

The Administration of the Aṭamasthāna at Anurādhapura

U. B. Karunananda

The Aṭamasthāna establishment at Anurādhapura presents a set up which seems to be rather unique in the administration and management of the temples and their properties in Sri Lanka. It is interesting to note that the Aṭamasthāna Committee, which consisted of a predominantly lay membership till the middle of the present century, is still responsible for the administration of the Aṭamasthāna whereas the Aṭamasthānādhipati and the head of the Bulankulama family, [the lay custodian of the Bo-tree temple] take charge of the affairs under the direction of the Aṭamasthāna Committee. A practice of this nature does not exist any where in Sri Lanka in the administration of temples and temporalities. Therefore, this paper seeks to examine the role played by the three Aṭamasthāna establishments - the Aṭamasthāna Committee, the Aṭamasthānādhipati and the head of the Nuwaravāva [Bulankulama] family.

The chief monk of the Aṭamasthāna is known as the Aṭamasthānādhipati, customarily resident at the Bō-Maluva Pansala or the temple of the Bō-tree. He is also referred to as the Anunāyaka of the Aṭamasthāna. According to a letter sent by the Mahānayake thera of the Malvatta Chapter in Kandy to the Government Agent at Jaffna, the title Anunāyaka meant the Deputy Chief Prelate of the Monastic order in Sri Lanka [SLNA 41/154, 15 Feb. 1851; 41/163, 22 May 1856]. This order, was reorganized during the reign of King Kīrthi Sri Rājasinha [1747-80] under the guidance and patronage of the Ven. Vālivita Sri Saranankara. Perhaps, under this reor-

ganization the office of the Aṭamasthānādhipati or Anunāyake may have been re-introduced or newly established. Although there is no evidence to the origin of the post of the Aṭamasthānādhipati, there is sufficient evidence to prove the existence of this post at least from the Kandyan times.

The Anunāyake of the Aṭamasthāna was independent of the Mahānāyaka of Kandy [ibid]. This was the most distinctive feature in the monastic set up, since every other Anunāyaka of the island was subordinate to the Mahānāyaka because they received their appointment from him and the Sangha Sabhāwa [ecclesiastical body] of the Chapter. As the Anunāyaka of the Aṭamasthāna belonged to the Malvatta Chapter of the Siamese sect, the Mahānāyake of Kandy exercised disciplinary authority over him only in his capacity as a monk, but not as the Anunāyaka. If he was found guilty of any offence unbecoming of a Buddhist monk, he was subjected to disrobement by the Malvatta Chapter headed by the Mahānāyake of Kandy [SLNA 41/133, 41/192, 26 March 1856].

From the beginning a peculiar system has existed in selecting the Aṭamasthānādhipati at Anurādhapura. When the Ven. Pallegama Ñānarataṇa of the Ruvanvālisāya temple was appointed Aṭamasthānādhipati in 1977 after the death of the late Anunāyaka Revata thero, objections were raised in court, and the dispute went upto the Supreme Court for resolution. The main objections raised by the Ven. Galkiriyāgama Sorata thero of the Thūpārama against this appointment was that the succession to the office of the Aṭamasthāna devolved according to the *sisyānususya paramparāva* or pupillary succession. On the other hand, the Ven. Ñānarataṇa thero maintained that the appointment was

made by the Aṭamasthana Committee on the nomination of the head of the Bulankulama family in accordance with the old and well established tradition [S.C Appeal 42/87].

A considerable number of cases instituted in the courts in Sri Lanka during the British administration and later during Independence followed the principle that in the absence of any proof of succession in terms of dedication, it is presumed that the succession must be on the rule of *sisyānususya paramparāva*. There are, however, a few exceptions. The chief incumbent of the Adam's Peak temple has not been thus chosen but has been elected by the monks of the Ratnapura District belonging to the Malvatta Chapter [ibid].

