

RICE CULTIVATION AND DISPUTES IN SOUTHERN SRI LANKAN VILLAGES

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INTRODUCTION

I visited the northern part of Matara District during three successive summers between 1980 and 1982, spending ten weeks in total in the locality. (Omori 1981: 22-26) In July 1980 an international conference entitled "Workshop on Legal Modernization in Sri Lanka and Japan" was held in Colombo, after which I visited a tea manufacturing factory at Beralapanatara village, Matara District, and undertook a general survey of this rural area. The village was revisited in August 1981 to collect information about local administration, means of livelihood, education system, beliefs and practices of Buddhist and Hindu religions, and the customs associated with their caste ranking. Further, in July and August 1982, my effort was focused on learning about some specific problems such as the syncretism of these religions, collective activities for rural development, and the conflicts and disputes over rice cultivation. (Omori & Taniguchi 1983, 1984, Omori 1985)¹⁾

In contrast with civil and criminal disputes, any trouble with paddy cultivation was to be brought without any complicated procedure to a Cultivation Officer in the vicinity. Infrequently it took place at the local communities. I received the relevant information from three Cultivation Officers, one Divisional Officer, one *Grama Sevaka* Officer (Village Headman) and two "village intellectuals," i.e., a school principal and a private English tutor. Except for the Divisional Officer all of them engaged in paddy field work themselves. With the principal or English tutor as my interpreters, I repeatedly visited these officials to examine their register books, letters of complaint, and their handwritten case documents, some parts of which were translated into English by the interpreters and were then checked by myself.²⁾

Three Cultivation Officers disclosed the actual number of cases which had been filed at their respective offices for twenty months from January 1981 to August 1982. First, Mr. Nayakasena, who was in charge of 240 acres of paddy lands at Deniyaya, had thirty claims. He managed to conciliate eighteen of these. Among the rest, two were still being heard by him while ten cases had been referred to the Divisional Officer. Second, Mr. Welappily, who was in charge of 484 acres at North and South Beralapanatara, heard twenty-five cases. He could settle eighteen and the remaining seven cases had been shifted to his senior Mr. Danyadasa, the Divisional Officer at Urubokka. The latter had achieved reconciliation only in a single case out of the seven, and the others had been sent onto the Assistant Commissioner at Matara. Mr. Welappily remarked that these difficult cases were troubles relating to land ownership or inheritance. Thirdly, Mr. Gunawardena, who was the Cultivation Officer at Kattawala village for 342 acres of paddy fields, had forty-four cases during the twenty months. He had settled twenty-four and sent thirteen to the Divisional Officer at Urubokka. The other seven cases were still at issue in the Cultivation Officer's care.³⁾

DISPUTES ON RICE CULTIVATION

1) Trespassing

Disputes on rice cultivation may be classified roughly into the following four categories: trespassing into paddy lands, neglect of necessary cooperation for work, livestock straying and damaging the crops, and land inheritance troubles.⁴⁾ First, two different types of trespassing were discerned: encroachment and double-sowing. Encroachments took place when one had broken a boundary ridge or demolished it thoroughly. A cultivator cut down one side of a boundary ridge and attempted to expand the space of his field. (Case 1) Or the ridge might be completely destroyed so that the trespasser might move the boundary forward to the other side of a waterway which had earlier demarcated one field from another. (Case 2) Cultivators would deliberately destroy boundaries by taking advantage of an opportunity of a land slip or overflow caused by heavy rainfall.

In this hilly area paddy fields were terraced on the slopes. Fields on the lower terraces enjoyed more fertility than those on the upper terraces, for the flowing water incessantly carried down fertilizer originally put in the upper fields. Moreover, over a long period of time boundary ridges between the terraces would fall down, diminishing the area of the upper one. These natural phenomena would easily lead to a friction between the field owners. A stubborn refusal to relocate a drain-hole, which had eroded the surface soil of the lower terraced field, might have resulted from antagonism of this sort. (Case 3)

Double-sowing was an extreme means to claim the right to a paddy field. Nobody could do this by mistake, for elaborate preparatory work done by the initial cultivator was apparent to everyone. Besides, this action amounted to the double-sower's requisition of the right to use the whole land. The claim might be for tenantry, ownership or a formerly established order of rotating crops. In any case, the initial sower would come to a Cultivation Officer to report the matter. If he failed to do so, all the crops would belong to the double-sower at harvest time. There was the common understanding that no complaint meant no claim for restoration of one's infringed right. Double-sowing was referred to as a "tough case," but it commonly occurred among cultivators in the locality. (Cases 4, 8, 15)

