

The Rulers and the Ruled in British Ceylon : A Study of the function of petitions in Colonial government

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The Mechanism of petitions

In the study of British rule in Ceylon the close consideration of the attitudes of the ruled towards the rulers is of paramount importance.

These attitudes are to some extent reflected in the reports of the government agents who ruled in the various provinces. But the existence of a powerful hierarchy of native officials constantly intervening between a government agent and the people as well as general considerations of empathy, warrant a search for evidence dealing more directly with the people.

Petitions in this sense are of considerable value. This article is based largely on a study of petitions relating to the North Central and Southern provinces in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. As a preliminary to a more extended study it was necessary to consider first not only a reasonably limited period of time but also the areas with broadly similar problems. Groups of petitions dealing with the Chilaw and Puttalam districts - though less useful - have also been examined.

Petitions fell into certain broad categories. Some were sent to a government agent of a province or to his assistant. Secondly there were the petitions addressed directly to the Governor. Thirdly petitions were also sent to the Colonial Office. For the particular purpose of this article the last category may be ignored. It may be also said that petitions to the Colonial Office were few and far between.¹ They were noteworthy for the great pains taken by the governor concerned to explain those policies of government even peripherally touched upon by the petition.²

Petitions to the governor did not necessarily deal with subjects of graver importance than those received by a government agent. Indeed in either category were found matters pertaining to land problems, irrigation,

1. Two types of petitions sent to the Colonial office have been excluded as they were in no way relevant to the issues discussed in this article. The first encompassed a variety of matters such as pensions, salaries and questions of leave which concerned the European officials serving in Ceylon. The second consisted of numerous memorials sent by groups of individuals and associations to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.
2. See C. O. 54/463, for despatch no. 36 of 2 February 1871, from Sir Hercules Robinson to the Earl of Kimberley, for petition of Don Hendrick Tilakaratne.

tax assessments and the offences of local officials.³ It was nevertheless true that often petitions were sent to the Governor because the petitioner believed that he had failed to get satisfaction from the Government Agent. Sometimes even though actual experience did not justify such an attitude, certain petitions seem to have from the start had a strong prejudice against making submissions to the government agent.

However, the method adopted in dealing with petitions sent to the Governor made differences between the two categories of petitions even less discernible. Petitions to the Governor were in effect handled by the Colonial Secretary's Department.⁴ It was invariably the Colonial Secretary's practice to refer these petitions for report to the Government Agent concerned. Much of the investigations were therefore made at an essentially provincial level. It will be seen that often it was at this stage that the fate of a petition was really decided.

This tendency did not however reduce the importance with which the Colonial Secretary's Department viewed the petitions that it received. Certain standing instructions given to the government agents ensured that they would not deal cursorily with petitions referred to them for report by the Colonial Secretary. For one thing a government agent was required to send back a petition with his report within eight days.⁵ Failure to do so could and did elicit sharp strictures from the Colonial Secretary. In 1898, when evidently an effort was made to enforce the existing regulations, the Colonial Secretary ordered the government agents to quote details of previous correspondence when reports were being submitted on petitions.⁶ On receiving this circular, Evan Byrde who was the Government Agent of the North Central Province at the time decided 'to take careful note of it'.⁷ In the following year however Byrde himself was reminded that certain petitions which had been sent to him had 'remained thirty days or upwards unreported on'. He was ordered to submit the reports within ten days.⁸

3. See files under lots 27 and 41. In particular see files nos. 27/271 to 27/274 Department of National Archives, Gangodawila.
4. Sometimes - especially when matters of principle were involved - petitions were submitted to the Executive Council by the Colonial Secretary. This was more likely to happen in the immediate aftermath of an important ordinance when questions unanticipated by those who drafted it, constantly arose. The unusually large number of petitions which followed the enactment of the Service Tenures Ordinance of 1870 in effect helped the government to issue important modifying instructions to the government agents with regard to its implementation. See Minutes of the Executive Council, 17 July 1871. C. O. 57/55. *Ibid.* 15 August 1871. Also C. O. 57/60 for Minutes of the Executive Council, 1 July 1870.
5. Dickman, C. *The Ceylon Civil Service Manual*. (1833 Ed.) p. 299 ff.
6. Circular no. 204. 20 October 1898. 41/492. D. N. A.
7. *Ibid.* Evan Maberly Durant Byrde was appointed the Government Agent to the North Central Province in 1895. He was a comparatively senior civil servant whose career in Ceylon had begun in 1867.
8. Colonial Secretary to the Government Agent, Anuradhapura, 24 March 1899. 41/492 D. N. A.

In reporting on petitions, usually a government agent's extensive knowledge of local affairs enabled him to explain fairly fully why he had taken a particular course of action or to expose attempts sometimes made in petitions to deceive the government. When certain Muslims in Anuradhapura petitioned the Governor that they should be exempt from the payment of the grain tax on the ground of poverty, the Government Agent replied that the inhabitants who lived in the town of Anuradhapura, particularly the Muslim traders who had signed the petition, could well afford to pay the tax.⁹ He also made much of the point that the chief petitioner was well known for his affluence and was really an owner of extensive paddy fields.¹⁰ A certain Muslim cultivator, also of Anuradhapura, had prayed that he be exempted from the payment of irrigation rates as his crops had been ruined due to the failure of the officials to supply him with water.¹¹ In his report the Government Agent pointed out that, although the Yoda Ela which ordinarily provided water to numerous cultivators had been closed on account of certain repairs at the time referred to by the petitioner, in anticipation of the difficulties which cultivators would have to face, ample water was made available from the Tissa Wewa.¹² The Government Agent remarked in addition that irrigation rates were levied for the maintenance of tanks and canals rather than for the actual quantities of water supplied at any given time.

