

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	6009	Press ~~Mis.~~
	46-47	
Dated	17-5-1958	

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Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation, 18th May 1858.

No. 46. Read the following letter from C. BEADON, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to the Government of Fort St. George, dated Fort William, 16th April 1858. No. 617.

SIR,

Home Dept. I am directed by the Hon'ble the President in Council to forward the accompanying copy of a letter, No. 54, dated the 3rd Ultimo, from the Agent in the Hill Tracts of Orissa, and to request that the Right Hon'ble the Governor in Council will favor the Government of India with his sentiments on the proposition therein made to place the Khond Tracts of Chinna Kimedy, Sooradah and Bodaguda, under the sole control of that Agency.

2. Lieutenant McNeill is understood to refer solely to the Hill country which pays no Revenue, and His Honor in Council observes that in the former correspondence upon the subject of the jurisdiction of the Hill Agency, it was throughout admitted by the Madras Authorities that its proper boundary was the line of Ghâts. It appears also from that correspondence that there would be no difficulty in defining a boundary of the nature.

From Lieutenant A. C. McNEILL, Agent in the Hill Tracts of Orissa; to C. BEADON, Esq., Secretary to the Government of India, dated Camp Russellcondah, the 3rd March 1858. No. 54.

SIR,

I have the honor to submit the following observations for the favorable consideration of Government.

2. In the Resolution recorded by the Government of India, dated 6th December 1845, certain Tracts were transferred from the jurisdiction, of the Cuttack and Ganjam Authorities, to that of the Agent in the Hill Tracts of Orissa. Colonel Campbell, c. B., in a letter, No. 85, dated 20th May 1847, requested that the four Districts as per margin might be removed from his jurisdiction, and again in a letter, No. 212, dated 5th July 1849, made a similar request with reference to the remaining Districts enumerated in the margin, assigning as his reasons, that "a Revenue charge incompatible with the free working of the Meriah Agency among the Khonds, whose minds are strongly impressed with the notion that all the pains and trouble taken for the suppression of the Meriah sacrifice will end at last in their being taxed." In conformance with the then Agent's request, the Government were pleased in a Notification, dated 8th March 1850, to direct the re-transfer of all the Districts placed under the Agent in the Hill Tracts of Orissa, under the Resolution, dated 6th December 1845.

3. Since the date of this re-transfer, the Officers of the Agency have nominally exercised authority, in cases of Meriah sacrifice and Female Infanticide only; but the Government were pleased to grant me permission to bring to trial "Boye Khond," who has since been convicted and hanged, for the wilful murder of a Peon on the establishment of the Boad Thasildar. At the same time, one Jugganauth Gowdo was tried and convicted of being an accessory in the murder of "Gonjoo Booda," a trader, and he is now undergoing the sentence awarded to him by Government, of 14 years' imprisonment with labor in irons.

4. Nobody however more sincerely regretted this relinquishment of powers, than did Colonel Campbell, c. B., and he, when on the eve of resigning his position as the Head of Agency, in which he had done so much for the cause of humanity, considered it expedient and solicited from the Government that the Officers of this Agency should be vested with the powers of Joint Magistrate, though this authority was to be restricted to cases of Meriah sacrifice and Female Infanticide only.

5. Up to the present period the Khonds and Ooriahs of the Chinna Kimedy Hill Tracts have known no authority save that of this Agency, and the influence which we have obtained, and the respect and confidence with which all classes view this Agency, is well known to Government. The history of our proceedings in the Khond Tracts of Chinna Kimedy, Jeypoor, and elsewhere, furnishes many examples of this, but I would beg to draw the particular attention of Government to the following instances.

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6. On my arrival at Sarrungudda on the 18th February last, I found that the feud between the Patros of Sarrunguddah and Kootoole had again broken out. This feud dating so far back as 1844-45 had been enquired into by Colonel Campbell, C. B., then Agent, who succeeded in reconciling the hostile parties, but the circumstances which led to a renewal of the feud were as follows: The wife of the Hindoo Chief of Sarrungudda having been seduced by an Ooriah of the same village, she was directed to leave the District with her Paramour. This they did, but were brought back to their original village, at the instigation of a party hostile to the Patro. This was an insult which the Chief (like all Hill men extremely jealous and sensitive) could not submit to, and the removal of the obnoxious parties was determined on, either by persuasion, or by force. The former of these having failed, an appeal to arms had been determined on.

