

THE CEYLON JOURNAL OF HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES

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BISHOP**

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REVIEWS

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Managing Editor
K. M. DE SILVA

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AN AMERICAN-KOREAN DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN SRI LANKA, 1884

EDWARD BRYNN
and
DONALD BISHOP

Ceylon, recently renamed Sri Lanka, was the scene of an interesting encounter between Asian and Western civilization in the spring of 1884, when the U.S.S. *Trenton* anchored in Colombo Harbour. On board the American vessel were three members of the first embassy of the Kingdom of Korea to the United States, returning to Seoul from Washington. Because Korea was the last country in Asia to have been "opened" to the world, these first Koreans to visit South Asia observed Ceylon with great interest because of its unique society and its longer contact with the West.

The visit of the envoys was recorded by their American escort officer. Currently preserved in the Library of Congress, the following letter is presented in these pages for the benefit of those interested in its significant observations of Ceylon in the late nineteenth century.

The journey of the Korean embassy was a milestone in the emergence of the long isolated "Hermit Kingdom" into the tense world of nineteenth century international relations. As the last quarter of the century began, Korea still maintained a strict policy of isolation. Like her neighbour Japan a generation before, Korea turned back foreign vessels and refused the overtures of European nations seeking to inaugurate trade and diplomacy. On two occasions the Korean armed forces resisted Western military expeditions. The kingdom's only foreign relations were tribute missions to Peking and infrequent negotiations with Japanese lords.

In 1876, however, Japan forced Korea to negotiate her first modern treaty. As a result Japanese influence in Korea grew alarmingly, and the Korean court sought to balance her international relations by negotiating treaties with other nations. The United States was chosen as the first new treaty power because the Koreans perceived America to be the one Western nation with no specific territorial ambitions in Asia.

Following the negotiation of the Li-Shufeldt treaty of "Peace, Amity, Commerce, and Navigation" between the United States and Korea in 1882, the United States sent an American diplomat to take up residence in the

Korean capital. America stood in high esteem in the court of King Kojong, and when Minister Lucius H. Foote proposed that Korea send a friendship mission to the United States, the Korean government responded immediately. A seven member mission, known in Korean records as the *pobingsa* (Mission to Reciprocate the Friendly Envoy), left for the United States on July 16, 1883.¹ The envoys arrived in San Francisco on September 2, entrained for Washington, and presented their credentials to President Chester Arthur in New York on September 18. Following the ceremonies the envoys toured Boston, New York, and Washington, and for two months they studied the workings of the American government in the capital. Their task completed, four of the Korean diplomats departed for Seoul via the Pacific in October. At President Arthur's invitation, however, Minister Min Yong-Ik and two companions, Pyon Su and So Kwang-Pom, returned to Korea via Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia on an American naval vessel sailing to Japan to join the U.S. Navy's Asiatic Squadron. The envoys visited the Azores, Gibraltar, Marseilles, London, Paris, Rome, Suez, Aden, Bombay, Colombo, Hong Kong, and Nagasaki before returning to their homeland on May 30, 1884.

Appointed to act as escort to the Koreans during the voyage was a young naval officer, George Clayton Foulk, the author of the letter which forms the body of this article. At age 27 Foulk was one of the Navy's most promising junior officers. After graduating third in his class from the Naval Academy in 1876, he made two cruises on the Asiatic Station and established a reputation for efficiency and understanding of Asian cultures. He spoke Japanese, read Chinese, and had begun to study Korean. He has visited Pusan and Wonsan briefly in 1882. The Koreans arrived in Washington while Foulk was assigned to the Office of Naval Intelligence. Foulk was designated to accompany the Koreans on their tour of the United States, and the Koreans requested that he be assigned to Korea. The Navy obliged the visiting diplomats by appointing Foulk to assume duties as naval attache at the American Legation in Seoul. Thus Foulk was the first attache appointed to any Asian capital.

Foulk performed his duties as escort with zeal. He personally accompanied the Koreans throughout their travels, and he prepared conscientiously for every part of the visit by studying the appropriate aspects of culture, society, and government. Foulk's letters from the *Trenton* describe in graphic terms the impact of world travel on the visitors from a nation long isolated from any contact with the outside world. Though Foulk believed that Western civilization had much to offer Asian peoples, he was no apologist for European domination over other nations. He was keen to point out the unfavourable aspects

1. The most complete account of the embassy, based on Korean and American primary sources, is Walter, Gary D., "The Korean Special Mission to the United States of America in 1883", *Journal of Korean Studies* (Korean Studies Society) I (July 1969), 89-142.

of European colonialism to the Koreans. It is in this regard that his letter from Ceylon is particularly significant.

Upon reaching Seoul on June 2, 1884, two months after their visit to Ceylon, the members of the Korean embassy returned to their posts in the Korean government. They sought to make other Korean officials aware of the need to accommodate the new Western civilization they had seen at first hand. Unfortunately, a split developed within the Korean aristocracy over the proper measures to take to reform Korean society. One envoy, Min Yong-Ik, became associated with his clan's moderate approach to change. As a result, he barely survived an assassination attempt by Korean radicals in the famous Post Office coup of December 1884. Intimidated by his narrow escape, he continued to hold official positions but thenceforth spent much time in exile and played little active role in Korean politics.

In contrast to Min, his former travelling companions So Kwang-Pom and Pyon Su became associated with the radical reformers. They participated in the same coup in which Min Yong-Ik was nearly killed. Following the failure of the emeute they fled Korea; both went to the United States. Pyon Su eventually earned a degree from Maryland Agricultural College, but he died prematurely in 1891 while in the employ of the Department of Agriculture. So Kwang-Pom survived his exile, returned to Korea in 1895, served as Minister of Justice in the reform cabinet, and was later appointed Minister to the United States. He died in Washington in 1897.

George Foulk served as naval attache until January, 1885. That month the American Minister departed Seoul and Foulk became *charge d'affaires ad interim*. He remained as the American diplomatic representative in Seoul with one brief interruption until December 1886. During this period he was known as the "lodestar of Korean progressivism" and worked hard to develop a sense of change and reform in the Korean government. His efforts, however, earned him the enmity of Yuan Shih-K'ai, then the Chinese resident in Seoul. Yuan forced Foulk's dismissal in 1887. The naval officer left Korea and became an expatriate because he believed the State Department's lack of support in his dispute with Yuan was "criminal". He married a Japanese woman, worked for an American trading firm, and finally became a teacher at a mission college in Kyoto. He died in Japan in 1893 at age 37².

2. For Foulk, see Bishop Donald "Policy and Personality in Early Korean American Relations: The Case of George Clayton Foulk", in *The United States and Korea*, Andrew C. Nahm, ed. (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, forthcoming).

U.S.S. Trenton 2nd rate at sea,
making passage in the Indian
Ocean, Bay of Bengal, Colombo,
Ceylon to Singapore, April 13, 1884.

My dear Parents and Brothers,

This letter will be the first you will have received from me which went eastward from the ship to America. We will have passed the half-way round-the-world-meridian from New York at Singapore, and the shortest way for letters to go is now by way of Yokohama and San Francisco. My last letter, quite a voluminous one, I mailed from Bombay on or about March 26th.

Our stay at Bombay was too long for the Koreans; in fact for everybody, but the captain who is far more of an Englishman at heart than an American, [and] consequently enjoyed himself in the society of the many English [speaking] military people in Bombay. In that the ship only came here because the Korean minister is on board, and through a dubiously doubtful expression of a desire to see Bombay which the captain worried out of him, I think the captain showed a great deal of inconsiderateness—selfishness—in staying so much longer than the Koreans expected he would.

We left Bombay on April 3rd and had a quiet, rapid and awfully hot passage to Ceylon of Three and one half [3½] days. Here it is now midsummer and the sun stands right overhead at noon. The heat is tremendous; all day long we sit and perspire, and at night it is so close as to almost entirely prevent sleep. On Monday we entered Colombo harbour.

While the tremendous heat was so uncomfortable our stay at Colombo was a pleasant one; indeed without the heat, Ceylon would not be the lovely paradise it is. As you skirt along the coast it appears as a rich garden with endless rows of palms and tropical jungles of tangled vines and queerly distorted trees. About Colombo, the thousands of red-tiled low bungalows stowed away in the dark shade of the palms add much to the view. In Colombo are some very fine European buildings—hotels, government buildings etc.³ The English have held the island for sixty-nine [69] years and in that long time have improved it greatly; the roads are good, there is a beautiful little railroad,⁴ and foreign

3. Description of Colombo.

The growth of Colombo was due largely to British policy. Construction of modern port facilities gave it a commanding pre-eminence over all rivals. Nonetheless, in 1885 the population of Colombo was only one-tenth of what it is now, about 50,000. See: Panditaratna, B. L., *The population of Colombo City: Its Population, Growth and Increase, 1824-1953*, *Ceylon Geographer*, XIV (1960), 1-16.

4. The development of an intensive and sophisticated transportation system under British rule resulted directly from the expansion of the plantation system into the mountainous interior. The Colombo-Kandy road, first opened to rough cart traffic in 1823, was originally undertaken for strategic reasons. Its value to coffee and coconut cultivators was soon made evident, and a network of cart roads was extended to much of the island. Many of these were originally barely passable; but by 1885 hard surfaces had replaced gravel in many areas.

homes are scattered all over the island. The great business of the foreigners is coffee raising.⁵ The Sinhalese, or inhabitants have been improved somewhat, but this seems to be due to contact simply with Europeans, for their condition does not indicate that foreigners have taken one-tenth [1/10] of the pains to improve them that they have to improve the country for their own selfish gain.⁶

5. Foulk's statement, true for the previous generation, was about to be voided by the continued spread of a virulent and eventually calamitous coffee blight (*Hemeleia vastatrix*.) This coffee leaf fungus first appeared in Ceylon about 1869, or a quarter century after coffee had established its ascendancy as Ceylon's export commodity. Although the fungus spread rapidly, high prices for coffee encouraged planters to plant new acreage to replace the old. By 1878 some 273,000 acres were devoted to coffee, compared to 196,000 at the outset of the blight. After 1881, however, decline in production, noted as early as the middle 70s, became precipitous. It caused hardship in all quarters. Many planters were bankrupted and departed the island; labourers who had been drawn to hitherto sparsely populated interior regions lost employment. It contributed to the collapse of the Imperial Bank Corporation in May 1884, just before Foulk arrived. Those who survived the threat of bankruptcy turned to tea and other crops. In 1885 they could not know that tea would supply coffees' deficiency and more besides. Foulk's observations, written in the midst of Ceylon's greatest economic crisis of the century, suggests that perhaps in this instance he repaired to his books rather than to conversation with the planters to report that coffee raising was "the great business" of the island. (See de Silva, K. M., ed. *History of Ceylon* (3 vols.; Peradeniya: University of Ceylon, 1973), Vol. III: *From the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to 1948*, pp. 93, 96, 101-102.)

6. While not without a large element of truth, Foulk's statement needs elaboration. As a general rule British authorities intervened reluctantly in such matters as caste and peasant life. Unlike the Portuguese and the Dutch before them, the British were thought to be intent on remaining a race apart, with a discernible "hauteur" and a strong attachment to British customs. Sometimes the interventions were spectacular, nonetheless. *Rajakariya*, or caste-related obligations to perform unpaid public service, was abolished in 1833. More severely criticised was the imposition of grain taxes on peasant rice cultivators. By 1880 these taxes had generated widespread resistance and may have intruded into Foulk's conversations in a form calculated to reinforce his anti-British sentiments. This problem is discussed in illuminating detail in two articles by Michael Roberts, "Grain Taxes in British Ceylon, 1832-1878: Problems in the Field", *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXVIII, 809-34; and "Grain Taxes in British Ceylon, 1832-1878: Theories, Prejudices and Controversies", *Modern Ceylon Studies*, I, 115-46. A case study immediately relevant to this period is D. Wesumperuma's "The Evictions under the Paddy Tax and their Impact on the Peasantry of Walapane, 1882-1885". *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, X (1970), 131-48.

In the 1880's sales and evictions from non-payment of taxes increased. Harsh enforcement led to social distress and even starvation. Opposition to the tax increased, and spread to certain British observers as well. The tax was finally abolished in January 1893. See de Silva, *Ceylon*, pp. 138-39, for a concise summary of this.

Foulk was probably also impressed by the small percentage of Ceylonese able to participate in the plantation economy. During the decade preceding his visit this percentage had increased slightly in terms of coffee, but the ratio was still only twelve to one. The Ceylonese did considerably better in another sector of the plantation economy; coconuts. These plantations, which dominated the coast north of Colombo and were increasingly evident in other lowland areas, underwent a great expansion in the 1870's and 1880's. Low country Ceylonese and Tamils predominated, and the decline of coffee probably resulted in increased land sales to these interests. The coconut plantation sector emerged as a prime factor in the emergence of an indigenous elite who after 1900 would move to challenge the British for economic supremacy and to provide a generation of leaders prepared to agitate for independence. It is not likely that Foulk came into contact with many of these elements. (de Silva, *Ceylon*, pp. 97-103, 260).

On a more positive note the British could take some credit for restoration and construction of irrigation works in the dry zone in the north. This work began in earnest in 1855 and was being pursued on a large scale when Foulk visited Ceylon. (de Silva, *Ceylon* p. 156).

The foreigners make money rapidly and are wealthy, living in beautiful homes, with every luxury and comfort, while the natives are poor, meek and wretchedly paid by their European masters.⁷ Not only here, but everywhere else I have seen Englishmen in control of foreign countries, it has seemed to me their policy to make a kind of a great slave race out of the native peoples. I was greatly struck with the difference between the Ceylon people and those of India proper. They are perhaps generally darker than Indians, but in expression very much superior; I saw everywhere honest, earnest, thoughtful faces in both men and women, and the men are more generally bearded than those of India. Sinhalese is the general name for Ceylonese, but they are more minutely separated into Sinhalese, Tamils, Weddahs, Hindus and Berbers (?), all very distinct people.⁸ The Sinhalese are Buddhists as a rule, the Tamils and Weddahs pagans of a very low order and the Berbers are Christians and Buddhists. There are also Christians among all the different classes.⁹ The Weddahs are very noted people; are now about as low in intellect as any people in the world; cannot count up to a hundred and only know enough to build the meanest sort of houses and make the rudest necessary utensils and arms. Yet their language shows that they once spoke Sanscrit, which could only have been used by a people when their civilisation was comparatively high. They

7. Against the background of a country such as the United States where labour often commanded relatively high wages (even in the early stages of the mass-production era) Foulk's observations here no doubt reflected a sincere conviction that plantation workers were "wretchedly paid". Ironically, the large labour force required on the estates were easily obtained, for Ceylonese wages (7 to 9 pence per day in the 1870's) were two and occasionally three times higher than those prevailing in the Madras, Tinnevely and Tanjore areas of India. Many labourers also enjoyed the use of small plots of land. There is evidence that wages, albeit depressed, were high enough to permit savings. [See Dharma Kumar, *Land and Caste in South India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 140-42.] Because the coffee harvest was seasonal (unlike tea) many labourers migrated between Ceylon and India each year. Immigrants outnumbered emigrants; Tamils resident on the estates rose from 123,000 in 1871 to 195,000 in 1881 and 235,000 in 1891. (de Silva, *Ceylon*, pp. 99-100).

8. Weddahs, or Veddahs, numbered no more than 5,000 in the 1880s, or less than two percent of the population, and were being rapidly assimilated into the larger Tamil and Sinhalese communities. Census figures failed to distinguish between Ceylon and Indian Tamils until 1901, but Foulk was probably aware that a large Tamil community had resided in Ceylon for centuries, and he probably intended the term Hindus to cover this category. Foulk meant Burghers rather than Berbers. Burghers of Dutch descent had suffered a sharp decline in economic status under early British rule, but they had recovered much lost ground so that Foulk may have heard complaints that they practically monopolised certain aspects of government. Most of the country's western trained medical professionals and lawyers were drawn from the Burgher class during this period.

Foulk does not allude in any detail to caste differentiations among the Sinhalese and Tamils. At the time of his visit the Karava, Durawa and Salagama castes enjoyed considerable power.

9. Foulk's description of Ceylon's religious groups betrays, probably subconsciously, a conviction that Buddhism was akin to Christianity, and indeed, in his mind, shared certain common principles. Because Buddhism predominated in Korea Foulk was (as other parts of this letter demonstrate) familiar with the tenets. He probably knew almost nothing of Hinduism.

are cited as an example of a race going backward in civilisation in argument against the hypothesis that men also always use—that all men have come up from a savage, barbarous condition.¹⁰

Ceylon is the great head centre of orthodox Buddhism. Buddha visited it several times, and relics of him are still very numerous. Notable at *Kandy*, the last capital of Ceylon under native rule, is preserved one of his teeth, in a large temple, where it is guarded closely by a number of priests. The relic is encased in a number of gold vessels richly studded with gems of great value which augment the necessity of great care of the relic. It is only exposed to view on the rarest occasions and then to distinguished persons under very great precautions; probably the foreigners who have seen it do not exceed a few dozens.

The national religion of Korea is Buddhism, although it is pretty well worn out.¹¹ It was but natural therefore that the three Koreans with me should

10. Foulk probably wrote of the Veddahs in the context of Charles Darwin's controversial work on evolution. Darwin arrived at his conclusions as early as 1837, but *Origin of the Species* was not published until 1859. By 1872 this work had run through six editions, and he had published many other works besides. Foulk was surprised and disturbed to note that these doctrines had reached Ceylon. To him the fate of the Veddahs seemed to contradict Darwin's observations. Foulk was troubled by what he knew of Darwin's theories. Earlier in the voyage, after viewing the Egyptian pyramids, he wrote that the ancient structure surely indicated man's divine origin. "It seems to me", he wrote from Port Said, "that the Almighty encourages, originates theories like Darwin's and the others antagonistic to the Bible for the purpose of forcing out the stupendous truths of the Bible, by making its friends unearth and search out their proofs which live all over the world". Foulk to family, 29 February 1884, Foulk papers, Washington D.C., Library of Congress.

11. Buddhism entered Korea from China about the year 372. The Koreans in turn passed the faith to Japan in the sixth century. First accepted in the court of the Koguryo kingdom, it gradually spread among the Korean people. The great Korean Buddhist thinker, Wonhyo (617-686), developed a type of "ecumenical" Buddhism which included all branches and sects; he sought to harmonise spiritual teachings and everyday life. The dominant school of Buddhism in Korea after the eighth century was the Chinese Ch'an (Zen), combined with Korean versions of Nuayen, T'ien-T'ai, and Pure Land. Over the centuries Korean Buddhism was also influenced by traditional Korean shamanism, Taoist geomancy, and the Yin-Yang theory of opposites.

During the Koryo dynasty (935-1392) Buddhism was sponsored by the state, and the monasteries had attained considerable secular wealth and power. Under the Koryo, Korean Buddhist scholars compiled the celebrated *Tripitaka Koreana*, an exhaustive compilation of Buddhist *sutras*. Carved on more than eighty thousand wooden printing blocks, the *Tripitaka* are still preserved at Naein temple near Pusan.

The Yi dynasty, which came to power in 1392 established Confucianism as the state ethic and suppressed Buddhism. The early Yi monarchs limited the number of temples, confiscated property, and imposed a special tax on priests. Though occasional kings sponsored ephemeral revivals of the faith and the preservation of its heritage, Buddhism positively declined after the sixteenth century, and it had little influence on the state. Buddhist thought, however, left its imprint on the values of the Korean people.

At the time of the envoys' visit to Ceylon, Buddhism in Korea could be properly described as "moribund". A royal decree prohibited any monk from entering a city. A few groups of military monks manned strategic fortress-temples, but sons of the aristocracy were barred from careers as priests. Early Western visitors to Korea uniformly remarked the idleness of the monks and their ignorance of Buddhist scriptures.

The envoys' familiarity with Buddhist teachings and temple ceremony had probably been gained by visits to mountain temples. Members of the class of literati often retreated to the temples to prepare for civil service examinations, to debate intellectual matters or to sequester themselves during periods of official disfavour. See: *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1974 ed, s.v. "Buddhism, History of", "Wonhyo", "Korea, History of", and "Korea, Religions of"; *UNESCO Korean Survey* (Seoul: Korea National Commission for UNESCO, 1960), 37-42; *Korea Its Land, People & Culture of All Ages* (Seoul: Nakwonsa Ltd., 1960), 329-337; Gilmore, George W., *Korea from its Capital* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1892), 188-190; Lowell, Percival Choson: *The land of the Morning Calm* (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1886), 361-375; Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbors* (New York: Fleming N. Revell Company, 1898), 139-149.

wish to see as much of Buddhism in Ceylon as possible and among other things, the tooth relic. I interviewed our Consul¹² on the subject and he said that in order to see it, the Koreans would have to meet a High Priest of Colombo and obtain from him a letter to be taken to Kandy. He furnished a letter of introduction to the High Priest, and with them I called to see him at the "Widyodaya Parivena" or "Oriental College" of Buddhism at Maradan, on the outskirts of Colombo.

This visit was both interesting and very trying to me. I will write the whole narrative of it; and you will readily see in what way it was trying or interesting. To get to the College, we drove out of Colombo to Maradan, a village about three miles off. Knowing it to be a Buddhist institution I expected to see a temple of the usual native architecture. Instead of this however, the college consisted of several very neat nearly European buildings in a small park. One of the buildings, the Library, was entirely European and was an imposing handsome edifice. To the left of the Library, on the verandah of a low-roofed bungalow, the High Priest, H. Samangala by name, lay reclining on a lounge. I presented the letter of introduction, and he at once arose and showed us about the place. There could hardly have been a greater contrast between the priest and the general air of the college place and buildings; the latter were, as I have said above, European, modern, imposing: the priest was wrinkled, very dark, and dressed only in the yellow robe of his order; his head had been shaven, but now on it and his face in parts, were a growth of short very white hair,—his feet were bare, and his robe thrown off the shoulder so as to leave it completely bare. This is the usual garb of the priests; in the streets the yellow robe is thrown up to cover the sholder, but about the temples and unless on duty elsewhere, it is bare.¹⁴

We at once went to the library, and soon about twenty [20] priests, all dressed like Samangala, with clean shaven heads and bare feet, collected there,

12. In 1810 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions authorised missionary work in Ceylon. The Anglo-American war of 1812-1814 postponed the despatch of representatives, but at length they arrived in 1816. Other American missionary groups followed, and an American consul was assigned to Jaffna, where most missionaries concentrated their efforts. The consulate was incorporated into the newly established embassy in Colombo in 1950. See: Fernando, C. N. V., "Christian Missions—X: "Some Aspects of the Work of American Missionaries, *U.C.R.*, IX (1951), 191-201.
13. The college at Maradana was a center of revived and reformed Buddhism. By 1885 the fortunes of Buddhism had come almost full circle. In 1815 the British government eased the dislocation inherent in the abolition of the Kandyan kingdom by solemnly pledging to support and protect Buddhism. Pressure exerted by evangelical groups in England led to termination of the East India Company's support of Hinduism in India by 1840, and the Ceylonese government soon followed suit by suspending aid to Buddhism. This policy led to an alienation of the Kandyan aristocracy, and the government gradually demonstrated renewed interest in legal commitments to Buddhism. The state thereupon separated itself from all denominations. The Church of England was disestablished in 1881, and resurgent Buddhism began to agitate for subsidies.
14. Foulk does not allude to other elements significant in variations in the garb of the bhikkus. He was probably unaware of caste and theological considerations involved.

together with a number of laymen, Buddhists, some of whom spoke English fluently and were thoroughly educated men. We were shown all parts of the library; the Buddhist scripture books written in Pali, Sanscrit, Burmese, Cambodian, Sinhalese and Chinese, on narrow leaves of palm with iron pointed pens. There were neat book cases filled with grammars and higher books on the science of various kinds in European languages. We were shown also what was said to be the oldest image of Buddha in the world; it was about a foot high—apparently of gold, a sitting figure of Buddha. The most interesting relic was a swede piece of the patra or alms-bowl of Buddha. It was only a tiny piece of grayish earth pottery, not a half inch long or more than one eighth [1/8] inches wide, mounted on a little silver stem kept under a gilded dagoba or bell shaped cover. With this piece of the patra were seven gold flowers of small size. The flowers and the patra piece were discovered with a number of Buddhist relics (in all, 700 flowers, 8 figures of Buddha, and 13 pieces of the Patra—and some incense)—at Sopara and another place in India about a year and a half ago. It seems that after the death of Buddha, about 2,400 years ago, the bowl was divided up into many pieces which were distributed as precious relics; of these one of the Kings received 13 pieces, which with other relics, he preserved in a stone box, the stone of a kind not found in India. It was this box which was dug up at Sopara, by certain English officers. The Buddhists here at Colombo asked for some of the relics, and these we saw at Colombo are those sent in compliance to the request. With the stone box were found mss. giving its history. I forgot to say, we also saw some of the incense, which was kept in a silver urn with the piece of Patra and the flowers. This piece of Patra is to me the most authentic relic of Buddha in the world; there is no positive proof that it is not genuine, nor is there anything unreasonable in what is claimed for it.

After having been shown the library, the party sat down and then followed a long conversation on Buddhism between the Priest and the Koreans in which I was the chief medium of the talk. These Ceylonese know nothing of Korea and they were evidently delighted to learn that in Korea there flourished the religion of Buddha.¹⁵ Questions as to the dress of priests, of the manner of salutation between laymen and priests, of the arguments among the priests, of the size of temples etc. were asked, and replied to by the Koreans. Then the interpreter, who was a very intelligent and well educated man named Andrew Pereira, spoke long and earnestly for the High Priest to the Koreans on the importance of missionary work among Buddhists, and the encouraging signs of the advance of Buddhism now apparent. He said that Buddhism had suffered

15. American naval officers as a class were similarly divided in their opinions. Themselves members of an American "naval aristocracy", they were generally Anglophilic. The Americans professionally admired the strength and modern character of the British fleet, and officers of the two navies developed close ties in foreign ports. Some officers, like Foulk and Admiral Shufeldt, however, disdained British imperial aggrandizement. Karsten, Peter, *The Naval Aristocracy* (New York: The Free Press, 1972), pp. 101-116.

very much under the English government of Ceylon in former times, but that in later years the officials had given considerable help to Buddhism in furnishing relics, according privileges, etc. About eight [8] years ago, an American, Colonel Olcott¹⁶ came to Ceylon and had taken the most active measures to help Buddhism. His chief work was the editing of a Buddhist catechism, of which about 14,000 copies had been printed in English, Sinhalese, German and Japanese. Col. Olcott had exceeded all other men in good work for Buddhism. Buddhism is now spreading in Europe—particularly in France and England and Germany, and the High Priest often receives letters from these countries approving of the religion. Buddhism accords with the results of the latest European science, and the intimation is that it must become the religion of the world. All evidences go to show that the Christian religion is the false one, that Buddhism is alone true. The greatest proof of the truth of Buddhism in science is the doctrine of evolution. There is a great deal of impurity in Buddhism, there is no doubt, and it has been and is the work of the leading Buddhists of Ceylon, i.e. of the College, to remove these impurities. They do not countenance idol worship nor the worship of images at all. They continue to make images but only of Sakya Muni-Buddha himself, and these images are only looked upon reverently,—just as the monuments of other great men are regarded, or the images of the Christian saviour in Christian churches. At the college there were about seventy [70] scholar priests, and these were instructed in Pali, Sanscrit and Sinhalese and the modified purified doctrines of Sakya Muni. From the college these new type priests were being sent out into the country, and on Sundays they conducted uniform services like those of the Christians. Already the people of Ceylon were being bettered by the change; schools were being opened, hospitals established, and a general enlightenment going on. Fewer people were being converted to Christianity, and in general Buddhism would seem to be swelling greatly—even all over the world.