In circumstances such as these, for all the fervour with which a petition might have been written, the Colonial Secretary had no alternative other than to reject it. Arachchilage Appuhamy and a number of other villagers of Keledivulwewa in Eppawela Korale, Anuradhapura, in a strongly worded petition blamed the Government Agent for the lack of water for cultivation.¹³ They added that notwithstanding this difficulty, they had been fined for neglecting to cultivate their fields. They were therefore compelled to think of leaving a district in which their families had lived for generations.¹⁴ The Government Agent, who had got the irrigation Officer of the area to make a report on the complaint, was able to show clearly that on the contrary the petitioners had been adequately supplied with water.¹⁵ A *Vel Vidane* might petition the Governor against his dismissal from office creating the impression that he had been dealt with unjustly.¹⁶ But the Governor himself was compelled to reject the petition

9. Sena Mana Kader Mohideen and others of Anuradhapura to the Government Agent. n. d. circa March 1898. 41/492. D. N. A.

10. *Ibid.*

11. The petitioner S. R. M. Mohideen Pichchai wanted exemption from all taxes for this reason. 41/492 D. N. A.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Arachchilage Appuhamy and twenty three others of Keledivulwewa to the Government Agent, Anuradhapura. 4 August 1889. 41/497.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. See 41/497 D. N. A. for details of petition no. 2018 of 1899. A *Vel Vidane* was a headman who had a certain amount of authority on irrigation matters.

when he was assured by the Government Agent that the *Vel Vidane* had been dismissed for deliberately making false statements regarding the sales of land in a certain village.¹⁷

It was no doubt this knowledge of local affairs that often made a government agent resent the fact that the Colonial Secretary should, as a question of principle, refer for report certain petitions, to which the government agent himself would have paid scant attention. D. S. Appuhamy, who lived in the Anuradhapura town had sent several petitions to the Governor. His complaint was that he was compelled to pay local rates although he was not liable to do so.¹⁸ Moreover despite this, he as well as certain others were not provided with lighting and sanitary facilities which they as ratepayers were entitled to. Investigations however had clearly shown that Appuhamy lived within the jurisdiction of the Local Board and was therefore liable for the payment of rates.¹⁹ At an early stage in the protracted correspondence between the Colonial Secretary and the Anuradhapura Agency on this subject, Byrde had advised, 'I see no reason to make any other report than that already made on a previous petition. D. S. Appuhamy is a troublesome and impertinent wretch . . .'²⁰ The incorrigible Appuhamy was not however discouraged. In a subsequent petition he alleged that his objections to the levy of local rates had led to the seizure of his properties coupled with physical harassment.²¹ Byrde, whose patience had been worn thin, exploded, 'I beg that the whole of the petition may be translated when it will be seen that the man D. S. Appuhamy holds a threat against the Government Agent . . . the statements are utterly false . . . I request that the Attorney General be asked his advice as to prosecuting this man for presenting a petition full of false statements. . .'²² Appuhamy however continued to give expression to his penchant for petition writing until Leonard William Booth, who had succeeded Byrde as the Government Agent, suggested to the Colonial Secretary that Appuhamy should be informed that 'no further petition from him on this subject will be entertained'.²³ The Colonial Secretary agreed to do so.²⁴ Thus a correspondence which began in early 1898 was finally closed in May 1900, no doubt to the immense relief of the Anuradhapura agency.

Sometimes, however, a mere knowledge of local affairs did not help a government agent to convince a sceptical Colonial Secretary about the reasonable-

17. *Ibid.*

18. See 41/492 and 41/497 D. N. A. for details of the following petitions, 4781 (1897); 354, 2492 (1898); 1155, 2674 (1899) and 492 (1900). Practically all the material for this article was extracted from files deposited in the Department of National Archives. To avoid unnecessary repetition the abbreviation D. N. A. is henceforth avoided in specifying the particular files from which the material is used.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.* L. W. Booth who was appointed as a writer in 1875 assumed duties as Government Agent, Anuradhapura in 1900.

24. *Ibid.*

ness of his actions. In 1898 a certain Hendirishamy, a cultivator in Anuradhapura, distressed at the possible damage to his fields by lack of water had dramatically sent a series of telegrams to the Governor.²⁵ Clearly implied in his complaint was the belief that this situation had been brought about by certain government officials. When investigations were begun, the Government Agent reported that the Yoda Ela, which had been silted up, was being repaired by the Public Works Department. His explanations were corroborated by the irrigation officer who in any case felt that in such circumstances occasional loss of crops would be inevitable.²⁶

The Colonial Secretary's Department however did not think so. It took the Government Agent to task for lightly dismissing the petition as being the work of a 'notorious humbug'.²⁷ It was pointed out to him that remarks of this nature did not help the government in its investigations. It was moreover the Colonial Secretary's view that it is not unnatural that the entire loss of crops should give the petitioner "something to grumble at". The government agent had chosen a singularly inopportune time for repairing the canal, when a severe drought was prevailing.²⁸ The matter was referred back to the Government Agent for a fuller report. He was also asked to give his opinion about the possible payment of compensation to Hendirishamy.²⁹ The Government Agent however thought that such a step would be extravagant.³⁰ Consequently the papers were once again referred to him with the admonition that there was much justice in the petitioner's complaint.³¹ As the Colonial Secretary had already referred the matter to the Central Irrigation Board, a way out of the impasse was evident.³²

Clearly the Colonial Secretary's Department could match a government agent's superior knowledge of local affairs with a deeper grasp of underlying principles. This was evident when Adikari Mudiyansele Senatige Wannakkurala, a cultivator in the Kalagam Palata, Anuradhapura, complained that a piece of land which he had cultivated for years had been seized and put for sale by the government.³³ The Government Agent, on the other hand, contended that the petitioner had encroached on crown land, and done so quite successfully, with the connivance of certain headmen. The Government Agent added that encroachments which were a common

25. The Hendirishamy affair. 41/492.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*

32. In 1885 Provincial irrigation Boards were set up to take in hand the larger irrigation works. In 1887 an ordinance was passed creating a Central Irrigation Board to Co-ordinate the proposals of the Provincial Boards and for the general management and promotion of irrigation.