2) Neglect of Collaboration

Cooperation is a prerequisite for farming paddy rice in such efforts as digging up the earth for sowing, plastering clay on the ridges, maintaining waterways, weeding, cropping and thrashing the grains. (Leach 1961: 241-253, 263-285, Yalman 1967: 46, 192-197, Robinson 1975: 62-66) However, the traditional system of mutual labor assistance is no longer operative, and almost all this work is now done by hired laborers. Hiring of laborers has become prevalent, and "traditional practices such as *attan* are now being increasingly replaced by more commercialized forms." (ARTI, Research Study Series No. 11, 1975: 18-19) At Deniyaya a day laborer for cultivating paddy lands is paid twenty-five rupees per day with one meal.⁹

Major water routes are properly maintained by the members of a Rural Develop-

ment Society. Under its direction, people collaborated in repairing damaged banks or rerouting streams which had easily overflowed after heavy rainfalls. On the other hand, control of minor waterways was left to the individual cultivators alongside their fields. Though infrequent, friction sometimes emerged between the users of the same waterway. (Case 5) The litigants had to cooperate to build a dam in order to supply water for their respective fields, but one party had subsequently not done the necessary labor and yet enjoyed use of the water at the expense of the other.

The Paddy Land Act of 1958 had fixed the rate of share-cropping between a land-owner and his tenants. Either six bushels of rice per acre or one-fourth of a crop had to be given to the landowner at the end of every growing period. A comparative study of five selected Districts (ARTI, Research Study Series No. 11, 1975; 16) indicates a difference of the rates of paddy land rent in correspondence with the conditions of the land lease and with the nature of social ties between the owner and the tenant. Along with the one-fourth share rates there were a large number of half share rates in response to collateral help from the landowners.

The same Act also assured permanent tenantry for the first time. Before 1958 tenantry of any paddy field had been secured only for five years. Earlier in 1953 an Act was promulgated in order to guarantee any paddy land tenant five years security. And by the Paddy Lands Act of 1958 all the tenants had been given "full proprietary rights". (Abeyasinghe 1979: 33-34) The landowners could no longer arbitrarily dismiss their tenants and became inclined to employ day laborers only for the necessary but intermittent work in their paddy fields. However, quarrels on tenantry have not declined due to the reversal of power between the two, i.e., neglect of paying rent, cheating, or denial of replacement. (Cases 6-10)

Tenantry was legally established when one's name was entered in a Paddy Land Register as a tenant, or literally a "co-farmer", by a Cultivation Officer. Once registered, no landowner, even if the father of the tenant, could infringe upon the right. This seemingly displayed a firm legal rejection of a longstanding custom according to which a parent could retake any property from unfaithful child. Here a negligent son had not paid any rent to his father for three successive seasons. (Case 7)⁶ Another dishonest tenant was not dismissed, despite the fact that he re-

peatedly gave crops of deteriorated quality to the owner of the land as his rent. (Case 11)

Land transactions have no effect upon the tenantry of the land. A new owner could not evict the tenants of the previous owner. (Case 9) Tenantry was inherited by the deceased's wife, and, at her death, by their children. In case there were no heirs, the deceased's father could claim the tenantry. (Case 10)

Joint-ownership of a paddy land was commonly observed in the surveyed area. Equal sharing among heirs also was seen to be widely accepted by the local residents. Refraining from excessive partition of a field on account of equal sharing, co-owners practiced rotational use of the jointly owned land at an interval of two rainy seasons or more. The joint-ownership and the rotation system were said to be rather recent occurrences due to the rapid population increase in the Wet Zone. Yet they had created numerous disputes among paddy cultivators. For instance, any disruption of rotation would lead to a dispute. (Case 11)

Moore & Wickremasinghe (1978) fully scrutinized this problem associated with the system of annual rotation of jointly owned paddy land (*Thattumaru-Kattimaru* land tenure). They speculated that this system had spread rather recently in correspondence with the rapid population growth in the Wet Zone area. (Ibid., p. 7) However, even before 1975 that system had already become common, in particular in such areas as the Kegalle, Kalutara and Ratnapura Districts, in each of which almost one-third of the paddy lands were already under the jointly-owned and rotational use system. (pp. 12, 14)