The appointment to the post of chief prelate of the ancient Mulgirigala Rajamaha Vihāraya in the Tangalla District too was not based on the *sisyānususya Paramparāva*: the selection here was made from among the members of the Mulgirigala *paramparāva* [ibid]. On both these occasions the right was vested in the monk, but not on laymen. The Supreme Court, in its judgement on the Aṭamasthāna case, admitted that the selection of the Aṭamasthānādhipati of Anurādhapura is vested in the Aṭamasthāna Committee which is dominated by laymen, while setting aside the argument that the succession is on the basis of *sisyānususya paramparāva* [ibid].

Therefore it is convenient here to examine the mode of selection adopted during the last century as well as the present century. A special feature governing the selection of the Anunāyake Unnānsē [monk] was that the Mahanāyāka of Kandy had no power to intervene in the appointments [SLNA 41/154, 15 Feb. 1851]. The selection and the dismissal of

Anunāyaka of the Aṭamasthāna since the Kandyan times was therefore vested in the Nuvaravāwa family and the people of the Disāvani. On such occasions the people were represented by the headmen the Vanni Unnānēs [SLNA 41/163, 22 May 1856, 41/154, 15 Feb. 1851]. Here the headmen acted not as government officials but as village leaders or the representatives of the people.

The first selection of an Anunāyaka under the British rule was probably in 1816, because Ipalōgama Unnānse [1816-1843] who was disrobed in 1843 had held that office for 27 years. [SLNA 41/188, 7 Sept. 1848]. Subsequently, his act of appointment was cancelled by the Government at the request made by the wife of the late Nuvaravāwa chief. [SLNA 41/163, 22 Feb. 1856]. *Payilegama Rēvata Unnānsē* [1843-1863] was appointed in 1843 afterwards as the Anunāyake of Aṭamasthāna [SLNA 41/188, 7 Sept. 1848]. When in 1863 the office of Anunāyaka fell vacant *Kaluābbe Dhammarakkhita Unnānsē* [1863-1870] was selected [SLNA 41/191, 23 Jan. 1864]. The office became vacant on the death of Kaluābbe Unnānsē in 1870 and this time the selection gave rise to a controversial issue. Finally, after the settlement of the dispute in 1872 *Unḍurāva Halmillavāvē Ratanapāla Unnānsē* [1872-1885] was appointed as the Anunāyaka Unnānsē [SLNA 41/183, 28 March 1870, 41/251, 27 Aug. 1872]. *Pahala Talāvē Siri Sumana Medhankara Unnānsē* [1885-1908] was appointed in 1885 when the office fell vacant [SLNA 6/7360, 13 Feb. 1886, 41/20, 22 March 1886].

It is clear that until the formation of the Aṭamasthāna Committee by the British the selection of the Anunāyaka (when the office fell vacant was vested in a Committee-like

body headed by the chief of the Nuvaravāva family consisting of the headmen of the Nuvarakalāviya who represented the people of the Disāvani. Under the Kandyan kings the Mahavanni Unnānsē invariably was the chief of the Nuvaravāva family and the Vanni Unnānsē of 16 Pattus of the Nuvarakalāviya Disāvani belonged to the Committee. But under the British since 1838 the chief of the Nuvaravāva family presided over the Committee consisting of three Ratē Mahatmayās and the 17 Kōralēs. This was because the British administrators had reconstructed the headmen system in 1838, substituting the designation Ratē Mahatmayās and Kōralē for Maha Vanniyās and Vanni Unnānsē. Unfortunately, it is not possible to trace the origin of this committee. But according to a statement made by Ratvattē Ratē Mahatmayā the Committee originated during the time of King Kīrthi Sri Rājasinha (SLNA 41/64, 184 Dec. 1889). As we know during the time of this king the Buddhist monastic order was re-organized under the Ven. Vālivita Saranankara Sangharaja. The question arises as to why he had authorized a different system of appointing and dismissing the Anunāyaka of Aṭamasthāna while adopting another system for similar in the rest of the Kandyan Kingdom. This was probably because of the peculiar system that existed for a long time. The chief of the Nuvaravāva family who held the office of the Mahavanniyā hereditarily, was considered a descent of the fact he also held the office of lay warden of the Aṭamasthāna to which the sacred Bo-tree became belonged (Chitty, 1834, 176). The protection to which sacred Bo-tree became the responsibility of this family which wielded political authority within the area by holding the highest local chief headmanship, *Viz.*, Maha Vanni Unnānsē. This peculiar situation may also have influenced the idea of forming such a committee. The lack of evidence hinders us the task of

examining whether there existed such a committee from even earlier times.

