

**A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE  
SINHALA WORKS OF JACOME  
GONSALVES (1676-1742)**

**By**

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## LIST OF PRINCIPAL ABBREVIATIONS

BAL	Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon
CALR	Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register, Colombo
cf.	compare
ed.	editor
edn.	edition
eds.	editors
JCBRAS	Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
no.	number
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
p.	page
pp.	pages
tr.	translation
vol.	volume
v.	verse
vv.	verses

## NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

### Sinhala Syllabary

There are two alphabets in Sinhala namely, the Eḷu (pure Sinhala) alphabet and the 'mixed' alphabet. The Eḷu alphabet is given in the *Sidath Saṅgarā*, the oldest and the only reliable grammar of the Sinhala language. It comprises letters used in writing pure Sinhala words. It contains thirty-three letters,<sup>1</sup> of which twelve are vowels and twenty-one are consonants which are also called 'dead-letters'. The 'mixed' Sinhala alphabet comprises letters of Eḷu and the Sanskrit alphabet, and thus it is more comprehensive than either of them.<sup>2</sup>

According to the classification of characters by C.H.B. Reynolds, the simplified Sinhala syllabary consists of twelve vowels: *a, ā, ä, â, i, î, u, û, e, ê, o, ô*; and twenty-four consonants: *k, g, c, j, ṭ, ḍ, ṇ, t, d, n, p, b, m, y, r, l, v, s, h, ḷ, ṅg, ṅd, ṅd, ṁb*. The complete alphabet, incorporating Pali and Sanskrit characters, includes: four additional inflections derived from two diphthongs, *ai* and *au* plus *ṛ* and *rṛ*; ten aspirated consonants: *kh, gh, ch, jh, ṭh, ḍh, th, dh, ph, bh*; two nasals: *ṅ* and *ṅ̃*; two sibilants: *ś* and *ṣ*; and *ṃ* and *h*. Of these, *o* (non-initial) is in common use.<sup>3</sup>

## End Notes

### 1. The vowels

*a, ā, ă, â, i, î, u, û, e, ê, o, ô*

The consonants

*k, g, ch, j, t, d, n, p, b, m, y, r, l, v, s, h, l, m.*

2. The complete 'mixed' Sinhala alphabet is given on p. 11.

3. Reynolds, C.H.B. 1995 : 150.

SINHALA SYLLABARY

සිංහල විරණ මාලාව

VOWELS						
 1 a	 2 ā	 3 ä	 4 ǣ	 5 i	 6 î	 7 u
 8 û	 9 e	 10 ê	 11 o	 12 ô		
CONSONANTS, SEMI-NASALS AND DIPHTHONGS						
 13 k	 14 g	 15 c	 16 j	 17 ṭ	 18 ḍ	 19 ñ
 20 t	 21 ḍ	 22 n	 23 p	 24 b	 25 m	 26 y
 27 r	 28 l	 29 v	 30 s	 31 h	 32 ʃ	 33 ŋ
 34 ŋḍ	 35 ŋḍ	 36 m̃b	 37 ai	 38 au	 39 ɽ	 40 ɽɽ
ASPIRATED CONSONANTS, NASALS AND SIBILANTS						
 41 kh	 42 gh	 43 ch	 44 jh	 45 tḥ	 46 dḥ	 47 tḥ
 48 dḥ	 49 pḥ	 50 bḥ	 51 ṇ̃	 52 ṇ̃	 53 ṣ	 54 ṣ
NON-INITIAL AND INITIAL						
 55 ṃ	 56 ḥ					

## INTRODUCTION

Christianity was brought to Sri Lanka <sup>1</sup> and nurtured there under the protection of the Portuguese, persecuted and purified under the Dutch conquerors, then tolerated and later supported by the British. It has grown and spread on the island with a foreign character and an alien image. Today, nearly 500 years after its 'implantation' on Sri Lanka, the Catholic Church is the largest Christian denomination in the country with a membership of over a million.

Even after the departure of the colonial powers from Sri Lanka the Church possesses well-established institutions, socio-political influence and a western religio-cultural identity. Therefore, the Church was and is seen as a continuation of the colonial legacy. The nationalisation of the Catholic school network in 1960-61, then the largest in the nation, was a great blow to the Church's established institutions.<sup>2</sup> Since then, the Church has been compelled to rethink its missionary and pastoral pursuits, goals and visions.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) initiated the serious task of 're-discovering the true image' of the Church *vis-à-vis* national contexts. This process of change was referred to as 'adaptation'. Later the notion of adaptation was broadened and more dynamic concepts were proposed, such as indigenization, inculturation, localisation, contemporisation and contextualisation.<sup>3</sup>

These trends pointed to an essential function of theology: that 'a theology which does not draw upon the legacy of the people to whom it speaks usually exhibits little

creativity and development, it quickly loses relevance, and gradually alienates the believer from the social and cultural context in which he lives'.<sup>4</sup> The theologians who gathered in Belgium in 1972, at a World Congress of Theology articulated this sentiment in a different tone: 'theology is a reflection of Christians upon their faith and their Christian experience in a particular time and culture. Hence only Christian communities, involved in the life of the contemporary world, and taking active responsibility within their society can fashion the theology of the future'.<sup>5</sup>

A striking feature in post-Vatican II ecclesiastic life and theology is the evolving process of indigenization. At different levels, efforts are made today to promote this process in the areas of liturgy, religious language and pastoral life. Due to the perceived lack of any precedents for this process, the emphasis on reform often projects a sense of novelty.

In the following pages I shall point out that such an enterprise, particularly in the South Asian ecclesiastic scene, in fact has numerous praiseworthy precedents. From Robert de Nobili to the French Benedictine monk Henri Le Saux, or the Hindu-style *sannyâsi* Swami Abhishiktananda (1930-1973), several missionaries in the past four centuries have laboured assiduously to promote that same process of ecclesiastical indigenization. My considered view is that Jacome Gonsalves (1676-1742), an Oratorian missionary from Goa, was a perceptive pioneer who introduced, nurtured and promoted this process in Sri Lanka with originality.

The policies of the missionaries were always contrary to those of the policies of colonial administration in newly colonised areas. The latter used colonial power to suppress prevailing cultural elements, particularly local religions, their places of worship and institutions. Missionaries like Joseph Vaz and Jacome Gonsalves respected and nurtured the cultural elements in such areas as vernacular languages and customs of people. Through their works in socio-cultural and religious fields, the missionaries promoted literary activities. In this context, it is remarkable that Gonsalves contributed towards promotion of Sinhala literature through his corpus of Christian literature. Roots of indigenization of Christianity in Sri Lanka can be found in his works.

An in-depth study of the works of Gonsalves was not done in the past. However, I was able to amass a collection of minor writings relating to Gonsalves' works, mainly magazine articles and popular books, as well as the more scholarly introductions provided in the printed editions of his texts. There are also references to Gonsalves in broader studies of Sri Lankan traditions of drama, hymns, poetry and language.

Again, much of this material is written in Sinhala; my thesis therefore, serves to make these Sinhala or Sri Lankan materials available to a wider English-language readership. Despite the significance of Gonsalves' works, the wealth of material available, and the high esteem in which Gonsalves is held in Sri Lanka, not one of

his texts has been translated into any language. Unless otherwise stated, therefore, all English-language quotations in this thesis are my own translations from the Sinhala language. This body of translation is in itself a major contribution: it makes the extraordinary range of Jacome Gonsalves' works accessible to the English-speaking world for the first time.

Useful though these writings are, however, there is as yet no major, comprehensive and critical study of Gonsalves' works, either in Sinhala or in English. It is my intention to provide such an original study. Areas of particular interest and significance explored in this thesis include: Gonsalves' contribution to the development of the literary traditions of Sri Lanka, his role in the indigenization process of Christianity in South Asia, and the relationship between the evolution of Sinhala literature and the indigenization process. With the purpose of a comprehensive study of the works of Gonsalves, I collected all the relevant literature. I was able to go as far as searching and consulting the earlier manuscript versions. They were well-preserved in the original form of manuscript and were available in micro-film to obtain copies in the Biblioteca da Ajuda in Lisbon. I have made a critical assessment of these documents. I also followed the method of comparative study of such literature with the Sinhala classics and the original sources of Gonsalves. As a result of those findings, much light is shed on certain dark areas of historical data and facts regarding Gonsalves. In this respect those findings appear to [be as to] advance the study of the subject. Therefore, this thesis

contributes towards an understanding of the life and works of Gonsalves. As a detailed study of the process of indigenization through the Sinhala works of one man, it is also a major contribution to our understanding of the mission process in general. The key argument of this thesis is that Gonsalves' mission was a success because of his readiness to indigenize himself as the necessary prerequisite, for the successful indigenization of Christianity in Sri Lanka. This study will be of interest to students of theology, of Sri Lankan mission and of Christian literature in missionary countries.

#### End Notes

1. Throughout this dissertation the island is referred to as Sri Lanka or Ceylon, the former being the official name of the country since 1978. The Portuguese of the sixteenth century used the name Ceylon (Ceilao) most frequently for the Kingdom of Kotte. During the last decades of their presence in the island, the name 'Ceylon' denoted the whole island. More ancient names for the island include: Thambapanni, Thambrapanni, Taprobane, Serendib, Kurundu (cinnamon), Seylon and Lanka.
2. Balasuriya, T. 1973: 82.
3. Buhlmann, W. 1978: 407.
4. Amalorpavadass, D.S. 1973: 32.
5. Amalorpavadass, D.S. 1973: 8.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. THE ROOTS OF CHRISTIANITY IN SRI LANKA

As was the case in other parts of South Asia, the first Europeans to bring Christianity to Sri Lanka <sup>1</sup> were the Portuguese, who anchored off the west coast of the island in November 1505. <sup>2</sup> Thereafter missionary activities were carried out regularly. In 1543, a group of Franciscan Friars arrived in Sri Lanka at the invitation of Buveneka Bahu, the king of Kotte. <sup>3</sup> At that time missionary work was limited to conversions and did not involve cultural or literary activities. Within the first few decades of their presence on the island, the missionaries were able to spread their work to all its regions. From the beginning, they faced opposition from the rulers and from indigenous religious groups.

The methodology followed by the early missionaries was first to baptise people and then to conduct a course of religious instruction. However, it is alleged that in many cases hardly any catechism was taught. The reason for this was that the majority of the Portuguese priests did not know the local languages. Hence religious instruction was often only given with the assistance of interpreters. The methods of evangelisation employed by the Portuguese missionaries were not perhaps the most suitable or effective ones. Since the Christian community which had existed in

the sixth century had disappeared over the course of time, Christianity was both new to the people and quite different from the local traditions of Buddhism and Hinduism. The missionaries therefore experienced considerable difficulties in their attempts to make people understand the Christian faith.

The Portuguese policy of destroying Buddhist and Hindu places of worship increased local opposition.<sup>4</sup> Religious worship other than Christian was prohibited and new converts to Christianity were shown favours. Christianity also provided incentives to convert: since the traditional religions encouraged caste discrimination, becoming a Christian was seen as a means of gaining social status. The impact of Christian social teaching on society, especially regarding the sanctity of marriage and the practice of monogamy, paved the way for the eradication of the predominant polygamous marriage customs. The new religion thereby brought about several changes in the socio-religious practices of the island.

### **1.i. The implications of European politics for their colonies**

Philip II of Spain succeeded Charles V to become the ruler of the Netherlands in 1556. During his reign the Protestant reformation in the Netherlands was swept away, provoking William of Orange to launch a battle for independence.<sup>5</sup> However, religious factionalism between Protestants and Catholics in the

Netherlands made it impossible to have a united battle against Spain, and the conflict between Holland and Spain was finally settled by the signing of a treaty in 1648 after nearly thirty years of war. Thereafter the newly independent Dutch Republic gained the monopoly on commerce with the East Indies, which was then under Portuguese dominion. <sup>6</sup> Since Spain and Portugal were Catholic countries, the antagonism that the Dutch felt towards Catholicism was reflected onto the political background of their colonies.

King Narendrasimha sought the assistance of Portugal's religious and economic rivals, the Dutch, to end the Portuguese reign in Sri Lanka. Negotiations for the mutual political advantage of the king and the Dutch began in 1638. Since the Dutch had had a bitter experience of Catholicism in their own country, they wanted to wipe it out from Sri Lanka. <sup>7</sup> Now more powerful than the Portuguese, they gradually captured Portuguese military ports <sup>at the</sup> 23 June 1658, and Portuguese rule on the island came to an end. <sup>8</sup> Thereafter the Dutch were careful to keep control of all the sea ports in order to prevent any foreign power from entering the island, particularly their Portuguese rivals.

### **1.ii. Paradigm shifts in the organisation of the missions**

For about one and a half centuries, Catholicism was spread in Sri Lanka, as it was elsewhere in South Asia, under the patronage of European colonial powers.

Although some foreign missionaries were not highly proficient in the languages of the missionary lands and failed to integrate with local cultures, they were able to lay a permanent foundation for their religion. The initiative of sending the missionaries was taken by the kings of Spain and Portugal, and also by the religious Orders: the Jesuits played perhaps the leading role, but the Franciscans and the Dominicans were not far behind. They launched their missionary activities, maintaining a respectful attitude towards local peoples, religions and cultures, *as to* promote and encourage this attitude. Instructions were sent out to the Vicars Apostolic in 1659:

Do not regard it as your task, and do not bring any pressure to bear on the peoples, to change their manners, customs, and uses, unless they are evidently contrary to religion and sound morals. What could be more absurd than to transport France, Spain, Italy, or some other European country to China? Do not introduce all that to them, but only the faith, which does not despise or destroy the manners and customs of any people, always supposing that they are not evil, but rather wishes to see them preserved unharmed. It is the nature of men to love and treasure above everything else their own country and that which belongs to it; in consequence there is no stronger cause for alienation and hate than an attack on local customs, especially when these go back to a venerable antiquity. This is more especially the case, when an attempt is made to introduce the customs of another people in the place of those which have been abolished. Do not draw invidious contrasts between the customs of the peoples and those of Europe; do your utmost to adapt yourselves to them.<sup>9</sup>

Thus the missionaries were instructed to change their approach from the cultural paradigm of colonial authority to a respectful openness towards local cultures.

Even when customs are bad and have to be changed, so ran the instructions, it is better to do this gradually by helping the people themselves to see what is perverse in them, rather than by any direct attack or condemnation in words. This change in the missionary approach created a new awareness of the need for indigenization.

As Neill explains,

The developments paved the way for what was later to be known as 'incarnation'. It was finally recognised that a plurality of cultures presupposes a plurality of theologies and therefore, for Third-World churches, a farewell to a Eurocentric approach. The Christian faith must be rethought, reformulated and lived anew in each human culture, and this must be done in a vital way, in depth and right to the culture's roots. Such a project is even more needed in light of the way in which the West has raped the cultures of the Third World, inflicting on them what has been termed 'anthropological poverty'.<sup>10</sup>

The missionary approach and the attitudes of the missionaries were challenged in terms of their understanding of the religion and how it should be adapted to the existing local cultures.

### **1.iii. Pioneers of the new trend of indigenization**

A constant tension prevailed between the Church administration and the missionary lands with regard to the appointment of bishops. Here an important step forward was made when an Indian became one of the first two Vicars Apostolic.

Matthew de Castro was a Brahmin convert who on account of Portuguese prejudice against the natives of India had been refused ordination by the Archbishop of Goa. He went to Rome and in 1630, after the completion of his studies, he was ordained as a priest. Subsequently, he was appointed as a bishop and sent to Japan. These administrative details are significant because they indicate a growing recognition of local churches and respect for their cultures. As Bosch explains, the Christian faith never exists unless it is 'translated' into a living culture.<sup>11</sup> The missions were thus reorganised in various parts of the world with an emphasis on giving prominence to local people and cultures.

Robert de Nobili (1577-1656), a young Italian Jesuit, arrived in India in 1605. He remained in Tamilnadu in South India for fifty years and invented new methods of approach to that society. Tamil is one of the main languages in South India, and culture and Hindu ways of thinking were predominant there. De Nobili's arrival there was quite significant regarding the origin of Tamil Christian literature. High-caste Indian converts maintained close links with Portuguese culture but this close association of the Christian faith with foreign customs abhorrent to Hindus, such as eating meat and wearing leather shoes, became a hindrance to the mission. De Nobili wished to live like an Indian in order to win over the Indians. He therefore abstained from all that was foreign to the local people. Adopting the robe worn by local Hindu holy men, he took on the appearance of a *samyâsi*. He mastered

classical Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit becoming the first European to study the ancient classical languages of India. <sup>12</sup> In order to avoid what he saw as contaminating, he cut himself off from the official Christian Church.

De Nobili's experiment was a success. He held public discussions on religious subjects. His knowledge of theology was recast in Indian forms with illustrations taken from the Indian classics. He instructed the new converts not to break their caste rules, if those practices were not idolatrous. Brahmins were encouraged to wear the sacred thread, the distinguishing mark of high caste. He made a lasting impression through his personal charm and ascetic way of life. When he was suspected by some people of belonging to 'the Parangi caste' (a close follower of the Portuguese who were considered to be agents of the foreign powers), he wrote a declaration to defend himself because the accusation might have hindered his missionary work:

I am not a Parangi, I was not born in the land of the Parangis nor was I ever connected with their race ... I came from Rome, where my family hold the same rank as respectable Rajas hold in this country ... The law which I preach is the law of the true God, which from ancient times was by his command proclaimed in these countries by *sannyasis* and saints. Whoever says that it is the law of the Parangis, fit only for low castes, commits a very great sin, for the true God is not the God of one race but the God of all ... <sup>13</sup>

De Nobili extended his work to other parts of India, particularly to Trichinopoly, and in 1645 he withdrew from the original mission at Madurai. Both his mission and the new method of indigenization were considered successful.

Another missionary who worked towards the indigenization of Christianity in India through his extraordinary mastery of the Tamil language was Constant Joseph Beschi, who worked in South India from 1711 to 1742. His grammars may be said to have laid the foundation for all subsequent scientific study of Tamil. With the aim of instructing new converts, he composed spiritual writings in Tamil prose. Among his compositions, *The Story of Guru Simple* is an amusing romance while the *Tembâvani* is a long Christian epic. The latter portrays the life of St. Joseph, with a great many digressions, and manifests such a perfect mastery of the elaborate diction characteristic of later Tamil poetry that it has always been regarded as a minor classic.

When Christianity was brought to Sri Lanka by the Portuguese, the religion was permeated by the Portuguese cultural outlook. That is because religion forms a large part of a culture; but the cultural elements that come with a religion can be a hindrance when attempts are made to root that religion in a foreign land. The tension inherent when religion is closely linked with a particular culture has prevailed throughout the history of Christianity. Therefore, as David Bosch suggests in his book, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission* (1997),

an effort was made towards the indigenization of Christianity. In the history of Christianity in South Asia, several missionaries made serious efforts in this direction. They tried to eliminate all cultural elements that were foreign and to incorporate the religion into their particular cultures, not only in terms of religious practices but also in the areas of language, literature and the way of life as a whole. The works of Gonsalves address this wider context. Through his literary works, he sought to give a local flavour to Christianity.

#### **1.iv. Jacome Gonsalves, a missionary from Goa**

Several missionaries over the past four and half centuries have laboured in Sri Lanka to promote the process of ecclesiastical indigenization which is referred to today as inculturation, acculturation, localisation or contextualisation. Efforts have been made at a number of levels to promote the same process in the areas of liturgy, religious language and missionary activity.<sup>14</sup> This study seeks to examine how Jacome Gonsalves, an Oratorian missionary from Goa, India, promoted this process in Sri Lanka. Recognising the needs of local people, Gonsalves composed a major collection of works on a variety of themes: his compositions are a testament to his efforts in this venture. For more than two hundred and fifty years, Gonsalves' work has been held in high esteem by both Christians and non-Christians in Sri Lanka, second only to that accorded to the New Testament. His writings have also been a source of inspiration to the faithful, as devotional and religious literature.

#### **1.v. His early life**

Jacome Gonsalves was born in the house of his maternal grandfather, and was baptised in the parish church of Our Lady of Graces, on the island of Chorao, on 8 June 1676. He was the eldest son of Thomas Gonsalves and Mariana de Abreu, Konkani Brahmins living in the parish of Our Lady of Pity, Divary, in Goa,<sup>15</sup> which was then under the rule of the Portuguese. The Konkani Brahmins of Divary had been Catholics for two or three generations, having been converted to the Catholic faith at the very beginning of the occupation of Goa. They had been baptised at one of the earliest and most solemn general baptisms, on the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, in 1543.<sup>16</sup>

Early in his schooldays Gonsalves began to show himself to be a talented musician, a skill he had inherited from his parents. He could play the organ and the violin among other instruments. Gonsalves' scholastic career was in the Jesuit College of Goa and he studied Latin under Pedro Ferrao, a well-known and learned priest from Margao who was then in charge of the parish of Pieta.<sup>17</sup> It was his desire to become a priest which led him to join a group of young boys who were planning to leave home and proceed to Rome to study for the priesthood.<sup>18</sup> However, their parents opposed their plans and so they failed in this early venture.

### **1.vi. His education and religious life**

Having become proficient in Latin and poetry under Pedro Ferrao, Jacome Gonsalves enrolled in the University of Goa when he was seventeen. For three years he followed a course in the Arts, graduating with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. In 1696 he began four years of theological studies at the Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas in Goa. During this period he held the post of organist at the Academy. This experience seems to have caused the young Gonsalves to develop his natural taste for poetry, prose and other literary and musical compositions. The progress he made in his studies was later manifested in his missionary activities.

Gonsalves then made an important decision which was to change in his life. He resolved to enter the Oratorian Congregation of Goa, and did so on 2 November 1700. This decision to leave home was reached amidst much opposition from his parents due to their love for their son and to family interests.<sup>19</sup> It is said that this was the first conflict in his life from which Gonsalves emerged victorious. He was appointed to the Chair of Philosophy at the University of St. Paul's in Goa, and took up his appointment in January 1705,<sup>20</sup> but relinquished the post in the same year to go to Sri Lanka.

### **1.vii. A call for a new mission**

In Sri Lanka the predominantly Catholic areas were under the rule of the Dutch for



PICTURE OF JACOME GONSALVES (WEERAKOON 1995 : 32)

about one and half centuries; that is, from 1658 to 1796.<sup>21</sup> This new colonial rulers, partly for political reasons, continued to persecute the Catholics. They feared that their predecessors, the Portuguese, would return and re-establish their power with the help of the Sri Lankan Catholics.

Despite this the Dutch gradually tolerated the practising of native religions. Buddhism and Hinduism maintained close links with local rulers and were supported and nurtured by them. However, the Dutch never tolerated the presence of Catholic priests, and Dutch officials were always on the look-out for their hiding places. The seizure of a Catholic priest at such a time, moreover, automatically led to the charge that they were 'political agitators',<sup>22</sup> a charge made to justify their persecution. It was under such socio-political circumstances that Joseph Vaz laboured in Sri Lanka. I shall discuss Vaz in chapter 1. Viii. From there he wrote to Goa requesting more missionaries:

The needs of the mission are greater than before, for by the help of God many are being daily converted to our faith and the faithful increase in faith and in their desire to receive the sacraments oftener.<sup>23</sup>

On receipt of this letter, nearly all the priests of the Oratory volunteered to go to the mission in Sri Lanka. There were only four priests on the island to help Vaz at that time. The Congregation decided in a council to double the personnel by sending four more priests, one of whom was to be the young Gonsalves, who readily abandoned the Chair at the University. He was sent to Sri Lanka with three others: Joseph de Jesu Maria, Manoel de Miranda and Miguel de Mello.<sup>24</sup> They left Goa on 9 May

1705 and reached Sri Lanka on the 30 August, arriving at Talaimannar. <sup>25</sup>

In addition to his mother tongue, Konkani, Gonsalves already knew Portuguese, the language of the colonial rulers of Goa, Latin and Spanish. <sup>26</sup> During the long journey to Talaimannar he studied the Tamil language, since it was spoken in many parts of the island. He mastered this language during his first assignment to the islands of Mannar, Arippu, Musali and other places in the Mannar district. He also became proficient in Dutch, the language of the new colonial masters of Sri Lanka.

But Sinhala was the language of the majority in Sri Lanka. Recognising Gonsalves' literary ability, Joseph Vaz sent him to Kandy to learn this language after he had completed his first assignment in the district of Mannar. In Kandy Gonsalves studied with Buddhist priests at the Malwatta Chapter in Kandy, who were known for their high and elegant Sinhala. <sup>27</sup> Gonsalves was also assisted by Pedro de Gascon, the son of a Frenchman by a Portuguese mother, a man who had risen to hold the highest office of Adigar. This position was second only to royalty, and Gascon enjoyed the reputation of being a man of Sinhala letters and a poet. Since he was a close associate of Narendrasimha, the king raised this loyal French Calvinist to the rank of first Adigar of Kandy in 1709. <sup>28</sup>

The missionaries realised that there was a need to create an indigenous Catholic literature. Gonsalves himself mentions in one of his letters that, when he came to this mission, 'literature in Sinhala was not available, except the Sign of the Cross, Litany

and the Lord's Prayer'.<sup>29</sup> With much effort and in spite of all his other missionary activities, Gonsalves was able to produce 22 books in Sinhala, 15 books in Tamil, 4 books in Portuguese and 1 book in Dutch.<sup>30</sup>

#### **1.viii. The mission of Gonsalves**

It was Joseph Vaz who paved the way for Gonsalves' literary and missionary works in Sri Lanka. Joseph Vaz was born in Goa on the 21 April 1651 into a Catholic family and was ordained priest in 1676.<sup>31</sup> He heard about the miserable state of Catholics in Sri Lanka while he was serving at Kanara and felt the call to serve them. He joined a community of Indian priests and was appointed the superior of the community which later became an Oratory on the model formulated by St. Philip Neri.<sup>32</sup> This renewal of the Oratory Mission made it possible for them to supply priests to Sri Lanka regularly, even after the death of Joseph Vaz.

Vaz arrived on the island in 1687, disguised as a beggar and worked alone for nine years.<sup>33</sup> He travelled as a missionary to various parts of Sri Lanka almost every year. Encouraging, instructing and administering the sacraments to the faithful, he went from village to village on foot. Although he wished the acceptance of the Christian faith by non-Christians, Vaz neither used coercion of any kind nor offered favours or gifts to win converts. His method was his all-embracing charity.

Negatively considered, it was a charity, which did not permit him to hunt the non-Christian in any way. Positively, Vaz extended his charity to all, whether Christians or non-Christians.<sup>34</sup> He gave alms to the needy, irrespective of religion.

During the smallpox epidemic in Kandy, he nursed the stricken both Christians and non-Christians, who, as usually happened, had been abandoned by their kith and kin. The people who saw him going the rounds with his companions, were amazed. What he did so bravely, even at the risk of contracting the disease himself, was in their eyes a miracle of charity. They were deeply moved, for charity such as this they had never seen. It is reported in Oratorian record that his charity during the epidemic brought more than a thousand into the Christian faith.<sup>35</sup> In short, it was his saintly and ascetic life, in which charity predominated, that, on the one hand, helped strengthen the faith and piety of the Christians, and on the other, brought non-Christians into the Christian faith. Long before Vatican Council II gave a new orientation to the attitude to non-Christian religions, he followed a policy of tolerance, co-existence, friendliness and charity. It was not by the show or exercise of power but by the witnessing to the teachings of Christ by the life he lived that he sought to spread Christian religion. His virtuous and simple life was an edifying example to his followers. His successor Gonsalves inherited a well-prepared and fertile missionary soil from Vaz, who had done the pioneering missionary work on the island.

After the death of Vaz, Gonsalves was made the Vicar General of the southern division, which included the two largest Catholic towns, Colombo and Negombo. The headquarters of the division was Kandy.<sup>36</sup> As the majority of Sinhala Catholics lived in this division, Gonsalves shouldered a heavier responsibility than those in other divisions. It was unfortunate that he dislocated his jaw in the act of yawning but in a way it was a blessing in disguise; thereafter he could concentrate more fully on the creation of works of literature.

#### **1.ix. The achievements of Gonsalves**

As a missionary in Sri Lanka Gonsalves worked in all districts and regions, visiting Catholics, teaching Christian doctrine and baptising new converts.<sup>37</sup> Quite often he visited Catholic communities spread throughout the country. He also built chapels and churches with the help of the people. One of his achievements was the establishment of a church at Bolawatta to minister to those who lived under the dual rule of the Dutch and King Narendrasimha (1707-1739). Before Gonsalves made it his missionary centre, Bolawatta was an unknown place without a church, in the area called Kammala.<sup>38</sup> In 1557 Dharmapala, the king of Kotte, became a Christian, and with that the opportunities for missionary work increased in Sri Lanka.

It was at that time that the people of Kammala became aware of Christianity.<sup>39</sup> Since Bolawatta was a part of the kingdom of Kandy and is only a short distance from Negombo, predominantly a Catholic town in the western sea coast of the island, Gonsalves selected Bolawatta as his centre. It was while he was at Bolawatta that he wrote a good number of his books.<sup>40</sup> Since a printing press was not available, he engaged twelve Sinhalese clerks to copy his books and distributed them among the people. As the Vicar General, Gonsalves regularly visited the communities in Colombo, Negombo and the Kandyan kingdom.

It was also an achievement that Gonsalves was able to maintain a good relationship with the kings of Kandy, often winning their favour. For example, it was said that Bolawatta was given to the Fathers of Oratory by the king of Kandy so that they could build a church.<sup>41</sup> When Gonsalves dislocated his jaw, King Narendrasimha sent his physicians to Bolawatta to cure him, promising them favours if they succeeded. Sri Vijaya Rajasimha, the king of Kandy, sent a present to Gonsalves, an ivory statue of the Mother of Jesus bearing the child in her arms;<sup>42</sup> it arrived at Bolawatta in a public procession and both Catholics and non-Catholics, from all parts of the area, participated in the event. From this time the Confraternity of the Mother of Jesus was erected and even people from Colombo came to attend the church services.<sup>43</sup> The seasonal liturgical celebrations were held at Bolawatta and devotees from various places flocked together to participate in them.

