

## CEYLON IN THE CHANGING SEA ROUTES OF THE INDIAN OCEAN IN THE 19th CENTURY

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The 19th century witnessed the development of some great ports (including Bombay, Aden, Singapore and Galle) in the Indian Ocean taking the place of numerous smaller ports of the past. The ascendancy of new primary ports to supremacy over others was largely due to the functions that each of these ports performed in the imperial sea-routes of the Indian Ocean. The diversity of port functions was broadly as follows:

- (a) An outlet from and an inlet to a hinterland
- (b) A port of call for provisions, water, fuel and repairs
- (c) A port for the transshipment of goods
- (d) An entrepot

Although most of these ports represented a mixture of functions they were not mixed in the same proportions and most tended to specialise in one or two of them. Bombay concentrated largely on the first two. Regarding the first, Bombay possessed a hinterland rich in export produce, particularly in the industrial raw materials that the West needed. India's largest industries - cotton mills - were located around Bombay and besides she was also the focus of her internal transport system. Hence a large proportion of India's overseas trade was channelled through Bombay.

Within the second category Bombay served more as a place of ship repair than a place for bunkering and the supply of ships' store, mainly because Aden on the direct route from Suez was better placed for these functions. The attractions that Bombay had over the others as a place of ship repair were: she was the naval headquarters in the Indian Ocean, the availability of natural facilities of people with a tradition for ship building; being a port handling a large volume of cargo, damaged vessels could spend time to attend the necessary repairs while at the same time awaiting the loading or unloading of cargo; and being the only dockyard on the western coast, Bombay served a large fleet of 'country craft' engaged in the coastwise trade.

Singapore, on the eastern side of the Indian Ocean, rose to pre-eminence due more to her geographical position in the Straits Settlement than to any other single factor. Arising from that fact the second and the last functions were more marked in Singapore in the 19th century. Regarding the second function it may be stated that dangers to vessels were more likely to occur in