When in 1843, the office of the Anunāyaka of the Aṭamasthāna became vacant, the selection of Payilegama Unnānsē by the chief of the Nuvaravāva family to the post was approved by the headmen, i. e., the Rate Mahatnayas and the Kōrales (SLNA 41/88, 7 Sept. 1848). When the office of the Anunāyake fell vacant in 1863, a difficulty arose, As there was no hereditary male heir of the Nuvaravāva family, as the previously mentioned Nuvaravāva Bandā died without issue. The headmen taking the responsibility upon themselves, convened a meeting and elected a committee of monks and laymen residing in Nuvarakalāviya for the purpose [SLNA 41/192, 30 May 1863]. Even though, as the Queen's Advocate pointed out, this election was irregular according to the customary procedures, government recognized the selection of Kaluābbe Unnānsē to the office of Anunāyake of Aṭamasthāna, under the circumstances, and the recommendation of Dyke, the Govt. Agent, Jaffna, to the effect that selection was acceptable and valid [SLNA 41/181, 30 June 1871].

But when, on the death of Kaluābbe Unnānsē in 1870, the office of the Anunāyake fell vacant, the selection became a controversial issue. As in 1863, the headmen arranged the selection through a committee representing the monks and the people of Nuvarakalāviya [SLNA 41/191, 23 June 1872; 41/192, 29 May 1863]. Meanwhile Galagoda Bandā of Nuvaravāva Valavuva as well as Ōville Kumārihāmy of Bulānkulāma Valavuva of Anurādhapura forwarded their claims to represent the Nuvaravāva family in the selection of Aṭamasthānādhipati. The intervention of the government

was now required for the solution of this problem. Twynam, the Government Agent of the Northern Province to which Nuvarakalāviya district then belonged was of the opinion that the procedure adopted in 1863 as requested by headmen should be considered as a precedent to be followed in 1870. This was contrary to tradition because the candidate must be nominated by the chief of the Nuvaraväva family and thereafter approved by the people of the district according to tradition [SLNA 41/192, 25 Feb. 1871]. On the other hand the Assistant Agent argued that Galagoda Bandā, son of the step sister of the late Nuvaraväva Bandā, who possessed the ancestral house and the lands, was the rightful heir to represent the family [SLNA 41/164, 22 April 1871]. As a result the Governor ordered that another meeting be held under the leadership of Galagoda Bandā and the proceedings recorded and submitted for his approval [SLNA 41/125, 14 March 1871]. Accordingly a meeting was held on 20th April 1871 presided over by Nuvaraväva Bandā at which Dambavatavana Unnānsē was elected as Anunāyaka on Galagoda Banda's nomination. It appears that, by prior arrangement, the three Ratē Mahatmayās, all Korāles and almost all Arachchies had boycotted the meeting [SLNA 41/184, 22 April, 1871]. The three Ratē Mahatmayās opposing this choice sent a petition to the Government Agent alleging that Nuvaraväva Galagoda Bandā had, without any authority, selected the said Unnānsē, where the consent of 3 Ratē Mahatmayās and the other headmen, monks and laity and been withheld. But the Queen's advocate held that the submissions of the Ratē Mahatmayās were inadmissible and that the right of Galagoda Bandā to represent the Nuvaraväva family was lawful and therefore Dambewatavana Revata Unnānsē should be recognized by the Government [SLNA 41/192, 12 May, 1871].

