

Remarks applicable to all the Villages belonging to the Temple of Ramanadha Swamy in Rameswaram

Sheet

No. 853

The Rany of Raminad claims to the right of management of the Rameswaram Devasthanam & requests to register her name in the Gram Register of the Villages attached to the Institution, as Trustee of the same. The Valuel of Peta Raminadha Pondaram of Rameswaram pleads that the Temple is under the management of ~~the~~ his client from time immemorial & that the Rany or person whom he may be has not shadow of ~~the~~ right to the management of the same.

The Rany's Valuel says that his client instituted a suit against the Pondaram for recovering of the right of the management of the Temple, in the Civil Court of Madras & that the result of which are not known. The Pondaram's Valuel urges that it is true that the Rany instituted a suit in N.Y. of 1857 of the Judge of the Civil Court of Madras for the recovery of the right of the management of the Temple; that the Court dismissed the suit on more than one occasion & that the Appellate Court directed the local Court about couple - months ago to re-investigate the case & decide it on its merits. As it will take some ~~more~~ months more to pass a final decision, ^{at myself in} referred to the correspondence that took place formerly between the Collector & the Board regarding this dispute. A letter addressed by Mr. J. Wroughton, Jy Principal Collector, to the Board, on the 7th January 1834 - contains all details of the dispute in question - Hence I enter the letter below -

1 - "With reference to your Jy Secretary's letter of the 7th February 1833, regarding the claims to the right of management of the Rameswaram Devasthanam"

"between the Raminad & the Pondaram of Rameswaram, I have the honor to report the result of my examinations on the subject: -
2 - The Managers of the Raminad zamindari urge that the right of nominating Pandarams to the Raminad Pagoda is vested with them, that the present Pandaram was not regularly appointed, that he is unfit for the office, and that they have several documents to prove their right of appointing Pandarams.
3 - The defendant (the Pondaram) states that his rights have been established upwards of 400 years, that the appointment is not vested with zamindars, that on the dissolution of a Pandaram, it has always been usual for him to appoint his successor, that it is inconsistent that zamindar who use animal food should be allowed any interference in bestowing the Kachayem or red cloth for the nomination of Pandarams of the pure Shera caste, that he has been lawfully appointed, and that if such had not been the case, that the deceased Raminad & Etapate would not have allowed him to perform the Ceremony of tying the Pasi-vattam around his head on the day of his instalment, and that he has several documents to prove these assertions."

4 - On the part of the zamindar 13 original documents were produced by the managers, and 9 documents by Ramanada Ayyar, one of his witnesses. Abstract list of these vouchers is here with submitted.

5 - On the part of the Pandaram, copies of 44 documents were furnished, list of which is also submitted and in abstract are as follows.

9 are Sashavams or Grants for the gift of Villages and lands to the Pagoda by the Tanjore Rajas and Seduhadis of Raminad.
11 are the orders from the Nishah for the restoration of the Pagoda villages to the charge of the Pandaram when they were apured with the Raminad District about 60 years back.
8 are Grants and other vouchers for the gift of lands situated in Ceylon.

6 are Takeeds issued to the Pandaram by Inspeu Collector Lushington and Parish demanding payment of the kists of the Pagoda villages.
1 Takeed from Mr. Parish to the Pandaram informing him of the complaint of the Rami of Raminad of negligence in his Pagoda duties admonishing him for the same.

7 are orders on various subjects, x-x-x

8 - Concerning that requiring parties to produce witnesses to support their respective claims would lead to much fabrication I deemed it more preferable to confine myself to a careful review of the orders which have long passed on this subject and to make examination of the witnesses on oath which took place in 1816 by order of the late Mr. Peter on the death of the former Pandaram 10 of whom have been examined and an abstract of their depositions is here with submitted No 3.
9 - Particular observation has been directed to the following points.

First — Whether the present Pandaram was appointed in a legal manner to his office or not? —
 Second — Proceeding his charge —

^{or} second — Regarding his character.

Third — Whether the right of nomination is vested with the yamundais.

Fourth — How far the zamindars have right to the management of the affairs of the Rissaltnams.

8a — To the first point, & witnesses positively swear that they were present, and testified that the present Pandaram was lawfully nominated by the late Pandaram
 10a during 2 hours before his demise resigned in his favour the symbols of office consisting of red cloth and Puttrasham beads ^{xxx} &c. These depositions are corroborated
 15a by the attachees given before the late Head Sasildar, and forwarded by him in his letter of 2nd February 1876. Two of the witnesses Ramanadayer and Ramanadapillay
 20a depose to the contrary, stating that the present Pandaram was nominated by Ramasivayer and other persons ^{xxx} after the death of the Pandaram ^{xxx} in ^{the presence of} his body. Ramanadayer
 25a one of the principal witnesses stated in his deposition before the late Head Sasildar in ^{xxx} that the nomination of the present Pandaram took place before the death
 30a of the late Pandaram; this contradiction he subsequently explains by stating, that in consequence of his mother's illness his mind was agitated, and he did not then pay attention
 35a to what was written in the attachee.