3) Livestock Straying

Paddy plants were extensively damaged by cattle, buffalo, and fowl. It was not common for a flock of fowl to stray into a paddy field, but upon its occurrence the damage would be considerable. (Case 12) The plaintiff estimated as much damage as three hundred rupees with which he had to purchase seed rice (around 80kg) and to hire laborers again. Despite the serious loss, he refrained from filing charges lest he sever an amicable relationship with the owner of the fowl. (Case 12 & 13)

If the damage was more than the victim could bear, or if a long-standing antago-

nism had earlier existed between the opponents, the victim would claim for compensation. Any claimant had to seize the straying animal at the field and show it as evidence to a Cultivation Officer. In spite of such evidence and the effort of the conciliation officer, its owner occasionally refused to negotiate or pay compensation. Then a Divisional Officer would put up the detained animal at auction. Normally, however, few inhabitants in the vicinity would want to purchase the animal out of fear of breaking a good relation with its former owner. Eventually the animal would be rendered as the complainant's possession. (Case 14)

4) Land Inheritance

Despite the entangled joint-ownership and tenantry patronized by the government, paddy lands were still strongly held onto by the rural inhabitants. Prices of paddy land transactions varied in accordance with the location and the fertility of the soil. However, one acre of paddy field on average was sold for 5,000 rupees.⁷⁾ Prices of communally owned lands went down in accordance with the partition of ownership. Co-owners could transact their joint-ownership rights individually, but it would lead to trouble among the cultivators of the land, if one did this without notifying his co-owners.

Local residents universally stated that all paddy land should be divided equally among heirs. In case of a posthumous partition this rule was faithfully observed. However, arbitrary land grants also took place and often created friction among the siblings. (Cases 15 & 16) Postponement of actual partition of intestate property averted danger of quarrels for heirs, who would continue to use the land jointly in rotation. In spite of this, trouble would develop when one of the co-owners passed away and his right on the land became obscure or was infringed upon by the other. (Case 15)

Cultivation Officers personally expressed their sympathy to claimants for equal partition of the parent's land. They criticized any unfair partition to give a larger portion to a specific child. But the current laws could not interfere in arbitrary, partial property grants. The District Court could not, for example, prevent a woman from partial sharing of her paddy land. (Case 15)

Some ambiguous and controvertible remarks have so far been made on the Sin-

halese rules of inheritance. Yalman (1967: 130) denied any established “categorical rules” of inheritance. However, Obeyesekere (1967: 38) demonstrated a general principle that the soil theoretically belonged to “a common body of agnatically related kinsmen” and “the respective rights to the soil” were held by individuals, i.e., “patrilineally related kinsmen descended from a common ancestor.”

On the contrary, Yalman (1967: 130) emphasized the individual’s right of spontaneous disposal of land, as had universally been observed in the early Nineteenth Century. Obeyesekere (1967: 41) noted that the individual’s right of disposing land would be a most effective means of control over his disobedient sons who had “neglected” him. Obeyesekere (1967: 41) and Robinson (1975: 47) agreed that equal division of property had been a rule of inheritance among the Sinhalese at least during the Kandyan Period. However, Obeyesekere limited the application of this rule to intestate inheritance alone.

Such an inconsistency between communal and individual rights to land might be overcome by another rule, that is, an individual’s spontaneous disposing of land could be admitted only in case of its delivery to the kin of the above category. Leach (1961: 173) remarked that “all land should be retained in the hands of members of the local *variga*.” More explicitly Obeyesekere (1967: 38) referred to a standing rule that “individuals cannot alienate *pravēni* (ancestral) shares to outsiders (of the hamlet).”

5) Causes of Disputes

Close examination of these cases has revealed a set of possible causes of trouble on paddy fields. We may order these causes as follows: environmental determinants, population problem, and cultural-historical background. More precisely, the first is concerned with hilly topographical features of the land, recurrence of rainy seasons at short intervals, and highly favorable temperature for rice cultivation all through the year. The second, then, is connected with those youths remaining in the rural area without adequate job qualifications, i.e., education or technical training for jobs in urban centers, where competition for employment is very keen due to the current rapid increase of the youth population in Sri Lanka. Lastly, the third is associated with the traditional techniques of paddy cultivation and keeping livestock, and, more

significantly, with the universally high esteem for rice cultivation and paddy fields. These factors interact in a complex fashion to cause a great variety and number of disputes.