Another achievement of Gonsalves was his mastery of the languages of Sri Lanka, making possible the production of a corpus of quality literature. He has been called 'the Father of Sinhala Catholic literature'.<sup>44</sup> Being a Konkani Brahmin, he had to master Sinhala if he were to be effective in his new mission. He did so paying special attention to the literary form of the language. At the same time circumstances such as lack of missionaries in the new mission, required him to become involved in missionary work as well, which also helped him to put into practice what he had learnt from Sinhala books and teachers. At the very beginning of his literary apprenticeship, he translated a few prayers from Tamil. Gonsalves had unparalleled opportunities to come into contact with all classes of people in Sri Lanka because of his proficiency in their languages. After the death of Pedro de Saldanha, on 28 April 1730, Gonsalves became the superior of the Oratorian congregation and the Vicar General of Sri Lanka under the Bishop of Cochin.<sup>45</sup>

Due to the prevailing political situation, Gonsalves had to travel around in disguise and he could never remain long in any area. Under these circumstances Gonsalves baptised 1,300 adults in three months, converts from Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.<sup>46</sup> It is also recorded that Gonsalves baptised 600 adults in one visit to Colombo in the year 1710.<sup>47</sup> He himself reported in one of his letters in 1726 that there were more than 20 confraternities in the city of Colombo and in its

suburbs. <sup>48</sup> At the beginning of July 1742, Gonsalves was confined to bed and he died on Wednesday, 17 July having retained the full possession of his senses to the very end. <sup>49</sup>

As the achievements of Gonsalves are discussed we can briefly mention here several that were due to his abilities as a scholar and a missionary. The most important achievement of Gonsalves was that, through his works of literature, he made Christianity an indigenous religion. In both prose and verse, he used the colloquial language and also coined appropriate new words and phrases in that language. Gonsalves used the socio-religious customs, which prevailed in the country, such as processions, organised with dancing, music and singing. These efforts brought him into close contact with people of all faiths. Another reason for his success in missionary activities was that he showed concern for the national interests of Sri Lanka. For instance, when King Narendrasimha consulted Gonsalves concerning the foreign powers, Gonsalves discouraged him from accepting assistance from the Portuguese. When the king showed surprise, Gonsalves said that the king did not ask him what was good for the missionaries, but what was best for him and his country. <sup>50</sup> Gonsalves' debates and public discussions proved that he was well equipped with sound arguments. Events like these were sometimes arranged by the king himself who always took pleasure in listening to Gonsalves. It is also reported in the *Oratorian Mission Report* that he performed miracles such as

healing the sick, casting out devils and taming wild beasts.

Even in his personal appearance he seems to have been a remarkable person: tall, with well proportioned limbs and fair skinned. <sup>51</sup> As one goes through the achievements of this missionary and scholar, one can find much to admire.

### 1.x. An overview of the works of Gonsalves

There are three lists of Gonsalves' works: the first is found in the *Oratorian Mission Report* for the years 1733-1740, <sup>52</sup> the second list is recorded at the end of the biography of the author, and the third is derived from my own study of the manuscripts of Gonsalves' works in the Biblioteca da Ajuda in Lisbon under the numbers 49-ii section 11 to 14.

The first list include, *Dêva Vêda Purânaya*, *Dharmôdyânaya*, *Prâtihâryâvaliya*, *Sukrita Darpanaya*, *Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya*, *Dêva Vêda Sañksêpaya*, *Suvisêṣa Visâdanaya*, *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya*, *Gnânânjanaya*, *Agnâna Auṣadaya*, *Buddhabana Pratyakṣaya*, *Bhedakârainge Tarkaya*, *Vêda Kâvyaya*, *Maṅgala Gîtiya* and *Kristiyâni Palliya*.

The second list include, *Kristiyâni Palliya*, *Dêva Vêda Purânaya*, *Dêva Vêda Sañksêpaya*, *Suvisêṣa Visâdanaya*, *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya*, *Dharmôdyânaya*, *Prâtihâryâvaliya*, *Sukrita Darpanaya*, *Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya*, *Agnâna Auṣadaya*,

*Buddhabana Pratyakṣaya, Bhedakârainge Tarkaya, Dêva Parihârya, Vêda Kâvyaya, Maṅgala Gîtiya, Christian Awakener, Sinhala-Portuguese Dictionary, Portuguese-Sinhala Dictionary and Portuguese-Tamil-Sinhala Dictionary.*

The third list include, *Dêva Vêda Purânaya, Agnâna Auṣadaya, Bhedakârainge Tarkaya, Dêva Vêda Saṅksêpaya, Visêsa Vêda Ādahilla, Pau Parikṣāvaya, Kristiyâni Palliya, Dêva Parihârya, Gnânânjanaya, Sukrita Darpanaya, Prâtiḥâryâvaliya, Vêda Kâvyaya, Ānanda Kalippuva, Maṅgala Gîtiya, Buddhabana Pratyakṣaya, Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya, Suvisêsa Visâdanaya, Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya, Dharmôdyânaya and Dinô Baktiya.*

The first and the third lists do not include the dictionaries of Gonsalves, but the second mentions them. The second list does not include the *Gnânânjanaya*, but it has a book without a Sinhala title (*Christian Awakener*), and this seems to be the *Gnânânjanaya*. The second and third lists include *Dêva Parihârya*. Only the third list includes the *Visêsa Vêda Ādahilla, Pau Parikṣāvaya, Dinô Baktiya* and the *Ānanda Kalippuva* which were very small compositions of four to ten manuscript pages. My overview covers the printed works of Gonsalves. I discuss the quality of the editions of the works in the last chapter. None of the works of Gonsalves is translated into English. These works are presented here in chronological order so that the progress of the author might be examined.

### **1.x.a. *Kristiyâni Palliya***

The title of the book means 'Christian school' or 'Catechism of the Principal Teachings of Christianity'. This first work was composed in 1715 with the dual purpose of instruction and to provide materials for prayer and worship. This is the oldest book of prayer available in Sinhala. It contains what the author thought a Christian ought to believe, how he or she should worship and what a person ought to practise. The contents fall into six sections. The first is a short summary of Christian doctrine, arranged in the form of a catechism. The next section describes how to make a good confession, and gives the order of worship, including the prayers of the catechism. Next we find prayers and meditations for the Mass and baptism, counsels for the dying, and the litanies and prayers to be recited at the funeral service. The last part gives the prayers for the sick. These prayers and the litanies have been reprinted in subsequent prayer books and are still in use.

### **1.x.b. *Agnâna Auṣadaya***

This book was also written by Gonsalves in 1715. The title of the book means 'A Cure for Ignorance' and the book takes the form of a dialogue between a spiritual teacher who is a Catholic priest and a scholar who is a non-Christian. The prefatory chapter sets the stage with an exchange of greetings, then follow ten chapters of discussion by the two on a variety of subjects: the existence of God; the artifices

of the devil, especially as manifested in certain practices; the existence of heaven and hell; ideas about vice and virtue; the human soul and its destiny; religion; saints and true teachers; and belief, both true and false. A striking aspect of the discussion is the familiarity of both priest and scholar with the religious beliefs and practices of the people of the island, and also the good humour with which the discussion is conducted. The answers are to the point and no time is lost in irrelevance. Gonsalves shows himself adept in the art of making a complicated argument simple and clear, with the aid of illustrations from nature and from everyday life.

#### **1.x.c. *Bhêdakârainge Tarkaya***

This work was composed in 1720. The meaning of the title is 'The Argument of the Opposition'. It is a record of a debate between Gonsalves and Nanclairs de la Nerolle, a Dutch officer, held in the presence of King Narendrasimha. The book consists of two parts. In the first part, Gonsalves seeks to prove the validity of the practices of the Church from the Bible: that is, the veneration of saints; the power of their intercession; confession; and the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. In the second part, which he calls 'the second arm', Gonsalves discusses the origin of the debate and responds to the objections which are generally advanced against the practices of the Church.

These earlier works of the author were composed with the specific purpose of instructing and encouraging the Christians in Sri Lanka rather than that of creating works of literature. They are polemical works, containing arguments in defence of Gonsalves' teachings.

**1.x.d. *Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya***

The title of this work may be translated 'The Judgement of God at the End of the World'. It was composed in 1720 with the aim of cleansing the soul of its attachment to sin by instilling in believers a salutary fear of the judgement of God. At the same time, Gonsalves argues against atheism, polytheism, idolatry, religious indifference and superstition, and inveighs against every variety of sin against the Decalogue. The work is arranged as a prose drama in three acts. The first act contains three preparatory scenes: the crack of doom, the summons to all and the coming of Christ to judge. The second act reveals the charges under three headings: the crime of disobeying the commandments of God; the sin of despising the examples of the saints; and the neglect of the soul for the sake of the body. The last act gives the judgements: first against the non-believers, second against false teachers and third against non-practising Christians. Then the epilogue describes the torments of the wicked and the happiness of the just. The dramatic presentation in this work is highly

effective, especially when the devils mock their victims and the just bear witness against the wicked who were ignorant of the law and of the consequences of their sins. This work constitutes a striking demonstration of the author's literary gifts.

### **1.x.e. *Dêva Vêda Purânaya***

The translation of the title of this work is 'Sacred History'. The word *purâna* means 'quasi-historical or quasi-legendary poem'. This book, a compendium of the Bible and of Christian theology, composed in 1725, represents Gonsalves' *magnum opus* in Sinhala prose. It contains two major sections entitled 'Purâna Dêva Vâkkyaya' and 'Abinava Vêda Vâkkyaya' or 'the old divine utterances' and 'the new'. Each section opens with a preamble in a high-flown style reminiscent of classical Sinhala writers, which like a trumpet-sound heralds the nobility of the theme. The first section contains twenty-eight chapters. Chapters one to three deal with the existence of God, the divine attributes and the concept of the Trinity. From chapter four, the historical narration begins with the creation of the world, following the order given in the Old Testament. The last two chapters are taken up with short notes on the four major and twelve minor prophets. As well as being divided into chapters, this section is arranged into seven periods of history. The second section, 'the new divine utterance', contains sixteen chapters. The first deals with the parentage, birth, life and death of John the Baptist. Chapters two to ten describe the life and

teachings of Jesus, while chapter eleven deals with the spread of the early Church. Thus chapters one to eleven summarise the contents of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. Chapter twelve deals with five subjects: Christ the teacher; the Bible as the word of God; miracles; sacraments; and the Holy Spirit. Chapter thirteen deals with the origin of false teachings, and chapters fourteen to sixteen explain the end of the world according to the Apocalypse, and the general judgement. While Gonsalves did not translate the Bible, his *Dêva Vêda Purânaya* constitutes a Biblical commentary. This work was in fact more useful to the people he was working with than a direct translation of the Bible would have been; besides, a commentary on the translation would also have been necessary. In this work he brings the stories of the Bible to life, both by giving explanations where necessary and—more important—by injecting them with local colour through the use of native similes, incidents and descriptions, and so on. This work alone would entitle Gonsalves to a place among the classical writers of Sinhala prose.

#### **1.x.f. *Vêda Kâvyaya***

This work, ‘Poetry of Sacred History’, is a poetical composition covering the history of the world from the creation to the Ascension of Christ into heaven. Composed in 1725, it is the most important of Gonsalves’ poetical works. It is a long poem (537 verses) on the same theme as the *Dêva Vêda Purânaya*, and consists of phrases

from classical Sinhala poetry as I shall discuss in detail in the next chapter. Gonsalves tried his hand at every sort of rhythmic device allowed in Sinhala prosody and was generally successful. The synthesis between Christian thought and Sinhala poetic diction was perfected by Gonsalves in the *Vêda Kâvyaya*. The opening verses 1 to 28 of this work sum up the creation story, the doctrine of the existence of God, His attributes and the nature of the Trinity. For poetic excellence these verses are unique. Verses 29 to 36 deal with the creation of the angels, their powers and the fall of Lucifer. Verses 37 to 48 evoke the Garden of Eden with a lyrical description of native fruit trees. The subject of verses 49 to 78 is the creation of Adam and Eve, their fall and the promise of the Redeemer. Verses 79 to 146 narrate the life of the Mother of Jesus from her own birth to that of her son. Verses 147 to 179 are a poetic narration on the person of Jesus. Verses 180 to 266 are a poetic setting of the Ten Commandments and are followed by the Beatitudes and the main points from the Sermon on the Mount. The Passion of Jesus begins at verse 267 with the meeting between Jesus and his mother described with great pathos. Verses 270 to 444 are generally sung as a song of mourning. The lament of the Mother of Jesus over the dead body of her son is most movingly expressed in verses 445 to 495. The final verses narrate the Resurrection, the Ascension and the final glory of Jesus. Kolamunne concludes: 'as long as there are Christians to tell the story of Jesus in

Sinhala song, the *Vêda Kânyaya* will be honoured'.<sup>53</sup> For this is a truly inspiring work.

### **1.x.g. *Dêva Vêda Sañksêpaya***

This work was written in 1725 and the meaning of the title is 'The Summary of Sacred History'. This represents the harnessing of the Sinhala language, until then innocent of Christian ideas, to express Christian theology with precision and elegance. In order to place the contents of the *Dêva Vêda Purânaya* within the reach of the less educated class of readers, Gonsalves compiled the *Dêva Vêda Sañksêpaya*, a summary arranged in catechetical form. He translated into Sinhala the Gospel texts read on feast days adding a short commentary on each. Hence, this work is more or less a summary of his *Dêva Vêda Purânaya*, presented in the literary form of dialogue. The first thirteen chapters summarise the material contained in the first part while chapters eighteen, nineteen and twenty deal with the discourses and the miracles of Jesus. The latter chapters are so full of detail that they can hardly be called summaries. This work shows a development in Gonsalves' literary and linguistic ability as a scholar and a writer.

### 1.x.h. *Dēva Parihâraya*

This book was composed in 1727 and the translation of the title is 'God's Remedies'. This work discusses details about medicine for all human and animal ailments and how to prevent all damage done to crops by grasshoppers and other insects. Prayers prescribed by the Church and prayers to respective patron saints are also given in this work, which was composed by Gonsalves to replace existing material that he considered to be non-Christian. The prayers found in this book are the original compositions of the author. The final section gives instructions on how to prepare oneself to be a spiritual healer by using the literature provided by Gonsalves.

### 1.x.i. *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya and Pasan Pota*

The contents of both these works are the same but the first is in prose while the latter is in verse. The translation of the title of the former book is 'Sermons on the Passion of Jesus'. This work was composed in 1728. In times of trial the Christian looks to the Cross for consolation and, in order to foster this attitude, Gonsalves wrote the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya* on Jesus' sufferings, and the *Pasan Pota*, a book of mournful songs. The introductory note to the sermons explains that the Passion of Jesus is here presented in stages by means of nine sermons to be read or sung over seven weeks. The first sermon considers the agony of Jesus in the garden of Geths<sup>e</sup>mane. The second is based on Jesus' trial and the third on his being handed over to the soldiers.

The fourth sermon considers the placing of a crown of thorns on Jesus' head. In the fifth and sixth sermons, Jesus is forced to take up the cross and, in the seventh, he is crucified. The eighth describes the death of Jesus on the Cross and the ninth the taking down of his body. The style of the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya* is very simple.

A companion work is provided by the *Pasan Pota* or 'The Book of Dirges' also composed in 1728. It contains nine sets of metrical compositions, arranged in the same way as the nine sermons, each set describing the theme of the related sermon. This composition is considered to be a major contribution by Gonsalves to the creation of a dramatic tradition on the island.

#### 1.x.j. *Suvisêᅅa Visarjanaya*

This book is given several titles: *Suvisêᅅa Vissaduma*, *Suvisêᅅa Visanduma*, *Suvisêᅅa Visandima*, *Suvisêᅅa Visâdhanaya* and *Suvisêᅅa Visarjanaya*. The translation of all these titles is 'Explanation of the Gospels'. It was written in 1730. The first part contains a careful selection from the Gospels and their commentaries, with moral applications for the special days of the year. It begins with commentaries on the Gospel for the first Sunday in the season of Advent and concludes with the twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost. Thereafter it deals with Gospel commentaries for feast days following the calendar year. The first feast is that of Saint Sebastian, which is celebrated on 20 January, and the last one is that of St. Sylvester on

31 December. The second part of the *Suvisêsa Visarjanaya* contains a variety of prayers and litanies to be recited on different occasions such as the feasts of saints, Christmas and Easter. In diction, it has an intonation and modulation of well-chosen words and phrases that ebb and flow, holding the attention of the listener. In the churches where Sinhala is used, this book is still chanted as in the old days.

### **1.x.k. *Maṅgala Gītiya***

This work, 'Hymns for All Feasts', was composed in 1730. Gonsalves was a musician and, in his college days, he was the college organist. He loved music and appreciated musical talent among his converts on the island. For their use he wrote these hymns, setting them to well-known melodies and music. The opening hymns are intended for the preparation for the Mass and the Sign of the Cross. Then follows a number of hymns for Christmas, the Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity, the Eucharist and one hymn to the Passion of Jesus. The next set begins with a hymn of adoration and is followed by several hymns to the Mother of Jesus. Some are translations from Latin while others are original compositions. Some recount the miracles of the Mother of Jesus. The concluding hymns are dedicated to a number of saints: John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, James, Anthony, Sebastian, Francis Xavier and Lucy. Altogether one hundred and five hymns are contained in the *Maṅgala Gītiya*. Some of the hymns are very popular hymns and carols even today.

### 1.x.l. *Prâti-hâryâvaliya*

This work, 'Itinerary of Miracles', was composed in 1732. It contains accounts of God's special interventions in creation to communicate to all people concerning God's favour to the good and His judgement on the wicked. The work consists of two parts. In the first part, selected incidents from the lives of the saints are retold, and in many instances places and dates are given. These incidents are selected with a purpose, namely to illustrate the commandments of God and of the Church. In the second part the intercession of the Mother of Jesus is illustrated, for the use of those who regularly say the rosary. In the whole book seventy-eight miracles are included. The first forty miracles relate to the commandments of God, fourteen others to the commandments of the Church and a further twenty-four concern the Mother of Jesus.

### 1.x.m. *Sukrita Darpanaya*

The title of this book means 'Mirror of Virtues and their Practice'. This work, composed in 1732, was composed to instruct the people on the purification of the soul and the practice of virtue in order to reach spiritual perfection. The subject matter of this work is *that*. Gonsalves aims at leading the people gradually away from ignorance and vice to the full knowledge of God's providence, the nature and destiny of human life and the beauty of the practice of Christian virtue. In fifteen short chapters the author sums up the teachings of spiritual writers on meditation,



the renunciation of the world, humility, piety, charity towards all, alms-giving, patience, meekness, penance, purity, chastity, obedience, conformity to God's will, modesty and the ugliness of vice. Christian teachings are copiously illustrated and reinforced by examples from nature and from incidents in the lives of saints.

### 1.x.n. *Bud<sup>dh</sup>a Bana Pratyakṣaya*

The meaning of the title of this work is 'Reflections on the Doctrine of the Buddha'. It was composed in 1733. This work contains two parts on the same theme. *Mâtara Pratyakṣaya*, which Gonsalves wrote for the instruction of the converts from Buddhism at Matara, and the *Bud<sup>dh</sup>a Mula* 'The Roots of Buddhism', an account of Buddhism which he presented to the crown Prince. The *Bud<sup>dh</sup>a Bana Pratyakṣaya* opens with an appreciation of the Sinhala people for their cultural values such as hospitality, respect for parents and elders, and generosity. The *Bud<sup>dh</sup>a Mula*, which means 'The Roots of Buddhism', is divided into five sections. The first explains the origins of Buddhism. The second deals with the countries where Buddhism exists. The third looks more closely at China and Japan, the fourth, at Araccan, and the fifth at Sri Lanka. This work, its format, content and style will be discussed in further detail in the last chapter of this thesis. In these two treatises, the author shows a surprising familiarity with Buddhist teaching, practice and scriptures, which he learned by closely associating himself with the Buddhist monks since Buddhism is the majority religion of the island.

### 1.x.o. *Dharmasagnâva* and *Ânanda Kalippuva*

*Dharmasagnâva* means 'Spiritual Convocation'. This work, composed in 1738, consists of a collection of aphorisms, in prose, written for the enlightenment of the faithful. Fifty focus on heaven, fifty on earth. It is clear from the content of this work that Gonsalves' intention was to instruct people to lead their lives according to Christian ethics and thus this composition provides instructions to be successful in this world as well as in the next. Although it is a small work of one hundred aphorisms, the quality of the composition reveals the scholarly ability of the author.

*Ânanda Kalippuva* was also composed in 1738. *Ânanda* means 'joyous' and *kalippuva* means 'vanity'. This is a work of twenty verses set to a well-known metre in Sri Lankan society. The canticles are sung to a joyous melody, to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals. The theme of the work is the vanity of worldly wealth, honour and pleasure. Some of the musical compositions particularly found in this work by Gonsalves are still used as popular songs by Sri Lankans.

Taken chronologically, the works of Gonsalves provide us with a detailed picture of the qualitative development of his scholarly work. At first, his purpose was to provide prayers for the faithful, materials for worship and religious instruction. Close examination reveals the obvious shortcomings of a beginner in these early compositions. However, Gonsalves improved quickly. He soon gained a high proficiency in the local language and began to compose literature of a high

standard. His most remarkable achievement is that he was able to create a religious language of his own when there was none before him. The language of a community is the key to influencing its people through the indigenizing of a religion. Gonsalves made use of the existing customs and literary forms to achieve this purpose. His skills are particularly well exhibited in his compositions in prose rather than in his poems. As he continued to write, Gonsalves broadened his scope to compose in a variety of literary forms: drama, dialogues, poetry, hymns and canticles. By 1742, the year of his death, he had produced a collection of writings and compositions that was to make a significant contribution to the indigenization of Christianity in Sri Lanka. Its impact is visible even today.

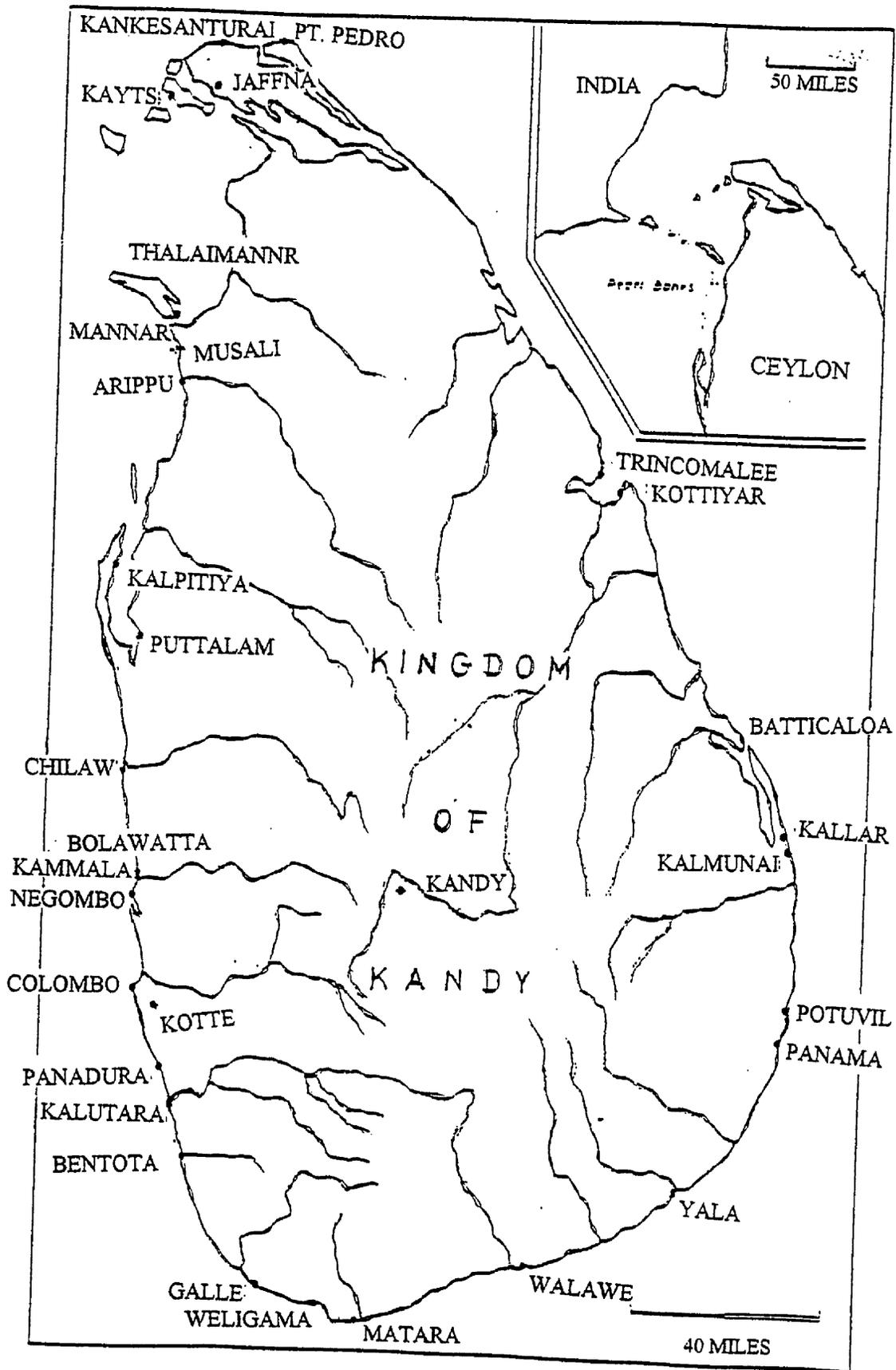
#### End Notes.

1. There is some literary evidence to indicate that there were Christians in Sri Lanka as early as the beginning of the sixth century. The travel account written around 540 AD by Cosmas Indicopleustes, a Greek merchant and traveller from Alexandria, refers briefly to a Christian community which flourished at that time on the island. Quere, M. 1987: 127-153, Peiris, E. 1978: 24.
2. Queyroz, F. 1936: 176.
3. Perera, S.G. 1938: 18.
4. Mendis, G.C. 1957: 54.
5. *New Standard Encyclopædia*, 1979: 162.

6. *New Standard Encyclopædia*, 1979: 162.
7. Silva, de K.M. 1981: 120.
8. Goonewardena, K.W. 1958 : 180.
9. Perniola, V. 1983: 3.
10. Neill, S. 1986: 153.
11. Bosch, D.J. 1997: 452.
12. Indeed, the celebrated Max Müller refers to him as 'our first Sanskrit scholar'  
(Cronin, V. 1959: 137).
13. Bosch, D.J. 1997 : 447.
14. Flannery, A. 1977: No. 53.
15. Sturrock, J. 1962: 185.
16. Perera, S.G. 1943: 1.
17. Perniola, V. 1983: 322.
18. Perniola, V. 1983: 323.
19. Perera, S. G. 1943: 5.
20. There is some confusion regarding the month of appointment. According to Perera, S.G., for example, Gonsalves was appointed in June 1705 (1943:8): but according to Don Peter, W.L.A., Gonsalves left Goa on 9 May 1705 (1991:7). Therefore, the date when Gonsalves took up his appointment should read January (not June) 1705.
21. Kolamunne, T. 1993: 80.
22. Peiris, P.E. 1985 : 58.
23. Kolamunne, T. 1993: 96.

24. Peiris, E. 1950: 38.
25. Perniola, V. 1983: 324 & 351. There is also some confusion regarding the date of Gonsalves' arrival in Sri Lanka. Perera, S.G. 1943: 12, says 31 August 1705; Ariyaratne, S. 1993: 3, says 9 May 1705; the inscription on Monument Plaque erected in front of the church at Bolawatta on the occasion of the 300th birthday of Gonsalves says 31 August 1705; the magazine, *Samaru Kalâpaya*, p. 16 says 9 May 1705. The mistake arises from a mistranslation of a Portuguese document, found in the library of Quintus Perera in Chlaw.
26. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1992: 96.
27. Perniola, V. 1983: 325.
28. Dewaraja, L.S. 1972 : 79.
29. Peiris, E. 1950: 23.
30. Perera, S.G. 1938: 250.
31. Perera, S.G. 1953: 110.
32. Boudens, R. 1957: 73.
33. Boudens, R. 1957: 227.
34. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1995 : 21.
35. *Oratorian Mission Report*, 1957 : 48.
36. Perera, S.G. 1943: 34.
37. *Oratorian Mission Report*, 1957: 75.
38. See the Map of Sri Lanka on p.56.
39. Abeyasinghe, T. 1966 : 200.
40. Perniola, V. 1983: 268.
41. Queyroz, F. 1936: 5.

42. Perera S.G. 1943: 109.
43. The distance from Bolawatta to Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, is about 45 miles.
44. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1992: 101; Perera S.G. 1962: 111; Ariyaratne, S. 1993: VIII; Peiris, E.1951: 1; *Samaru Kalâpaya* 1995: 16.
45. Peiris, E. 1950: 39.
46. Kolamunne, T. 1993: 88.
47. *Oratorian Mission Report*, 1957: 92.
48. *Oratorian Mission Report*, 1957: 107.
49. Peiris, E 1951:15.
50. *Oratorian Mission Report*, 1957: 110.
51. See the picture of Gonsalves on p.28.
52. *Oratorian Mission Report*, 1957: No. D.19 to D. 58.  
In his letter to the Bishop of Cochin Gonsalves mentions his works:  
'I wrote the Prayers, the Litanies, the Instructions, the Controversies, the *Flos Sanctorum*, the Itinerario, the Purana, the Gospels, fifteen volumes in all together with books in poetry and with anything else they need.'
53. Kolamunne, T. 1993: 108.



SRI LANKA (CEYLON), (PERERA, S.G., 1932 : 38)

## CHAPTER TWO

### CHRISTIANITY IN SRI LANKA: THE PROCESS OF INDIGENIZATION

#### 2.i. The need for indigenization of Christianity

The Catholic Church is a transnational body, which is often hierarchically organised. Yet in Asian and African countries the local churches are often surrounded by an overwhelming non-Christian population. The non-Christian nations that were under the rule of western colonial powers have often perceived the Church as a vestige of colonialism, as is manifest in its art, architecture, sculpture, music, literature, dress, community worship and its faith formulae. European cultural forms were understood by the Church authorities as representing universal Christianity, a justification for eurocentricity, which became a hindrance to the local churches' existence and growth. Thus the identity of the Sri Lankan Christian minority was developed in a complex national and cultural situation. Their search for their own distinct identity is referred to as indigenization.

