

There were two Nayakkar princes who were heirs to the throne by the time King Rajadhirajasinghe died in 1798. One was Kannasami and the other was Muththusami. According to a plan of Pilimathalawe who was the 'Maha Adikaram' of the hill country kingdom, prince Kannasami was coronated as 'Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe.' Then, prince Muththusami escaped to the English for protection.



Fig 2.4 – King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe

The British, soon after establishing their power in the coastal regions of the country, eyed on the hill country kingdom also. The policy of the governor, Fredric North is very significant here. He tried to get the consent of the hill country king to a treaty which was more advantageous to the British. He sent envoys to the hill country headed by Commander MacDowell in 1800. He strengthened the convoy with 1164 soldiers and 8 cannons in order to display their military power and get the king's consent to a treaty which was more beneficial for them. Yet, King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe denied the permission of allowing such a massive army and cannons entering the upcountry. As a result the envoys had to enter the kingdom alone leaving the soldiers and cannons

outside the upcountry. Though MacDowell had discussions with the king and the other aristocrats, the king did not agree to the conditions of the British. So, this mission became a complete failure.

North was distressed because he could not get the sanction of the king. He considered the independent government of the upcountry as a threat to their power in the coastal regions. Because the British had to employ a massive army for the security of the coastal areas and the protection of the inland territories, they were forced to bear a huge cost. Another problem they faced was that the general public of the coastal areas still accepted the upcountry king as their king too and when there were insurgencies the upcountry king helped the rebels. The British further knew that if the upcountry king happened to request the support of the French who were the enemies of the British, that would be an added threat to their administration. On the other hand, the English wanted to have contact with Trincomalee which was their main naval centre from the administration centre of Colombo via land. They had to cross the territories of the upcountry in order to keep contact between Colombo and Trincomalee. The English wanted to build a road between these two cities. Owing to the above reasons, the British paid their attention to either conquering the upcountry or winning their good will.

### ❖ Invasion of the Hill Country in 1803

When MacDowell's mission failed to give the expected results, the governor, North decided to invade the hill country. So, North sent two troops of soldiers to the hill country from Trincomalee and Colombo in January and February, 1803. In this invasion, which was headed by MacDowell, the British troops entered the hill country on 21<sup>st</sup> of February. King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe and the citizens vacated the city as a security measure and started organizing themselves. The British named prince Muttusami who had been brought to the upcountry with them as the king. But, the people of upcountry started to get together with king Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe and prepared for the war ignoring Muttusami.

The British had to face unexpected difficulties with the beginning of the rainy season because epidemics started spreading among the British troops. At the same time, as a result of the upcountry people blocking all supply means, the English suffered due to lack of food and difficulty of communication with Colombo. The English troops suffered heavy losses under the timely attacks of the upcountry people. Happening to let their puppet ruler, prince Muttusami to be captured by the upcountry people, provides evidence to the seriousness of the defeat the British experienced.

Before this attack, the governor North did not have a clear understanding about the hill country. Yet, when his invasion ended in defeat, he understood that the upcountry kingdom is strong and it cannot be overpowered by such attacks. Hence, the British moved into a highly tactful policy regarding the hill country after the invasion of 1803.

### ❖ Invasion of the Hill Country in 1815

Thomas Maitland was appointed the governor of Sri Lanka at the end of the governor North's session of duty in 1805. Unlike North, he did not hasten to invade the hill country; instead moved into a strategic policy and started carefully laying the platform for a future invasion. He employed an efficient civil servant named John D'Oyly for this.

### ❖ John D'Oyly

John D'Oyly was a graduate of the Cambridge University. He tried to understand the local culture after coming to Sri Lanka unlike the others who looked down upon it. He engaged himself in studies under the Buddhist monks like Rev. Korathota

Dhammarama and Rev. Morathota Dhammakandha. The folklore says that D'Oyly was capable of composing poems in contest to Gajaman Nona. D'Oyly who had an excellent knowledge about local customs was in the habit of chewing betel also. As a result he was capable of winning the hearts of not only the general public but also the aristocrats of the hill country. D'Oyly completed his duty successfully using his sharp intelligence and talents.



Fig 2.5 – John D'Oyly with the hill country aristocrats

John D'Oyly worked hard to cultivate secret connections with the upcountry aristocrats and tried to win them towards the English people. Further, he took steps to send spies in the disguise of sellers and palm readers and got them to gather all information about the internal affairs of the kingdom. As a result he was able to find out information about the internal security of the hill country, which all other Europeans were ignorant of. It was Robert Brownrigg that became the governor of Sri Lanka after Maitland who took the advantage of the conditions created by Maitland and D'Oyly and took further steps to capture the hill country.

It was not only the strategies of the British that paved the way to the falling of the hill country to the hands of the British. A number of other situations that accelerated the downfall of the hill country had been created during the reign of King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe. The king who was very young and inexperienced seemed to have taken decisions following the advice of his Nayakkar relations. The last two Maha Adhikarams of the hill country had had disagreements with the king. Pilimathalawwe Maha Adhikaram who worked to offer the throne to the king too was sentenced to death by the king as a result of the problems they had with each other. There were incongruities between Ehalepola Adhikaram who was the successor of Pilimathalawwe Maha Adhikaram and the king.