This was the talk of the High Priest to the Koreans—and he added that the best help the Buddhists of Korea might give to the great cause would be to send students to the college. He invited them to apply for any help or knowledge in regard to Buddhism in his power to give.

16. The Theosophical Society was founded by the Russian-born religious mystic Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and the American Henry Steel Olcott in 1875. Olcott, an American lawyer and newspaperman, fell under her sway and in 1878 they transferred their base of operations to Adyar, near Madras. Mme Blavatsky's emphasis on a spiritual principle transcending denominational consideration found many parallel manifestations in Buddhism, especially of the reformed variety. In 1880 Olcott and Blavatsky visited Ceylon and there dramatically embraced Buddhism. The revival of Buddhism was already well under way in Ceylon, but the visit of this famous twosome made a deep impression in Ceylon and abroad. Blavatsky's writings were translated into Sinhalese and provided grist for a series of debates between Christian missionaries and certain Bhikkus; indeed one of these debates was described in the American press. Olcott busied himself in supporting the reform movement in Ceylon and stressed the importance of education.

I had read and talked so much Buddhism that my knowledge of it was very fair, and I could, and can, probably translate in that subject as well as any European in the world. But having to translate such matter as the above embarrassed me greatly—indeed I was miserable all the time I was talking. That I, a Christian, of Christian parents, should be useful to the cause of Buddhism, as an enemy of Christianity, seemed a horrible thought. Yet there is reason for believing I do right in translating such matter, even though superficially the thought I was doing wrong came up.¹⁷

(Foulk proceeds with an exegesis of Christian and Buddhist theology based on the thesis that reformed Buddhism was gravitating towards Christianity and asks himself whether his assistance as translator can be excused on those grounds. He planned to consult a Presbyterian clergyman when he returned to Washington.)

Still another question comes into the matter. As interpreter and escort by direction of my government in the faithful performance of duty to the Koreans, could I have refused to translate religious subjects of this character for them? If I had refused, could not they have said, "he does not translate because he doubts the strength of his own religion; surely his religion is not true because he is afraid to allow us to know how Buddhism is spreading". Would not silence on my part have meant that Buddhism was getting ahead of Christianity.

The Priests at the College seemed to think a great deal of me and one stated he would like to talk to me about religion some time. Before talking so favourably of Buddhism they very considerably stated that they hoped I understood that they were not talking to me—that they meant all they said for the Koreans who were Buddhists like themselves. They were all kind, charitable men, with good, honest faces, and open manners.

I do not know how you may look on it, but it seems to me that I was placed here in a very unusual position. I doubt whether it was ever occurred to any other Christian before. Indeed my life seems full of unusual occurrences,

17. Foulk was perhaps less enlightened in this respect than many of the British whom he so roundly criticised. Sir William Gregory, Governor of Ceylon from 1812 to 1877, took an active interest in Buddhism and initiated the practice of a grant to the Vidyodaya Pirivena to encourage Buddhist studies, a gesture which the Colonial Office did not discourage. See, B. Bastiampillai, "The Colonial Office and Sir William Gregory, Governor of Ceylon, 1872-77: A Study of British Imperial Administration", *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, IX (1966), 20-43.

and I wonder what they will grow into. The Koreans are very anxious to have me translate a Buddhist catechism for them but I am going to think and think a long while before I attempt any such thing.

On the following day with the Koreans I started for Kandy in the interior. This city is in the mountains—seventy two [72] miles due east of Colombo, and is reached by a very complete and beautiful little railroad.¹⁸ I do not know when I have enjoyed a railroad ride so much before. For the first half of the way the country was made up of low hills, and the railroad generally level. On all sides all the way were palm groves, dense jungles of tangled bushes and creepers, flowers of all sizes and colours; every now and then a break came into this wild greenness, a long terrace of rice paddies, each rising above the other—and narrowing to a point far off. The half-way station is called Pal-ahawela written in two kinds of Sinhalese characters....¹⁹

From here on the railroad rapidly ascended and the scenery was mountainous all the way to Kandy. For a while the road seems to seek the ridges, from which you look down on lovely valleys, in which white clean roads winding over bridges and through shady palm groves form a border to the narrow paddy terraced rice fields in which here and there the water stands still and mirror-like. Then the road is but a shelf in the rocky hill side, the rocks hanging over it in great rugged proclivities in places, and on the valley side you look down straight into the palm tops. Where cross ridges meet the road, there are clean cut tunnels, some quite long. As far as you can see are mountains rising above mountains, the far ones veiled in the mist which rises from the interlying valleys. The stations are few; near them you see a small group of the low native bungalows, with long overhanging eaves stretching off into the dark of the dense trees and vines. The station house is generally a little white bungalow buried in a dense mass of flowering vines and trees. While the train stopped, the natives came to the car windows selling young cocoanuts (Kurumpai), great ripe pineapples, mangoes and bananas. The Kurumpai are very young cocoanuts—their meat still soft and milky, and the shell not yet hard; over this is a yellow smooth husk, looking like the ripe skin of a great bartlett pear.²⁰ They are used only for the water with which they are filled; you buy them—the seller chops the top off, and you have a golden yellow cup full of clear cold water slightly flavoured with cocoanut. The pineapples are wholly unlike any I ever saw at home, large, long, red, and yellow in colour, and the meat which you cut crisply off in chunks almost dissolves in the mouth, and has a rich delightful flavour, of which you only get a hint in the pineapples you get at home.

18. The railroad northeast (not due east) to Kandy was completed in 1867, the first part of a more elaborate system which stretched into new highland areas after the conversion to tea exerted renewed pressure to improve the island's transportation system.

19. The transcriptions of the characters in the typed version of Foulk's letters show clearly that the top line was Tamil and the second line Sinhalese.

20. A large, yellow, juicy variety of pear commonly found in the Northeastern regions of the United States

With eating pineapples, drinking Kurumpai water and looking out on the ever changing panorama of tropical scenery, the time—four [4] hours—passed rapidly and happily! We arrived at Kandy at 6.15, just as the sun went down below the hill tops. We drove to the best hotel, the "Aneon's" a cheaply built, rickety sort of a place, but cool and comfortable enough and beautifully situated on the edge of Kandy lake, and facing the Maliganda or temple where the tooth relic is preserved.

Kandy was the capital of the last Kandian king—for Kandy is also the name of a district. It is not a large city—rather a scattered group of houses built in the shade of the hills about the lake, which is artificial. There is but one street—a short one, lined with low, white houses. The elevation is about 1,540 feet,²¹ and the air is consequently fresh and cool. It is but a lovely retreat—with no great number of sight-seeing places—having the name given it by the Maliganda of a sacred city. We took our dinner in a white, cool hall open to the street and then strolled out into the moonlight, wandering slowly along the smooth walks under the trees about the quiet lake. All was quiet, the natives having gone home and to bed, and the whole place presented the air of a little mountain village. We all enjoyed the stroll greatly, and then rather tired, we went to bed, with the prospect of a good sound sleep—a very happy one for during the past month the great heat has made healthful rest at night an impossibility.

After getting to my room and looking out into the moonlight the temptation to go out alone was too strong for me. In such a lovely place I could not get to sleep early—so dressing, I went out. Going away from the lake, I went along the one quiet street until I came to a little temple on the hillside; here a festival was going on and I wandered into the grounds and among the hundreds of dark, queer people, listening to the dull voices of the priests who seemed to be teaching the women, for dozens of them sat about on the floor of the temple or on the ground outside—all listening attentively. The priests were concealed in gaudy canopy boxes placed before the shrine and images of Buddha. In front of the temple a curious little labyrinth was made of mats set on edge. The people paid a small sum to enter it and after a long walk finally reached the center where a yellow robed priest presided at the shrine of an image of Buddha. The whole place was brilliantly illuminated with lamps of cocoanut shells.

From this temple I continued walking out into the country, leaving the village far behind. The road was always smooth and clean, and winding about over hill tops, down into shady (in the moonlight) valleys and under handsome arches. Having gone about two miles, I saw what I supposed was a dog asleep

21. Kandy has always impressed foreigners. (To Governor Gregory, "Kandy was the loveliest city in the loveliest island in the world"). His hotel stood on or close to the site of the present Queen's Hotel.

in the middle of the road. Approaching I found it to be an emaciated miserable man with long black hair hanging in matted masses over his face. His only clothing was a shirt about the waist. I had just been noticing some beautiful bungalows of Europeans cosily built in the trees by the road side and was still thinking of the wealth and comforts their inhabitants must have. Then to meet suddenly this wretchedly poor miserable native, asleep at midnight, almost naked in the road, was touching. I looked at him a while, and then put a silver rupee (which is five or six days' pay to the average native) in his hand which stuck out from under his cheek. I touched him and he woke up, looked at me, then at the money, and then threw it from him as if it had been something horrible. I thought perhaps he was not in his senses—not fully awake—and so again offered him the money. He then was fully awake, but as soon as I approached him he motioned me off and half indignantly showed that he detested the money—did not want it. I hardly knew what to make of this as I never before had heard of so wretched a being refusing money. I walked a little farther and then returned home, having walked in all about six miles. I made inquiries about this man on the following day and was told he was a Tamil pagan who had taken some sort of a vow and was sitting there on the road all the time, refusing money and or food, saying his god would help him, not man. Such an exhibition it strikes me, is not creditable to the humane, Christian government of the queen of England which has been that of Ceylon for more than sixty [60] years. The more I see of England's foreign dependencies, the baser, the more cruel, heartless Englishmen become to me; they are surely prostituting heartlessly all the weaker countries in which they can get a footing to their selfish love of money and power. Of course English missionaries are excepted, as are also a very few other Englishmen who do try to raise up ignorant and unhappy natives for the sake of justice and religion.²²

On the next day we got up early and in the cool of the morning drove out to the Peradeniya Botanical gardens, about three [3] miles off. These were planted by the English in 1821 and now make up a great forest of tropical trees and plants from all parts of the world. Here there are two hundred [200] rainy days in the year and this wetness with this tropical heat makes all vegetable life grow with a vigor unknown in most [other] inhabited countries. The little gum tree plant of European gardens is here a gigantic tree, with enormous flat roots running about like serpents over the surface of the ground. The vines run from tree to tree and may reach a mile in length. Flowering plants assume the queerest shapes, and flowers' odors are so fragrant and rich as to be almost stifling and become obnoxious. Bamboo grows here, larger than

22. American attitudes about Great Britain in 1885 were ambivalent: a common cultural and linguistic attitude was reflected in attempts by a wealthy, seaboard class to emulate English practices and to uphold English tastes and values. Elsewhere, Americans tended to stress differences from Europe, and stressed egalitarianism, self-reliance, and unnerving candour. Foulk probably harboured anti-English values well before he visited any parts of the empire; his exposure obviously did nothing to weaken them.

anywhere else in the world, they reach a length of 100 feet and grow a foot in a day when young. I gathered here in quick succession from the trees, nutmegs, cloves, cinnamon bark, allspice, coffee, cinchona (quinine bark), gum (caou-chouc) bark, camphor, and tea leaves. Nearly every kind of tree known in the tropics is here represented. Owing to the rank growth of everything, these gardens are not like the orderly well arranged ones at home, they are a howling tropical wilderness of tangled trees, vines, bushes and plants of all varieties. It is said these gardens are the finest in the world. The nutmeg was particularly interesting to me. On the tree it looks like a big yellow plum. When ripe this splits nearly in half showing the bright crimson mace covered nut—it is very pretty indeed.

After a long cool rest and tiffin²³ at the hotel, we drove out through the native village called Katugastoka, to the wild country jungle "to see the elephant" in his native state. Here we saw two elephants owned by one of the jungle natives. One, an immense fellow, was domesticated, used for working or carrying miniature shrines in Buddhist processions. He was very obedient; would go, come, eat or not eat, seize and carry an enormous weight, just as he was told; now and then the native persuaded him by hooking his staff to the elephant's ear and pulling on it. The other elephant, not so large a one, had just been caught and was rather savage. To train him he was kept tied fast to the big tame elephant who pulled him about, making him behave himself, most unmercifully. To catch a wild elephant, say a male, a tame female is let loose near him; the male then follows the female and while he is "spooning" on her, forgetful of everything else, the men fearlessly come up and tie him fast to a tree by the legs: So you see that boy-elephants as well as boy men are made fools of by the girls.

At noon on this day (Apr. 10) a note came from the English agent (Chief Officer) at Kandy, saying the governor of Ceylon²⁴ had expressed a wish that the sacred tooth relic be shown to Prince Min Yong Ik. I forgot to say that at our call on Samangala, he had said a note from him would be of no assistance in seeing the tooth—that permission had to be obtained from the English Governor, to obtain which would require more time than we would spend at Colombo. So we had to give up all hope of seeing the relic—and went to Kandy without a show of seeing it. Consequently this note made us all very happy. The relic is locked up in a cage to which there are three keys—kept, by the English agent at Kandy and two priests of the Maliganda, all three of which must be present to open it. Only on the rarest occasions is the relic exposed to view—and then with extreme care—to particular persons. Some Burmese Princes only saw it after about a month of work sometime ago, and up to the

23. Tiffin, or lunch. Foulk had picked up some English vocabulary not commonly used in the United States.

24. Arthur Gordon.

time of our visit, the Acting English Agent at Kandy had never seen it, so you may imagine that we considered ourselves very fortunate in having this chance of seeing so wonderful and distinguished a relic.

At 4.30 p.m. the Sinhalese interpreter of the Agent called for us and escorted us to see the shrines and *dagobas* in the temple grounds. The *dagobas* are bell-shaped structures, about twenty-five feet [25] high containing relics and contributions of jewels and money to the temple; they are heavy massive buildings of stone built out in the open air, and permanently sealed up. The shrines were about a Bodhi tree—the species under which Buddha sat and meditated to become Buddha. We next inspected the old palace of the Kandian King—now ordinary enough as the residence of the agent, then a garden near it—from which we entered the Maliganda by a private stair case—formerly used as a secret entrance. This led to the temple library, where a priest read Buddhist scripture in Pali and Sinhalese to show the manner of chanting it. Precisely at 5.30, the Acting Agent appeared—bringing with him some friends, who were taking advantage of the occasion to see the relic. The exhibition of the relic is a matter of considerable moment. Many of the natives are superstitious enough to believe a sight of it equivalent to a cure or salvation; others may want to steal it—but more care is necessitated on account of the enormous amount of jewels and precious stones about the relic. It is probably on account of the latter that the English government has a hand in exposing the tooth, or in its care. Every precaution was taken to keep quiet the exposition of the tooth to the Koreans, nevertheless the hundreds of natives about the streets near the temple divined what was coming and clustered about the door in a tight mass. As we approached the house in which the relic is kept from an unexpected side of the temple, the natives did not see us enter its door until the last of our party was about to enter. Then came a wild rush of them; at the door a struggle and howling took place—which looked as though it might terminate in serious trouble. Fortunately after the exercise of considerable muscle, the Agent got the door closed and bolted after which things went on in an orderly way.

The Maliganda is built in a long rectangle of stone columns and verandahs. At one end is an octagonal tower which is used as the library. In front of the principal side is a moat surrounded by a handsome stone wall. In the middle of the rectangle is a square building of two stories—the lower of stone, the upper of wood, both decorated handsomely with carvings. In the middle of the upper story is an iron cage reaching from ceiling to floor, made of heavy iron bars. Inside of this on a table or platform, stands a tall *dagoba*—about two and one half [2½] feet high which contains other *dagobas* of diminishing size—the last one and smallest holding the sacred tooth. The outer *dagobas*—perhaps two—may be gold-plated only; the others are of gold, and more particularly, the inner smaller ones, richly covered with jewels. This is the

general shape of a dagoba; the sketch is very rough only giving the general shape. At the time of our visit, the cage door was open, and in front of it on a slab or stand were arranged the relic receptacles—except the large outer one which stood in the cage in its usual place. In the middle of the slab was a gold lotus flower about four and one half [$4\frac{1}{2}$] inches in diameter from which stood, upright in the middle, a straight gold cord twisted stem with a loop in the upper end, in which was the wonderful tooth. The sketch below will show its shape and actual size very accurately.²⁵ There are no signs of roots about it at all; indeed nothing to suggest its being a human tooth. In colour it is yellowish with darker streaks—very like much handled ivory. The tooth is only placed in the lotus flower for exhibition. Ordinarily it is kept in a gold case nearly its own shape, richly studded with gems—mainly rubies. This stands on a circular gold base—also covered with gems, and over the case and on the base fits the first gem-studded dagoba. One over the other, then are placed the six other dagobas. Besides the tooth was exhibited a sapphire image of Buddha about two and one fourth [$2\frac{1}{4}$] inches high—well cut and of a green colour; this was said to be worth \$250,000. The lotus flower and the image are kept under a separate dagoba which is small enough to be placed under the great outer one of the tooth set. I asked the priests for the history of the tooth, but they only replied that it had been at Kandy about 800 years. They stated that it was impossible to estimate the value of the tooth accurately—that estimates of people who ought to have been able to make them fairly ranged from 2 to 3 millions of pounds—10 to 15 millions of dollars!

By the sides of the table containing the relic stood 6 priests—old ones, and the chief ones of the Maliganda. The head one wore the costume of an ancient Indian officer, brilliantly coloured materials and a wide flaring hat set full of true or false gems. Other priests were here and there about the narrow room, and kept a close anxious watch upon all the visitors. Having seen well all the relics, we returned quietly to the hotel. The Koreans were formally presented to the six chief priests in the Maliganda—and were asked a few questions of little import relative to the religion of the country.

(Foulk recounts variations on the history of the sacred relic, including the alleged role of the Portuguese. His skepticism was reinforced by that of some of the bhikkus at Maradana.)

The evening after the visit to see the tooth we spent again in strolling about the lake. On the next day (11th) we came down to Colombo in the morning train enjoying the ride more than that going up—owing to the dewey coolness of the morning. The Koreans were delighted with the trip—and I also think it the happiest one I have made during the voyage.

25. Deleted here, the sketch shows the dagoba and what appears to be the tooth, with a cord tied around it.

On the 12th we got under way from Colombo and will reach Singapore by the 20th certainly. From there I will mail this letter and one other. The trip to Kandy was one of considerable note to me—exceptional in many ways. The inspection of the maliganda has been made by few Europeans—indeed natives—in the world. On this account I have written of it in lengthy detail. You will probably find this a dry sort of letter—but it is one I would like to have preserved as it may be serviceable in the future.

It is awfully hot—the sun being right overhead. The sea is smooth and appears to be burning. In spite of the heat, I have picked up some flesh—am heavier than I have been during the past two years.

Hoping you are all well and happy, I am, with affection.

GEORGE C. FOULK.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE MEDICAL AND TECHNICAL DEPARTMENTS,

1910-1930

TISSA FERNANDO

An important contribution of British rule to Ceylon was the introduction of English education. Aided to some extent by administrative and economic changes of the nineteenth century, English education brought about radical changes in values, life style and patterns of leadership. It also, in the course of time, led to demands for better employment and it is this aspect that is the concern of this paper.

A concerted agitation by Ceylonese for equal employment opportunities with Europeans was slow to develop in the island. The very limited provision of English education was the main obstacle. Despite the early introduction of English schools the spread of western education in Sri Lanka was neither rapid nor pervasive. There were relatively few English schools even by the turn of this century and they were concentrated in a few provinces. Equally important was the uneven quality of the education they provided: only a few schools gave an education comparable to secondary education in a British grammar school. At the 1921 Census only 3.7% of the population was literate in English, and of these only a very small proportion had obtained secondary education. With the exception of professional training in law and medicine, there was no provision for post-secondary education until the founding of the University College in 1922.

Although small in numbers the English educated community had become an important element in Ceylonese society by the early decades of this century. Imbued with western ideas of democracy and constitutional progress they began to campaign for political reform as well as for superior employment for educated Ceylonese. This paper will analyse the employment prospects for Ceylonese in the period 1910-1930 in two government departments. The period reviewed saw rapid progress in constitutional development and with it progress in employment opportunities as well. In 1910 there was not a single elected Ceylonese in the Legislative Council nor a single Ceylonese representative in the Executive Council. In 1931 elected members formed a substantial majority in the State Council and a predominantly Ceylonese Board of Ministers wielded considerable executive authority. These two decades saw the beginning of a systematic challenge to the white bastions of power and employment

was a vital aspect of this challenge. This paper will examine employment policies in relation to two specific branches of government service—the medical and technical departments. These two have been selected because the former was predominantly a *Ceylonese* department while the latter had a preponderance of British officers, and was considered a British preserve.

The Medical Department

The Medical department was unique among the larger government departments in being manned almost exclusively by Ceylonese doctors. The vast expansion of the department in the first three decades of this century provided Ceylonese doctors with increased opportunities for government employment. Table 1 shows the extent to which the medical department depended on local officers.

Table 1. Doctors in the Medical Department

		<i>British</i>	<i>Ceylonese</i>
1910	..	20	67 (77%)
1920	..	9	115 (93%)
1930	..	7	349 (98%)

Source: *Ceylon Civil Lists*

The rapid Ceylonisation of this department was made possible by the high quality of medical training that was available within the island. As early as 1870 a Medical College had been established in Colombo, and in 1888 the diplomas of the College were given recognition by the General Medical Council of Britain. The professional competence of the local doctors was high, and the Governor was able to tell the Colonial Office as early as 1910 that "the Ceylon medical service holds a deservedly high reputation in the profession".¹ Facilities were afforded for local doctors to pursue their medical education after graduation. Thus, licentiates of the Medical College, after a period of service under government, were entitled to leave and passage facilities to obtain further qualifications in Britain. And a high proportion of local doctors made use of these facilities. In 1910, for example, 59 of the 67 Ceylonese doctors in the medical department had a British qualification in addition to their local diploma.² The number of local doctors with high postgraduate and professional qualifications increased in the subsequent decades; in 1930 there were 22 Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons and 11 Members of the Royal College of Physicians of Britain among Ceylonese doctors.

1. Colonial Office (C.O.) 54/733, McCallum to Crewe, No. 113, 3 March 1910.

2. *Ceylon Civil List*, 1910.

The high proportion of Ceylonese in the medical department³ and the presence of officers with superior qualifications did not mean that there was unrestricted mobility for local talent within the service. As in other departments, British officers tended to monopolise the highest positions in the medical department. In 1922, for instance, there were only 7 British doctors in the department but they held all the key posts in the service.⁴ This tendency was resented by western educated Ceylonese. A local newspaper observed that "the entrance of Ceylonese into the higher posts in these departments is about as easy as that of the camel through the needle's eye".⁵ It was only natural that restrictions to mobility would be interpreted as discrimination, especially since there were many local doctors with better professional qualifications than their British superiors. It was believed that highly qualified Ceylonese doctors were unwelcome because of the threat they presented to the British dominance of key positions in the medical service. Much publicity was given to the fact that a Ceylonese doctor, V. Gabriel, who returned to Ceylon having obtained both the M.R.C.P. and F.R.C.S. from Britain had to seek employment elsewhere because he was refused a post commensurate with his qualifications.⁶

The evidence is clear that racial considerations were at least partly responsible for the exclusion of Ceylonese from the higher posts. The official attitude emerged in a speech made in the Legislative Council by the Principal Civil Medical Officer (the head of the medical department), Dr. G. J. Rutherford. In opposing a suggestion of the Stubbs' Committee of 1919 that the deputy head of the medical department be a Ceylonese, Rutherford argued that communal differences in the island made such an appointment undesirable: "If a Ceylonese held the appointment, racial favouritism may be ascribed to him".⁷ In the same speech, however, Rutherford showed that racial considerations of a different sort were at work. For example, he urged the appointment of a British doctor to the post of Inspecting Officer of the Tea Estates, "as the estates are very largely owned and staffed by Europeans". Rutherford also wanted the post of Medical Superintendent, General Hospital, Colombo—the main hospital of the country—made a British preserve. The reason he gave was explicit enough to leave little doubt that racial considerations were prominent in his thinking. "It must be remembered", Rutherford told the Legislative Council, "that practically the whole of the nursing staff is composed of

3. Not all doctors joined the medical department. The majority were in private practice. In 1921 there were 841 doctors in Ceylon.
4. *Sessional Paper (S.P.) X of 1922, Further Employment of Ceylonese in the Public Service*, p. 12. The posts they held were, the Principal Civil Medical Officer, the Assistant P.C.M.O., the Medical Superintendents of the General Hospital, Colombo, and of the Lunatic Asylum, the Director of the Bacteriological Institute, the Bacteriologist and the Sanitary Commissioner.
5. *Ceylon Independent*, 15 November 1912, editorial.
6. *Daily News*, 15 March 1920, editorial.
7. *Ceylon Hansard*, 1920-1921, Speech by Dr. G. J. Rutherford, 18 February 1920.

Europeans and that a large number of patients in the paying section are Europeans....." Such a discriminatory policy became less and less easy to maintain in a department which had a good proportion of highly qualified local doctors. Their sheer numerical preponderance guaranteed Ceylonese high office in the course of time, and by 1930 local doctors had in fact succeeded in obtaining the four posts immediately below the head of the department.

The medical department, then, was an important avenue of mobility for western educated Ceylonese. It was, in a British dominated higher administration, the only largely Ceylonised department. It is therefore of interest to compare the conditions of service in this department with other departments in the government service. When one looks at the medical department from this perspective one is struck by the poor pay and prospects of the local doctors. In 1912 the salaries of medical officers, excluding head-quarter staff were as follows (in Ceylon rupees):⁸

Provincial Surgeons	Rs. 6,000 to 8,400 per annum
Medical Officers	
Grade I	Rs. 3,600 to 5,400
Grade II	Rs. 1,800 to 3,000
Grade III	Rs. 1,200 to 1,800

How poor these scales were becomes evident only when they are compared with the pay structure of departments manned largely by Europeans. Table 2 would show this difference.

Table 2. Salary Scales of Some Government Officials, 1920

Medical Officer, Grade I	Rs. 3,600 to 5,400 per annum
District Engineer, Public Works Department	Rs. 5,062 to 6,750
Civil Servant, Class III	Rs. 7,875 to 10,125.

Source: *Ceylon Civil List*, 1920

Nor was it only a case of lower pay. The Slater-Stevenson Commission Report showed that medical officers enjoyed relatively low status within the public service as a whole. "If the table of subsistence allowances is to be taken as any guide to the degree of respect in which government holds its officers, the official estimates of the Ceylon medical service is not flattering...."⁹ The following Table shows the subsistence allowance paid to doctors compared with the allowance paid to some other categories of government servants.

8. *S.P. XXXV of 1912, Position and Prospects of the Public Service* (Slater and Stevenson Report), p. 190.

9. *Ibid.*

Table 3. Subsistence, Allowances, 1912

Medical Officer	Rs. 4.00 per diem
Chauffeur	Rs. 5.00
Inspector of Schools	Rs. 7.50
Clerks in the Colonial Secretary's Office	Rs. 6.00
Interpreter, Supreme Court	Rs. 5.00
Superintendent of Mail	Rs. 7.50

Source: *Sessional Paper XXXV of 1912*, p. 191.