The Second Vatican Council stressed the need to incorporate the socio-cultural traditions of local peoples into the Church.<sup>1</sup> With this in mind, one of Gonsalves' greatest contributions was that he based his own literary works on existing models.

## 2.ii. The literary tradition of Sinhala Christianity

According to Pope Benedict XV, learning the language of the country was one of the most important requirements for foreign missionaries.<sup>2</sup> Some of the missionaries who worked in Sri Lanka not only learned to communicate in the local languages, but also gained sufficient proficiency to be able to compose poetry and drama that inspired much admiration among the people. As was expected of them, the missionaries paid particular attention to producing works of religious instruction as well as grammar books and dictionaries for the use of new missionaries.

One of the earliest pieces of evidence we have is a book of Christian doctrine composed by the Jesuit priests of the College of St. Paul in Goa in the year 1545. Another book, containing Christian teachings and the lives of twenty-six saints, was translated in 1610 by Pedro Francisco, a Jesuit priest who was said to have been well versed in Sinhala.<sup>3</sup> Francisco worked at Malvana, which was the headquarters of the Portuguese Captain General at that time.

The first Sinhala grammar in a foreign tongue was composed by Emmanuel Costa, who became a priest in 1620. His work was entitled *Ars Chingalensis Lingual* but it is now lost. A larger work on Sinhala grammar was composed in French by the Jesuit Pierre Berguin, and there are copies of it in the libraries of the

University of Jena and the Berlin Academy.<sup>4</sup> The manuscript copies consist of three parts, the first containing six chapters, the second fifteen and the third five.<sup>5</sup> With the exception of Berguin's grammar, no other Sinhala works by the missionaries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are still extant.<sup>6</sup> Most probably, they perished due to the wars and political instability in Sri Lanka.

### **2.iii. Alagiyavanna Mukaveti, the author of the first Christian poem**

The *Kustantînu Hatana*, the first Christian poem in Sinhala, was written in 1620 by Alagiyavanna Mukaveti. He is reputed to have been the last of the Sinhala classical poets.<sup>7</sup> The *Kustantînu Hatana* is considered to be a landmark in both the history of Sinhala literature and the history of Sinhala Christian literature.<sup>8</sup> It is the first Sinhala war-ballad (*hatan kâvya*),<sup>9</sup> and concerns the victory of Alagiyavanna's benefactor, Constantine de Sa, over the rebel leader, Antonio Barreto. As the first Sinhala Christian poem, it offers a synthesis between Sinhala poetic diction and an explicit Christian outlook. It is considered a pioneering effort, since Sinhala had hitherto been used to create primarily Buddhist literature. In general Alagiyavanna Mukaveti's works are considered to be of literary merit and to reveal poetic gifts; hence he is hailed as the greatest poet of the dark age, deserving to be ranked among the classical poets. Although some Sinhala works had been written by

Christian missionaries at this point, there is no evidence of a Sinhala Christian poem before the *Kustantîmu Hatana*. In keeping with the traditional worship of the 'Triple Gem' (*t.ġé saraṇa*) of Buddhism, so often found in the Sinhala poetic tradition,<sup>10</sup> Alagiyavanna invokes the Christian Trinity in the first three verses:<sup>11</sup>

*basa ara aruta mena  
venasa noma pā pavatiṇa  
piti put veedi yana  
tevak eksura vadim adariṇa*

Lovingly I worship the one Triune God, Father, Son and the Holy Ghost, whose unity is like that of (a word's) symbol, sound and sense.

*sau leu sat mudun  
siya siripā kamalaḍḍun  
met guna piri nadun  
vadim ġesus christu surindun*

I worship Jesus Christ, God, abounding in gracious compassion and goodness, to venerate whose lotus-feet the heads of all beings on earth are bent low.

*rivikān pahanaġkina  
nikut nalasilu vilasina  
kanni mari kusayena  
pahala suridun vadim bātiyena*

Devoutly I worship the God who was born of the womb of Mary like a flame issuing from the sun-stone.

These three opening verses strongly suggest a link with the literary tradition of the country. In the first verse, an allusion is made to the Triple Gem, the three objects in which a Buddhist takes refuge: the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Almost all

classical Sinhala works start with verses in adoration of this Triple Gem. A similar link may be found in the concluding verses.

In the native poetic tradition, a work is typically concluded with one or more benedictory verses invoking the blessings of the gods on the king, his people and the country. In accordance with this, in the last three verses of the *Kustantīnu Hatana*, Alagiyavanna prays to Christ and Mary to bless and give long life to the victorious King Constantino de Sa and to the whole world:

*gunāyēn mahāṭu*  
*lova rākumahi niyutu*  
*asiri idumāṭu*  
*rakī sura jēsuskristu*

May Jesus Christ, God of wonder and power and abounding in goodness, who watches over the world, protect the world!

*ranahasa vanitā*  
*gunayen yutu vinitā*  
*t ediyateka mātā*  
*rakī mulu lova jēsu mātā*

May the mother of Jesus, mother of the three worlds, who is gentle and graceful like the golden swan, protect the whole world!

*mulutun lova āsā*  
*jēsu surindu veseśā*  
*constantino de sā*  
*raju rakī sau isuru salasā*

May Jesus, God, eye of the three worlds, especially protect and prosper in every way the Lord Constantino de Sa! <sup>12</sup>

Thus, in both opening and closing verses, a traditional Sinhala format is used to express Christian sentiments and ideas.<sup>13</sup>

Alagiyavanna was instructed in the Christian religion, and was baptised by Jesuit priests six years before he composed the *Kustantînu Hatana*. Jesuit missionaries were quite open and tolerant in their attitudes towards the non-Christian cultures of the Asian countries in which they laboured. The *Kustantînu Hatana* is a good example of this remarkable incorporation of both Eastern and Western concepts. The poem employs South Asian figures of speech to illustrate the poet's ideas. In particular, the *Kustantînu Hatana* is noted for the author's prolific use of the simile, a common feature in oriental literature. One finds both conventional similes and their adaptation to illustrate Christian doctrine. An example of Alagiyavanna's use of conventional similes may be found in the following verse:

*nan visituru ven nohaduva*  
*men disi sak sudam mađuva*  
*sen dakinâ magul mađuva*  
*ginmen dâ vîya ađuva*

The most perfect royal palace, from where the king views his army, is like the celestial Sudarma palace of the god Sakra. It is turned into ash by the fire.<sup>14</sup>

An example of the adaptation of conventional similes to illustrate Christian teachings may be found in the allusion to the Trinity in the first verse. In Europe the Christian Trinity is usually symbolised as an equilateral triangle, although one can also find

localised symbols such as the three-lobed leaf of the shamrock used by St. Patrick of Ireland. The simile for the Trinity used in the *Kustantīmu Hatana* is the word, with its three elements of symbol (orthography), sound (pronunciation) and sense (meaning). This is an adaptation of an ancient simile found in the *Rāguvamsa* of the great Indian poet, Kālidāsa. In this text the poet shows that Umayangana and the god Siva are linked together as closely<sup>as</sup> the two elements of a word, sound and meaning. Kālidāsa uses a similar simile in his *Meghadūta*.<sup>15</sup>

The *Meghadūta* provided the model for many poets. This form of poetical composition, *dūta kāvya* or *sandēśa* or message poems, which gave ample opportunity to its author to display his powers of description, had a special appeal to Sinhala poets. That the *Meghadūta* was well known among the Sinhala *literati* is evident from the fact that there is a Sinhala translation of it going back to the twelfth century.<sup>16</sup> The Sinhala *sandēśa* writers no doubt obtained the idea of this type of poem from the *Meghadūta*, but they developed the theme along rather different lines. Later Sanskrit poets used as their message-carriers living beings, chiefly birds, in place of inanimate objects like clouds. The Sinhala poets did the same, until the very last phase, when some of the *sandēśa* writers applied this poetical form to yet other objects. Throughout the history of Sinhala literature the poets have followed such Sanskrit literary traditions as their models.

The same simile of Kâlidâsa mentioned above is used by Alagiyavanna in one of his earlier poems *Sâul Sandêśaya*, where he writes that flower and fragrance are 'inseparable as sound and sense'.<sup>17</sup> In keeping with the ancient South Asian tradition, Alagiyavanna developed the same simile, adding one more element to the word (that is, *farman*) to illustrate the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

Alagiyavanna also expresses Christian sentiments in his poem by making use of indigenous customs and traditions. For example, the poet describes Constantino de Sa in prayer as worshipping Christ 'with hands joined above the head',<sup>18</sup> whereas in Europe this worship is done with the hands joined at the breast. Similarly, reverence to a person is expressed in the poem by worshipping the feet: the author writes that de Sa worshipped 'the sacred and comely feet of Jesus Christ',<sup>19</sup> and 'the feet of the Triune God'.<sup>20</sup>

Alagiyavanna's description of the birth of Jesus in the *Kustantînu Hatana* is far more appropriate than that of Gonsalves' in the *Vêda Kâvyaya*. Alagiyavanna made allusions to South Asian mythology and the Hindu classics, both of which were considered exceptionally important in Sinhala poetry. In his poem, therefore, Alagiyavanna created the tradition of following the style of indigenous poetry in the composition of Christian works. In later years Jacome Gonsalves did the same in both his prose and poetry as part of his efforts to indigenize Christian literature.

#### 2.iv. The Sinhala classics and the works of Gonsalves

The foundation for the growth of an independent culture on the island was laid with the introduction of Buddhism. Even the art of writing Sinhala was taught to the people by the Buddhist monks who introduced a more developed system of writing and literature.<sup>21</sup> People of every nation have an innate desire to listen to stories, and wherever people go, they carry their folk-tales with them. Stories are first told before they are written down. The stories of a race deal with its heroes or gods and its patriots. Right through civilization religion has had much to do with the propagation of stories. The Buddhist stories were connected with the life of the Buddha himself. Most of these stories were brought to Sri Lanka from India by the missionaries of Buddhism, but some had their origin in Sri Lanka itself. The introduction to the island of writing with Buddhism enabled the Buddhist monks to write down their stories.

At present there is a varied and valuable literature in Sinhala, although some works have disappeared over time for various reasons. The oldest extant dialect of the language is represented by two works, *Sikavalanda Vinisa* and *Dampiyā Aṭuvāgāṭapadaya*. These belong to the tenth century and *Dampiyā Aṭuvāgāṭapadaya* was compiled by King Kassapa V. Works such as *Siyabaslakara*, *Kaūsilumina*,

*Kusadâ*, *Sasadâ*, and *Sidat Saṅgarâ* are considered by scholars of Sinhala to be the most elegant. The *Siyabaslakara* is the earliest extant Sinhala poem, a work written by King Sena I who reigned in Sri Lanka from 831-851 AD. The *Kaūsilumina* is an epic and a poetical version of the *Kusajâtaka* story, written in the period of Dambadeniya, in the thirteenth century. To the twelfth century belong the Sinhala poetical work, the *Sasadâ*, which was written in the auspicious reign of Lilavati (1197-1200). The *Sidath Saṅgarâ* is the oldest commentary on Sinhala grammar and its author is unknown. Later compositions, such as *Kāvyaśēkara* and *Guttīla* of Veedagama Thero and *Sālahihini Sandēśaya* (a message-poem) of Sri Rahula Thero written in the Kotte period (fifteenth century), are considered to be of great merit even today.<sup>22</sup>

From ancient times the Sinhala language and Sri Lankan Buddhist literature grew up interdependently. There was no existing tradition of Christian literature in the Sinhala language. Even Alagiyavanna's poem was only a secular work with poetic allusions to Christian concepts. Gonsalves was thus the first to try to create a specifically Christian literature in Sinhala. The most striking feature of his writings is variety, the variety of theme, form and style.

Since Gonsalves' works were largely inspired by the indigenous literary tradition, he can be viewed as a link with that rich tradition. Far from being

considered alien to the people, therefore, his works became part of their culture. Gonsalves drew his inspiration from the vocabulary, the Buddhist concepts and the attitudes to life found in the Sinhala classics.<sup>23</sup>

For example, Gonsalves selected the title, *Dêva Vêda Purânaya*, in accordance with a long-standing oriental literary tradition. This *magnum opus*, a compendium of the Bible, consists of two parts, which together run to 400 printed pages. *Purâna* is a Sanskrit word meaning 'ancient'. In works of literature this word denotes a collection of stories and legends of gods and heroes of ancient times. This Sanskrit word has been incorporated with the same meaning into several South Asian languages such as Sinhala and Tamil. In Sinhala it is a loan word, pregnant with a variety of meanings such as ancient, old, ruins, out of date and history. Gonsalves uses the word *Purâna* in the title of his work in terms of (sacred) history. The word *Purânaya* is found in the Tamil literature of South India, in the poem *Purânâwîru*.<sup>24</sup> Indian pundits have applied the word *purâna* to legends about gods in ancient times. According to Amarasingha Acharya, who lived in the tenth century A.D., five subjects should be dealt with in a *Purâna*: the creation of the world, the destruction and recreation of the world, genealogies of gods and elites, different eras, and legends about the sun and the moon. The term was also used by Thomas Stephen, a missionary from England, in the title of his book *Christian Purâna*, written in the Konkani language. This important work contains 10,962 verses,<sup>25</sup> and

undoubtedly influenced Gonsalves' *Purāṇaya*. It was quite appropriate for Gonsalves to use the word *purāṇa* for a work, which deals with the stories of the Bible.

The titles of two more of Gonsalves' works are drawn from ancient Sinhala classical texts: the *Agnāna Auṣadaya* 'cure for ignorance' and the *Gnānānjanaya* 'spiritual collyrium'. Both titles can be found in the *Vṛyasaḥāraya*, an ancient Sinhala work.<sup>26</sup> The first two verses of the first chapter begin, respectively, with the two phrases: *agnāna tṣimrandanan* 'enlightenment of the ignorant' and *gnānānjanaya*. A more detailed analysis of the influence of the Sinhala classics on Gonsalves' work is provided later in this chapter.

## 2.v. Gonsalves' traditional sources

Sinhala has a great literary tradition that has persisted over the centuries. Today's literature has been greatly influenced by older traditions; even present-day short stories are often a development and adaptation of the *jātaka* stories.<sup>27</sup> Gonsalves' works were similarly influenced by the traditions existing in his day, but he created an independent style expressive of his own individual genius. In addition, he attempted to express the life he experienced or saw around him; this is in sharp contrast to other authors who, steeped in Sanskrit lore, were blind to the lives of

their own people.<sup>28</sup> Gonsalves' *Vêda Kâvyaya* is like a mirror reflecting the society of his time, showing us the manners and even the speech and customs of the village folk that he knew so well.

Some Sinhala writers of the same period adorned the stories they gathered with illustrations and images taken from ancient works. However, Gonsalves enriched his book-learning with his observation of life, and he brought in all his experience of the world in order to add to the interest of the stories he was relating from books. For instance, he gives a straightforward Sinhala version of the story of the creation of the Garden of Eden found in the Book of Genesis:

Yahweh God planted a garden<sup>29</sup> in Eden which is in the east, and there he put the man he had fashioned. Yahweh God caused to spring up from the soil every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden. A river flowed from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided to make four streams ... Yahweh God took man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it.<sup>30</sup>

The Biblical account does not provide any details of the garden, whereas Gonsalves' version in the *Vêda Kâvyaya* does.<sup>31</sup> The environment he creates is that of a Sri Lankan garden, full of local plants, fruits and flowers:

*tosva budîna rasa âtinan ekineka  
puspa kâdali pala aṭalos vagayaka  
râsva idumu vâla varakâ âti neka  
lassa ganan sâdi maha uk vaṇayeka*

All sorts of different flowers, branches and fruits of eighteen kinds that are sweet and a pleasure to eat. A large number of trees full of ripe jack fruits of many kinds in a garden also containing many hundred thousands of sugar canes.<sup>32</sup>

The fruits mentioned by Gonsalves are, of course, foreign to the context in which the Bible was written. The jack fruit tree grows in South Asia, while sugar cane is a tropical grass from the jointed stems of which sugar is made.<sup>33</sup> Gonsalves continues:

*tämbili timbiri neralu da turu golle  
kämbili kumaku palaturu däka lolle  
bäbali tibena vilikun pala valle  
ambili nalen bima hunu e siyalle*

King-coconut, *timbiri*, jack are fruit trees growing in the wood. All these different Fruits are ripe and shining. They have all fallen on the ground on account of the breeze.<sup>34</sup>

The king-coconut is reddish in colour and seen as a fruit which is used as a drink, and it is found all over South Asia. A tropical tree of this sort could be found in any garden in Sri Lanka today. This vivid description of the garden recalls a similar verse in Sri Rahula's *Sälalihini Sandēsaya*, the greatest message poem in the period of Kotte and a classic:

*vadimin savasa nala häsirena digatu vala  
sobaman sunil mini nil numbatura vipula  
patasan avara giri näṭiyen väṭena kala  
vilikun surat pala väni vē rivi mandala*

The orb of the setting sun will resemble a ripe crimson fruit falling from the stalk (which is the western-mountain), belonging to the tree (which is the expansive sky coloured like a lovely dark-blue sapphire) with branches (which are the directions played on by the evening breezes).<sup>35</sup>

The poetic diction and the word picture created here with reference to the garden full of fruits have much in common with that of the verse from the *Vêda Kâvyaya* quoted earlier. Rather than trying to recreate the environment in which the Bible was written, Gonsalves embraced the local poetic tradition, creating a garden of native trees, fruits and flowers.

A similar account of the Garden of Eden is found in the *Dêva Vêda Purânaya*:

*eveni mandalayehi chandana vriksâdi suganda ganda vihiduvana vrûksa  
pelahara hâ amba dambâdi madura palâ palaskruta vrûksa pelahara hâ  
kamala padmâdi nânâ alankâra piyumpatra kusuman jâti supispita turu  
pâla hâ noyek palâ mulpantival hâ vâlaval vargada anûnaû kramapantiyen  
sâdi aturu tånvala pancavarnanâ padmayan préboda karana vil pokumu  
âdiyen sôbitavî sâmatân gasana pibina vîna nâdayak men puravi koul  
âdi kurullangê madura svaraya äsi hâtpasin sâpa dâyakaû sihil pavan gâsi ...*

In such a garden where there is sandalwood and other kinds of fragrant-smelling trees, and full of other trees such as mangoes and different kinds of flowers like red and blue lotus and a variety of creepers and vegetation, and in certain places lakes and ponds full of five kinds of flowers and the songs of birds that reminds one of the beautiful music of the *vina* and the whole garden is made pleasant with breezes.<sup>36</sup>

By mentioning native trees, fruits, birds and flowers in the *Dêva Vêda Purânaya*, Gonsalves presents the Garden of Eden as a local garden. His observations and insights helped him to handle the Biblical narration appropriately by adapting it to the local situation.

## **2.vi. The concept of indigenization**

Contemporary trends in Christian theology view indigenization or contextualization as a concept, vision and process. It is indicative of the socio-theological evolution of what was initiated by the Vatican Council II nearly three decades ago simply as 'adaptation'.<sup>37</sup> Indigenization generally means a process by which the Gospel message and the Christian way of life are inserted into the socio-cultural and historico-religious traditions of a particular community. As Shoki Coe explains the terms 'indigenous', 'indigeneity' and 'indigenization' are derived from a nature metaphor, that is, of the soil, or taking root in the soil.<sup>38</sup>

Hence, the term points to something 'growing out of the natural environment', 'native as opposed to foreign or exotic'.<sup>39</sup> In this process of indigenization, three phases are involved: the reception, assimilation and re-expression of the message and values.<sup>40</sup> This whole process implies a rooting of Christian faith in the local culture.

The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation of Jesus cannot be properly understood unless it is seen in the light of the paschal mystery. The Incarnation is interpreted as an initiation into the mystery of salvation. This initiation led to completion through the paschal event.<sup>41</sup> It is believed that the Resurrection event transcends all the cultural limitations of the historical Jesus. The Resurrection therefore made it possible for Jesus to be identified with all cultures.

The Vatican Council II also considered the Incarnation to be the starting point of indigenization. The Church teaches that the dynamic encounter between God and man took place in and through the event of the Incarnation. Although Jesus was believed to be a divine person, he was born in a particular Jewish cultural context, which had been influenced by the Greco-Roman civilization. He used the language and images of that culture for his preaching, and used bread and wine, the ordinary food of Jewish people, to institute the Eucharist.<sup>42</sup>

A movement towards indigenization was attempted within the Catholic Church in some parts of Asia in the early seventeenth century. This movement has left indelible imprints in the history of the Church in this region. The missionary efforts of Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) in China, of Robert de Nobili (1557-1656) and Giuseppe Beschi (1680-1746) in South India, for example, are viewed today as heroic attempts at indigenization,<sup>43</sup> as are the audacious missionary methods employed by the Oratorian priests, Joseph Vaz (1651-1711) and Jacome Gonsalves (1676-1742) in many parts of Sri Lanka.<sup>44</sup>

### **2.vii. Gonsalves and the process of indigenization**

Human culture is a wide concept, one that usually includes a major distinction between secular culture and religious culture. Religious culture deals with a religion's scripture, liturgical language, its manner of worshipping deities, its

rituals and ceremonies, and so on. A religion identifies itself with both its specific doctrines and its cultural practices. In the context of culture generally, two things might take place when a foreign culture is brought into a land. One is that it adapts; in the case of Buddhism, for example, many elements typical of Indian Buddhism in the third century BC were indigenized and are now associated with Sri Lankan culture.<sup>45</sup> Before the advent of Buddhism, Sri Lanka had no developed culture in relation to literature, language, architecture and so on. Therefore, the cultural elements brought into the island together with Buddhism merged with those already existing there. For example, architectural models of temples and houses that existed in India, and Pali, the religious language of Buddhism, were brought into Sri Lanka. Another possibility is cultural intermixture, where existing cultural elements mingle with the cultural ideas that are brought from abroad. This is noticeable especially in popular Buddhism. The cult of local deities, for example, which already existed in the country, has become part of the common man's Buddhism.

When Portuguese missionaries introduced Christianity to Sri Lanka in the early sixteenth century, they made the mistake of essentially linking Christian religious culture with their European culture and expecting converts to accept both at once. Their second mistake was that they condemned the traditional Asian cultures as pagan. As Perera explains,

To become a Catholic in those days, one had to be first a Portuguese, very much in the same fashion as the Judaizing Christians attempted to do in the infant Church of Jerusalem.<sup>46</sup>

Native religions and indigenous cultures were intrinsically linked and therefore both were rejected.

For example, a new convert had to take both a Christian name and a Portuguese surname at baptism. He had to give up completely the culture and traditions of his ancestors and become a loyal subject of Portugal. He had to take a number of Portuguese words into his vocabulary, to the extent that he became a laughing-stock to his fellow countrymen. Since the native literature was full of Buddhist ideas and imagery, a Christian was expected to abandon it completely.

A new phase for Christianity in Sri Lanka began with the advent of the Oratorian missionary priests. General change began with Joseph Vaz, and change in particular terms of indigenization began with Gonsalves. He made a unique effort to create an indigenous Church, respecting and enriching all that already existed in the culture. In a way he was fortunate that there were no traditions prior to him, as this gave him the freedom to take a new approach. He composed vernacular literature and used the national languages in liturgy. Works such as *Dêva Vaidyâvaya* and *Vaṅdanâ Karmastânaya* contain numerous liturgical compositions. He even composed prayers in the form of chants or *mantrams* like those used in popular witchcraft ceremonies, in order to be more acceptable to the local people.<sup>47</sup>

Gonsalves took the novel approach of using phrases and words from classical fairy-tales and legends of gods. He wanted to maintain the poetic traditions of old as given in the *Sidath Saṅgarâ*.<sup>48</sup> In this way he succeeded in adapting the Gospel to the local culture, a remarkable achievement where many an ardent missionary before him had failed.

## 2. viii. The influence of the Sinhala classics on Gonsalves

The Sinhala classics are so called as an acknowledgement of their excellence. They follow traditional principles and are believed to be of permanent value. One of the early classics in the history of Sinhala literature is the *Kaṭṭilumina* in the thirteenth century, and the last of the classical writers is Alagiyavanna Mukaveti of the seventeenth century. Works like these have represented an exemplary standard to all subsequent writers.

Gonsalves associated himself closely with the Sinhala classics and he was greatly influenced by them. Sinhala poetry has a long history. Indeed the following instruction is given in the early Sinhala grammar book, the *Sidath Saṅgarâ*: 'Without breaking the ancient poetic tradition, an effort should be made to continue the same.'<sup>49</sup> Gonsalves observed this in his literary works. His most important poem is the *Vêda Kâvyaya*, which consists of 528 verses. This work contains more verses and phrases from Sinhala classical poetry than any of his other poems. In addition, Gonsalves makes specific reference to the *Pâarakumbâ Sirita*, the *Gūttila Kâvyaya*, the *Kusa Jâtaka*, the *Sâlalihini Sandêśaya* and the *Budugunâlan̄kâraya* to which he also refers in his *Budda Bana Pratyakṣaya*.<sup>50</sup>

The *Pâarakumbâ Sirita* is the first panegyric written in Sinhala. It was written in praise of the great King Parakramabahu VI of Kotte and its

authorship is unknown. Wickramasinghe states that the poets in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were much influenced by this panegyric.<sup>51</sup> The *Gùttila Kāvya* was composed by Vattave Thero, one of the greatest poets in the Kotte period. The purpose of the author was to narrate a Buddhist *jātaka* story in the form of a poem. This book is famous for its simplicity. The *Kusa Jātaka* was written by Alagiyavanna Mukaveti who lived in the sixteenth century. This poem is also based on a Buddhist *jātaka* story, composed by the poet before he became a Christian. *Sālahihini Sandēśaya* is composed by Sri Rahula Thero, in the year 1450. It is the third message-poem composed in the Kotte period. This poem is considered to be the greatest of the message poems written in Sinhala. The *Budugunālaṅkāraya* was composed by Veedagama Thero in the year 1472. This poem is dedicated to the Lord Buddha, claiming his superiority over all his great contemporaries and all the Hindu gods. Considering the excellence and themes of these works, Gonsalves seems to have enjoyed their inspiration and guidance in composing his literary works.

#### **2.ix. Gonsalves' account of the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem**

For example, it is interesting to note the close link between Gonsalves' account and that of the *Budugunālaṅkāraya*. In the latter, King Bimsara invites the Buddha to the city of Visala, then he splendidly decorates the road.<sup>52</sup> In the same way Gonsalves makes a poetical narration in the *Vēda Kāvya*, basing his poem on an event in the Bible.

The Biblical account of Jesus' going to Jerusalem reads:

They brought the donkey and the colt, threw their cloaks over them, and Jesus got on. A large crowd of people spread their cloaks on the road while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds walking in front of Jesus and those walking behind began to shout, 'Praise to David's Son! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God.'<sup>53</sup> When Jesus entered Jerusalem the whole city was thrown into an uproar.

The passage provides sufficient material for the poet for his narration. This dramatic scene is rich with activity amongst the people gathered around Jesus. In the Biblical context, and also for Gonsalves, this is one of the most important events in the life of Jesus. He goes up to the city of Jerusalem to perform his supreme act of redemption through his Passion, death and Resurrection. The *Budugunâlanîkâraya*'s account draws a vivid picture of the visit of the Buddha to the city of Visala:

*dada kuḍa koḍi ga nnôyâ*  
*sonda ganda dum la nnôyâ*  
*pin pala bala da nnôyâ*  
*muni pudayata va nnôyâ*

Being aware of the results of good deeds they all go to worship the Lord (Buddha), taking with them flags, umbrellas and frankincense.<sup>54</sup>

A similar event to that of the Biblical passage is found in this *Budugunâlanîkâraya* presentation. The Lord Buddha has been invited to the city of the king and, since the people admire the Buddha greatly, they are extremely enthusiastic about receiving him into the city. Veedagama Thero's purpose in his description of the event and of the person of the Buddha was to predict his superiority over all the gods, as mentioned earlier. Gonsalves' account combines elements of both passages:

*kolatu kaḍḍā lanno yā  
pālandi barana lanno yā  
perā maga sarasanno yā  
kōlahala kara yanno yā*

They decorate the road by breaking the branches of trees and creepers  
and with wearing their ornaments they create a vivid scene as they march.<sup>55</sup>

The poetic technique of making the sound echo the sense can be found in the above verse of the *Budugunālaṅkāraya*. Metre, tune, and, to a certain extent, diction are the same in the two verses quoted above. This influence is particularly evident when we compare the following verses from the two works:

*atin rāgat kusum damin  
sitin rāgat muni sa damin  
bātin ayek āti pa damin  
nitin munidu yati pu damin*

Taking in their hands wreaths of flowers, bearing the Lord (Buddha)  
in their hearts, having a great deal of faith, they constantly pay  
homage to the great Lord Buddha.<sup>56</sup>

*atin rāgat atu gasaki na  
sitin rāgat pem adari na  
muven kiyat tuti vadani na  
nitin devidu yati pudami na*

Taking in their hands branches of a tree, and bearing love in their hearts,  
uttering words of praise through their mouth, they constantly advance in  
worshipping God.<sup>57</sup>

Comparing these two verses, one hardly notices any difference in diction, metre, tune or meaning, with the exception of the reference to God (*devidu*) in the *Vēda Kāvya* instead of Lord Buddha (*munidu*) in the *Budugunālaṅkāraya*.

The parallel between the two works becomes ever clear when we compare the following verses relating to Jesus' going up to Jerusalem:

<i>nānati danô sita tâna tâ na</i>	<i>nānati dano sita vena ve na</i>
<i>vimati novî adahâ ge na</i>	<i>vimati novi adahâ ge na</i>
<i>kāmati lesin kavi bānda ge na</i>	<i>kāmati lesin kavi bānda ge na</i>
<i>kiyati budun guna tâna tâ na</i> <sup>58</sup>	<i>kiyati jêsu guna me lesi na</i> <sup>59</sup>

The learned people standing here and there, without being astonished, utter the virtues of the Buddha/Jesus, composing poems as they wish.

The only significant difference in these two verses is that the word *jêsu* (Jesus) is used instead of *budun* (Buddha) in the last line. The other words *tâna tâ na* and *vena ve na* carry the same meaning. The rest of the verse from the *Budugunālan̄kâraya* is repeated verbatim in the *Vêda Kâvyaya*.