During the reign of King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe, disparities among the aristocrats increased. As a result, the majority of the aristocrats worked against the king. They

were the group that acted as the leaders in organizing the general public to protect the king and the kingdom during the early invasions of the Europeans.

The relationship between the king and the monks had also been broken because several monks had been killed during that time. The bond between the king and the people had also been broken due to some decisions the king made during the last few years of his reign. The king prohibited staying in the city at night for the people who had come from regions like Sabaragamuwa, Sath Korala and Sathara Korala for the services like extending the Bogambara tank, building the 'Paththirippu' (the octagon) and renovations of the Kandy city. Therefore, they faced a number of difficulties.

Though the rebellion against the king that arose in Sabaragamuwa could have been, easily suppressed more than 100 individuals were killed in it. History says that the king ordered to brutally massacre the wife and the children of Ehalepola because he could not be arrested after the rebellion. These inhuman acts of the king had created a wide gap between the king and the people of the country by 1815.

Whenever the Europeans invaded the upcountry, the aristocrats and the general public sacrificed their lives to protect the king. The same human shield that guarded the upcountry kingdom turned against the king because of his own deeds. As a result the king was at danger in his own kingdom and this became an advantage to the British. The governor, Brownrigg took advantage of this situation and when he invaded the upcountry in January 1815, people did not come forward to protect the king. The governor had spread messages among the upcountry people saying that their real enemy was not the British people but the king himself and the invasion is really for the sake of the upcountry people.

King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe gave up the Kandy city and escaped to a secure place as the British invaded the upcountry. The upcountry people themselves surrounded the place where the king was hiding which was in '*Medamahanuwara*.' They captured the king and the queens and handed them over to the British on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February, 1815. The British were able to record a victory that any other European nation could not record in the hill country with this arrest of the king. But, the British did not think that they captured the whole upcountry just because they caught the king. They could arrest the king because they were supported by the aristocrats. Therefore, the British took steps to sign a treaty with the aristocrats and complete the process of capturing the whole of the upcountry.



Fig 2.6 – The monument established in Medamahanuwara, at the place where King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe was arrested

### ❖ Upcountry Treaty – 1815

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March, 1815 a treaty was signed between the aristocrats representing the upcountry people and the governor, Brownrigg representing the British government at the royal courts (*Magul Maduwa*), about the yielding of upcountry kingdom. This is known as the upcountry treaty.



Fig 2.7 – The moment when Rev. Wariyapola Sri Sumangala thero hoisted the Sri Lankan national flag dragging down the English flag

There is a belief that Rev. Wariyapola Sri Sumangala thero dragged down the English flag and hoisted the Sri Lankan flag when some Englishman hoisted their flag before the treaty was signed after the statements of the treaty were read and explained on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March in the royal courts. Some records say that the governor, Brownrigg and some aristocrats signed the treaty on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March.



The upcountry treaty is an important historical document that officially accepted the surrendering of the upcountry kingdom to the British. From the first three statements of the treaty King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe and his relations were stripped off of their rights to the upcountry kingdom. The fourth statement declared that the upcountry kingdom surrendered to the English government and further informed that they would govern the country in such a way that the rights and privileges of the traditional aristocrats of the upcountry are protected. The fifth statement promised the continuation of Buddhism and Devagam and the protection of monks, temples and devalas. The other statements explained how they expected to conduct the judiciary system of the upcountry.

With this treaty Sri Lanka completely lost its sovereignty which lasted unbroken for more than 2000 years and became a colony of a foreign country. The British started enjoying the power vested upon them by the treaty and appointed John D'oily as a residential representative of the governor for regional affairs. His office was opened in Kandy and a group of officers was appointed to assist him. The English government offered positions for the aristocrats who agreed to serve under the British administration. Thus the people of the upcountry who used to enjoy an independent ruling system for more than three centuries had to live under an administration system run by a group of foreign rulers.

#### ↓ **ACTIVITY 4**

Prepare a book of short questions for the following headings.

- The background of the British arrival to Asia
- The British paying attention to Sri Lanka
- The British establishing power in Sri Lanka

### **2.4. Protests against Foreign Domination**

Although the people of the upcountry could escape the obstinate ruling of King Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe with the arrival of the British to the hill country in 1815, they did not have any partiality to the administration system that continued thereafter. They, in no time understood that they had lost the independence that they protected by fighting and sacrificing their lives against the European invaders like the Portuguese and the Dutch. Therefore, they rose against the English in 1818 and 1848 using their traditional ways of attack. The natives called them as attempts to win the lost independence back by chasing the foreigners away from the hill country whereas the British interpreted them as rebellions against the government.

Therefore they became the first freedom struggles that arose against the British administration. Let's now discuss the struggle of 1818.

### ❖ The Struggle for Freedom in 1818

The armed insurgencies against the English government that existed from September, 1817 to October 1818 in the hill country were called as the Struggle for Freedom in 1818. The aristocrats and the general public moved to such a struggle even before three years after the English administration started because of the dissatisfaction they had about the ruling system. This proves that there had been several reasons that encouraged the hill country people for the 1818 struggle.