In order to settle this dispute amicably, Lieching, the assistant Government Agent at Anurādhapura decided to hold an inquiry [SLNA 41/251, 28 June 1871]. At this inquiry the three Ratē Mahatmayās maintained that there was no hereditary chief of the Nuvaravāva family and consequently a fresh election of the Anunāyaka should be conducted. Ōville Kumārihāmy claimed her right to nominate a monk for the office of Anunāyaka as it had been devolved on her from her husband, the late chief of Nuvaravāva family. Nuvaravāva Galagoda Bandā argued that as young Nuvaravāva Bandā had died without issue, the right to represent the family had passed on to said Nuvaravāva Bandā's step sister, and from her to him as her son. As the Government was now compelled to investigate the claims made by two claimants, the queen's advocate examined the records of a number of cases instituted in Anurādhapura courts in which these two parties were involved and finally delivered his opinion in favour of Ōville Kumārihāmy of the Bulankulama valavuva [SLNA 41/192, 25 Jan. 1872]. He further recommended that no certificate be issued in recognition of the nomination of the monk by Galagoda Bandā of Nuvaravāva Valavuva unless he established his claims, within a prescribed period in a competent court of law [ibid]. As Galagoda Bandā failed to take any legal steps to substantiate his claims, the government decided to recognize the nomination of Ōville Kumārihāmy as the Anunāyaka of Aṭamasthāna [SLNA 41/251, 27 Aug. 1872]. At a meeting attended by Ratē Mahatmayās, Kōrāles, Arachchies and the monks of the district *Undureva Halmillavāvā Ratnapala Unnānsē*, the nomination of Ōville Kumārihāmy was selected to the office of Anunāyaka of Aṭamasthāna [SLNA 41/187, 27 May 1872]. He was formally installed as the Anunāyaka of Aṭamasthāna by the Government [SLNA 41/251, 27 Aug. 1872].

The policy adopted by the Government, on this occasion as stated by Governor Gregory, was to abide by the decision of the court [SLNA 5/59, 14 Nov. 1872]. The question was finally resolved in this manner and thereafter the head of the Bulankulama family [of Ōville Kumārihām̄y] enjoyed without interruption the customary rights and performed the duties pertaining to the Atamasthāna.

It is noteworthy to examine how the selection of Anunāyaka was done when the said Committee held its meetings. The procedure adopted at the meeting held on 20 April 1871 which appeared to be in conformity with the traditional customs was as follows: Firstly, 20 laymen were selected from among those present to represent the people of the district. Galagoda Bandā proposed a sub-committee of 20 monks of Nuvarakalāviya to represent the Buddhist clergy to examine the qualifications and the suitability of the candidates [SLNA 41/184, 22 April 1871]. Candidates were invited to declare themselves. Two monks came forward. Nuvaravāva Galagoda Bandā submitted that one monk was too young to hold office and then nominated the second to the office of Anunāyaka. The laymen and the clergy assembled approved his nomination [*ibid*].

Examining the precedents and practices which existing earlier J.F. Dickson, the first Government Agent at Anuradhāpura had formed a committee known as Atamasthāna Committee. The so constituted Atamasthāna Committee consisted of the head of the Nuvaravāva family 3 Ratē Mahatmayās and 17 Koralēs of Nuvarakalāviya [Ievers: 1890 43]. The head of the Nuvaravāva family automatically became the head of this Committee. All the members of the Committee were laymen. The Committee was entrusted with

the right of selection as well as dismissal of the Atamasthānādhipathi. The Atamasthāna Committee was modified in 1905 and 1931. The committee formed by the Ordinance 8 of 1905 consisted of six members, namely, the Anunāyaka of Aatamasthāna, Ratē Mahatmayās of Nuvaragam, Kālāgam and Hurulu Palātas, the head of the Nuvaravāva family [Bulankulamā family] and the Buddhist layman nominated by the chief incumbent of the Adam's Peak temple together with the Mahānāyakas of Malvatta and Asgiri Chapters [Ord.8-1905 sec.5]. Commenting over this change, Supreme Court Judge E.A.D. Atukorala in his judgement over Nānaratana VS Revata case says.

“In my view the only variation or modification in the custom has been in respect of the composition and not the functions of the Boards of Electors” [S.C. Appeal. 42/87].

The Atamasthāna Committee under the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance No.8 of 1905 and No 19 of 1931 had selected three Atamasthānādhipatis consecutively. They were *Pallegama Ratanapāla Thero* [1908-1943], *Undurāva Halmillavāva Sumana Revata Thero* [1943-1977] and the present *Atamasthanadhipati Pallegama Nānaratana Thero*. On these three occasions the succession was determined by virtue of appointment. A requisite qualification for the post was that the monk should be from the Bō-Maluva Paramparava lineage. *Sisyanu sisya Paramparāva* or seniority among the pupils too appeared an added qualification [*ibid*].