The poor prospects within this department had the effect of turning a branch of the public service which could have become a source of pride for the Ceylonese into a source of discontent and disappointment. Although readily accessible, the medical department was simply not attracting the best local talent. Ceylonese doctors preferred private practice to government service, with the result that the medical department was often understaffed. By 1912 the situation was serious enough for the government to consider remedial action.¹⁰ Governor McCallum reported to the Secretary of State the difficulty experienced in filling vacancies in the medical department and explained this in terms of the poor pay given to local doctors.¹¹ McCallum noted that the medical department of the Straits Settlements offered a starting salary of Rs. 2,250-4,125 which was appreciably higher than that offered in Ceylon (Rs. 1,200-3,000), and that several Ceylonese doctors had preferred to seek employment there. The problem of filling vacancies had become so formidable that government was compelled to import "second-rate medical men from India".¹²

On the recommendation of the Slater-Stevenson Commission the government proposed to the Colonial Office that measures be taken to improve the prospects of local doctors.¹³ But the proposals were by no means radical. The starting salary of a Grade III medical officer was increased from Rs. 1,200 to Rs. 1,500 per annum with a further increase to Rs. 1,800 after one year's probation. There was to be no salary increase for the superior grades but the number of posts in Grades I, II and III were to be re-classified to improve promotion prospects. Travelling allowances were also revised so as to remove existing anomalies whereby doctors received lower allowances than government servants performing less responsible duties.

Although a beginning in the right direction, these changes were not radical enough to satisfy the aspirations of the new generation of western educated Ceylonese.¹⁴ For, the changes of 1912 had ignored the crux of the problem which

10. In 1912 there were 14 vacancies.

11. C.O. 54/752, McCallum to Harcourt, No. 292, 28 May 1912.

12. *Ceylon Independent*, 6 March 1912, editorial.

13. C.O. 54/752, McCallum to Harcourt, No. 292, 28 May 1912.

14. See *Morning Leader*, 11 September 1915, editorial.

was the massive disparity between the salaries paid to doctors recruited in Britain and those recruited locally. The Salaries Commission¹⁵ of 1921 observed that one reason for the poor pay of government doctors was their theoretical right to private practice. In fact though, with the gradual expansion of the medical department only a few doctors were able to enjoy a successful practice. On the other hand there were many positions (for example, in the Sanitary Branch) where no private practice at all was possible. The need, therefore, was to pay doctors a salary (irrespective of private practice) which would "enable the new recruit to maintain the position in society to which he, as a professional man, [was] justly entitled".¹⁶ The Salaries Commission recommended an overall increase of salaries, and raised the starting salary to £ 200 per annum. The salaries of doctors were further increased in 1930, and the initial salary was raised to £300. The maximum salary of medical officers was also increased from £600 to £750, and of provincial surgeons from £960 to £1,000.¹⁷

These were substantial increases and helped to ease dissatisfaction within the department. These salaries were, however, still below those paid to comparable officers in European dominated departments. A provincial engineer of the Public Works Department, for example, was paid £1,200 in 1930 and a Class II Civil Servant enjoyed a maximum of £1,300, nearly twice the maximum salary of a Grade I medical officer. Thus, although it is true that the pay and prospects of the medical department improved considerably in the period of this study, the conditions of employment in the department remained clearly inferior to those departments manned traditionally by British recruits.

The Technical Departments

The main technical departments in Ceylon were the Public Works, Irrigation, Survey and Agriculture departments. These, in contrast to the medical department, were dominated by recruits from Britain. Similarly, whereas the medical profession was predominantly Ceylonese the engineering profession was predominantly British, as Table 4 would show:

Table 4. Engineers in Ceylon

		British	Ceylonese
1901	..	81 (75%)	27
1911	..	193 (74%)	66
1921	..	107 (66%)	56

Source: *Ceylon Census Reports*

15. *S.P. XIX of 1912, Report of the Salaries Commission, 1921.*

16. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

17. *S.P. I of 1930, Report of the Salaries Committee.*

The following Table shows the high proportion of posts held by British recruits in three of the main technical departments.

Table 5. Civil List Officers in Three Technical Departments

		1910	1920	1930
Public Works Department	British	44 (64%)	56 (58%)	63 (50%)
	Ceylonese	25	41	64
Irrigation Department	British	19 (76%)	13 (72%)	21 (72%)
	Ceylonese	6	5	8
Survey Department	British	34 (94%)	40 (89%)	37 (62%)
	Ceylonese	2	5	23

Source: *Ceylon Civil Lists*.

From the perspective of employment opportunities for Ceylonese the technical departments were the least attractive in government service. For, apart from the predominance of Europeans, the local recruit had little chance of reaching the highest grades in these services. There were only 5 provincial engineers out of a total of 64 Ceylonese engineers in the Public Works Department even as late as 1930. Similarly, only one Ceylonese had reached the grade of Superintendent of Surveys in the Survey Department.

Why were the higher grades of technical departments beyond the reach of local talent? The Ceylonese elite tended to attribute it to racial discrimination. It was alleged, for example, that in the Public Works Department, examinations in mathematics were set in a manner that made it practically impossible for Ceylonese to succeed. Ceylonese who had held acting appointments as District Engineers for twenty years had not been confirmed in their posts because they had failed to pass the departmental examination in mathematics. — One newspaper contended that departmental examinations for promotion to superior grades were made deliberately severe in order to restrict these posts to Europeans; these examinations were intended “not to test the engineering knowledge of the candidates, but to exclude them from the higher posts...”¹⁹ A correspondent criticised the “numerous dishonest and dishonourable devices” adopted to exclude Ceylonese from high office, and asked that departmental examination papers be scrutinised by independent experts in England.²⁰ Dissatisfaction with the partiality of departmental examinations was not confined to the Public Works Department. The Survey Department was equally suspect.²

18. *Ceylon Independent*, 15 May 1912, letter by “One interested”.

19. *Ceylon Independent*, 18 May 1912, editorial.

20. *Ceylon Independent*, 29 March 1913, letter by “F.R.I.B.A.”

21. See *Daily News*, 25 February 1920, letter by “One-who-knows;” 2 March 1920, editorial; 5 March 1920, letter by “Fair Play;” 9 April 1921, letter by “Daniel”.

It is difficult to know whether these allegations had any substance, but they are sociologically significant as reflecting serious discontent with the existing prospects for mobility in technical departments. To interpret obstacles to mobility in terms of discrimination alone, however, is to ignore other factors that kept Ceylonese in subordinate positions. The most important of these was education. Post-secondary education in the fields of law and medicine was available to Ceylonese from the late nineteenth century. As a result, the legal and medical professions came to be numerically dominated by Ceylonese and by 1930 local lawyers and doctors were holding high positions in government service. In contrast, there were no facilities in Ceylon for post-secondary technical education in the entire period of this study, and even general scientific education up to the degree level had to await the establishment of the University College in 1921.

The government's Technical College—established in 1893—was not an institution for higher education but merely 'a feeder' for subordinate positions in specific government departments such as the Public Works, Survey, Railway and the Post Office. And the technical education imparted in the College was of a very elementary kind. For example, of the 145 students on the roll in 1907, 111 were attending only drawing and art classes.²² Thus, the products of the College were educationally competent to hold only subordinate positions, and naturally, the large majority were incapable of passing departmental examinations held to determine promotions. A committee investigating technical departments in 1905, pointed out that it was not possible for Technical College students to fill the higher grades of these departments because the technical and practical knowledge shown by qualified students was of a low standard.²³ An important cause of this poor quality was the bias against manual occupations which discouraged those with a good secondary education from joining the Technical College. "With rare, though perhaps brilliant exceptions, the students of good education seem averse to the rough manual labour of the work-shops".²⁴ Consequently, students who entered the College were invariably those who lacked "a sound general education".

The Technical College has not got good material to work on. Boys should have gone through public education in mathematics and science before entering the Technical College. This is not so; the boys have had no proper grounding.....²⁵

22. S.P. XLIV of 1908, *The Royal and Technical Colleges*, memorandum by McCallum 29 December 1907.
23. S.P. XXXIV of 1907, *The Ceylon Technical College*, enclosure: Report of the Committee of 1905.
24. S.P. XLIV of 1908, p. 9.
25. *Ibid.*, quoted in memorandum by S. C. Obeyesekere and P. Arunachalam.

Thus the Technical College must not be thought of as the equivalent of the Law College or the Medical College. It was at best an institution providing elementary training for those seeking subordinate positions in government departments. Consequently, for much of the period under review, only those Ceylonese who could afford to obtain training in Britain at their own expense could hope for promotions in technical departments.

A direct result of this state of affairs was the dearth of qualified Ceylonese for higher appointments. The Stubbs Committee of 1919, for example, pointed out that in the Public Works Department, "the question is not one of making use of the local material that exists, but of obtaining more local candidates qualified for appointment".²⁶ Similarly, the Committee noted that there was not a single Ceylonese among the engineers in the Irrigation Department, but denied that this was "due to a deliberate policy of exclusion of non-Europeans". On the contrary, "the only reason for the absence of Ceylonese from this department is the lack of any qualified candidates". The official point of view was well expressed by the Colonial Secretary of the Ceylon Government, R. E. Stubbs, in a speech to the Legislative Council. Stubbs stated that he welcomed the appointment of Ceylonese to high office and opposed "importing persons for any office for which I believe a suitable man can be found locally". But there were practical difficulties to rapid Ceylonisation. "You cannot appoint a man to a post, however much you wish to do so, unless he possesses some of the more obvious qualifications which are required".²⁷

The contention of the government that there was an inadequate supply of technically qualified Ceylonese for appointment to responsible positions was a fact beyond dispute. The Ceylonese allegations of discrimination must, therefore, be qualified by the obvious fact that untrained persons cannot be appointed to specialised occupations. The government's attitude to native aspirations cannot be determined simply by counting the number of Ceylonese in high office if, in fact, the real difficulty was the dearth of qualified persons. The government's attitude is better revealed by examining the steps it took to educate and train Ceylonese for high office in these departments.

An early suggestion for the improvement of facilities for technical training of Ceylonese came from Governor McCallum in a memorandum submitted to the 1908 Committee investigating the working of Royal and Technical Colleges. Emphasising the poor quality of Technical College products, McCallum proposed establishing scholarships to the Madras Engineering College for able local students.²⁸ The 1908 Committee was not impressed with this

26. *S.P. I of 1919, Further Employment of Ceylonese in the Public Service*, p. 4.

27. *Ceylon Hansard*, 1917, 8 August 1917. Speech by R. E. Stubbs.

28. *S.P. XLIV of 1908, The Royal and Technical Colleges*, memorandum by McCallum, 29 December 1907.

suggestion and proposed, instead, one engineering scholarship to the United Kingdom to be awarded annually, in open competition. The Governor, however, had his way and in 1910 a scheme for awarding six scholarships at the Madras Engineering College was instituted.²⁹ Although hardly an adequate measure to meet the demands of expanding technical departments, this scheme is important as a first step towards training Ceylonese for responsible positions. The Stubbs Committee investigation of 1919 was the first attempt in the period of this study to make a comprehensive review of employment prospects for Ceylonese in the public services.³⁰ The report of the committee showed clearly that Ceylonese were poorly represented in the higher grades of technical departments, but it made only mild proposals for improving employment opportunities for local recruits. Their main recommendation was increasing the number of University Scholarships offered for training in Britain and reserving one of these scholarships for engineering. The committee also appealed to "the public and local or other associations" to establish similar scholarships. It is difficult to see how the committee could have concluded that a few scholarships abroad was an adequate solution to the problem of training Ceylonese. The great defect of the Stubbs Committee report was that it never considered the feasibility of establishing a local institution for secondary or post-secondary technical education. However, to see this omission in perspective it must be noted that even in Britain technical education was not made a part of secondary education until after the 1944 Act.³¹

The committee's recommendations for some departments, however, were praiseworthy and were responsible for ameliorating existing conditions. The Survey Department was a case in point. There were two ways by which appointments were made to the higher grades of this department. There were first the appointments made in Britain, usually from university graduates or those with engineering experience who had been trained at the Ordnance Survey Office at Southampton. These recruits were appointed direct to the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Surveys. Local recruits were, in contrast, appointed Surveyors and had to pass the senior departmental examination to be promoted to Assistant Superintendents. The recruitment as surveyors was made on passing a "comparatively simple examination" and consequently only a few local recruits had the necessary competence or training for promotion. The defect in the existing arrangements had been the absence of inducement for bright secondary school products to take to surveying by giving them direct access to the rank of Assistant Superintendent. The Stubbs Committee wished to remedy this defect. It proposed that instead of the existing simple examination, a special competitive examination be held to recruit Ceylonese

29. C.O. 54/734, McCallum to Crewe, No. 281, 18 May 1910.

30. *S.P. I of 1919, Further Employment of Ceylonese in the Public Service*. The committee under the Chairmanship of R. E. Stubbs, had three British officials and one Ceylonese.

31. Olive Banks, *Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education*, London, 1955, p. 9.

to the department. These recruits were to be given a year's training at the Survey Department Training School after which they were eligible to sit for the senior departmental examinations. The successful candidates were then to be appointed to the rank of Assistant Superintendent. The committee also proposed that 50% of the posts in this class be reserved for local recruits. This change had a significant impact on recruitment to higher grades in the Survey Department. Thus, whereas there were only 4 Ceylonese to 22 Europeans in the Assistant Superintendent grade in 1920, the number of Ceylonese had increased to 19 as against 22 Europeans by 1930.³² In 1928 a programme was instituted for training Ceylonese survey probationers in the U.K. Graduates of the University College were selected for training at the Ordnance Survey for six months from March to September, and at Cambridge University from Michaelmas to end of Easter term.³³

The Stubbs Committee also made important recommendations concerning the Agriculture Department. The Committee pointed out that the practice of importing experts was in the long run detrimental to the national interest, but the problem was how Ceylonese could be trained for specialised jobs such as those of entomologist and mycologist. The Committee recommended that Ceylonese who had passed the London Intermediate Examination in science be appointed as understudies to European officers in the department. After a year or two of such experience they were to be given scholarships for obtaining higher training in an Indian agricultural training centre.³⁴ The Thomson Committee,³⁵ which was appointed in 1922 to suggest practical ways to give effect to the Stubbs Committee recommendations, disagreed with the above proposal. Both the Director of Agriculture and the Marine Biologist had stated that the proposed scheme did not provide adequate training for a scientific officer. The Thomson Committee, therefore, recommended that Ceylonese agricultural probationers be sent for further training to Britain or the United States before being confirmed in their posts.

Despite this recommendation the Thomson Committee was aware of the limitations of an approach geared exclusively to training Ceylonese abroad. In fact, this was their major criticism of the Stubbs Committee report which had assumed that a foreign training was the only way to equip Ceylonese for superior employment. The Thomson Committee disagreed.

The number of Ceylonese who are both willing and able to incur the expense of sending their sons to Europe to be trained, or of founding scholarships, as the previous committee suggested, to enable the sons of others to be so trained, is limited, and we doubt whether a complete solution of the problem can be expected in that direction.

32. See *Ceylon Civil Lists* 1920 and 1930.

33. C.O. 54/888, J. P. L. Conyngham (Cambridge) to Private Secretary (Appointments), Colonial Office, 18 May 1928.

34. *S.P. I* of 1919, pp. 6-7.

35. *S.P. X* of 1922, *Further Employment of Ceylonese in the Public Service*. Chairman Graeme Thomson, and 3 British and 5 Ceylonese members.

The solution, according to the Thomson Committee, lay in providing facilities for technical training up to 'graduate' standard in the colony itself. It was acknowledged that this was not feasible in some fields—for instance, in mechanical and electrical engineering—but in a field such as civil engineering it was eminently practicable. The Committee endorsed a scheme put forward by a Ceylonese member, T. G. W. Jayewardene, which intended to make it possible to obtain the professional diploma of A.M.I.C.E. with a purely local training.³⁶ By this scheme, the people of Ceylon would be able to obtain the necessary qualifications for promotion without having to go abroad for the purpose. The Thomson Committee accordingly recommended that District Engineers of the Public Works Department and Irrigation Engineers be recruited from local Assistant Engineers of the respective departments, provided they had obtained the A.M.I.C.E. diploma. This important proposal was intended to provide facilities for Ceylonese engineers to obtain professional qualifications without which they had to remain for ever in subordinate positions. It is interesting to note that this proposal was opposed by the European Director of Irrigation (C. F. S. Baker), who argued that a local training can never be the equivalent of a training in Britain. The Thomson Committee, however, overruled this objection on the realistic grounds that "the practical alternative to training Ceylonese locally is not training them in Europe, but abandoning the whole attempt to extend the employment of Ceylonese in the Public Works and Irrigation Departments". The scheme for training civil engineers was put into operation and by 1926 the Institution of Civil Engineers of Britain was holding its examinations in Ceylon.³⁷

There was much ambiguity in governmental policy on native recruitment to the technical branches. The government did not discourage Ceylonisation of higher grades in the technical departments, but neither did it do anything substantial to make this possible. The changes outlined in this paper—in the main, *ad hoc* remedies—did not ensure a permanent supply of qualified personnel. For that, a local institution for higher technical training was indispensable, and it is surprising that despite the founding of the University College in 1921 the possibility of University-level technical education was never given serious consideration. In 1928, a select committee of the Legislative Council stressed the need for an Engineering College giving theoretical training up to the B.Sc. honours level.³⁸ But the idea was never pursued and higher technical training in Ceylon had to wait till an engineering faculty was established at the

36. *Ibid.*, p. 4. The scheme was to provide a 3 year theory course in the Technical College, of a standard sufficiently high to warrant recognition by the Institution of Civil Engineers, together with 3 years practical training under a civil engineer and a year's experience in design and construction work in a government department.

37. *Ceylon Hansard*, 1926, vol. III, 28 October 1926. J. Strachan (Director of Public Works) in reply to a question by A. F. Molamure.

38. *S.P. XI of 1928, Report of the Select Committee of the Finance Committee on the Training of Ceylonese for higher posts in the Technical Departments.*

University of Ceylon after Independence. The Ceylonese leaders were understandably perturbed by the government's lukewarm attitude. Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam in an influential address to the Ceylon National Association pointed out that "enforced ignorance closes the scientific departments of government to us in large measure".³⁹ Ceylonese leaders wanted the government to play a more positive role in providing adequate technical training locally.⁴⁰ That it was the absence of opportunities for training that relegated Ceylonese to subordinate positions in technical departments is shown by the height to which Ceylonese rose in the medical and legal departments.⁴¹ The government was not totally indifferent to the situation as the preceding account showed. But on the whole, the contribution of the British raj to Ceylon in the field of technical education (in contrast to medical, legal or liberal arts education) was most unimpressive. No attempt was made to introduce technical subjects into the curriculum of the University College which was founded as late as 1921. The discontent of educated Ceylonese was not without cause. For, as the *Ceylon Independent* put it,

If Government complains on the one hand that it cannot obtain suitable men and on the other does nothing to remedy the defect, it proves that it has no sympathy with forwarding the true interests of the permanent population.⁴²

Whatever the motives of the government, the practical effect of its attitude was that technical departments were dominated by recruits from Britain.

Ethnic Distribution in the Medical and Technical Departments

The above review of employment opportunities revealed that the prospects for satisfying employment for English educated Ceylonese was greater in some branches of the Public Service than in others. The legal and judicial services had a fair representation of Ceylonese⁴³ and the medical department was almost wholly Ceylonised. But even in these fields there was a consistent disparity between the salaries paid to local recruits and the salaries paid to those imported from Britain, and the topmost positions were usually barred to Ceylonese. In the technical departments, however, Ceylonese were poorly represented in senior ranks.

The recruitment of Ceylonese did not necessarily mean the employment of Sinhalese, who composed the large majority of the native population. The tendency in the early phase of Ceylonisation was to recruit mainly Burghers,

39. Arunachalam, P. *Our Political Needs*, Colombo, 1917, p. 5.

40. See *S.P. X* of 1922, Rider by Marcus Fernando, A. Drieberg, C. A. Hewavitarne, T. G. W. Jayewardene and O. C. Tillekeratne; *S.P. XI* of 1928, Dissent by D. S. Senanayake.

41. For an account of employment opportunities of the legal profession see Tissa Fernando, 1969-70.

42. *Ceylon Independent*, 14 May 1912, editorial.

43. But not so in the Civil Service. See Tissa Fernando 1970, pp. 64-83.

with the result that in many branches of government service the Sinhalese were poorly represented and the Burghers over-represented. The following Table shows the ethnic distribution of doctors in the medical department.

Table 6. Ethnic Distribution in the Medical Department as Percentages of Total Number of Ceylonese

		1910	1920	1930	Percentage of Total Population at 1921 Census
Burghers	..	51%	32%	19%	0.7%
Sinhalese	..	21	31	47	67
Tamils	..	28	36	33	11

Source: Adapted from *Ceylon Civil Lists*.

Table 6 shows that in 1910 51% of the Ceylonese doctors in the medical department were Burghers although they constituted less than 1% of the population. Although by 1930 the Sinhalese had gained ground they had yet to obtain a proportion of posts commensurate with their numerical strength. The above pattern of native recruitment held true for the technical departments as well. The following Table shows the proportion of Burghers in the Public Works Department.

Table 7. Ceylonese Officers in the Public Works Department

		1910	1920	1930
Total	..	25	41	64
Burghers	..	15 (60%)	23 (56%)	27 (42%)
Sinhalese	..	6	11	18
Tamils	..	4	7	19

Source: *Ceylon Civil Lists*

The predominance of Burghers among Ceylonese recruits was a conspicuous feature of the entire public service. The Tamils also enjoyed more posts in proportion to population than did the majority community, the Sinhalese.

It is interesting to consider the reasons for the predominance of Burghers in government employment.⁴⁴ One may suspect that the Burghers, by virtue of their European descent and westernised life style, impressed the British officials in Ceylon more than did other native communities. Certainly the British population in Ceylon had greater social contact with Burghers and viewed the

44. For a detailed analysis from which this section is adapted see Tissa Fernando, "The Burghers of Ceylon" in Noel P. Gist and A. G. Dworkin (eds.), *The Blending of Races: Marginality and Identity in World Perspective*, John Wiley, Inc., 1972, pp. 61-78.

Burghers as a superior stratum of the local community. Apart from the advantage of being themselves 'European', the Burghers were also the most pro-British element in the colony. As a community, the Burghers kept aloof from the constitutional reform movement of the early 20th century and refused to join the National Congress. It is possible that their conspicuous loyalty to the British raj worked to their advantage in obtaining good employment. But there is a third reason which was probably the most important. The Burghers were superior to all the other communities in Ceylon in one important respect, their better command of the English language. Since the early days of British rule the Burghers had adopted English as their home language, whereas English was a foreign language to the Sinhalese. Since all government employment (and, indeed, every other non-manual employment) depended on the mastery of English, the Burghers were able to compete successfully with other communities. The following table shows the percentage of those literate in the English language, in the census years 1911 and 1921.

Table 8. Literacy in the English Language

		1911		1921	
		Males	Females	Males	Females
Burghers	..	77.7%	74.1%	82.6%	81.4%
Low Country Sinhalese	..	4.1	1.2	5.9	2.0
Kandyan Sinhalese	..	0.8	0.2	1.3	0.3
Tamils	..	5.7	1.3	8.5	2.1

Source: *Reports of the Census of Ceylon, 1911 and 1921.*

The greater proficiency in English, through their use of it as a home language, operated to the distinct advantage of the Burghers. The Sinhalese on the other hand had to clear that hurdle, for due to the "want of conversation" they lacked "readiness of speech" in English.⁴⁵ The achievements of the Burghers emphasise the correlation between English education and superior employment for Ceylonese, so characteristic of Sri Lanka under the British. The greater share of government employment enjoyed by the Tamils *vis-a-vis* the Sinhalese was also mainly a function of English literacy. For, the Tamils "were ahead of the Low Country Sinhalese in English literacy, though they were behind them in literacy generally".⁴⁶

45. Seneviratne, A. C. (ed.), *Memoirs and Desultory Writings of the late James D'Alwis* Colombo, 1939, p. 73.

46. *Census of Ceylon, 1921, Vol. 1, Pt. II, p. 69.*

THE SINHALESE BUDDHIST ATTITUDE TOWARDS PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

BRUCE MATTHEWS

An understanding of contemporary political ambitions and tensions in Sri Lanka must sooner or later come to grips with the whole issue of how the Sinhalese Buddhists view the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy which they inherited from the British *rāj*. This paper examines the problem from an historical and ideological point of view by tracing out some of the key factors and events which have affected the development of Sinhalese Buddhist political ways of thinking up to the present day.

Before questions can be asked specifically of the Buddhist attitude towards parliamentary democracy, however, it is argued that an adequate review of this topic should be at least partly based on the traditional Theravāda interpretation of the relationship between Buddhism and the state.¹ The paper initially explores, then, some of the central teachings of the Buddha which had obvious political ramifications, and which have come down to the Ceylon Theravāda in the Pāli Canon. At the same time we want to briefly analyze the nature of the link that for centuries bound the two wheels of spiritual and political law closely together in Lanka until 1815. Once this has been done, the paper proceeds to investigate the many political changes that have challenged both Sinhalese culture and religion during the last century, and centres in on how the current left and right wing political ideologies have emerged from this turbulent past. In this context, it is demonstrated that although there is no one Sinhalese Buddhist disposition towards the democratic system, the fact remains that for the time being at least, this largely imported parliamentary form of government suits the political needs of Sri Lanka. Above all, these needs must be seen in the perspective of what can only be called a wave of Buddhist revivalism and nationalism that has continued virtually unabated since 1948, and has contributed greatly to formulating both left and right wing attitudes towards parliamentary democracy. This concern with the religious influence of Buddhism on the contemporary Sinhalese political consciousness is, therefore, a central part of the methodology of this paper.

1. I have used the Concise Oxford Dictionary definition of the state as "an organized political community with a government recognized by the people".

In turning now to the roots of this deep religious conviction, we want first to look at some of the basic teachings of the Buddha which have had an impact on Indian and Sinhalese political thinking through the centuries.

It is difficult to isolate a precise political philosophy in the Pāli Canon, but there are strong indications in both the Sutta and Vinaya Pitakas of a political ideal which complemented the soteriological teachings of the Buddha. This soteriology rests on the central problem of painfulness (*dukkha*), and the Buddha's way of deliverance (*magga*) is essentially a practical solution to painfulness and the ills of life here and now. Not for him is there any eschatological dilemma or otherworldly goals. This is a religion which relied primarily on seeing the facts of life as they are (*yathābhūtam*, D.1.83, S.4.188), on eradicating superstition and useless social practises through reason (*takka*, M.1.68) and analysis (*vibhajja*, D.3.229). Although there is a fundamental epistemological basis to this soteriology, it is important to see that there is also a social dimension at stake, for the Buddha not only asks how and what we know, but also what we should do, not only for ourselves, but for others as well. This had obvious ethical implications, and even a casual reading of the Nikāyas brings into relief this close connection between the need for right knowledge, right individual behaviour and the common social good.

The early Buddhist soteriological aim, then, is not just focussed on the individual. Its implications for the body politic are just as vital. When the Buddha urged control of the emotional cankers (*āsava*) of greed, hatred and delusion, or the elimination of gross craving (*taṇhā*), here was a message that had crucial implications for the collective psyche of any nation at any time. Indulgence (*kāmasukhallikānuyoga*) and aggression (*paṭighāmusaya*) are only two examples of the kinds of spiritual hazards that constantly appear to upset the equilibrium of the people, the state and the world at large.