15 7th The other attachments which accompanied the copy of the late Head Sasildar dated 2nd February 1816. shew that the present Pandaram was nominated after the death of the
15 late Pandaram by his party - who were then present, and the Sasildar. states that these attachments were sent to him by Vijaya Gopalasitupati husband of Narayani Kachiyar
15 Granting that the Situpati had authority to obtain such depositions, yet it does not appear that they were taken in his presence, but that they were procured by one of his
15 private servants, ^{the} ^{the} ^{the} not taken before competent authority as the estate was at that time under assumption, the documents so taken were obtained improperly by his servants
15 and consequently useless.

"10th The Zamindar rests his objections to the nomination of the Pandaram upon the Sanads issued by Mr Peter dated 25th July & 9th August 1815. Mr Peter had grounds at that time to issue such orders upon the complaints of Vijaya Gopalasetupaty, but on the 23rd July, 1816 he issued another order to the Head Sirdar to put the Pandaram for the present in charge of his Office, and further to give him the usual offerings as respect from the Pagoda due to his rank. This latter document of course invalidates the two former, and the point which was objected to before regarding the appointment of the Pandaram is not only clearly proved, but it also appears that he has discharged the duties of this Office - nearly 18 years - jointly with the Sirkar servants.

"11. With regard to the impeachment of the Pandaram's Character, no proof whatever has been adduced neither have any complaints been brought forward against him, except
 "the accusations of the Manager. It would be most difficult to procure credible witnesses on this point if there existed the least suspicion against his conduct
 "it would have been noticed by his disciples and the people of his caste and it is not probable that he would have been admitted by Ramasami Sitaipati into
 "his palace in 1829 to perform the ceremony of tying the Parivattam at his coronation. The Pandaram then, did not prefer any claim to the management of the Deuce.

10th With regard to the right of the zamindars to appoint Pandaraw, the present manager possesses not other document except the Kararnamah stated to have been executed by the late Pandaraw when he was 5 years of age to the former zamindar, Mudu Ramalingam Setupaty in the year Pramadihar or 1793. The several other orders alluded to were issued in the time of the said Setupaty within 4 successive years in which he dismissed the Pandaraw and appointed other persons to the management of the Pagoda. It does not appear that the manager possesses any documents or accounts to prove that any other Setupaty had before or after Mudu Ramalingam Setupaty - exercised such an authority. The Kararnamah stated to have been given by the late Pandaraw when he was 5 years old is not binding according to law, moreover the oppressive conduct of Mudu Ramalingam Setupaty is well known to Government which terminated with his confinement at Madras and the assumption of his zamindari. Exercising such tyranny it was easy for him to have obtained any kind of document from a poor Pandaraw who was in his power, such documents are only to be admitted with extreme doubt if at all.

734 — It appears generally from the documents and witnesses produced on both sides, that it has been ^{the} established custom, that the dying Pandaram nominates one of his disciples, and that the election is reported for the zamindar's sanction and approbation, so he thereupon issues orders to the Statadhar of the Pagoda to show him the usual respect, and to obey his orders at the time the present Pandaram was nominated, the zamindari was in dispute and held under attachment by the Collector, so that the orders which would have under other circumstances emanated from the zamindar were passed by the Collector the orders were dated 23rd July 1816 - to the late Head Kasildar.

14. The last and most principal point relates to how far the zamindar has right to supervision over the Pagoda affairs. By the depositions of the witnesses it appears that a Yettumallee or overseer was charged in the accounts of the establishment of the Pagoda, on the half of the zamindar and that his duty was to look after the due performance of the daily Pujas, festival ceremonies and repairs of the Pagoda, and to report to the zamindar cases of neglect &c. This declaration supports the Kiriar namah produced by the Manager as having been executed by the Pandaram in 1793. in which it is worded, that the Pandaram would conduct himself to the satisfaction of the Cultivators of the Simotanam village, that he would without partiality settle all disputes which may occur amongst them, that all the

as friends of the zamindar would be considered as the friends of the Pandaram, and the enemies of the zamindar as the enemies of the Pandaram. It is also stated in another document produced by Ramaratnam one of the witnesses on the part of the manager dated 9th Eyr - Year Padharana (about 105 years ago) issued by Katakumar Setupathy to the stalatons of the Pagoda, appointing Sunkara Gurnakal to superintend the daily ceremonies and festivals in the Devasthanam. By these documents and the evidence of the witnesses, it clearly appears that the zamindar had the power of supervision.

15th The following exhibits the Revenue of the Villages appertaining to the Pagoda in each District.