As mentioned above, it is clear that a committee like body was in existence at least since the time of King Kīrthi Sī Rājasinha. Perhaps it may not have been a new creation,

but the legalizing of a traditional method when the king reorganized the monastic establishment in the kingdom. Being a lay warden of the Bō-tree since its arrival in the island the Nuvaravāva family may have had a leading role in to affairs of the Aṭamasthāna for a long time. The Mudiyaṅsēs or Vanni Unnānsē of the Pattus represented the people.

It is worthwhile to point out that the procedures adopted regarding the Aṭamasthāna affairs were in most cases not similar to what existed in other areas of the island. The selection of the Anunāyaka by a Committee consisting of laity and the management of the temple properties jointly by the chief incumbent and the lay custodian were such exceptions. The management of the Aṭamasthāna appears to have devolved on a system peculiar to itself.

Ignoring the existence of the Aṭamasthāna Committee responsible for the affairs of the Aṭamasthāna at Anurādhapura, the Government had put into operation the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance of 1889. According to the Ordinance chiefly the administration of the temple properties including revenue and income, became the responsibility of District as well as Provincial Committees, which created under the same Ordinance. These Committees, to enforce the rules and regulations under the Ordinance, had appointed a Trustee for each temple. They were to take charge of the revenue of the temples and had to present revenue records to the District Committees [Cey. Govt. Gazette, 15 Nov. 1889].

The establishment of the Provincial and District Committees under the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance had badly affected the affairs of the Aṭamasthāna. The Aṭamasthāna at Anurādhapura was under the jurisdiction of the Anurādhapura District Committee. But there existed also

a traditional system which was responsible for the administration of the Aṭamasthāna. This consisted of the Aṭamasthāna Committee, the head of the Nuvaravāva family and Aṭamasthānādhipati. Now the Aṭamasthāna Committee had no legal jurisdiction to carry out their activities. As recorded by the Government Agent of Anurādhapura in 1905 the Aṭamasthānā Committee did not meet since the enforcement of the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance of 1889 and its only duty appeared to be the selection of the Aṭamasthānādhipati [Karunananda: 1990. 102-104]. This clearly proves that the Aṭamasthāna Committee was powerless to enforce the traditional rules and regulations and consequently it became a powerless body with regard to the temple affairs except the privilege to select the Aṭamasthānādhipati. On the other hand, the District Committee under the said Ordinance was reluctant to take any action which was detrimental to the traditional laws and procedures. As such, the appointment of trustees to the temples of Aṭamasthāna took a long time to be executed. It was after Brahmācāri Valisinha Harischandra became the Secretary of the District Committee, and chiefly due to his efforts that the trustees were appointed to the Sri Mahabodhi and the Ruvanvālisāya. But the trustees could not perform their duties properly due to the opposition of the incumbent of the temples, the Aṭamasthānādhipati and Sumanasāra Thero. Hostilities between the trustees and the incumbent priests was a common occurrence in those days.

A sub-committee of the Legislative Council appointed to inquire into the functioning of the Provincial and District Committee system under the Buddhist temporalities Ordinance had recommended the revival of the Aṭamasthāna Committee for the purpose of administering the affairs of the

Atamasthāna as it appeared more suitable than the District Committee [s.P.25-1905]. Accordingly, the powers and responsibilities hitherto enjoyed by the District Committees under the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance were entrusted to the Atamasthāna Committee with reference to the Atamasthāna at Anurādhapura [Ord.8-1905 Sec.5]. The Committee now consisted of six members, namely, the Anunāyaka of Atamasthāna, three Ratē Mahatmayās, the head of the Nuvaravāva [Bulankulama] family and a Buddhist laymen nominated by the Mahānāyaka and the incumbent of Sri Pāda [ibid].