In the surveyed area some people managed to get employment on tea or rubber farms, tea manufacturing factories, or in paddy fields as day laborers. However, their low wages could hardly satisfy their daily needs and rendered them dependant on paddy cultivation as well.⁸⁾ Eventually the demand for paddy land increased, and an entangled form of joint-ownership involving rotational use had been promoted.

Friction arose between paddy farmers owing to their conventional ways of farming and of livestock keeping. Having been widely sown, rice seeds could not be protected from hungry fowl. If the seeds were germinated in a seedbed near to the cultivators' residences and grew until they were transplanted to paddy fields far away, the damage was considerably diminished. Correspondingly, if farmers frequently weeded their paddy fields, fewer cattle would stray onto the land. The conventional farming techniques did not require cultivators to inspect their fields repeatedly once the plants had outgrown and overshadowed weeds.

A rightful cultivator at a specific season became obscured on account of the joint-ownership and rotational use of lands. Short-term alternating shifts of cultivators made it difficult for neighboring farmers to distinguish an illegitimate, from a legitimate, user of a particular field. Nor would any Cultivation Officer visit individual fields to check on their cultivators in each growing period. Illegitimate use of a field would be ultimately disclosed, but an infringed right could be recovered only with much greater difficulty. In fact, the longer the delay in disclosure, the harder to recover the land right. Moreover, joint-ownership itself was a fruitful source of annoyance. As mentioned above, postponed partition of a land bequest or untold transference of one's joint-ownership would usually precipitate a conflict.

In a closed rural community cooperation and amicable ties were prerequisites for earning a living. Under such circumstances, neighboring cultivators, landowners and tenants, plural co-owners of lands, all had to cooperate harmoniously with one another. All local inhabitants had to refrain from strong self-assertion or pursuance of their selfish interest. However, in the current situation one could migrate from one's

home village either to the larger towns or to the unreclaimed lands. The government has ardently encouraged villagers to apply for the resettlement schemes to immigrate to the Dry Zone areas. Gunatilleke (1973: 30) estimated that by 1972 around 600,000 people had been settled under the government's colonization schemes.

Besides these changes, newly promulgated laws had positively ensured self-reliance and self-assertion. Once he was entered into a Paddy Land Register, a cultivator had exclusive right to use the land during the registered period. The Agrarian Services Act safeguarded paddy growers by regulating land rent and restricting the dismissal of tenants. The tenants had become aware of their protected rights against the landowners and actively set out to claim what might serve their own interest, not fearing to precipitate conflict with their landowners. According to a survey (ARTI 1975: 16) around one-third of the tenants in a village of the Wet Zone expressed concern over insecurity of their tenantry of paddy lands. However, the rest admitted no worry about their tenantry.

Newly introduced laws thereby threatened persistent community cohesion which had rested on the integrity of each family grouping. Yalman (1967: 134) referred to the prevailing occurrence of communal land use by the siblings as shareholders long after their parent's death, and he commented that this was "one of the most usual sources of contention." Abeyasinghe (1978: 90) argued that British concepts of landownership, i.e., one of unqualified possession or freehold rights, had had an enormous impact on the vague, ill defined customary rights and claims of the former Sinhalese tenure system.

Westernization and urbanization prompt local inhabitants to increase their income to cope with multi-plying expenditures on industrial, imported commodities, school fees of children, medical and hygienic expenses, and rising costs of imported fertilizer and drugs for cultivation. No family is able to bear such an economic burden without regulating the number of its dependants. The onrush of economic innovation has inevitably undermined those conventional large family systems which used to be operative only with the support of communally managed family estates. Such a current of change underlies the troubles of paddy lands and inheritance among the people in the surveyed area, and turns up in the disputes on paddy cultivation

among the local residents.

This presentation is based on an Omori's article (1987).

Notes

1) Beralapanatara and Deniyaya are two local communities in the interior highlands of southern Sri Lanka, three hours and a half by public bus from Galle or Matara, two major coastal towns. On the basis of my previous study on the litigation records at Buhara village, Uganda, I had first expected to listen to court proceedings and refer to court records. However, serious obstacles quickly emerged. In this locality all court statements and documents are exclusively in the Sinhalese language. A few residents could assist me as an interpreter, but they could not constantly sit with me at sessions. Much worse was the fact that only criminal matters are heard at Deniyaya, while all the civil conflicts except for those on paddy cultivation are filed at the District Court at Matara, the capital. As I had to undertake extensive observation of rural activities including work, education, social interactions and religious practices, I could not spend most of my time moving back and forth from Deniyaya to Matara to attend these court sessions. I felt that one could scarcely elucidate any dispute, either civil or criminal, without learning details of the actual rural circumstances and ways of living there. (Omori & Taniguchi 1984)