Although there are a number of texts (viz. the Sigālovāda Sutta, D.3.180) which set down how society should conduct itself from a point of view of social relations, two of the most significant sutras that deal directly with political responsibility are the Cakkavatti-Sihanāda and the Aggañña Suttas (D.3.58, 80). These texts develop the theme of the origin and evolution of the concept of the state, and give attention to the rights and duties of both the monarch and the citizens. Here is a picture of an ideal society as one in which there is pursuit of good actions and objectives and where there is a strong social ideal behind the principle objectives of the state. Certainly the recommendations of these sutras go beyond the static political world-view of early Hindu society, locked as it was within a rigid caste system. The Aggañña Sutta in particular urges equal treatment for all men, irrespective of caste or race, for everyone should enjoy the same rights and opportunities as fellow members of humanity, a fact that is echoed many times elsewhere in the Nikāyas as well

(cf. M.2. 85., 151., D.1. 99).² What we have here is a moral and political picture which teaches the responsibility of the state and its citizens to maintain economic and social equality (D. 3. 68). Whether we can go so far as to claim that this was an established democratic political philosophy is open to question, but certainly there are elements of democracy here, for the ideal state is seen as one which allows for human freedom and evolution of human potential. It suggests that the political apparatus of the state, as well as its citizens, must be allowed to evolve and mature. This is consistent with the Buddha's teaching that nothing, including the state, is permanent, and that nothing should rest only on the basis of authority alone (A.1. 189).³

So far we have seen how the spiritual law (*dhamma*) of the Buddha has definite political applications. But attempts have also been made to show a political direction in the Buddha's rule (*vinaya*) for his brotherhood (*sangha*). Some, such as D. C. Vijayavardhana (pseudonym), stress the socialistic aspects of the *sangha* (i.e. pooling of resources, *et cetera*), and suggest these as a guide for the greater political whole of the state.⁴ Others emphasize that the *sangha* was based on democratic lines, and that these traditions spilled over and survived in various forms of assembly and village administration.⁵ Yet although the Vinaya Piṭaka undoubtedly gives us a picture of an early Indian community of *bhikkhus* who lived in a partly socialist and democratic manner, it would not be justifiable to take this as a political model for lay society. In fact, the traditional early Buddhist *sangha* was not concerned with politics, and seems to have had strictly religious aims.

In summary, it should be emphasized that in the Pāli Canon we have a political philosophy which urges both society and state to have the central authentic aim of co-existing in harmony, whereby the individual is allowed to

2. cf. also M.2.85:

Tam kiṃ maññasi, māharāja? Yadi evaṃ sante, ime cattāro vaṇṇā samasama honti? No vā? Kathaṃ vā te ettha hotiti? Addhā kho, bho Kaccāna, evaṃ sante ime cattāro vaṇṇā samasamā honti; na'saṃ ettha kiñci nanakaraṇaṃ samanupassāmiti.

"What do you think about this, sir? This being the case, are the four castes the same? Or not? How does this appear to you? Certainly, dear Kaccāna, this being the case, these four castes are the same. I do not perceive any difference between them in this respect".

cf. also D. 199, and also the concept of impartiality (*samānattatā*), A2. 32f., D. 3. 152.

3. K. N. Jayatilleke, commenting on what reactions early Buddhism might have sanctioned in cases of abuse of authority, refers to the Padamānvakusala Jataka. Here the power of the state is said to be dependent on the rule of righteousness (*balacakram* hi *nīsarāya* *Dharmackram* pravartate). "But... if the social contract upholding law and order is seriously "violated", notes Jayatilleke, "revolt is justified". It must be admitted that this is an unusual interpretation, somewhat like the Chinese T'ien Ming (Mandate of Heaven), and it is questionable if the Buddha would have approved of revolt under any circumstances. cf. *The Contemporary Relevance of the Philosophy of the Buddha*. (Buddha Jayanti Lecture, University of Ceylon, 1969).

4. Vijayavardhana, D. C. *The Revolt in the Temple*. Colombo: Sinha Publications, 1953. p. 430, 626, 631.

5. Joshi, L. M. *Aspects of Buddhism in Indian History*. Kandy: B.P.S. 1973, p. 33

pursue his destiny, but not at the deleterious expense of others. Jayatilleke calls this "ethical universalism", based neither on egoism or altruism.⁶ Perhaps the Anguttara Nikāya sums it up best when it notes in terms that are surprisingly "socialistic" and "democratic":

"Bhikkhus, these four persons are found existing in the world. What four? He who reaches out neither for his own profit nor for the profit of others; he who reaches out for another's profit, but not his own; he who reaches out for his own profit, not another's, and he who reaches out for the profit both of himself and of another.... bhikkhus, just as from a cow comes milk, from milk cream, from cream butter, from butter ghee, from ghee the skimmings of ghee, and that is presumed the best, even so, this person who reaches out for his own profit as well as for the profit of others, is of these four persons best and foremost, noblest and most distinguished". A.2.95⁷

Even more crucial to the background of Sinhalese Buddhist political philosophy, however, is the emerging historical portrait of early Buddhism as a system that was very dependent on state patronage for survival, not only in India under Aśoka, but also in Ceylon under a whole line of erastian Buddhist princes.

Initially in India, while Gotama was still alive, Buddhism was favored by at least two early monarchs, Bimbisāra (c. 544-493 B.C.) and his son Ajātaśatru (c. 493-462 B.C.)⁸ The Pāli Canon refers to both these individuals (Sn. 408, D. 1. 50, 2.2, Vinaya 3.243) as acquaintances, if not devotees, of the Buddha and his *dhamma*. By itself, though, this should not be considered as evidence of state patronage for the new religion. The motive which lay behind the royal acceptance of Buddhism appears to be strictly personal, with no particular political application in sight.⁹ Not enough is known about the religious propensities of the rest of the Magadhan monarchs, and with the rise of the Mauryan empire in 324 B.C., there is evidence that its first great emperor, Chandragupta, gave his preference instead to Jainism.¹⁰ As is well known,

6. Jayatilleke, K. N. *Ethics in Buddhist Perspective*. Kandy: B.P.S. 1972, p. 49.

7. "Cattāro 'me bhikkhave puggalā santo saṃvijjamaṇā lokasmim. Katame cattāro? N'ev' attahitāya paṭipanno no parahitāya, parahitāya paṭipanno no attahitāya, attahitāya paṭipanno no parahitāya, attahitāya ca paṭipanno parahitāya ca... Seyyathāpi bhikkhave gavā khiraṃ, khiramaṇā dadhī, dadhimā navaṇitaṃ, navaṇitaṃ sappi, sappimā sappimaṇḍo tattha aggaṃ akkāhayati, evaṃ eva kṇo bhikkhave yvāyaṃ puggalo attahitāya ca paṭipanno parahitāya ca ayaṃ imesaṃ catunnaṃ puggalānaṃ agga ca seṭṭho ca mollakkho ca uttamo ca pavaro ca". A. 2. 95.

8. These dates are those suggested in *The Age of Imperial Unity*. ed. R. C. Majumdra. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. 1968, p. 38.

9. cf. Bechart, Heinz. "Buddhism and Mass Politics in Burma and Ceylon". *Religion and Political Modernization*. ed. D. E. Smith, New Haven: Yale University Press. 1974, p. 148f.

10. cf. *The Age of Imperial Unity*. op. cit. p. 61f.

however, Chandragupta's grandson Aśoka the Great (c. 273-236 B.C.) enthusiastically embraced Buddhism, expanded its ethical and moral role beyond its early monastic perimeters,¹¹ and started it on its course of becoming a vital social and religious force in Asia. Just how erastian Aśoka was in his relationship to Buddhism is debatable,¹² but there is no doubt that to some extent at least he directed the activities of the *sangha*. Although the *sangha* was not necessarily involved in the actual structure of the state, neither were its interests ignored by the state, and in time the wheel of spiritual law was seen to be just as strategic as the wheel of political law in maintaining public harmony.

It is true that once royal guardianship was withdrawn from Buddhism in India under Puśyāmītra (c. 182 B.C.), an immediate decline of *sangha* influence was inevitable, but by then, Buddhism had been disseminated to Lanka, where it immediately established close connections with the Sinhalese crown. Here, from the very first, the allegiance of the people was to both state law and the law of *dhamma*. By the 2nd century B.C., the *sangha's* power was such that it was considered necessary to validate the exercise of political authority. In this regard, Heinz Bechert quite rightly points out that the *sangha* "helped provide the charisma that legitimized the traditional Buddhist monarchies",¹³ a fact that was to play an important role for a thousand years in Lanka's political history. The indelible significance of Buddhism was part of the very fabric of Sinhalese consciousness is attested to time and again in the celebrated Ceylon chronicles, the *Dīpavaṃsa*, *Mahāvaṃsa* and *Cūlavāṃsa*, perhaps best articulated in this well-known paragraph from the *Mahāvaṃsa* Commentary:

"When the Guide of the World, having accomplished the salvation of mankind and having reached the utmost state of blissful rest, was lying on his deathbed, in the midst of the great assembly of gods, He, the great Sage, the greatest of those who have speech, spoke to Sakra who stood there near him: "Vijaya, son of King Sinha Bahu is come, from the country of Lala, to Lanka together with seven hundred followers and will assume its sovereignty. In Lanka, O Lord of gods, will my religion be established and endure for full five thousand years, therefore protect with zeal the prince and his followers and Lanka and the Dhamma".

11. "Aśoka was attracted more by the ethical than the philosophical aspect of Buddhism and laid stress upon the practical benevolent activities and pious thoughts inculcated by it". *Ibid.* p. 75.
12. cf. Basham, A. L. *The Wonder That was India*: N.Y.: Grove Press, 1959. p. 56. "(Aśoka's) relations with the Buddhist clergy seem to have been erastian, for he had no compunction in prescribing passages of scripture which the order was specially to study, and he instructed local officers to ensure that all ill-behaved Buddhist monks were unfrocked".
13. Bechart, H. "Buddhism and Mass Politics in Burma and Ceylon". *op. cit.* p. 151f.

The story of the development and progress of Buddhism in Sri Lanka from the arrival of Mahinda, c. 250 B.C., through to collapse of the Kandyan crown in 1815 A.D., is a rich tapestry of devotion and resolution in the face of periodic intrigue, corruption and, above all, invasion. The Ceylon chronicles testify to a close connection between religion and state during this period. Buddhist kings and princes came and went, but for the most part, the protection of the Buddhist religion remained a central responsibility of the state. One thinks of Duṭṭhagāmaṇi (c. 161-137 B.C.) or Vattagamani (c. 104-76 B.C.) as examples of early Sinhalese leaders who battled under the banner of Buddhism, so to speak, against the incursions of the Tamils. Threat of invasion from South India continued to haunt the Sinhalese, especially between the 5th and 11th centuries A.D. When Vijayabāhu I finally succeeded in defeating the Tamil Colas in c. 1070 A.D., Sinhalese Buddhism underwent an unprecedented revival, ably boosted by Parākramabāhu the Great (c. 1153-1186 A.D.), and continuing for nearly three centuries. Economic and political conditions, however, were never all that stable after the death of Parākramabāhu, and by the time the Portuguese arrived in Lanka c. 1505 A.D., the country was disorganized and unstable. With the coming of the Europeans, Sinhalese Buddhism and the whole culture it was interwoven with entered a new and imperilled age.

The successive foreign rule of the Portuguese (1505-1658), Dutch (1658-1796) and British (1796-1947) had a serious impact on the Sinhalese Buddhists, and forced them to go through an identity crisis which has lasted until the present day. With various degrees of intolerance and smugness, the Europeans set about to undermine, if not eradicate, the Buddhist religion. By the 18th century, Buddhism had ceased to have much of a social impact in the occupied maritime regions of Lanka, and sought its final protection under the still intact Kandyan kingdom. Here it enjoyed the christian patronage of several important princes, notably Vimala Dharmasūrya II (1687-1706 A.D.), Viṭṭarākrama Narendrasinha (1706-1739 A.D.), Vijaya Rājasinha (1739-1747 A.D.) and, above all, Kīrti Srī Rājasinha (1747-c 1780 A.D.). It was during the latter's reign that the *sangha* underwent a strategic re-organization, provoked by the fact that the Higher Ordination had all but disappeared, and the traditional study of the *dhmma* and *Vinaya* had been largely replaced by astrology and interest in the occult. As well, there was widespread abuse of the accumulated wealth from temple holdings, and nepotistic appointments to positions of seniority in the order. Kīrti Srī Rājasinha set about to correct this state of affairs, first of all, by appealing to the king of Siam, Dhammika, to help re-establish the Higher Ordination, and second, by providing a new code of conduct (*katikāvata*) for the *bhikkhus*. One of the strategic results of this reformation, however, was the division of the *sangha* into caste-oriented sects or Nikayas. The Higher Ordination from Siam resulted in the Syāmpoli (Siyam) Nikaya, at once regarded as the privilege of the Goyigama caste only. This somewhat feudal approach to the spiritual life encouraged the creation of two other

Nikayas, the Amarapura and Rāmaññā (Ramanya) in 1803 and 1863 respectively, for *bhikkhus* of less privileged castes. Although there were no outstanding doctrinal differences between the Nikayas, the social and political implications would become obvious as time went on. Perhaps the most important outcome of all this was, as Bryce Ryan points out, that "the house of Buddhism in Ceylon was divided".¹⁴ There was never again to be just one 'official' Buddhist voice or opinion.

After the establishment of the Nikayas, the next strategic event in the history of modern Sinhalese Buddhism was the collapse of the Kandyan kingdom in 1815. The British initially found it politically prudent, if not imperative, to accede to demands that Buddhism be granted state protection, hence the formulation of the celebrated Article 5 of the Kandyan Convention,¹⁵ which theoretically guaranteed the place and privilege of Buddhism under the British rāj. In fact, however, this protection lasted only until 1853, when, mostly because of Christian missionary agitation, the crown withdrew its official safeguarding role. An immediate vacuum was created which the *sangha* was not able to cope with. After centuries of being cared for and even governed by the state, the *sangha* suddenly found itself, and the whole apparatus of the Buddhist religion, left to its own devices for survival in a hostile colonial climate. For twenty years zealous Christian missionaries, eager to further the decay of Buddhism, continued to exacerbate the situation by challenging the place Buddhism traditionally had in the social and spiritual context of Sinhalese culture. It did not take long before the Sinhalese Buddhists recognized that if their religion continued to suffer the humiliation of being regarded as "heathen" and inferior, and if their temple lands and privileges continued to be dispersed, what was at stake was not only the whole-scale demise of the Theravāda, but also Sinhalese culture in general. In the latter part of the 19th century, then, Sinhalese Buddhism and Sinhalese culture assumed a militant posture, and a jingoistic element entered the religious and social way-of-thinking of Sinhalese people which led to an inevitable communalization of politics. Aggressive leadership by a number of outstanding individuals such as Anagārika Dharmapāla and Col. Olcott, gave needed inspiration to what can only be called a Buddhist renaissance.

As might be expected, the post-1853 events had an enormous impact on the *sangha*. Some scholars suggest the order went into a state of shock and lethargy after imperial protection was withdrawn,¹⁶ whilst others argue that only when these traditional ties between church and state were severed did

14. Ryan, B. *Caste in Modern Ceylon*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 1953, p. 39.
15. Article 5 of the Kandyan Convention of 1815 reads: "The Religion of the Buddhoo professed by the Chiefs and inhabitants of these Provinces is declared inviolable and its Rites and Ministers and Places of Worship are to be maintained and protected".
16. Robinson, R. H. *The Buddhist Religion*. Belmont: Dickenson Publishing Co. 1969, p. 114f.

the *sangha* become a potent factor in mass politics, encouraged by the rising tide of Sinhalese nationalism.¹⁷ Certainly to some extent the *sangha* did associate itself with the bourgeoisie sentiment at this time, for the Sinhalese Buddhists emerged from the long period of colonial rule in a distinctly impaired social, cultural and religious position. Throughout the British rāj, the *sangha* had become alienated from having any meaningful social role, locked off from the real scene by lack of expertise in the English language and by their fundamental monastic disposition. It is not to be wondered that perhaps even more than the laity, the *sangha* felt the deadening weight of the colonial yoke, and wanted change at any cost.

The rise of lay Sinhalese Buddhist organizations, such as the Maha Bodhi Society, the Y.M.B.A., the All-Ceylon Buddhist Congress and the Bauddha Jathika Balavegaya (Buddhist Nationalist Force), also contributed to the strengthening of the links between Buddhism and Sinhalese political consciousness. In many ways, these lay organizations were better equipped than the *sangha* to meet the complexities of changing times, and they were quick to copy the aggressive style of their Christian adversaries. Not restricted by the traditional political curbs placed on the *sangha*, the Buddhist associations were at different times able to activate high degrees of political participation, aimed chiefly at championing the cause of Buddhism in society. It should be pointed out, however, that many of these associations were relatively short-lived, and never replaced the final authority of the *sangha* as the mouth piece of Sinhalese Buddhist aims and ambitions.

All of this had an obvious effect on Sinhalese Buddhist attitudes towards how they should manage the emerging self-government responsibilities they began to assume, starting with the Donoughmore reforms of 1931, and leading up to the advent of dominion status in 1948. At this point, political parties arose with definitive and differing ideas about how Buddhism should fit into the apparatus of society and state. For some individuals, here were all the ingredients necessary to provide Buddhism with the protection of the state.¹⁸ Others went even further, and reached out for a situation in which Buddhism would be the veritable heart and soul of a new government of Lanka. This ideological dream was best expressed by two strategic works that appeared in the mid 1950's, *The Betrayal of Buddhism* (a report on an unofficial "Buddhist

17. Bechart, H. "Buddhism and Mass Politics in Burma and Ceylon". *op. cit.* p. 151f.

18. This kind of attitude is expressed, for example, by H. R. Perera when he writes: "The Buddhist leaders who worked indefatigably for the cause of Buddhism were also the Sinhalese national leaders who led the struggle for liberation from foreign rule. It was therefore to be expected that when these leaders gained national freedom and took over the reins of government from the British rulers they were mindful of their national faith and its culture and therefore took the necessary steps to set things right so that Buddhism would once more receive its rightful place". *Buddhism in Ceylon*, Kandy: B.P.S. 1966, p. 78.

Committee of Inquiry" into the state of Buddhism in Ceylon, 1954),¹⁹ and *The Revolt in The Temple*.²⁰ It is in the latter work especially that we find an articulate contemporary Sinhalese Buddhist response to a whole range of political issues, including that of the questionable usefulness of the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy in modern Lanka. The importance of this work is difficult to underestimate, as it reflects a strong current of socialist and even Marxist thinking, subtly interwoven with traditional Buddhist ethical teaching and a heavy dose of Sinhalese nationalism. The fact that much of its political philosophy surfaces in the developing ideology of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike's S.L.F.P. cannot help but impress one. The work is all the more significant because it carried a foreword by one of the most distinguished *bhikkhus* in the island at that time, the Venerable Pahamune Sri Sumangala, the then Maha Nayaka Thero chief incumbent of the Malwatta Vihara (one of two highly respected chapters that comprises the prestigious Siyam Nikaya). By unhesitatingly endorsing the book and giving it his imprimatur so to speak, the Maha Nayaka indicates how politically restless even certain conservative elements of the *sangha* had become by that time.²¹ Not unexpectedly, he also made a strong plea for the restoration of the *sangha* in the political consciousness of the nation.²²

Published in 1953 on the eve of the Buddha Jayanti (the 2500th anniversary of the passing away of the Buddha), *The Revolt in the Temple* marks a turning point in Sinhalese Buddhist convictions, for here was a high-level expression of discontent with the social structure and political mechanism of post-independence Ceylon. By 1956 the incumbent U.N.P. party, which had been roundly scorched in the unofficial but well-known "Buddhist Committee of Inquiry" for its suspected favoritism to Roman Catholicism, capitalism and foreign vested interests, appeared unable to accommodate the exploding sense of cultural and religious nationalism. Although there was no rival political party founded only on a religious platform, the S.L.F.P. quickly assumed the role of guardian of both Buddhism and another closely related issue, the

19. *Buddha Toraturu Parikshaka Sabhava Vartaya*. Balangoda: Dharmavijaya Mudralaya, 1956.

20. Vijayavardhana, D. C. *Dharma-Vijaya* (Triumph of Righteousness) or *Revolt in the Temple*. *op. cit.*

21. *Ibid.* p. 15.

22. "What the Sangha did during two thousand years and more in this country to make its voice heard in questions of politics and social reform is a matter of simple history... the temple, for centuries, was not only the centre from which radiated the spirit of religious devotion, but was also the force which invigorated the people and held them together... this rapid survey of history shows that the claim of the Sangha today to be heard in relation to social, political and economic problems and to guide the people is no new demand, but a reassertion of a right universally exercised and equally widely acknowledged, up to the British occupation of the country". *Ibid.* p. 16f. cf. also Mendis, G. C. *Ceylon Today and Yesterday*. Colombo: Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd. 1957, p. 117f.

preservation and use of Sinhalese as the official language of Sri Lanka (*swabasha*). At the same time, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike gained the support of the radical Eksath Bhikkhu Peramuna (United Monks Front), which allied itself to his new coalition M.E.P. party (Mahajana Eksath Peramuna or People's United Front), and certainly helped him to victory in 1956. This excursion into politics by the *sangha* was not without its weaknesses and serious potential hazards, however. For one thing, the E.P.B. really represented only a fragment of the *sangha*, and although its guiding force, the Ven. Mapitigama Buddharakkhita was a low-country Siyam Nikaya *bhikkhu*, for the most part the E.B.P. was made up of members from the Amarapura and Ramanya Nikayas.²³ Secondly, as the tragic events surrounding the death of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike in 1959 were to demonstrate, the E.P.B. was totally unscrupulous in its ambitions. Kearney aptly remarks that "the E.B.P. had come to symbolize the cynical manipulation of religious and linguistic passions for personal gain", and that among the recommendations of the official government inquiry into Bandaranaike's death "was a declaration that *bhikkhus* should remain out of partisan politics".²⁴

Although the *sangha* had in consequence little to do with the March 1960 general election, by 1965 they were back in the political scene, this time visably on both left (L.S.S.P.) and right (U.N.P.) sides of the fence. This ambivalence was everywhere apparent, but focussed around the central issue of Mrs. Bandaranaike bringing into her coalition cabinet three Marxists, including a new minister of finance, Dr. N. M. Perera, leader of the Marxist Lanka Sama Samaj Party (LSSP). Despite the fact that the new Marxist ministers made an appropriate *puya* at a well-known Buddhist temple after they were sworn into office, rising suspicions about their secularism and their general attitude towards the place of Buddhism in the social context of Sri Lanka were widespread enough to provoke serious controversy. Meetings of such prestigious Buddhist societies as the Lanka Bauddha Jatika Balavegaya, the All-Ceylon Bhikkhu Congress, the Sri Lanka Mahendra Bhikkhu Sangamaya and the All-Ceylon Organization of Bhikkhus brought forth declarations ranging from surprise to condemnation over the Marxist involvement, and fear that this would spell the beginning of the end for Buddhism. On the other hand, there were both lay Buddhists and *bhikkhus* who wholeheartedly backed the Marxist appointments, and who rejected as inflammatory exaggeration, remarks that suggested

23. It is important to recognize that the E.P.B. was largely ignored by the crucial upper-caste Malwatta and Asgiriya Viharas in Kandy. In fact, these chapters issued a warning for *bhikkhus* to stay out of active politics altogether (*Ceylon News*, Mar. 3, 1956). Sri Sumangala's introduction to *The Revolt in the Temple* may be considered by some as an exception to this advice.

24. Kearney, R. N. *The Politics of Ceylon (Sri Lanka)*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973, p. 176.

Buddhism and Marxism were somehow at opposite poles.²⁵ In the end, Mrs. Bandaranaike's coalition government was not able to weather this storm, and was defeated in the general election of 1965.

It is easy to conclude that in every election up to 1970, the issue of the preservation of the traditional role of Buddhism in Sinhalese society was a political one, and that neither the right nor the left wing platforms could afford to ignore it.²⁶ Accordingly, both sides have argued that under their aegis, Buddhism would find its rightful and guaranteed place. What is of vital significance, however, is whether the survival of Buddhism depends on the survival of democracy, a point the U.N.P. unhesitatingly raise in their concern over Marxist ambitions.²⁷

As might be expected, these events have had a serious impact on the current Sinhalese Buddhist attitude towards parliamentary democracy. At once it can be seen that there is no single attitude, but a wide range of ways of looking at the usefulness and meaningfulness of democracy in the present social and political climate of Sri Lanka. It is possible, however, to isolate two general views on this subject expressed by the various sectors of the Sinhalese Buddhist community.

Firstly, the left wing, both lay and *sangha* have announced repeated frustration with the unsatisfactoriness of the parliamentary system in coming to grips with issues they see as central to their platform. Nevertheless, for the most part they are committed to the concept of parliamentary democracy, and have in fact found it to be a useful vehicle whereby they can put into practise their political philosophy.²⁸ As might be expected, there are certain obvious exceptions to this, and a lot of evidence that some extreme elements of the left accept parliamentary democracy in a more or less cynical fashion, biding their time until the hour for revolution or the replacement of democracy by some kind of soviet system can take place.²⁹

25. This issue is carefully reviewed in the article "Coalition Government Will Safeguard Buddhism", *World Buddhism*. Vol. 12. No. 12 (July 1964). p. 13f. cf. also Smith, D. E. *Religion, Politics and Social Change in the Third World*. N.Y.: Free Press. 1971, p. 147. cf. also Bechert, H. "Buddhism and Mass Politics in Burma and Ceylon". *op. cit.* p. 167.

26. It was certainly true in the last two decades, and may well be the case today, that a political party adopting a purely secular approach to religion, as the LSSP did in 1960, will not gain the important rural Sinhalese vote. cf. Wilson, A. J. "Buddhism in Ceylon Politics 1960-65". *South Asian Politics and Religion*. D. E. Smith, ed. Princeton: P.U.P. 1966, p. 515.

27. *Ibid.* p. 530.

28. In this regard, A. J. Wilson notes "...despite repeated failures, the left continues to place some reliance on the parliamentary processes. That attitude has nevertheless never been consistent, veering at times towards revolution and extra-parliamentary methods, at other times, toeing the constitutional line, depending very much, as their theoreticians are wont to aver, on the objective circumstances. Part of the reason for the attraction to parliamentarianism was the surprising success that the left met with at the general election of 1947". *Politics in Sri Lanka, 1947-1973*. London: MacMillan Press, 1974. p. 155.

29. Viz. Leslie Goonewardene, "New Outlook of the L.S.S.P.", *Ceylon Daily News*. Dec. 21, 1970, as quoted in Wilson, A. J. *Politics in Sri Lanka, 1947-1973*. *op. cit.* p. 160.

From an ideological point of view, the kind of political apparatus outlined in *The Revolt in the Temple* comes closest to expressing a general left-wing Sinhalese Buddhist approach to democracy. Here is a scheme of evolutionary socialism, theoretically compatible with the teachings of the Buddha and the traditions of the *sangha*, that operates within the format of a democratic system. The economic and social objectives of this system, however, are to some degree Marxist in orientation, with an emphasis on the eradication of capitalism and the establishment of an economy based on 'co-operative' non-profit enterprise, so that "there will thus be achieved democracy in the economic as well as in the political sphere".³⁰ "Socialists", the text goes on to say, "refuse to concede that the parliamentary state must necessarily be dominated by the property-owning state". It is also important to emphasize that a serious attempt is made here to harmonize this socio-economic ideology with the value-system and the world view of Theravāda Buddhism, a phenomenon that is not uncommonly found elsewhere in contemporary left-wing Sinhalese Buddhist political and theological³¹ literature.³²

Secondly, the right-wing Sinhalese Buddhist political component under the U.N.P. has from the beginning supported the concept of parliamentary democracy, and, as noted briefly above, on several occasions has linked the safeguarding of democracy with the safeguarding of Buddhism. Although the U.N.P. is largely supported by the Goyigama vote,³³ and thereby are distinctively a communal Buddhist party, it should also be noted that the U.N.P. has the support of an important right-wing Sinhalese element which is not Buddhist but Christian, most of whom come from the aggressive and highly

30. Vijayavardhana, D. C. *The Revolt in the Temple*. op. cit. p. 625.

31. By the word "theological", I mean more than just the theistic aspect, if there is any of a given religion, but also the whole doctrinal structure of a religion.