### ❖ Reasons for the 1818 Struggle

- ▶ The regret of the loss of a king and the freedom.

It is clear that the people of the upcountry had grievances over the loss of freedom they enjoyed under a ruling system of their own even during the times when the low country was governed by the Portuguese and the Dutch.

Even though it was announced after the colonization that the king of Britain was the king of the upcountry also; the people of the hill country had never seen the so called king. They wanted a king who lived in their capital city, who could listen to their grievances and give solutions to them instead of a never seen king who lived in a country thousands of miles away. Because they could not see a king they tend to believe that the country was throneless. The following two poems believed to be composed by a monk who lived those days displaying the distress they had because they did not have a king.

Oh! Dear ants  
you have a king  
what can we do  
this is our destiny

when will we have a king  
to celebrate with milk rice  
respect with pageants  
chant with “sadu sadu”



Fig 2.8 – The throne of King  
Sri Wikrama Rajasinghe

### ► Emergence of Problems about Religion and Culture

The people of the hill country did not believe that a set of foreigners who are not Buddhists would give the same protection that would be given by a Buddhist king although the English had promised in the 5<sup>th</sup> statement of the upcountry treaty to protect Buddhism. This is evident in the statements such as, conducting pageants and chanting 'sadu, sadu'. Another example for this is the support of monks for the struggle.

The people of the hill country suspected that their traditions and culture would be destroyed in the hands of foreigners. Under a traditional ruling system a king's major duty was to protect the customs. There were a number of traditions regarding the palace, courts and administration matters. Uniforms were designed for each post under the old administration in a way that they were honoured and respected. But, the English soldiers who came to the Kandy city did not follow those traditions. As a result, a gap was created between the British and the people of the hill country religiously as well as culturally. This generated a desire for freedom in the hearts of the upcountry people.

### ► Attacks on the Upcountry Aristocrats

Although the British continued with the traditional upcountry posts according to the 1815 treaty, the social status and the power of the aristocrats were not stable. They had complained to D'Oyly that the British soldiers did not respect them. The traditional earnings of the aristocrats too were challenged. One example for this is the loss of income the aristocrats suffered because the English cancelled the tax called "kadwath badda". The British could change the traditional posts of the aristocrats as well. There was a tradition to always appoint a Sinhalese to the post of 'Madihe Mohandiram' who was in charge of upcountry transport. But the British breaking this tradition, appointed a Muslim called 'Hajji Marikkar' to this post. This created a distress among the aristocrats of Uva Wellassa. They tend to lead the struggle because their privilege, status and earnings were attacked in many ways.

### ► Nature of the Struggle

While there was a growing displeasure about the British administration among the upcountry people, a person called Doresami emerged from Wellassa who claimed to be an heir to the throne. The Badulla agent Douglas Wilson, came to know that he was gathering forces to regain the kingdom with the help of the local elite like 'Kohu Kumbure Rate Rala'. Hence, Douglas Wilson sent a platoon with Hajji Muhandiram to arrest Doresami. Yet, he was killed by the rebels. Then Douglas



Wilson too was killed by an archer when he set out to arrest Doresami. When the government noticed that the people of Wellassa were gathering around Doresami, they sent Kappetipola who was in charge of Uva to control the situation. Nevertheless, Keppetipola returned the English troops that came with him and joined the rebels. This resulted in the fights spreading to many parts of the upcountry. Among the aristocrats, only Molligoda and Eknaligoda Disawe did not join the fights.

Doresami was declared the upcountry king by the rebels under the guidance of Kappetipola. Kappetipola Disawe was appointed the Mahaadikaram of the new king. Another problem the British faced was the Tooth Relic which was believed to be the symbol of the kingship falling into the hands of rebels. Ehelepola too was suspected by the British because of the close kinship he had with the other aristocrats who were leading the struggle though he did not join the fights. Because of that he was arrested and brought to Colombo by the British.

The British were too vicious in suppressing the battle. The governor imposed martial law to the upcountry in February, 1818. The British troops that were there in the coastal regions were summoned to the upcountry. They followed a land sweeping policy to wipe out the rebels. Setting fire to villages, arresting as many men as possible and prosecuting under martial law were some strategies they used. The upcountry people could not persist with the battle in the face of the harsh retaliation of the British. So, the British were able to arrest several leaders of the battle. Some of those arrested were Maththamagoda, Kobbekaduwa, Dambawinna Disawe and Galagedara Mohottala, Basnayaka Nilame of Katharagama, Butawe Rate Rala and Ehelepola Adikaram.

The English spread news saying that the one who said to be the king in the battle



Fig 2.9 – Kappetipola Disawe

was not the real Doresami and he was not the real heir to the throne. There were disputes among the main leaders of the struggle such as Kappetipola, Madugalle

and Pilimathalawe. By August and September of 1818, the battle had died down a lot. The English were able to arrest Kappetipola and Madugalle in October. They were sentenced to death by the court martial. They were executed by the British on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November, 1818.