Gonsalves' inspiration from the *Budugunālan̄kâraya* can also be seen in the following verses from the two poems:

*tada duk dura la m̄ôyâ*  
*saga mok sâpa de m̄ôyâ*  
*mohuma veî da m̄ôyâ*  
*vānda vānda bima he m̄ôyâ*

Falling on the ground, worship him who is all powerful and gives the bliss of heaven to human beings and takes away the sorrows of life.<sup>60</sup>

*nira duk dura lannâ maya*  
*surâ mok ama dennâ maya*  
*nara yan devi rajidâ maya*  
*kara adu bima hennâ maya*

Since God the King takes away the sorrow of hell and gives the bliss of heaven to human beings, worship Him falling on the ground.<sup>61</sup>

These verses, from the *Budugunâlañkâraya* and the *Vêda Kâvyaya* respectively are similar in many respects.

The next pair of parallel verses (quoted below) represent the innocence of the divine infant. An indigenous way of worshipping is to join hands over the head of the faithful. Gonsalves not only received the inspiration from the *Budugunâlañkâraya* in his composition but also the local gesture of worshipping in this example:

*ada madakut no kiliṭi yô  
mada landa kiri bona päṭi yô  
nada muni ruva dâka a ṭiyô  
bânda mudunat vânda si ṭiyô*<sup>62</sup>

*ada madakut no kili ṭiyô  
mada landa kiri bona pä ṭiyô  
nada 'pa jêsu daki yaṭi yô  
bânda mudunat vânda si ṭiyô*<sup>63</sup>

An infant who is not impure in any way is drinking milk and it was a pleasant scene. Observing the image of the Lord, they worshipped him with joined hands raised.

The words, metre, tune and even the arrangement of the words are the same in both the verses quoted above from the *Budugunâlañkâraya* and the *Vêda Kâvyaya*. The only difference is that Gonsalves replaces the word *muni* with the word *jêsu*. In these few instances, Gonsalves follows the existing poetic tradition of the country to build up a language of his own for his literary compositions. This same literary pattern of following one's intertextuality, can be found in the works of other authors. It is commonly observed that poets follow certain structural patterns as well as similes and other literary devices used by their predecessors to compose their own works, and such efforts are not considered as plagiarism.

Another indigenous posture of reverence is also referred to by the author of the *Vêda Kâvyaya*, following the ancient traditional ways presented in the Sinhala classics. The archangel Gabriel taking his position in front of God is described in a manner similar to that of a servant of a royal palace taking his position in front of a king. He always stands on one side, out of reverence to the king:

*é ânju gabrie l  
pasâka siñiyê ema ka l  
nama kara siri patu l  
mesê sâla kala sandehi mana ka l*

Then the angel Gabriel (reverently) stood on one side at that time, venerating the feet gladly, and he communicated thus.<sup>64</sup>

The same posture of reverence is portrayed in describing the position of the soldiers in front of King Herod: 'Bowling (reverently) and standing on one side, they thus communicated (to the king)'.<sup>65</sup> The posture of reverence and the poetic diction is taken by Gonsalves from which was introduced earlier: 'Different types of well-dressed actors stood on one side.'<sup>66</sup> In the *Sâlalihini Sandêsâya*, the author instructs the bird-messenger to take its place in the respectful manner in which one stands before a superior person:

*anaturu balâ adahasa avasara viga sa  
yuhusulu novî sâlakala pasu palamu ba sa  
peradâri kara surinduta tiu vadan go sa  
sâlakara ta giya katayutu siña ekat pa sa*

After ascertaining his intentions and a moment of leisure, stand on one side and, observing a coherence in successive words, first sing a song of praise and inform the lord of gods (*Vibhisana*) of the object of thy visit.<sup>67</sup>

Another marked parallel is found between Gonsalves' description of the city of Jerusalem and the people gathered to welcome Jesus as he approaches and the passage in the *Budugunālaṅkāraya*, that people flock to the city of Visala to see the Buddha. In this pair of verses a critical reader may observe how much Gonsalves was influenced by the *Budugunālaṅkāraya*:

<i>mihi vadayehi ganda ṭa</i>	<i>mihiri mal suvanda ṭa</i>
<i>divena bingu men iva ko ṭa</i>	<i>vadina men bingu loba ko ṭa</i>
<i>tada gim kala diya ṭa</i>	<i>supirisidu vilaka ṭa</i>
<i>divena gaja sen lesin vilāka ṭa</i> <sup>68</sup>	<i>divena gajasen lesin sahatu ṭa</i> <sup>69</sup>

As a swarm of bees, craving for the odour of flowers [bees nest], and like a herd of elephants, running towards a pure water pond [water tank], during a severe drought ...

In Gonsalves' verse the two similes are presented in the same manner as in the verse extracted from the *Budugunālaṅkāraya*. The only differences are that, in the *Vēda Kāvya*, the swarm of bees is attracted to the bees' nest and not to the flowers; and the herd of elephants goes to a water tank in the season of drought and not to a pure water pond. These minor differences are not significant and do not undermine the thesis of the influence of the Sinhala classics on the works of Gonsalves. It is quite clear that, in verses 309 and 315, Gonsalves has described the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem in terms of the entry of the Buddha into Visala in traditional Sinhala poetry, and so has deliberately linked the two.

Having described the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the author then diverts the thread of his thought towards a moral lesson. Once again, following the Sinhala classical heritage, Gonsalves makes an allusion to Buddhist teachings in

the *Gūttila Kāvya Varṇana*.<sup>70</sup> A typical example of the influence of Buddhist concepts on Gonsalves in the *Vēda Kāvya* can be highlighted here. The teaching of the Buddha is firmly based on *aniṭṭa* (impermanence) and *dukkā* (sorrow). Although the same concepts are found in Christianity, they are not highlighted or taught as dogma. In his poem *Vēda Kāvya*, however, Gonsalves explicitly mentions the impermanence and futility of the human world when compared with the lasting and permanent state of the next:

*nara lova dahasak auru du  
sura lova ek dinakāṭa ban du  
tira nāti sāpa me lova puru du  
pura ṇa é tis tun auru du*

A thousand years in this world are equal to one day in the next. Everything that is associated with life in this world is impermanent. Aware of this reality, he [Jesus] grew up until he was thirty-three years old.<sup>71</sup>

The Buddha's teaching of *dukkā* is often expressed in various art forms in Sri Lanka. It also underlines the attitudes of people in general. According to tradition, the Buddha had the significant experience of seeing five signs before abandoning family life: a sick person, an old person, a hermit, a dead body and a funeral. Thereafter he came to the realisation that the reality of the world is *dukkā* and the only way to overcome it is cessation of desire. Gonsalves' writings are also inspired by the local religious and cultural thoughts. As he was influenced by the classics to such an extent, that he deliberately incorporated Buddhist teachings in his poem.

## 2.x. Gonsalves' account of the lamentation of Mary

The synthesis between Christian thought and Sinhala prosody, which Alagiyavanna Mukaveti attempted in the *Kustantînu Hatana*, was fully developed by Gonsalves in his *Vêda Kâvyaya*. It is the most popular and the most inspired work of the author. Gonsalves tried his hand successfully at a variety of rhythmic devices typical of traditional Sinhala poetry, especially in the narration of incidents such as Mary's meeting with her son Jesus on his way to Calvary where he was to be crucified. This long section extends from verse 408 to verse 456. It is not merely to be read but to be chanted to a melancholy tune, reminiscent of the lament of a Sri Lankan mother over the death of her only son.

In Sinhala literature, the narration of lamentations is commonly used to create an emotional response in the reader or listener. A particular feature of the literary works of the Kandyan period is that they are full of Sinhala folklore, and the techniques used by Sinhala folk literature are classified as the panegyric tradition, particularly, the tradition created by the first panegyric, the *Pâarakumbâ Sirita* which was referred to earlier. A common feature of this tradition is the repetitive use of words, a feature explored freely by Gonsalves in his own compositions. For instance, the three verses 177 to 179 of the *Vêda Kâvyaya* have the word *jêsu* at the beginning of each line; altogether, the word is used twelve times in these verses. The familiarity of this traditional technique effectively appeals to the hearts of his audience.

In general terms, the purpose of the narrative of lamentation is to create a compassionate attitude towards the characters portrayed. More specifically, Gonsalves sought to embed his poem, and the characters described, within a familiar Sri Lankan world. Mary's lamentation in the *Vêda Kâvyaya* is presented

in traditional terms: <sup>72</sup> 'Lowering her long black hair from her head, she lamented, beating her chest with her hands.' <sup>73</sup> The lament and the gestures that accompany it are typical of a Sri Lankan rural mother expressing her intense sorrow. In the *Kusa Jâtaka*, for example, one finds a similar reference to a grieving woman's unkept hair in Prabhavati's mournful cry:

*sonda, nil gele pil kaḷambeka vila s  
oda, vaḍavana duṭu duṭu dana mana s  
mada, kalekin mage varalasa vese s  
ā-da, ā-da sindalaiṭṭi yak bū pisa s*

My hair that like the peacock's feathers shone, and gladdened the eyes and hearts of those who loved to look upon its beautiful tresses, after many days is gone; demons and fiends and ghouls will tear and rend it. <sup>74</sup>

In his poem *Kusa Jâtaka*, Alagiyavanna Mukaveti suggests the manner in which Prabhavati, the daughter of the king, wept as she departed from her husband Kusa: 'Releasing her black hair along her back, the maiden uttered a sorrowful cry'. <sup>75</sup> A comparison of the *Vêda Kâvyaya* of Gonsalves and the *Kusa Jâtaka* of Alagiyavanna thus reveals many similarities.

Another example of Prabhavati's sorrow is the following verse from the *Kusa Jâtaka*:

*mele, sin pabavat raja dū la da  
kiya, min vana sô eki binda bin da  
anḍa, min mau bisavaṭa vānda vān da  
lela, ran liya vilasata siṭṭi sa da*

Thus speaking words of woe, the daughter of the king, fair Prabhavati, sobbed again, and, worshipping the mother stood as a graceful, gold creeper. <sup>76</sup>

Gonsalves takes Mary's lament one step further by employing another familiar visual image. When a woman is in great sorrow, she responds by throwing herself on the ground, a common scene at a funeral house in Sri Lanka even today. Gonsalves describes such a scene in his *Vêda Kāvya*:

*vena dukak nova medi na kesê indimi divi räge na  
dena é mau kusa dukina añdati peralemin dera na*

How to live this life bearing so much sorrow on this day;  
with a burning sensation of grief that mother wept, sobbing  
and throwing herself on the ground.<sup>77</sup>

A similar idea is found in the *Elú Attanagalu Vamsaya*, written by Anavamadarshi Thero who lived in the Dambadeniya period (1236-1271). The subject matter of this book is the history of Attanagalla, a prominent political and cultural centre at that time. The main character in the *Elú Attanagalu Vamsaya* is King Sirisangabo who reigned in Sri Lanka for two years (300-302 AD). He was famous for his generosity and kindness. In the following verse, a mermaid laments the death of her husband:

*supushpita û kusuman hâ nirmala û väli talâ äti  
vana lähebek dâka etân\hi vätie hê bima  
peralennê \lä\bägâ û hânâ\m vâlap\m kalâya.*

Seeing a forest with well blossomed flowers and a plane of pure sand,<sup>78</sup>  
she, throwing herself on the ground, lamented and wept with deep sorrow.

Both these familiar images—the unkept hair and the physical collapse of the grieving woman—are found in the Sinhala classic, the *Sanda Kinduru Dâ Kava*. It was composed by a poet of the school of Vilgammula in the sixteenth century. It is a very elegant poem, a tale of a devoted and loving spouse of the

Bodhisattva, Yasodhara, in one of her former births as a mermaid, a semi-human being, as given in a Buddhist birth story. This poem contains some of the finest lyrical and elegiac pieces in Sinhala poetry, such as the captivating description of the dance of the mermaid to please her husband. She moved her gentle hands like garlands and danced to suit the tunes of all music. Even the gods were happy when they saw her pretty red palms opened out as she danced there. In such harmony with the music did she take her steps that those who watched her could have learned the art of dancing even without a teacher. All the beasts and birds of the forest and the fish in the water stood still, entranced by her movements. As a result of the beauty of her dance, the lament of the mermaid over the dead body of her husband is all the more heart-rending. In the course of her expression of grief, she rebukes the wicked being who shot him. She asks why he killed her husband, who was her sole source of joy. She says that they used to play in the cooling shades of trees, on sandy spaces strewn with flowers. She also says that they saw no sorrow and it was all love, and not a word was there of any disagreement. The sorrow of separation now burns her like a fire sprung from the water and she can find no consolation. So she goes on until Śakra comes on the scene and restores the Bodhisattva to life. As she laments the death of her husband, the mermaid is described as follows:

*kindurangana nola sin*  
*viyaru humuvaka vila sin*  
*piṭa hunu varala sin*  
*ävili avamin andata me le sin*

Suddenly the mermaid, as she was losing her senses, throwing her hair on her back, began to mourn and lament thus.<sup>79</sup>

Gonsalves' use of such images is both deliberate and effective. However, the theme of Gonsalves' work is completely different. In the *Sanda Kinduru Dā Kava*, the mermaid alludes to the emotion of sexual love. In the *Kausilumina*, the lament of Prabavati takes the form of a curse. The *Kusa Jātakaya* of Alagiyavanna echoes folklore in the lament of Prabavati as Gonsalves often did to a prominent feature of the poetry of the Kandyan period. By contrast, Gonsalves' *Vēda Kāvya* presents Mary's lament for death of Jesus in order to highlight her tender-heartedness and to evoke compassion for a grieving mother. He thereby creates in the hearts of his readers and listeners an atmosphere of tender-loving emotion:

*sura lovinē bāsa me dinē  
 mau kusinē bihi vemi nē  
 kumbu detanē kiri bominē  
 mini lesinē vāduru tā nē  
 dilena ranē ruva lesinē  
 mal uyanē siṭiya di nē  
 mema maranē obaṭa unē  
 kimada anē devi raju nē*

Descending from heaven, born of the womb of the mother, being fed from the breast, he grew up as a pot fills, growing in age like gems and looking like a golden statue on the day he was seen in the garden before his death occurred. Oh! What happened to you, my God and King.<sup>80</sup>

The selection and arrangement of words, the mournful tune and the familiar poetic techniques combine to create the desired emotional response.

A further example taken from Gonsalves' *Pasan Pota*, follows:

*mā na utum devi surana – pāna yasas bala nodā nā  
vā na dukak nova medina – kesē idimi diri rāge na*

Unaware of the excellence and the divine power of the great God [they] persecute Him. How it is possible for anyone to live without feeling sorrow [for Him]?<sup>81</sup>

In this verse Gonsalves adopts traditional poetic techniques which were used in eulogies of the Buddha. Hymns and poems in praise of the Buddha have been known in Sri Lanka from very early times. The best-known example of such a poem is the *Budugunālaṅkāraya*, (the ornament of the virtues of the Buddha), of Vidagama Thero. The poet has made use of this poem to extol the virtues of the Buddha and to condemn the gods, show their inefficiency, and declare the fruitlessness of devotion to them. The poet also speaks of the powers of the Buddha and shows the worthlessness of other teachers, the futility of faith in the gods, and exposes the hypocrisy of the Brahmins:

*boru vē maturu bānda – valahana levan hāmasanda  
bamunangen dulada – vāḍak vūyē lovata kikalada*

When did any benefit accrue to the world from these heathen Brahmins who deceive the world with their false religious charms?<sup>82</sup>

The poem of Gonsalves is quite similar to the *Budugunālaṅkāraya* in several respects, including theme and subject matter. It is evident, therefore, that Gonsalves made use of the classical traditional poetic techniques in his composition.

The *Vêda Kâvyaya* is composed as a quartet (that is, it employs stanzas of four lines). Each quartet is divided into several rhythms, and the final letters of the lines are arranged alike to create a rhythmical effect. Many stanzas in the *Vêda Kâvyaya* are composed with nine syllables in an uneven metre, eleven and fifteen syllables in an equal metre and forty-three syllables in a general metre.<sup>83</sup>

The rhythm is quite similar to that of the classic Sinhala works such as *Guttilla Kâvyaya*, the *Budugunâlañkâraya*, the *Pârakumbâ Sirita*, the *Kusa Jâtakaya* and the *Daham Soñḍa Kava*. The *Vêda Kâvyaya* features several stanzas that are composed by combining six letters.<sup>84</sup> There are also some long verses with twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five and twenty-six short vowels.<sup>85</sup> The latter type of verses is usually composed to express the emotion of lamentation. We may conclude, therefore, that Gonsalves used the appropriate traditional poetic techniques for an effective and scholarly creation of characters and situations.

## 2. xi. Gonsalves' use of South Asian mythology in his compositions

Another aspect of Gonsalves' work is his retention of the type of mythological allusions typical of Sinhala classical writing. For instance, a phrase often used in the Sinhala classics is *ran giri hisin*, meaning 'from the top of the golden mountain'. According to the *Sûriya Siddhânta*, written in Sanskrit in the third century AD, which is of unknown authorship, and was translated into Sinhala by Vilgammula Sangharaja, the earth was a sphere with a north-south axis.<sup>86</sup> At

the north pole of this sphere, an immense rock of gold jutted out as a continuation of the axis far into space. This mountain, called *mahâ mēru*, is in the centre of a *chakkavala*, and rises more than two million miles; half of that height is below the surface of the earth. At the top of the mountain is the heaven of the *ĭvatinsā* gods while human beings dwell at its base. This heaven was imagined as a land of delight, a place of recreation for the gods.

One of the most common South Asian myths concerns the god Śakra.<sup>87</sup> From his central position on the top of *mahâ mēru*, the god Śakra not only reigns over his own heaven but also supervises affairs on this earth, acting as a benign deity or a sort of protector of those whose examples of piety and virtue make them high in merit. Whenever such a righteous person is in trouble, Śakra's throne, which is of solid marble, becomes hot; at this signal, Śakra at once directs his thousand eyes to find out what is wrong and where.

For Gonsalves, Hindu mythology and Buddhist beliefs were not incompatible with the Christian faith. In his efforts to indigenize the Christian faith, Gonsalves made frequent allusions to both. He was not the first to do so. Alagiyavanna Mukaveti makes similar allusions, at one point comparing the king of Portugal to Śakra, the chief of all the gods.<sup>88</sup>

Śakra is described as a king, because he is the ruler of a kingdom consisting of two heavens (*caturmaha rajika*, which is the nearest to us, and *tushita*). Śakra is also considered to be the chief of all gods. In the *Kustantīnu Hatana* Alagiyavanna Mukaveti also compares General Constantino de Sa to Śakra: 'The general in the midst of his army and followers was like Śakra among his host of gods.'<sup>89</sup> Later, he compares the general and his staff to Śakra's thunderbolt.<sup>90</sup>

Allusions to Śakra in the Sinhala classics are common. For example, in the *Sanda Kinduru Dâ Kava*, we learn that 'Śakra saw the Lord [Buddha] when he spent [seven weeks] abstaining from food.'<sup>91</sup>

Buddhist literature and *jâtaka* stories also describe Śakra as a benevolent god: 'God Śakra imparted his blessing on both of them (the couple of *chanda-kinnara*) and wished them long life.'<sup>92</sup> At the end of a *jâtaka* story, Śakra usually intervenes on behalf of the troubled protagonists and sets everything in order:

*nik mena mini kirana taruna  
aruna kirana kirana lesi na  
vak aṭakin udula anagi nâyaka  
mini ruvanak ge na  
vik mâti kusa rajuge visulu  
durukara ura palandavami na  
sak raju nomadin tuti koṭa sura  
purayāṭa van satosi na*

The heavenly throne of Śakra is decorated with a priceless eight-curved gem which is bright as the sun and moon; removing the ugliness of King Kusa and pleasing all people,<sup>93</sup> Śakra returned home.

In particular, historical stories and Buddhist birth stories made frequent reference to the god Śakra. Alagiyavanna refers to celestial beings other than Śakra in the *Kustantînu Hatana*. In the following verse, for example, Constantino de Sa is linked with *Râmâyana* story:

'His [Constantino de Sa's] march against Barreto resembled that of god Vishnu, incarnated as Râmâ, going to war with Râvana'.<sup>94</sup>

The same theme of making allusions to ancient legends in the first Christian poem is found in the following example:

*surana liyana lesina ruvi na  
dakina satana satana pina na  
gangana pihina kelina liya na  
natana evina mavina keva na*

The damsels swimming and playing about in the river were so fair, like heavenly damsels they gladden the hearts of the people who watch them. Their dance could only be repeated by Ananta the king of Nâga and only the god of wisdom could fitly describe their beauty.<sup>95</sup>

The Sinhala classics often refer to the damsels of the world of Nâgas (termed *pâtâla* or *rasatala*) beneath the surface of the earth.<sup>96</sup> Their kingdom is as prosperous as that of the gods and the Nâga maidens are very beautiful. The Christian writer Alagiyavanna uses them in his writings despite the strange fact that the Nâgas appear in all the other major Asian religions. This may be a tacit reference to the idea that they were converted by the Buddha according to Buddhist legends. Further references by Alagiyavanna to the goodness and help of gods and the Triple Gem can be found in the following example:

*têruvañ mahimenu t  
suravañ anuhasinu t  
é raju pin belemu t  
uvadurak noma vemin madaku t*

When the rebel Barreto fell upon Kandy, it was by the power of the Triple Gem [of Buddhism; the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha] and the help of gods that King [Senarat] came off unscathed.<sup>97</sup>

Such allusions to pan-Indian ideas in Hindu mythology and Buddhist beliefs were evidently not considered by the author to be incompatible with the Christian

faith; they serve only as a means of poetic embellishment. In fact, from the references Alagiyavanna makes in his poem to Christian theological concepts, we see that he was an enlightened Christian who possessed a sound knowledge of Christian teachings.

In these various ways Alagiyavanna has harmonised the Christian faith with his local culture as presented in the Sinhala classical works. The Hindu classical and mythological allusions, considered so important in oriental poetry, are retained in this poem. It is worth examining the contribution of Alagiyavanna in detail, because he was Gonsalves' forerunner. However, Gonsalves had a larger purpose for his works, the indigenization of Christianity, for which references to existing poetic and mythological allusions were an effective tool.

At the time Gonsalves was working on Sinhala Christian literature, there was no Christian literary tradition, and therefore no inspirational Christian imagery. The only existing poetic traditions expressed Hindu mythology and Buddhist beliefs, and non-Christian concepts in those religions contributed much to the creation of Christian literature in Sri Lanka. Gonsalves draws on this tradition to such an extent that he could be placed among the Sinhala classical poets:

*patara rangiri muduna susādu  
pavara nava mini é viduras nê  
nitara vāda inda suran tutu kara balā  
nara lova āthi palas nê  
vitara nova tada vadaya vindimsatun sura pura lami nives nê  
satara divayin ātulu sakvala pāmi  
situva dēva dis nê*

The god seated on the top of the great golden mountain—<sup>98</sup> which was decorated with the nine gems of ruby, pearl, agate, diamond, lapis lazuli, coral, sapphire, topaz and emerald—found it pleasing to be seated

there all the time, and he looked down on the earth to please the beings there. They took all sorts of pains and troubles to make the human beings heirs of the celestial city; and they made the divine sight fall on the four islands and the *sakvala*.<sup>99</sup>

It is interesting to note how Gonsalves, a foreigner and a busy missionary, composed such a verse. This particular verse suggests that Jesus Christ the Son of God sits enthroned in heaven just as Śakra sits in his palace in *tautisa*, the celestial city of Śakra. Apart from referring to Śakra himself, all the terms one would expect in a passage about Śakra are used even though these allusions are apparently contrary to the teachings of Christianity. Indeed, such was his desire to have his literary works placed within the wider context of the Sinhala literary tradition that Gonsalves used these references despite their inappropriateness. For example, he writes of 'A golden ladder to heaven; a vessel to the sea of transmigration.'<sup>100</sup> This presents the teachings of the Buddha on life after death which are clearly not the same as Christian teachings on the subject. Elsewhere, Gonsalves writes: 'Fullness of beauty which brings fortune: the golden figure is like a creeping plant.'<sup>101</sup> The creation of man and woman by God in the Bible is portrayed here by typical Sinhala poetical imagery where a woman is often compared to a creeper.

Like the famous city of *Vijain* in Dambadiva [India within the Ganges where the Buddha founded Buddhism], Saint Joachim glittered as the sun in the sky.<sup>102</sup>

As a poet, Gonsalves freely discussed his own views on various subjects, making references to other local religions, myths and places of religious interest and this

was not seen as heretical. As an example of Gonsalves' use of Hindu imagery, we have: 'The whole side of the sun and the moon was darkened: The milk-sea was shaken and became a stream.'<sup>103</sup> Only in Hindu mythological stories can one find reference<sup>S</sup> to the 'milk-sea'; such terminology came late to Sinhala literature. Other Hindu references in Sinhala literature concern *paurada*, the largest of all mountains and supposed to lie under the sea. Below this is the abode of the *asuras* or the human beings; above it is the kingdom of *suras* or the celestial beings surrounded by seven mountain peaks. Gonsalves also quite often used the term *tunlo*, or three worlds,<sup>104</sup> in both verse and prose. This term expresses the classification of the universe into three realms and these are the *divya loka*, the world of gods where celestial beings dwell; the *manukṣa loka*, the world of men; and the *patala loka*, the world of *asura* (a kind of demon) where inferior beings live. The three worlds are also classed as *arupa loka*, the world of non-material forms, *rupa loka*, the world of material forms, and *kāma loka*, the world of sensual beings. More rarely, we find a division into *byanjana loka*, celestial beings, *satva loka*, living beings and *sanskara loka*, material universe.

*Rivikula*, or the Sun-Dynasty, is a legendary lineage, said to date from the earliest times, and to which many famous rulers of ancient India claimed to belong. The other legendary lineage was called the Moon-Dynasty, and these two were very powerful dynasties in India. However, Gonsalves refers more often to the Sun-Dynasty, the ancestor of whom was said to be Manu, who appeared during the first period of the world. This dynasty is also known as *manu vansa*, and the Sinhalese kings too claimed descent from this dynasty.

Among the Sinhala classics the *Pārakumbā Sirita* is a well-known panegyric about King Parakrama VI. The terms used in this work can be seen in the many panegyrics composed by Gonsalves. Hindu mythology records that the power of the gods declined due to a curse by the sage Durvasas. The gods came and begged Vishnu<sup>105</sup> to help them. He gave them *ambrôsia*, the food of gods and, feeding on this nectar, the gods increased in strength until they were able to defeat the *asuras*. Vishnu is one of the favourite gods of the Hindus. He is invoked and his blessings are asked for. His wife is Sri, whom he constantly embraces. An image of Vishnu is often found in Buddhist temples too.

Constant references to such Hindu mythological stories and gods can be found in Gonsalves' *Agnâna Auṣadaya*. He makes several references to the god of fire, the god of air, the god of heaven and the god of earth here and elsewhere.<sup>106</sup> The *Budugunâlañkâraya* quite often influences his comments on these gods.<sup>107</sup> Gonsalves also refers in several works to the South Asian concept of the *erdhi balaya*, the supernatural power one acquires to go up into the heavens, to be absorbed into the earth, to walk on water and so on.<sup>108</sup>

Sinhala classics are full of references to *sadeu lova*, the six celestial worlds which serve as the abodes of six classes of gods, each world higher than the preceding one. These worlds are called *chaturmaharâjika* (the visible heavens), *tavatinsa* (the second divine world, Śakra's heaven on the top of *mahâ mêru*), *yama* (the world pertaining to the god Yama), *tusita* (the fourth divine world), *nirmanarati* (the fifth divine world, so called because the inhabitants create new enjoyments for themselves), and *paranirmiti* (the sixth or highest world of the gods). Gonsalves was fully aware of this terminology and uses it freely in the *Agnâna Auṣadaya*.<sup>109</sup>

Similarly, Gonsalves' references to a 'hundred and thirty-six hells'<sup>110</sup> reflect the common allusions made to hell in the Sinhala literature. He also writes that 'It is frightening to think of falling into hell for even a hundred weeks';<sup>111</sup> according to one source, this highlights the role of Sinhala literature in discouraging sin through fear. Gonsalves was fully aware of many other religious concepts current in his time and refers to them in his works. For example, he writes that 'Four religions of the Vedas and sixty-two religions exist',<sup>112</sup> following the *Lôvâda Saṅgarâva*, and 'Directing (the believers) to heaven sixty-two doctrinal religions exist'.<sup>113</sup>

Gonsalves thus created a synthesis between a Christian outlook and other, non-Christian religious concepts. Hindu classical and mythological allusions, considered so important in oriental poetry, are used in his prose and poetry in the same spirit that any Christian writer of Europe would use Greek and Latin mythological allusions to adorn his writing. Similar references to mythology can be traced in the *Lusiads*, the national epic of Portugal by Luis Vaz de Camoens, and in the writings of such men as the missionaries in India, Robert de Nobili and Constant Beschi. Beschi, the author of the Tamil Christian classic, the *Tempâvani*, made free use of the literary devices of the *Chintâmani*, the *Kural*, the *Ramâyaṇam* and the *Naladiyâr*. As we saw, earlier, in the *Kustantînu Hatana*, Alagiyavanna makes substantial references to mythology and Buddhist beliefs; clearly he too did not see them as incompatible with his Christian faith.

The *Lusiads* is a striking example of the harmonisation of Christian belief with pagan mythology, with its great prominence given to the gods and goddesses of Greek and Latin myth. The narrative weaves the historical facts of Portuguese exploits in the East into a plot in which mythical gods and goddesses have a part to play under the supreme dominion of the God of the Christian faith. At the very beginning of the poem, we are told that Jupiter summoned the gods to Mount Olympus to discuss what help should be given to Vasco da Gama and his fleet sailing to India.<sup>114</sup>

The *Kustantînu Hatana* resembles the *Lusiads* in its attitude to mythology. Like Camoens, Alagiyavanna weaves together Christian concepts and mythological beliefs. From the *Lusiads* we should not be surprised that the early missionaries in Sri Lanka had an accommodating attitude towards non-Christian cultures and it may be that Alagiyavanna was influenced by them.