33. See 41/493 for petition no. 2463 of 1898 and other related papers.

occurrence in the Anuradhapura districts must be dealt with firmly.³⁴ The matter however did not end there. An extensive correspondence between the provincial government and the Colonial Secretary followed. The Government Agent was asked to examine the period during which the land had been cultivated by Wannakkurala. 'His Excellency further desires that you should not put up for auction any more occupied land without reference to Government'.³⁵ When it was discovered that the land had been occupied by Wannakkurala for over five years, Sir Edward Noel Walker, the Colonial Secretary, pointed out that in principle the petitioner was entitled to the land by virtue of 'occupation and improvement'.³⁶

'I did not understand', he minuted severely, 'Mr. Byrd's action in this matter. The mere fact that the petitioner was "a very stubborn man" does not seem qualification for dealing with him otherwise than under ordinary regulations'.³⁷ The Governor Sir West Ridgeway himself thought that Wannakkurala had been dealt with rather harshly, 'in view of our lenient and habitual practice with encroachers of this class'.³⁸ What might have dragged on interminably was ended when the purchaser of the land consented to surrender it to Wannakkurala in return for the sum he had paid at the sale.³⁹

As evident was a certain sensitivity displayed by the Colonial Secretary's Department to violations of some accepted principle or policy. In a petition to the Governor concerning the *Ratemahatmaya* of Hurulu Palata in the North Central Province, it was alleged with subtle casualness that the *Ratemahatmaya* and his wife had bought some land in the village of Manankattiya, notwithstanding the rule prohibiting government officers from buying land.⁴⁰ It was alleged further that following a dispute which had arisen from this very transaction, the *Ratemahatmaya* had prevented the execution of writ by bribing the Fiscal's clerk.⁴¹ Evidently the allegations were true. The Colonial Secretary intimated to the Government Agent that the whole affair was 'eminently unsatisfactory. . . and should not be allowed to remain as it is'.⁴² He pointed out that the *Ratemahatmaya* should have first obtained the sanction of the Government.⁴³ The Government Agent, clearly evincing a reluctance to pursue the matter, replied that the *Ratemahatmaya* had thought that such sanction was not necessary. The Colonial Secretary was convinced that 'the *Ratemahatmaya* cannot be permitted to plead ignorance of important standing instructions issued by

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*

40. The Colonial Secretary to the Government Agent, Anuradhapura. 25 March 1897. 41/492.

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Ibid.*

government'. The Government Agent was warned to give adequate publicity to such instructions for the benefit of 'provincial subordinates'. After further correspondence, the Colonial Secretary who never tired of impressing on the Government Agent that the whole affair was 'unsatisfactory from beginning to end', ordered that the *Ratemahatmaya* should be censured. The matter ended when the Government Agent undertook to do so.⁴⁴

Whatever the nature of a petition might be in the final analysis it was the *Mudaliyar* who conducted the investigations. On receiving a petition, the first step taken by a government agent was to forward it to the *Mudaliyar* of the district with which the petition was concerned. On the spot inquiries which a *Mudaliyar* made together with his intimate knowledge of local affairs, enabled the *Mudaliyar* to submit short reports which were both knowledgeable and useful. A *Mudaliyar* was moreover the essential link between the Government Agent and a miscellany of subordinate native officials in the District. It speaks much for the trust reposed on the *Mudaliyars* that their reports alone were the basis on which the Government Agent often took decisions on petitions. Sometimes a government agent would summon the petitioners and conduct investigations himself. But even on such occasions, which did not occur often, the *mudaliyar's* assistance was found to be useful. Indeed with regard to requests for exemption from taxes, matters pertaining to land disputes, irrigation and land sales. - matters which loomed so large in the lives of the peasantry - the *Mudaliyar's* voice was fairly decisive.

Perhaps at no time was his influence made more evident than when petitions were received against the subordinate native officials. A government agent's faith in the knowledge and judgement of the *Mudaliyar* on such occasions was striking. In fact neither the tone of the petitions, nor their length, or the matters complained of, made it possible to pick out the genuine from those petitions that subsequent investigations showed to be the product of family animosities and all manner of petty rivalries.

A certain man who lived in a remote village in the Southern Province complained that he was being harassed by the *Vidane Arachchi* who believed that he rather than the petitioner, was the real owner of some lands which the petitioner was cultivating.⁴⁵ The *Vidane Arachchi* had not only prevented the petitioner from reaping the crops, but had arbitrarily sold portions of the petitioner's land. The *Mudaliyar* reported that the allegations were true and added with characteristic gravity that the *Vidane Arachchi* 'had not acted credibly to himself at these instances'. Inevitably the *Vidane Arachchi* was sharply reprimanded by the Government Agent.⁴⁶ When the villagers of Pahala Hammillewa, a village in the Nuweraagam Palata in the North Central Province, made strong complaints against the *Vel Vidane* to the Government Agent and later to the Governor, the

44. *Ibid.*

45. Petition of Tennekoon Gammahey of Pahalagama n. d. 27/340.

46. *Ibid.*

Ratemahatmaya was able to show that the chief petitioner was actually the brother of the *Vel Vidane* and that animosities between the two brothers had long since been evident on account of a land dispute.⁴⁷ The *Ratemahatmaya* who dismissed the petitioner as 'a great scoundrel' reported that the *Vel Vidane* performed his duties well and set a good example to other cultivators as a landowner. Booth, who was the Government Agent was therefore able to suggest to the Colonial Secretary that the petitioner should be firmly told that the government had no intention of removing the *Vel Vidane* from his office.⁴⁸ A man who lived in Labuhengoda, a village in the Hambantota District, complained to the Assistant Government Agent that the Police Officer of the village was harassing him. The *Mudaliyar* of Giruwa Pattuwa was on the other hand, certain that the allegations were false. He added that villagers were not on the best of terms with the Police Officer and that there was a case between the Police Officer and the petitioner.⁴⁹

On the other hand when petitions were received against the *Mudaliyars* themselves, or against other native officials holding posts of comparable importance, the situation was wholly altered. Petitions of this type were invariably sent to the Governor rather than to a government agent. The petitioners usually made no secret of their mistrust of the government agents. It is significant that the Government Agent should have been represented as a gullible official who was blind to the misdemeanours of his *mudaliyars*. In a petition against the *Ratemahatmaya* of Kalagam Palata in the North Central Province it was said that although the *Ratemahatmaya* was an unscrupulous man he was powerless to influence the courts of law, 'though he could circumvent the Government Agent and make that credulous unsuspecting official believe all the falsehoods he was capable of telling'.⁵⁰ Another petitioner accused the Government Agent of maintaining 'silence' despite knowledge of the very things of which the petitioner was complaining.⁵¹ A third petitioner simply declared '... if Your Excellency were to refer this petition to the Government Agent, the petitioners submit that they will not answer. Why? Because if the Revenue Officer were to give his explanation... there will be no mercy shown to them by him'.⁵²

Ironically it was a government agent himself who decided the fate of this type of petition, which as a matter of course, were referred to him. It was evident that a government agent preferred to be guided by his own knowledge of the *mudaliyar* or a *Ratemahatmaya* concerned, rather than place much reliance on the typically amorphous statements made in petitions. In fact as part

47. Petition of Kesarasinghe Appuhami and others of Pahala Hammillewa, 28 September 1899.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Petition of W. C. I. Don Andiris Appu to the Assistant Agent, Hambantota, 22 October 1866.

