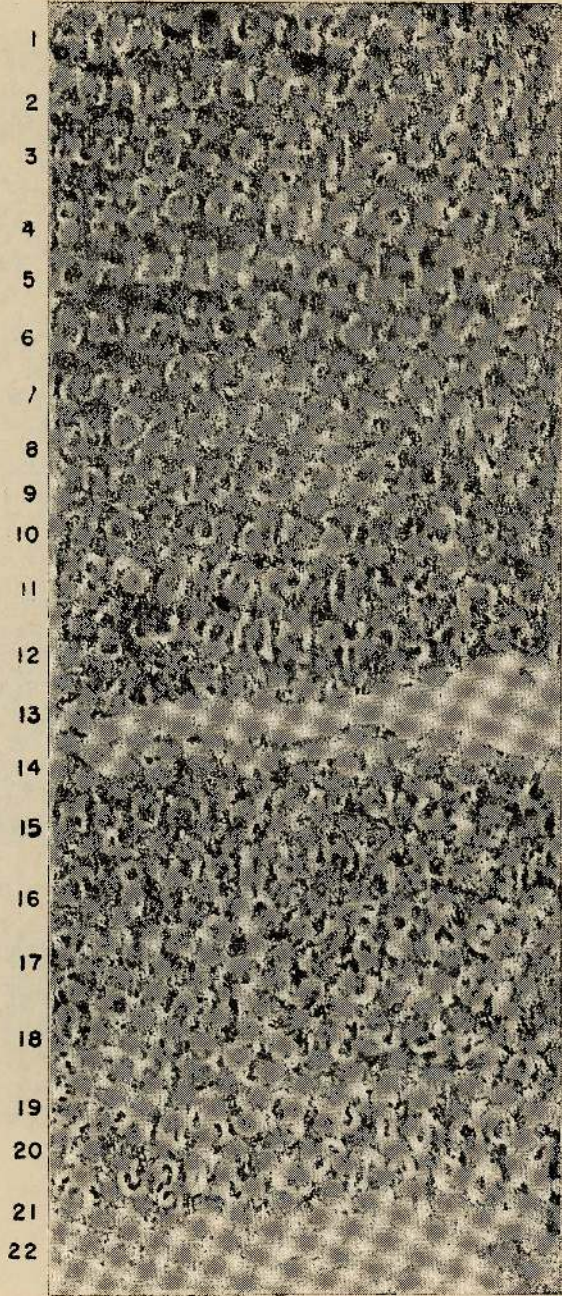
60. *The Indian Village Community*, pp. 20-37.

nature of the ideology on which their lives were based, totally alienated from the processes of agricultural production. This seems to be the essential feature which distinguished the monastic community from all these models of the "village community." Immunities including those of *brahmadeya* status which certain monastic properties enjoyed not only augmented the income of those monasteries but also introduced another distinction which marked out the monastery from the "village community." In such instances, the monastery was vested with the additional functions of exercising fiscal and judicial authority over its tenants. The community of monks was thereby placed above the tenants in an economic as well as a political sense, the officials administering the villages being subordinates acting under their behests.





Slab Inscription No. 1



Slab Inscription No. 2

# THE EFFECT OF PRICE FLUCTUATIONS ON RUBBER PRODUCTION IN CEYLON: A STUDY OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE KOREAN WAR BOOM

G. H. PEIRIS

The study of the response of rubber producers to price fluctuations has received the attention of many writers. Its importance lies in its relevance to the more general and complex problem of the relative efficiency of different sectors composing the rubber industry. It is found that available studies on the subject are based on the two-fold division of the industry into the 'estate sector' and the 'small-holdings sector,' and are largely in reference to Malaya and Indonesia. What is attempted here is not a re-appraisal of the problem, but, as far as possible, a fresh empirical study of the problem with reference to Ceylon. However, where necessary, comparisons will be made with findings on other rubber producing countries.

## A Review of Price Movements

The history of the natural rubber industry has been characterized by fluctuations of price of rubber in the world market. Recurrent changes in price have been brought about by unpredictable, and, often, uncontrollable changes in supply and demand. In the period before 1930 the salient features in regard to price movement were the spectacular boom of 1909-11 which lasted until the boom-induced expansion in production outstripped consumption, and the relatively low prices during the period which followed which culminated in the introduction of the Stevenson Restriction Scheme in 1924. It is observed that the short phases of favourable market conditions throughout this period were the results of sudden expansions in demand or of artificial restriction of production, and seldom the effect of endogenetic adjustments of production to consumption made individually and collectively by the producers.

In 1928 the Stevenson Restriction Scheme was lifted, and, as Bauer points out, '1929 marked a relatively stable year for the rubber industry.'<sup>1</sup>

1. Bauer, P. T. *The Rubber Industry* (London, 1957), p. 25; See also Rae, C. 'The Statistics of the Rubber Industry,' *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1938, p. 323.

Although the price of rubber during 1929 was lower than during the first two decades of the century, 'a price level remunerative to all classes of producers prevailed.'<sup>2</sup> During the year, the rubber output in Ceylon recorded a substantial increase over the output of the preceding years, and extensive new areas were brought under rubber cultivation.

From early 1930 the price deteriorated rapidly. From an average of 14 cents per pound of rubber in 1931, the price fell to an all time low of 11 cents in 1932. On the one hand, the world-wide economic depression drastically reduced consumption and furthered the accumulation of gigantic stocks; on the other, production continued to expand as new areas planted earlier came into bearing. To rescue the industry—or according to some, a section of the industry—from the imminent disaster, the International Rubber Regulation Agreement was made and enforced in May 1934.<sup>3</sup> Since all major rubber producing countries curtailed output according to the terms of the Agreement, and since the degree of curtailment enforced depended on movements of demand and price, the restriction scheme had the envisaged effect of improving market conditions from the point of view of the producer. However, due to the difficulty of making even short-term forecasts of consumption the improvement of price which followed the enforcement of the scheme was, contrary to expectations, neither gradual nor steady.

The period after the depression was characterised by a series of ups and downs in the price curve. Following the out-break of the Second World War the demand for rubber increased and the prices rose. When in 1942, Malaya, Indonesia and Indo-China fell under Japanese occupation, Ceylon became the major source of supply of natural rubber to the allied war effort. Production was enhanced to meet emergency needs not only by the prevailing high prices, but also through governmental encouragement in the form of payment of compensation to slaughter tapped areas.<sup>4</sup> With the end of the war, when rubber from the major producers of Southeast Asia began once more to flow freely into the market, the price of rubber deteriorated. During this period, it was found that a large section of the rubber industry of Ceylon was operating at 'sub-economic' levels.<sup>5</sup> The next major upsurge of price was connected with the Korean war. From an average of Rs. 1.25 a pound in July 1950 the price reached a summit of Rs. 3.00 in early 1951, and by the end of the year it was below Rs. 1.25 once more.

2. Bauer, *op. cit.* p. 25.

3. For a comprehensive study of the operation of the International Rubber Regulation Agreement, see, Mc Fadyean, Sir Andrew, *The History of the Rubber Regulation 1934-1943* (London, 1944), Bauer, *op. cit.* Knorr, K. E. *World Rubber and Its Regulation* (Stanford, 1945); and Yates, P. Lamantine, *Commodity Control* (London, 1943).

4. See, *Administration Report of the Rubber Controller, Ceylon, 1943-48.*

5. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Rubber Industry, of Ceylon* Sessional Paper XVIII of 1947, Ceylon Government Press, pp. 3-7 and 287-288.

During the five years which followed the signing of the bilateral trade pact between the Republic of China and Ceylon in 1953, the fortunes of Ceylon's rubber were somewhat different from those that applied to rubber produced elsewhere. Under the terms of the pact China purchased virtually all sheet rubber produced in Ceylon at prices well above those prevalent in the world market.<sup>6</sup> Since the price to be paid was decided upon at the commencement of each year, a major portion of Ceylon's rubber found a market free from short-term gyrations. In 1958, when the trade pact was renewed, the system of payment was altered radically. With the lifting of the United Nations' ban on the export of rubber to China from Malaya, Indonesia and Indo China, China's bargaining position had improved. China, however, has continued to be the main buyer of Ceylon's rubber after 1957; the price paid being slightly higher than the price in the open market, and normally varying according to the monthly average price at Singapore. It is contended in certain writings that from around 1960, rubber has entered a 'new era of stable market conditions.'<sup>7</sup> This contention is based on the promise that careful regulation of the release of government stock-piles in the United States and the United Kingdom, and the availability in sufficient quantity of stereorubbers which are close enough to the natural product in quality, will reduce the amplitude of short-term differences in supply and demand, and will hence make the price of rubber less volatile than in the past. Whatever significance one places on such recent developments, a point on which there is general consensus is that sudden changes of price have had harmful effects on both the producer and the consumer, and that such changes have been the consequence of the failure of the supply sector as a whole to make prompt and effective adjustments to short-term changes in demand.