32. cf. especially K. N. Jayatilleke, *The Contemporary Relevance of the Philosophy of the Buddha*, op. cit., *Buddhism and the Race Question*, Kandy: B.P.S. 1974, p. 8f., *Ethics in Buddhist Perspective*. Kandy: B.P.S. 1972, p. 18f. D. E. Smith cites a good political example of Marxist-Buddhist dialogue when he notes "Mr. Philip Gunawardena's VLSSP, the Marxist group in the (1956) MEP coalition, could reconcile the emphasis on Buddhism with its own ideology at several levels. With some justification it was argued that Buddhism was a philosophy, not a religion, and that some of its tenets (atheism, rejection of priestcraft, scientific approach to problems) had much in common with Marxism". "The Sinhalese Buddhist Revolution". *South Asian Politics and Religion*. op. cit. p. 470. It is interesting to note that even the violent Guevarist P.L.F. (People's Liberation Front or Jathika Vimukthi Peramuna) a movement spear-headed by young Sinhala Buddhists only, had the backing of some *bhikkhus*, and nowhere (viz. "The Five Lectures") did it express an anti-Buddhist posture, despite its well-known anti-traditionalism and its extreme anarchistic role in the 1971 insurrection. cf. Obeyesekere, G. "Some Comments on the Social Backgrounds of the April 1971 Insurgency in Sri Lanka". *Journal of Asian Studies*. Vol. XXXIII. No. 3. May, 1974; Bharati, A. (Leopold Fischer), *Monastic and Lay Buddhism in the 1971 Sri Lanka Insurgency*, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. Vol. XI. Jan. 1976. p. 103. The author is also indebted to conversations in the summer of 1975 with Percy Colin-Thomé, High Court Justice in Colombo, and H. A. I. Goonetilleke, Librarian of the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya, which confirmed these observations on the P.L.F.

33. Ryan, B. *Caste in Modern Ceylon*. op. cit. p. 289.

consolidated Karāva caste.³⁴ The fact that the attempted coup d'état of 1962 was perpetrated by Christian armed services officers inevitably gives rise to the suspicion that this element of the right-wing is more oriented to fascist rule than to parliamentary democracy, but this is a hypothetical judgment only.³⁵

In summary, it should be stressed that the right-wing sees democracy as being consistent with the traditions of Sinhalese Buddhism, and certainly a more practical bed-mate with the teachings of the Buddha than Marxism.

We want now to draw some general conclusions. It can be argued that contemporary Sinhalese Buddhist attitudes towards parliamentary democracy are closely linked to a religious and cultural way of thinking that has strong theological and historical roots. This understanding is established on the one hand through the Buddhist teaching that the political apparatus of the state, like everything else, is in a condition of continuous fluctuating evolution; and on the other hand, through the tradition that Buddhism is an integral part of the Sinhalese world view, and thereby has a right to be protected by the state, no matter what political form that state adopts.

Secondly, the Westminster model of parliamentary democracy (along with several other European structures; viz. political parties, elections, committees, unions *et cetera*), is still a fairly recent political phenomenon in Sri Lanka, and it is too soon to tell for sure whether this model will fit the democratic needs of the country.³⁶ When it is remembered that it is a scant 150 years since the fall of the feudal Kandyan kingdom, followed by a long period of political inactivity, and that parliamentary democracy has really only been in the political consciousness of the Sinhalese Buddhists for one or two generations, it can be seen that there has not been time to gauge the impact of the democratic system and that there is potentially room for a great deal of evolution and maturity in regard to this issue.

Thirdly, both left and right-wing Sinhalese Buddhist politicians and politically-oriented members of the *sangha* cannot as a rule envision a state which is not in some close way associated with Buddhism. In some ways their thinking approximates the philosophy of Jacques Maritain's "democratic charter", wherein religions and secular "faith" go hand in hand, and where, to separate the spiritual heritage of the body politic from democracy is to separate democracy from "the deepest of its living sources".³⁷

34. *Ibid.* p. 334.

35. cf. Editorial Comments, *State* (A Marxist Quarterly). Colombo: 1975, 3. p. 4.

36. For example, the 1972 Constitution has already changed the structure of the National Assembly by abolishing the upper house in favour of a unicameral legislature.

37. Maritain, J. *Man and the State*. Chicago: U.C.P. 1951, p. 126.

Fourthly, however, the Sinhalese Buddhists diverge from the commendable path of Maritain when they appear to revert to the age-old erastian tendency of identifying the Sinhalese nation, language, religion and even the race with the state, which can and inevitably must lead to disastrous conclusions, as Maritain marks out when he observes that the state, when it has "presumed to impose by force of law the so-called type and genius of the Nation, thus (becomes) a cultural, ideological, caessaro-papist, totalitarian state".³⁸ There is no doubt that the current trend in the communalization of politics in Sri Lanka is heading partly in this direction, and that the identification of Ceylonese nationality with Theravāda Buddhism and the Sinhalese language will reflect itself in the Sinhalese Buddhist attitude towards the usefulness of parliamentary democracy in achieving communalistic aims.

Fifthly, there are many social and political unknowns in modern Sri Lanka, emerging as it is from centuries of dogmatic rule and custom. How the new forms of social organization and the new broad-based changes in attitudes and values will affect the old ways of thinking, fears and shibboleths, caught up as they are in the traditional religious and cultural dimensions of society, remains to be seen. There is in particular a wide difference of opinion as to whether parliamentary democracy in Sri Lanka can support radical new socialist trends and Marxist directions, and whether Buddhism in the long run can in turn accommodate itself to these political dimensions. For the time being at least, the answer lies before us in the new (1972) constitution of Sri Lanka,³⁹ where "the progressive advancement towards the establishment of a socialist democracy" and the semi-theocratic elevation of Buddhism to "the foremost place" shows the tenacity of both democracy and Buddhism to survive in the economically and politically hostile environment of a proud third-world nation.

38. *Ibid.* p. 7.

39. cf. Warnapala, W. A. W. "The New Constitution of Sri Lanka". *Asian Survey*. U.C.L.A. Vol. XIII. No. 12. Dec. 1973. p. 1192.

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REFLECTIONS ON AGRARIAN RESEARCH IN SRI LANKA IN THE 1970s

G. H. PEIRIS

This paper attempts a critical review of recent agrarian research in Sri Lanka. It seeks to identify the principal trends of research carried out during the period under review, comment upon the methods used, evaluate the more significant research findings and spotlight the gaps that exist in this area of research. The paper is based on a study of the relevant literature and on discussions which the writer has had with certain researchers in the field. An annotated bibliography which forms the second part of the paper is intended to illustrate the criticisms and comments made in the first part and also to enable the reader to identify those works that deserve exoneration from such criticisms and comments. The numbers given in parenthesis in the body of the essay facilitate cross references to the bibliography.

* * * *

The rapidity of the changes in Sri Lanka's agrarian scene during the past seven years and the element of experimentation and uncertainty which such changes inevitably entailed combined with the high governmental priority accorded to agrarian affairs to create a milieu within which agrarian research could proliferate and flourish. Agrarian research did indeed respond to these stimuli in the sense that in comparison to its own past record and also to many other fields of socio-economic research it attracted considerable talent and its output has been far more voluminous. The sense of urgency which appears to have prevailed among the workers in this field during the period under review contrasts markedly from the leisurely pace which characterised earlier times.

Apart from the vastly increased output, another welcome trend in this field of research is its increased emphasis on inter-disciplinary work. Although this is still an incipient development, certain writings of the recent past embody collaborative efforts of groups of researchers, such collaboration made possible not only by the increased number of research personnel qualified in various cognate social science disciplines, but also by the fact that institutions, reasonably well endowed with resources, have come to sponsor and direct an increasing share of the research. Among such institutions are the Agrarian

Research and Training Institute (ARTI); the Economic Research Division of the Central Bank of Ceylon; the Agricultural Diversification Project of the Ministry of Plantation Industry; research units attached to such governmental agencies as the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Agrarian Services and the Mahaveli Development Board; and also private organizations like the *Marga* institute. In this respect too, agrarian research in the 1970s contrasts from that of the '50s and the '60s when, a few notable products of team-work excepted (eg. Sarkar & Tambiah, 1957; Jogaratnam and Schickele, 1969), were all from scholars who operated individually in their respective fields.

Recent agrarian research has also tended to take a more practical orientation. Research writers have, on the whole, exhibited an impatience with academic refinement. Ostensibly, the sole objective of a majority of research programmes in the field has been fact-finding. Hence the final results of research often appear less concerned with the general reader and are certainly less stimulating and less readable than those of the past.

Agrarian research publications that belong to the review period may, for convenience, be divided into three groups (a) socio-economic surveys relating to agricultural land, its use and its users; (b) inquiries into specific problems in land ownership, land tenure and land use, and institutions and infrastructure connected with agriculture; and (c) reviews, evaluations and syntheses based upon data from secondary sources and the "specialist" skills which the writers profess. This typology must not be regarded as one of rigid compartmentalization, for, in terms of scope, content and objective, some writings overflow the boundaries and share the traits of more than one type.

Typical of the first of these groups are the studies of the "Agrarian Situation" (1.3.1 to 1.3.6) and the surveys of Beminiwatte (1.4.) and Kurundankulama (1.12.) by the ARTI. Other studies such as the joint project of the Universities of Ceylon and Cambridge in the south-eastern lowlands (report in preparation), the Central Bank surveys of the Mahaveli Development Area (2.2.) and the colonization schemes of Uda-Walave, Minneriya and Padaviya (in preparation) as well as many others that are more restricted in areal coverage (eg. 3.1.1., 3.1.2., 5.2., 5.3., 5.4., 7.11., 7.24.) may also be placed in this category.

The second type is represented by a large and varied volume of literature. Most essays in the "Occasional Publications Series" and some in the "Research Study Series" (1.1., 1.7., 1.14.) of the ARTI, over 25 publications in the "Research Study Series" of the Division of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture (4.1 to 4.8 are selected examples), a majority of the survey reports and project proposals of the Agricultural Diversification Project (3.1.4., 3.1.5., 3.1.6., 3.1.7., 3.2., 3.3.) and several articles and monographs such as those by Amarasinghe (7.2.), Fonseka (7.6.), Kanagaratnam (7.12.), Peiris (7.15.), Ratnaweera (7.20.), Weerawardena (7.27) and Wimaladharma-

Clifford (7.29.) belong to this category of research. A majority of these writings have a directly practical purpose. Some attempt evaluations of on-going programmes and projects while others are directed towards the formulation of policies, programmes and projects. Likewise, some of them are preliminary investigations intended to pave the way for larger and more comprehensive ones, while others are by-products of general socio-economic investigations. Only a very few writings in this category have an academic bias.

Of the "review" type work too, there are many. Based as they are on the findings of others, the authors' impressions and/or various sources of published data, they usually seek to generalize, identify broad patterns and trends, and prescribe solutions to problems, avoiding the tedium of grappling with details of facts and figures. The "review" of writings on land settlement by Ellman et.al. (1.8.), the land reform and tenurial reform studies by Sanderatne (7.21., 7.22.), Gooneratne (7.8.) and Peiris (7.16., 7.17.) and the writings on miscellaneous themes by others like Dias (7.4.), Herring (7.10.), Narayanasamy (7.14.), Pieris (7.19.) and Weerawardena (7.26) could be cited as typical examples.

* * * *

A majority of the works that fall into the first of our groups and some in the second follow a basically similar methodology. They are based on sample surveys, the technique of survey usually being the questionnaire method of interview. This is similar to the methodology used by Das Gupta in his pioneer socio-economic surveys of rural Sri Lanka over 30 years ago and followed since then by many others (Sarkar & Tambiah, 1957; Fonseka, 1966; Jagaratnam & Schickele, 1969). However, the size and the design of the samples, the care with which the questions are framed and the samples are selected, the points of reference within which the questions are placed, the definitional precision of the terminology used, the checks placed upon the field assistants and those interviewed, and the preciseness of the answers expected, all tend to vary from one survey to another. The result is a mass of monotonous and repetitive information on similar sets of agrarian phenomena which, even when considered reasonably accurate, is not comparable either in space or in time.

This criticism requires elaboration and further clarification. In the first place, there is the problem regarding the representativeness of the samples studied in the field. The sets of units which have been subject to field investigation in the studies of this genre are variously referred to as "random samples" (simple, multi-stage, stratified and so on), "opportunity samples", "purposive samples" and in one instance, "a quasi-random sample". In those reports that provide information on the sample design, the size of the samples are seen to range from about .001 % to about 10 %, with a majority constituting less than 1 % of the "universe". When the field of study is large, the samples are invariably minute. [To cite a few examples, a study of Farm Business Management in the Dry Zone (4.6.) was based on data from about 25 to 50

farms in each of the 11 districts. A survey of the Agrarian Situation of Colombo District (1.3.5.) where there are over 200,000 rural households was based on a sample of 154 and a similar survey of Kandy District (1.3.2.) on a sample of 158.] Sometimes the technique of multi-stage stratification has been used (3.1.2., 2.2., 7.2.), not so much as a device of providing due representation to the relevant agro-ecological or socio-economic diversities within the field of study, but merely to camouflage the smallness of the sample. The end result is that a given "universe" is "represented" with data extracted from a few arbitrarily selected units. Of course the authors of these studies usually record brief warnings about the possible non-representativeness of their samples. However, it becomes evident to the reader that the authors themselves often forget this warning in drawing conclusions about the field of study. Furthermore, if the laborious process of extracting statistical information from a sample is for the purpose of quantifying aspects of the "universe", then, in any event, a non-representative sample can hardly have a meaning.

Secondly, there is the equally significant problem relating to the reliability of the data extracted from the samples. Many recent field investigations have been of short duration—entire districts or even larger areas being covered within a week to a month. Most of them (7.2. and 7.24. are exceptions) have been conducted by groups of field workers whose expected task is not one of rapid interrogation of the informants but rather lengthy discussion on each point to ascertain the veracity of the information supplied. [A typical example is a report (2.2.) which claims that the information collected on land ownership, cultivation practices, inputs and costs is accurate, because it was recorded after "lengthy discussion in open interview". Yet, in another section of this report it is revealed that the five field assistants who conducted 373 such interviews and gathered other data as well from 15 villages and 5 colonization schemes spread over an area of approximately 500 square miles could not have spent more than 30 days in the field.] The questionnaires used are also long and elaborate and relate to a great many detailed facts [How many participated in harvesting your field last *yala* and how much did you spend on them? How many vehicles came to and left the village yesterday? How many days were you unemployed during the past 30 days? What were the different varieties of seed paddy you used in each year during the past 12 years?] This process of eliciting information obviously places undue reliance on the memory of the informants, not to mention the almost superhuman skills it expects from the field investigators.

In presenting to the reader the quantified "objective reality" unravelled in this manner, the reader is often assured that the questionnaires were pre-tested in pilot surveys, the field assistants were meticulously trained and closely supervised and that they in turn were able to establish perfect rapport with those whom they interviewed. It may well be that at least some of these claims are true. But to what extent can the reader rely on the exactitude of the final

data presented in the smug statistical tables on, say, man-days spent on transplanting the previous year, or the expenditure on hired labour for the previous harvest, or the extent of under-employment during the slack spells of the last agricultural year, or the year on which a certain percentage of farmers switched from H4 seed paddy to BG 11-11; or for that matter, even on apparently simple and straightforward things like yield obtained and extent owned? Thus, the question of the representativeness of the samples apart, those who have seen and experienced this process of data collection cannot regard the most carefully gathered data on many of these aspects as any more precise and more reliable than "guesstimates". Any pretence at greater quantitative precision must surely deserve the raised eyebrow.

The claimed (or implied) precision being what it is, then, for what purpose the endless process of re-discovery and reiteration of known facts? When stripped of the facade of precision much of what remains is common knowledge or trivia. Many a recent survey has shown us time and again that agriculture is the mainstay of the rural economy of Sri Lanka. We have also been shown that the size of the rural households usually varies from about 5 to 8 persons and that a large proportion of the rural population is juvenile. Our attention has been repeatedly drawn to the fact that holdings of peasant agriculture are small but that in the peasant colonies of the Dry Zone they tend to be larger than in the surrounding villages. At a more profound level, it has been revealed to us that in the Dry Zone colonies underemployment occurs during slack periods in the cultivation season, that in most parts of Sri Lanka women usually do not engage in "heavy" agricultural work but that they do participate in lighter work like transplanting and reaping, that the tractor when used in ploughing is a labour saving device. A recent investigation even discovered for us that in the Mahaveli Development Area the women look prematurely senile.

Even if these discoveries, most of them stated in quantitative terms, are assumed to approximate reality, in the absence of reliable "bench-mark" studies which could serve as points of departure, they can hardly be used for assessments of temporal change. Nor, in the absence of uniformity in the bases definitions and reference points of data collection, can the quantities from different contemporaneous surveys be used for studies of spatial variation. In other words, we cannot know whether the women of the Mahaveli are not as good-looking now as they were. Nor can we know how they compare with those in the other river valleys.

The criticism levelled here against the pretence at exactitude does not, perhaps, apply to certain recent surveys like the University survey of the South-East (which involved over 2 years of intensive work in the field, but the results of which we are yet to see) and only partially to certain others (1.14., 1.15., 4.1. to 4.8. and 7.3.). These latter surveys have attempted a departure from the

conventional method of collecting field data and based their fact-finding on Farm Record Books specially maintained for the surveys by groups of informants. The work that has been done so far on the basis of farm records demonstrates both the possibilities as well as the limitations of this technique. Its architects have hitherto worked with only tiny samples. Such samples can only include the willing farmer participants who are also capable of maintaining the required records. Hence, specially in surveys that have covered extensive and varied territory (4.3., 4.6., 1.15.), the results, in their present form, cannot be regarded representative and free from bias. But, where the field is small and manageable (4.4., 4.5., 4.7., 4.8., 7.3.) the technique has distinct advantages for extracting certain types of agrarian information. The work done so far also indicate that the Farm Record Book can be an effective instrument for monitoring small agricultural projects, especially those in which educated youth have been accorded priority. (For example, if this method was judiciously used by the Division of Regional Planning, the Divisional Development Farm fiasco might well have been averted).

The aimless repetitiveness that characterises the methodology of many of the surveys to which reference has been made earlier pervades also the manner in which their findings are presented to the reader. Many recent agrarian writings of the type that covers a wide spectrum of topics take the form of a procession of statistical tables interspersed with explanatory notes on what the "above table" or the "statistics given below" show. For the lazy reader, the same facts are simplified further in charts and diagrams. Analysis remains at a superficial level and invariably conveys the impression that the writer has anticipated a readership unfamiliar with the country or has merely attempted to lengthen his work. Interesting correlative features which the statistics sometimes show are left suspended in mid-air. The type of synthesis that seeks to identify trends, parallels and models and reflects a familiarity on the part of the author with the related writings already available is often entirely non-existent.

Although the foregoing criticisms apply in varying measure to a majority of the general agrarian survey reports of the recent past, such surveys have some usefulness. Collectively, their findings form a jig-saw, albeit with many misfits and missing pieces, depicting a scene, not with photographic precision, but with broad sweeps and impressionistic variations of texture and tone. From the mass of writings produced over several decades it is possible for the careful student to draw some tentative conclusions. For example, the conventional view that share tenancy is an institutional constraint on raising levels of productivity in paddy appears to rest on a weak empirical foundation. Likewise, the contention which B. H. Farmer made in 1958 that the usual processes of fragmentation of paddy holdings (not up to the flower-pot size) need not be regarded an unmitigated evil, though summarily rejected by many at the time, now seem supported by data from several surveys. Again, the traditional system of mutual labour exchange in paddy cultivation appears

operationally unimportant in many parts of the country. It also seems that hired labour is invariably the most important item in the cost structure of paddy production. The paddy cultivators' overall net incomes are low but their earnings per man-day of labour are higher than in many comparable fields of employment. The peasantry can no longer be regarded "conservative" in its response to innovation; the peasants adopt readily, provided change brings demonstrable and short-run economic gain. In most parts of the country, many recent surveys suggest, water supply is the fundamental determinant of the paddy farmers' performance. Some of these conclusions now appear adequately "proven" for them to influence agrarian policy. Others, at least, could be used as hypotheses for further research.

In the second category of writings—those relating to specific agrarian phenomena—there are many works to which considerable value may be attached. There are among them several "case studies" of village institutions (1.5., 1.7., 1.11., 7.29) the findings of which substantiate what has been observed in some earlier writings and in certain contemporary general socio-economic surveys about the failure of such institutions to fulfil the objectives and expectations with which they were set up. Likewise, the studies on "cooperative settlements" such as those by Ganewatte (7.7.), Ellman and Ratnawcera (1.7.) and Peiris (7.15.) despite their differences in approach, collectively bring out some inherent weaknesses of the cooperative farming systems developed in Sri Lanka in the recent past. The "project evaluation studies" by Gooneratne (1.13.), Sathasivampillai (4.2.), Jogaratnam (7.11.) and Van Eersel & de Jong (7.23.) have their obvious intrinsic importance. The "stream catchment land use plans" formulated by the Agricultural Diversification Project (3.1.3-3.1.5) indicate economic advantages of changing the present patterns of land use in the areas concerned. The "crop studies", many of which have also been conducted under the same project (Moll, 3.1.7.; Kuhonta, 3.2.1.-3.2.4.; McConnell & Upawansa, 3.3.1.-3.3.6; see also, de Silva 6.1.-6.3.) are valuable sources of basic data on aspects of agriculture on which hitherto there has been little or no information.

In the case of writings that attempt synthesis and review—the third category in our typology—in which, as one could expect, there is wide variation in purpose and quality, generalized comment is difficult. Though none of the recent writings in this group reach the standards of scholarship set by the past giants in the field, the best among them (for example, 7.4., 7.10, 7.19., 7.26.) are at least products of specialist skills, mature experience and/or painstaking effort, useful alike to the general reader and the policy maker. However, a large majority (only a few of which have been included in the bibliography) contain trite and do not in any way enrich our understanding of the agrarian scene.

The vast output of agrarian research writings in Sri Lanka during the recent past is to some extent a result of the "Gestetner Revolution" which has enabled writers, especially those attached to official research organizations with plenty of funds, to prepare the results of their labours for limited circulation in the back-rooms of their own offices. Many such publications are not freely available to the others in the field. This is perhaps one of the main causes for the frequent duplications and overlaps which characterize recent research in this field. The present writer does not subscribe to the view that this is something inherently bad. Several studies of the same phenomenon by different persons could produce different insights and perspectives all of which are of some value. But where there is a scarcity of resources for research and, more significantly, when much of the research effort is devoted to the mechanical and repetitive process of data collection the end result of which is the production of a conglomerate of statistical tables, overlap and duplication become wasteful. To illustrate this with an example, the Mahaveli Development Board carried out some "bench-mark surveys" in the early 1970s in the areas to be developed under Stage I, Phase 1 of the scheme. Subsequently, the Economic Research Unit of the Central Bank also did a similar survey of the same areas "because no bench-mark data were available" on the project area. Some research personnel from the University are currently probing into aspects of the Mahaveli Development Area because "it is vital to have bench-mark data" about it. Not to be out-done, the Economic Research Unit of the Department of Agriculture is now planning a socio-economic survey of the Mahaveli Development Area "because no bench-mark data are available". Surely, it is desirable to control this process, if not for any thing else, at least for the sake of those tolerant people living in the area.

In many recent reports of sample surveys one often comes across a routine apology which states that with the resources available to "this institution" it was not possible to cover the field with a more representative sample. In the context of our earlier criticisms it appears that if some of these institutions were to pool their resources, specially for the larger research projects, and if the unseemly haste to publish is also curbed, it would be possible to improve the quality of work and produce more meaningful research.

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The dictionary defines the term 'Agrarian' as "pertaining to land, its ownership or tenure". In this sense, agrarian change has perhaps been the most significant change witnessed in the country so far in the 1970s. Ownership changes under the land reform programme initiated in 1972 involved approximately one million acres or 23 percent of the total area under cultivation in the country. This extent is almost entirely within the Wet Zone. Paddy has been virtually unaffected by the reform, the total paddy acreage acquired

and redistributed representing only 1.4 percent of the total area that came within the purview of the reform. In contrast, governmental acquisitions comprised 60 percent of the country's tea acreage, 30 percent of the rubber acreage and 10 percent of the coconut acreage. About 15 to 20 percent of the acquired land is estimated to be cultivable but uncultivated. The reform eliminated public companies from the scene of plantation agriculture and reduced by about 50 percent the area held by individuals in the private sector, confining the size of most of their "residual properties" to less than 200 acres. Large-scale private capitalist enterprise, typical of the traditional plantation system, has thus been liquidated and replaced with extensive state ownership. New complexes of collective farming have also emerged and now control about 6 percent of the total agricultural acreage in the country. By any scale of measurement these agrarian changes are of momentous significance to Sri Lanka.

In a period of such unique interest and importance, it does appear strange that the key organizations concerned with agrarian research have failed to record and evaluate this agrarian change. Looking into their record of research it almost seems as if nothing of consequence happened and that plantation agriculture did not exist at all. Paddy cultivation and the Dry Zone continued to be their main areas of interest. Rural institutions and minor cash crops did receive some attention. There have been some sporadic and superficial studies of the recently established cooperative farms and settlements. But if we are to overlook the efforts of a few individual researchers, there continued to exist a glaring void within the field of agrarian research in that its most crucial areas of change have been allowed to lie fallow.

This, however, is no indictment of the research personnel concerned. Apart from an understandable reluctance of the bureaucratized researcher to venture into politically sensitive fields of study, many obstacles were in fact placed in his way by the politician and the officialdom. It appears that friction prevailed between a leading official research establishment and a key institution involved with land reform, resulting in officers of the former being treated as *persona non grata* by the latter. Instructions came to be issued to the managerial cadres of a large complex of cooperative settlements that no information of any sort be released to "unauthorised persons"—the required authority was always difficult to obtain for those without proof of political loyalty. Criticism, both of policy and practice, even by implication, was treated as subversion. In one instance at least, a carefully programmed investigation into aspects of land reform was suspended midway on order from above.

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Assuming that there is now some change in this policy of secretiveness, there remains many questions for which agrarian research has to produce quick and accurate answers. Its present task is not necessarily one of finding

what went wrong and who is to be blamed, but also gaining insights on how to put things right. While making no pretence at compiling a list of "relevant" research, one could say that many new dimensions of plantation agriculture demand immediate investigation. For example, to what extent is the recent fall in productivity of the principal plantation crops (amidst boom conditions) a result of changes in ownership, management, scale and labour? What are the effects of fragmentation of plantation land under distributive land reform? Are communal and cooperative forms of land management a viable alternative to the plantation system of the conventional type. Are the changes advocated through slogans currently in vogue like "integration of plantations with the village economy" possible and desirable? How to make the optimum use of unused and marginally used land?