50. Ekanayake Mudiyanseelage Kiri Banda and others to the Governor, 12 June 1897. 41/497.

51. The Colonial Secretary to the Government Agent, Anuradhapura enclosing petition no. 3159 of 11 September 1902. 41/494.

52. T. B. Minneriya and others to the Governor. 20 February 1901. 41/496.

of the procedure usually adopted, the Government Agent would forward the petition to the *mudaliyar* concerned to give him an opportunity of answering the various allegations made. Sometimes the Government Agent held an inquiry to which the petitioners were summoned. At such inquiries it was not uncommon to discover that the real basis for the petition was some hitherto undisclosed animosity or that the petition had been signed by fictitious characters.

Often even before such knowledge was forthcoming, a government agent would feel justified in stoutly backing his subordinate. Certain peasants who lived in Hurulu Palata had alleged that the *Ratemahatmaya* had not merely imposed arbitrary fines on them and subjected them to all manners of hardships, but that the *Ratemahatmaya* had not even spared their women.⁵³ Moreover it was the *Ratemahatmaya's* practice to accept bribes in recommending persons to the Government Agent for subordinate native posts like *koraleships*.⁵⁴ In reporting on this petition Booth remarked that the Colonial Secretary should have rejected the petition no sooner than it was received. It was his opinion that the allegations against the *Ratemahatmaya* were 'gross and insulting'. Booth added that he had no reason to believe that the allegations were true.⁵⁵

In February 1901 T. B. Minneriya who evidently commanded considerable influence in the locality together with over three hundred persons who lived in the Tamankaduwa District in the North Central Province, submitted a strongly worded petition to the Governor against Gabriel Wijesinghe Jayawardane who was the Revenue Officer of the district.⁵⁶ In addition Jayawardane was the President of the local village tribunal. The petitioners alleged that it was Jayawardane's practice to take their rice, coconuts and livestock without making payment. If payment was demanded, the petitioners were harassed and often assaulted. As President, Jayawardane decided cases by accepting bribes from one or the other of the parties. The petitioners also alleged that when an epidemic of cholera broke out in the Dastota District, it spread widely on account of Jayawardane's negligence. Although he did not think that the petition deserved to be considered at all, Booth referred it to Jayawardane himself so that Jayawardane could 'ascertain how far the signatures are genuine and to give a more categorical denial than I can give to some of the statements'. Even as matters stood Booth was certain that certain allegations at any rate were 'quite untrue'. When Jayawardane had made his explanations, Booth told the Colonial Secretary that the petition was 'a tissue of falsehoods from end to end'. Nor

53. 'If he hears even a false report that a poor village woman commits adultery he proceeds to the spot and recovers fines. . . . when he goes to hold his division days he orders all the pretty women to be brought for him'. Petition no. 3159 of 11 September 1902, 41/494.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*

56. Petition of T. B. Minneriya and others to the Governor. 20 February 1901. 41/496.

was it genuine as many of the signatures were false. Moreover Jayawardane was 'an officer of the highest discretion, zeal and integrity, incapable of such misconduct as is attributed to him'. Booth had no doubt at all that the petition should be rejected.⁵⁷

The extent to which a government agent supported a *mudaliyar* or *ratemahatmaya* in these circumstances was clearly decisive. In June 1897, in a petition against the *Ratemahatmaya* of Kalagam Palata, it was stated that the *Ratemahatmaya's* conduct was so oppressive that the petitioners were not over dramatizing their plight in regarding themselves as slaves. Specifically the petitioners alleged that the *Ratemahatmaya* had punished them severely for their failure - due to entirely unavoidable reasons - to provide provisions for the use of the Governor when he last visited the district.⁵⁸ The petitioners also declared that it was the *Ratemahatmaya's* practice to exact provisions unfairly and call upon the villagers to render certain services such as the erection of pandals whenever important official visits took place. Moreover the *Ratemahatmaya* had persons of questionable competence and background - the weightier consideration - appointed to subordinate posts. Such a person was the *Korala* who was a stranger to the district and whose conduct too was objectionable.⁵⁹

Byrde, who was the Government Agent at this time, was certain that the petitioners had 'clubbed together to try to injure the *Ratemahatmaya*'. Nonetheless Byrde sent the petition to the *Ratemahatmaya* himself and made arrangements to hold an inquiry. When those investigations were over, Byrde reported to the Colonial Secretary that he saw no reason to take further notice of the matter.⁶⁰ But petitions against the *Ratemahatmaya* did not cease. In 1899 two petitions were received by the Governor. These accused the *Ratemahatmaya* of corruption and the general abuse of his administrative powers.⁶¹ These petitions too were rejected. But Booth, who had succeeded Byrde as the Government Agent, confessed that his 'acquaintance with the *Ratemahatmaya* . . . has been too short for me to express an opinion as to whether there is any truth in the charges of corruption and interference . . .'. He assured the Colonial Secretary that he was determined to watch the *Ratemahatmaya's* conduct carefully.⁶²

Despite the rejection of petitions of this nature largely due to the intervention of the government agent, certain incidental references to the petitions themselves showed that the *mudaliyars* and the *ratemahatmayas* sometimes abused their power and made themselves obnoxious. In more than one petition concerning the *ratemahatmayas* in the Anuradhapura district one reads that a *ratemahatmaya*, in order to punish petitioners, would forbid the village *dhobies* to wash their clothes.⁶³ When the *dhobies* seemed defiant on one occasion they had

57. *Ibid.*

58. Ekanayake Mudiyanseelage Kiri Banda and others. 12 June 1897. 41/497.

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Ibid.*

61. Petitions 2495 and 4174 of 1899. *Ibid.*

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.* Also petition no. 3159 of 11 September 1902. 41/494.