#### Views on Relative Flexibility of Different Classes of Producers of Rubber

Generalisation regarding the response of the estate sector and the small-holdings sector to price fluctuations have been made by several writers on the basis of observation and through scrutiny of output from the two sectors during the depression of the early '30s and the boom of the early 50's. By virtue of the intensity of price movements during these phases, they provide extreme examples of a slump and a boom, ideally suited for studies of the response of the producer under contrasting situations. Unfortunately, the absence of reliable and sufficiently detailed data has limited the extent to

6. Throughout 1953 the price paid by China was, on the average of 30 to 35 cents per pound above the price at Singapore. During the short periods of high price in 1955 and 1957, the world market prices exceeded those paid by China to Ceylon.

7. See, Editorial *Natural Rubber News*, New York, April 1963, pp. 2-4; and Economic Intelligence Unit Commodity Division, London 'Some Aspects of the Competition between Natural Rubber and the Stereos,' *Rubber Trends*, June 1963, pp. 26-30.

8. See, Knorr, *op. cit.*, Yates, *op. cit.* in addition to other works referred to in foot-notes 9 to 13 below.

which quantitative study is possible. The result is a confusing mass of widely divergent views on the nature of the response and the degree of flexibility of the two sectors of the industry. The conflict of opinion can be illustrated by quoting from several authoritative works.

The supply of rubber from the estates in the outer provinces of Indonesia was the least elastic; these estates produced at an almost constant rate throughout the slump. The rate of production of Malayan estates was also fairly stable. At the other end of the scale the N.E.I. smallholders produced in 1932 only about one quarter as much rubber per mature acre as in 1929, several of the small producing territories too reacted the same way. The supply of smallholders' rubber was more elastic than the estate output, principally because of the ability of the smallholders to turn to alternative sources of earning. (Bauer<sup>9</sup>).

The natives, like peasants everywhere, tend to produce more rather than less when price begins to fall . . . in general the reaction to a price fall is quite insignificant. (Yates<sup>10</sup>)

In normal circumstances the high elasticity of supply of smallholders' rubber could be regarded as a symptom of strength, for the ready transference of resources to changes in price is a mark of efficiency. Such a transference, more-over, is likely to reduce the amplitude of price fluctuations to which rubber is prone. (Allen and Donnithorne<sup>11</sup>).

It is well known that a Malayan smallholder . . . whose cost of production is almost nil, will vary his production in *inverse* ratio to the price of the commodity to maintain a revenue just sufficient production is almost nil, will vary his production in inverse ratio to keep himself and his family alive. (Kunhardt<sup>12</sup>).

In Malaya a large number of native producers (smallholders) are entirely dependent on their rubber and must tap their trees to obtain the bare necessities of life. For many of these natives, when price was falling their output had to increase. (Rae<sup>13</sup>)

The interpretation of the behaviour of the two classes of producers given by those, like Bauer, who hold the view that small-holdings' production is more flexible than estates' production can be summarised in general terms as follows:

Estates, normally encumbered by a rigid cost structure—high overheads and fixed labour wages etc.—are compelled to continue production at a uniform level or to expand production when price falls. When the margin of profit per pound of rubber narrows during a price fall, estates maintain profits at a uniform level or minimize losses by continued production, thereby covering at least in part, the fixed operational costs. During severe market depressions when cost exceeds price, estates maintain production purely for the purpose of survival. Hence a curtailment of output (an adjustment of supply to lowered demand) which can induce a price recovery does not occur in the estate sector. The smallholding sector, which is considered as consisting of peasant owned owner operated units, transfers its resources (labour, capital and sometimes land) to other avenues of income during periods of low price. This, in addition to being a mark of efficiency in itself, contributes towards a reduction of the amplitude of the depression through a lowering of supply. During periods of high price, it is said, estates are unable to make short-term expansions in output on account of the rigidity of labour supply, and on account of the more conservative programmes of tapping to which they adhere. Smallholdings, on the other hand, are said to be

9. Bauer, *op. cit.* p. 30.
10. Yates, *op. cit.* p. 115.
11. Allen G. C. and Donnithorne, A. G. *Western Enterprise in Indonesia and Malaya* (London 1957), pp. 137-138.
12. Kunhardt, J. C. G. *The Future of Rubber* (London 1930) p. 10.
13. Rae, *op. cit.* p. 324.

able to expand output at short notice and thereby reap the benefits of market booms through a ready transfer of labour from other avenues to rubber. Further, it is claimed, that an intensification of production by smallholders during a period of high price does not necessarily entail slaughter tapping of trees, because they generally possess reserve rubber land which is worked only when the extra labour applied is adequately remunerated.

Of several writers whose opinions have been quoted above only Bauer has attempted to substantiate his contention regarding the response of different sectors of the industry to a depression with statistical data. It is profitable here to examine Bauer's data.

**Table I**  
**Estimated Output per Mature acre, 1929-1933<sup>14</sup>**  
(lb. per acre to nearest 5 lb.)

	1929	1930	1931	1932	1934
Malaya—Estates .. ..	410	380	375	365	355
Malaya—Small-holdings .. ..	480	460	445	385	465
N.E.I. Estates, outer Provinces .. ..	275	365	390	360	360
N.E.I. Estates, Java .. ..	390	385	400	325	380
N.E.I. Natives .. ..	430	245	170	105	165
Ceylon .. ..	360	350	260	210	275
Sarawak .. ..	420	225	170	85	105
French Indo-China .. ..	215	175	135	120	150
Siam .. ..	275	190	100	60	110
Average Price London (pence per lb.) .. ..	10.3	5.9	3.1	2.3	3.2

It is clear from the above data that during the depression the output of the small-holdings sectors dropped more markedly than the output of the estate sectors both in Malaya and the Netherlands Indies. This, as shown in the following discussion, does not necessarily imply that a general hypothesis regarding the relative elasticity of supply from the two sectors can be drawn from the data. In the course of the following discussion the validity of the hypothesis on relative elasticity of supply that has been drawn from the above data, and its applicability to Ceylon will be examined.

### Rubber Production on Ceylon's Estates and Small-holdings During the Depression

The data given below in Table II show the changes in output from units of over 100 acres and those of less than 100 acres in extent between the termination of the Stevenson Restriction Scheme in 1928 and the enforcement of the International Rubber Regulation Agreement in 1934. The relationship between yield per mature acre and price during the period is shown in Figure 1.

14. Bauer, *op. cit.* p. 29.

**Table II**  
**Estimated Mature Acreage, Output and Yield per Acre on**  
**Estates and Small-holdings in Ceylon (1929-1934)**

	<i>Mature Acreage</i> (acres)		<i>Output</i> (in 1000 lb)		<i>Average yield per</i> <i>mature acre (lb)</i>	
	<i>Estates</i>	<i>Small holdings</i>	<i>Estates</i>	<i>Small holdings</i>	<i>Estates</i>	<i>Small holdings</i>
1929 .. ..	310,106	153,402	114,240	56,0000	367	365
1930 .. ..	311,199	156,007	114,688	56,000	368	359
1931 .. ..	314,060	161,464	86,680	49,680	276	305
1932 .. ..	318,347	174,598	72,800	38,080	228	218
1933 .. ..	328,287	200,439	91,168	56,000	277	269
1934 .. ..	336,927	218,681	112,000	67,000	341	307

**Yield per Mature Acre as a Percentage of 1929 yield**

	<i>Estates</i>	<i>Small-holdings</i>
1929 .. ..	100.0	100.0
1930 .. ..	100.3	98.3
1931 .. ..	74.7	83.6
1932 .. ..	62.1	59.7
1933 .. ..	74.8	76.1
1934 .. ..	92.9	84.1

*Sources:* Based on data from Ceylon Year Book, 1929-1934 and Rae, *op. cit.* p. 324.

*Note:* Extents of mature acreage have been estimated on the assumption that rubber trees take 7 years from the time of planting to reach maturity.

Data on acreage and yields on holdings of less than 10 acres in extent are not separately available. Hence figures given for small holdings here are not comparable to those given in Table III.

The data in Table II and Figure 1 show a progressive lowering of yield and output up to 1932 in both sectors of the industry concurrent with the fall in price, and a gradual increase in yield and output with the improvement in price during 1933 and 1934. Contrary to what Bauer has shown in regard to Malaya and the Netherlands Indies, in Ceylon there has been no significant difference between the two sectors in terms of the extent of curtailment of production during the worst years of the slump. When the price was at its lowest, the average yield per mature acre in both sectors was around 60 per cent of the yield in 1929.