7. Such was the state of affairs when I arrived at Sarrungudda, but the Patro made an urgent appeal to me to settle the affair amicably, if possible. The time appeared critical, as if the question was not at once amicably adjusted, to the satisfaction of all parties, disturbances would most certainly have broken out; and such an occurrence, at all times to be deprecated, was much more so at a period, when the minds of Khonds and Ooriahs had been worked on by false and exaggerated reports of the state of affairs in Sumbulpore and elsewhere, circulated by designing Dombos, Byraghees, and others, who have this season visited the Hills in considerable numbers.

8. I accordingly directed the attendance at Mahasinghy of all the parties in the case, and they assembled on the 20th February. The meeting was as I fully anticipated, a very stormy and angry one, but it had the desired effect; and the jealousy and rancour which would otherwise inevitably have ended in bloodshed, here exhausted itself in words only; and I had the pleasure of settling amicably and to the satisfaction of all parties, not only this dispute, but also all the ramifications of the old ones extending a period of 11 or 12 years. The Assistant Moon-shee deputed by me to visit the China Kimediy Khond Tracts also succeeded in adjusting an exactly similar feud between two Tribes of Khonds in the Shubernagherry District, in which also an appeal to arms had been made.

9. The more immediate object I have in view bringing these cases prominently to notice is, that the Head of Police in Poornaghur of Upper Goomsur has this season for the first time visited various District in the Chinna Kimediy Hills Tracts, and has informed the Patros and others, that he had been deputed to settle disputes, and to take cognizance of any misdemeanours, as the Agent in the Hill Tracts of Orissa had no authority save in cases of Meriah sacrifice. The declaration of this latter statements, however partially true it may be in abstract, will have, I beg most respectfully to submit, a prejudicial effect on the operations of this Agency, by weakening that influence and confidence which we have obtained amongst all classes in the suppression of Meriah and Female Infanticide; for it may not be out of place here to remark that much of the success which has attended our efforts in abolishing human sacrifice and Infanticide in Chinna Kimediy has been obtained, not by the mere moral influence which has been brought to bear on those particular questions, but by the unity of authority and action which, combined with other sources of power, has obtained for us that influence over all classes by which we have settled disputes and feuds, in which persuasion and advice triumphed over the rule hitherto in vogue that might was right, and by the amiable adjustment of even domestic squabbles in which the Bow and Battle Axe had hitherto been the invariable arbitrator.

10. I would here quote from a letter, dated 25th August 1844, from Captain S. C. Macpherson, to the Acting Agent in Ganjam, paragraph 12.

"The existence of several Authorities in this region having distinct jurisdictions, whether derived from separate Governments or from the same Government, and whether or not conjoined with a common jurisdiction to be used in emergency, is, I conceive, incompatible with the maintenance in the minds of the Khonds of the idea of one Supreme Authority acting systematically and irresistibly for the accomplishment of our declared purposes towards them.

"From the necessary differences of opinion which must arise between those distinct Authorities, and from the different and often discordant modes of procedure which they must adopt, the artful hostility of any Rajah Bissoye or other enemy to our objects might easily induce these Khonds to believe them to be in conflict; and by combining that with other delusions readily received and acted upon by the parties opposed to us in each Tribe, might bring

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about the most fatal results. It being remembered, that the credulity of these Mountain Tribes has no limits; that we have very few instruments capable of the difficult task of dealing with false impressions having the appearance of truth; and that a passing change of opinion, producing, for example, a single human sacrifice, may undo the work of years" and again, quoting from the same letter, he states "that Khonds look in every case to persons, not to institutions, not to the Government, but the representatives, and cannot see a change in the latter, without apprehending changed principles of procedure."

11. It may probably be argued that beneficial results have been obtained by the establishment of a Thasildar in Boad, and a Head of Police in Upper Goomsur, but I would nevertheless beg respectfully to call the attention of Government to the opinions recorded by Colonel Campbell, C. B., and also by Captain MacVicar, as to the policy which led to the establishment of a Head of Police in Goomsur; those opinions are before Government, but I would in this place quote two Extracts, one from Colonel Campbell's letter, No. 33, dated 9th February 1854, to the address of G. Plowden, Esquire, Secretary to the Government of India, in which he states.