Reynolds No. 717		In Raminad District 54 th 76		No of Villages annual Revenue Rs - A - P	
Sheet No. 854		Tinnavally	9 1/2	5611	5 - 3
		Tanjur	1	250	9 - 11
		Sivagangai zamindari &c		3037	15 - 10

From this it will appear that the donations to the Pagoda are principally from Raminad, and as the Pagoda is situated within his zamindari, it is natural to suppose that the zamindar would ~~not~~ have omitted to retain to the ~~extent~~ ^{the independent} supervision of its affairs.

16th Having thus weighed the claims of both Parties I perfectly agree with and beg to support the recommendation made in the 5th Para of Mr. Viniash's letter dated 20th September 1882 and which received the sanction of Government on the 23rd October 1882 the limit of the supervision allotted to the zamindar not having been distinctly defined in the letter, has given occasion for the present dispute between the parties.

XVII 17th I therefore beg to Recommend that the following provisions if approved be enacted as the future rules for the management of the Pagoda.

First - The receipts and expenditures of the Pagoda should be under the immediate superintendence of the Pandaram who should appoint and dismiss the servants, subject to an appeal to the zamindar and to the collector.

Second - All collections to be lodged in the Treasury of the Pagoda.

Third - A Sumpaddy or overseer be employed on behalf of the zamindar on the establishment of the Devasthanam, he should have access to and the accounts of the receipts and charges and forward them monthly to the zamindar with the Pandaram's signature, and he should further ~~be~~ ^{be at the} to examine the state of the Treasury, every month and report upon it to the zamindar.

Fourth - The zamindar should forward annual acc^t current of the Devasthanam to the Rajar together with the annual accounts of the other Devasthanams under his immediate superintendence.

Fifth - All irregularities in the Pagoda are to be reported in the first instance to the zamindar who if necessary will represent the same to the Collector.

18th It is very improbable after this controversy between the zamindar and Pandaram that the ~~existing~~ ^{the} feelings excited thereby will suddenly subside and therefore as a temporary measure, I recommend that a respectable person may be sent on the part of Government to act as a moderator and faithful reporter of the contentions whenever they may ~~arise~~ ^{arise} this arrangement, however may be considered by your Board to interfere more with the internal Economy of the Pagoda than you approve, but same check ~~is~~ ^{is} under existing circumstances to be absolutely necessary. It appears by the records that the late Pandaram, involved the Pagoda in debt to the amount of one Lac and forty one thousand rupees, and at the time sixty-four thousand still remain unpaid, and this is entirely owing to no check having been exercised to control the Pandaram's management.

19th The last point for consideration is what manner it is most desirable to dispose of the surplus funds accruing yearly. I conceive it will be most satisfactory to both parties, that all disbursements beyond the Sadsack must be made on the mutual responsibility and consent of the zamindar and the Pandaram. I have the honor to be, Sir, Your obedient servant.

II From para XVII of the above letter it is plain that the Pandarams are ~~independent~~ ^{the} Darnak antists of the Temple & that they have immediate charge of the Temple. It appears that the zamindar employed a Sumpaddy for some time prior to 15 or 16 years as ruled by Mr. Whoughton in para 17 of the above letter & that since the last 15 years neither the zamindar appointed a Sumpaddy nor the Pandaram who presides over the Temple as Darnak anta is rendering any account of the disbursements of the Temple to the zamindar. Now, the person ~~is~~ ^{has} not any concern in the management & superintendence of the affairs of the Temple - The case now pending in the Court will decide ultimately ~~the~~ ^{the} proper person to take charge of the management of the Temple. It is clearly proved now that the Temple & the Villages appertaining thereto are in the management of the Pandaram, I regret the Pandaram named ~~the~~ ^{the} Pandaram is a young man of 18 years old.

is considered to be a minor - His relation Periya Mayakem Pillai "managing the affairs of the temple on behalf of the minor -
 The Valued of the trustee of the temple produced annual Takess issued to the predecessors of his friend by the collector - ~~They~~ styling them "Darmakarta of the Devast" among
 Rameswaram - The Hon'ble Secy says that the Takess are issued by the collector of the District regarding the Devast anam affairs to the ~~hon'ble~~ Darmakarta of
 the same. Petu Ramanatha Pandaram, the present Darmakarta was nominated by his predecessor who died about 2 1/2 years ago. & the Petu Ramanatha Pandaram
 is a Darmakarta of 2 1/2 years standing - It is said that he will assume the duties of his office soon. The entry is referred to the civil court after registering the name
 of the present Darmakarta Petu Ramanatha Pandaram in the Room Registers -

Ramakrishna
 22 664

Ramesh Chandra Rao

The Title Deed will be issued in the name of the
 Pagoda & the Manager for the time being. The Rani has
 already brought a suit to establish her right to the Trusteeship
 of the Pagoda & of course this Department ^{cannot} ~~has~~ ^{do} nothing
 in the matter.

The Title Deed will be delivered to the
 Pandaram who has now the charge of the Pagoda - 1

Indian Commissioner's Office
 Coimbatore, 8th July 1864

W. W. Wain
 Indian Commissioner

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