**Rubber Production on Ceylons' Estates and Small-holdings**  
**during the Korean War Boom and the Aftermath**

The price and production trends of the period 1949 to 1957 (see Table III) presents several features of interest. 1950-51 was characterised by a spectacular rise and fall in price. This was followed by a period during a greater part of which the price was free from sudden and large fluctuations characteristic of the previous two decades. With the exception of the first quarter of 1954, the price remained at a level considerably above that of the pre-boom period.



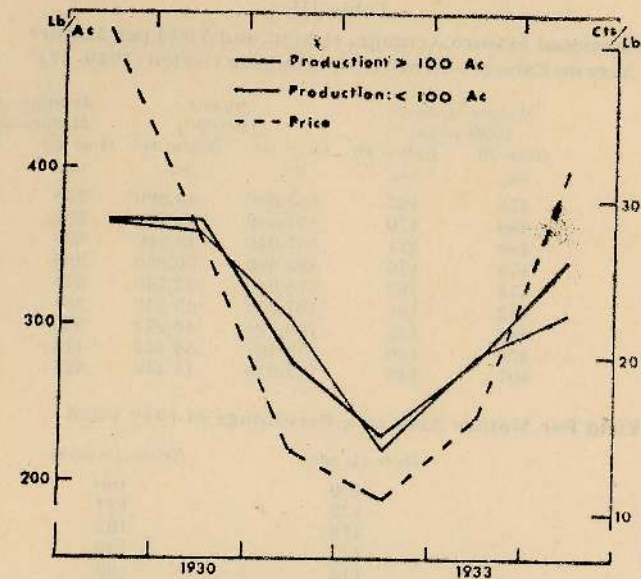


Fig. 1. PRODUCTION AND PRICE - 1929-34

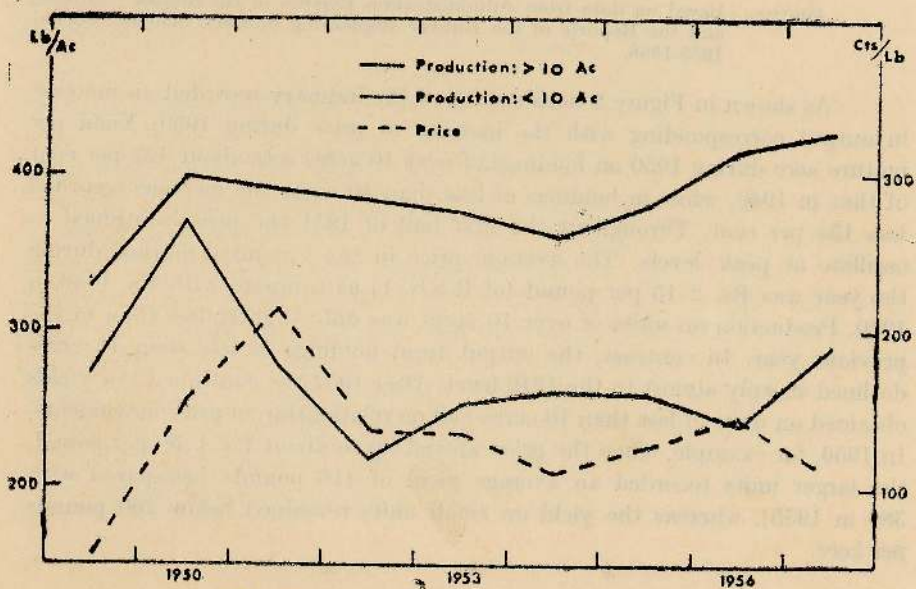


Fig. 2. PRODUCTION AND PRICE - 1949-57

**Table III**  
**Estimated Mature Acreage, Output and Yield per Mature**  
**Acre on Estates and Small-holdings in Ceylon (1949-57)**

	Mature Acreage (000 acres)		Output (1000 lb.)		Average yield per Mature acre (lb.)	
	Over 10	Below 10	Over 10	Below 10	Over 10	Below 10
	ac.	ac.	ac.	ac.	ac.	ac.
1949 .. ..	475	165	155,680	44,800	328	272
1950 .. ..	480	170	191,520	62,720	399	369
1951 .. ..	480	171	187,040	48,160	390	277
1952 .. ..	479	170	183,680	36,960	383	217
1953 .. ..	473	169	178,080	42,740	376	252
1954 .. ..	463	165	167,274	43,140	361	261
1955 .. ..	443	158	169,205	40,974	380	259
1956 .. ..	426	150	177,437	36,324	416	241
1957 .. ..	407	143	173,958	41,449	427	290

**Yield Per Mature Acre as a Percentage of 1949 Yield**

	Over 10 acres	Below 10 acres
1949 .. ..	100	100
1950 .. ..	122	134
1951 .. ..	119	102
1952 .. ..	117	80
1953 .. ..	114	93
1954 .. ..	110	96
1955 .. ..	116	95
1956 .. ..	127	88
1957 .. ..	130	107

*Sources:* Based on data from Administration Reports of the Rubber Controller and the Reports of the Rubber Replanting Subsidy Scheme, Ceylon, 1953-1958.

As shown in Figure 2 both sectors of the industry recorded an increase in output corresponding with the increase in price during 1950. Yield per mature acre during 1950 on holdings of over 10 acres was about 122 per cent of that in 1949, while in holdings of less than 10 acres the increase recorded was 134 per cent. Throughout the first half of 1951 the price continued to oscillate at peak levels. The average price in the Colombo market during the year was Rs. 2.15 per pound (of R.S.S. 1) as compare with Rs. 1.56 in 1950. Production on units of over 10 acres was only slightly less than in the previous year. In contrast, the output from holdings of less than 10 acres declined sharply almost to the 1949 level. After 1952 the continued low yields obtained on units of less than 10 acres had no relationship to price movements. In 1956, for example, when the price moved up to about Rs. 1.50 per pound, the larger units recorded an average yield of 416 pounds (compared with 380 in 1955), whereas the yield on small units remained below 250 pounds per acre.

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The feature relevant to the present discussion that emerges from the foregoing study of data pertaining to the depression and the boom is that what has been said in writings quoted earlier on relative flexibility of

supply from the two sectors in Malaya and Indonesia are inapplicable to Ceylon. It is therefore necessary to examine to what extent and why conditions in Ceylon differ from those that have been claimed to prevail elsewhere.

### Response of Estates to Price Changes

Evidence from several authoritative sources can be quoted in support of what is borne out by the data presented above, that in Ceylon within the estate sector as a whole there was a drastic curtailment of production in response to the price fall during the early 1930's. In 1931, with the average price at 14 cents per pound, an estimated extent of 100,000 acres is said to have been out of production.<sup>15</sup> By 1932, when the price fell still further, it has been reported that production was suspended on about 200,000 acres, and that a large proportion of this extent belonged to estates.<sup>16</sup> Such curtailments of production were accompanied by substantial reductions of costs through the adoption of 'ruthless measures of retrenchment' in all sections of estate production.<sup>17</sup> A contemporary record states that 'on many mid-country estates where rubber is interplanted with tea, the former is neglected, and there is eradication of rubber.'<sup>18</sup>

Turning from the early 1930's to the Korean War boom and the aftermath, it is seen that in response to the increase in price during 1950-51 there was substantial intensification of production in the estate sector. In the absence of reliable and sufficiently detailed data, no firm conclusion can be drawn on the manner in which the intensification was achieved. There is, however, some indirect evidence which enables the making of certain observations. During the late 1940's when low prices prevailed, estates are reported to have had extensive areas out of tapping, which, in all probability, were brought into production with the increase in price. The report of the Rural Survey of 1951 records a large scale absorption of village labour for temporary employment on estates during the boom.<sup>19</sup> This suggests that the estates were, in general, able to muster the labour required for intensification of production. Further, the ability of the estate sector to maintain its yields well above pre-boom levels, and, to a certain extent, regulate its output according to price movement after 1951 suggests that the increase in yield at the height of the boom was not achieved by slaughter tapping, or at any rate, not by tapping at an intensity resulting in permanent damage reflected on production during subsequent years.

15. *Administration Report of the Director of Agriculture*, 1931, Ceylon pp. D. 4-5.

16. *Administration Report of the Director of Agriculture*, 1932, Ceylon, p. D. 5.