Socio-economic aspects of peasant agriculture will obviously continue to require special attention in research, with some modification of the methods used. In view of the unfortunate absence of regular agricultural census enumerations, general agrarian surveys could perform the function of recording data relating to those basic features on which the conventional questionnaire-interview method of field study can generate reasonably accurate information. Our earlier criticisms and comments imply that such surveys must be based on representative samples and must aim at maintaining a uniformity of approach that lends itself to comparison over space and time. Where greater detail and depth is sought, either in the investigation of specific problems or on those aspects of the general agrarian situation which are vulnerable to distortion (eg. inputs, costs, incomes, resource management etc.) clearly, different strategies are indicated. For the deepest insights, the technique that involves intimate and prolonged association with the field of study like that followed by Leach and Obeyesekera has no substitute. But in view of limitations and constraints inherent to this technique, in depth studies conducted within selected "Laboratory Areas" (1.13.) and "pilot project areas", combining where possible the questionnaire method with the farm record book method and its variants could be visualized as a feasible compromise. The recent experiments with farm record books have much to commend themselves, although, thus far, their results have suffered from the smallness and the bias of the samples. It might, however, be feasible to extend the scope of these experiments with a view to increasing the size of the samples and reducing the bias if some of the larger research organisations were to work in collaboration with each other and also obtain the assistance of other institutions like the schools and the University.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTES

The following annotated bibliography contains about 90 entries out of a possible total of about 130 'agrarian' writings of the review period to which the writer had access.

Publications of the main research organizations are listed under their respective names, arranged alphabetically according to the authors' names except where it is considered appropriate to introduce several writings in a group. Other writings are listed in a separate section at the end.

1. Agrarian Research and Training Institute, Colombo

RSS = Research Study Series

OP = Occasional Publication

- 1.1 Abeysekera, T. & Senanayake, P., *Economics of Vegetable Production and Marketing: A Case Study of Villages in Palugama (Wellimada)*, RSS No. 2, (mimeo.) 1974. 66p.

A report of a study conducted in 4 purposively selected villages in a major vegetable producing area in the up-country. It substantiates what has already been known about the potential of highland vegetable production to generate high incomes, provided the producers are enabled to obtain a fair price for their products and the private middlemen who now play an exploitative role are eliminated from the channels of marketing.

- 1.2 ARTI, *Smallholdings of the Coconut Triangle*, OP No. 2, (mimeo.) 1973. 34 p.

This report, sub-titled 'a case study of 245 smallholdings in Colombo, Kurunegala and Puttalam districts', represents a blatant misuse of the sample survey technique. Apart from the minuteness of the sample (there are over 400,000 coconut smallholdings in these districts), it has been drawn from the register of participants of the Fertilizer Subsidy Scheme, thereby introducing an obvious bias. The data obtained are thus of very little value. The conclusions (eg. smallholdings display poor standards of husbandry) and the recommendations (eg. more credit should be made available to the smallholders) are even less so.

- 1.3 ARTI, *Agrarian Situation Relating to Paddy Cultivation in Five Selected Districts of Sri Lanka—*

1.3.1. *Hambantota District*, RSS No. 6, 1974. 148 p.

1.3.2. *Kandy District*, RSS No. 7, 1974. 150 p.

1.3.3. *Polonnaruwa District*, RSS No. 8, 1975. 119 p.

1.3.4. *Anuradhapura District*, RSS No. 9, 1975. 93 p.

1.3.5. *Colombo District*, RSS No. 10, 1975. 69 p.

1.3.6. *Comparative Analysis*, RSS No. 11, 1975. 37 p.

This was intended to be an "introductory inquiry" into the major socio-economic and environmental factors affecting paddy cultivation in 5 paddy producing districts. Field investigations on which the inquiry was based had a stratified multi-stage sample design and involved the interview of 160, 158, 162, 201 and 152 farmers respectively from the districts referred to above.

Each district report follows a near uniform pattern and discusses a range of agrarian issues relating to tenure, scale, credit, labour, management, productivity, income and institutions. The last report presents inter-district comparisons thereof.

The reports caution the reader about the possible "non-representativeness" of the samples and also about other limitations of the field data. But, in discussions of such data the recurrently implicit (or, at times, explicit) notion is that the data portray agrarian reality as it prevails in the different districts. However, collectively the reports spotlight some interesting phenomena for further and more precise investigation. Certain "generalizations" drawn in the summary report (1.3.6.) are not substantiated by the individual district reports.

- 1.4. ARTI, *Socio-Economic Survey of the Beminiwatte Agricultural Productivity Committee Area*, RSS No. 13, 1975. 82p.

This area was "adopted" by the ARTI as its "Field Laboratory" in which to conduct in-depth surveys and experiments. The survey on which the present monograph is based was a preliminary fact-finding exercise which involved obtaining information from a multi-stage stratified sample of 426 households distributed over 16 villages within the area.

The survey design and objectives are similar to those of the "District Surveys" referred to above. But in view of the more intimate acquaintance gained of the field of study by the investigators, the data gathered are probably more reliable. A point which emerges from the field data is that there does not appear to be a significant relationship between yield on the one hand and the adoption of improved techniques (in paddy) like fertilizer use, weed control and transplanting, on the other. Unfortunately, this intriguing feature has been left unprobed.

- 1.5. Asmar, Samir & Kumarakulatumgam, R. V., *A Study of Seven Selected Agricultural Productivity Committees (APCs) and Cultivation Committees (CCs)*, OP No. 9, (mimeo.) 1975. 31p.

A report of an opinion survey conducted among members of APCs and CCs, government officials and a tiny sample of farmers in seven districts. Although it is claimed that 70 APC members, 70 CC member and 200 officials were interviewed, the tabulated results (for reasons not made clear to the reader) relate to much smaller "samples". In view of the haphazard manner in which the survey has been conducted, its results are of dubious value.

- 1.6. Chambers, Roberts, *Water Management and Paddy Production in Sri Lanka*, OP No. 8, (mimeo.) 1975. 34 p.

This thought provoking discussion of a variety of issues relating to water management in the colonization schemes of the Dry Zone, questions the validity of certain commonly held ideas and common practices of water use. The author argues convincingly that greater attention than in the past should be paid to water management because of the demonstratable economic gains from policies and practices geared to optimum utilization of water which, rather than land, is the scarce resource in the Dry Zone.

- 1.7. Ellman, A. O. & Ratnaweera, D. de S., *New Settlement Schemes in Sri Lanka* RSS No. 5, 1974. 224 p.

A monograph which contains the results of a study of recently established 'cooperative settlements' of which, at the time of the study, there were 4 types—viz., 43 Youth Settlement Schemes, 27 Cooperative Farms, 350 Divisional Development Council (DDC) Farms and 16 Land Reform Settlements in the country.

Following a concise general introduction to the settlement schemes and a statement of the objectives and method of study, the report sets out to deal with each type of settlement in separate chapters. These chapters, based as they are on "sample studies" of 5 settlements from each type, describes and evaluates them against their objectives. The study is concluded with a comparison of the different settlement types and with recommendations towards their improvement.

This bulky document, on close scrutiny, is less impressive than it appears at first sight. The data on the settlements in the samples, supposedly accumulated through in-depth investigation, could have been obtained from the records of the official agencies linked to the settlements in a managerial or supervisory capacity. Further, it is seen that certain conclusions are based on tenuous evidence. For example, although only one out of the five DDC Farms in the sample had communal ownership of land (and that too, a poultry project) the report states that both individual and communal ownership of land has worked successfully in the DDC Farms. Similarly, though only one sample DDC Farm was being managed by a Special Cooperative, the report declares that the Special Cooperatives are more efficient in the management of DDC Farms than Primary Cooperatives. Moreover, the individual units in the samples show that, measured against the objectives with which they were set up, they represent varying degrees of success. But the report makes no attempt to identify the general ingredients of success or failure.

In spite of these shortcomings, the monograph looms large in a relatively barren but important area within the field of agrarian research. It contains a succinct 'introduction' to the new settlements and is also useful as a collection of brief case studies.

- 1.8. Ellman, A. O., et. al., *Land Settlement in Sri Lanka, 1840-1975*, RSS No. 16, 1976. 94p & appendix.

This guide to the literature on land settlement in Sri Lanka introduces 54 "major writings" which are among a total of 194 entries in its bibliographic appendix. It is not comprehensive in its coverage of the field, it ignores certain controversies relating

to past settlement policy, and it provides summaries rather than reviews of the 54 writings selected for special treatment. Nevertheless, both for its perceptive 'Analytical Overview' and as a bibliographic source it is of undeniable value.

- 1.9 Ganewatte, P., *Fragmentation of Paddy Land*, OP No. 4, (mimeo.) 1974. 23 p.

This study is based on a "natural cluster" of 5 *purana* villages in Anuradhapura District. The relevant data have been obtained from official records as well as through interviews with key village officials and Cultivation Committee members. It is the smallness of the paddy parcels, the scattered nature of their distribution and the implications thereof, rather than fragmentation as a process, that is discussed in this study. One of its main findings is that the multiplicity and scatter of an individual's holdings contribute to the perpetuation of share tenancy.

- 1.10. Ganewatte, P., *Thattumaru and Kattimaru Systems of Rotation of Cultivation of Paddy Land*, OP No. 6 (mimeo.) 1974. 31 p.

A detailed study of the operation of two traditional systems of land tenure (which involve rotation of cultivation rights among co-owners of a plot or plots of land) in a village of Anuradhapura District, which illustrates the merits (prevention of fragmentation, reduction of conflicts and tension in the farming community) and the demerits (disincentive to improvement of the land for long-range benefits) of these systems. (see also, 7.27). The author's voyage of discovery into the etymology of place names is irrelevant to his theme.

- 1.11. Gooneratne, W., et. al., *The Role of Cultivation Committees in Agricultural Planning at Village Level*, OP No. 3, (mimeo.) 1974. 34 p.

Two Cultivation Committees (CCs) in the Beminiwatte "Field Laboratory Area" (1.4.) with contrasting records of performance were selected for detailed study with a view to identifying the causes for the contrast. Information obtained from about 10 percent of the farmers in each CC area and also from the village officials, provided the raw material for the study. The effective CC, unlike the other, was observed to consist of persons who genuinely represent the farming community.

- 1.12. Gooneratne, W., et. al., *Kurundankulama Dry Farming Settlement: A Socio-Economic Appraisal*, RSS No. 17, (mimeo.) 1977. 40 p.

Commencing with a brief account of the past vicissitudes of this scheme (begun in the early 1940s) the report proceeds to discuss a range of its present socio-economic characteristics. Field data have been obtained from an acceptable sample (65 households). The survey found that the standard of living in the scheme is perceptibly superior to that which prevails in the *purana* villages of the area. Despite a few errors of carelessness (in footnotes and Statistical tables) the report is well written and stands out in its genre as an important contribution.

- 1.13. Gooneratne, W., et. al., *Group Production: A Case Study*, OP No. 14, (mimeo.) 1977.

A record of the results of a multi-stage experiment in "group farming" (defined as a form of farm organization which involves individual ownership of land among members of a group of farmers, but collective decision making and integrated activity in certain aspects of cultivation, supplies and marketing) conducted by the ARTI in collaboration with certain other agencies in the "Field Laboratory" of Beminiwatte (1.4.). The results of the experiment, though inconclusive regarding its potential for wider application, nevertheless demonstrate distinct advantages of the group farming technique. The experiment also signifies a departure from the conventional 'passive observer' role of the social scientist in agrarian research.

- 1.14. Izumi, K. & Ranatunga, A. S., *Production of Other Crops in Paddy Fields in Yala*, 1972, RSS No. 4, (mimeo.) 1974.

A study of the possibilities and implications of growing subsidiary food crops on irrigable land during the *yala* season, based on data from record keeping farms in the colonies of Elahera and Dewahawa. The authors concede that their field data are not representative of the larger setting of the Dry Zone.

- 1.15. Izumi, K. & Ranatunga, A. S., *Cost of Production of Paddy, Yala 1972*, OP No. 19 ; *Cost of Production of Paddy, Maha 1972-73*, OP No. 5, 1974.

These studies are based on information obtained from Farm Record Books maintained by about 114 farmers in 5 districts. The data obtained from the individual farms probably have a high level of precision and reliability. But in view of the minute sample, the data cannot be used to portray a general picture.

2. Central Bank of Ceylon, Colombo

- 2.1. Abeygunawardena, W., 'Optimum Size of Farm Holdings in Agriculture in Sri Lanka with special reference to paddy cultivation', *Staff Studies*, 6 (2), 1976, pp. 147-755.

This study attempts a techno-economic evaluation of the different size classes of paddy holdings and, on slender empirical evidence, concludes that the medium scale farms (holdings of 1 to 5 ac.) show the best performance in terms of yield, fertilizer use and labour productivity.

- 2.2. Department of Economic Research, *Survey of Economic Conditions in the Mahaveli Development Area (MDA)*, 1974.

This investigation was undertaken to "determine the economic conditions" of the MDA on the eve of the initial diversion of the Mahaveli water to the tank systems of Kala Oya and Tamankaduwa. It was based on a stratified, multi-stage sample survey, and, it is claimed, that in addition to the direct questionnaire method, the "open interview method", the "archival method" and the "observation method" were used to gather the required information. The investigation is typical of the 'general surveys' which we have discussed earlier. The section of the report dealing with 'methodology' leaves the impression that it was intended to lull the reader into a state of unquestioning trust. For example, the reader is informed that the "archival method" was used to obtain data on aspects such as inputs and costs (p. 16). But what this method is and how it was used are kept secret. Space does not permit references to many other similar defects. This methodological vagueness plus the haste with which the survey appears to have been conducted (despite the claim that rapport with the informants was established even before the investigators arrived in the field, through the radio and newspapers!) make the reader wonder about the usefulness of the entire exercise. Perhaps, the only useful 'bench-mark' information which the report contains is the data on housing and services (there is a class-interval blunder in the tabulation of the latter data) in the settlements studied.

- 2.3. De Silva, L., 'A Critical Evaluation of Agricultural policy 1960-68', *Staff Studies*, 1 (1), 1971, pp. 93-110.

An overview of policies and developmental achievements in peasant agriculture. (No mention of plantation agriculture) Contains nothing new for the cognoscenti.

- 2.4. Jayatilake, K. E., S. & Tennekoon, M. U. A., 'Competitiveness of Chilli and Paddy Cultivation: An Examination of Data from Anuradhapura District', *Staff Studies*, 5 (1), 1975, pp. 191-200.

An analysis of data gathered from 15 randomly selected villages of the study area, which shows that despite some comparative advantages which chilli had over rice (in 1973), there has been no significant diversion of resources from rice to chilli.

- 2.5. Sandaratne, Nimal, 'Agricultural Productivity Considerations of the Land Reform Law of 1972', *Staff Studies*, 4 (1), 1974: pp. 57-54.

Introduces the reform law and discusses the principal agrarian changes that would accompany its implementation. At the time of its publication it was a very useful source of information.

- 2.6. Tennekoon, M. U. A., 'A Note on Some Social and Economic Problems of Subsistence Farming in Rural Settlements in the Dry Zone', *Staff Studies*, 2 (1), 1972, pp. 1-56.

An essay on the Dry Zone and its settlements which describes (not for the first time) some agrarian phenomena.

3. UNDP/FAO, Agricultural Diversification Project, Peradeniya (ADP)

- 3.1. Settlement and Land Use Studies.

- 3.1.1. Ahmed, M. M. A., et. al., *Socio-Economic Studies of the Established Village Expansion Schemes in the Gurugoda Oya-Ritigaha Oya Catchments*, (mimeo) 1975. 44 p.

Seven Village Expansion Settlements located in an area of about 32,000 acres in Kegalle District were studied through a field investigation which involved obtaining data from 53 families "selected in a quasi-random nature". The field data tabulated in the report relate to a variety of demographic and economic aspects. The report shows that the annual net farm income derived from the present allotments (which range from .5 to 2.5 ac.) is inadequate and recommends that they should be made larger.

- 3.1.2. Ellman, A. O. & Wijekoon, L. D., *Socio-Economic Survey...in the Nilambe-Atabage and Gurugoda-Ritigaha River Catchments*, (mimeo.) 1975. 25 p. & statistical appendix.

This is an attempt to "fill the gap" in information on the population living in two catchments which were earmarked as development areas under the Agricultural Diversification Project. It contains data on demographic aspects, land ownership and tenure, labour and employment, agriculture, industries etc., but does not explain satisfactorily how certain sets of data (eg. those relating to employment) were obtained.

- 3.1.3. Ahmed, M. M. A. et. al., *Economic Assessment of the Proposed Land Use Adjustment Plans for Nilambe-Atabage Catchments*, (mimeo.), 1975.
 3.1.4. ADP Project Proposal for *Huluganga-Kotaganga Catchments*, (mimeo.), 1976.
 3.1.5. ADP Project Proposal for the *Development of Mahawak-Nambapana Catchment*, 1976.

These monographs (3.1.3.-3.1.5.) contain proposal formulated within the Agricultural Diversification Project. They involve major land use changes in areas that range in size from about 25,000 to 45,000 acres. Implications of the proposed changes on population, investment, production, employment and income are worked out on the basis of empirical data and extrapolations from such data. The concept of land use planning within the framework of stream catchments has its attractions, specially if the larger national issues and implications are not lost sight of. Unfortunately, it appears that at least in some of the proposals this in fact has happened. For example, a financial outlay of Rs. 77 million over a five-year period is recommended for diversifying about 22,000 acres of "uneconomic" tea to other uses such as mixed gardening, dairying and sericulture in the Nilambe-Atabage catchment. The proposal, however, does not consider as an alternative, the possible effects of replanting the uneconomic tea with high-yielding VP teas. (With Rs. 77 million, it is possible to replant about 23,000 acres of tea.)

- 3.1.6. Ariyaratnam, E. A. & McConnell, D. J., *Actual and Conditional Economics of Replanting Tea in the Mid-Country of Sri Lanka*, (mimeo.) 1974.

With data from 50 mid-country (2,000' to 4,000') tea estates; costs of replanting rates of replanting from 1961 to 1973, and the yields and net returns obtained, from replanting have been worked out. "Conditional Economics" of replanting have also been computed for varying technical, cost and price conditions. This elegant exercise fulfils its objective of providing a guide (for replanting or for diversification) to the mid-country tea estates.

- 3.1.7. Moll, H. A. J., *Economic Assessment of the Diversification of Tea Land in the Mid-Country of Sri Lanka*. (mimeo.) 1976. 22 p. & appendix.

This contains the results of a comparative economic evaluation of tea growing in the mid-country in 1975 and certain alternative forms of cropping for the area. An incidental point which emerges from the data presented is that there is a significant relationship between yield and cost in tea production, one in which cost per pound declines as yield per acre increases. (a similar relationship is known to exist in the case of plantation rubber).

3.2. Production Economics Studies, ADP.

- 3.2.1. Kuhonta, Precioso, C., *Cocoa Industry of Sri Lanka*, (mimeo.) 1973.
 3.2.2. Kuhonta; Precioso C., et. al., *Coffee Production in Sri Lanka*, (mimeo.) 1973.
 3.2.3. Kuhonta, Precioso, C. et. al., *Pineapple Production in Sri Lanka*, (mimeo.) 1973.
 3.2.4. Kuhonta, Precioso C. et. al., *Passion Fruit Production in Sri Lanka*, (mimeo.) 1973.

3.3. Farm Management Reports, ADP.

- 3.3.1. McConnell, D. J. & Upawansa, G. K., *Pepper*, (mimeo.) 1974.
 3.3.2. —do— *Cinnamon*, (mimeo.) 1974.
 3.3.3. —do— *Cloves*, (mimeo.) 1974.
 3.3.4. —do— *Nutmeg and Mace*, (mimeo.) 1974.
 3.3.5. —do— *Cardamon*, (mimeo.) 1974.
 3.3.6. McConnell, D. J., et. al., *Citronella* (mimeo.) 1974.

Production Economic Studies and Farm Management Reports of the ADP, along with the writings listed in Section 6, below, are monographs on crops most of which have been either increasing in importance during the recent past or present potential for development as 'non-traditional exports'. These works are often similar in outline and are aimed at filling an information gap. Commencing with the overall historical, distributional and marketing aspects, they provide detailed information on "samples" investigated in the field. Systematic sampling has often been hampered by the absence of proper sample frames. Also, at times, the samples investigated are embarrassingly small. Despite such defects, these monographs are of undeniable value as sources of information which has hitherto been unavailable.

4. Department of Agriculture, Division of Agricultural Economics, Peradeniya, Agricultural Economic Studies = AES.

- 4.1. Sathasivampillai, K., *A Study of the use of Farm Record Books*, AES No. 9, (mimeo.) 1974.

This study was undertaken to test the feasibility of the farm record book method of field data collection in agrarian research. A "purposive sample" of 86 farmers from the 22 districts in the country were requested to record detailed farming information in record books prepared and distributed among them. The maintenance of these records was regularly supervised by personnel from the department. At the end of the year, 76 units had satisfactory records. The study concludes that the use of farm record books by "average Ceylonese farmers" is feasible.

Subsequently, the Division of Agricultural Economics made use of the farm record books for the following publications which are among a total of about 20 similar ones.

- 4.2. Sathasivampillai, K., *Farm Business Analysis of three Agricultural Projects of Sri Lanka, 1971-72*, (mimeo.) 1973.

A study of the settlement projects at Rajangana, Muthu Iyankuddu and Visuwadukulam, which had specialized in 'high value' crops. While data were obtained from samples of 10 percent of the settlers at Muthu Iyankuddu and Visuwadukulam, it had been possible to obtain the required records from only .01 percent of those at Rajangana.

- 4.3. Sathasivampillai, K., *A Production Economic Study of Paddy Cultivation in Mannar District*, AES No. 11, (mimeo.) 1974.

A study based on data from a "sample" of 18 farmers in the district.

- 4.4. Sathasivampillai, K., *Farm Business Analysis of an Educated Youth Scheme (Visuwamadukulam) of Sri Lanka, 1972-1973*, AES No. 12, (mimeo.) 1974.

A continuation of the investigation initiated the previous year (4.2.) based on 50 farm record books.

- 4.5. Sathasivampillai K. & de Silva, G. A. C., *Potato-Vegetable Cultivation in Nuwara Eliya District of Sri Lanka*, AES No. 16 (mimeo.) 1976.

Examines the problems associated with potato and vegetable production in the district using data from 44 farm record books supplemented with other information obtained from a random sample of 167 farmers. The combination of the farm record technique and the conventional questionnaire method is an interesting innovation. The study shows that potato production is highly profitable and that in the season preceding the survey the average net profit per acre of this crop was about Rs. 6,500.

- 4.6. Sathasivampillai K. & de Silva, S. A. C., *Farm Business Management in the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka*, AES No. 17 (mimeo.) 1976. 164 p.

A study based on a "purposive sample" of 325 record keeping farms distributed over the entire Dry Zone (except Trincomalee District). The results cannot, and were not intended to, be applicable to the whole region.

- 4.7. Sathasivampillai, K., *Farm Business Analysis of an Educated Youth Settlement Scheme (Visuwamadukulam) of Sri Lanka, 1973-74*, AES No. 23, (mimeo.) 1977.

A continuation of an earlier study (4.2. & 4.4.) which reveals a sharp downward trend in the settlers' incomes.

- 4.8. Sathasivampillai, K., *Farm Business Analysis of an Educated Girls' Scheme (Mirusuvil) of Sri Lanka, 1974-75*, AES No. 24 (mimeo.) 1977.

Presents detailed data on an acceptable sample. Shows, among other things, that grape vine is the crop best suited to the agro-ecological conditions in the farm.

Most of the writings referred to in section 4 have a similar format. They are compendia of statistical tables on Physical Inputs, Labour Use, Expenditure in relation to Capital Investment, Per Acre Costs of Production, Yield and Farm Business Accomplishments (measured in terms of farm income, size of business, and other indices relating to yield, cropping intensity, cropping system, commercialization and returns). This uniformity facilitates certain valid and interesting cross comparisons.

The fact that explanatory notes, for the most part confined to brief definitions of terminology combines, with the clumsy performance of the "efficient typists" who figure in the Acknowledgements to make the perusal of these documents rather wearisome.

5. Mahaveli Development Board (MDB), Settlement Planning Division, Colombo.

- 5.1. Bulankulame, S., *Socio-Economic Survey on Temples and Temple Lands in Area H of the Mahaveli Project*, (mimeo.) 1976.

A report on land tenure and agriculture based on information on all temple lands (an aggregate extent of 1510 acres or about 2 percent of the total area in H) owned by about 60 temples. Claiming that about 27 percent of this acreage lies idle and that there are feudalistic tenurial relationships on temple lands, the report recommends a reduction of the area owned by each temple to a maximum of 10 acres and the "emancipation of the temple tenants". Very progressive!

- 5.2. MDB, *Sample Survey in Areas H and IH of the Mahaveli Development Project* (mimeo.) 1976.

A collection of statistical tables on population, labour, land ownership, land tenure, cropping systems, agricultural technology, farm inputs, indebtedness, credit and income in the existing settlements of the study area. No information is given on the method of data collection.

- 5.3. MDB, *Kala Oya Left Bank Socio-Economic Survey*, (a series of reports on Blocks 301 to 314) (mimeo.) 1974 & 1975.

The data upon which these reports are based have been obtained from all households in the respective study areas. Collectively they were intended to serve as "benchmark" studies of an area in which dramatic agrarian changes were anticipated.

- 5.4. Perera, K. Lionel, *Socio-Economic Survey of Bowatenna*, (mimeo.) 1973. (in Sinhala) A report of a sample survey in an area within the Mahaveli Project. With disarming frankness the author admits that it is not possible to extract accurate data through this type of survey.

6. Ministry of Plantation Industry, Colombo.

- 6.1. de Silva, Sumith, *A Report on...the Cardamon Cultivation Industry* (mimeo.) 1974.

- 6.2. —do— *A Report on...the Cocoa Industry of Sri Lanka*, (mimeo.) 1974.

- 6.3. —do— *A Report on...the Papain Cultivation Industry in the South-Eastern Papain Region of Sri Lanka*, (mimeo.) 1974.

see notes in section 3.2 and 3.3, above.

7. Other Writings

- 7.1. Abeyesinghe, Ariya, *Efficient use of land in the Plantation Sector of Sri Lanka*, Ministry of Plantation Industry, Colombo, 1974.

A brief discussion of the position of plantation agriculture in Sri Lanka's economy followed by a somewhat shallow analysis of the policies pursued and the programmes implemented by the government *vis-a-vis* the plantation sector in the recent past. Useful only to the ignorami.

- 7.2. Amarasinghe, Nihal, *Economic and Social Implications of the Introduction of High-Yielding Varieties of Rice on Settlement Schemes in Ceylon*, University of Sri Lanka, Faculty of Agriculture, Peradeniya, 1972.

This study is based on the Minipe Colonization Scheme and is divided into two parts. The first part provides an introduction to land settlement in the Dry Zone; a physical, demographic and socio-economic background to the Minipe scheme and an explanation of the method of study. The second deals mainly with institutional, infrastructural and technological changes that have accompanied the recent spread of high-yielding varieties of seed paddy in the colony, and is based on data obtained from a sample of 62 farmers in three Cultivation Committee areas within the study area. The questionnaire used in the field, which is appended to the report, suggest an over-reliance on the memory of the informants in the process of extracting certain sets of information. The field data, however, are handled with skill.

- 7.3. Amarasinghe, Nihal, 'Increasing Farm Incomes and Efficiency in Resource Use under Peasant Farming Conditions in Sri Lanka; *Journal of the National Science Council of Sri Lanka*, 3 (2), 1975, : pp. 72-99.