been told that they would be tied to trees and assaulted.⁶⁴ The petitioners who claimed to be Kandyan of high birth made the point to the Governor that more than the inconvenience, the action of the Kalagam Palata *Ratemahatmaya* had humiliated them in the eyes of the entire village. The petitioners declared that the *Ratemahatmaya* could not have chosen a more effective means of causing them injury. An attempt to persecute the *dhobies* had been of no avail as there was no legal basis for doing so. In no instance did the *Ratemahatmaya* concerned deny that he had given such an order to the *dhobies*. The *Ratemahatmaya* of Kalagam Palata on the contrary justified his action on the ground of custom. It was he said a mode of punishment specifically reserved 'for the disobedient and stubborn', according to native custom. It is significant that the *Ratemahatmaya* should have taken care to point out that this was not a practice he had begun, but that it had been much availed of by his predecessors. Although the Government Agent intimated to the Colonial Secretary that he had ordered the *Ratemahatmaya* to withdraw the prohibition, it is clear that he did not consider this mode of punishment particularly obnoxious.⁶⁵

Although the *Ratemahatmaya* sought to justify action such as these on the basis of custom, the evidence suggests that in the late nineteenth century there was a growing antagonism to those very customs. It is worthy of note that this should have been evident in the North Central Province which had at the beginning of the last quarter of the century been considered 'backward' in official circles.⁶⁶ It is as noteworthy that this feeling should have been manifest not among extraneous Low Country Sinhalese settlers who seem to have come in significant numbers to the Anuradhapura district during this period, but among the indigenous Kandyan villagers themselves.⁶⁷

It was also made the subject of general complaint that the *Ratemahatmayas* when deciding disputes did so 'solely according to the Sinhalese fashion and customs'.⁶⁸ An all too evident preference for the courts of law as opposed to the traditional institutions of justice at village level, is in this context significant.⁶⁹

64. *Ibid.*

65. *Ibid.*

66. This notion was given considerable expression during the governorship of Sir William Gregory (1872-77). It was Gregory's boast that he had taken the first major step in making the North Central Province accessible thereby paving the way for its subsequent development

67. The influx of the Low country Sinhalese to the North Central Province was viewed with hostility by the Kandyan villagers who rather unfairly blamed the *Ratemahatmayas* for a development these officials were powerless to control. These attitudes were probably engendered by the nature of the economic activities in which the Low Country Sinhalese were involved. Like the Muslims, the Low Country Sinhalese were engaged principally in trade. This apart they competed with the Kandyan peasants for the lease of tank lands, became renters of the grain tax and held an undisputed sway in the arrack trade.

68. Petition no. 3159 of 11 September 1902. 41/494.

69. Ekanayake Mudiyanselage Kiri Banda and others. 12 June 1897. 41/497.

There were other straws too which indicated the change of wind. The practice of obtaining provisions from the people of districts through which high officials like the Governor or the Government Agent travelled had no sanction other than custom. As a certain petition explained, the *Ratemahatmaya* would call upon the Sinhalese in the village to contribute such commodities as 'coconuts, coconut oil, shell spoons, peas, straws and hats and the Moorish inhabitants are compelled to give fowls'.⁷⁰ The *Ratemahatmaya* denied indignantly that provisions obtained in this fashion were not paid for.⁷¹ In any case the *Ratemahatmaya* would strongly defend the practice on the grounds of ancient custom.

Byrde himself remarked that the practice was in complete accord with custom. He described this and the erection of pandals for which the *Ratemahatmayas* requisitioned the services of the people, as *Rajakariya*. Bryde has left unnoticed the *Ratemahatmaya's* statement made purely incidentally, that the *Korala* acting under his orders had compiled lists of all those cultivators who did not 'pay their respects to the Governor' on his visit to the district. One may wonder why such lists should have been made. It is significant that the petitioners, although they conceded that the obligation to fetch provisions arose from custom, should have retorted that 'this custom will doubtless be condemned by every Englishman . . .'.⁷²

The underlying Assumptions

Reflecting on the usefulness of petitions both as a 'safeguard of the subject' and as a means of enabling the government to know 'the actions of . . . subordinate officers', a government agent remarked that in Ceylon a petition was the equivalent of the British practice of writing to the local paper, - 'a petition to the Governor ranking with a "letter to the Times"'.⁷³

More significantly however petitions mirrored a certain divergence of attitudes with regard to the obligations of the rulers towards the ruled. For example, that a great many petitions drew attention to the lawlessness prevailing in certain districts was not *per se* particularly significant. There were, however, a closely allied group of petitions reflecting a widespread belief that the government's duty to protect its subjects necessarily involved its intervention in private disputes which - as the government agents were never tired of reminding the petitioners - should have been referred to the courts of law.⁷⁴

70. Petition of T. B. Minneriya and others 41/496.

71. *Ibid.*

72. *Ibid.*

73. E. Elliot, Assistant Government Agent. Report on the Matara District. Administration Reports 1870, p. 147.

74. Petition of S. A. Eliyas and others of Beliatta 26 July 1888. 27/271. Petition of Abeydeera Liyanage Don Simon and Sixty seven others of Galagama, West Giruwa Pattuwa Southern Province. 26 February 1870. 27/271. Petition of certain Tamil traders of Madampe to the Assistant Government Agent, Chilaw. 30 December 1877. 42/735. Also M. A. L. Mohamadu to the Government Agent, Anuradhapura n. d. 41/493.

Clearly the limits of paternalism had in some way to be defined. If, as the evidence suggests, the generality of the rural peasantry expected a great deal more from the government than was - in the eyes of the government agents permissible - a possible reason suggests itself. As part of the policy of projecting the image of alien rule with as much an indigenous colouring as possible, the British had maintained - in form at any rate - the native hierarchy of officials in provincial government.⁷⁵ And in effect too, the power exercised by these officials at village level merely served to strengthen the image of native rule. Besides, broadly peripheral factors such as the partiality shown by some government agents towards archaic Sinhalese customs - so alien to their own outlook - also suggest a certain broad similitude to the indigenous model. It is inconceivable that these developments did not have a corresponding impact on the attitudes of the ruled towards government. It is possible that with increasing affinities to traditional form an equally traditional outlook towards the rulers manifested itself.

On the other hand the government agents were fairly agreed on what should constitute the peripheries of paternalism. They washed their hands of many questions on the ground that these were beyond the pale of legitimate government concern. The resulting lack of identification with matters that bothered the simple peasant was sometimes given expression to if only in relation to particular issues.⁷⁶ For example in 1871 a government agent in the Kurunegala District wondered whether it would not after all be useful to take note of 'petitions respecting matrimonial squabbles in respect to which the parties do not seek for separation but merely beg that inquiry be made and justice awarded'.⁷⁷

At a considerably more elevated level the incongruity of attitudes was brought into sharper focus. The study of petitions concerning Buddhist questions is of manifest relevance in this sense. For more comprehensively

75. 'The success with which the administration of the Government of Ceylon has been carried on is due in no small degree to these headmen, the Ratemahatmayas in the Kandyan Provinces, the Mudaliyars in Maritime Districts . . . and the maintenance of this power has done much to reconcile the people to British rule' C. O. 54/531. Confidential Despatch of James Longden to the Earl of Kimberley 8 February 1881. C. O. 54/531. Also in Lot 6 (5) D. N. A. no. 3482 for lengthy memorandum on the headmen establishment written by W. C. Twynam who was the Government Agent in the North Central Province. 7 October 1871.