### ❖ Failure of the 1818 Battle and Its Effects

The rebellion spread fast within a few months after the beginning. When the British forces chased away the rebels from one area by destroying property, the battle started in another place. Yet, the upcountry people failed to launch a combined attack when the English started a heavy retaliation with extra forces. They had an advantage when it became possible for them to keep contact with Colombo via Sathara Korala because the in-charge of that area, Molligoda Nilame was partial to the British. Thus, there were several reasons for the loss of the battle. Some of them can be summarized as follows.

#### ❖ Reasons for the failure of the 1818 Battle:

- ▶ The heavy retaliation launched by the British
- ▶ Shortage experienced by the upcountry people, of weapons and other resources that are needed for a long battle
- ▶ Disorganized nature of the battle
- ▶ The exposure of the real identity of the person who claimed to be the heir to the throne.

As a result of the battle for freedom, leaders like Ehelepola, Kappitipola, Madugalle had to sacrifice their lives for the independence of the country. Property of some more aristocrats were confiscated. Some leaders who supported the battle were banished from the country. Those who went against the government were punished thus whereas the other aristocrats like Molligoda, Eknaligoda who were partial to the English were rewarded.

The British were able to strengthen their grip of the upcountry region because the 1818 battle was lost. The governor, Brownrigg issued a special announcement strengthening his power in the upcountry on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November, 1818. This long document which consisted of 56 statements curtailed the power of the aristocrats. Steps were taken to establish the English legal system in the upcountry reducing the legal power enjoyed by the aristocrats. It seems that the 1818 November document made the British power in the upcountry complete.

## ❖ Struggle for Independence in 1848

In about 30 years following the failure of the 1818 struggle, there was another battle against the British government. This struggle which tried for the second time to reestablish the imperial system the upcountry people used to have, can be named as the second armed battle for the independence. There were several reasons that led to the emergence of such a battle which began in 1848.

## ❖ Causes of the Battle

There were two major factors that led to the 1848 struggle as the effects of the Colebrooke reforms and the new tax policy of the government.

## ❖ Effects of the Colebrooke Reforms

### ► Land Policy of the Government

The government launched a policy of selling lands under the Colebrooke reforms which were started in 1833. The government land policy was problematic for the general public of the area because the land in the upcountry was rich and the environment was conducive for coffee cultivation. According to the Barron Land Act imposed in 1840, uncultivated lands that could not be proven of their continual ownership for 30 years were confiscated. There were no legal documents to prove the ownership of lands of the upcountry people that came to them from their descent.

As a result, many of their Chena lands were taken back to the government. The government sold these lands for very cheaper prices to the foreigners. Because the people lost their lands and the cultivation was disturbed thus, they were distressed about the government.

### ► Discontinuation of “Gam Sabha”

The existence of ‘Gam Sabha’ was challenged because the compulsory service system and the duty labour system were banned by the Colebrooke Commission. The building and maintenance of lakes, bunds, canals and dams of each area were done by the *Gam Sabha* (village council). The major method the Gam Sabha got labour was the system called "duty labour". Yet, when this method was cancelled, the Gam Sabha found it difficult to get necessary labour forces. The *Gam Sabha* did a good service by solving the minor problems in the area. But, they lost their judiciary power due to the reforms in 1833. The villagers had to suffer due to such reasons.

### ► New Judiciary System

Villagers had to go to courts even for a small matter according to Cameron's legal reforms. Earlier, they could get such matters resolved in their villages. They were not aware either of the English language or the rules and regulations that were in function in the new courts. Some other problems the villagers had to face were that they had to pay all lawyers' charges, stamp fees in cash and had to spend days in the court when they went for legal matters. As a result, their agricultural work including the protection of their cultivations was neglected.

### ► Distancing Relationship between the People and the Government

The decisions to reduce the number of civil service posts and allowing the civil servants to engage themselves in estate cultivation following the Colebrooke recommendations, made the local administration inefficient. As a result, the area of the administration officer expanded and they found it difficult to supervise such a big area. Because some officers were more attentive on cultivation, they did not have enough time to attend to the needs of the people. As a result, the problems of the general public were not properly informed to the government and it affected to widen the relationship between the people and the government.

### ► The New Tax Policy of the Government

The closest reason for the struggle was the decision of the governor, Sir Torrington to impose new taxes in 1848. Because the government income had gone down, the governor made a tax reform with the purpose of earning a considerable sum from the people. A stamp fee, cart and catamaran tax, tax on shops, tax on guns, body tax, and tax on dogs were those new taxes. People opposed all those taxes; especially the protest against the taxes on guns, body and dogs was significant.

The villagers used guns to protect their cultivations. They had to pay two shillings and a half every year for the tax on guns. The villagers had to go to government offices for this and to fill in the forms in English language. They had to pay extra charges in addition to the time spent. Charges they had to pay for the guns sometimes exceeded the real value of the guns. There was a resistance for the tax on guns because of the above reasons.

Every grown up male had to work in building roads for six days every year and if they failed to do so they had to pay three shillings as a tax on their body. There was opposition for this tax also. People had to pay taxes for dogs in 1848. This was

an unwise decision and there was an elevated resistance against this tax also. The government conducted a survey for the collection of statistics called the 'Blue Book' at the same time when new taxes were imposed. The people suspected this move too as a way of imposing more taxes.