17. *loc. cit.*

18. *loc. cit.*

19. *Final Report of the Economic Survey of Rural Ceylon, 1950-51*, Ceylon Sessional Paper, XI, of 1954. This survey, it can be noted, was conducted from October 1950 to April 1951, when the rubber price was at the highest levels.

From the foregoing discussion it is evident that the estate sector of the rubber industry of Ceylon has possessed a greater flexibility than is ascribed to the large-scale producer of rubber in Malaya and Indonesia in some of the writings that were quoted. This can be explained with reference to the nature of ownership of rubber estates in Ceylon.

About 50 per cent of the estate rubber acreage in Ceylon is owned by Ceylonese, and falls outside the Company sector.<sup>20</sup> On these estates, unlike in large Company owned ones, rigid programmes of tapping are rarely adhered to.<sup>21</sup> They draw most of their labour from the surrounding villages, and depend little on labourers resident within the estates. In Ceylon, workers resident on rubber estates compose only about 30 per cent of the total rubber estate workforce.<sup>22</sup> This made possible the large scale retrenchment of labour when it was necessary to curtail production, and the obtaining of additional labour when it was necessary to intensify production. The situation appears to be clearly different from those areas such as Outer Indonesia where estates are largely dependent on Javanese labour. The experience of rubber plantations in Southern Sumatra which Pelzer reports<sup>23</sup>—that plantations lose labour during times of high price when they can least afford the trees to go untapped—does not appear to be one that is shared by the rubber plantations in Ceylon.

'Fixed overheads' which are said to compel the large-scale producer to continue operations during times of low price are observed to account for a relatively small proportion of the costs of production on estates of the non-company sector. Furthermore, on many Ceylonese owned small estates, those in immediate charge of production (who are in many instances, the owners themselves) do regulate day to day activity with an eye on the movement of price.

It is probably true to say that the smaller individually owned estates in Ceylon possess a greater flexibility of action than the large estates of the Company sector where the labour supply and the overhead costs are more rigid. Nevertheless, since the smaller estates account for a bulk of the total acreage in the estate sector, it is possible to make the generalization that the condition of this sector in Ceylon appears to differ from the picture painted

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20. In 1930 this category of estates covered about 130,000 acres or about 40 per cent of the total rubber estate acreage.
21. In Malaya too there appears to be a difference in this respect between European owned large estates and Asian owned small estates. Whanton, C. R. *Malayan Rubber Supply Conditions* (New York 1964), p. 142, states that 'European owned estates apparently adhere to a more rigorous tapping and replanting schedule than the Asian owned small estates.'
22. This estimate is based on data relating to labourers of Indian descent given in *Administration Report of the Commissioner of Labour*, Ceylon, 1960.
23. Pelzer, Karl J. 'Land Utilization in the Humid Tropics' *Proceedings of the 9th Pacific Science Congress*, Vol. 20, 1957, pp. 135-136.

by many authorities of the 'economic enclaves' situated in sparsely populated parts of Southeast Asia, which are owned by foreign investors, supervised by salaried employees and worked by hired migrant labour.<sup>24</sup>

### Response of Small-holdings to Price Changes

With the data available I am unable to draw firm conclusions on the exact manner in which changes in output in the small-holdings sector were brought about during the two periods that were reviewed. It is possible however to offer an explanation of the response of the small producer to major changes in price; an explanation that appears to fit the features indicated by yield and price trends that have been discussed.

In order to explain the reaction of the small-holders to price change, it is necessary to refer to the composition of the small-holdings sector of the rubber industry in Ceylon. With data obtained through field investigations in several rubber growing areas of Ceylon and with evidence drawn from several other sources,<sup>25</sup> I have shown elsewhere that 'owner-operated peasant holdings' which are considered as *typical small holdings* in the rubber industries of Malaya and Indonesia form only a part of the rubber small-holdings sector in Ceylon, and that an estimated extent of 40 to 50 per cent of the total small-holdings rubber acreage in Ceylon is owned by persons outside the peasant sector and is operated with hired labour paid at rates equal to or higher than the rates on estates.

In the "peasant sector" proper of the rubber industry (owner-operated units worked with unpaid labour) the cultivation of rubber is basically the same as the 'cultivation' of a host of other 'gardenland' crops like coconut, arecanut, jak-fruit, bread-fruit etc.; the only difference being that from rubber the owner derives, or can derive, a regular monetary return. In the economy of rural Ceylon the return from rubber rarely attains the basic place which paddy occupies; but for most peasant producers it forms an important means of subsistence. This sector of the industry (on account of its low costs on labour) produces rubber at a lower cost than other classes of producers. During the early 1930's when the price was in the region of 10 to 15 cents per pound a peasant small-holder producing even 200 pounds of rubber per year would have derived from it a net return with which, at the low prices of other subsistence goods that then prevailed, he could have met many of his needs. This is one objection to the view that there was a significant transfer of resources in the peasant sector during the Depression. The other is that alternative avenues of income to which the peasant could turn were, as always, limited

24. See, Boeke, J. H. *Economic and Economic Policy of Dual Societies*, (New York 1953), pp. 52-129.

25. Peiris, G. H. *Economic Geography of Rubber Production in Ceylon*, Ph.D. Dissertation (unpublished) University of Cambridge, 1965.

in scope. The available data on 'other crops' in Ceylon during the period 1930 to '35 suggest that, despite the encouragement given by the government to the peasants to turn from rubber to other crops,<sup>26</sup> there was no substantial intensification of activity in those fields.<sup>27</sup> It must be remembered that other crops (with perhaps the sole exception of tea) also fetched low prices, and hence, could not have formed more lucrative avenues of employment to the peasant. As for other occupations, the want of skills, the smallness of the market, and other economic and social obstacles, would undoubtedly have prevented large-scale transfers.

In view of the reasons outlined above, it is justifiable to contend that it was unnecessary, and even if necessary, impracticable for the peasant producers of rubber to transfer their resources to other avenues during the period of low price. This contention contradicts what Bauer has shown with his data on the native producers in the N.E.I. who should be treated as falling into the 'peasant' class in the present context.<sup>28</sup>

Several writings on peasant production of cash crops on Indonesia have shown, that particularly in the more remote areas, the produce from small-holdings has to pass through a series of middle-men and traders before it reaches the market.<sup>29</sup> According to Van Gelderen the link between the producers and the market in such areas is provided by indigenous middle-men and traders who themselves make a profit in the transactions.<sup>30</sup> It is possible to imagine that when in 1931 and 1932 the price dropped to less than 10 Malayan cents per pound in the Singapore market, there would have been a collapse of the services of middle-men which are essential for maintaining the supply from small holdings. In Rae's review of the slump it is stated, 'the natives generally continue to tap their trees as long as they can find a market for their product; and with falling prices *accessibility to market largely determines their output.*'<sup>31</sup> (my italics). According to Rae, 'in a well-developed country like Malaya, transport costs did not begin to affect small holdings output until the London price was under 3d. per lb., and even in 1932, when the price averaged 2½d., the output was only 12 per cent lower than what it had been during the previous three years.' In the Netherlands Indies, on the other hand, 'the restriction of output began at a much higher level and increased continually as the price fell.'<sup>32</sup> Thus to attribute, as Bauer has done, the fall in yield per mature acre of rubber land belonging to native producers

26. Estimated acreages and output data on coconut, paddy and pulses given in *Ceylon Year Books*, 1929 to 1940, indicate no intensification of activity in these fields.

27. *Administration Reports of the Director of Agriculture*, 1932, p. D. 116, and 1934, pp. D 87-97.

28. See, above p. 84.

29. Bocke, *op. cit.* pp. 122-123; van Geldeven J. 'The Economics of a Tropical Colony' (ed) *Indonesian Economics* (Amsterdam, 1961), pp. 121-122.

30. *loc. cit.*

31. Rae, *op. cit.* p. 326.

32. *loc. cit.*

of Outer Indonesia to the peasants turning to other avenues of employment appears to be, to say the least, a over-simplification of what occurred during the Depression.

The position of small holdings owned by 'the non-peasant class' was different. For the owners of these units, the income from rubber is a subsidiary one, on expansions and contractions of which, they normally do not place critical significance. During periods of low price, if operational costs exceed price, there are no fixed costs to compel continuation of work. The drop in the overall output of the smallholdings sector in Ceylon during the depression was hence (probably) more due to the suspension of production by the 'non-peasant' smallholders than due to peasant producers turning to other avenues of income. In this respect the response of the 'non-peasant' smallholdings appear to be comparable to that of small estates.