2) At Deniyaya, no Primary Court seemed to be operative. The Primary courts were established in 1975 and took over the jurisdiction of the former Rural Courts and Village Conciliation Boards. The Rural Courts started in 1948 and were replaced by the Village Conciliation Boards in 1958. The latter had been operative until 1978, but were suspended by the Government because of repeated unfair interference into their decisions by local Parliament Members. Since 1979, no member of the Village Conciliation Boards has been appointed.

A Primary Court covered as wide an area as one of the Government Agent Divisions (Omori 1985: 123), even though these did not coincide geographically. A Primary Court stood alongside a Magistrate's Court, the latter assuming the jurisdiction of the former in case of its absence. The judge of a Primary Court could order payment of any fine up to Rs. 1,500 (civil suit) or give any penalty not exceeding three months imprisonment or Rs. 250 fine (criminal case). A complainant normally consulted in advance with a village proctor (*Goda Perakadoru*) who was a legal expert (despite his lack of formal training), and subsequently chose to file his or her case at either a Primary Court or a Magistrate's Court (personal information from Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, January 1984, and from Mr. Nobuyuki Yasuda, June 1984)

3) Biographical sketches of these informants are introduced briefly here;

Mr. N. S. Nayakasena had served as a Cultivation Officer in Deniyaya for four years. He was a native in the town and forty-two years old. He got a General Certificate of Education,

Ordinary Level, in 1958, but he had been a tailor at Matara until a Parliament Member recommended him to the present post in 1977.

Mr. Welappily was appointed to the present office in February 1978. He was thirty-eight years old and had passed the General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level. He used to be a field officer at a private tea estate but wished to apply for the present job. After the appointment, he had undergone two months and later one more month special training programs for the Cultivation Officers.

Mr. S. Gunawardena was the Cultivation Officer at Kattawala village which was located in the north to Beralapanatara. He had served as the Cultivation Officer since April 1977. He was thirty-two years old and a holder of a General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level, which was conferred to him in 1972. However, he had cultivated his father's four acres of paddy fields continuously before his appointment to the current job.

Mr. U. P. Siripala was the Divisional Officer of the Agrarian Services Centre at Deniyaya. He had studied social sciences at the University of Ceylon and got a B.A. in 1972. He lived in Matara city and once every week came to his office at Deniyaya.

Mr. D. G. Somapala was the *Grama Sevaka* Officer of Beralapanatara South Village. He was born in 1938 and was conferred a General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level, in 1959. He had been successful in passing another examination to be appointed to the village headmanship in 1963, since when he had served as the headman in some villages of Matara District. He was a native of Deniyaya town, and I had stayed with his family for eight weeks in the summer of 1982, pursuing my research project on which this paper is based.

Mr. P. Pathegama was a primary school principal. He was born in Beralapanatara in 1929, and since 1950 he had served as an English teacher, being transferred to the various localities in Sri Lanka. In 1971 he managed to get a post at his native village and returned to the homeland. He also grew tea trees on his own seven acres of tea farms.

Mr. A. W. Sonnadara was born at Matara in 1932 and had worked for a trading company at Colombo until he decided to settle down at his wife's hometown, Deniyaya, in 1968. Since then, he had taught English as a private tutor at his home and concurrently had taken care of his wife's several acres of jointly-owned land for rice cultivation.

The Divisional Officer and the village headman as well as Mr. Pathegama and Mr. Sonnadara were all fluent in speaking English. Mr. Pathegama and Mr. Sonnadara assisted me as interpreters at my interviews with respective Cultivation Officers and other local inhabitants including Buddhist priests and Hindu specialists.

- 4) Robinson (1975: 112) divided his collected dispute cases into eleven categories including some criminal ones. Five of these correspond to mine; "damage to property by animals," "property damage (by persons)," "conflicts over sharecropping arrangements," "conflicts about irrigation rights," and "disputes over land rights."
- 5) Gunawardena (1981: 50) attached an appendix table of "Average Daily Wage Rates of

Hired Agricultural Workers...Maha 1978/79." However, the sums of wages indicated here seem to be underestimated despite his consideration of the rates of inflation during these three years.