### ❖ Nature of the 1848 Struggle

Fights began between the government and the people when people gathered to oppose the tax policy of the government. People gathered in major cities such as Colombo, Galle, Kandy and Badulla and they protested against the English civil servants in these rallies. Some farmers that gathered in Badulla smashed their guns on the ground in front of the government agents to show their displeasure. Around 4000 people gathered in front of the Kandy Kachcheri and protested against these taxes. Armed forces had to be summoned because the police could not control those crowds. The protests that began in Colombo and Kandy spread to areas like Matale, Dambulla, Wariyapola and Kurunegala.

People in areas like Matale, Wariyapola and Kurunegala organized themselves with arms and attacked the government buildings like courts. As the people were under high pressure due to the tax policy of the government, leaders like Gongalegoda Banda, Puran Appu, Dingirala and Diyes emerged from people and led the battle. A group of rebels gathered in the Dambulla temple and coronated Gongalegoda Banda as the king with the help of the chief incumbent.

Matale was the centre of the battle in 1848. In addition to this, fights spread to some parts of the Kandy and Kurunegala districts. But, the English using their experience of the 1818 battle overpowered the insurgency soon. The struggle soon broke down due to the suppression launched by the governor, Torrington employing the armed forces. As a result, the British were able to arrest many of the leaders within two months of the battle. Gongalegoda Banda, who was arrested so, was trialed, whipped and exiled from the country. Puran Appu was sentenced to death and he faced death bravely. Some other fighters were imprisoned. At the same time, there was a strong indignation against the government because the arrested Rev. Kadahapola Thero was shot and killed after a very short trial without taking proper legal actions.

### ❖ Failure of the Battle

The major reason for the failure of the struggle was its disorganized nature similar to the 1818 battle. The majority of the rebels were from the general public who did not have any armed training or proper weapons. The British had good knowledge about

the roads in the hill country by that time and the rebels could not fight against the military power, strategies and the weapons of the British. The British could retaliate the battle easily because it was limited to several areas of the upcountry.

The English government appointed a special committee to probe into the situation of this country because the governor, Torrington's conduct in 1848 battle was highly criticized. As a result he was summoned back to England. Taxes that generated public displeasure were given up. Accordingly, the trade shop tax and dog tax were abolished. The rest of the taxes were revised and reformed. More attention was paid on Buddhism because there was displeasure among the people about the way the British treated it. A special attention was paid to solving the problems of farmers though no proper steps were taken for that before 1850.

↓ **ACTIVITY 5**

Complete the following table using information about the rebellions of 1818 and 1848.

Year	Reasons for the battle	Leaders of the battle	Results of the battle



## CHAPTER

# 3

## National Renaissance in Sri Lanka

### Introduction

The era in which Sri Lanka tried to win independence after the fights in 1848, is divided into two periods as national and religious renaissance and then the time of political agitation.

From 1850 to 1915 the campaign on national and religious renaissance was prominent whereas from 1915 to 1948 people gave more prominence to political agitations.

There were impediments to the existence of the culture and traditional religions after the British conquered the hill country in 1815. As a result Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims of the country were religiously and nationally aroused towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. That situation is explained as national renaissance in this lesson.

### 3.1 Background of the National Renaissance

The Europeans tried to spread their religion and culture in the areas they conquered in Asia in order that they have a loyal group of people in those countries. When the Portuguese and the Dutch governed the coastal regions of the country, they had to restrict their religious and cultural activities to the areas they governed, because there was an independent kingdom in the upcountry. Doors opened for the western culture to spread under the British reign throughout the country, with the submission of the upcountry.

#### ❖ Activities of Missionary Organizations

Several foreign organizations that came to Sri Lanka during the British reign started spreading Catholicism in the country. They are called as missionary organizations. Given below are some such missionary organizations that came to this country from 1804 to 1818.

<b>Missionary Organization</b>	<b>Year they came to Sri Lanka</b>
London Missionary Organization	1804
Baptist Missionary Organization	1812
Wesleyan Missionary Organization	1814 - 1815
American Missionary Organization	1816
Church Missionary Organization	1818

These missionary group members engaged themselves in activities of spreading religion in different areas of the country. Baptists functioned from Colombo. Wesleyans worked in the North and the East. The American missionary organization worked in the North including Jaffna. Church missionaries functioned in Colombo, Galle, Kalpitiya, Mannar and Kandy. They used the three methods; writing, preaching and education in spreading their religions.