Information obtained from a sample of 40 farmers at Minipe forms the raw material of this study which has involved an attempt to use sophisticated techniques of data analysis. That the spread of high-yielding varieties brings about phenomenal changes in the farming system, that the objective of maximizing farm incomes does not conflict with more intensive utilization of land and labour and that diversification to 'high value crops' on irrigated land during *yala* increases incomes and facilitates more intensive utilization of physical and human resources are among the principal findings of this study. Some statistical tables referred to in the text are missing.

- 7.4. Dias, Hiran D., 'Land Reform Policy in the Context of HYV's, *Proceedings ARTI/IDS Seminar on Economic and Social Consequences of Improved Seeds*, April 19-May 20, 1974, Kandy, Sri Lanka (mimeo.)

A discussion of the influence (or the lack of it) of scale and tenurial variations in paddy holdings on rates of adoption of high-yielding seed and on the efficiency of its management as reflected in yield levels. The article is based on data from several field investigation.

- 7.5. Evers, Hans-Dieter, 'Temple Lands and Rajakariya: The Kandyan Lankatilaka Rajamaha Viharaya', *Ceylon Studies Seminar*, 1969-70 Series No. 6, University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya, (mimeo.) 1970.

Provides a descriptive account of the land holding and service tenure systems of an important Kandyan temple. The author concludes that "purely from an economic point of view" the temple tenurial system is one of "crude exploitation of a land hungry and poor peasantry". (This article is one of many writings by Evers which is of interest to the agrarian researcher).

- 7.6. Fonseka, H. N. C., 'Problems of Agriculture in the Gal-Oya (left bank) Peasant Colony', *Modern Ceylon Studies*, 2 (1), 1971: pp. 69-75.

Contains brief discussions on a range of agrarian problems in the study area, all of which are related to non-optimized use of resources and technology.

- 7.7. Ganewatte, P., *Campbell's Land Youth Settlement Scheme, A Case Study*, Land Commissioner's Department, Colombo, (mimeo.) 1973.

A report of an investigation conducted in 1973 of a cooperative settlement scheme begun in 1966. At its inception, the scheme had 108 rural youths living and working together in a communally held farm of 240 acres. From its very early stages there had been a high drop-out rate among the scheme participants whose number had dwindled to 57 by early 1970, when, in response to a clamour among those still in the scheme, the government apportioned out the land in 2½ acre blocks on an individual basis.

- 7.8. Gooneratne, Wilbert, *Land Tenure Problems and Land Reform in Sri Lanka*, Institute of Developing Economies, (VRF Series No. 39), Tokyo, 1975.

This monograph traces the evolution of the present pattern of land use and land tenure in Sri Lanka, examines the country's land policy from the mid-1930s to the present day and shows that the reform programme initiated in 1972 was the first attempt at "serious re-structure" of land relations in the country. It then proceeds to discuss the reform of 1972, with special reference to its scope, limitations and implications.

- 7.9. Gunatilleke, Godfrey, 'Some Demographic Aspects of Integrated Rural Development', *Marga*, 4 (1), 1977: pp. 56-82.

An essay which deals mainly with the mutual interaction of demographic and socio-economic processes of change in the rural sector.

- 7.10. Herring, Ronald J., 'The Forgotten 1953 Paddy Lands Act in Ceylon: Ideology, Capacity and Response', *Modern Ceylon Studies*, 3 (2), 1972: pp. 99-124.

An interpretation of the political ideologies and contrasting perceptions of the agrarian problems which moulded the attempts to regulate share tenancy through the Paddy Lands Acts of 1953 and 1958. The article is concise, rich in content and is highly readable.

- 7.11. Jogaratnam, T., *Report on the Re-Survey of Elahera Colonization Scheme in Ceylon* 1971, University, Faculty of Agriculture, Peradeniya, 1971.

An evaluation of the Programme of Intensive Agricultural Development initiated at Elahera in 1967-68. The evaluation was facilitated by the availability of socio-economic data from a "bench-mark" study conducted by the author in 1967. The evaluation revealed that although paddy yields in the area had increased since 1967, some of the improvements expected of the programme of intensification had failed to materialize.

- 7.12. Kanagaratnam, S., 'Muthu Iyankuddu Youth Settlement Scheme', *Opportunities for Youth on Land*, Marga Institute, Colombo, 1972: pp. 1-14.

This article describes a youth settlement scheme which was inaugurated in the mid-1960s and developed in 4 stages until there were about 300 settlers working on 3-acre individual allotments. The scheme, it is shown, had achieved a measure of success in the sense that by the early 1970s the average annual net income per settler had risen to about Rs. 6,000. (see also, 4.2. above)

- 7.13. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, *Staggered Cultivation of Paddy: A Case Study of Amparai District*, Colombo, (mimeo.) 1972.

A report based on data obtained through a sample survey of 48.7% of the households in 4 units of the Gal Oya Left Bank colony, which shows that the non-adherence by the colonists to cultivation calendars (mainly a result of shortages in tractors, draught animals and credit) leads to problems like waste of physical resources and crop failures. (see, Chambers' comments on this problem in 1.6.)

- 7.14. Narayanasamy, S., 'New Approaches to Settlements in Sri Lanka', *Ceylon Studies Seminar*, Proceedings of conference, August 16-20, 1974, University, Peradeniya, 1976.

Presents a brief historical survey of settlement development in Sri Lanka since the early 1930s and a discussion of the recent trends in settlement strategy.

- 7.15. Peiris, G. H., 'Agricultural Growth through Decentralization and Popular Participation: A Study of DDC Farm Projects in Kandy District', *Modern Ceylon Studies*, 3 (1), 1974, pp. 60-94.

An evaluation, based on field investigations, of the performance of 10 DDC Cooperative Farms. The article spotlights the gaps between their expectations and achievements and predicts that the manner in which the farms were being operated indicates gloomy prospects for their future.

- 7.16. Peiris, G. H., 'Current Land Reforms and Peasant Agriculture in Sri Lanka', *South Asia*, 5, 1976: pp. 78-89.

A somewhat premature attempt to assess the probable impact of the changes envisaged through the Land Reform Law No. 1 of 1972 on agriculture in the peasant sector. The article is based on data from secondary sources.

- 7.17. Peiris, G. H., 'Share Tenancy and Tenurial Reform in Sri Lanka', *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies*, VI (1), 1976: pp. 24-54.

A review and synthesis of writings on share tenancy in Sri Lanka and on attempts at its regulation.

- 7.18. Peiris, G. H., 'Land Reform and Agrarian Change in Sri Lanka', *Modern Asian Studies*, (to be published in 1978).

This article examines the impact of the land reform programme initiated in 1972 on the agrarian structure of the country. It is based on unpublished data obtained from the Land Reform Commission, State Plantation Corporation, Janawasama, Usawasama and other official sources.

- 7.19. Pieris, Ralph, 'Alternative Strategies for Employment Oriented Agricultural Projects', *Marga*, 3 (1), 1976: pp.

With forcefully stated commonsense, the author argues that agricultural strategy in Sri Lanka must aim primarily at maximizing production and that, for this, it is necessary to re-structure agriculture on a large-scale basis. The article is also an eloquent exposé of the absence of clarity and coherence in some aspects of contemporary agrarian thought.

- 7.20. Ratnaweera, D. de S., *New Settlement Schemes of Sri Lanka*, Colombo, 1977.

This monograph presents the results of a re-evaluation of the cooperative settlements which were the subject of an earlier collaborative study (1.7.). The objectives of the present study are similar, but it had the advantage of a longer time-span to examine. The author claims that his data were obtained through detailed investigation which even involved "participant observation". If this were so, it seems as if he has kept most of his in-depth findings to himself. However, since the strategies that formed the framework of these settlements are now likely to undergo some change, this collection of case studies could be useful for future reference.

- 7.21. Sanderatne, Nimal, 'Sri Lanka's New Land Reform', *South Asian Review*, 6 (1), 1972: pp. 7-19.

Similar in scope and content to 2.5., above.

- 7.22. Sanderatne, Nimal, 'Tenancy in Ceylon's Paddy Lands: The 1958 Reform', *South Asian Review*, 5 (2), 1972: pp. 117-136.

A Concise discussion of the impact of the Paddy Lands Act of 1958 on share tenancy in Sri Lanka.

- 7.23. Van Eersel, B. W. & de Jong, H., *Report on Youth Settlement Scheme Project in Ceylon*, The Hague, 1970.

A report submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture by two volunteer advisors. It embodies discussions based on intimate personal experiences on issues such as management, leadership and discipline in youth settlements, the need for providing better facilities at the settlements and the reasons for the poor performance of a majority of the settlements.

- 7.24. Wanasinghe, Ananda, *Some Techno-Economic Aspects of Agriculture in the Chandrika-weva and Tract 12 Settlements of the Uda Walawe Project*, River Valleys Development Board, Angunukolapelessa, (mimeo.) 1974.

A report of a survey conducted among a sample of approximately 185 farmers. The sample design is not clearly described. Adds very little to existing knowledge.

- 7.25. Weerawardena, I. K., *Land Tenure Data: Sri Lanka*, Rural Institutions & Productivity Law Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Land, Colombo, (mimeo.) 1977. 31 p.

A compendium of statistical tables on the number of farmers, tenurial types, and the extents under different crops, compiled with data obtained from Agricultural Land Registers maintained by the 496 Agricultural Productivity Committees in the country. Useful, especially in the absence of a recent census of agriculture.

- 7.26. Weerawardena, I. K., *Lessons of an Experiment*, Colombo, 1975. 83 p. + xxip.

A penetrating analysis of the operation of the Paddy Lands Act from its introduction in 1958 to its repeal in 1973, based largely on the author's experience as an agrarian administrator. It highlights administrative, institutional and legal problems that were encountered in the implementation of the Act. The monograph reflects a passionate commitment on the part of the author to the objectives of the Act.

- 7.27. Weerawardene, I. K., & Collonnage, I., *Thattumaru and Kattimaru Study*, Department of Agrarian Services, Colombo (mimeo.) 1971.

An "evaluation study" of the two systems of land tenure (see, 1.10.) in Mahagama South Cultivation Committee Area. It clarifies some definitional problems and discusses the operation of the two systems in the study area, bringing into focus their counter-productive aspects. The authors recommend legislative measures for the eradication of Thattumaru and Kattimaru. Careful editing could have made this very usefull study more eligant and more concise.

- 7.28. Weitz, R., & Kedem, A. et. al., *Uda Walave Project, Ceylon: A Comparative Study of Two Regional Planning Alternatives*, Settlement Study Centre, Rehovot, (Israel), (mimeo.) 1971.

This report discusses the drawbacks of the conventional "scattered" pattern of settlement construction in the colonies of the Dry Zone and submits alternative physical plans involving hierarchical "cluster" patterns which are aimed at the optimal utilization of the land for agriculture and facilitating "maximum proximity" of the living quarters in the settlements to each other and to the services in the settlement centre. The alternative models are based specifically on Tract 12 of the Uda Walave project.

- 7.29. Wimaladharma, K. P., & Clifford, John, 'The Operation of the Paddy Lands Act in a Village in the North Central Province', *Ceylon Studies Seminar*, 1973 Series, No. 3, University, Peradeniya, (mimeo.) 15 p.

A study based on a *purana* village which shows that the provisions of the Paddy Lands Act were inappropriate to the socio-economic milieu of paddy cultivation in the village.

- 7.30. Wimaladharma, K. P., *Agricultural Diversification in Sri Lanka*, Agricultural Diversification Project, Peradeniya, (mimeo.) 1977.

An annotated bibliography of the publications of the Crop Diversification Project, upto April, 1977.

THE EARLIEST AMERICAN IMPACT ON SRI LANKA

The American Mission Seminary in Jaffna

JAMES T. RUTNAM

The earliest American contacts with Ceylon, now known as Sri Lanka, were trading vessels that called at Galle, Colombo and Trincomalee from 1788 onwards. The first serious attempts to establish contacts of a more enduring nature in Asia by Americans came not from traders but from Christian-Missionaries. Their intention was to make India their field, but they were faced with the refusal of the British East India Company to permit them to do so. It was thus that Samuel Newell, who had gone with the first batch of these missionaries to Calcutta and been forced to quit in 1812, proceeded to Mauritius and then to Ceylon, arriving in Galle in 1813. Following Newell's report, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Boston, Massachusetts, decided in 1815 to send a band of missionaries headed by Daniel Poor to Ceylon and eventually to the Tamil speaking district of Jaffna, in the north of the island and closest to India.

The War of 1812 was over with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent in December 1814. The missionaries left New England the following year on 13 October and arrived in Ceylon on 22 March 1816. Poor came with his wife and was accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. James Richards, Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Meigs, Mr. and Mrs. Horatio Bardwell and Mr. Edward Warren. Of these, the Bardwells went over to Bombay. The rest stayed for a few months in Colombo assisting other Christian missionaries. In the meantime they learnt Tamil under Gabriel Tissera, a son of Roman Catholic parents, and Franciscus Malleappa, a son of a Tamil proponent under the Dutch who had held the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon before the British.

Tissera and Malleappa were evidently good teachers, for, Poor, no mean scholar himself, was able to preach in Tamil within a year of his learning the language. Soon the two Tamil youths were ready to accompany Poor and his colleagues as their interpreters, for Jaffna. Warren left first arriving at Jaffna,

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travelling in a palanquin along the western coast, on 11 July 1816. The others reached Jaffna soon afterwards. In a letter dated 13 June 1816 to William Wilberforce, Governor Brownrigg of Ceylon covered these events as follows: When a foreign missionary, an American, came to the island in 1813, he wrote his reception was such as to produce a letter of thanks from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, a copy of which I enclose. I will not enlarge on the subject, except merely to state that during the stay of that Missionary in Ceylon, I was placed in a very delicate situation, for I had reasons to apprehend that my protection of American Missionaries might involve me in some embarrassment with the East India Company's Governments. The five American Missionaries announced in the Commissioners' letter are arrived, and I have just acceded to their request of establishing themselves in Jaffna, the Northern Province of this Island.

Conditions prevailing at this time are best described by J. V. Chelliah in his book "A Century of English Education". When the first missionaries came to Jaffna, he wrote, there were only a few Tamil schools here and there, and only a few could read, and write with style and *ola*, but very few could read the printed character with ease and fluency. The missionaries, therefore, strove to raise up a reading population by establishing free vernacular schools in different villages. But they found that the desire of the people for education was so small, and their prejudice against missionary work so great, that it was a difficult task at first to induce parents to send their children to these schools. The teachers were, to begin with, necessarily Hindus, and it was difficult to procure even these. The first free schools were established at Tellippalai and Mallagam with 30 boys. These were taught to read and write the Tamil language and had instruction in small works of poetry and arithmetic and geography on the European Plan. They had in addition, instruction in Scripture. Some of the pupils, who had studied under Rev. Mr. Palm, an L. M. S. Missionary, who had worked at Tellippalai before the advent of the Americans, were given assistance in the study of English.

The missionaries, we are told, were not satisfied with the meagre education in these free schools, and were anxious to attempt a more thorough system of training by keeping promising pupils entirely under their influence. They decided to start Free Boarding Schools, the first Free Boarding Schools, it is believed, in Asia. The children were slow in coming. Six small boys formed the first batch at Tellippalai. Another school was started at the other centre at Vaddukoddai. With the extension of Missions at Uduvil, Pandaterruppu and Manipay, Boarding Schools, too, for both sexes were established at these places. The pupils, Chelliah states, were boarded and clothed free, and their expenses were paid by individuals and associations in America. Names designated by the benefactors were given to the pupils. Instruction at these boarding schools was given to pupils in English and Tamil. The subjects included Scripture, Arithmetic, Grammar and Geography.

Proselytizing in the sense we now understand—a term that describes a misguided religious zeal—was never practised by the American Mission. There were no forcible conversions. The missionaries depended entirely on precept and example to gain their spiritual objectives. They set great store on education, on dialogue and finally on conviction and a genuine change of heart, for which consummation they were ready to pray and wait patiently. This explains why there was not a single case of baptism of a non-Christian in their field for as long as five years.

With the rapid expansion of missionary activity, particularly in the field of education, additional personnel was needed. Early in 1820 Levi Spaulding, Miron Winslow, Henry Woodward and John Scudder arrived in Ceylon with their wives. Brownrigg was still Governor of Ceylon, but as it transpired later, these missionaries had not come a day too soon. They arrived just as the Governor Sir Robert Brownrigg was retiring from office. His official consent to their residence was given the day before he left. When the Lieutenant-Governor Sir Edward Barnes protested, he said that he was Governor as long as he remained in the island, and he it was who should give permission. Sir Edward Barnes replied, "Very well, they will soon die off and we shall not allow any more to come".

The canard that the Ceylon Government had relegated the American missionaries to the "arid" north (of Ceylon) to perish there appears to have sprung from this story. Indeed it should now be clear that Jaffna was selected for other reasons. "It is a curious fact", says a writer, "that from the announcement of this programme (by Barnes) till its withdrawal in 1832 (by Horton) the American Mission lost only one man by death and suffered little from sickness. Two members of this company lived and worked fifty years in Jaffna". The "curse" had no effect.

But Barnes did have his revenge. For after Brownrigg's departure in 1820 when Barnes was Governor, James Garret came over to Ceylon to take charge of the Mission's printing press. Barnes would not allow him to stay, and he had to leave finally for Bombay. Barnes, a Waterloo veteran, fumed and fretted that he considered it "an impertinence on the part of Americans to come to Ceylon for Missionary work since every needed effort in that direction was already being made by his Majesty's Government".

Barnes sneered at the Americans and got his Deputy Secretary William Granville to write to the Missionaries in a letter dated 22 September 1820 that when he considered the vast extensive regions of the American continent, many of the populous tribes of which were to that hour in all the darkness of heathen barbarism, he could not but think their pious labours might be far more advantageously exerted in their cause than in that of a people already subsisting under a Christian Government.

He even dared to reopen the question of the other missionaries who were earlier permitted by Brownrigg to stay, and his dispatch to Lord Bathurst, the Secretary of State, dated October 10, 1820 affords interesting reading. He did not think it expedient or prudent to allow the subjects of a foreign State to gain that influence over the minds of the Natives, which as their religious instructors, these men and their successors might in time acquire.

Barnes, whose objections were really political, not religious, continued to be a menace to the Mission and a nightmare to unhappy Poor. It must however be recorded that towards the end of Barnes' administration in Ceylon, he seems to have been impressed by Poor's persistent protests, for, in his letter dated 11 March 1829 to George Murray on Ecclesiastical Establishment and Education he says, "At stations within a short distance of each other and a few miles of the Town of Jaffna are five American Missionaries with their Native assistants. They are very well informed, indefatigable and painstaking men, have had much success among the Malabars, and have very flourishing schools with an institution at Batticotta for further education of the most promising youth who have made considerable progress in the higher branches of Education. Their annual Examinations have always given the greatest satisfaction to all present, among whom have been some of the best judges in the Island". Righteousness seems to have triumphed finally, though belatedly. Note the word "indefatigable" used by Barnes. That was the measure of Poor's triumph over his opponents.

With the addition of capable and earnest men and women (thanks to Brownrigg), Meigs and Poor felt emboldened to extend and raise the educational services of the Mission. Chelliah says that some of the boys were so far advanced in their studies that it was felt that fuller provision should be made for their further education. With this object in view the missionaries resolved to establish a central institution to give higher education to deserving boys, and issued an elaborate Prospectus, which they presented to the Prudential Committee of the American Board, the Ceylon Government, and to friends in England, America, and the East.

The position on the eve of the establishment of the Seminary is given in an early report of the Mission. In 1822, it stated, there were 42 schools with 1800 pupils maintained at a cost of 270/- pounds Sterling, including presents, premiums, and the wages of the teachers who, instead of receiving a regular salary, as at present, were paid according to the progress of the scholars which was determined by a monthly examination.

In 1823 the Mission supported more than 105 boys and 28 girls at the Free Boarding Schools at their five stations. Not a few of the pupils in these schools, continued the Report, had made such advancements in their studies and given such promise of further advancement as to warrant an attempt to place within their reach the advantages of higher education in a Central High School.

The proposal of the missionaries was to establish a college of university rank with, it is supposed, a charter to confer degrees in due course. The Prospectus that was dated Jaffna, Ceylon, March 4, and signed by Meigs, Poor, Winslow, Spaulding, Woodward and Scudder is a historic document. It is an extremely far-sighted and comprehensive blue-print for a truly liberal education of "Tamul and other youth".

It is a thousand pities that this magnificent plan was not fully implemented. Had it been executed in the grand manner as envisaged by its architects it would have heralded a national and cultural renaissance not only in Jaffna but throughout Ceylon and South India. It was noted in the plan that there was a considerably large Tamil population in the Island, and some millions on the continent, that might need the aide of a literary Seminary, and there were many native youth of good talent who would prize its privileges and employ them "*for the good of their countrymen*". What vision! What philanthropy! What patriotism!

It will be observed that the builders spoke of good "talent" not of good "birth". This, we suppose, was done advisedly, and is very significant; for although it so happened that the recruitment of students by the American Mission was drawn generally, with a few exceptions, from a particularly favoured class of the Hindu community (unlike, for instance, the Catholic missionaries who cast their net far and wide), the method of education imparted and, as we know in several instances, the manner in which the social crises and challenges of feudal pseudo-superiority were faced, testify to the determined effort on the part of the missionaries to instill what they held to be the cardinal Christian virtue of universal brotherhood among the bretheren with whom they had cast their lot.

Their method of approach to the social problem of caste was somewhat peculiar. They preferred generally to inculcate a sense of duty and social justice among those who had hitherto wrongly held themselves superior, rather than to encourage a consciousness of denied rights to those who had been forced till then to accept a position of inferiority. Thus they endeavoured to avoid the bitterness of a class struggle. Admittedly this was not the radical way. But it did raise the social tone of the community. The least that it did was to make indifferent Hindus better Hindus even if they had failed to make them Christians, good or bad.

The objects of the proposed College were declared in the Prospectus. The first object, it stated, was to give native youth of good promise a thorough knowledge of the English language. The great reason for this is that it will open to them the treasures of European science and literature, and bring fully before the mind the evidences of Christianity. A knowledge of the English language, especially for those designed for "native preachers", is in this point of view, important almost beyond belief. Their minds, it was urged, could

not be so thoroughly enlightened by any other means. Emerson Tennent, a British Colonial Secretary serving in Ceylon, had stated in his "Christianity in Ceylon" published some years later, that the Seminary like all others founded by the Mission was essentially a Christian institution. The missionaries were of the opinion that a liberal education was an essential requisite for the reception of the Christian gospel.

The missionaries disagreed with the position taken up by William Carey and his colleagues in India who had earlier in 1817 established an educational institution known as the Serampore College, a body somewhat similar to, though much less catholic and liberal than, the one contemplated for Jaffna. The controversy between the two was over the place of English in the educational structure.

The question of the national language *vis-a-vis* English has been the subject of debate ever since the British undertook the educational development of their subject people in India. This debate still continues even after the withdrawal of the British. Scientifically it has been held desirable that one must learn first in one's own mother tongue. This has never been refuted by the Missionaries. But they had realized that English Education at that time was an urgent need in order to open the windows of the world to their promising wards who were hungering after learning and knowledge. The Prospectus in a spirited advocacy of the stand taken by the missionaries had declared that the great efforts they were making to transfer the learning of the West into the language of the East, was a matter of most sincere rejoicing; and the Seminary here contemplated was designed to assist in doing this good work. It is in this way only that the great mass of the people could be enlightened. The most important works in English must be translated, epitomes made of them, or new works written; but to accomplish all or any of these objects a large number of English scholars must be raised up from among the Natives. It is a work, according to the Prospectus, which foreigners, comparatively ignorant of the language and customs of the country, could not be supposed qualified to do.

The second object declared in the Prospectus was "the cultivation of Tamul literature". It stated that to maintain any good degree of respect among the native inhabitants, it was necessary to understand their literature. The Tamil language, it continued, like the Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek, etc. was an original and perfect language, and was in itself highly worthy of cultivation. The high poetic Tamil was, however, very difficult of acquisition, and required all the aids which the College was designed to furnish. The Puranas and all the more common sacred books were to be found translated into high Tamil in which they were read in the temples, and it was particularly desirable that some at least, if not all of those who were set for the defence, or employed in the propagation of the Gospel, should be able to read and understand them.

It further stated that a more important benefit would be the cultivation of Tamil composition, which is now almost entirely neglected. It is common to find among Tamil people men who can read correctly, who understand to some extent the poetic language, and who are able perhaps to form a kind of artificial verse, who cannot write a single page of correct prose. The attention of many must be turned to writing intelligibly and forcibly in their own language. Original native composition, on account of the superior felicity of its style and idiom, will be read when the production of a foreigner or a translation, will be thrown aside. To raise up, therefore, and qualify a class of native authors whose minds being enriched by science may be capable not only of embodying European ideas, but of putting them into a handsome native dress, must be rendering important aid to the "interests of learning and Christianity". It will be observed here that the missionaries held firm to the view that the "interests of learning and Christianity" were not contradictory. Thus their ultimate Christian objective was not overlooked.

The missionaries had also planned to give a select number of the pupils a course of study in Sanskrit, Hebrew, Latin and Greek. This was generally intended for students proposing to be "native preachers". The Prospectus stated that in addition to these Languages, and through the medium principally of the English, it was designed to teach as far as the circumstances of the country required the sciences usually studied in the Colleges of Europe and America. The course at present contemplated, according to the Prospectus, would embrace, more or less extensively, Geography, Chronology, History, Mathematics, Trigonometry, Natural Philosophy of the Mind, Elements of Geometry, and Natural and Revealed Religion. In teaching these it was designed to provide as fast as possible elementary works in Tamil for the assistance of the student. The public lectures would be delivered principally in English with suitable explanations in the native language. That all the students would be able to make great advances in most of their different branches was not supposed, but that many will thereby obtain an expansion of mind and the power of receiving and originating thought, which would not only free them from the shackles of superstition but enable them to guide others also, was not only hoped but confidently believed.

There were other benefits too contemplated by the architects of this institution. Agriculture and mechanic arts were to be improved; learning would rise in estimation, and gradually obtain a dominion over wealth and caste; the native character would be raised; and the native mind, freed from the shackles of custom, would imbibe that spirit of improvement which had so long distinguished and blessed most European countries. A college such as the one intended would give a new tone to the whole system of education in the district, and exert an influence which would be felt in every school and village. "In short", Chelliah wrote, "the founders had in view not only the

raising up of competent Preachers and Mission Agents, but also well educated citizens, Christian and non-Christian, who would serve Government and Society in the work of the uplift of the country".

This plan was thought by some to be "rather large", but according to an early Report of the Mission it was warmly approved by the friends of the Mission in America and generally also in India. Funds to a considerable amount were conditionally pledged in America, and would have been given, had not unexpected obstacles from the local government prevented its projectors from carrying the plan fully into effect.

What were these obstacles? The Ceylon Government under Barnes would not allow the work to be carried out as proposed. It was expressly stated that no more Missionaries could join the force and no "College" could be established.

Poor was undeterred. Within four months of the issue of the Prospectus, Poor and his colleagues presented everybody with a *fait-accomplis*. The "College" was begun, although at its birth it was wrapt in swaddling clothes. There were no buildings to speak of. Funds had to be collected. Even the final sanction of the Board had to come. But the Professors were there. The students were there too. Together, these pioneers formed a University College, the first of its kind in Ceylon, and the second in Asia, the other being Serampore College in India.

Let others contend, Poor would have told himself, for the name we shall have the substance. For, the name of the institution remained unresolved for a number of years. Even the siting of the institution at Jaffna, the metropolis of the Peninsula, so desirable from many points of view, was abandoned from a fear that the organisers would be thought of as being too ambitious.