76. And yet, interestingly enough, a government agent implied that the Government in enacting legislation regarding the institution of marriage among Kandyan had made crucial inroads into the social sphere.

As far as economic issues were concerned there was a greater willingness to make changes in existing institutions presumably in the interests of British entrepreneurship.

R. Morris, G. A., Report on the North Western Province, Administration Reports, 1875, 1871. p. 75.

77. W. D. Wright, Actg. G. A., Report on the Kurunegala District, Administration Reports, 1871. p. 221.

and indeed more explicitly than was evident in petitions concerning other subjects, this particular *corpus* of petitions clearly reflected the indigenous view concerning the obligations of the government towards the ruled.

Primarily there were three types of petitions concerning Buddhism. The first - really the least important - was strictly related to matters which impinged on certain measures which the government had adopted towards Buddhism. The petitions therefore merely reflected the administrative difficulties in implementing these measures. In particular, the great majority of petitions in this group principally involved the specific issues - the registration of temple lands and the administration of Buddhist temporalities.

Briefly, after 1856 the government had set about the task of systematically registering temple lands with a view to demarcating clearly the lands that genuinely belonged to the various temples.⁷⁸ It was thought that many temple authorities had exaggerated the extent of their legitimate temple holdings to secure an undue advantage from the provision which the British had made in 1818 to exempt temple lands from taxation.⁷⁹ But in spite of the finality with which the registration of temple lands had been done under the ordinance of 1856, there was a constant flow of petitions from individual temples claiming that mistakes had been made in surveying temple lands.⁸⁰ It was usually claimed that a particular temple had been unjustly deprived of this or that land, due to the failure of the Temple Lands Commissioner to take adequate cognizance of *sannasas* and *talapats* according to which the temples, by ancient grant, had irrefutable claims to the lands in question. Decisions which a government agent made from time to time to sell crown lands triggered off this kind of petition, the claim being strongly made that certain portions of these crown lands belonged to a particular temple.

Often these petitions were rejected outright on the ground that the *sannasa* or *talapat* in question was a fabrication.⁸¹ Sometimes however, a government agent would relent sufficiently to make more extended investigations. As the genuineness or otherwise of a *sannasa* or *talapat* was at best a

78. The Proclamation of 21 November 1818 exempted temple lands from taxation. The Government however made clear in the Proclamation of 18 September 1819 that it was necessary in the interests of collecting revenue to register the lands belonging to the temples. This resolve was reiterated in a third Proclamation issued on 21 May 1822.

79. The Temple Lands Registration Ordinance 1856.

80. C. O. 57/46. Minutes of the Executive Council. 19 August 1868.

C. O. 57/46. Minutes of the Executive Council. 22 June 1868.

C. O. 57/68. Minutes of the Executive Council. 18 April 1876.

81. Petition of the incumbent of the Rankotmulle temple, 8 December 1866, drawing attention to certain lands surrounding the temple with which it had been endowed by virtue of a grant of 1772. 27/340.

Petition of Dipankara Unnanse of Handagoda Vihare in Hurulu Palata, N. C. P. 27 December 1898. To this petition is attached an interesting translation of a *talapat* dated 1773. 41/494.

moot point, inquiries were more realistically directed towards ascertaining whether, in tradition, in the belief of the people and above all in the opinion of those most likely to know, the land in question belonged to the temple. As might be expected in these circumstances the government agent would place heavy reliance on the opinion of the *Ratemahatmaya* and other native officials.⁸²

A similar orientation towards purely administrative considerations was reflected in the petitions relating to Buddhist temporalities. After decades of indecision, the government had enacted an ordinance for the regulation of Buddhist temporalities.⁸³ As a result, the government agents were able to react somewhat more positively to petitions which dealt with the formation of committees, the appointment of trustees and a number of other matters, for all of which the ordinance had made some kind of provision.⁸⁴

More significant in terms of the basic themes was the second group of petitions. These were clearly symptomatic of a belief that it was traditionally the government's business to look after the interests of Buddhism. For example, some peasants who lived in the Kalagam Palata in the North Central Province, urged the government to appoint a certain D. B. Ratwatte - a retired *Ratemahatmaya* - as an *Upasaka Adikarama*. They insisted that Ratwatte should moreover be invested with the authority to levy fines of 25 cents from 'people who do not perform their religious obligations'.⁸⁵ The Government Agent's laconic rejoinder that this was not a matter that could legitimately concern the government was significant. The essence of another petition, submitted by a group of Buddhists in Anuradhapura was that animals were being slaughtered in the area disregarding the ancient law of the Sinhalese kings forbidding this. The petitioners complained that in general the attitude of the government towards Anuradhapura - which they urged was a place of special significance to the Buddhists - did not conform

82. *Ibid.*

83. Sir William Gregory who had a genuine regard for the wellbeing of the Buddhist temporalities tried hard to persuade the Colonial Office that the initiative in solving this problem should be taken by the Government. For a clear grasp of the underlying issues which were indeed undeniably complex, see C. O. 54/503. Gregory to Carnarvon. 291 of 26 September 1876.

C. O. 54/404. Gregory to Carnarvon, 397 of 29 September 1876.

C. O. 54/507. Gregory to Carnarvon, 40 of 7 May 1877.

C. O. 54/527. Longden to Kimberley, 89 of 7 August 1880.

C. O. 54/533. Douglas to Kimberley, 153 of 15 June 1881.

C. O. 54/547. Longden to the Earl of Derby, 307 of 28 June 1883.

84. Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance of 1889. For critical comments concerning its implementation see,

Administration Reports 1890, p. E4

Administration Reports 1891, p. J24.

Administration Reports 1893, p. J10.