#### ❖ Using the Written Medium

The missionary organizations that came to Sri Lanka possessed funds and organizational ability to establish publishers for printing of books and magazines. The missionary priests studied the native languages such as Sinhalese and Tamil to overcome a major problem they had, i. e. inability to use native languages. Later, they started to translate the Bible into Sinhalese and print and distribute books, newspapers and magazines. Some such publications were;

<b>Year of printing</b>	<b>Name of the Publication</b>	<b>Organization</b>
1832	Masika Thegga (Monthly Gift)	Church Missionary Organization
1840	Lanka Nidhanaya (Treasure of Lanka)	Religious Book Club
1842	Uragala	Baptist Organization

## ❖ Preaching and Education

The missionary priests did preaching in temples and public places for the perpetuation of their religions. At the same time they dedicated to starting and conducting schools. In schools maintained by the missionaries a prominent place was given to spread the religion. The government assistance was given to missionary education. English knowledge was necessary to get a government post during the English reign. Therefore, the Sinhalese and Tamil children had to attend the missionary schools to get English knowledge.

### 3.2 Buddhist Renaissance

There was a necessity of replying to what the missionaries said about traditional religions. They criticized some Buddhist and Hindu traditions in their preaching and publications saying that worshipping statues was futile. Another need arose of lifting up the education of native languages because there was no government assistance for the education of native languages such as Sinhalese and Tamil. The Buddhist monks became the pioneers to find solutions to these problems. A landmark in Buddhist education field was the establishment of the Parama Dhamma Chethiya Pirivena in Rathmalana by Rev. Walane Siddhartha thero. This pirivena produced a group of both lay and ordained pundits who studied languages like Sinhalese, Pali and Sanscrit and those who valued the indigenous culture. Rev. Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala thero who was among them started the Vidyodaya Pirivena at Maligakanda in 1873. Rev. Ratmalane Dhammaloka thero established the Vidyalkara Pirivena at Peliyagoda in 1875. As a result of the re-establishment of pirivena system, more educated people were created and it became a blessing for the Buddhist renaissance.

## ❖ Establishment of Publishers

Rev. Bulathgama Dhammalankara Siri Sumanathissa thero took steps to open a press which many Buddhists longed to have for a long time. The thero worked to get financial assistance from the King of Thailand (Siam) because the funds collected from Sri Lankan philanthropists were not enough for the purpose. Another significant landmark in Buddhist renaissance is the establishment of 'Lankopakara Printers' using the money collected thus in 1862 at Galle. After that, several presses were established in several places of the country by the Buddhists. Some such Buddhist publishers were;

- Lankabinawa Vishratha printers
- Kawatakathika printers
- Sudarshana printers
- Sarasavi Sandaresa Printers

Buddhists were able to publish a lot of magazines and newspapers since a number of publishers were there after 1862.

Some such Buddhist publications were;

- Lakmini Pahana
- Lankalokaya
- Sarasavi Sandaresa
- Sinhala Jathiya
- Sinhala Bauddhaya

### ❖ Engagement in Public Debates

Public debates give evidence to how the Buddhists used the mode of preaching in reply to the preaching of missionaries for the perpetuation of their religion. Buddhist monks were the forerunners in conducting such debates with missionary priests. Rev. Migettuwaththe Gunananda thero was a prominent character among them. He who resided in Kotahena Deepaduththaramaya rendered a yeoman service for the Buddhist renaissance. Educated monks like Rev. Hikkaduwe Sumangala thero, Rev. Waskaduwe Subuthi thero, Rev. Pothuwila Indrajothi thero and Rev. Rathmalane Dhammaloka thero extended their support to Rev. Migettuwaththe Gunananda thero in the debates held with Christians. Five such debates are termed as ‘Five Great Debates’ (*Pancha Maha Wadha*).



Fig 3.1 – Rev. Hikkaduwe Sumangala thero

### ❖ The Five Great Debates

<i>Baddegama wadaya</i>	1865
<i>Waragoda wadaya</i>	1865
<i>Udanwita wadaya</i>	1866
<i>Gampola wadaya</i>	1871
<i>Panadura wadaya</i>	1873



Fig 3.2 – Rev. Migettuwaththe Gunananda thero

Among these debates *Panadura Wadaya* received international fame. Henry Steel Olcott who was impressed by reading a book about the arguments between Rev. Migettuwaththe Gunananda thero and the Christians that took place in Panadura wadaya came to Sri Lanka.

### ❖ Establishment of Buddhist Schools

Although the Buddhists had developed a lot in preaching and written medium, they could not establish a Buddhist school system to compete with the missionary education system. Buddhists did not have sufficient funds and organizational ability to establish and run schools. After Sir Olcott came to Sri Lanka Buddhists also found this opportunity. Sir Henry Steel Olcott came to Sri Lanka, became a Buddhist and pioneered to start Buddhist schools although he was a foreigner.