The missionary principles and activities of such men as Robert de Nobili in India and Matteo Ricci in China are well known. From about a decade before the *Kustantînu Hatana* was composed, De Nobili had been living in Madurai the life of a Brahmin, but as a Christian. He believed that the Christian need not discard anything from non-Christian cultures except what was strictly incompatible with Christianity and there were many missionaries who shared his views. The missionaries in Sri Lanka such as Vaz and Gonsalves certainly knew of the other missionaries in India and were also perhaps influenced by them. It is possible, therefore, that the spirit of De Nobili found an echo in the Christian literature of Gonsalves.

Further evidence revealing the attitudes of the early missionaries to the non-Christian cultures of the lands where they worked was on display at the Winter

Exhibition of the Royal Academy in London in 1955, in an exhibition of the art of Portugal from 800 to 1800 AD. One of the exhibits was a seventeenth-century credence table from the church at Lahore on loan from the Victoria and Albert Museum. The central feature of the table was a medallion showing a monstrance surrounded by angels and the inscription *Lovvado seia O Santissimo Sacramento*.<sup>115</sup> However, inlaid around this, in bone, were figures from Indian mythology which one would not normally expect in an article of this nature, which was used in church worship. The way early Sinhala Christian authors like Alagiyavanna and Gonsalves expressed their attitudes to South Asian mythology and the non-Christian cultures in their works is reflected in this piece of art.

These Christian authors made an effort—in the spirit of Camoens, de Nobili and Beschi—to harmonise Christian belief with the poetic tradition and literary heritage of the country. It was a genuine attempt both to bring East and West together on the literary platform and to allow literature to play an important role in the difficult area of inter-faith relations.

Creativity demands a degree of freedom and room for the imagination to manoeuvre. The early Sinhala Christian writers would contribute much both to local literature in general and to Christian literature in particular. They can, therefore, be regarded as men who laboured for a genuine ecumenical and indigenizing movement through their works of literature.

## **2. xii. The influence of literary devices in the Sinhala classics on Gonsalves**

In the third century BC, Mahinda and his companions from India brought Buddhism and the Pali canonical literature to Sri Lanka. In the fifth century AD, Buddhaghosa visited and produced a Pali commentarial literature, which

was fortunate for Sri Lankan Buddhists. Upon arriving in Sri Lanka, he studied Sinhala at the Mahaviharaya at Anuradhapura, the ancient city in the country, and translated into Pali a large part of the Sinhala commentaries. In addition, he composed original works in Pali, the most famous of which is the *Visuddhimagga*, a systematic and encyclopædic exposition of the Dhamma. Like Buddhaghosa, in the eighteenth century, Jacome Gonsalves came to Sri Lanka from India to provide Sri Lankans with a new religious literature in their own language, although in this case the religion was Christianity.

When Gonsalves arrived in Sri Lanka in 1705 he was almost thirty years old. Sinhala was an entirely new and alien language to him. His feat of mastering the written and spoken forms of the language, and of producing so many works, has not been equalled to this day, even by those whose mother tongue is Sinhala. Gonsalves' literary output is both extensive and varied. He not only wrote in both the literary or learned language and the colloquial idiom, in both prose and poetry, but he also covered a wide range of subjects. His writings, apart from being a substantial contribution to Sinhala Christian literature, are of great value from a linguistic point of view. As stated before, he was not only well versed in the literary language but also, by coming into close contact with common folk in the course of his missionary tours in the hill country and maritime districts, had come to know the spoken language in all its variety and variations. The result was that a large number of words from the vocabulary of ordinary people, many of them now obsolete, have been preserved for us in his works. Gonsalves' trilingual dictionary is a mine of linguistic information; for each Portuguese word

there is a set of Tamil words, and from one to as many as fifteen Sinhala equivalents.

Gonsalves' style made good use of literary devices, particularly similes. He illustrated his ideas by using similes drawn from real life and featuring objects, incidents and customs with which the people were familiar. This is a contrast with the kind of stereotyped and conventional simile so frequently repeated in some of the Sinhala classical works. One is struck by the originality, freshness and appropriateness of his similes, examples of which can be found on almost every page of his works. He comes very close to another master of the simile in Sinhala literature, the monk Dharmasena, who wrote the *Saddharmaratnâvaliya*. Wickramasinghe writes of the latter:

Just as the poetry that began with the *Sasa-da-vata* or *Muva-dev-da-vata* followed a stock pattern in respect of subject matter and treatment, so the prose that began with the *Butsarana* tended to limit itself to a few stock themes and stereo-typed modes of handling them. Dharmasena brought some relief into this monotony, drawing his subject matter from the lives of villagers and by introducing into his style the turns of speech and idioms of the folk. After the *Amâvatura*, the only prose work to which one could turn with an ever-freshening interest is the *Saddharmaratnâvaliya* ... It contains in the main Buddhist stories relating to the life of village folk, and these incidents are enlivened with figures of speech drawn from the village. The style Dharmasena creates thereby becomes unique and admirably suited to his matter ... He enriched his book-learning with his observation of life, and he brought in all his experience of the world in order to add to the interest of the stories he was relating from books.<sup>116</sup>

To make his subject matter applicable to his readers, Dharmasena presented it with similes drawn from village life. Some examples are: 'It is like taking hold of the tail after letting the eel escape',<sup>117</sup> and 'Like asking for directions while

walking down on a familiar road'.<sup>118</sup> Dharmasena quite often drew his similes from the life of farmers: for example, 'Like taking only rice, leaving all chaff and particles'.<sup>119</sup> His skill at drawing similes was so great that in one passage he used as many as eleven similes to elaborate one feature.<sup>120</sup>

Gonsalves also uses similes to describe an object, comparing it with another object closer to the experience of his readers. All his works, both prose and poems, are full of these similes. A scholar once commented that the similes to be seen on every page of his works could be regarded as glittering precious stones on a golden vesture.<sup>121</sup> His similes are not conventional and woven by effort; they spontaneously flow from his felt experience and his observation of the day-to-day lives of ordinary people. Consequently, they are quite appropriate to communicate his message effectively. P.B. Sannasgala admires Gonsalves' skilful usage of similes such as 'Like offering a lotus flower to a viper and making a request not to sting'.<sup>122</sup> Gonsalves uses a chain of similes to explain and emphasise one point of his message, one paragraph of his work containing as many as fifteen different similes: 'Stars falling like faded leaves fall from trees';<sup>123</sup> 'Crying like a small frog caught by a cobra';<sup>124</sup> 'Just as ants running here and there when their mound is broken'; 'Just as animals are scattered when the jungle is cleared'; 'Like the sea is flowing into the land'; 'Just as water tanks and holes dry up'; 'Just as an uprooted palmyra tree is fallen'; 'Just as a nail that cannot be removed without breaking the board'; 'Just as a man stuck in the mud, when he tries to take one leg out, the other sinks in'; 'Just as adding oil to a large flame'; 'Just as giving a handful of rice to tame a dog'; 'Even if one were to

pound chaff many times, one would not obtain any rice'; 'Just as charcoal will never become white, even if it is rubbed many times on a stone'; 'Just as Gurenda wood would never be fragrant, even if it were to be washed so many times'.<sup>125</sup>

By this arrangement of words, Gonsalves was able to communicate his message effectively his literary techniques evoking a response from his readers. The *Agnâna Auşadaya* in particular is remarkable, in that similes from ordinary village life are used in a logical way to support his message. Some of these similes are: 'Just as the gunman himself is killed as the gun explodes';<sup>126</sup> 'Just as a flying snake will not be born of a walking snake';<sup>127</sup> 'Just as a fool jumps into fire out of fear for smoke';<sup>128</sup> 'Would a fallen fruit return to the branch of the tree?';<sup>129</sup> 'Just as a blind person cannot lead another'.<sup>130</sup> The influence of the Sinhala classics and Hindu mythologies can also be seen in Gonsalves' similes.

*rivi tarindu apama na  
eka vita pahala û mena  
yasa râsin dilemi na  
kâlum numba gâba piritira ge na*

As both the sun and the moon illuminated together at once, the sky was filled bright and glorious with excellently shining rays.<sup>131</sup>

*kiyamin siṭi kala ṭa  
sanda rivi dahas eka vi ṭa  
baṭéu elikoṭa va ṭa  
pemini divarataya paṇḍi gedora ṭa*

While uttering, the divine carriage came to the house of the pundit, as both the sun and the moon illuminated the whole place together at once.<sup>132</sup>

The above verses from the *Vêda Kâvyaya* and the *Guttîla Kâvyâ Varnanâ* describe two great events: in the former, the birth of Jesus, celebrated in a vivid

poetic description, and in the latter the great gathering of the distinguished guests to witness the contest between Guttila and his disciple Musila. In both scenarios, day and night were illuminated alike because precious stones shone like the sun and the moon throughout in order to illuminate the place.

The literary device used in the above verses compares a real object with one that does not exist in the real world. This is called *atbhutôpamâ*. The excellence of the event is emphasised by the use of this literary device, as demonstrated in the following example:

*mutu mini ran ridiyen sâdi rata  
padamin yana lesa ta  
mutu sayuren nâû men pêna  
guvanata yana kala ta  
mutu mini dô pirivaramin lassa  
ganan muni evi ta  
tatu dâna dēvati deviyangê  
âu issara ta*

Like driving carriages made of pearl, gem, gold and silver: and resounding the space like boats from the sea of pearl, [the Lord] goes into heaven; accompanied by hundreds of thousands of saints like pearls and gems; being aware of all the God of gods came forward (to receive them).<sup>133</sup>

The Ascension of Jesus into heaven is considered as an expression of divine power and intervention. Further, Hindu mythology mentions a divine carriage driven by Matalî Divya Putra. Gonsalves' account of the scene makes use of the literary device most suitable to describe such event, as we find in the citation below:

*satosa kara rakina: tun lōka pasindu:  
deu upan magulata: nolasinnē  
nidosa sura tavayō: nave saba men sädi:  
sura puren basiṭi: tedasinnē*

For the feast of the birth of the famous benevolent God, who protects the three worlds, the innocent angels assembling together with all their splendour descend from the gloriously divine city, without being delayed.<sup>134</sup>

*lan nu nu lape tarindu: men jēsu surindun  
väda un tänyata: nolasin nē  
in piri lova sitan: sambārayak suro:  
pangadamin sädie: basimin nē*

A group of heavenly beings, having got together, descended suddenly to the place where the spotless men like Lord Jesus stayed.<sup>135</sup>

Gonsalves, who invents many imaginary elements, brings out the excellence of the event of the birth of Jesus.

Another literary device that the poet uses is that of juxtaposing two elements found in two different objects in order to draw out their similarities. For example,

*bara kurusayak gena yannata lad dē  
sēruvatat yane kala veediya mād dē  
jerusala nuvara sata andanā sad dē  
nera andana räsiya väni viya bād de*

When a heavy cross is being carried (by Jesus) along the roads, the mournful cry made by people of the city of Jerusalem is the same as the cry of the *rāhis* [a night fly] in the jungle.<sup>136</sup>

Similarly, 'The endless cry of a group of people in that city and the cry of the insect cricket are the same.'<sup>137</sup>

Gonsalves also uses the literary device of hyperbole (*atīsayōkti*), which gives an object, event or a person more prominence:

*mêru sāma é kuruse barat ā ti*  
*māru karati tara kara pita tabā ya ti*  
*eru meru kiyamin tada vada kara ti*  
*jeru salā nuvara sata me lesa handa ti*

The cross is as heavy as the *mahā mêru* [mountain]. Laying it on [his] shoulder, [they] mocked him and made him suffer. Seeing it, the people in the city of Jerusalem wept thus.<sup>138</sup>

Similarly, through hyperbole, Jesus is made the same as a golden statue: 'The divine prince is like a golden statue and they beat him, full of anger'.<sup>139</sup> The comparison of a human body to a golden statue is an exaggeration, but it is an accepted literary device in poetic language.

Gonsalves also uses irony (*utpreksā*), in which the imagery is the opposite to the object portrayed:

*vāde avāda noma dannā é pu ra*  
*kadē badu sē ekakuta nomavai ti ra*  
*bade unnu bilindu da mau eka va ra*  
*ide nohāra maramin eti pem hā ra*

A city not aware of the difference between good and evil is as permanent as the goods displayed in a boutique for sale: together with the child in the womb and the mother with a kind heart they advanced and kill them both.<sup>140</sup>

Gonsalves also used irony as a literary technique in which the audience can perceive hidden meanings attributed to the characters he has created in his dramatic compositions.

Gonsalves uses all the literary devices and techniques possible to create a valuable collection of literature. A critical study of his works reveals that they are of a remarkable literary quality. Gonsalves continually selected suitable literary techniques to present his subject matter; he used folklore more than <sup>the language</sup>  $\wedge$  of <sup>the</sup> learned in his works; he also selected literary devices to suit the group of people he addressed.

Folklore is the unwritten literature of a culture or people as expressed in oral folktales, proverbs, songs etc; a body of stories and legends attached to a particular place or people. Some literary critics consider folklore as unsuitable material for works of literature without a proper grammatical order and suitable only for colloquial usage. However, folklore has its own tradition and it evolves like a language.<sup>141</sup> For example, in the *Saddharmaratnâvaliya* Dharmasena created a language of his own by associating himself with the ordinary village folk, a language enriched by his observation of the daily lives of villagers.<sup>142</sup> The techniques found in folklore were also used by Gonsalves and the style and words of his literary works flow spontaneously.

Gonsalves selected suitable rhythms for his poetical narration. The tunes in the poems were always in accordance with the themes he discussed. In the narration of the lamentation of Mary over the death of her son, Gonsalves uses a tune to create a sorrowful mood in the reader or listener:

*têda anasaka nodânedo vada kala ata noma dado  
 kuruse kara tibuva do mâ hâra koi vâdiya do  
 obatat me dati vê do me giya pana nala âe do  
 duk dîla mâriva do vâdu mage sita vâ do.*

Won't the hand that inflicted pain be punished? Has the cross been laid on the shoulder and where has he [Jesus] gone, leaving me? Has it happened

to you and will the last breath return? Was he killed after giving  
much suffering? Will my heart, which bore him, bear it?<sup>143</sup>

The sound of the funeral drum is created with the repetition of the word *do* eight times in the verse. Rhythmic techniques such as alliteration or repetition, and having the final letters of the lines alike, can be found in the works of Gonsalves, as they can in classical Sinhala works:

*pasukara rusiren surambâ*  
*gosakara ran mini salambâ*  
*enuvara keli raᅅga purambâ*  
*bambasara sita vat kalambâ*<sup>144</sup>

The combination of the word *ra* and the sibilants with the nasals in words like *rusiren* and *suramba*, *ran* and *salamba*, *raᅅga* and *puramba* suggests the subtle combination of a metallic and hissing sound as produced by anklets and bells on the feet of dancers.

In the lamentation of Mary, Gonsalves makes use of the literary devices of alliteration and the repetition of words to achieve his purpose, devices seen in his prose as well. The spontaneous flow of words and the use of literary devices is more clearly seen in his prose, since here he did not have the limitations of poetic form:

*sath venidâ samudurayehi siyalu ulpath*  
*vidharanavâ âkâsa doratu hârî ghanatara mēgha*  
*pâtâalavalin guvantharaya vâsie vatha ghattanayen*  
*hâ gigum viduli sena akunâdi grahanthika valin*  
*varshava patangena sathalin dinâ premanayehi*  
*divâ râe nonavatha dhâra nipâthayen vesa veu,*

*gañga, lin, oya, kethvathu, goda, mada, äla dola*  
*siyalla pirî ithirî mahathu prelayak vîya.*<sup>145</sup>

In this sentence the combination of the sounds *gha* and *tha* picturesquely describes the terrifying consequences of the flood during the time of Noah, as recorded in the Old Testament.<sup>146</sup> Similar instances can be found particularly in the *Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya* and the *Dukprâpti Prasañgaya* but the device appears throughout his compositions.

Having the final letters of the lines alike to bring about a rhyme and rhythmical effect can also be seen in his poetical narration. In some of the panegyric Sinhala classics, this particular literary device is used for mere sound effect without having much meaning while Gonsalves often used to communicate a message through the sound effect. For example,

*sura kallâ asu kara gatthemuva ade*  
*kara vellâ gela äda äda avata tade*  
*nara kollâ sura puthu venta kala va dê*  
*mera alla podi kela venna tada ba dê*<sup>147</sup>

In this verse, the Jews rejoiced as they caught Jesus. With the combination of the sounds *ra, lla* and *de* the sound echoes the sense.

Gonsalves was quite successful in using these literary devices in his poetical compositions; he communicated his subjects through the traditional literary techniques of the Sinhala classics.

End Notes.

1. Flannery, A. 1977 : 19.
2. Peiris, E. 1943 : 163.
3. *Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register* 1890 : 84.
4. The title page of the Jena MS. reads as follows: *Arte grammatica da Lingoa Chingala: Para a ouso e servico das Igregias e Chrisanidades de Ceilao; Composta no anno 1645, Pelo Padre Pierre Bergoim.*
5. *Ceylon Literary Register* 1890 : 62.
6. Peiris, E. 1978 : 78.
7. Godakumbura, C.E. 1955 : 200.
8. Peiris, E. 1950 : 4.
9. Several other Sinhala war-ballads (such as *Ankota Hatana, Parangi Hatana, Mahâ Hatana, Ingrisî Hatana, Vaduga Hatana* and *Ahalepola Hatana*) were composed after 1620.
10. Kumaratunga, M. 1930 : 1-3.
11. Veerasekara, E. 1932 : 1-3.
12. Veerasekara, E. 1932 : 186-189.
13. Wickramasinghe, M. 1949 : 197.
14. Veerasekara, E. 1932 : 151.
15. Silva de S.M.V. 1959 : 69.
16. Panabokke, T.B. 1893.

17. Vijayawardana, M. 1958 : 93.
18. Cf. Veerasekara, M. 1932 : 83 and Sorata, W. 1930 : 583.
19. Veerasekara, E. 1932 : 83.
20. *ekatun devinduge pāda vānda adarina*  
Veerasekara, E. 1932 : 126.
21. Wickramasinghe, M. 1949 : 2.
22. Siddhanta, M. 1899 : xii.
23. Sannasgala, P. B. 1968 : 728.
24. *Purāna Nūru* is assigned to a period around the second century AD or earlier.
25. Perera, S. G. 1938 : 250.
26. Gunawardana, W. F. 1951 : 1.
27. Wickramasinghe, M. 1961 : xxxii.
28. Pinto, N. 1954 : 14.
29. 'Garden' is translated as 'paradise' in the Greek version. Paradise is pictured here as an oasis in the desert.
30. Genesis 2: 8.
31. *Vēda Kāvya* 1993 : 37.
32. *Vēda Kāvya* 1993 : 39.
33. *Concise Oxford Dictionary* 1995 : 1393.
34. *Vēda Kāvya* 1993 : 42.
35. Vijesekara, N. D. S. 1943 : 48.

36. *Dêva Vêda Purânaya* 1924 : 29.
37. Flannery, A. 1977 : 58.
38. Coe, S. 1973 : 240.
39. Hodges, M. 1953 : 1.
40. Pinto, P. 1985 : 13.
41. Shorter, A. 1988 : 83.
42. Chandrakanthan, A. J. 1979 : 44.
43. Amalorpavadass, D. S. 1978 : 227.
44. Geiese, F. 1985 : 73.
45. Don Peter, W. L. A. 1995 : 31.
46. Perera, S.G. 1962 : 100.
47. Gomis, O. 1990 : 28.
48. Dharmaratna, S. 1931 : 147.
49. *noma lâga pera kavi sama kau bānda yasa bānda deva* (Dharmarama, S. 1931 : 227).
50. *Budu Bana Pratyakṣaya* 1932 : 31.
51. Wickramasinghe, K.D.P. 1965 : 198.
52. Sorata, W. 1930 : 64.
53. Matthew 21. 7-9 (Good News New Testament- 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 1994).
54. Sorata, W. 1930 : 486.

55. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 331.
56. Sorata, W. 1930 : 487.
57. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 312.
58. Sorata, W. 1993 : 491.
59. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 313.
60. Sorata, W. 1930 : 492.
61. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 314.
62. Sorata, W. 1930 : 500.
63. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 315.
64. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 114.
65. *vânda ek pasekin si ta  
tepalâ sâla kala mē lesa ta* (*Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 209).
66. *vesi in sulaku huvô  
pasêka siñiyôya nan na huvô* (Gunawardana, W.F. 1946 : 251 and 252).
67. Vijesekera, N.D.S. 1943 : 93.
68. Sorata, W. 1930 : 535.
69. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 309.
70. Gunawardana, W.F. 1946 : 472.
71. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 317.
72. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 388.
73. *digu; neela varala mudamin hisa  
tugu; mula tara layê att gasâ* (*Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 389).
74. Gunasekara, A.M. 1897 : 548.

75. *nêla varalasath mudamin pitata helâ*  
*bâla hasa biso ânduvâya duk velâ* (Gunasekara, A.M. 1897 : 387).
76. Gunasekara, A.M. 1897 : 557.
77. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 437.
78. Gunawardana, W.F. 1938 : 36.
79. Piyaratana, M. 1960 : 367.
80. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 440.
81. *Pasan Pota* 1993 : 330. (Further examples of the same style of the narration can be found on pages 323, 326 and 334.)
82. Sorata, W. 1930 : 137.
83. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 1, 49, 114 and 153.
84. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 100 and 204.
85. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 399 and 401.
86. *Sinhalese-English Dictionary* 1924 : 1055.
87. *Sinhalese-English Dictionary* 1924 : 1013.
88. *pasak śak sari va na*  
*pretikâl rajuta mana me na* (Veerasekara, E. 1932 : 38).
89. *vara sura senega mō da*  
*un pasak śak deu le da* (Veerasekara, E. 1932 : 72).
90. *surindun suratî gat lelavamina*  
*sobaman viduravi vilasin teu na* (Veerasekara, E. 1932 : 87).
91. *no valandâ aha rak*  
*munindu vâda un sanda é dâka śak* (Piyaratana, M. 1960 : 155).

92. *śak devīndu tosi na  
jeevat va tepi dede na* (Piyaratana, M. 1960 : 416).
93. Gunasekara, A.M. 1897 : 638.
94. *balavik māti senagak pirivarami na  
karasak lesa râvana yudayata ya na* (Veerasekara, E. 1932 : 101).
95. Veerasekara, E. 1932 : 121.
96. Vijesekara, N.D.S. 1943 : 45.
97. Veerasekara, E. 1932 : 22.
98. The Buddha's diamond throne was that which sprang up at the Bo tree when a Brahmin threw eight handfuls of Kusa grass for the Buddha to sit on the day he became the Buddha.
99. *sakvala* is a complete set of worlds, including the earth, with *mahâ mēru* in its centre, and around its circumference a wall of rock, the sun and moon and all worlds as far as the light of the sun extends, as well as a series of hells and heavens, the latter consisting of the worlds of Deva and Brahma (*Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 78).
100. *sagata ran hina ki  
bava sindu naukâve ki* (*Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 6).
101. *pasak rusiru sara kalana subâ vak  
sisak nunu rana kanaka latâ vaka* (*Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 60).
102. *damba diva parasindu é visâ purava ra  
numba dili rivi lesa juvakim muni va ra* (*Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 82).
103. *rivi sandu saha lapa pasakata rā viya  
kiri sindu sasalava kara oya sê viya* (*Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 86).
104. *Pasan Pota* 1993 : 58, 61, 71 and 318.
105. Vishnu is one of the chief Hîndu deities, who is said to be the preserver of the world. He has had many incarnations and in Krishna he is said to have been wholly incarnate.

106. *Agnâna Auṣadaya* 1961 : 4; see also *Dêva Vêda Saṅksêpaya* 1925 : 29.
107. Sorata, W. 1930 : 13, 135 and 156.
108. *Dêva Vêda Purânaya* 1924 : 332; see also *Suvisêṣa Visarjanaya* 1905 : 152, *Sukrita Darpanaya* 1927 : 19.
109. *Agnâna Auṣadaya* 1961 : 11.
110. *ek siya tis hayak narakâdi* (*Agnâna Auṣadaya* 1961 : 13).
111. *situvath biya karavana ara ta raye*  
*vâtunoth ek siya sâtiyak ni raye* (Kumaranatunga, M. 1930 : 9 and 93).
112. *vêdagam satarak ätha*  
*samayam desätak ätha* (*Agnâna Auṣadaya* 1961 : 26).
113. *nivanata maga meyai ki yam*  
*dahamata venu desätak sama yam* (Kumaranatunga, M. 1930 : 88).
114. Atkinson, W.C. 1952 : 42.
115. 'Praised be the most holy sacrament'.
116. Wickramasinghe, M. 1949 : 93 and 94.
117. *andâ yavâ tabalâ valpita gattâ se* (Ratnapala, N. 1962 : 30).
118. *handunana maga yamin sita maga vichârannâ se* (Ratnapala, N. 1962 : 41).
119. *davaseiya ha kudu hära sahal pamanak gath se* (Ratnapala, N. 1962 : 49).
120. Ratnapala, N. 1962 : 78.
121. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1963 : xiv.
122. *polonga ta nelum malak dê mâ dashta karanta epa kîva se* (Sannasgala, P.B. 1961 : 726).
123. *târaka, gasvala paradel kola se bima vâti*.
124. *nayâ allâ gath gembiditta andannâk men*.

125. *Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya* 1942 : 5.
126. *tuvakkuva pipirî vedi thiyâpu ayama miya yannâ se (Agnâna Auṣadaya*  
1961 : 8).
127. *ävidina sarpayekugen igilena sarpayan no ipede (Agnâna Auṣadaya* 1961:  
7).
128. *dumata bayen gimnata panina ayata môdaya yai kiyathi (Agnâna Auṣadaya*  
1961 : 9).
129. *bimata vätumu gediya koi kaleka gasata eyda (Agnâna Auṣadaya* 1961 : 14).
130. *kanekuta kanek pâra penvamata nupuluvana (Agnâna Auṣadaya* 1961 :  
37).
131. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 164.
132. Cf. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 317 and Gunawardana, W.F. 1946 : 371 and 472.
133. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 523.
134. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 150.
135. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 151.
136. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 380.
137. *in râsi ganân sen e pu re*  
*un râsiyan se andu no asi re (Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 393 and 289).
138. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 379.
139. *ran ruya vilasin deu kumaru ta*  
*un sîṭṭa sarosin dena pahara ta (Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 392 and 406).
140. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 220 and 209.
141. *Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya* 1942 : v.
142. Wickramasinghe, M. 1954 : 129.

143. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 329.

144. Gunawardana, W.F. 1946 : 126.

145. *Dêva Vêda Purânaya* 1924 : 43.

146. *Genesis* 7 .17 – 20.

147. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 353.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. GONSALVES' CONTRIBUTION TO THE EVOLUTION OF THE DRAMATIC TRADITION IN SRI LANKA

Visual media such as symbolic gestures and signs provide perhaps the earliest evidence for religiosity in human history. The innate human qualities of speech, song, dance and acting manifest themselves in individual behaviour and in an organised form in group behaviour. The mimicking of actions for entertainment or information led to the evolution of drama, and with the development and establishment of economic conditions, social relations and progress in literacy, the organised form developed into folk plays and then dramas of literary and cultural value. Drama then became a genre of the literature in some societies. The *New Encyclopædia* describes the term as follows:

Drama, in the generally accepted sense, is a composition in prose or poetry, usually intended to be acted upon a stage, presenting a story by means of characters, speaking and acting in situations contrived to develop a plot, and with such accessories of scenery, stage machinery, costumes etc., as are fitted to produce an impression of reality.<sup>1</sup>

As will become clear, traditional Sinhala culture did not have a literary drama. This was largely due to the influence of Theravada Buddhism. However, the inspiration of popular Buddhism gave rise to some forms of folk drama.

When Christianity came to Sri Lanka with the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century, religious drama was used as a medium for catechetical

instruction, especially of adults, by the missionaries from European countries.

The literary works of Gonsalves in the early eighteenth century included an important development in the evolution of Sinhala drama.<sup>2</sup> This can be seen especially in works such as the *Dukprāpti Prasāṅgaya*, the *Pasan Pota* and the *Maṅgala Gītiya*. The tradition of passion plays created by these compositions gave rise to a variety of forms of drama in subsequent decades. Gonsalves' influence is particularly evident in *nāḍagam*, a type of folk play, but *nāḍagam*, as I shall demonstrate later, can also be found in all other forms of Sinhala drama.

### **3.i. A historical survey of the Sri Lankan tradition of drama**

In the history of literature and in the *jātaka* stories, one finds plenty of dramatic material. In spite of these records, there is no evidence of drama in the early history of Sinhala literature. The traditional religious ideal of Theravada Buddhism regarded music, dancing and drama as incitements to passion. Sinhala literature generally evolved among Buddhist monks, and the lack of literary drama is attributed to the fact that for these literary men drama was prohibited.<sup>3</sup> Some have also suggested that drama received no encouragement because singing, dancing and acting were relegated to the lower classes. As Sarathchandra explains,

There is nothing to indicate that any spoken drama was acted either in the court or in the circles of the educated laity. The fact that

writers did not produce anything in this genre, and did not even translate the Sanskrit plays that were known to them, would naturally have stood in the way of drama becoming a form of royal entertainment. Later contacts with South India brought about no change in the situation, doubtless because of the language difficulty that importation would cause, as well as because the South Indian drama was at a folk level and hardly a fit entertainment for the educated. <sup>4</sup>

Sinhala writers, however, knew of the existence of drama. For example, the author of the *Kâvyâdarsa* declares: 'In prose and poetry only the virtues of the Buddha and religious customs and so on can be portrayed, and I warn against all forms of drama'. <sup>5</sup>

Drama in prose or poetry was therefore prohibited. According to Godakumbura, the *Kâvyâdarsa* verse refers to what existed in the country at that time; <sup>6</sup> yet drama was regarded as one of the sixty-four skills and arts (*sivu sâta kalâ*) <sup>7</sup> that a prince should possess. For example, one of the rites connected with the sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha at the city of Kurunegala in the year 1325 AD was dramatic: 'those skilled with drama, dressed in colourful garments and bedecked with bright ornaments, should perform before the Relic'. <sup>8</sup> Moreover, the *Girâ Sandêsaya* (1450-1460 AD) explicitly mentions that the pupils of Totagamu Pirivena school of Sri Rahula studied, besides Sanskrit, Pali, Sinhala and Tamil, the art of poetry and drama (*nalu*).<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, we have no evidence of the types of dramatic art practised in the country in the past.