In a previous section of this paper relating to the period 1949 to '57 it was shown that although the sudden upsurge of price in 1950 had a responsive increase in yield per mature acre on small holdings from 270 pounds in 1949 to 370 pounds in 1950, the small holdings sector failed to maintain a high yield level in the following year despite the continued prevalence of high prices throughout a greater part of 1951. In the Wet-Zone of Ceylon, where cultivable land is relatively scarce and where population is dense, smallholders rarely possess reserve rubber land on which they can work when high price stimulates increased production. It is hence probable that the gradual fall in yield of small holdings after 1950 was a consequence of slaughter tapping of rubber trees (most of which were already in a direlict condition) during the earlier part of the boom. Whether in this respect the owner-operated holdings of the peasant sector differ from small holdings outside the peasant sector, the available data do not reveal.

### Conclusions

In regard to the relative flexibility of supply in different sectors of the rubber industry of Ceylon, it is seen that distinctions lie, not so much between the small holdings sector and the estate sector, but rather between different classes of producers within each sector. Conditions in Ceylon, as reflected by production trends during the periods examined, appear to be different from those ascribed to other countries in the works that have been quoted.

It is possible to draw a general conclusion in regard to Ceylon that if the ability to respond readily to changes in market conditions is taken as a criterion of assessment of efficiency, estates outside the Company sector and small-holdings outside the peasant sector are more 'efficient' than company-owned estates on the one hand and owner operated peasant holdings on the other.

## REVIEW ARTICLE

### CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN THE AGE OF ASIAN-AFRICAN NATIONALISM

*A History of the Methodist Church in Ceylon, 1814-1964*, [ed. Revd. W. J. T. Small] (Colombo 1971) 660 pp. including 5 appendices. No bibliography or index. Rs. 12.50.

Mobley, H. W. *The Ghanian's Image of the Missionary*. (E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1970) pp. xi + 180.

In 1864 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Wesleyan Methodist mission in Ceylon there appeared one of the outstanding works on missionary activity in the island, the Rev. R. S. Spence-Hardy's magisterial *Jubilee Memorials of the Wesleyan Mission (South Ceylon) 1814-1864*. Now, over a hundred years later a group of eight contributors, under the editorship of the Revd. W. J. T. Small, have produced a comprehensive volume to commemorate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary. The team who produced this massive and well documented survey of the Methodist mission in Ceylon have done their work with admirable competence. The thirteen chapters (fourteen, if one includes the epilogue) of the book cover every important aspect of the Methodist mission's range of activities in Ceylon. The appendices contain a wealth of biographical and statistical information. The clarity of the language of most of the chapters certainly enhances the readability of the book, while the restrained note of much of the writing and the tone of diffident soul-searching are a stark contrast to the effusive self-righteousness that marred a great deal of the missionary writings of the past.

It is inevitable however that comparisons will be made between this present work and Spence-Hardy's volume, and inevitable too that such comparisons will be to the disadvantage of the later volume. This is because a book written by a single author (more so an author as knowledgeable and discerning as Spence-Hardy) will have a coherence and integrity that no group or team of collaborators can hope to match. But there are other shortcomings as well. The volume as a whole suffers from the lack of a historical perspective. It carries too much detail to be a really effective historical survey, but this I suppose springs from the desire—indeed, the need—to commemorate scores of individuals who have made their modest contribution to building up the institutional structure of their mission and church, and a mention in this volume is at once a just reward, and a tribute to their memory. Again, while there is a detailed factual survey of the educational activity of the Methodists and the schools maintained by them the manner in which the material is presented is unsatisfactory. If it is comprehensive, it is also unmistakably fragmentary and the effect of it is to make this volume too much like an opulently devised souvenir. This impression is sustained by the fact that this volume has neither an index nor a bibliography, surprising omissions for a scholarly work of this sort. Thus while Spence-Hardy's volume will be read as essential background material for the history of early nineteenth century Ceylon even by those with no special interest in missionary organisation, the present volume is hardly likely to serve that very useful function. Its appeal will be much more limited—limited to the faithful adherents of the church, or to those interested in the missionary movement in its wider perspective. Even these latter will find a curious parochialism in the contributions of the individual writers. The questions they have set out to answer though important in themselves are either much less so than some which have escaped their attention or they are surveyed without reference to the wider implications of such problems.

The emphasis in this book is—quite legitimately—on the century since the publication of Spence-Hardy's volume. From the point of view of the Christian missions the major theme of this period in its historical perspective is the emergence of an effective indigenous resistance to the missionaries and the response of the missionaries to this.

The Christian missionaries had come to Ceylon as the apostles of a new faith and as the representatives of a new way of life. This latter had given the missionary movement its characteristic feature of cultural intolerance. There was a conscious attempt to undermine traditional customs and beliefs, and to impose in their place the whole system of Christian values associated with the Victorian age. Thus there was a seemingly contradictory position—the stronger the Christian faith the greater the prospect of Christians becoming a privileged sect, looking down in contempt and disgust at aspects of traditional life.

It was in the years after the first World War, however, that the missionaries working in Asia and Africa began to face up to the implications of the changes brought about by the rise of nationalism, when Christianity began to be viewed and resisted as an integral aspect of imperialism. Over the years the missionary movement both Protestant and Roman Catholic responded to this new situation by seeking an accommodation with the



forces of resistance, by accepting the need to tone down the westernness of Christianity. And in so doing they went counter to the whole trend of missionary thinking and practice of the nineteenth century. The aim now was to make the missions and churches indigenous institutions, less conspicuously under European leadership and direction. In Ceylon this change of attitude became noticeable, but almost up to the grant of independence in 1948 Ceylonisation in religious affairs among the Christian groups working in Ceylon was much more tardy than the equivalent process in the political and administrative spheres.

Christian churches and missions in Ceylon were westernised—and anglicised—to the point where the soul-searching about the relationship between Christianity and nationalism which appeared in many parts of Asia and Africa at the tail-end of the nineteenth century, either did not emerge at all, or did so a full generation later and on a more modest scale. The crucial question—can a Ceylonese become a Christian and yet remain a Ceylonese, was something which occurred to a small and far from influential minority of Ceylonese Christians.

At this point it is illuminating to refer to the experience of an African country, Ghana, where the Christian impact was as prolonged as it was in the coastal regions of south-west Ceylon. There was in Ghana, as Mobley's book so skillfully demonstrates, a long tradition of indigenous Christian scholars producing the most trenchant and profound criticisms of the organisation and conduct of Christian churches in their country. Native Christians in Ceylon produced nothing to compare with the great Ghanaian works on the role of the Christian community in relation to the indigenous society—a series of profoundly important works which began with the books of Mensah Sarbah and Casely Hayford in the late nineteenth century, and continued during the twentieth century, and beyond the attainment of independence in the careers and works of Nkrumah and Busia. Not only did Ghanaian Christian intellectuals draw a contrast between Christian philosophy and the institutional structure of the church, between Christianity proper and what they chose to call "Churchianity," they also attempted a fusion of Christian content and African form in Ghanaian Christianity by the incorporation of indigenous practices into Christian worship. This had emerged by the beginning of the twentieth century, by which time a pronounced reaction had set in among Ghana's Christian community against western forms, prejudices, procedures and customs in the practice of their religion. The first glimpses of this attitude of mind became visible among Ceylonese Christians only in the 1920's and that too sporadically and without significant impact on the Christian community at large.

The Revd. W. J. T. Small's team of collaborators demonstrate insufficient acquaintance with the historical background of these problems as they emerged in Ceylon. It is not that they entirely ignore these issues, but the parochialism which affects much of their writing in this volume is seen at its worst in the analysis of these problems with the result that the complexities and subtleties are ignored for a bald, and simplistic patchwork of information. In these circumstances Mobley's lucid and incisive analysis of the problems of Ghanaian Christianity and the missionary movement in that country, affords a salutary corrective. It is an absorbingly interesting book not least because it reveals a strand in Ghanaian Christianity which was almost entirely absent in Ceylon before independence. This book is essential reading for all those interested in the problems of a Christian community in Africa and Asia confronting the emergence of national consciousness.

The process of coming to terms with nationalism may be called the re-indigenization movement—the revival of indigenous names, dress, the use and cultivation of native arts, crafts and languages among the Christians. The re-indigenization movement proper was in the hands of the critics of the missionaries, and the missionaries in Ceylon at first rather self-consciously stayed aloof from it, but some of them sought to accommodate themselves to the changes inherent in this process. In this the Anglicans were always in the forefront—in the adoption of traditional architectural forms in church building, and the use of forms of worship natural to Ceylon. In most of the Protestant churches a Sinhalese prayer book was the only concession to the indigenous culture, and there was no attempt to adapt the form of worship to a national or truly Sinhalese form. The re-indigenization movement, such as it was, was essentially a Protestant one. The Roman Catholics lagged behind—it could seem as though the very nature of their organisation impeded them in the attempts to come to terms with the spirit of national consciousness. The Methodists, as the volume reviewed here will reveal, were not especially distinguished in this sphere either, but the admission is made candidly and fairly, with no attempt to conceal inconvenient facts. One other point needs mention. Even with regard to the attempt to make the church—and this so for all the Protestants—an indigenous institution, the articulate spokesmen of the new views were more often than not British missionaries rather than native Christians.