### ❖ Sir Henry Steel Olcott

Sir Olcott gave guidance in starting the '*Colombo Parama Vignanartha Movement*' in June 1880. It was an organization in which both lay and ordained could work together. Then, it branched out to some major cities like Galle, Kandy and Ratnapura. One of the major achievements of the movement was the establishment of Buddhist schools for Buddhist students. A fund was set under the guidance of Sir Olcott for the above purpose. An enthusiasm was generated among the Buddhists to start new schools because Sir Olcott went from village to village with monks to collect funds. Names of some individuals who were active in the process of establishing schools;

- Sir Henry Steel Olcott
- Rev. Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala thero
- Rev. Rathmalane Sri Dhammaloka thero
- Rev. Waskaduwe Sri Subuthi thero
- Rev. Migettuwaththe Gunananda thero
- Mr. Don Karolis Hewawitharana
- Mr. Amaris De Silva Batuwanthudawe
- Mr. Don Spater Senanayake
- Anagarika Dharmapala
- Mr. Jeremiyes Diyes



Fig 3.3 – Sir Henry Steel Olcott

All the above mentioned philanthropists gave financial assistance in opening Buddhist schools. Because of this dedication they were able to start Buddhist schools in several cities of Sri Lanka. Some of those schools are;

- Ananda Vidyalaya – Colombo
- Dharmaraja Vidyalaya – Kandy
- Mahinda Vidyalaya – Galle
- Vijaya Vidyalaya – Matale
- Jinaraja Vidyalaya – Gampola
- Anurudhdha Vidyalaya – Nawalapitiya

There was a development in printing sector because of the Buddhist renaissance and this led people to develop their intelligence by reading various books, magazines and newspapers. Because of this motivation for education, their literacy was improved. Missionary organizations worked to develop the English education. Other important incidents that took place during the Buddhist renaissance were the getting the government to declare the Vesak full moon poya day as a holiday and the introduction of the Buddhist flag which is in use even today.

Because of the establishment of Buddhist schools and pirivens, a religious younger generation that understood the value of the culture emerged. Among those youths, there were true sons of the motherland and a group of national writers who highlighted the greatness of the indigenous culture. The leaders like Anagarika Dharmapala, Walisinghe Harischandra, Piyadasa Sirisena and John De Silva among those youths used different types of media to arouse patriotism and nationalism among the natives. As a result, by the on set of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a movement to kindle patriotism among the natives, a movement to protect Buddhist religious places and a non-alcoholic movement had been started through the Buddhist renaissance.



Fig 3.4 – Walisinghe Harishchandra

### ❖ Movement to upgrade Patriotism and Nationalism

The prime intention of this movement was to create countrymen who love their country by encouraging them to value the indigenous culture because during the British reign people started imitating the western culture due to the influence of the fast spreading western culture in the country.



Anagarika Dharmapala presented a new vision elucidating the importance of past civilization and the value of harmonious living as Buddhists. He worked for this target by preaching in public and writing to the publications like '*Sinhala Bauddhaya*' and the magazine '*Mahabodhi*.'



Fig 3.5 – Anagarika Dharmapala

Mr. Piyadasa Sirisena criticized the tendency of Sri Lankans to embrace the western culture unscrupulously, through his novels and the newspapers like "*Sinhala Jathiya*." Other than them, a number of Buddhist monks and lay scholars started briefing the citizens on appreciating the indigenous culture.

### ❖ Protection of Buddhist Religious Places

People were enthusiastic to restore and protect the Buddhist monuments situated in the ancient cities like Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa which were in decay covered by forests after the downfall of those kingdoms. The knowledge of general public about ancient culture and the national heritage expanded when the European scholars like George Turner, Riis David, H.C.P. Bell and Henri Parker uncovered elements of ancient culture through research, excavations and exploration of historical sources and when the local scholars wrote books in parallel to those of the above mentioned European scholars. In the same atmosphere, Walisingha Harischandra dedicated for a movement to protect the religious places in Anuradhapura. Anagarika Dharmapala fought hard to protect the religious places like Buddhagaya in India. At the same time, the renovations of Ruwanweli Seya also commenced around 1870.

#### ↓ ACTIVITY 1

Prepare an article about the beginning of the Buddhist renaissance movement in Sri Lanka, including details about the following points.

- Establishment of presses
- Conducting debates
- Establishment of Buddhist schools
- Movements to upgrade patriotism and nationalism
- Protection of Buddhist religious places

## ❖ Temperance Movement

The spreading of alcoholism in the island under the British administration became a social problem. Therefore, the leaders of the Buddhist renaissance movement enlightened the people against alcohol consumption. Buddhist monks played a major role in this regard and the leaders like Anagarika Dharmapala, Piyadasa Sirisena, and John De Silva briefed people using different media. Anagarika Dharmapala engaged himself in this process through public preaching and newspapers. Piyadasa Sirisena used the dialogues between the characters of his novels to teach the people about the bad effects of alcohol. John De Silva explained the harmful nature of alcohol through his drama. In the 'Sura Act' of his drama, '*Sinhala Parabhawa*' dangers of alcohol consumption was clearly depicted.

### 3.3 Hindu Religious Renaissance

There was a religious and a cultural renaissance among the Hindus of this country due to the challenge created to Hinduism as a result of the perpetuation of missionaries. This Hindu renaissance movement was led by Arumuga Navalar. He had good understanding about missionary activities because he had got his primary education in a missionary school and had served under a priest of the Methodist assembly. Therefore, he worked to establish schools for Hindus and establish presses, brief Hindus by printed leaflets, books and public preaching.

## ❖ Arumuga Navalar



A press was started in Wannaponei, Jaffna under the guidance of Navalar and the people were briefed in written medium. He began a newspaper called 'Udayabhanu'. Another excellent service rendered by him is the composition of a textbook in three volumes for the Tamil students. At the same time he translated and published several prose and poetry books. Periya Puranam and Skandha Puranam were two of them.