"Although I am enabled to report thus favorably of the present condition of the Khond mind respecting human sacrifice, it would be injurious as impolitic to leave them to themselves for some years to come, and I may adduce in explanation of my meaning, the protracted state of transition in which the Goomsur Khonds remained for so many years, although these Khonds had been completely cowed by the Military operations and executions of 1836 and 1837, and were perfectly under our control, every path and village being known to us and their most distant hamlet, being not more than four ordinary marches from the Military Station of Russellcondah. In 1841, I reported that the public performance of the Meriah sacrifice in Goomsur was at an end, but that it would be difficult to maintain the ground we had gained, unless measures were adopted for its suppression in Boad and Chinna Kimediy. In 1844, Captain Macpherson reported that the conquest of all Goomsur was completed. In 1845, Mr. Cadenhead, Officiating for Captain Macpherson, reported that there was still an intense longing on the part of the great body of the people to return to ancient usages and that men's minds were far from easy under the relinquishment of the sacrifice, and in March 1848, just 8 years after my report that the rite had publicly ceased, it was with difficulty and by great good fortune that I succeeded in forcibly rescuing a victim a few hours before the appointed time for her immolation by one of the pledged Tribes of Athara Mootah. If this then has been for so many years the condition of the Khonds of Goomsur so near at hand and so easy of access, it will, in my humble opinion, require incessant watchfulness to maintain our ground amongst the Khonds of the distant and far more extensive and difficult countries where the Meriah has been recently suppressed," and again, in his letter, No. 36, dated 14th February 1854, paragraph 4, "I have always opposed, and I still oppose the transference of whole Districts to this Agency, believing that in cordial co-operation with the respective Authorities, we could equally well effect our purpose, but it is imperative that we should for some years remain in an influential position with the Khonds of the several Hill Tracts in order fully and completely to realize our views and also to prevent their relapsing to their old system of Bow and Battle Axe, instead of appealing to us, as I have found them invariably to do, while we were in authority."

12. With reference to these considerations and to the preceding observations regarding distinct jurisdiction, I beg permission to draw the attention of Government to the following: In the Notification, dated the 8th March 1850, the Government were pleased to order the re-transfer from this Agency, of all those Tracts of country which, by the Resolution, dated 6th December 1845, were removed from the jurisdiction and superintendence of the Commissioner in Cuttack and of the Agent in Ganjam.

13. In a letter, dated 26th November 1846, from G. A. Bushby, Esquire, Secretary to the Government of India, to the address of the Acting Chief Secretary to Government, Fort Saint George, the Hon'ble the President in Council was pleased to direct that the three Districts of Chinna Kimediy, Bodaguda, and Sooradah should be placed under this Agency. The records relating to this period are very incomplete, some having been lost, and others injured in their transit to Calcutta and back; it does not therefore appear, if any further correspondence on this subject took place or not. I would therefore submit for consideration, whether the three Districts above alluded to, viz. Chinna Kimediy, Sooradah, and Bodaguddah, not included in the Resolution of 6th December 1845, came under the operations of the Notification of 8th March 1850.

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14. But whatever view of the question the Government may be pleased to take, I would earnestly solicit that the Khond Tracts of Chinna Kimedy, Sooradah and Bodagudda may be placed under the sole control of this Agency, as I am convinced that such a measure will not only contribute to the welfare and happiness of the Khonds, but will also materially strengthen our hands in the furtherance of the objects of this Agency.

15. It does not appear to me that any objections can be raised by the Ganjam Authorities to this proposition.

16. Colonel Campbell objected to the transfer of Districts on the grounds that the exercise of Fiscal authority was incompatible with the free working of Meriah suppression, but in the Khond Tracts above alluded to, not a Rupee of tribute is paid by any one, and the Khonds, virtually independent, have hitherto looked to us only for justice and the settlement of their disputes, whereas the Districts which really pay Revenue, are situated in the country below the Ghauts, and are inhabited by Oorials and others who neither sacrifice nor commit Infanticide, and who are therefore totally unconnected with the objects of this Agency.

No. 47. ORDER THEREON, No. 644; dated 17th May 1858.

Ordered to be communicated to the Agent at Ganjam, who will report, at an early date, his opinion on the proposal of the Agent in the Hill Tracts of Orissa, to place the Khond Tracts of Chinna Kimedy, Sooradah and Bodaguda under the sole control of that Agency.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

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No. 644

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*Fort St. George
17 May 1858*

[Signature]

Copy to Agent at Ganjam. Disp. 17th