### **3.i.a. Different forms of drama found in Sri Lankan history**

We have plenty of information, however, about the folk plays prevalent in Sri

Lanka. In the first place, there were realistic dances and plays performed by the people from ancient times to ward off disease and evil spirits, and to invoke the help of the gods in the various crises of life.<sup>10</sup> Puppetry is mentioned as early as the twelfth century AD, and there is an elaborate description of how puppet shows were used to enhance a religious procession in the time of King Parakramabahu II (1234-1269 AD).<sup>11</sup>

Although puppet shows have a long history, the Sinhala puppet play, as it survives today, is of recent origin.<sup>12</sup> Puppetry as a dramatic art is said to have been stimulated by the folk play or folk opera, known as *nāḍagama*. Another form of folk play was the masked play or *kōlam nāṭima*. This form presented an array of masked dancers, representing characters drawn from various sources but connected with a particular story. It ended with the enactment of that story in the form of a play, through the medium of song and spoken language, the latter being for the most part impromptu. Different people did the singing while the dancers acted out the songs. The natural development of masked plays culminated in another variety of folk play called *kavi nāḍagama*. In this form the masks were considered an unnecessary encumbrance, a hindrance to the development of dialogue, and were dropped entirely. Another type of folk play is *sokari*, which bears the stamp of being one of the earliest types. It is a form of dramatic entertainment confined to the hill country peasantry, with its several incidents strung together to yield a play of intense rustic appeal. Its humour, produced by the deliberate misunderstanding of words, gives rise to an unmistakable rustic character.<sup>13</sup>

### **3.i.b. Literary drama and the cultural traditions**

Mahayana Buddhism commonly absorbed many local cults and practices and made all kinds of concessions to the customs of people. However, Theravada was slow to make such concessions and preferred to keep the doctrines uncontaminated, even at the expense of its popularity. As a result of Theravada influence on Sinhala culture, the country did not develop stage or literary drama.

Under the patronage of Buddhism, drama flourished in India, as it did in Burma and Siam (Thailand), two Theravada countries where well-developed drama could be found in the royal courts.<sup>14</sup> This difference between the Indian and Sri Lankan contexts was largely due to royal patronage. In addition, however, traditional Sinhala culture regarded drama as morally unacceptable. Buddhist monks were discouraged from studying and promoting the dramatic arts, by an ascetic injunction. The culture also discouraged the literati, who might have developed poetic and dramatic compositions. After the *Kaṅṅilumina* of Parakramabahu II, no poetic works appeared for centuries.<sup>15</sup> However, there is plenty of evidence of dancing, drumming, feasting and public demonstrations at court and at religious functions. Despite the variety of types of folk play, however, there was no development of literary drama at any time in the history of Sinhala literature.

### **3.ii. Plays used by the missionaries prior to Gonsalves**

In marked contrast to this, as long as dramatic performances did not infringe

Christian religious beliefs and morals, Christianity was not averse to them. Missionaries made the first serious attempt at dramatisation in Sinhala as early as the seventeenth century, drawing on the wealth of material to be found in the liturgy of the Church, the lives of the saints and the scriptures. Occasions for staging plays are found in the celebrations of church festivals, most famously the passion plays, performed in churches annually during the Lenten period.<sup>16</sup>

### **3.ii.a. Christian passion plays**

The passion play seems to have originated in Europe. The composition and production of religious plays began even before the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>17</sup> The mystery plays drew their inspiration from the colourful Easter liturgy celebrated in the Church. As Don Peter explains, 'all evidence points to Easter as the festival with which the earliest religious dramas were mostly intimately connected'.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, these plays highlight Jesus' passion, death and resurrection as narrated in the Gospels rather than his early life or public ministry. These mystery plays were performed in the Church itself at first, but later they were shifted to other public places. Enacted during the period of Lent, they were referred to as *passos*, *passo* meaning a 'pious exercise' practised on Good Friday.<sup>19</sup>

Portuguese culture gave a more prominent place to drama as these passion plays developed. The most skilful and influential playwrights in this early period were Gil Vicente (1465-1536) of Portugal and Lope de Vega (1562-1635) of

Spain.<sup>20</sup> Portuguese missionaries launched their mission work in Goa, India and in Sri Lanka during this period of theatrical creativity, and it is therefore quite natural that the Portuguese plays made an impact here. In Sinhala and Tamil, passion plays were called *pâsku*, from the Portuguese *pâscoa*, and they were composed in both those languages.<sup>21</sup> As Sarathchandra explains,

The Roman Catholic Passion Play, or *pâsku*, as it is called, ought to be considered together with the Sinhalese puppet play. The *pâsku* originated, like the *nâdagama*, in the Catholic areas of Jaffna, and migrated in a similar way, to the Sinhalese-speaking Catholic parts along the west coast.<sup>22</sup>

In certain records, the word *gâvina* or 'ceremony' was used instead of the word *passo* or *pâsku* to effect the same meaning.

### **3.ii.b. Plays performed by the missionaries in Sri Lanka**

Scriptural and liturgical events were dramatised for the purpose of catechetical instruction. These factors were the source, origin and the cause of the evolution of religious plays. The process is described by E. Peiris as follows:

The primary constituents of drama are dialogue and representation. Both are present in the happenings which the liturgy records. The Mass is a mimesis and the elaboration of its ritual was the first step towards a Christian theatrical art. The sanctuary, however primitive, was a stage, and the faithful, however few, were audience as well as actor. The play was at once a ceremony in which they took part and a spectacle at which they assisted.

From these activities Christian theatre, almost inevitably, was born. The central events in the Christian economy of redemption were both narrative and act: and the sacred ministers, day by day, retold from scripture and where necessary, underlined in homily the things that they were representing. Just as in the Mass itself narrative and petition become fused into pure act and strict imitation, so Christian drama developed its native form.<sup>23</sup>

From the liturgy grew the religious and the morality plays. The early Christian missionaries encouraged and even composed Christian plays in Sinhala and Tamil. For example, when the Jesuits arrived in Sri Lanka in 1602 they staged a drama to celebrate the opening of their first chapel in Colombo. They then staged a drama on 2 February 1604, to mark the inauguration of a new church they had built in Colombo. The following year, when their Provincial came to Sri Lanka, they had a dramatic performance to celebrate the event.<sup>24</sup> The Jesuit missionaries had organised similar performances in the mission territory assigned to them. For example, there was a dramatic performance on the occasion of a church feast at Kammala. Another drama was staged at Chilaw to celebrate the inauguration of a new church.<sup>25</sup>

In their dramatic compositions, the Portuguese missionaries must have followed the *autos*, an Iberian variety of mystery and miracle play, which was popular in Portugal. The two main festivals of the Christian liturgical calendar are, of course, Christmas and Easter and the missionaries brought into the mission lands the European custom of setting up a crib in churches and homes as a visual representation of the birth of Jesus. Some dramatisation too was added to this, a practice which continued in Sri Lanka for decades.<sup>26</sup> This took the form

of puppet animation of the figures in the crib, especially the angels. Sometimes the arrival of the shepherds and the kings to pay their homage to Jesus in the crib was performed by live actors immediately after the midnight Mass on Christmas day. Different kinds of nativity play presented the Christmas theme. There were plays relating the story of the shepherds directed by heavenly messengers to the stable at Bethlehem in the *autos pastorales* (pastoral plays), and there were similar plays about the visit of the Magi, called *autos dos Tres Reis Magos* (plays of the Three Kings).<sup>27</sup>

The Goan Oratorian missionaries made a form of visual representation of the passion (*passo*) to recall the events commemorated in Holy Week in the Dutch period. Here we find a pictorial dramatisation of the passion of Jesus using statues to depict the major passion scenes, one for each week of the liturgical season of Lent. These scenes culminated in the crucifixion on Good Friday and the resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Further, there were lamentations chanted during Lent, especially in Holy Week. These lamentations are known in Sinhala as *pasan*, from the Portuguese word *paixao*, meaning 'passion'.<sup>28</sup> The passion-chants that have come down to our times are the compositions of Gonsalves, and both the tradition and his compositions continue to be used.

### **3.iii. Gonsalves' contribution to development of the dramatic tradition**

Gonsalves was familiar with dramatic techniques. As a student at St. Paul's College, Goa, he had seen how his teachers, the Jesuit missionaries, had used

the techniques of the puppet play to instruct and edify the masses, especially during Lent. He was acquainted with the local Sri Lankan variety and improved on it. The Oratorian missionaries had passion plays, with images of the sacred personages, in Kandy and in the Vanny, during the Lent of 1706.<sup>29</sup> Gonsalves wrote sermons on the passion of Jesus and, as stated above, the *pasan* (sorrowful chants) in Sinhala and Tamil to be read and sung during the shows. He also compiled several verse books;<sup>30</sup> the stanzas that appear in the *Pasan Pota* and the *Maṅgala Gītiya* were normally used in passion plays. Moreover, the melody patterns of Gonsalves' verses composed in the above-mentioned works became models for the dramatists. He himself popularised the medium of songs in proselytising activity. He was a choir master and a musician while in Goa, and there is evidence that when families gathered together under the shade of a tree while playing a drum (*rabana*), they sang his verses.<sup>31</sup>

### **3.iii.a. The specific characteristics of Gonsalves' contribution to drama**

Of all the works of Gonsalves, the *Pasan Pota* is unique in its composition. Although it is a poem, in some stanzas he has not arranged the last letters as usual.<sup>32</sup> Long lines in the verse are broken half-way to give a dramatic presentation in dialogue form. Gonsalves knew several languages and he made use of this knowledge to absorb a variety of forms from other languages. I shall examine this aspect when I discuss Gonsalves' use of language later in the thesis. This particular type of verse developed in the period of the Kotte kingdom and

evolved through the influence of South Indian literature. These unique dramatic characteristics of Gonsalves' composition can be considered as a part of his effort to indigenize the dramatic tradition found in the country. It is obvious that the passion plays received from Portuguese *autos* plays via Goan traditions were adapted to the local situation.<sup>33</sup>

Subsequent plays followed the traditions created by Gonsalves. His specific contribution to the passion plays includes his compositions, the *Dukprāpti Prasāṅgaya* and the *Pasan Pota*. The *Dukprāpti Prasāṅgaya* itself was a passion play, and it has been an inspiration for the same tradition throughout the centuries. Gonsalves' contribution to drama can be seen even more vividly in another factor: all the plays written prior to him have disappeared during the course of time, due to political instability and wars.<sup>34</sup> Therefore one has to depend on the works of Gonsalves to study the development of the dramatic tradition of the country.

#### **3.iv. The dramatic compositions of Gonsalves**

Passion plays were landmarks in the history of drama in Sri Lanka; according to the existing written dramatic materials, they played a pioneering role in that field.<sup>35</sup> Religious drama was considered to be a powerful means of giving vent to the pent up feelings of the persecuted believers and, since there were no models in the country's literature, they turned to South India for inspiration. According to the *Oratorian Mission Report*, Holy Week was observed 'with

passion plays especially on Good Friday, for which this Congregation (of the Oratory) has given the full consent'.<sup>36</sup>

Compositions such as the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya* (the sermons on the Passion of Jesus) were meant to move the spectators to devotion. Consequently, they were lifted from the plane of entertainment to that of religious manifestation.

#### 3.iv.a. The *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya* of Gonsalves

The *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya* is the most popular work by Gonsalves. The sermons contained in this work are composed for chanting to a mournful tune during the season of Lent and at passion plays in Holy Week. The author says in one of his letters:

There existed here some ancient hymns of sorrow about Jesus, which the women sang over the dead. The non-believers began to speak ill, for this reason, the people asked me to compose for them others suitable for occasions for mourning.<sup>37</sup>

The sermons as well as the chants bear witness to the author's devotion to the passion of Jesus. They have a pathos seldom met with in prose or verse. This work is important for anyone interested in the origin of passion plays or the origin and the development of drama in Sri Lanka. Passion plays were performed with the help of images and it was perhaps out of reverential regard for the

sacred personages that images were used instead of live actors, just as in Theravada countries human actors were averse to playing the part of the Buddha. There was also a great veneration for the crucifixion images of Jesus. In the popular mind, no human actor can represent so revered a figure. The images were moved like puppets, especially that of the crucifixion, to give the audience the impression of Christ agonising and dying on the cross. These images as well as the costumes were perhaps brought from Goa.<sup>38</sup> The *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya* was composed with the specific purpose of using it at such passion plays.

The *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya* contains the most dramatic part of the life of Jesus, as he bids farewell to his mother to leave for Jerusalem, up to his death and the leaving of his body in the tomb. The whole narration is divided into nine dramatic scenes with the purpose of staging them in the seven weeks of the season of Lent.

#### **3.iv.b. The structure of the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya***

Gonsalves composed all nine sermons to follow a definite pattern. Each sermon consists of a vivid, moving and dramatic description of the passion narratives, followed by explanations and reflections. At the end of each sermon, the main thoughts of that sermon are given in summary in the form of a prayer. The whole work is meant to move the hearts of the audience.

The enduring popularity of the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya* may be attributed to the devotional elements it contains. The Lenten devotions have been practised in the Church in various ways, including chanting, listening to the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya*, the way of the cross, the veneration of the cross, the *passo* and the *pâsku*. These practices were woven around the theme of repentance and other penitential aspects of popular devotions.<sup>39</sup> The official Lenten worship of the Church and the devotion connected with it are meant to make the faithful realise their sinful nature and to inspire them to plead for the mercy of God. The structure and the subject matter are presented in the nine sermons of the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya* to achieve this purpose.

#### **3.iv.c. Dramatic elements in the composition**

People expressed their devotion to the passion and death of Jesus through this performance, the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya* being chanted during the performance of the *pâsku* or the passion play. The enactment of the passion play was not confined to the stage only. The dramatic scenes of the carrying of the cross by Jesus to Calvary were enacted in villages. People also participated in them by forming processions.<sup>40</sup> Relevant images were carried by the people during these processions, the chief one being Jesus carrying the cross. This gave the people an opportunity to play an active role in the dramatic performance of the Passion of Jesus.

### **3.v. Analysis of the nine sermons**

The whole composition is not meant to be read at a stretch, but each sermon is to be recited in the appropriate week during the season of Lent. Evidence can be found in the narration itself to indicate that the work is divided according to the seven weeks. At the beginning of the second sermon we read: 'On the previous day we have seen how Our Lord went through the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, and today let us see how he was arrested by the Jews'.<sup>41</sup> The fifth sermon begins by saying: 'In all these days we have seen one after the other how Our Lord was harassed. Today let us see how Pilate decided to crucify Jesus and handed him over to the Jews'.<sup>42</sup> At the beginning of the seventh sermon, it is stated: 'On the previous day we have seen how Our Lord, the all powerful, has climbed the mount of Calvary, carrying the cross. Today let us see the death of Jesus on the cross'.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, the division of the nine sermons for performance over seven weeks was probably organised in the following manner: in the first week, the first sermon; in the second week, the second and third sermons; in the third week, the fourth sermon; in the fourth week, the fifth sermon; in the fifth week, the sixth sermon; in the sixth week, the seventh sermon and in the seventh week, the eighth and ninth sermons. The reason for this division is that there is no mention of such phrases like, 'the previous day' and 'today let us', at the beginning of the third, eighth and ninth sermons. The other reason is that there is a close link and unity between the

second and third sermons and between the eighth and ninth sermons. The division of sermons according to the respective weeks suggests the different scenes of a long play.

### **3.vi. The sources of Gonsalves' composition**

Gonsalves used Biblical sources for the composition of his dramatic masterpiece, the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya*. A comparative study of the passion narratives in the Gospels reveals that the four authors interpreted the life of Jesus through the prism of the 'Paschal events', each one addressing his gospel to a particular community. Each community faced different contextual problems relating to its socio-religious life, and therefore, each author had a special agenda in seeking an answer to the needs of his community. Thus the four gospel writers highlighted certain aspects of the preaching, ministry, arrest, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, each according to his own perspective.

Gonsalves took material freely from all four Gospel narratives for his composition. The main theme of the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya* is the Passion and death of Jesus.

**3.vi.a. A record of passion elements from the four Gospels found in the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya***

Points mentioned by Gonsalves

	<u>Mt.</u>	<u>Mk.</u>	<u>Lk.</u>	<u>Jn.</u>
Large upper room furnished		14/15	22/12	
Washing of the feet				13/1-20
Thirty pieces of silver	26/15			
Suffering at Gethsemane	26/36	14/32		
Going to the Mount of Olives	26/30	14/26	22/39	
Sheep to be scattered <sup>44</sup>	26/31	14/27		
Peter's denial	26/34	14/28	22/32	13/37
Jesus' three disciples	26/36	14/32		
'My soul is sorrowful'	26/38	14/34		
Instructions to pray			22/40	
Jesus knelt down			22/41	
He fell on his face	26/39			
Cup of suffering	26/40			
'Father, thy will be done' <sup>45</sup>	26/42			
Disciples were sleeping	26/43			

It is interesting to note that Gonsalves did not use the Lukan text, 'And there appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him' (22/43). According to many Biblical scholars, this particular verse is not found in some of the earliest New Testament manuscripts, a view supported by the absence of this verse in qualitatively important manuscripts.<sup>46</sup> However, it is also possible that Gonsalves purposely omitted this verse to show his own point of view, that is, that Jesus had to endure his suffering without external support. It is certainly the case that Gonsalves took poetic licence in his composition.<sup>47</sup>

The main two characters in the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya* are Jesus and his mother. She is portrayed as a sorrowing mother who takes an active part in the

sufferings of her son. It is also interesting to note that some incidents mentioned in the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya* relating to the mother of Jesus are not found in the sources of the Gospels. For example, in the first sermon of the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya*, Jesus goes to his mother and bids farewell to her before his final mission of going up to Jerusalem, and he receives her blessing.<sup>48</sup> This event is not mentioned in any of the Gospels, but it remains one of the themes traditionally used in the *passo*. Gonsalves also relates that the information about the sentencing of Jesus to crucifixion was taken to Mary by John. In another scene, Veronica wipes the face of Jesus and in return Jesus rewards her with the imprint of his face on the cloth with which she wiped his face. Later we read of the soldier who pierced the side of Jesus with a lance, causing blood and water to spurt out. When a drop of fluid falls on the blind eye of the soldier who has pierced Jesus, he recovers his sight. Such events, being highly effective for dramatic presentation, appeal to the audience, and we may conclude that this is why Gonsalves made use of these alternative sources in his own composition. At the same time, the creativity and imagination of the author are evident.

### **3.vi.b. The first sermon: the agony of Jesus in the garden**

Jesus' acceptance of his sufferings is presented in the composition as obedience to God. It is portrayed vividly, to move the hearts of the audience. In the scene in which Jesus bids farewell to his mother, Gonsalves twice emphasises the sole intention of Jesus to do 'God's will'.<sup>49</sup> However, at this moment Gonsalves

stresses the important role Mary has played in his mission, as a source of consolation and encouragement to the people.

From this scene we move to the Last Supper, where Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. Here he predicts his betrayal and reveals his realisation that Peter will deny him. Jesus' desire to be alone to commune with the Father in Gethsemane is recorded in the Gospels, and retained by Gonsalves.<sup>50</sup> The author also highlights the absence of a response from the Father. The atmosphere of deep silence and loneliness as narrated by the author reminds one of the *Dark Night of the Soul*.<sup>51</sup>

The author also vividly portrays the description of the sweating of blood at Gethsemane. In this event the suffering of Jesus is contrasted with the sin of Adam in the Bible. In the first sermon of the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya*, the author effectively records the details of Jesus' physical, psychological, moral and spiritual sufferings.

### **3.vi.c. The second sermon: the arrest of Jesus**

Gonsalves portrays Jesus as full of mercy and compassion in sharp contrast to the betrayal by Judas, Jewish stubbornness and, to a certain extent, Peter's denial. Judas' act of betrayal by kissing his master is presented as an act committed with an explicitly evil intention:<sup>52</sup> Judas expresses his false loyalty to Jesus through the kiss which reveals him to his enemies. By going to meet the crowd that has come to arrest him, Jesus shows his attitude of straightforwardness. His

persecutors are presented as evil personified, but the denial of Peter is mentioned without much comment.<sup>53</sup> Gonsalves juxtaposes Jesus and the rest of the people throughout the second sermon. Jesus is left alone, deserted by his own people, betrayed by one of his disciples, denied by another and arrested. Gonsalves creates a dramatic scene from these conflicts. In spite of everything, Jesus' attitude of mercy and compassion does not change. The author uses the word *karunā*, (mercy) five times in this sermon: when Jesus heals the ear of the soldier who had come to arrest him; when he addresses Judas, who has betrayed him while pretending to be a friend; and in the special look of forgiveness cast at Peter who has denied him; Gonsalves also mentions Jesus showing mercy to those who have come to arrest him and as showing mercy to those who persecuted him. By portraying Jesus as full of mercy and compassion, the author calls his audience to turn to Jesus to receive his mercy for themselves.

### **3.vi.d. The third sermon: the flagellation**

Jesus, as the protagonist in the story of the *Dukprāpti Prasāṅgaya*, is portrayed triumphant as a heroic character. In the third sermon, people who have had some encounter with him recall his goodness, his greatness as a teacher and divine healer. Gonsalves juxtaposes the goodness of Jesus with the cruelty of the high priests and the elders; the trial and the unjust condemnation by Pilate is dramatically portrayed to move the hearts of the audience. The description of the mourning on that day effectively communicates this message: the sun and moon,

the very sources of light, are said to be in mourning; all the creatures of the earth, as well as the heavens and the earth itself, share the agony of Jesus. All these descriptions portray Jesus as perfectly innocent and unjustly condemned to death and crucifixion.

### **3.vi.e. The fourth sermon: the crowning with thorns**

In this sermon, Jesus is presented as the universal king. Referring to the Creator, Gonsalves emphasises the fact that Jesus is powerful enough to create and destroy. A comparison is made between Jesus and the great kings in history, in order to bring out the incomparable greatness of Jesus as king. Gonsalves refers to the powerful King Solomon and King David to present Jesus as the greatest of the kings, although he is mocked and humiliated by contemporary rulers and high priests. Jesus is also portrayed as the king of all three worlds.<sup>54</sup> Gonsalves describes in detail the insults and humiliations that accompany the crowning with thorns, contrasting the hardened pride of mankind with the humiliations borne by Jesus. Gonsalves thus evokes the *kenosis*<sup>55</sup> of Jesus who has undergone all his sufferings and humiliations for the sake of humanity. At the end of the sermon, Gonsalves urges all people to give up their sinful ways.

### **3.vi.f. The fifth sermon: Pilate presents Jesus with the words,**

*ECCE HOMO*<sup>56</sup>

The author of the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya* presents Jesus as the new Adam.<sup>57</sup>

Reference is also made to Barabbas the thief to remind the people of their stubbornness. On the other hand, Jesus is presented as unchanged, steady and a ransom for the sin of the world.<sup>58</sup> In the fifth sermon, a dramatic scene is created when Jesus is presented with the words, '*ECCE HOMO*'. In this scene the deep-rooted hatred of the people towards Jesus is brought out by Gonsalves, an attitude intensified by Pilate's evident desire to release Jesus. It is generally understood that Pilate presented Jesus with the words, '*ECCE HOMO*' in order to arouse the sympathy of the Jews for the humiliated Jesus. Gonsalves points out three charges given as reasons for sentencing Jesus to death: disturbing the peace, denying the authority of the king and claiming to be God.

### **3.vi.g. The sixth sermon: the carrying of the cross**

Gonsalves uses the narrative of the Gospel of John when he says, 'Jesus went to Calvary carrying his own cross'.<sup>59</sup> This statement suggests that Jesus willingly carried the cross. The wickedness of the persecutors of Jesus is portrayed even in this sermon and at the same time Gonsalves applies the event to the lives of ordinary people by stating that Jesus suffered for the sins of the world. In this sermon several highly dramatic scenes are presented. A courageous woman named Veronica volunteers to wipe the face of Jesus; as a reward for her gesture the face of Jesus is imprinted on the cloth with which she wiped his face.

More than half the sermon narrates the dramatic event of Mary going to meet Jesus. John, a disciple of Jesus, brings to Mary the news that Jesus has

been taken to be crucified. This scene is a clear instance of Gonsalves' creativity and imagination. Mary is presented as full of anxiety and disturbed as she begins to inquire from all she meets. The dialogues composed in this sermon are moving. The lamentation of Mary and her imagination of the disfigured Jesus is skilfully narrated by Gonsalves. The other incident recorded in this sermon is that Simon of Cyrene is forced to help Jesus carry the cross. The cruelty of the soldiers is dramatically portrayed in this scene, and again Gonsalves gives priority to the heart-rending details of the agony of Mary at the fate of her only son.

### **3.vi.h. The seventh sermon: the crucifixion**

In this sermon, Gonsalves says that people flocked together to witness the drama of the agony of Jesus on Mount Calvary, which is presented as a detestable place. In spite of the fact that Jesus is already in a state of death, the persecutors want to crucify him. The scene of the removal of his garments is highly dramatic. For Gonsalves, the worst humiliation endured by Jesus is the removal of his clothes, and he brings out the extremity of the lowly state of Jesus without decent clothes. The author reminds the audience of the Transfiguration in which grey clouds come down and Jesus is covered with his divine glory at Mount Tabor.<sup>60</sup> Gonsalves also makes use of the dramatic technique of irony to contrast the tireless works of Jesus during his mission with the sort of rest he receives once he is nailed on to the cross at the moment of his crucifixion. Jesus' mother, Mary, is

also present at the scene of the crucifixion and Gonsalves describes her state of agony as being as if her heart itself had been nailed to the cross. Gonsalves makes use of the highly dramatic scene of the crucifixion of Jesus to describe his agony: he describes the way the executioners pulled and stretched his hands and feet. Jesus is placed between two thieves to count him as one among them.<sup>61</sup> The crucified body of Jesus is dramatically portrayed by the author as a river of blood flowing out of his wounds.

### 3.vi.i. The eighth sermon: the death of Jesus on the cross

Gonsalves found preaching material in the seven utterances of Jesus recorded in the Gospels while he was hanging on the cross, and in the narration of the story of the Passion and death of Jesus. These seven utterances are given a prominent place. In the first utterance, Jesus forgives and prays for those who crucified him, saying: 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do'.<sup>62</sup> With these words Jesus is portrayed as the all-merciful and compassionate Lord, there being twelve occurrences of the word *dayābara* (compassion<sup>ate</sup>) in the sermon.<sup>63</sup> Jesus is also presented here as the personification of divine mercy. The second utterance is addressed to the repentant thief: 'This day you shall be with me in paradise'. In these words Jesus is portrayed as an all-forgiving personality. Jesus addresses his mother and his disciple John in the third utterance: 'Woman, behold thy son. Son, behold thy mother'. Gonsalves sees the word *striya* or 'woman' as having been chosen deliberately by Jesus, but not with the intention of refusing to accept how

dear his mother Mary was to him. 'I thirst', were the words of the fourth utterance of Jesus. Following many others, the author makes an effort to describe the reaction of Mary, who was among those who heard these words from the cross. However, while most authors interpret the thirst as purely bodily—the craving of a dying man for a few drops of water—Gonsalves by contrast goes further, explaining the hidden meaning of the words: Jesus' thirst is for the salvation of all people, a thirst to undergo even further suffering to accomplish his mission. In the fifth utterance, Jesus calls out to his Father, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me'. Gonsalves brings out the intensity of Jesus' desolation as he comments on these words. The author says that for those who suffer for the sake of God, Jesus is sure to be their consolation, even if people forsake them. The sixth utterance is, 'It is finished'.<sup>64</sup> Gonsalves offers four interpretations: the salvation of mankind is achieved, the atonement for sins is finished, all that God had ordained for Jesus has been completed, and the prophecies of the Old Testament have been fulfilled. The seventh and final utterance is, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit'. Jesus utters these words knowing that the time of his earthly life is almost at its close. Gonsalves describes the physical changes taking place as Jesus breathes his last.

At the death of Jesus, the author gives a vivid description of the sympathetic reaction of the different elements of the cosmos: the sun hides its light at day time, the mountains knock against one another and shatter themselves, the clouds turn black in mourning. Other details, such as the opening of the graves and the

rising of the dead, and the ripping of the curtain of the temple, are evidently taken from gospel sources.<sup>65</sup> Gonsalves goes on to portray a heart-rending picture of the sorrowing Mary, thereby reinforcing her significance for the Sinhala dramatic tradition. Among other things, the mockery of the executioners, which persists even after they have seen that Jesus is dead, multiplies her sorrow.

### **3.vi.j. The ninth sermon: the body of Jesus is taken down from the cross**

Throughout this sermon Mary is again given a prominent place. The piercing of Jesus' side and, according to the non-Gospel sources, the miraculous healing of the blind soldier occurs at this point. Gonsalves explicitly describes the blood and water that flows from the open wound in Jesus' side, one drop of which restores the soldier's sight. This event is seen as an expression of the mercy of Jesus that continues even after his death. Gonsalves gives Mary an elaborate and touching soliloquy in part of the sermon that is a clear reference to the lamentation of Mary in the *Vēda Kāvya*<sup>66</sup> and the *Pasan Pota*.<sup>67</sup> Mary turns to God and expresses her state of helplessness and utter loneliness. She also addresses the cross in her lamentation, asking it to bend down and return to her the fruit, which is her light, treasure, possession and her all. This touching soliloquy recalls the Sinhala classical drama, *Maname*, in which the princess Achala laments alone, calling for the help of the gods in the jungle.<sup>68</sup>

Mary's lament recalls the state of her son at his birth, when she had at least a few rags to protect him from the cold. Now she addresses him saying that she

has nothing with which to cover his body, while he is lifeless on the cross. Asking herself whether heaven or earth or anyone would come to console her, she continues to lament. Then a crowd comes towards the cross and she wonders whether they have come to submit her dead son to further torture. However, the crowd has come with ladders, perfumes, burial clothes and so on in order to help her to bring the body down from the cross and lay it to rest in a tomb. When she realises this, Mary gives a sigh of relief.