The first Atamasthana Committee under ord. No. 8 of 1905 consisted of the following persons:

1. Sri Sumana Mēdhankara - Anunāyaka of Atamasthāna.
2. L.B. Bulankulama - R.M.Nuvaragam Palāta/Head of the Bulankulama family.
3. H.B. Hurulle - R.M. Hurulu Palāta.
4. D.B. Ratwatte - R.M. Kalagam Palāta.
5. T.B. Raḥapanava - Nominee of the Mahānāyakas of Kandy and Sri Pāda.

After a long delay, the first meeting of this newly constituted Committee was held on 22 January 1908 at the Anurādhapura Kachcheri. At this meeting Hurullē Ratē Mahatmayā was elected President of the Committee and L.B. Bulankulama as the Secretary [SLNA 41/457 18 Dec. 1097.22 Jan. 1908; 41/502, 22 Jan 1908].

The Atamasthāna Committee so constituted has been functioning up to the present day. One significant feature of this Committee is that for the first time, a member of the clergy was included. The Atamasthānādhipati became one of

the members of the Committee. Further, in the new Committee, the head of the Bulankulama family was not an ex-officio Chairman of the Committee. Earlier he was the ex-officio Chairman of the Committee. Hitherto the outsiders had no voice in the affairs of Atamasthāna. All the members were local headmen representing the district and the head of the leading family of the district. But under the new Ordinance outsiders got the right of selecting one member to the Committee. They were the Chief Priest of the Adam's Peak and the Mahānayakas of Kandy. This is the first occasion when outsiders could interfere indirectly in the affairs of the Atamasthāna. Perhaps the agitation conducted by the Mahābodhi Society under the leadership of Harischandra insisting that the Mahānayaka should select the Atamasthānādhipati and also the close relations of High Priests like Hikkaduve Sumangala, the chief of the Adam's Peak temple with the Governor, may have influenced the Government to consider giving them a hand in at least the nominating of a member to the Atamasthāna Committee.

The right to remove the Anunāyaka of the Atamasthāna from office was also vested in the Atamasthāna Committee. But during the time of Kandyan Kings, the chief of the Nuvaravāva family had exercised this authority. Any misconduct as a monk, inefficiency or irregular conduct in the capacity of Anunāyaka of the Atamasthāna were reasons for the removal. As mentioned by young Nuvaravāva Bandā, during the time of his grandfather *Ulukkulame* and *Andaravāva* Unnānsēs and during the time of his father, *Divulvāva* Unnānsē, *Karukkankulame* Unnānsē and *Paluvāva* Unnānsē had been dismissed from the office of the Anunāyaka [SLNA 41/163, 26 March 1856]. As the Anunāyaka was always a member of the Malvatta Chapter, he was subjected

to its disciplinary control with regard to his conduct as a monk. If he was found guilty of any grave misdemeanour, the penalty was disrobing [*ibid*]. By being disrobed he would cease to be a monk and automatically be disqualified to hold the office of Anunāyaka. The first dismissal of the Anunāyaka under the British appears to have taken place in 1843, where a committee headed by the Mahānāyaka Unnānsē of Kandy disrobed the Ipalōgama Anunāyaka as he was guilty of misconduct [SLNA 41/180, 7 Sept. 1848].

In 1856 a meeting of the headmen and the people under the chairmanship of Nuvaravāva Bandā was held and the Committee decided to remove the said Payilegama Unnānsē as he was dectieful and allowed the sacred places to go to ruin. He was found guilty of many misdemeanours constituting grave infringement of the Vinaya rules [SLNA 41/149, 26 June 1856]. In his place they selected Rambāvē Rēvata Unnānsē [SLNA 41/159, April 1856].

Payilegama Unnānsē had been removed from the office according to the customary procedures and, as in 1843, Nuvaravāva Bandā had requested the withdrawal of his act of appointment. A policy on non-interference in connection with the Buddhist religion had been pursued by the Government in those years. The reply of the Government was that “the matter is one in which his Excellency cannot interfere” and therefore informed the Committee that “if the priest does not satisfy the people they must proceed by law if they cannot make an arrangement without it and if custom has sanctioned that the inhabitants can supercede the priest they can follow that custom on their responsibility” [SLNA 41/164, 26 June 1857].