Since nationalist sentiment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century had been so deeply intertwined with the re-assertion of Buddhist values, the re-appraisal of the attitude of missionary societies towards nationalism necessarily involved a re-consideration of the prevailing attitude towards Buddhism. The "root-and-branch" critiques of Buddhism which had been so characteristic of the missionary campaigns of the nineteenth century gradually gave way to a more restrained and subtle approach, though they did not disappear altogether. There were recrudescences of these in the furious controversies with the Buddhists which raged in the years 1907-9, and 1921-2, and on all such occasions Methodist missionaries were at the centre of the storm.

But the Methodists were also the ones who played a path-breaking role in the attempt at defining a new course in evangelical activity in relation to Buddhism and Buddhists. There were those who held the view that what was necessary was to reconcile some of the teachings of Buddhism with those of Christianity on the grounds that Buddhism in common with other great religions was a real (if partial) expression of man's search for God and God's revelation to man. The corollary of this view was that Christianity should be so preached that it would seem a means to the fulfilment of Buddhist ideals. However, there was no strong support for these views, and the line of policy that was adopted was that there was no approach from Buddhism to Christianity, and that Christianity should be preached without any effort to treat it as a means of realising Buddhist ideals. Nevertheless even those who took up this position emphasised the point that they believed strongly in the possibility of a friendly and constructive relationship between Christians and Buddhists, and the possibility also of working together in a variety of spheres of secular activity: in the temperance movement; in campaigns for social justice; and in political campaigns for the fulfilment of national aspirations. This policy decision had been taken in the late 1920's. In its own way it reflected not merely a sober realism about the limits of evangelical activity in a completely changed situation, but the persistent references to the Christian life and message in relation to Buddhism was indicative of a change of mood in missionary endeavour—it was no longer a matter of expansion so much as consolidation, if not contraction.

At the same time the Buddhist resurgence and the growth of nationalism were the real driving forces which compelled the missionary movement to co-ordinate its activities in Ceylon. No longer could they afford the dissipation of energies in sectarian disputes. There had been precious little co-operation among missionary groups in the island at the turn of the century. The greatest achievement of the World Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in 1910 was the bringing into existence of the first permanent instrument of Christian co-operation outside the Roman Catholic church. The impact of this began to be felt in Ceylon in the nineteen twenties and thereafter, and its influence fitted in neatly with the practical necessity to close ranks in the face of a resurgent Buddhism.

One of the striking features of Small's volume is its careful and scrupulously methodical treatment of the themes of church unity, and encounter of Methodism with the major indigenous religions in Ceylon. This present volume as a whole reflects the views of the earnest advocates of church union. And the space devoted to the encounter with the indigenous religions—the last chapter brings the various issues involved in this into sharper focus—is only to be expected in a religious group which has been in the forefront of missionary efforts to study Buddhism in depth, a tradition which began with the researches of the Revds. D. J. Gogerly and R. S. Spence-Hardy in the nineteenth century.

An epilogue treats the important theme of the final emergence of the Methodist church in Ceylon as a fully autonomous body in world Methodism, self-supporting, self-propagating and indigenous. The establishment of autonomous status was a long drawn out process. There was the practical and mundane problem of financial dependence. The Protestant missions in Ceylon made slow progress in freeing themselves from their financial dependence on their parent societies in Britain. The degree of dependence varied from mission to mission, but it would be true to say that before 1948 none were substantially self-supporting.

The Revd. W. J. T. Small and his team are to be congratulated on the production of a scholarly work, obviously the product of years of devoted research. Although this review has pointed out the shortcomings of its treatment of some of the themes in missionary activity in Ceylon these, it must be emphasised, do not lessen the utility of this most competent and timely book.

K. M. de Silva,

## I

*Zeylanicus, Ceylon, between Orient and Occident* (Elek Books, London 1970) 288 pp. 42 sh. £ 2.10.

An author's decision to conceal his identity invariably confers a mysterious attractive power on a book. So it is in this case. The dust-jacket of the books informs us that the author is a Ceylonese civil servant, and the preface carries an explanation by him about his decision to resort to a pseudonym. One's interest is also sustained by a foreword from S. A. Pakeman, who was Professor of History in the Ceylon University College at Colombo.

The author has two basic aims in this book: first, to survey the main trends in the island's long history; and, secondly to comment on its Commonwealth association. There have been in the last few years a number of general works on Ceylon—one by Pakeman himself, two by Ludowyk and one by Arasaratnam. The reader who turns to Zeylanicus in the hope that he has something new to say, or that his book is infused with a fresh outlook on the themes he sets out to review will be in for a disappointment. Zeylanicus's review of the island's history from ancient times to the beginning of the nineteenth century displays neither solid research nor shrewd judgement. It teems with glaring errors. He may have redeemed the situation if he displayed a lively and provocative style, but his prose is that of the general run of annual administration reports produced by his tribe, perfunctorily and without any literary pretensions. Any hope that the sweep improves as one gets nearer our own times is quickly dispelled. The shortcomings seen in the earlier chapters persists and indeed are accentuated. The author believes strongly in the need for Sri Lanka to continue her Commonwealth association but the case he makes is stodgy and simplistic, and his arguments unerringly conventional.

The appallingly poor history might have been compensated for by some stimulating reportage if the author as a civil servant—and presumably a senior one—had used his personal knowledge of public affairs to illuminate some of the dark corners of our recent history and politics. There is nothing of this. Nor is there any percipient down-to-earth political or economic analysis, any sensitivity to persons, places or atmosphere.

At the end of it all I kept asking myself why the author should have resorted to a pseudonym. There is little or nothing in this book that should bring on his head the wrath of politicians though one must never underestimate the sensitivity of our notoriously thin-skinned politicians who can take offence at the most harmless remarks. Again, was the author afraid that his venture into print had infringed some financial or administrative regulation though which our *panjandrams* of the higher bureaucracy impose restraints on initiative and creativity? Or was it that he finally tired of his work, was convinced of its intrinsic superfluity, and concealed his identity out of sheer embarrassment at this?

K. M. de Silva.

## II

*Political and Administrative Development.*

Edited by Ralph Braibanti (Durham NC, Duke University Press, 1969), 15 Dollars.

The expensive international conference, which gave birth to the thirteen papers published in this massive volume, was intended to 'explore the theoretical issues implicit in transnational efforts to improve the administrative capability of developing political systems.' (p. vii) Since the appearance of the impact of 'behaviouralism' in political science, much attention has been given to the 'problem of the relationship of administrative reform to political development.' Fred Riggs, Ralph Braibanti, Dwight Waldo, Edward Weidner and Milton Esman have successfully imported the techniques currently employed in comparative politics to study the administrative systems in different polities. In this area of study, which is now known as Comparative Public Administration, a significant effort has been invested to examine the 'institutional adequacy' of the political systems to undertake and generate economic and social change. This type of inquiry became prominent because of the 'insistence that development must be indigenized or ecologically adapted.' (p. 25) The adaptation is a problem which is integrally related to the problem of political development. The most important factor which is relevant to administrative development is largely 'the diffusion of power to the periphery of the social order.' (p. 47) It is anticipated that diffusion of power would ensure a high degree of meaningful participation. The defects in the 'loci of power within the institutional arrangement of a political system' make it necessary to construct a 'strategy for induced political development designed to strengthen institutions in developing systems'. (p. 59) The strengthening of the bureaucratic system has been considered a primary requisite for political development, and foreign

assistance, as argued by Braibanti, is certain to make a contribution in this direction. On the basis of this assumption, he emphasised the doctrine behind Title IX of the Foreign Assistance Act (1967), and the entire volume is based on the view that 'the strengthening of administration must proceed irrespective of the rate of maturation of the political process! (p. 3).

With Ralph Braibanti's introductory remarks on a number of theoretical expositions, the volume enters into a discussion of the importance of strengthening the bureaucratic institutions of new states. It is in this that we see one of the good features of the volume—the freshness of the discussion. This is largely because of the attack provided by the discussants on the main papers, for example Sartori against Friedrich, Landau against Riggs, and Taylor Cole against Lehman.