- 6) Obeyesekere (1967: 41) states that "all authorities agree that transfer of property, whether in written or oral form, was always *conditional* upon the 'good faith' of the transferee, so that all deeds and related transactions were revocable by the grantor. A person could at any time revoke the property he had made in advance to his heirs, by written or oral deed, so that a recalcitrant heir could be 'controlled' in this manner."
- 7) Much better income could be yielded by tea growing. On average, one acre of tea farmland produced 500 kg of tea leaves per month. The amount might vary in proportion to the given fertilizer and rainfall. But the 500 kg of tea leaves were sold to a tea manufacturing factory for around 2,200 rupees or so. In spite of this, tea growers would face difficulties when they had a drought or price fall in the world tea market. (Caspersz 1976: 11) In comparison with paddy fields, the expenditure for wages, fertilizer and drugs needed for tea was much higher. Tea farmland itself was worth 15,000 rupees per acre. Thus, the majority of local inhabitants preferred growing paddy to raising tea.
- 8) Kurukulasuriya (1980: 86) indicated median incomes of selected 7,326 income receivers of the country for two months in 1973. The statistics show that on average in the rural areas farmers received Rs. 462.41, farm workers Rs. 265.77 and estate employees Rs. 225,00.

DISPUTE CASES

Case 1 (Trespassing). Sirisena vs. Anguhamy, 8-31-1981, Deniyaya.

Complaint: There was a path between Sirisena's tea estate and Anguhamy's paddy field underneath. Anguhamy attempted to expand his paddy field by digging up the path.

Settlement: A policeman was called to define the boundary.

Case 2 (Trespassing). Udenis vs. Harmanis, 4-3-1979, Deniyaya.

Complaint: Harmanis had destroyed the dam (2 feet wide) located between his field and Udenis' so that Harmanis might take the portion.

Settlement: Cultivation Officer made Harmanis repair the dam.

Case 3 (Trespassing). Abeysekera vs. Diyasena, 10-27-1980, Beralapanatara.

Complaint: Abeysekera's paddy field had suffered from erosion caused by a drainage hole opened at Diyasena's field ridge on an upper terrace. Diyasena denied Abeysekera's request to move the hole elsewhere.

Settlement: Cultivation Officer managed to persuade Diyasena to accept the request.

Case 4 (Trespassing). Pantisappu vs. Adwin, 10-2-1979, Beralapanatara.

Complaint: On 10th July, 1979 Pantisappu sowed rice in his three rudes of paddy field. On the following day Adwin did the same in the same field.

Disposition: Despite Adwin's assertion of his ownership of the land, this instance of double

sowing was tough case and it was sent to the Divisional Officer. The outcome was not known by the Cultivation Officer.

Case 5 (Neglect of Collaboration). Somapala vs. Francis, 3-25-1982, Kattawala.

Complaint: Both litigants used to supply water to their respective paddy fields, having dammed up the water in a small channel. Francis had several times avoided the laborious work to dam up and yet took its water into his field.

Settlement: Cultivation Officer made them reconcile and write an agreement of collaboration on the work thereafter.

Case 6 (Neglect of Collaboration). Dorren de Coster vs. her tenants, 9-30-1980, Deniyaya.

Complaint: Charles, Amaradasa, and Martin were all the tenants of Mrs. Coster's three and one-third acres of paddy fields, but they had not given her any share of their paddy crops as farm rent.

Settlement: The Cultivation Officer made these tenants pay their respective rents.

Case 7 (Neglect of Collaboration). Hamy vs. Danapara, 9-25-1981, Kattawala.

Complaint: Hamy had earlier made his son, Danapara, a tenant of Hamy's 3 rudes of paddy field. However, the son neglected to give any share of the crop to Hamy for three seasons.

Settlement: The Cultivation Officer investigated the case, calling three cultivators in neighboring fields as Hamy's witnesses. The Cultivation Officer then ordered Danapara to give the rent for three seasons to his father. Danapara paid the rents and no trouble took place between the two thereafter.

Case 8 (Neglect of Collaboration). Dissanayaka vs. Ostin, 10-10-1979, Kattawala.

Complaint: Both were the co-owners of a paddy field of 1 acre and 2 rudes. Dissanayaka had two tenants and Ostin also had two. The co-owners had previously agreed that each owner should use the land for two years, i.e., four seasons at one time. Ostin's tenants, however, started to cultivate it one season earlier.