They bring the body down and leave it on the lap of the sorrowing mother. Gonsalves describes the tremendous cry of sorrow that bursts out of her and then details the manner in which she kisses her dead son and laments over him. She also thinks of the lifeless hands, feet and lips that served innumerable people when he was alive.

Mary suffers unbearable misery, caused by the death of her son. Gonsalves describes her wish that she be buried along with her son when she has to hand over the body for burial. Together with the dead body, the nails and the crown of thorns with other items are taken in the burial procession. In concluding this final reflection, the author reminds his audience of the great sorrow expressed by the different elements of the cosmos at Jesus' death.

### **3.vi.k. Conclusion**

As a whole, the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya* offers its audience a vivid and effectively dramatised scenario of the last days of Jesus. The language used by Gonsalves

brings to life the moving events narrated therein and the author has taken the liberty of incorporating several indigenous elements that reflect the life of a South Asian community.

Gonsalves also refers to certain figures or statues in his book. Probably these figures, and even the costumes, were brought from Goa for staging the passion plays.<sup>69</sup> These figures would no doubt have been appropriate to one or other of the sermons. The *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya* of Gonsalves would have brought those lifeless images alive through its dramatic presentation of powerful scenes and characters.

### **3.vii. The influence of Gonsalves on the subsequent dramatic tradition in Sri Lanka**

Gonsalves is hailed as the pioneer of the dramatic tradition in Sri Lanka. In the local literary tradition, drama was not a developed form of art and it was the missionaries who introduced it for their own religious purposes. Portuguese elements are found in them although, because of the subsequent history of the island, all early sources are now lost. Our only source today is Gonsalves. His tradition of passion plays continued to be staged during Lent and a vivid picture of Holy Week celebrations at Bolawatta, where Gonsalves spent many years of his life, is given to us in an Oratorian mission report:

Holy Week was celebrated with passion-plays, six missionaries being present and dividing the sermons among them, one in Tamil and the others in Sinhala. There was also a sermon in Portuguese to satisfy the Hollander Catholics of Colombo, who came with their wives and children and who understand that language. The concourse of people from Colombo, Negombo, Matara and other places, two or even three days' journey from Bolawatta, was immense. They came on Palm Sunday and remained till Easter day. As the place cannot easily accommodate so many, they erected temporary houses with coconut leaves, procured in the locality. The preachers of the passion were the following: the first scene: 'Our Lord taking leave of his mother', by Father Diogo de Mello; the second: 'Christ in the Garden', by Father Aleixo Manoel; the third: 'Arrest and Imprisonment', by Father Bernadino de Monroy; the fourth: 'The Scourging', by Father Francisco Gonsalves; the fifth: 'The Crowning with Thorns', by the same Father; the sixth: 'Behold the Man', by Father Bernadino; the seventh: 'The carrying of the Cross', by Father Custodio de Andrade; the eighth: 'The Crucifixion', in Sinhalese from the writings of Father Jacome Gonsalves, which were read at the request of the people; the ninth: 'Taking Down from the Cross', by Father Andrade.<sup>70</sup>

The tradition of passion plays introduced to Sri Lanka by Gonsalves have continued until <sup>to</sup> day in much the same manner. These passion plays were (and are) accompanied by the singing of the passion hymns from the *Pasan Pota*, which is generally considered to be a verse supplement to the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya*.

### 3.vii.a. The evolution of the tradition of the passion plays

As stated above, the ground for Gonsalves' passion-play tradition had already been prepared by the Portuguese *autos* plays introduced by the early missionaries. These plays were especially prevalent in the maritime areas in Sri Lanka. The earliest plays used puppetry, but later on human actors were

introduced alongside the puppets. In this way *passo*, which for socio-religious reasons used only puppets, became *pâsku*. Gradually, the *pâsku* began to replace the *passo*. According to the Oratorian report of 1787, passion plays were performed in all the churches. The *pâsku* originated in areas where Catholics formed the majority and gradually spread to other parts of the island. Even today, *pâsku madu*<sup>71</sup> are used during the Holy Week as can be seen in Pesalai, Pamunugama, Pitipana and Pallansena. *Pâsku madu* are the permanent structures built near churches for the performance of passion plays.

This type of *pâsku* uses life-sized statues on a large specially constructed stage. The *pâsku madu* is twenty-five feet high, open at the front, closed at the back and its upper part is covered by *cadjans* or woven dried coconut leaves. The front part of the stage was also covered by *cadjans* to the height of about six feet from the ground so that the stage arrangements, such as the way the statues were moved by people inside might not be visible to the audience. An important aspect of this type of *pâsku* is the movement of the statues<sup>72</sup> by means of strings for which great skill is required.<sup>73</sup> However, *pâsku* was not limited to stage performances. The carrying of the cross to Calvary was enacted in the open, and everyone took part as an act of devotional exercise. During the procession, the relevant images were carried, namely Jesus with the Cross on his shoulder surrounded by men acting the part of the soldiers.

Since the main characters were represented by life-sized statues or images, their movements were interpreted by a narrator<sup>74</sup> who stood in front of the

stage before the audience. The narrator in fact chanted from the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya* and *Pasan Pota* of Gonsalves as a commentary. The compositions of Gonsalves have been used as commentaries for the *pâsku* in this way for a long time.<sup>75</sup> The appearance of live actors engaged in dialogues came much later.

### 3.vii.b. Christian plays initiated the development of *nâḍagama*

The *nâḍagama* is a form of dramatic entertainment in Sinhala which existed during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. It had the spontaneity and boisterous naivety of a folk play and came from the South Indian *terukûttu*, but was given a Sri Lankan setting. The word *teru* means 'street' and *kûttu* means 'play' or 'dance'. The subject matter of the South Indian *terukûttu* at the time of its birth was the lives of ordinary people and therefore it did not find favour among the elite and the literati in South India. However, it found a favourable ground in Sri Lanka. In this context, J. C. Beschi, a reputed scholar who lived in India from 1680 to 1747, wrote:

Dramatic poetry is so completely disregarded, that the ancient writers have left us neither models of it nor rules for its composition; the natives are nevertheless extremely fond of dramatic representations. Short comedies are termed *kûttu*, while tragedies and tragi-comedies are called *nâḍagama*. These are all written in various kinds of verse, among which, the *cintû* is constantly introduced. In representation, they are always accompanied with singing and dancing, but they display no higher degree of skill or contrivance than is sufficient to please the vulgar and to excite mirth; to search for art in them would, therefore, be a useless attempt.<sup>76</sup>

Although *nâḍagama* was not popular among elite in South India, it was much in use among the ordinary people. Since a dramatic tradition could not be found in Sri Lanka, the *nâḍagama* of South India was taken as the foundation for such a tradition. This is not surprising: even in the ancient literature one finds a number of inspirational elements from South India in various fields such as dance and folk songs. Local drama in Sri Lanka was guided by the *nâḍagama*; and it became popular and won the favour and interest of all elite, literati and ordinary people.

The first Tamil drama produced in the *nâḍagama* style was the *Gnanappallu*,<sup>77</sup> written about the middle of the seventeenth century on a Christian theme. Gradually the *nâḍagama* tradition spread, especially in the western coastal districts where the Christians formed the majority of the population. In particular, the Nativity story provided strong dramatic material for *nâḍagama* performances.

### **3.vii.c. The contribution of Gonsalves to the *nâḍagama* tradition**

The dramatic tradition of *nâḍagama*, as rooted in Sri Lanka, was nurtured and fostered by dramatic elements created in the compositions of Gonsalves and by his songs. Through song, Christians expressed their religious beliefs and the plays contained pilgrim songs based on sacred chants composed by Gonsalves and embodied in his *Maṅgala Gītiya*. Gonsalves made an effort to use these songs in the field of drama. As Ward explains,

... the Society of Jesus had always considered dramatic performances a very valuable form of training, both as giving the students a taste for dramatic poetry and as lifting certain ideals out of the region of cold abstractions and of mere intellectual assent into the sense of reality that action conveys.<sup>78</sup>

In order to break the monotony of normal church sermons and to present them dramatically, Gonsalves composed songs to be sung either at the end of the sermon or at intervals during its delivery. Gonsalves' few verse books, the stanzas appearing in the *Pasan Pota* and the *Maṅgala Gītiya*, were normally copied by the *nādagama* artists.<sup>79</sup> This type of stanza is exemplified in the *Ānanda Kalippuva*:

*ahasa polova nidosinnē māu*  
*nēsa pitruvana devindu nodāna sata dōsa*  
*rāga mata yennē – siya*

*dahas ganān rudu pau pamunana boru*  
*nīcha vedam daraminne – yasa*

*ōsa pavatī nara lova inda novitara vehesa*  
*marana unun dirne – sonda*

*sahasa me pana dun devindu sabē monavāda*  
*kiyā gālāyennata yannē*

Without acknowledging God the Father who created the heaven and earth, human beings go astray; they are attached to wrong ways of doing things which caused them to fall into thousands of sins; while being in the human world they are powerful, but when they are dead, for their salvation what excuses they would give to God who gave them their lives?<sup>80</sup>

As I demonstrate, verses like these became models for the dramatists of subsequent decades.

The Dutch relaxed their hostility towards the Catholics for political reasons in the mid-eighteenth century and, in the wake of dawning freedom, Sri Lankan Christians felt the need to manifest their religious beliefs in drama. Their favourite themes were the birth of Jesus and the lives of the early martyrs, in addition to the existing passion plays of Gonsalves. Christian liturgical songs also paved the way for the development of the native dramatic tradition. Candappa describes the influence:

His [Gonsalves'] songs were modelled on both the *vañmam* [a kind of folk dance] of the Kandyan areas of the island and the Gregorian chant, as well as Christian hymns introduced from Portugal. The *mañgalam* song [song of blessings] in the traditional *nâdagama* resembles the melody pattern of the Sinhala version of the Gregorian chant ... Music in the *nâdagama* is therefore, an organic result of a variety of musical forces inherent in the musical thought of the Christian missionaries. We notice many of these traditional Church tunes in the passion plays.<sup>81</sup>

M. Gabriel Fernando's *Raja Tun Kattiva* or 'The Magi' is followed by his *Marigirida nâdagama*, about St. Margaret, a martyr of Antioch in 275. The author acknowledges his debt to Jacome Gonsalves' *Dêva Vêda Purânaya*; that is, both the theme and the subject matter of the *Marigirida Nâdagama* are drawn from the prose passages of Gonsalves' *Dêva Vêda Purânaya*. In fact, the shepherd's song in the *Marigirida Nâdagama* is taken directly from the *Mañgala*

*Gîtiya* of Gonsalves. More than ten shepherd's songs can be found in the *Mañgala Gîtiya*, all of which remain popular carols even today.

*devindu upanneya satuni  
devindu upanneya Ohó!  
devindu sarva nâyaka vana  
devindu é manu ves ganimina  
nirindu dâvit kula sasobana  
bilindu lesina mihi vadimina  
deranê - trîna yahanê - kima sayanê - sura rajunê  
gopalun saha edena golla  
bilindun devi dakina lolla  
eluvan sonda ajase mella  
kiripân saha pudati siyala  
parevin - saha kurulan - mal pokurun - pada tabamin.*

Oh! All creatures see that the Lord is born. All powerful God is born in the Davidic Dynasty taking human form. Oh! God the king, how is that you lie down in this world like an infant on a grass bed? With the desire of worshipping the infant God, the shepherds who look after the goats came happily, [they] walked up and offered milk and honey, pigeons and other birds and bouquets of flowers.<sup>82</sup>

A good example of Gonsalves' composition may be found in this piece of writing. The rhyme, rhythm and poetic diction are so rich that the sound echoes its sense. In the Sri Lankan context, a sheep is not a common animal, but a goat is. Here Gonsalves deliberately substitutes a goat for a sheep in this verse as part of his attempt to indigenize his concepts.

Another clear reference to the compositions of Gonsalves is made in the *Raja Tun Kattúva*.

*amâ mok suvaya läbu é gonsalves tuma  
kela sansêpena  
abinava sangîta lesa raja tidenage  
charita sädu halâvatha patunaye  
kivi nara ú guru gabriel prenanduta  
sugata palavê nitina.*

Gonsalves, who won the bliss of heaven, composed this *Saṅksēpaya*. Following that a new musical composition dealing with the story of three kings [Magi] was written by Gabriel Fernando of Chilaw. He was a poet and a musician to whom well-wishes are extended for ever. <sup>83</sup>

The reference to Gonsalves' *Saṅksēpaya* indicates the *Dēva Vēda Purāṇaya*, which is said to contain the whole of the Bible in condensed form. The melodies and themes of the *Raja tun Kattiva* and the *Marigirida* were generally borrowed from contemporary melodies and compositions, and in the subsequent decades the *nāḍagama* closely associated both religious as well as secular themes.

Another variety of drama that followed *nāḍagama* was called *vasappu* or *vasagappa*. <sup>84</sup> This type of drama, also imported from South India, contains both spoken and sung parts. It became popular on the western seaboard, where Christians predominated. One dramatist, M.S. Liyanage Joseph Fernando, composed *Josuvagē Yuddhaya* or 'Joshua's war' and M.S. Juse Diego Fernando composed *Dēvamāniyange Vasappuva*, about Mary, the mother of Jesus. Another leading dramatist, J. D. Hendrick is said to have written several dramas.

When we examine how Gonsalves contributed to the evolution of Sri Lankan drama, we also need to consider how his works created an indigenous dramatic tradition that appeared in subsequent works. *Nāḍagama* or folk opera, reached its climax in the hands of a reputed dramatist named Pilippu Sinno, who was born in about the year 1770. <sup>85</sup> Of the plays attributed to him, there are six on Christian themes, <sup>86</sup> including *Josepat* which is probably based on the

story of *Barlâm-Josephat* found in Jacome Gonsalves' *Dharmôdyânaya*.<sup>87</sup> This story is a Christian romance found in the work of Saint John Damascene, which gained such popularity in the west that it appeared even as an early English play entitled *Castell of Perseverance*.<sup>88</sup>

The other Christian plays of Pilippu Sinno also refer to stories from the Bible and Christian tradition. *Suseu* deals with Joseph the patriarch of the Old Testament, *San Nikulâ* with St. Nicholas (of Santa Claus fame), and *Estakki* with St. Eustachius, a Roman officer martyred in 118 AD. *Helena* is based on the story of a certain Princess Helena, the daughter of Antonius, the King of Constantinople.<sup>89</sup> Sinno also composed a *nâdagama* entitled *Raja Tun Kattiva* on the birth of Jesus. Four out of the thirteen *nâdagama* by Pilippu Sinno have been printed. However, the authorship of some of these *nâdagama* are disputed and, probably, some of them should not be attributed to Pilippu Sinno. However, the list of thirteen *nâdagama* given by Sarathchandra agrees with that provided by W.A. Silva.<sup>90</sup>

Even in the *nâdagama* based on secular themes, one finds the influence of Christian concepts conveyed by Gonsalves in his work. For example, in the following introductory verse from the *Âhâlapola Nâdagama*, Pilippu Sinno reproduces the exact expression of Christian sentiments that is found in Gonsalves' *Dêva Vêda Purânaya*.<sup>91</sup>

All powerful God who created everything and divine and human beings;  
I believed and worshipped him always that I may be protected.<sup>92</sup>

Gonsalves' influence on the *nāḍagama* is obvious. The early *nāḍagama* authors were Christians and the only literature available to them, the models on which the Sinhala *nāḍagama* had to be based, was that written by Gonsalves. As Sarathchandra explains:

We may also infer that Pilippu Sinno was a Roman Catholic. We could gather this from the fact that the invocatory stanzas in *Āhālapola nāḍagama* as well as the *Sthāk nāḍagama*, not included in the above list, but attributed to him in the printed text edited by Muhandiram Thomas Gomis (1881), contain addresses to the Holy Trinity. Many of the early *nāḍagama* writers appear to have been, like Pilippu Sinno, Roman Catholics. The Christian stories and the Christian sentiments expressed in the plays indicate this with sufficient certainty.<sup>93</sup>

When one examines the dramatic compositions, more evidence can be unearthed in support of the theory that both the *nāḍagama* and the plays followed, directly or indirectly, the works of Gonsalves. Indeed, as I have indicated, there are several passages and phrases which are direct quotations from his works.

A wide variety of dramatic themes and terms is contained in the compositions of Gonsalves and these gave rise to all the later dramas irrespective of their themes or the religion of their authors. In this respect, Gonsalves contributed immensely to creating an indigenous dramatic tradition in Sri Lanka.

End Notes.

1. *New American Encyclopædia* 1968: 34.
2. Gomis, O. 1993: 18.
3. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953: 23.
4. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953: 16.
5. *peden budu sirita - basinvat sirit ä pada yutu basin nalu ä - nänaturu lakunu dakvami*. Gunawardana, W.F. 1952 : 20.
6. Godakumbura, C.E. 1955: 304.
7. Ariyapala, S. 1958: 276.
8. Peiris, P. 1920: 49.
9. Jayatilake, H. 1983: 227.
10. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953: 25.
11. Gunawardana, W.F. 1952: 36.
12. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953: 108.
13. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953: 73.
14. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953: 8 and 18.
15. Wickramasinghe, M. 1954: 71.
16. Perniola, V. 1983: 443.
17. *Catholic Encyclopædia* 1951 : 535.
18. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1978 : 247.

19. Matthew chapters 26 and 27; Mark 14 and 15; Luke 22 and 23 and John 18 and 19.
20. *Catholic Encyclopædia* 1951 : 240.
21. Gunatilaka, M.H. 1984 : 32.
22. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953 : 111.
23. Peiris, E : 1979 : 9.
24. Perera, S.G. 1941 : 48.
25. *Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register* 1916: 80.
26. Peiris, E. 1950: 32.
27. Peiris, E. 1978: 238.
28. Peiris, E. 1950: 34.
29. Perera, S.G. 1939: 54, 167 and 185.
30. These are: *Maṅgala Gītiya, Vêda Kāvya, Yagna Bhakti Abyasaya, Vandanâ Karmastânaya* and *Pasan Pota*.
31. *Dêva Vêda Purâṇaya* 1924: xi.
32. *Pasan Pota* 1993: 212.
33. Candappa, C.E.T. 1983: 91.
34. Peiris, E. 1950: 34.
35. Joseph, H. 1937: 84.
36. *Oratorian Mission Report* 1957: 54.
37. *Oratorian Mission Report* 1957: 32.
38. Kolamunne, T. 1993: 119.
39. Souza, I. C. 1986: 408.

40. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953: 126.
41. *apê dayâdika svâmidaruvô mal uyane dyanayen inda vindapu duk pera dêsânâvehi dutu ikbithi ada dina unvahanse judayin atata asu vî sira bandana û prakâraya balamuva. Dukprâpti Prasângaya* 1924: 195.
42. *Dukprâpti Prasângaya* 1924: 208.
43. *Dukprâpti Prasângaya* 1924: 217.
44. Cf. Zachariah 13/7, 'Strike the shepherd, scatter the sheep'. God as the good shepherd is an important theme in the Bible: Ez. 34/11-16, Jer. 23/1-4.
45. An exaggerated description of Jesus' willingness to accept God's will is given in the *Dukprâpti Prasângaya*: 'Even if I were to have a thousand lives, I am ready to spend them all for you, doing your will'.
46. Aland, K. 1984: 297.
47. For example, while he has taken some materials from the Gospel narratives, he has also drawn on the writings of some medieval contemplatives. Perera, S.G. 1943: 146.
48. *Dukprâpti Prasângaya* 1924: 189.
49. *Dukprâpti Prasângaya* 1924: 190.
50. Lk. 22/41 and Mk. 14/35.
51. Cross, J. 1962: 91.
52. *Dukprâpti Prasângaya* 1924: 196.
53. However, the event of the denial of Peter is elaborated in the Gospels. Cf. Mt. 26/57-75, Mk. 14/53-72 and Lk. 22/54-71.
54. Gonsalves made references to the South Asian concept of 'the three worlds' in his compositions, as we have discussed earlier.
55. Phil. 2 / 5. The meaning of the Greek word *kenosis* is emptying, giving up or laying aside what one possesses.

56. The Latin expression, '*ECCE HOMO*' may be translated, 'Here is the man'. Gonsalves uses the Latin words to present Jesus to the crowd, quoting the Gospels exactly.
57. 1 Cor. 15 / 21.
58. 1 Tim. 2/6, Mt. 20/28 and Mk 10/45.
59. Only this Gospel presents the words of 'Carrying his own cross'. Jn. 19/17.
60. Cf. Lk. 9/28 f., Mt. 17/1 f., Mk. 9/2 f.
61. '[He] was numbered with the transgressors'. Is. 53/12.
62. Lk. 23/34.
63. The word *dayābara* or 'compassion' has the same meaning as the Hebrew word *hesed* which is 'divine mercy'.
64. Cf. Jn. 19/30.
65. Cf. Mt. 27/45.
66. *Vēda Kāvya* 1993: 408 f.
67. *Pasan Pota* 1993: 274 f.
68. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1966: 32.
69. Kolamunne, T. 1993: 119.
70. *Oratorian Mission Report* 1957: 16.
71. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953: 124.
72. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953: 125.
73. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1978: 249.
74. The narrator's role is more developed in later dramas such as the *Pote Gura*. In the *Maname* drama of E. R. Sarathchandra, the narrator also plays a significant role.

75. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1958: 125.
76. Beschi, J.C. 1738: 149.
77. The Tamil word *gnanappallu* means 'spiritual pastoral'.
78. Ward, J. 1907: 201.
79. Gunatileka, M.H. 1984: 38.
80. *Ânanda Kalippuva*, 1974: 12.
81. Candappa, E.C.T. 1983: 86.
82. *Maṅgala Gītiya* 1993: 137.
83. Fernando, G. 1918: iv.
84. Peiris, E. 1950: 35.
85. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953: 83.
86. Silva, W.A. 1903: 92.
87. *Dharmôdyanaya* 1926: 147 f.
88. *Chambers Encyclopædia* 1958: 151.
89. Peiris, E. 1950: 38.
90. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953: 84. Cf. Silva, W.A. 1903: 95.
91. *Dêva Vêda Purāṇaya* 1924: 1.
92. *sura nara sau satun noyek dê mâu  
sarva vallamba devi tuman;  
gatu nitara adahâ vânda gatimi devi  
û thek mâ rāka devan.* Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953: 91.
93. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1953: 84.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. HYMNS AND SONGS COMPOSED BY JACOME GONSALVES

Hymns and poems are important aspects of literature. Sinhala literature, like that of many other countries, was in this particular area very much conditioned by politics and historical circumstances. Panegyrics were composed and sung by writers to praise the virtues of kings or to celebrate their victories over their enemies. The *Pārakumbā Sirita* and *sandēśa*, the message poems, are examples of this type. Naturally, they won the favour of kings and were rewarded. As well as this, however, there were poems written for religious worship. During the Kandyan period, named after the last kingdom of Sri Lanka (1687-1747), these two areas of panegyrics and religious songs were greatly influenced by the advent of Hindu customs with the South Indian kings who ruled the country in the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> As I have already indicated, Gonsalves was quite familiar with South Indian traditions of verse and made use of them in his compositions.

One category of musical composition undertaken by Gonsalves was that of the chant-book. Examples include: *Pasan Pota* (the book of the passions), the *Dukprāpti Prasāṅgaya*, the *Dēva Nīti Visarjanaya* and the *Suvisēṣa Visarjanaya*. Another category was that of carols, songs or lyrics, as seen in the *Māṅgala Gītiya* and the *Ānanda Kalippuva*. This variety of compositions—lyrics and chanting—clearly shows Gonsalves's poetic abilities. The tradition he created through his compositions

was an integral part of the developments in this particular field in subsequent decades.

Gonsalves' innate taste for music was already evident in his childhood, when he acquired proficiency in the violin, organ and other musical instruments.<sup>2</sup> While a student of Theology at the Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, he was made chief organist and given the privilege of living in the College.<sup>3</sup> His well-founded knowledge of Western music would have helped him to appreciate and enjoy the local music and the folklore of Sri Lanka that existed in his time. However, it is in his writings that he exhibits his musical skill as a composer. His taste for native melodies can be seen in his poetic compositions, which contain lyrics or songs that are sung even today. To analyse his contribution to Sri Lankan music, we need to understand the historical context of the native literature of his time.

#### **4.i. Compositions of verse in Sinhala literature**

The origins of Sinhala verse literature go back to the tenth century AD. Throughout the history of Sinhala literature, the writing of verse depended to a large extent on royal sponsorship which in turn depended on such factors as being politically well established and free from the threats of enemies. Sinhala literature is, therefore, best categorised and classified according to the periods of the kingdoms.

One of the oldest books in the history of Sinhala literature is the *Sika Valanda Hâ Sika Valanda Vinisa*. Scholars are of the view that it was written between 902 and 947 AD. <sup>4</sup> After translation into Pali, it was used for the instruction of Buddhist monks during the period of Dambadeniya. All the early lyrics were inspired by Indian poets such as Bharata Muni, Ânanda Vardana, Ksemendra and Kuntaka. They initiated the poetical principles followed by later writers. <sup>5</sup>

The *Sasa Dâ Vata* and the *Muva Dev Dâ Vata* exemplify the earliest lyrics composed in Sinhala according to the models provided by Indian scholars. The *Sasa Dâ Vata* was composed during the reign of Queen Lilavathie in 1205. The *Muva Dev Dâ Vata* is considered to have been composed after this. Based on Buddhist birth stories, these two verse books occupy a unique place in the history of Sri Lankan literature: they paved the way for the greatest Sinhala epic, the *Kaúsilumina*. This verse epic was composed by Sri Parakramabahu II, who became king of the Dambadeniya kingdom in the year 1217; <sup>6</sup> it represents the culmination of elegant Sanskrit expression. This work has become a source of inspiration for subsequent poets; notably, the *Sidath Saᅅgarâ*, which provides the guidelines for poetic compositions, refers to the *Kaúsilumina*. After the *Kaúsilumina*, works of such quality are found only during the period of the

kingdom of Kotte.<sup>7</sup> The panegyric, *Pārakumbā Sirita*, and the *sandēśa* (message-poems), both of which influenced the verse books of Gonsalves, were composed during the Kotte period.

#### 4.ii. The development of poetry in the Kotte period

The capital of Sri Lanka throughout the fifteenth century was Kotte. Hence the literature of this period is often referred to simply as the literature of the fifteenth century. This particular period is considered to be a unique era in terms of both political and cultural achievements.<sup>8</sup> Under the reign of Sri Parakramabahu VI, who became the king of Kotte in 1415, the whole country was united after a long period of disunity. Political stability and economic prosperity led to the production of literature and, remarkably, poetry experienced a more significant development than prose during this particular period. The lyrical compositions of this period can be classified according to several categories: poetry based on Buddhist birth stories, *sandēśa* or message-poems, directives for poetry, panegyrics and Buddhist literary works. In particular, the *Budugunālaṅkāraya* and the *Pārakumbā Sirita* directly influenced Gonsalves, although, as mentioned earlier, the *sandēśa* or message-poems and the panegyrics were also important.

#### 4.ii.a. *Sandēśā* (message-poems)

Among the types of verse books written during the Kotte period, the *sandēśā* occupies a prominent place both in the number of compositions and in terms of quality. Their origin can be traced to Kālidāsa's poem *Meghadūta* 'cloud-messenger', written in Sanskrit in the fourth century AD.<sup>9</sup> In Sri Lanka this gave rise to a number of imitations and some Sinhala *sandēśā* even bear comparison with Kālidāsa's work. South Asian writers have always possessed a wealth of words to describe the natural beauty of lakes, gardens and hilly forests; but the *sandēśā* became more conventional in its structure, use of mythological allusions and stock similes than any other form of literature, and it did not develop.<sup>10</sup> However, the *Sālahini Sandēśā*, written by Sri Rahula Thero, was composed with a certain originality and new growth, more so than that found in the rest of the *sandēśā* of the period, i.e. *Paravi*, *Hansa*, *Kōkila*, *Mayura* and *Girā*. The following verse is a prime example of the rich description and originality of thought in the *Sālahini Sandēśā*:

*vadimin savasa nala hāsirena digatva la  
sobaman sunil mini nil numbaturu vipu la  
patasan avara giri nāṭiyen vāṭena ka la  
vilikun surat pala vānivē rivimaḍa la*

The orb of the setting sun will resemble a ripe crimson fruit falling from the stalk [which is the western-mountain], belonging to the tree [which is the expansive sky coloured like a lovely dark-blue sapphire] with branches [which are the directions played on by the evening breezes].<sup>11</sup>

More often, however, the *sandēśā* are full of praises for Hindu and Buddhist gods and the powerful king of Kotte. In the fifteenth century, the Tamil Hindu god Upulvan was given a prominent place in the *sandēśā*. However, the qualities and the prominence of Upulvan were later transferred to Vishnu,<sup>12</sup> following a pattern common to Hinduism throughout South Asia. Hindu gods are commonly worshipped in Buddhist popular devotions, and it was through this worship that South Indian music and the lyrics found in their panegyrics influenced Sinhala poetry. The royal family especially had many political and cultural relations with South India due to the fact that the Sinhala kings married princesses from India and these princesses brought their cultural traditions, such as music and dance, with them. For example, in panegyrics of the Kotte period such as the *Pārakumbā Sirita*, we can see the South Indian influence in the way that King Sri Parakramabahu VI is praised.

#### **4.ii.b. South Indian influence on the Sinhala panegyrics**

The *Pārakumbā Sirita* occupies a significant position in the history of Sinhala literature as the first panegyric full of elements to be found in Sanskrit literature of the fourth century A.D.<sup>13</sup> The characteristics as well as the structure of the Sanskrit panegyrics greatly influenced the composition of the *Pārakumbā Sirita*; thereafter, Indian music and its terminology had a big impact on Sinhala literature. As a Goan and as an accomplished musician himself, Jacome Gonsalves was naturally familiar

with Indian music. He absorbed material from many sources, especially the Sinhala classics, for his musical compositions. Peiris provides some of the details of this borrowing:

They [the verses of Gonsalves] are full of phrases and passages from our classical poems, like the *Kusadâ Kava*, *Guttilaya*, *Kâvyasêkaraya*, *Pâarakumbâ Sirita* and *Budugunâlañkâraya*, to which he refers in [his] *Pratyakṣaya* and from which he has lifted at least five verses almost bodily. He tried his hand at a variety of rhythmic devices admitted in Sinhala poetry.<sup>14</sup>

Gonsalves' compositions were therefore enriched from a variety of sources, both local and foreign. During the Kotte period, a poetic and *viridu* (bardic praises) tradition also developed, the culmination of which was found in the Kandyan period. A close study of the contemporary *viridu*, poetry and songs reveals that they were full of South Indian religious music as well as the music of the royal court, and the Kandyan royal palace was no exception. There is evidence that South Indian musicians were brought to the palace to produce music and drama for the entertainment of the royal family.