Carl J. Friedrich, who indulges in the examination of the objectives of modern government, sees maximisation of freedom as the major objective, and makes the point that the 'problems of development do not, in spite of the great variety of cultures, differ basically from the politics in the mature societies.' (p. 134) Sartori, identifying two different approaches among the contributors to this volume, the 'inductive' and the 'inventive' method, (pp. 137-8) contributes a lively piece. In this, he agrees with Friedrich that basic objectives are followed by both developed and underdeveloped systems, and they are 'worthy of exploration as a vital part of comparative politics.' (p. 141) Henry Kariel, discussing the goals of administrative reforms in developing countries, attempts to generate a polemical debate. The treatment of the subject, however, remains inadequate. LaPalombara contributes an historical essay on the evolution of Western administrative systems (refers to a number of leading Western writers) and labours the point that 'there exists an administrative technology that is universally applicable.' (p. 169) This is certainly an argument in favour of continued Western technical assistance in the so-called sphere of 'bureaucratic modernisation.' With a reference to a British writer, he makes an interesting point, which we in the underdeveloped world conveniently overlook, C. H. Sisson, writing his book entitled 'The Spirit of British Administration,' has made the point that 'it is the absolute non-entity of the British administrator that is his chief merit.' This, LaPalombara, condemns as 'patently naive and empirically false.' (p. 215) Riggs, employing his own jargon (which if not supported by his own glossary remains incomprehensible) contributes the longest and most 'inventive' chapter (pp. 220-324) which introduces a classificatory scheme to relate five types of complex bureaucracy to seven basic types of polity. The author of such terms as the 'prismatic society,' 'the Sala model,' and the 'bazaar-canteen,' produces here in this volume fifty odd terms, and some of them deserve to be mentioned—amatonic polity, antetonic polity, antitonic polity, atonic polity, autotonic polity, contratonic polity, heterotonic polity, hypotonic polity, isotonic polity, monotonic polity, neotonic polity, tonic polity, nontonic polity etc. Landau, who provides the attack on this incomprehensible dogmas of Riggs, makes the fundamental point that 'systematic investigation must employ lexical terms—those with conventional meanings.' (p. 326) It is Landau's view that Riggsian 'formulations have not generated the research they warrant.' His vocabulary is 'esoteric and alien' and this feature, contrary to its intention, obscures the theory. The same criticism was made immediately after the appearance of his work 'Administration in Developing Countries—The Theory of Prismatic Society,' and no note has been taken of the criticisms made. Despite all his contributions in the area of comparative public administration, the indiscriminate use of a vocabulary—sometimes indulging in an art of sheer verbosity—is in fact an obstacle to the emergence of a standard theory of administrative change in the developing countries.

Lasswell and Holmberg write a note towards 'a general theory of directed value accumulation' which seeks to measure institutions in terms of their value content. In their point of view, 'the fundamental criterion of a general theory is contextuality.' (p. 354) Another vital point which they make is that 'political modernisation is not to be achieved by withdrawal from world politics.' (p. 394) This means that a certain degree of involvement in world politics is prescribed as a necessary concomitant of political modernisation. Does it mean that countries in this part of the world obtain more and more foreign aid—foreign aid with 'what' and for 'what.'

Two short essays have been contributed by Pye and Montgomery. Pye, while contributing some interesting ideas on the psychology of institutions, examines 'the behavioural dimensions' of bureaucracies in both traditional societies and post-independent nations. On the basis of this examination, he suggests that the Civil Services of new states need 'training' in competitive relationships.' (p. 421) The need to build bureaucracies around 'conflict

situations' did not arise in the first decade after independence, because there existed no competition relating to aspirations and social orientations between the political leadership and the bureaucracy. For instance, the communal competition for places in the Ceylonese public bureaucracy was a phenomenon of the second decade after independence. Except for the behavioural garb of his essay, Pye does not say anything remarkably new to a student whose speciality is public administration in the developing countries. Montgomery, on the other hand, discusses the dynamics of bureaucratic reform, and relates them to political and constitutional factors in an interesting manner. He uses the phrase 'favoured elite' to describe the bureaucracies in these countries.

Lehman, perhaps with justification, has made an attempt to examine the role of this new tribe in the underdeveloped countries called the planners—experts in economic development. In an effort to understand their 'ideology of economic development,' Lehman interviewed 33 mid-career planners from eighteen countries. He, digging a lot of data relating to their social origins, made the distinction between a 'conventional bureaucracy' and a 'rational-productivity bureaucracy.' The distinction is not that distinct in these countries. Taylor Cole offers an alternative approach for the study of economic planners in the public services of developing countries. Abueva, the only contributor from this part of the world, examines the UN handbooks and AID programme reports to see the extent to which they represent an 'administrative doctrine.' In an effort to analyse the response which these handbooks and reports generated in the Philippine setting, he interviewed fifty-two Filipino administrators.

The common theme of this massive volume (667 pages) has been the importance of strengthening the bureaucratic systems of new states, and the editor, writing the conspectus (not the conclusion), says that he sees the 'glimmerings of a common perspective.' (p. 639) Though the papers in this volume do not give birth to a general model for the study of administrative reform, they represent an important step forward in the study of institutions. It provides an interesting variety of sources in its footnotes, and this is an admirable quality of any work which has been edited by Ralph Braibanti. The volume, stripped of its vocabulary—the Riggisian jargon in particular, is certain to remain a landmark in the development of the subject.

W. A. Wiswa Warnapala.

### III

Mannel Faria Y Souza—*The Portuguese Asia* [translated into English by Capt. John Stevens] Vol. I 36 unnumbered pages + 448; Vol. II 28 unnumbered pages + 526; Vol. III 26 unnumbered pages + 440. (First edition (1695)) printed in offset and republished 1971. (Gregg International Publishers Ltd., Farnborough, England.) \$ 24.00.

Despite the increasing concentration on the study of more recent history, the story of the Portuguese impact on Asia has proved fascinating enough to attract a steady stream of scholars and writers up to the present day. The fascination of the period lies not only in the heroism and brutality, the enterprise and cupidity, of the Portuguese adventurers and the varied nature of Asia's response to its first direct contact with an European power in modern times, but also in that the Portuguese produced a group of distinguished writers and historians who despite their many shortcomings preserved the spirit of the age in their writings. It is therefore all the more regrettable that so few of the accounts of Portuguese chroniclers have been made available in translation to the English-speaking public. In this sense the re-publication of John Stevens' summarised translation of *Asia Portuguesa* is welcome for it had long been difficult to get at.

On the other hand, Faria y Souza's work, in comparison to those of Barros, Couto, Bocarro or Castanheda is somewhat below par. True, y Souza was well read in both classical and contemporary history and a person capable of great industry. Before he wrote on Asia he had already established a reputation by his *Europa Portuguesa* originally published in 1628 as *O' Epitome de las Historias Portuguesas*. And, unlike, many of his contemporaries who looked upon historical facts merely as a means to present a style of writing, y Souza was also interested in the veracity of his material.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that his work suffered greatly from the limitations under which he worked and also the attitude he adopted. He was essentially an 'armchair historian', having never visited the East. This in itself had proved no great disadvantage to one of his famous predecessors, Joao de Barros, whose furthest venture had been

to the coast of Guinea, but Barros being the official historian had access to the royal archives and moreover had gained considerable experience in the Oriental trade by serving for many years at the *Casa da India*, Lisbon. Faria y Souza too is known to have participated in the preparation of a ship to India in 1629 but due to his long stay in Madrid and his reluctance to waste time on visitors he was denied any considerable contact with those who had any experience in the East. Faria y Souza himself did not consider this a great bar. He uninhibitedly gathered material from the Decades of Barros, Couto and Bocarro—so much so that *Asia Portuguesa* has been sometimes termed—'a summary of the Decades.'

There is little doubt that *Asia Portuguesa* was largely compiled from the Decades. A comparison of the section devoted to the viceroyalty of Dom Jeronimo de Azevedo (Volume III, pp. 181-277) with the preceding and following sections will illustrate the wealth of detail provided by Bocarro's work. Of course Faria y Souza read many other books too. Some idea of his bibliography may be obtained from the list in pages 436-440 of Volume III though the translator has here omitted the 48 printed books and 91 volumes and 29 bundles of manuscripts on metropolitan Portugal that y Souza claims to have read. He made good use of Fr. Paulo da Trindade's *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente* which he received in manuscript form. (Compare for instance Trindade, Volume III (Lisbon 1967) pp. 214-218 with Steven's translation, Vol. III, pp. 300-302 on the Portuguese in Jaffna). He also read and 'distilled' information from the works of Emmanuel Barradas, Antonio Galvao, Garcia d'orta and the younger Affonso de Albuquerque. On the other hand it is difficult to argue that y Souza made any improvement on the earlier publications. He was uncritical in his search for information. He swallowed wholesale Fernao Mendes Pinto's account of the fictional kingdom of Calaminham (Vol. III, pp. 354-356) and quoted him at length in other instances (e.g. Vol. II, pp. 522-523).