Settlement: Ostin admitted his mistake and Dissanayaka was entitled to use the land in that season. Ostin had already paid Rs. 75 to his tenants for the sowing which was finished before the conciliation. Dissanayaka refunded the sum to Ostin.

Case 9 (Neglect of Collaboration). Wymalasena vs. Apu, 9-30-1980, Deniyaya.

Complaint: Wymalasena purchased 1 acre of paddy field from de Silva and wished to dismiss Apu who had been de Silva's tenant on the transacted field. But Apu opposed the dismissal.

Settlement: Apu was eventually persuaded to stop cultivating the land and Wymalasena set out to farm it himself.

Case 10 (Neglect of collaboration). Girigoris vs. Nathilaka, 8-15-1980, Deniyaya.

Complaint: Nathilaka's paddy field (3 acres 2 rudes and 30 perches) used to be cultivated by his tenant William. William died and Nathilaka wished to use the land himself. The dead tenant's father, Girigoris, staked a claim for the tenantry right

to the Cultivation Officer.

Settlement: Nathilaka could not take the tenantship from Girigoris, who continued to cultivate the paddy field in place of his dead son.

Case 11 (Neglect of Collaboration). Piyadasa vs. Ekanayaka, 8-31-1979, Kattawala.

Complaint: Ekanayaka was the tenant of Piyadasa's paddy field (1 rude 30 perches). Ekanayaka had several times mixed low quality (half-matured) rice into fully ripened rice when paying farm rent to Piyadasa.

Settlement: The Cultivation Officer ordered Ekanayaka to inform Piyadasa of the date and time he thrashed grains, so that the latter might attend and supervise the packing of rice to pay the rent.

Case 12 (Straying). Sonnadara vs. Nonis, Maha Season of 1979, Deniyaya.

Complaint: Sonnadara hired laborers to sow seed rice in his wife's 2 acres of paddy field. Seven days later he found that almost all the seeds had been eaten by 25 or 30 fowl. Having made inquiries about the owner of the fowl, he visited and asked Nonis to stop his fowl straying into the paddy field.

Snnadara did not demand compensation for the wages he had paid or the cost of the seeds, since Nonis was an old acquaintance.

Case 13 (Straying). Weeraman vs. Narayana, 8-21-1981, Beralapanatara.

Complaint: Narayana's cow strayed onto Weeraman's 30 purchases of paddy field. The damage was estimated to be two sacks of rice (worth Rs. 200).

Settlement: Weeraman demanded Rs. 25 for compensation and Narayana paid the sum. The Cultivation Officer remarked that the complainant did so in order to maintain their good friendship.

Case 14 (Straying). Yasapala vs. Ariyadasa, 1-30-1982, Kattawala.

Complaint: Yasapala's paddy field was trespassed by several straying cattle and suffered Rs. 700 damage. One of the cattle was caught at the spot. Ariyadasa, the owner of the animal, refused to pay any compensation, and so the cow was put up to auction by the Divisional Officer.

Disposition: Nobody purchased the cow at auction, and eventually the animal was rendered to Yasapala. He estimated the cow's worth at Rs. 585. Yasapala might have filed another case demanding the balance of Rs. 115 but he did not do so. Ariyadasa was ordered by the Divisional Officer to pay Rs. 25 as the fee to the officer.

Case 15 (Inheritance). Rupasinghe & two brothers vs. Rangenyi, 4-30-1980, Deniyaya.

Complaint: The litigants cultivated together their mother's one acre and a quarter of paddy land for a long period. Then, the mother gave her daughter, Rangenyi, a half of the field. After three brothers had sown seed rice, Rangenyi came to sow at the paddy again. A policeman was called but he could do nothing to settle the trouble. The litigants went in pursuit of their dispute up to the District Court at Matara

but failed to achieve any satisfactory settlement. The Cultivation Officer said that eventually one-half of the disputed land was used by Rangenyi and that her brothers could only cultivate the other half together.

Case 16 (Inheritance). Francis vs. Ginadasa & two brothers, April 1980, Kattawala.

Complaint: This was a dispute over a paddy field (1 acre 2 rudes) between paternal cousins. Francis' father was the brother of his three opponents' father. The litigants had cultivated the paddy field together after their fathers' death.

In accordance with the custom, Francis was entitled to a larger portion of the field, but in actuality his opponents set out to use a larger portion than that left to Francis to cultivate.

The Divisional Officer failed to settle this dispute and sent it to Matara for a further trial.

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