The Government which had accepted the appointment of Anunāyaka according to the traditional procedure, and once in 1843 had accepted the procedure of dismissing the Anunāyaka, now refused to accept the same responsibility. The Government was now working contrary to what it had done earlier. This may have been because of the controversy, which was still unsettled, over the interference of the government in religious matters of the island. However, this policy of the Government gave rise to and helped the dispute to escalate. Payilegama Unnānsē was dismissed according to the age-long customs and expelled from the temple. But the Government did not cancel his appointment. After expelling him from the office the Atamasthāna Committee headed by Nuvaravāva Bandā handed over the Udamaluva temple to the newly selected Anunāyaka Dambēvatavana Revata Unnānsē. But he was not formally recognized by the Government through an act of appointment. Payilegama Unnānsē who was not fit for the office under the accepted old system now instituted an action in the District Court of Kandy challenging his removal. The Court pronounced its judgement in favour of Payilegama Unnānsē on 27 July 1860 [SLNA 41/164, 1 June 1857, 41/192, 19 March 1860]. It is evident that Payilegama Unnānsē managed to resume his position by virtue of a decree of an English Court of law and to continue to hold office in spite of having been rejected by the entire district. This episode may have resulted in an increase of power of the Anunāyaka over temple affairs, simultaneously decreasing the influence of laymen like Nuvaravāva Bandā over them.

When the Kandyan Province fell into the hands of the British the local chief of Nuverakalāviya was Nuvaravāva Sūriya Kumārasinha Mudiyaṅsē Mahavanniyā. He was the

chief of the Nuvaravāva family and therefore also the custodian of the Aṭamasthāna at Anurādhapura. As he had been implicated in the so-called Rebellion of 1818, Nuvaravāva Maha Vanniyā was removed from the office and was imprisoned in Galle. During this time he had taken Hakkīṇḍa Kumārihāmy as his second wife and she bore a girl who was named Puñchi Mānikā [SLNA 41/192, 25 June 1872]. When he returned and was re-instated he brought this daughter to the Walavuva at Anurādhapura with the consent of his legal or first wife as they were childless. This girl was brought up as their own daughter. In the meantime his wife bore a child, a boy, and now in the Walavuva were the son of the first wife and the daughter of the second wife. This son who was married to Oville Kumārihāmy died without issue. The daughter Puñchi Mānikā married Galagoda Bandā [SLNA 41/192, 25 June 1871, 25 Jan 1872]. Puñchi Mānikā remained in the Walavuva until her marriage and the property was settled between the two in the following manner. One third of the old chief's lands, a portion of jewellery and the Walavuva of Nuvaravāva were given to Puñchi Mānikā. In the deed of settlement dtd 31 August 1850 by which the bequest was made, the widow of the old chief had described her as a daughter "begotten by the said chief and born of Hikkīṇḍa Kumārihāmy, the second wife of the old chief" [*ibid*]. A judgement of the District Court at Anurādhapura established that Puñchi Mānika was not the legitimate daughter of the old chief, and therefore she was not entitled to inherit his estate and declared that the rights regarding the temple and the rights pertaining to the chief belonged exclusively to young Nuvaravāva Bandā as the only son of the old chief. In court case in 1860 the widow of the late Nuvaravāva Maha Vanniyā applied for the administration of the estate of her diseased husband on the ground that she was its sole heir

on the death of her son. The judgement declared that the mother was the legal heir to the son's estate according to Kandyan law, and not the son's sister Puñch Mānika [*ibid*]. In a court case in 1861, Ōville Kumārihāmy producing the last will of the said widow, applied for probate, which was accepted as genuine [SLNA 5/59, 14 Nov.1872].

There existed a long standing disputes between the two branches of the Nuvaravāva family. i.e. later known as Nuvaravāva Walavuva and Bulankulama Walavuva. The Nuvaravāva Walavuva belonged to Puñch Mānika. While Bulankulama Walavuva belong to Ōville Kumārihāmy, the widow of the legitimate son of the said late Maha Vanniyā. As we have seen earlier, the dispute over the powers and privileges regarding the Atamasthāna establishment was settled in favour of Ōville Kumārihāmy of the Bulankulama Walavuva. The discendents of his family enjoy this privilege uninterrupted till the present day.

Notes

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