To these defects of approach were combined those of attitude. Faria y Souza was genuinely proud of Portuguese achievement. "We may be sometimes overpowered by number, not overcome by valour, for though upon some occasions fortune forsook all yet few were forsaken for their courage. . . . ." (Vol. I, Introduction). He was also somewhat blind to Portuguese shortcomings and in his work, Asia and its people are seen merely, as a stage setting in which the Portuguese played their parts.

The value of *Asia Portuguesa* appears to have been further reduced by Steven's translation. It is not that the translation is inaccurate—which it is not. It is more that Stevens took upon himself the task of reducing *Asia Portuguesa* to less than half of its original size by omitting what he considered unhistorical matter and trivial detail Stevens ignored ' . . . tedious lists of officers and gentlemen's names who were present at any considerable Actions, which Names are of no use to us ; those of the commanders-in-chief and such as particularly signalized themselves being sufficient for History. . . .' (Vol. I Translator's message). Unfortunately for Stevens the concept of history has changed since his day. Stevens also left out many long speeches as he considered they were ' . . . for the most part never thought of by those they are fathered upon. . . .' Thus the speech attributed to Vasco da Gama at Calicut in 1498 is omitted while many others (e.g. Vol. III p. 385) are given in summary form. While historians would have little to quarrel with Stevens' judgement on this matter it would be well to remember that Faria y Souza sought to express his ideas and show his literary skill in those very passages on which Stevens had drastically wielded the blue pencil. In any case much grace and literary style has been lost in Steven's attempt to summarize.

Thus what the present three-volume work offers is a truncated translation of a rather undistinguished compilation on Portuguese Asia. Even in the original version Faria y Souza's contribution was not very noteworthy. The translator's technique of summarization has further reduced its value. Nevertheless, considering the dearth of translations of contemporary works on the Portuguese of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the re-publication of the Portuguese Asia will be welcomed by librarians, book-collectors and enthusiasts, although the price at which it is offered is well beyond the reach of many prospective individual purchasers in Asia.

C. R. de Silva.

*The Asian Newspapers' Reluctant Revolution*, edited by John A. Lent (Iowa State University Press, 1971), 373 pp., \$ 12.50.

The Iowa State University Press goes in for exotic titles. Its study of the news media in Africa was called *Muffled Drums*. A survey of mass communications systems in the Soviet Union and China was titled *The Red Giants*. The story of journalism of the American blacks was given the title of *The Black Press, U.S.A.* The Press in Asia seems to have presented difficulties in the selection of a stereotype, either pigmentation wise, or ideologically, so the title *Reluctant Revolution* was chosen despite its negative and even self contradictory connotations.

The publisher's explanation of the title, and the theme of the book is that the Asian Press is trembling on the verge of a revolution that could sweep newspapers into a new world of mass circulation, conquer a million-figure readership, and embrace the technological advances of the mid-twentieth century. However, deprived of a few powerful catalysts, this revolution has failed to break into its full intensity. Thus the title of this comprehensive volume—*Reluctant Revolution*.

The comprehensiveness consists of a description of the newspaper presses of 15 Asian Nations (Ceylon included). With three "overviews" there are in all eighteen authors, of whom ten are Asians, and the remainder, Americans. Each contribution is supposed to combine history with contemporary description. Inevitably there is a marked degree of unevenness in the contributions. What is more disconcerting are the sweeping and categorical assertions by some of the authors.

For instance, the editor of the book, in an introductory note on the Press in South Asia says that: "In all three Nations Newspapers, Ex Newspapermen played Key roles during independence movements. *Gandhi, of course was a journalist, as was Wijewardene in Ceylon* (my emphasis)." Gandhi edited newspapers and journals at various stages of his life, but who in Ceylon would equate Wijewardene with Gandhi?

Roland E. Wolsley wrote the chapter on the press in India before India's military victory over Pakistan and the turn of events make his forecasts seem anything but prescient. Speculating on the possibility of India's "conquest by the Chinese People's Republic," or economic dominance by too close a relationship to the Soviet Union," Mr. Wolsley predicted that "should wars elsewhere, notably that in Vietnam, break out in worldwide proportions, India could be bowled over easily. Should Pakistan, already ultra-friendly with China, come again into military conflict with India, China might have her way."

The strength of the book lies in its contribution to an understanding of the problems of Asian newspapers, and of the stresses of the Press in developing countries.

Newspapers in Asia (excluding Japan) labour under the handicap that their cost in relation to the incomes of readers, and potential readers, is much greater than the cost of American and European newspapers. Where newspapers are outspoken and critical, Governments regard them as dangerous enemies whose power and influence, should be curbed, either by fiscal or legislative measures, or both. This point is well brought out by a number of the contributors to the book. The debilitating effects of the policies of Asian Governments on the newspapers in their countries is a subject worthy of further research.

Donovan Moldrich.

"*A Return to Kandy. Over Balana and beyond.*"

By Vesak Nanayakkara. With line drawings by Stanley Kirinde. Colombo, Arasan Printers for the author, 1971. viii, 237 pages, plates. Rs. 35.00.

One had almost given up hoping that a book deviating from the drab norms of design and production could be produced in the limited world of Ceylonese printing ink, when in late 1970 this despair was temporarily stemmed by the appearance of Neville Weeraratne's exquisitely wrought and printed tribute to the late Arthur Van Langenberg. It was a sheer delight to handle and gloat over, and put one in mind of the most illustrious examples of private printing in the world outside. That this was no isolated swallow was proved soon after by the publication in a strictly limited edition of an opulent book by

Vesak Nanayakkara, crafted and designed by the same sure and capable hands of Neville Weeraratne—it is depressing to realise that he emigrated to Australia the day the book was published and it is a resplendent and fitting swan-song to his career as a decorator and art-designer. This book then sets up new standards of taste and publishing in Ceylon, which all printers should strive to achieve in the future. From dust jacket to final page it is a satisfying piece of artistic craftsmanship, and a congenial accompaniment to the fabled splendours and tragic miseries of the last Sinhalese kingdom, which the author delineates in his very readable, racy and passionate prose. With this book, he joins that rare and dwindling breed of busy public servant who have communicated with intelligence their special interest in romantic segments of this country's past. His brisk text scorns footnotes and eschews the heavy and searching tread of historical scholarship.

Many writers in the recent past have made this sentimental pilgrimage to the beautiful and historic city nestling in the ravishing folds of Ceylon's central hills, but few have done so with the nostalgic deftness and loving touch of Vesak Nanayakkara. Both strident chauvinism and inflamed nationalist sentiment are refreshingly conspicuous by their absence. His style wafts and radiates the fragrance of the mediaeval past and not its mustiness—his pages are peopled attractively with the brave and essentially human personages who valiantly upheld to the last the *elan vital* of Sinhala patriotism, and his text resounds to the stirring drum beats of a gallant society breathing defiance to the end. Both the selection of old nineteenth century prints and the striking line drawings of Stanley Kirinde, probably the best known of modern Kandyan artists, drive home in alluring fusion the captivating image that Kandy down the years has always presented to both native resident and casual visitor alike. The appeal is immediate and lasting, and this lake city has never been able to shed, even in the vulgar hustle and ugly flurry of the commercial present, the compelling patina of its ornate and many splendoured past. Hugh Lupus Grosvenor, First Duke of Westminster, touring Ceylon at the age of twenty five, sent his mother an ecstatic account of his impressions, heading his letter "Kandy, Garden of Eden, Paradise Island, of Ceylon, this 20th day December 1850." As a distillation of the magnetic charm of this "Divine Old Town beneath Hantenne" the description could hardly be bettered, and it has been echoed and re-echoed by thousands of visitors, both foreign and native, black and white, rich and poor, simple and sophisticated, literate and illiterate.

As an addition to the swelling band of Kandyophiles, the present author stands in the first rank, and his book does engaging justice to the bewitching and insatiable appeal of Kandy and its environs, impregnated at every turn by the romantic aroma of its inescapable and seductive past. To the jaded city dweller stewing in the noxious effluvia of the late twentieth century present, this endearing and irresistible reminder of a near vanished past is the perfect desert island book, providing instant escape from the encircling seas of tedium and ennui.

H. A. I. Goonetilleke.



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