85. Kiribanda and others to the Government Agent, Anuradhapura. *Circa* January 1899. 41/492.

to tradition. As a result not only had the adherents of non Buddhist faiths been able to gain a foothold in Anuradhapura, but they had also built places of worship there.⁸⁶ When he was asked to report on this petition the Government Agent remarked to the Colonial Secretary that 'the petitioner's case needs only to be stated to show its absurdity'.

The tendency to look to the government - notwithstanding its alien and basically Christian character - was sometimes emphasised by references to a past which was invariably presented with idyllic overtones. 'In old times', remarked Medhankara Unnanse of Habarana vihare in a petition to the government Agent in Anuradhapura, 'this country being resorted to by happy princes, men of affluence and pundits versed in Pali grammar and other branches of learning, was in a state of prosperity'. Instead there was in his own times, the clearest symptoms of degeneration among laymen and priests alike. In sum the great void in contemporary society was the absence of the *Dharma* the law of religion.⁸⁷

Medhankara Unnanse was determined to remedy this state of affairs. He confided in the Government Agent - as though the Government Agent and he were in perfect accord about the spiritual objects. Medhankara Unnanse had in mind - that he had been thinking of building a preaching hall, a dormitory for the accommodation of priests and a school room. To do so on his own was impossible. On the other hand, he was denied the little assistance he might have ordinarily expected from the villagers who lived nearby because of their extreme poverty. Hence the appeal to the government to perform a function - which Medhankara Unnanse implied - came legitimately within its purview.⁸⁸ Predicated on similar assumptions was the petition of the *Nayake* Priest of the Atamastane in Anuradhapura applying for a free grant of land to build a *pirivena* near the Thuparama.⁸⁹

As revealing were the third group of petitions. The underlying assumptions however were more complex. In these petitions there was a more intense awareness of the decline of Buddhism. The real divergence however came in the manner of responding to this. Instead of looking to the government, there was in this group of petitions - largely submitted by reformist minded Buddhist priests - the idea that the problem of the decline of Buddhism must be dealt with by individual efforts, either because of the apathy of the government towards Buddhism, or because an alien government could not really be expected to be mindful of its interests. The most striking and depressing outward manifestation of the decline of Buddhism was the

86. Tennekoon and other Buddhists of Anuradhapura to the Governor. Circa January 1901, 41/497.

87. Medhankara Unnanse to the Government Agent, Anuradhapura. Petition no. 759, 7 April 1900, 41/494.

88. *Ibid.*

89. The *Nayake* Unnanse of the Atamastane to the Governor. Petition No. 2433 of 1900, 41/497.

degenerate condition of the traditional places of Buddhist worship. The ambition of these priests was to restore these places of worship to their pristine grandeur by individual effort. Hence the petitions to government for permission to do so. Indeed a more dramatically symbolic mode of highlighting the condition of Buddhism could not have been conceived.

The government however did not take kindly to these efforts. Since the time of Sir Hercules Robinson - when an Archaeological Committee had been established - and more particularly during the governorship of his successor, Sir William Gregory, the preservation of ancient monuments especially in the Anuradhapura area had been an aspect of government policies.⁹⁰ Indeed the lone efforts of an obscure Buddhist priest to repair a large *dagoba* in Anuradhapura about which Gregory wrote feelingly to the Earl of Kimberley, had served him well in drawing the Colonial Office to the need to preserve ancient Buddhist monuments.⁹¹ It is noteworthy that the government should have been at pains to disclaim that it was in anyway identifying itself with the Buddhist religion.⁹² The point was made sufficiently clear that what mattered was to safeguard the monuments or the sake of their historical and aesthetic value. With the institution of an Archaeological Survey this work was taken in hand more vigorously.⁹³ Correspondingly the official antipathy to Buddhist priests who were anxious to 'restore' ancient monuments was more pronounced. Often the priests were regarded as charlatans, solely motivated by a desire to collect money from credulous Buddhist pilgrims who frequented the places of worship. Alternatively they were stigmatised as misguided zealots who did great damage to ancient monuments by putting up extraneous edifices and all manner of additions which marred the aesthetic integrity of the original.

Whether this attitude was so wholly justified is questionable. It is noteworthy that permission was sought not only to restore the more famous places of worship in Anuradhapura, but also to take in hand the less frequented and clearly less accessible such as, the Somavati dagoba in Trincomali, Nagalkande in the Minneriya district and Seruvila in Tamankaduwa.⁹⁴ Moreover the

90. C. O. 54/492, Gregory to Kimberley no. 21 of 15 January 1874.

91. C. O. 45/492, Gregory to Kimberley no. 21 of 15 January 1874, also C. O. 54/566, Gordon to the Colonial Office, No. 308 of 11 August 1886

92. Considerable emphasis was placed on the preservation of ancient inscriptions. To effect the scientific reproduction of these inscriptions - a cognate consideration - Gregory secured the service of Dr. P. Goldschmidt who had been recommended to Lord Carnarvon by R. C. Childers See C. O. 54/495. Also *Governors' Addresses (1860-77)* p. 384 ff. Also p. 523.

93. Devendra, D. T., *Seventy years of Ceylon Archaeology*. Reprint from *Artibus Asiae* Vol XXII. p. 23 ff. Also SMITHER, J. C. *Architectural Remains, Anuradhapura, Ceylon*. See Preface.

94. Petition no. 3621 of 1901. 41/497 Also petition no. 2911 of 1900. Kotawewa Sanganda Unnanse to the Government Agent, Anuradhapura. 41/497.

'restoration' complex was a significantly diffused phenomenon suggesting in a sense a strong kinsmanship to the broadly contemporary Buddhist revivalist movement.⁹⁵ Indeed petitions for restoration did not originate from Anuradhapura alone or from a particular region in the island but from widely separated areas such as Kegalle, Tamankaduwa, Colombo - to mention but a few.⁹⁶

But the redoubtable Archaeological Commissioner of the day, H. C. P. Bell did not see matters in this light.⁹⁷ Indeed he fought tooth and nail to prevent various Buddhist priests from tampering with the monuments. 'It is not desirable' remarked Bell on petition from a priest in Kotahena, concerning the Gal Vihare in Polonnaruwa 'to allow any priest to occupy and inevitably "modernise" the Gal vihare . . . the sad experience gained at Isurumuniya rock temple in giving an ignorant priest a free hand to disfigure the grand old rock by . . . minarets and a hideous belfry should be sufficient warning'. When the Government Agent demurred pointing out that the priest sought permission to merely clean the surrounding jungle, Bell replied, 'I can personally certify that the Gal Vihare was nicely cleared and easily accessible in September 1893 and there is little doubt that it is so still'.⁹⁸ With as much characteristic asperity Bell gave vent to his feelings when Kotawewa Sangananda Unnanse of Minneriya wanted to restore three *dagobas* in the Tamankaduwa district.⁹⁹ Bell who dismissed the proposal as being patently absurd, remarked that what the priest really wanted from the Governor - to whom the petition had been first sent - was 'a roving commission to collect money from innocent pilgrims'.¹⁰⁰