Poor, however, continued to press his claims for due recognition of the institution by the local government under Barnes. He sought the aid of the Board in America to make a direct approach to the British government. This too was done, but to little avail. A College such as the one proposed "had to be under instructors from Great Britain". That was the furthest concession that could be wrung from unwilling hands. This proposal was however politely ignored by Poor.

The term "Seminary" which was finally used to describe this institution was an innocuous word that could mean different things to different men. The missionaries appear to have toyed with the word "Academy" too. At the end, they agreed, modestly, upon using the word "Seminary" for their University College. In this manner the missionaries cleverly side tracked Government disapproval of the term "College".

The twenty-second day of July 1823 is a day for ever memorable in the annals of the educational history of Ceylon. This is how the event and circumstances are described in an early report of the Mission: "The institution was commenced in a modified form at Batticotta in 1823 by bringing together the most forward lads from the different Boarding Schools and placing them under the care of one of the missionaries who, with assistant teachers, was to devote himself principally to their instruction in Literature, Science and Religion. The number at first received was forty-eight, who after qualifying themselves by further attention to some elementary subjects, entered upon a course of study both in English and Tamul, similar to that laid down in the original plan of the College".

Poor had achieved his purpose, although perhaps in a guarded and disguised way. He had succeeded in giving effect to his original plan despite all objections and obstacles. Poor was the obvious choice for the post of Principal which place of honour and responsibility the Mission unreservedly awarded him.

The band of American missionaries present at the opening of the Seminary was small. Besides Poor there were Meigs, Winslow, Spaulding, Woodward and Scudder. Warren and Richards were victims of tuberculosis contracted before their arrival in Jaffna. Warren was sent back for a sea voyage and he died at the Cape of Good Hope on 11 August 1818. Richards was one of the five students of Williams College in Massachusetts, who launched the idea of this Mission in 1810 from a haystack in Williamstown, and who joined in establishing the American Board on 29 June that year. He was the only one among this lot of five pioneers to labour in the foreign field. Soon he left his mortal remains at Tellipalai in Ceylon where he died in 1822.

Strangely enough it was the afflicted patients, Warren and Richards, who became the first medical missionaries in Ceylon, although Scudder was not too far behind. Warren and Richards had a short course of Medical study at the University of Pennsylvania and some practice at the hospitals at home. Within a year of their arrival in Jaffna they had opened, with the help of Government officials and private individuals, a temporary hospital at Tellipalai "for the cure of both soul and body", which function, they had felt, was their mission in life.

Poor, of course, was most concerned with soul and the *mind*. Poor too had been afflicted with tuberculosis, but some kind fate seems to have saved him for his great mission at the Seminary. Poor is reported to have had at the beginning the professorial assistance of Winslow, later to be the great Tamil lexicographer, Woodward, who remained in Jaffna until 1834, and Scudder, who was a practising Doctor of Medicine in New York when, according to him, the "call" came to leave the surgery at once, to work as a missionary in the foreign field.

The course of study at the Seminary at the beginning extended for six years. Emerson Tennent had written that the course of education was so comprehensive as to extend over a period of eight years of study. The course he was referring to perhaps included a post-graduate term. Tennent described the curriculum as embracing all the ordinary branches of Historical and Classical learning, and all the other higher departments of Mathematical and Physical Science, combined with the most intimate familiarisation with the great principles and evidences of the Christian Religion.

Tennent also wrote that it was part of the system to apply the annual contribution of some one friend of the Mission if it amounted to the stipulated sum (which was £4/3/0 per annum) to the exclusive education of one individual who, on admission, assumed, in addition to his own name, that of the distant benefactor to whom he was indebted for his presentation. This is the genesis of the large crop of American names in such a far-off places as Jaffna in the little island of Ceylon. Most of these names came from Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Maryland.

When the first class of fifteen graduated there were two hundred applicants to the new class. L. J. Gratiaen, a prominent educationist in Ceylon, exclaimed that the Batticotta Seminary was for some years the highest achievement of education in the Island. This was high praise indeed. He further remarked that a bright boy in one of these village schools might go to a Boarding School, learn English, enter the Seminary and go back to school as a teacher or enter the mission service. Till the Americans developed this idea, the English and the vernacular students were distinct, one being for Headmen's sons and the other for the village. Here therefore is not only an admirable school system, but the beginning of a social revolution.

In September 1830 C. H. Cameron and Col. Colebrooke, members of a Commission of Enquiry sent by the British Government to Ceylon, visited the Seminary and conducted an examination. They were much impressed and soon reported that the Barnes prohibition of further missionaries from America should be immediately rescinded. This paved the way for the arrival of Dr. Nathan Ward and H. R. Hoisington in 1833, and James Read Eckard in 1834.

Colebrooke in his report in 1831 wrote that while the English missionaries had not generally appreciated the importance of diffusing a knowledge of the English language through their schools, the Americans missionaries were fully impressed with the importance of English. He referred approvingly to the Seminary where the students made some creditable proficiency in several branches of useful knowledge.

At the end of 1835 Poor felt a "call" specially to perform evangelistic work, and being satisfied that he had placed the Seminary on a firm foundation offered his resignation from the post of Principal. Owing to the restrictions

imposed by Government, Poor was obliged during his term of office to sustain the burden almost alone, the other members of the Mission rendering only limited assistance in the midst of their regular missionary duties.

Poor had seen to it that the Seminary was not isolated from the life of the community. One of the functions of the Seminary was to influence the intellectual life of the people of the area. The Seminary was the centre which radiated goodwill, stimulated a spirit of enquiry and extended knowledge beyond its walls, reaching the homes and families of its students and their friends.

Hoisington was a worthy successor to Poor. The Seminary had been fortunate to have had during the first twenty-six years of its thirty-two years of existence two exceptional men to direct it. Both were diligent students of the culture of the people among whom their lot was cast. They were earnest and profound scholars of the language and philosophy of the Tamils; indeed they much appreciated and admired them, although when it came to defending their own religious convictions they were unyielding. They were good men, learned men; they held fast to what they held to be the truth, but they were charitable men too and were lavish with a true love for their fellow men.

In 1848, shortly before Hoisington relinquished his duties as Principal, Tennent, the Colonial Secretary, visited the Seminary. He has left a record of his appreciation of the work done at the Seminary. The whole establishment, he wrote, in his book already referred to, is full of interest, and forms an impressive and memorable scene—the familiar objects and arrangements of a College being combined with the remarkable appearance and unwonted costumes of the students; and the domestic buildings presenting all the peculiar characteristics of oriental life, and habits. The sleeping apartments, the dining hall, and the cooking room are in purely Indian taste, but all accurately clean; and, stepping out of these the contrast was striking between them and the accustomed features of the lecture-room with its astronomical clock, its orrery and transit instrument; the laboratory with its chemical materials, retorts and electromagnetic apparatus; and the Museum with its arranged collection of minerals and corallines to illustrate the geology of Ceylon. But the theatre was the centre of attraction, with its benches of white robed students, and lines of turbaned heads, with upturned eager countenances, “God’s image carved in ebony”. The examination which took place in our presence was on History, Natural Philosophy, Optics, Astronomy and Algebra. The knowledge exhibited by the pupils was astonishing; and it is no exaggerated encomium to say that, in the course of instructions, and in the success of the system for communicating it, the Collegiate Institution of Batticotta is entitled to rank with many an European University.

The number which the building can accommodate, Tennent continued, is limited for the present to one hundred, who reside within its walls, and take their food in one common hall, sitting to eat after the customs of the natives. For some years the students were boarded and clothed at the expense of the Mission, but such is now the eagerness for instructions that there are a multitude of competitors for every casual vacancy, and the cost of their maintenance for the whole period of pupillage is willingly paid in advance in order to secure the privilege of admission.

Tennent finally summed up: Nearly six hundred students have been under instruction from time to time since the commencement of the American Seminary at Batticotta, and of these upwards of four hundred have completed the established course of education. More than one half have made an open profession of Christianity, and all have been familiarized with its doctrines and more or less imbibed with its spirit. The majority are now filling situations of credit and responsibility throughout the various districts of Ceylon; numbers are employed under the missionaries themselves as teachers and catechists, and as preachers and superintendents of schools: many have migrated in similar capacity to be attached to Christian Missions on the continent of India; others have lent their assistance to the Mission of the Wesleyans and Church of England in Ceylon; and amongst them who have attached themselves to secular occupations, I can bear testimony to the abilities, qualifications and integrity of the many students of Jaffna, who have accepted employment in various offices under the Government of the colony.

The Seminary showed signs of decline, although it was not too noticeable, from about 1845. This was due partly to the poor health of Principal Hoisington. But the chief factor was the policy of retrenchment adopted by the Mission. At the time of Tennent's visit to the Seminary, it was to all purposes a flourishing and promising institution, but his reference to the numbers being one hundred reflected a numerical set-back, for the numbers in the past had consistently varied from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and sixty.

The American personnel in the staff was the first to suffer from the axe of retrenchment. But the Tamil assistants, most if not all of whom were graduates of the Seminary, stepped readily into the breach. Funds, however, were slow in coming. The whole vote for education from the Mission was reduced to £1,000/- in 1852, and in 1854 the recommendation was made that the number in the upper classes should be brought down. The following year, the fatal year when the Seminary was closed, the total number on the roll was only 96.

Although it took some time for the changing attitude of the Board towards the Seminary to take effect, yet it was evident that there was a good deal of rethinking in America regarding the wisdom, value and need of continuing the policy hitherto followed in the Seminary.

The Rev. Rufus Anderson, the powerful Secretary of the American Board, had expressed grave misgivings about the way the Mission was then proceeding. As early as 1848 Dr. Anderson had written to Emerson Tennant saying, "Our late doubts have risen chiefly from the apparent failure of the Mission in raising up a trustworthy (native) ministry, and the operating upon the masses of the people...I think the proportionate expenditure of the department of Education is somewhat greater than we can afford to comprehend".

Anderson's views were contrary to the broader and more humanistic approach of men like Daniel Poor. The whole world would never be converted to God, according to Anderson, by education; instead education would, imparted in English, acquire a material value and set the natives strongly towards the world. Anderson who propounded this theory in a book published in 1845 and had consistently advocated it, finally had his way as far as Ceylon was concerned.

Anderson led a deputation consisting of himself and Dr. A. C. Thompson which arrived in Ceylon on 2 April 1855. Daniel Poor, the founder of the Seminary and its redoubtable champion was getting ready to confront Anderson. He expressed his views in a long letter which reached the deputation while it was on its way at Bombay. "It became more and more evident," Poor wrote, "that nothing short of a widespread system of elementary Christian education in the vernacular tongue, and a thorough-going system of scientific and theological instruction, both in Tamil and English, were the appropriate means to be used. Such a course is indispensably necessary for securing the desired access to all classes male and female, for the one great object of preaching the gospel to every creature. Both these systems of education we have been permitted to carry to an extent beyond all our thoughts, and with a degree of success not distinctly anticipated". This was Poor's last effort to save the Seminary. He was stricken soon afterwards with cholera from which he died a few days before the deputation reached Jaffna.

The deputation however recommended that the Seminary be remodeled to accord substantially with the plans of Anderson. This was in effect a death sentence on the Seminary, and it was suspended in September 1855. Thus came to an end, wrote Chelliah, the Batticotta Seminary at one time famous throughout India and Ceylon as a great seat of learning. It lasted 31 years and cost the American Board over 20,000 English Pounds, not taking into account the money collected in India and Ceylon.

In an assessment of the impact of American education in Ceylon, chiefly of the Batticotta Seminary and the equally eminent Girls' College at Uduvil, in a doctoral dissertation submitted under the supervision of Dr. Mabel E. Rugen to the University of Michigan in 1968, Dr. C. H. Piyaratna, a Ceylonese scholar wrote: the findings support the conclusion that the educational system

established by the Mission in Jaffna, a relatively unproductive dry zone region, did contribute to its relative overdevelopment and so to the development of the country in general.....(and) the 'excellence' of the American Mission Schools supplied the example and challenge for the government to increase and improve the scanty educational facilities in other areas of Ceylon and also establish a College in Colombo. Thus, it is stated, the Mission indirectly contributed to the increase and development of educational facilities as a whole. Dr. Piyaratna concluded: "Clearly the impact of the American Mission Educational System extended beyond the Jaffna peninsula, but its contribution to the development of the peninsula is singular". This we believe is a true verdict.

Anderson led a delegation consisting of himself and Dr. A. C. Thompson which arrived in Ceylon on 2 April 1855. Daniel Foot, the founder of the Seminary and its redoubtable champion was getting ready to confront Anderson. He expressed his views in a long letter which reached the delegation while it was on its way at Bombay. "It seems to me that more wisdom," Foot wrote, "than anything short of a widespread system of elementary Christian education is the veritable torch, and a most glowing system of scientific and theological instruction, both in Tamil and English, were the appropriate means to be used. Such a course is indispensable, necessary for securing the desired access to all classes, male and female, for the great object of giving the Gospel to every creature. Both these systems of education we have been permitted to carry to an extent beyond all our knowledge and with a degree of success not distinctly anticipated." This was Foot's last effort to save the Seminary. He was striking rock shrapnel with chains from which he died a few days before the delegation reached Jaffna.

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In an assessment of the impact of American education in Ceylon, chiefly of the Batticaloa Seminary and the equally eminent Olive College at Udawalpaya, in a doctoral dissertation submitted under the supervision of Dr. Michael H. Ruge to the University of Michigan in 1968, Dr. C. H. Piyaratna, a Ceylonese scholar, wrote: the findings support the conclusion that the educational system

BOOK REVIEW

Visakha Kumari Jayawardena, *The Rise of the Labor Movement in Ceylon*, Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1972, 382 pp.

Jayawardena's study is the first detailed attempt to document the development of the labour movement in Sri Lanka and its place in national politics. The origins of the labour movement are traced back to the turn of the nineteenth century, to the years which saw the emergence of the nationalist movement in the island. The first labour leaders, drawn from the 'radical' wing of the nationalists, were primarily from the truly minority communities (mostly Burghers) but by the early decades of the new century the leadership passed on to the Sinhalese. Neither they nor the earlier leaders were able to maintain a sustained activism among the working classes. Until the emergence of A. E. Goonasingha in the 1920s, the labour agitation proved to be sporadic and intermittent. Goonasingha, whose organizational abilities are amply brought out by Jayawardena, succeeded where the others had failed. Especially with the establishment of the Ceylon Labour Union in 1922 the employers and the colonial government—for that matter, the nationalist leadership, too—faced a powerful challenge from a quarter which hitherto had been taken for granted. Goonasingha no doubt had a genius in articulating discontent among the urban workers but it eventually proved to be a flawed genius. By the early 1930s, when the period surveyed by Jayawardena ends, the labour movement was in disarray and Goonasingha was clearly on his decline and on his way to political oblivion.

Jayawardena brings a wealth of data to her narrative but her analysis leaves much to be desired. Primarily, this is due to the conceptual framework she has adopted. In Jayawardena's hands, Marxian methodology tends to obscure rather than clarify the subject examined. Given the divisive forces—caste, ethnic and religious—that were operative, one could question whether a working class in the Marxian sense was there at all in the island then. Her description of the middle class—which is divided into two groups, old and modern, and modern in turn divided into three constituent elements, conservative, moderate and radical—is full of ambiguities. How different, indeed if at all, were the 'radicals' from the 'moderates'? Could the early 'radical' labour leader Lisboa Pinto be classed with Goonasingha and Natesa Aiyar who was active among the immigrant labour in the plantations? As Jayawardena herself observes, the early tentative alliance between Goonasingha and the labour activists in the plantations broke down by the end of the 1920s and Goonasingha not only became estranged from the plantation trade union movement but also adopted a virulent anti-Indian Tamil stance in public. This provides the proper clue to identify Goonasingha's brand of radicalism. He was inspired by that charismatic figure, Dharmapala, and the Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism which he embraced could hardly be shared by other 'radicals' like Natesa Aiyar and for that matter by men like Ponnambalam Arunachalam. The continuum of 'radical' labour leadership which Jayawardena posits from the incipient stages of the labour movement to its maturity could thus be challenged. The confusion which arises from Jayawardena's use of terminology without clarity is compounded by her patent bias towards the leaders of the period who were, from a Marxian standpoint, worthy of acclaim. The 'moderates' and 'conservatives' suffer greatly from her treatment and Jayawardena clearly fails to understand the contribution they made to political and constitutional evolution in these years. Moreover, the author tends to forget the very pertinent development which is documented in the study itself: the transformation of a 'radical' of one period into a 'moderate' or 'conservative' of another period. One wonders what Jayawardena's evaluation of Goonasingha—the major figure in the study—would be had the study been extended to those years when this once charmed 'radical' became a 'reactionary'.

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Urmila Phadnis, *Religion and Politics in Sri Lanka*, South Asia Books, Columbia, Mo., 1976, xiv, 326 pp.

This is an ambitious work. It has been conceived as an "attempt to analyse the interplay of the religious and political systems as they emerged in the island in the different phases of its history" (vii). The results fall far short of this goal. This is explicable. The period covered in the book is virtually the entire history of Sri Lanka, from its early beginnings to the contemporary times and, quite apart from other factors, a thorough knowledge of the literature concerned with this 2500 years of history would have to be possessed by the writer. At best what Dr. Phadnis has succeeded in accomplishing as far as the pre-colonial and colonial periods of Sri Lanka's history is concerned is an overview of the history of Buddhism in these years, with the emphasis on the capacity it had of responding to changing political conditions. When the focus shifts to contemporary times, the author is on firmer grounds. The reform of the monastic orders and the competitive element now inherent in this area and the interest and involvement of the *sangha* in 'political' issues like language, land and foreign policy are discussed at some length. Yet, the wider setting of the political processes of which the *bhikkhus* became a part is not adequately explained—especially, the relevance of the plurality of the Sri Lankan polity is not explored to its fullest. Equally, the reader is left without a satisfactory answer to the very crucial question, what are the obstacles to the development of the role desired by *bhikkhus* in politics? Some reasons have been taken up—the trend towards secularism and the opposition of non-Buddhist minority groups—but the perceptions of the Buddhists themselves of the legitimacy of the nature and area of activism of the 'political monks' surely needs closer attention.

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Goran Djurfeldt & Staffan Lindberg, *BEHIND POVERTY, The Social Formation in a Tamil Village*, Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series, Lund, 1975. pp. 317.

The poverty and economic backwardness of India have been familiar themes in modern Indian history. Indeed during the British *Raj* they were contentious issues between an increasingly self-conscious administration and its strident critics. The debate has clearly lost its topical appeal but occasionally the themes appear in more sophisticated guises. In the post colonial period the centre of interest has shifted more generally to Asia and to underdevelopment—altogether a more impersonal and neutral term—moving forwards as it were from its classic Indian groove.

Underdevelopment is the theme of this book. Goran Djurfeldt and Staffan Lindberg its co-authors have been familiar with conditions in South India over a considerable period. The object of their present study is the Thaiyur panchayat in the Chingleput district of Tamil Nadu in Southern India.

Underdevelopment—basically an economic problem—is studied in relation to the ownership of land and the complex structures of production and distribution. But underdevelopment cannot be divorced from a given social context. Questions of caste, class, ideology and religious ritual, are—especially in the Indian context—equally germane to the discussion. The result is that we have in our hands a book that conveys a sense of reality and depth and which is not a dehydrated economic analysis.

Certain assumptions which the writers make or "orientations"—the more fancied term in current jargon—have been part of the methodology. The authors explicitly declare that they are guided by the Marxist interpretations concerning class and the processes of production and distribution. Indeed throughout the book the Marxist stance is made evident. Secondly they exchew the "consensus model" in their view of society and history and favour

instead the "conflict" perspectives. This is of course to be expected in a Marxist inspired analysis. Thirdly the authors declare that their purpose—"central to our Marxist approach"—was to establish that underdevelopment is the product of imperialism.

Whether the object has been achieved is a moot question. What is the connection between imperialism and *Thaiyur*? Imperialism we are told implies an uneven and exploitive economic relationship between the imperialist power at the centre and the dominated elements in the peripheries. The expropriation of surplus wealth, the exploitation of labour and above all an enforced market relationship are the principal constituents in this connection. It is evident that the authors see the link between *Thaiyur* and imperialism in a historical rather than in a neo-colonial and contemporary sense. Two sorts of imperialism have been germane to their discussions—the imperialism of the Mughuls and that of the British. Both imperialisms were disasters and there was little to choose between them.

The Mughul period saw the unfortunate union of military rule and revenue administration. Within each *Jagir* the produce of the peasant over and above his subsistence needs was appropriated by the *Mansabdar* or local military commander. The foundation was laid for the gradual erosion of the peasants' economic wellbeing. As British rule in India was a more thoroughgoing business, the economic decline of the peasant was completely accomplished. Under the British land revenue became the principal source of government income. In theory and in fact the exigencies of the state made the land revenue increasingly burdensome. More than half the peasants' produce was appropriated. The difficulties of the peasant were compounded by the influx of cheap consumer goods which spelled the ruin of the rural handicraft industries. The overall result—one on which the authors lay particular stress—was the creation of a landless proletariat whose labour the landowner could exploit at will because in the absence of industrial growth there were no escape hatches or alternative means of employment and livelihood.

Meanwhile the British insistence that land revenue must be paid in cash and the predilection of the peasant as well as of his overlord to concentrate on cash crops rather than on grain production gave an immense impetus to the monetization of the rural economy. Consequently hitherto secluded enclaves like *Thaiyur* became integrated with more activated segments of the economy—witness *Thaiyur's* own relations to the city of Madras—and thence to a larger national and extra national economic system.

There is nothing extraordinarily new about all this. The propositions are blandly stated as long established verities in Indian economic history. The authors do not however tell the reader that these very viewpoints have recently been seriously controverted. Instead they complain about the paucity of literature on the subject of the relationship of the *Raj* to land and peasant the very area where Indian historiography has made some of its more notable gains.

The villainous *dramatis personae* of the rural scene—the grasping landlord and the moneylenders—and indeed the complex ramifications of exploitation were not products of British rule. Nor was the landless proletariat. What of monetization and integration? It is surely ironical that whereas writers like Djurfeldt and Lindberg should emphasize the pervasive effect of economic change, others—the modernization school for example—should practically bemoan the absence of change after a long period of British rule in India. The latter in turn stress the view that the forces unleashed by British rule failed to bring about the desired integration of the somnolent Indian rural economy with the larger economic order.

Significantly Djurfeldt and Lindberg juxtapose the period of imperial rule with the *Jajmani* system—a social and economic set up which was functioning in medieval India before the coming of the Mughuls. They describe the *Jajmani* system in near idyllic terms. It is true that the system held the village together and that its collective bias ensured a degree of economic stability to which historians of a certain genre wistfully looked back. The contrast however one suspects is a trifle overblown. There has been no attempt to take a closer view

of a system whose inner contradictions and tensions often stemmed from its rigid and mandatory caste character and the inadequate economic rewards which the *Kamin* received for their services.

Land revenue systems—be they traditional, Mughul or British—were basically exploitive in the sense that a fair proportion of what the peasant produced was expropriated and literally left the village either as kind or as cash. What after all was the rural commitment of the *Raj* in India? Was it only a vast lugubrious exercise in the collection of land revenue and nought else? It has been said that British economic policies in rural India were based on the aspirations of individuals rather than on the proclivities of traditional social groups. As one writer ably put it the British attempted to disseminate “rationalism and acquisitiveness in rural society in order to persuade the peasants to improve their lot....” say for example by the adoption of new techniques in agriculture. However many administrators at the time saw that not all strata were ready for the change. Consequently there was from the beginning a countervailing—one might add—almost a renegade strategy to check the spread of acquisitiveness and the atomization of rural society. In short a strategy to protect the weaker elements from the harsh realities of competition and *laissez faire* capitalism. Ironically it was in this latter respect that British rule was more successful. Hence the lament of the modernization *wallahs* and the “rural sector strategies” of the now ruling Janata Party. So much for grand Machiavellian imperialist designs and their actual effects. One recalls Sir Keith Hancock’s celebrated caveat that “imperialism” was no word for scholars because its functional meaning has long since been eroded by a tradition of perjorative usage.

The usefulness of this book lies not in its history but in its obvious contemporary relevance. We have an able, well researched, and perceptive work on economic conditions in a South Indian village. What has been said of the Thaiyur panchayat would presumably be as true of South India as a whole. Djurfeldt and Lindberg draw a grim and rather depressing picture of the exploitive patterns of ownership, production and distribution.

In India in particular where since the days of East India Company the catalyst of economic change has been unevenly felt, the landowning classes have exercised an age old economic and social domination of the rural scene. The microcosm that is Thaiyur serves to show how with little effort on their part landlords have been able to obtain enormous quantities of grain as well as manipulate the market in town and country alike. Meanwhile the sheer inadequacy of his income and the virtual absence of alternative economic avenues have driven the peasant into the arms of traditional moneylenders. Indeed over the years, the essential configurations in the rural scene have altered little. In Thaiyur over 80 per cent of the householders were in debt *circa* 1975. It is significant that over 64 percent of the debts were incurred to buy food and not for wasteful “social purposes” as is sometimes alleged.

What is the solution? Djurfeldt and Lindberg were convinced that little could be expected from the state. Both the union and provincial or state governments have been more concerned with *per capita* consumption requirements of provinces as a whole rather than with specific problems of localities like Thaiyur. And less concerned too with the assumptions underlying the existing systems of production and distribution. In this way the modern Indian state has connived at the perpetuation of a basically inequitable system.

Could there be change from within? Djurfeldt and Lindberg are sceptical. There are of course the conventional remedies like increasing the area under cultivation, intensive culture, green revolution technology and the improvement of irrigational facilities. The writers clearly show that the theoretical options are in fact effectively nullified by formidable constraints. In any event it is the large landowner who has the means though not always the inclination—in view of the sheer magnitude of his existing profit margins—to make the best of the additional inputs. In short the peasant in Thaiyur is caught up in a vicious cycle he was practically born into and from which there is no visible escape. Djurfeldt and Lindberg found as pragmatic westerners that the Thaiyur peasant’s fatalism which had at first caused them some annoyance was after all a legitimate reflex.

There is however the ultimate solution. Djurfeldt and Lindberg vote for a large scale peasant revolt. It is their belief that in its wake a more rational and just economic order would emerge. Without as much as flexing a muscle in their sombre narrative they recount how when they returned to Thaiyur after a long period of absence they found the place animated with excitement and wondered whether the long hoped for revolution had at last broken out. Instead much to their consternation they discover that all the excitement centred around a well to do landlord who after several attempts had succeeded in bringing about the green revolution in his land! Waiting for the big bang to take place in other people's backyards—and not in one's own—can not doubt be fun. But presumably it can also be a rather tiresome business.

To sum up, the merit of this book is that it takes a long hard look at the conventional strategies for developing the traditional rural sector in South Asia. However a fondness for jargon and an exaggerated ideological bias which has led the two authors to make all sorts of value judgements have marred an otherwise excellent book.

L. A. Wickremeratne.

University of Sri Lanka,
Peradeniya.

There is however no doubt that the author, Dr. J. A. Whitman, has done his best to make the book as readable as possible. The book is written in a simple, straightforward style, and the author has done his best to make the book as readable as possible. The book is written in a simple, straightforward style, and the author has done his best to make the book as readable as possible. The book is written in a simple, straightforward style, and the author has done his best to make the book as readable as possible.

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J. A. Whitman

Author of the book

THE UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON, HISTORY OF CEYLON VOLUME THREE

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