Fig 3.6 – Arumuga Navalar

Arumuga Navalar pioneered to start the Wannaponai Shaiwa Prakasha College in 1849, for the Tamil students in order to give them education which is appropriate to the Hindu culture. Establishing of Hindu schools was continued by the later founded assembly of Shaiwa Administration and the assembly for Hindu Education. The Shiwangala school was started in 1872 in Jaffna for the purpose of giving English education to Tamil students later became the Hindu Vidyalyaya in Jaffna.



Fig 3.7 – Ponnabalam Ramanadan



Fig 3.8 – Ponnambalam Arunachalam

After the death of Arumuga Navalar, Sir Ponnabalam Ramanadan and Ponnambalam Arunachalam worked in dedication to continue the Hindu Renaissance movement. These two leaders were respected not only by the Tamils but also by the Sinhalese. Mr. Ponnambalam Ramanadan voiced for the Buddhists when the government imposed martial law to repress them in 1915. Mr. Ponnambalam Arunachalam pioneered to found “Sri Lanka National Congress” with the Sinhalese leaders to gain political power for Sinhalese in 1919.

### 3.4 Islamic Renaissance

In parallel to the Buddhist and Hindu renaissance there was an Islamic renaissance among the Muslims too. In the same way Arumuga Navalar led the Hindu renaissance, M.C. Siddhi Lebbe took leadership in generating enthusiasm in the minds of Muslims to protect the Islamic religion and culture. He who was an Islamic devotee that came to Sri Lanka from Egypt in 1883, dedicated to make the Arabic Islamic renaissance a success.

❖ Mr. Siddhi Lebbe



Fig 3.9 – Mr. Siddhi Lebbe

Mr Siddhi Lebbe's prime goal was to create an interest among Muslims for education and encourage them to study English and Arabic languages. A newspaper called 'Muslim Nevisian' was started in 1882 under his guidance. Then, the Colombo Zahira College was established for Muslim children under Mr. Siddhi Lebbe's guidance. Then he started an organization called "Muslim Academic Club" for the continuation of the education of Muslim people. Islamic schools called "Madrasa" were restructured to meet the new needs of education.

After Mr. Siddhi Lebbe, Mr. T.B. Jayah dedicated to continue the interest of Muslims for education. As the principal of Colombo Sahira College, he developed the school a lot. He rendered a yeomen service as a politician and by pioneering to start schools for Muslims around the country too.



Fig 3.10 – Mr. T. B. Jayah

↓ **ACTIVITY 2**

- Prepare a portfolio about the leaders of Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic renaissance movement.

# 4

## Political Changes in Sri Lanka under the British

### Introduction

The British governed the entire island for 133 years from 1815 when the upcountry surrendered to the British until Sri Lanka was granted independence in 1948. The British introduced several constitutional reforms to the country from time to time. Sri Lankans, who were not contented with those reforms, engaged themselves in continuous protests demanding more power to be enjoyed in administration. As a result of these protests, they were able to win the administrative power back in 1948 for themselves. The details of the constitutional reforms introduced to the island by the British and the protests of the Sri Lankans are discussed in this lesson.

### 4.1 Colebrooke Reforms of 1833

When the British governors ruled the country after 1815, the expenditure exceeded the income of the government. As a result, the governors of Sri Lanka had to request for money from the British government to cover the expenditure of the country. Spending money for the functioning of colonies was not the policy of Britain. Therefore, the secretary to the colonies appointed W.H.G. Colebrooke (William Mac Bean George Colebrooke) to probe into the situation of Sri Lanka and make recommendations. In 1829, he came to Sri Lanka and his duty was to investigate into the political and economic situation of the country. Charles Hae Cameron was appointed by the secretary to the colonies to probe into the existing situation in the legal system and courts and give recommendations. He came to Sri Lanka in 1830 following this appointment. A constitutional reform was introduced to the country based on the suggestions of the Colebrooke Commission in 1833. It is named as the Colebrooke reforms. According to the recommendations of Cameron, the judicial system was also reformed.

### ❖ Distinguished Features of those Reforms

Several reforms that widely changed the political and economic systems of the country were introduced under the Colebrooke reforms. Some of the distinguished features among them were;

- Establishment of the executive and legislative councils.
- Introduction of a ruling system which combined both upcountry and low country.
- Dividing the island into five provinces.
- Repealing compulsory service system.
- Discontinuation of the trade monopoly of the government.

A special feature of the Colebrooke Commission is the establishment of a legislative council and an executive council. The governor was exercising an immense power when the Colebrooke Commission came to Sri Lanka. The commission which considered the above mentioned fact as an obstacle to the freedom of the general public proposed to reduce the power of the governor by establishing these councils.

There were 15 members in the legislative council appointed in 1833. Nine of them were official members or those who were appointed in their position. The other 06 were unofficial members. Three of them were selected to represent Europeans and one member each for the other three ethnicities; Sinhala, Tamil and Burger. The governor exercised the power of appointing these 06 members.