The rigid policy of excluding 'interlopers' from a preserve which Bell could legitimately regard as his own, exposed him to a certain measure of public criticism. In a sense the tables were turned on Bell when S. N. W. Hulugalle,

95. A well defined and significantly diffused revivalist movement among the Buddhists was by far the most conspicuous feature of the religious history of Ceylon in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The movement was as much a protest against the campaigns of the christian missionaries as it was a conscious search for the institutions and facets which symbolised the traditional culture.
96. Petition no. 1007 of 1900, M. K. Sanga Tissa Unnanse of Kotahena to the Government Agent, Anuradhapura. 41/497.
Also petition of Sumangala Unnanse of Henpitikande vihare in Galboda Korale, Kegalle District. circa June 1900. 41/497.
Petition no. 2911 of 1900. Kotawewa Sangananda Unnanse to the Government Agent, Anuradhapura. 41/497.
97. H. C. P. Bell who began his career in Ceylon in 1873 had served in various capacities until he was appointed Archaeological Commissioner in 1890 - a post which he held for years with great distinction.
98. See 41/497, petition no. 1007 for letter from H. C. P. Bell to the Government Agent, Anuradhapura of 7 January 1895. Also letter dated 12 January 1895.
99. Petition no. 2911 of 1900 in 41/497.
100. A reason sometimes put forward against monks who wanted to restore *dagobas* was that such monks were often strangers to the locality concerned and therefore would be unacceptable to the villagers. In the above petition, Bell remarks that he would have no objection to Kotawewa Sangananda Unnanse restoring a small *dagoba* below the Minneriya tank bund 'provided he is supported by the consent of the villagers who may prefer to entrust the work to other hands'. Booth echoed these sentiments.

who represented the Kandyans in the Legislative Council, specifically charged Bell with having damaged Buddhist monuments by careless excavations. Hulugalle added that he was giving utterance to the fears of many Buddhists which, indeed were substantiated by his own observations.¹⁰¹ This incident - even though the Governor had prevailed on Hulugalle to retract and virtually apologise to Bell - merely served to give his outbursts a somewhat sharper edge.¹⁰² In reporting on another typical petition, Bell ruefully remarked to the government agent of the North Central Province 'from paragraphs 2 and 3 of the petition it would appear as though the Archaeological Commissioner was the officially recognised "Bill Sykes" of the Ceylon Government - a brutal burglar of Buddhist buildings'.¹⁰³

This bitterness was often tinged with a sense of exasperation. For example when he was asked to comment on a petition submitted by a Buddhist monk seeking permission to occupy an ancient *pansala* in Sangili Kanadarawa, Bell replied, 'there is no objection to this or any other monkish dreamer of dreams for his own benefit being allowed to settle at the ruins of Sangili Kanadarawa'.¹⁰⁴

To the priests concerned however - and the divergence was made apparent - official attitudes were clearly inexplicable. This was invariably the sequel to petitions of this sort. In their eyes, the monuments which were scattered throughout the North Central Province and elsewhere were primarily places of worship and not merely spiritually barren historical relics. The fact of their antiquity was proof of their continuing importance as places of great religious significance.¹⁰⁵ To journey to distant Anuradhapura, to live for months in the vicinity of some ancient *dagoba* plastering crevices or cleaning the surrounding jungle was in itself a deeply spiritual experience to those who habitually read in a spiritual meaning to the simple act of sweeping the temple compound.

At other points too in the broad spectrum of official policies, one may see a similar gulf between the rulers and the ruled. Was the gulf therefore inevitable? Institutionally British rule in the East had been based on certain ideas conceived towards bringing the rulers into greater proximity

101. The background to this incident was partly the Antiquities Ordinance of 1900. *Inter alia* this ordinance declared that antiquities were the absolute property of the state and that it was an offence to willfully injure, tamper or deface antiquities. In the Sessions of 1901, Hulugalle in moving for papers containing instructions to guide the Archaeological Commissioner, drew particular attention to the Abhayagiri Vihare which he said had been damaged by Bell. Debates of the Ceylon Legislative Council, 23 October 1901.

102. L. W. Booth to H. C. P. Bell, 15 July 1900 in petition no. 2204 of 1900.

103. H. C. P. Bell to the Government Agent, Anuradhapura. 14 March 1901. See papers on petition no. 109, 41/497.

104. H. C. P. Bell to L. W. Booth, 19 December 1900, 41/97.

105. 'These *dagobas* are distinct objects of veneration and I have to submit that in the eyes of the Buddhists any interference with them would be most offensive to their feelings'. Hulugalle, Debates of the Ceylon Legislative Council, 23 October 1901.

with the ruled. The broad aims were to preserve the institutional *status quo*, to restrict change to remedying abuses in prevailing institutions and systems, and to generally preserve the image of continuity with the old order of things which British rule had supplanted. It is true that these seminal ideas were evolved and received their best expression in relation to a certain historical context - the crucial period when especially in India, British rule was in the throes of displacing native power. But the ideas were too valuable to pass into oblivion even though with time the British took a firmer grasp of their possessions. They continued to be useful in ruling essentially peasant orientated societies characterised by the slow tempo of economic change. Besides extraneous influences, such as for example the wide impact of Sir Henry Maine's ideas, led to a fresh appreciation, a new seeking out of native administrative institutions.

If nonetheless the gulf remained it was because in the hands of the government agents the ruling ethic of paternalism was in turn diluted by a congeries of extraneous values, in spite of the determination to rule the natives in their own idiom. Hence against the proneness of the people to look to the government was matched the sturdy Victorian virtue of independence and self-reliance. The very frequency with which the phrase 'self-reliance' occurs in the documents is significant. Indeed to many Government agents the concept was almost a touchstone in weighing the usefulness of various measures which the government took particularly in respect of irrigation and land problems.