In particular, Gonsalves was familiar with the South Indian Karnatic music that existed in his time in the Kandyan kingdom. Gascon Adigar, who was both a friend and Gonsalves' Sinhala teacher, was also competent in such music. It was he who composed *viridu* and songs of praise to be sung before King Narendrasimha. It is

obvious, therefore, that Gonsalves was influenced by the Karnatic South Indian music prominent during this period. The characteristics of the musical compositions of the Kandyan period include: Sanskrit words incorporated into the Sinhala language; frequent alliteration or repetition; equal importance given to sound and meaning; and music composed in accordance with dancing tunes.

All these characteristics can be found in Gonsalves' poetic compositions. The works that fall under this classification are the *Pasan Pota*, the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya*, the *Maᅅgala Gītiya* and the *Ānanda Kalippuva*. Gonsalves' compositions are of such rich quality that he is called 'the father of indigenous Catholic music'.<sup>15</sup>

Chorus: *t}ēja yasasin, rāja kulakin, anna juvakin, dāna varamin,  
māriya landaka, divya rāyaka-  
bihi va lovaka, priya tosaka.  
pubudu mala}ēya, suvanda rāsa sēya, vihida go sēya.*

With divine favour, received splendour and majesty, and born to a royal dynasty by Anne and Joachim.

Chorus: In a blessed night with joy, [Jesus] came into the world born of Mary.  
As a fully blossomed flower, spreading the fragrant mild scent.<sup>16</sup>

In this verse, the Sinhala language incorporates Sanskrit words (such as *tejas* and *rāja*) while several words (such as *sēya* and *aka*) are repeated to create a rhythm suitable for dancing.

#### 4.iii. The *Pasan Pota* and the tradition of *pasan* singing

*Pasan* is a type of religious song found only in Sri Lanka. However, words similar to *pasan* can be found in Portuguese, Latin and English. The term is probably derived from one of these languages: according to Edmond Peiris, for example, *pasan* is derived from the Portuguese *paixao*.<sup>17</sup> P. B. Sannasgala speaks of 'unforgettable poetical compositions' in the *Pasan Pota* which he maintains were 'enriched with the kind of compositions that is never found in the history of Sinhala literature'.<sup>18</sup> The following verse may be taken as an example of this richness:

*isiñ ugulana lesiñ devinduge: umun judayô katâ karâgena*  
*eyiñ pera isagasâ tibu katu: ounge katuval*  
*atiñ atata holova holovâ: sri sirasa vana pârava sâma*  
*kiyañ nata häki noû lesa tada: vaden katu ugula*

Words cannot express the way they removed the crown of thorns, shaking it with their hands and moving it here and there to deepen the wounds on the head of the Lord.<sup>19</sup>

Specific characteristics in the singing of this verse include holding the sound and dragging it for a long time, and words having the same final sounds. For example, the rhythm of the words *isiñ*, *lesiñ*, *eyiñ*, *atiñ*, *kiyañ* and *vaden* creates an onomatopoeic effect. The *ñ* sound is repeated in this verse six times. The repetitive phrase *atiñ atata holova holovâ* stresses the gravity of the situation. P.B. Sannasgala holds the view that these characteristics were borrowed from South Indian literature.

Another example may be taken from the *Pasan Pota*:

*atat payat ven karalâ - kurušê âna tada kara lâ  
talamîn tadakota varalâ - evigasa mala sâti dâka lâ  
mau bisô änduvê dukulâ - andana lesin rä kira lâ  
kumaruni mâ tani karalâ - vädiyê kima at hära lâ*

Separating the hands and legs, the nails were fixed on to the cross by hammering, thoroughly tightening the ropes and beating him. The mother saw the parting son and she lamented, saying, 'Oh! Prince, why do you go away, leaving me behind?'.<sup>20</sup>

This verse exemplifies Gonsalves' use of indigenous rhythms and local imagery.

The verses of the *Pasan Pota* are composed in a mixture of Sinhala and Sanskrit, a style also found in the *Pärakumbâ Sirita* and in some of the poems of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially these composed by courtiers of the Kandyan king. The poems by Gonsalves were composed with the specific purpose of involving the community in singing.

#### **4.iii.a. The mode of *pasan* singing**

*Pasans* are usually sung only during the Christian liturgical season of Lent, by the members of a family or a small group of people. They are sung either inside a house or in the open air, usually in the evening or at night. The singers divide into sub-groups of two or more and each in turn sings one or more verses, reading either from manuscripts or from printed books. The singing is not usually accompanied by musical instruments and is performed in sorrowful tones.

The subject matter of *pasan* songs is the Passion of Jesus and the main character involved is his mother. She laments in song the cruelty of the punishments imposed on her son by the ungrateful people. These songs are also called 'passion hymns' and 'passion music', terms used in other countries as well. In particular, as Peiris points out, historical records reveal that *pasan* singing was prevalent during the Portuguese period:

À Franciscan missionary, Antonio Peixoto, who was here in 1636, was proficient in Sinhala and famous for poetical compositions and music. His songs on the Passion of Jesus were sung with such mournful tunes that people shed tears after listening to them.<sup>21</sup>

For various reasons, however, these early songs have now disappeared. The oldest *pasan* in existence today <sup>are</sup> those composed by Gonsalves. The name *pasan* may even have been coined by him: he entitled his book of religious songs on the Passion of Jesus the *Dêsana Navayê Pasan Pota*, and this seems to be the earliest recorded use of the word *pasan* in the Sinhala language.

#### 4.iv. The *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya* and the chanting of lamentation

The *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya* is complementary to the *Pasan Pota* and is the most popular work by Gonsalves. It is not read, but chanted to a mournful tune, like the lament of an Indian mother over her only son.<sup>22</sup> The sermons in it are often chanted at passion plays.

#### 4.iv.a. The folk musical tradition in the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya*

The custom of chanting the verses of the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya* seems to have been a common practice from the time of its composition. An Oratorian report provides some information regarding the specific form of chanting (music) used:

He [Gonsalves] did so not only in prose but also in verse, which they call *purāṇa*. And as poetry is a thing which not all can properly understand, he assembled at Mantota a large number of people from different and distant parts to give them an explanation, which he did with his usual elegance and clearness.<sup>23</sup>

It may be deduced from the above quotation that both Gonsalves and the local people considered the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya* to be a kind of poetry. Poetry is not read but sung or chanted with various types of tunes that fit the poetic genre. It is very probable that Gonsalves himself chanted it to the large gathering of people at Mantota. Since this work is used as a passion play, it is sung or chanted.<sup>24</sup>

It is clear that Sinhala classical poetry such as the *Kâvyasêkara*, the *Gûttila*, the *Budugunālakâra*, the *Pârakumbâ Sirita*, the *Dahamsonda Kava* and the *Vessantara Jâtaka* had an important influence on the *Pasan Pota* and the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya*. None the less Gonsalves' uniqueness can be discerned in the lamentations of Mary in the *Vêda Kâvyaya*, the *Pasan Pota* and the *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya*. These can be compared to similar poetic narrations found, for instance, in the lamentations of King Kusa and Prabavati in the *Kausilumina*; the lamentations of Deudath in the

*Dêvadatta Varuna*; the lamentation of the mermaid in the *Sanda Kinduru Dâ Kava*; the lament of Maddri Devi in the *Vessantara Jâtaka*; the lament of Kuvêni in the *Kuvêni Asna*; and the lament of Yasôdarâ in the *Yasôdarâ Vata*. It is often said that the compositions of Gonsalves are equal to any of these, as the following verse demonstrates:

*ran gira sê derana räsê noma dilisê nitara di sê  
guvan kusê dili sanda sê häma davasê samaga vä'sê  
ran rasa sê noma vena sê eka pana sê säma dava sê  
mä pana lesê giya vilasê dâka melesê vämi ke sê*

Like the Golden Mountain [*ran gira*], he is never illuminating but ever seen. As the moon shines in the sky, he is daily present among us. As gold and quicksilver always live together, the body and soul can never be separated. Now how can I be consoled seeing such? It is better if I shall die.<sup>25</sup>

Conventional imagery—‘the Golden Mountain’ (*ran gira*), ‘the Great (Śakra’s) Mountain’ (*mahâ mēru*) and ‘Gold and mercury’ (*ran rasa*)—is used skilfully and appropriately. Each line contains the syllable *sê* four times, including the final sound in each line, thereby enabling the lines to be effectively sung.

Jacome Gonsalves’ poetic compositions recall those of Constantius Joseph Beschi, an Italian missionary who worked in South India. Beschi used poetic imagery popular among contemporary Hindus to compose his Christian poetry. For example, Beschi composed in Tamil the *Añmai Aluñkâl Añdâdi* along the lines of

the Hindu poem *Kandârandâdi* of Arunagirindar. The chief character in his work was also Mary, the mother of Jesus. Likewise, following the poetic traditions created in the Hindu classics, Beschi wrote many books such as the *Ulla*, the *Kalambâkam* and the *Ammânai*. Just as Gonsalves used a language full of Buddhist terminology for his poetic compositions, so Beschi too used a language replete with Hindu terms to produce the epic poem, *Tempâvanai*, consisting of 3615 verses on the life of St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus.<sup>26</sup> The linguistic efforts made by Beschi to indigenize Christianity in India <sup>are</sup> quite similar to those made by Gonsalves in his musical compositions. Evidently, both these missionaries were convinced that any literature, philosophy or religion that was not rooted in the cultural heritage of the local people would not survive or flourish in that land.

#### **4.iv.b. The sources of the chanting melodies of Gonsalves**

Regarding the sources and the origin of the chanting melody used by Gonsalves, a variety of opinions has been expressed. The melody could already have been in use in Goa before his time: a comparative view of the musical traditions prevalent in Goa during his time reveals that they did influence his music and chanting. Another view is that Gonsalves could have been influenced by the culturally rich and highly developed South Indian Karnatic music: the study of South Indian music and its influence on Sinhala culture during the Kotte period also suggests a source for

his chanting melody.

As explained earlier, South Indian Carnatic music as used in Sri Lankan folk songs has certain marked characteristics of *viridu* and *vañnam*: the use of Sinhala mixed with Sanskrit; an emphasis on alliteration or repetition; a preference for sound rather than meaning; and musical tunes suitable for dancing. These characteristics can be found in the works of Gonsalves and we may therefore, assume that he was influenced by popular melodies, panegyrics, *vañnam* and *viridu* in the periods of Kotte and Kandy. The following verse is a prime example:

*udurannô - sri sira kes sri kansa räul allâ*  
*gutiñnô - sri pita mandala vana pita vana vallâ*  
*holavannô- kantaka krîjaya dôta vären allâ*  
*peralannô- bima äda nätaka parusa kiyâ kallâ*

Some pulled out the hair from his head and beard; they punched him making wounds on his back; holding the crown of thorns firmly with both hands, they shook it; used rough language at him as he was thrown on the ground. <sup>27</sup>

All the characteristics discussed above in relation to the lyrics of contemporary song are found in this verse.

During the Kandyan kingdom period, musical compositions were created for dancing purposes, the *vañnam* and panegyrics are full of such rhythms. This was another characteristic of South Indian music that came into the island with other Hindu cultural features. One of the most popular *vañnam* tunes used by Gonsalves in the *Pasan Pota* is found in the following verse:

*tamdenâ : tâna tanâ nam danâ tâna tanâ*  
*teitanâ : tátâna tátâna tanâ tam danâ tâna tanâ.* <sup>28</sup>

*sithdaya : striyak saha mariyâ mada lê na*  
*vattama : kâtuva yanda pitathva pavama na*  
*nathlathô : nithkiya yana duksha é andô nâ*  
*sathena : mârgaya dâka kiuva nomava nâ*

A kind hearted woman and Mary Magdalene accompanied her [Mary] to go on her way [to meet her son], sorrowful lamentations were sung, as they went, people on the road seeing them felt sorry. <sup>29</sup>

The breaking of the words and the rhyming of the lines are skilfully done to create a musical scene such as that found in a popular folk ballet. This type of music and dance was current in the Kotte and Kandyan periods.

The chanting and singing of Gonsalves' lyrics are identified with the following musical notes, which are standard in the Carnatic music tradition: *Sachcham (sa)*, *Sathushruthi Rimabam (ri)*, *Anthara Kantharam (ga)*, *Panchchamam (pa)*, low octave. These notes alone, however, are not enough to determine a raga in Carnatic music. There are also other features, which are peculiar to the chanting melodies. All four notes can be prolonged; that is, the chanter can stay on any note as long as he or she wishes and the chanting can begin on any of these four notes. These features mark Carnatic music at its most highly developed and sophisticated. The singing of lamentations in mournful tunes requires these long notes to convey the sorrowful mood of the *pasan*, a characteristic of Carnatic music which is very much in evidence in Gonsalves' compositions.

A third view concerning the origins of Gonsalves' musical chanting melody is that he was influenced by Sinhala folk songs, especially *opâres*. The Tamil word *oppâri* means 'lamentations sung by women round the dead body of a departed person'. The same word is used for the lamentations sung on Good Friday which commemorate the death of Jesus. The following passage from the *Oratorian Mission Report* describes the situation faced by Gonsalves at the time:

The people requested me again and again to give them a translation supplied with explanations and instructions. They had some ancient *opâres* or lamentations on Christ. When women used to sing them at funerals, the heretics began to find fault with them. Hence they asked me to compose others adapted to funerals. This is another reason that induced me to compose *opâres* or mournful tunes. These are meritorious to the souls of the departed and fruitful to those who listen to them. They are based on the Four Last Things,<sup>30</sup> while many words are borrowed from the book of Job. They lead to the contempt of the world and the fear of judgement and hell. These are accompanied by prayers that are a help to saving one's soul and are considered of great help to the departed. The women sing these instead of weeping.<sup>31</sup>

As we see, various forms of folk literature such as *nâdagam* and *opâres* existed during the time of Gonsalves; he himself mentions them in his letters. Thus *opâres* are another possible source for the chanting melody of his lyrics.

#### **4.iv.c. The chanting melody of *opâre***

In reality, *opâre* (or *oppâri*) is a form of traditional folk literature that developed from the spontaneous outbreak of grief expressed in words and put to a loud

mournful tune. Uncontrollable emotions arising from sad events make people cry and when this sadness is expressed in words it becomes *opâre*. The word *opâre* was also used for the lamentation sung on Good Friday when Christians commemorate the Passion and death of Jesus.<sup>32</sup> I entirely agree with K. Sivathamby when he remarks about the use of *oppâri* by Christians that the Passion and death of Jesus occupy a central place in Christianity, and the chants describing them were adapted from an already existing traditional form of *oppâri*; a happy blending of these two factors was therefore able to make a lasting impression on the traditional *oppâri* folk literature.<sup>33</sup> The adoption of the existing *opâre* form of folk literature probably took place during the Portuguese period. When Gonsalves arrived, therefore, *opâre* compositions on the Passion and death of Jesus were already in use. These compositions were also sung as penitential invocations by Christian women at funerals.

Even today among Sri Lankan Christians, melancholy folk songs such as *lathôni*, *kâthal* and *opâre* exist; however, it is *opâre*, sung by women at funerals as they beat their breasts, which resembles the chanting melody of the poetical compositions of Gonsalves more than any other form of melancholy folk song. Despite this, it is impossible to arrive at a decisive conclusion with regard to the melody used in chanting *opâre*. The tradition of beating the breast in *opâre*, once popular among Sri Lankan Christians, still exists in some villages; by looking at this custom we may find clues to the source of this particular melody.

#### 4.v. The tradition of carol singing

The Bible contains a variety of songs, such as lamentations, psalms, panegyric and love songs. They often remain literary compositions without much practical use for religious purposes. By contrast, carols are very popular in seasonal liturgical celebrations, especially during the season of Christmas. The socio-cultural life of people is touched by them to such an extent that they have become a part of the lives of Sri Lankan Christians.

Different definitions and interpretations are expressed regarding carols. They are a kind of religious group songs sung by choirs<sup>34</sup> and widely used during the festive seasons of Christmas and Vesak.<sup>35</sup> 'Carol' is termed *chanson de noel* in France and *Weihnachtslied* in Germany. The English word 'carol' and its European equivalents are used exclusively for Christmas songs in these countries. According to some, however, the term 'carol' may denote any religious song, such as the songs sung at Easter or on May Day.<sup>36</sup> During the Middle Ages in Europe, songs without any connection with Christian religious festivals were also termed 'carols'.<sup>37</sup> This wide-ranging definition is supported by others too: according to *The Larousse Encyclopædia*, a carol is a specific kind of repetitive group song sung both on religious as well as on non-religious occasions.<sup>38</sup>

Broadly speaking, then, a carol is a song marked by religious joy and associated with a given season, especially Christmas. More strictly, it is a late medieval English

song on any subject, in which uniform stanzas or verses alternate with a refrain. The medieval words 'carol' and 'carole' might also denote a popular dance-song with pagan associations; a courtly dance or a dance-song; a song of popular piety; a polyphonic song in a certain style; and a popular religious procession.<sup>39</sup> By the fourteenth century, the word 'carol' had established its meaning and practice as a popular religious song.

The golden era of the English carol is considered to be the period from 1350 to 1550 A.D. From among these carols only a few tunes and about 500 verses have survived to the present day. A considerable number of these are composed on the themes of the mother of Jesus, baby Jesus, the lives of the saints commemorated just after Christmas, and the passion of Jesus. Those compositions which are in a mixed language of English and Latin are credited with a certain originality.

At the end of the fifteenth century, carols appeared in a court song-book and the same carols were contained in the *Fayrfax Manuscript*. The carols of this era are regarded as landmarks in English medieval music: they were composed mostly by William Cornyshe, Robert Fayrfax and John Browne and usually deal with the Passion of Christ. In these songs the words often determined the musical effect.<sup>40</sup> The oldest carol is considered to be the *Boar's Head Carol*, composed by

Wynkyn de Worde in 1521 AD. Some of the most famous modern volumes containing ancient works are: *The English Carol Book* (1913), *The Cowley Carol Book* (1902) and *The Oxford Book of Carols* (1928), with many conventional carols contained in C. Sharp's *English Folk Carols* (1911). From the middle of the eighteenth-century, we find the Methodist contribution, including Wesley's famous carol, 'Hark, the Herald Angels Sing'.

The carol is very popular world-wide, both as a form of literature and as a form of music. Scholars classify carols into three kinds: those composed under the influence of conventional folk songs; those composed by adapting non-religious music such as opera; and those composed with a certain degree of originality.<sup>41</sup> Of these three kinds, the most numerous are those which have been greatly influenced by folk songs<sup>42</sup>: in these, the characteristics of folk singing are clearly visible, and it is notable that they were sung by unskilled singers.<sup>43</sup>

However, the conventional carol has developed. A modern example is the *Carol Symphony of Tom, ...* which was composed in 1929, and is a testament to the way that carol singing has become increasingly popular throughout the centuries. The way that new carols have developed from previously existing carol tunes is also notable. A good example of this pattern is 'Good King Wenceslas', which became popular in the latter part of the nineteenth-century using a tune from the sixteenth-century hymn book, *Piae Cantiones*.

#### 4.v.a. Carols in Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan carol tradition goes back to the Portuguese period and to the imperial powers of Portugal and the Netherlands.<sup>44</sup> However, although Dutch carols have been found, the Dutch Reformed Church did not encourage their development in Sri Lanka. This attitude may be contrasted with that of the Oratorian missionaries who were inspired by Joseph Vaz, <sup>who</sup> created indigenous forms of literature in the Dutch period. As one of these missionaries, Jacome Gonsalves is considered to be the father of the Sinhala carol tradition. The first Sinhala carol is found in his *Maṅgala Gītiya*, composed in 1730. It consists of hymns of praise or religious canticles for the feasts of Christ and the mother of Jesus and the apostles and there are fifteen religious songs on the birth of Jesus. One of the first carols—the most popular among all the traditional religious songs and widely used in contemporary times—is the *Devindu Upanneya Satuni*.

#### 4.v.b. The *Maṅgala Gītiya*

Gonsalves' contribution to the development of Sinhala carols has to be assessed not only in terms of literature but in terms of music. For Gonsalves employed local music in his carols and *pasan*, using melodies that have a greater affinity with the taste of Sinhala people than the Christian songs introduced by the Portuguese

and the Dutch. Some scholars believe that Gonsalves used folk melodies that were popular in the island during his time, while others argue that he drew his melodies from South Indian music. Peiris, for example, argues as follows:

Fr. Gonsalves was a musician, a trait noticeable even in his prose: he could appreciate Oriental music and the value of our folk songs. His *Maṅgala Gītiya* or chants for festive occasions, is altogether based on Oriental melodies of the Carnatic variety.<sup>45</sup>

However, it is more likely that Gonsalves used both Sri Lankan and South Indian sources. For example, folk singing and music are particularly popular among the fishing folk in the western coastal area of the island, where Karnatic music is widely played. Using the music and the melodies available locally, therefore, Gonsalves composed hymns and carols to be used in the Church liturgy. Meanwhile, the village folk of the interior country appreciated the *vaṅṅam* and the poems of the peasant sector. In the Kandyan royal family, however, South Indian music and dance were commonly used, due to Malabar influences. Gonsalves selected the most popular tunes and melodies—both those of local origin as well as South Indian material—for his compositions.

From early times, Sri Lankan Christians have sung religious songs in church, accompanied by drums and oriental musical instruments. These songs were sung either before or after the fall of a curtain which covered the sanctuary, following

the Jewish custom.<sup>46</sup> Therefore the Christians in the city of Jaffna called them *tirei patta*, meaning 'the songs of the curtain'.<sup>47</sup> These songs on the theme of the birth of Jesus include the most popular and ancient Sri Lankan carols. Some exhibit Portuguese elements, as seen here:

*yasāti raja nirindō - pema - yasāti raja nirindō*  
*vanditi dev bilindō - nama - vanditi dev bilindō*  
*oh! gi ki viyôle - bolan- gi ki viyôle*  
*gīta nāda siyalle - bolan- gīta nāda siyalle*  
*oh! vīvā vīvā vīvā - kiyava vīvā vīvā vīvā*  
*bihiva dēva vīvā kiyava - bihiva - dēva vīvā - tutuva tuti.*

The good kings venerated the God-child with love. Oh! See, singing with music of the violin; all music and singing everywhere; gladly singing *vīvā vīvā vīvā* [because] he is born.<sup>48</sup>

The Portuguese word *vīvā* is used eight times in this verse for its musical effect; the meaning of the term is similar to that of the English word 'hurrah' or 'hurray' as an exclamation of joy or approval.<sup>49</sup> Portuguese had been used on the island for one and half centuries and so Gonsalves was making use of forms and expressions prevalent in the country in his time. As noted above, the oldest Sinhala carol book is his *Maṅgala Gītiya* which was edited and printed in 1873. In the preface, the editor introduces the book thus:

I need not mention here, for it is common knowledge, that many are the works done into Sinhala from other languages by some authors. However, to one who peruses the *Maṅgala Gītiya*, it becomes clear that this book is not a translation, but an entirely original composition in the mixed Sinhala prevalent in Ceylon.<sup>50</sup>

Gonsalves loved and appreciated the musical talent of the Sri Lankans. For their use, he wrote these carols and hymns to melodies not imported from abroad but well-known on the island. Hence the tunes of the *Maṅgala Gītiya* are altogether local. Its opening hymns are for the preparation of the liturgical celebrations and the Sign of the Cross. Then follows a number of carols for Christmas and other feasts to mark the events of the life of Jesus. The next set begins with a hymn of adoration and is followed by several hymns to the mother of Jesus, including the translation of a popular hymn, *Ave Maris Stella*, and metrical settings of the litany of Loretto and *Salve Regina*. Some of the hymns recount the miracles of Mary, the mother of Jesus, as related in the *Prātihāryāvaliya*. The concluding hymns are to Ss. John the Baptist, Peter and Paul, James, Anthony, Sebastian, Francis Xavier, and Lucy. The last verses are in the *Jayamaṅgala* metre, a popular vehicle for the invocation of blessings on a person on any occasion, whether secular or religious.

Gonsalves was a great synthesiser, his musical compositions receiving inspiration and guidance from both panegyrics and war poems. In fact the *Maṅgala Gītiya* became a single composition drawn from a variety of elements visible in earlier Sinhala poems. As noted above, South Indian forms of art had a tremendous impact on the socio-cultural life of the country during the Kandyan period, and Gonsalves skilfully blended the Carnatic music of South India with traditional folk elements already prevalent in the country. His works were enriched by many sources yet, at the same time, his compositions exhibit a distinct sense of originality.

#### 4.vi. The tradition of Sinhala Christian hymns

A popular type of Sinhala Christian hymn is the *kantâru*. Sinhala dictionaries define the term as a kind of hymn used in churches for religious worship.<sup>51</sup> *Kantâru* is also defined as playing on an instrument while singing and chanting are going on.<sup>52</sup> The Sinhala word *kantâru* is obviously derived from the Portuguese word *cantâr*, and it is also evident that the Portuguese have used the words *cantô* or *cancão* for the English word 'song'. In Latin, the word *canto* denotes a singer and the word *cantor* is used for the chief singer or the one who conducts the choir.<sup>53</sup> However, the Sinhala term is gradually disappearing and has ceased to be used in contemporary society while a more meaningful and indigenous word introduced by Jacome Gonsalves to refer to hymns has become increasingly important: *gîtika* or *gîtiya*. This term is found in the title of Gonsalves' hymn book, the *Maṅgala Gîtiya*. In this context, the title seems to indicate the songs used for religious worship and on festive days.

The word *gîtika* is more appropriate than *kantâru* and it is used in Sinhala classical works as well. The use of this term, therefore, is significant for understanding the indigenization of Christianity. The following examples are taken from these Sinhala works, the *Saddharma Ratnâvaliya*, the *Sinhala Bôdhivaṃsaya* and the *Saddharmâlaṅkâraya*.

*tamba van tatu dahasê hança divya gîtikâ nâdayak men.*  
As a celestial song made by a thousand copper-coloured wings. <sup>54</sup>  
*madura dvaniyen nâda karana lada vîna dvaniyen*  
*kôlâhala û maṅgala gîtiyen gayana keranu*  
*labanna û yasa prabanda ätte.*

The compositions are full of beautiful music from stringed instruments and the sound of the auspicious songs. <sup>55</sup>

*ek siya visi layin anapeta û manahara divya gîtikâ kiyâ kiyâ*

While singing celestial songs, accompanied by not less than a hundred and twenty melodies ... <sup>56</sup>

Clearly, the word *gîtikâ* was often used in the older Sinhala literary works. At present, however, it is used exclusively to refer to Christian hymns. These religious songs are sung as community prayers, as songs of praise, and in thanksgiving to God. The word *gîtikâ*, derived from Pali and thus from Sanskrit, is widely used to denote a range of musical forms such as carols, *pasan* and passion songs.

As well as its Portuguese and Latin associations, the word *kantâru* is closely linked with the English word 'hymn' or the Greek word *hymnos*, which denotes a song of praise and thanksgiving. Hymns were also used to praise and thank heroes and famous persons, and even in the ancient Greek civilizations certain songs were used as hymns. Only later did they become exclusively religious, as defined by St. Augustine:

A hymn is the praise of God by singing. A hymn is a song embodying the praise of God. If there be merely praise but not praise of God it is not a hymn. If there be praise, and praise of God, but not sung, it is not a hymn. For it is to be a hymn, it is needful, therefore, for it to have three things - praise, praise of God, and these sung.<sup>57</sup>

In the Sri Lankan context, the word *gîtika* (hymn) is sometimes used with reference to the religious songs sung by a congregation. At the same time the word *gâyanâ* (chant) is used for the songs sung by the priests or religious, while *puna gâyanâ* (choral) denotes the songs sung by the choir. Along with the word *kantâru*, the tradition of singing *kantâru* came from Portugal. The Portuguese taught their religious music and singing in schools and churches and Don Peter argues that, since religious worship was conducted in Latin, there would have been singing practices accompanied by musical instruments such as the organ, violin and harp.<sup>58</sup> The tradition of singing Latin hymns continued to some extent after the sixteenth century: for instance, the hymn book, the *Gee Kalamba*,<sup>59</sup> allocates thirty pages to Latin hymns.

In Sri Lanka, the religious language for Catholics was Latin—as Pali is for Buddhists, Arabic for Muslims and Sanskrit for Hindus—and it was introduced by the Franciscan missionaries in the sixteenth century. However, Latin was taught in schools not only as a religious language but also as a classical language. Thus just as Buddhists had some knowledge of Pali, Catholics were able to understand Latin to some extent,<sup>60</sup> since these two languages were the religious languages of the island.

Even after hymns were composed in Sinhala, certain popular Latin phrases continued to be sung:

*lilî û sudu mal samâ na  
devadûtayô patane a pê  
svargika û gitikava k  
kiemata sâdie patan ga ti  
Gloria in excelsis Deo*

The angels like white lily flowers; [they] began to sing a celestial hymn; that hymn is 'Gloria to God' in the highest'.<sup>61</sup>

Obviously, Latin was considered the appropriate language for Christian worship and the characteristic of including certain Latin hymns and phrases is evident not only in the Sri Lankan tradition of singing, but also in English.

From its early days the carol was occasionally given macaronic texts (the burden in Latin, the verses in English, for example), and this is a feature also of some carol-anthems of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods; an excellent example is Weelkes's 'Gloria in excelsis Deo'.<sup>62</sup>

However, when Gonsalves began to compose hymns for Sri Lankan Christians, he deliberately eliminated such foreign terms, creating a genuinely indigenous tradition of local hymns. Consequently, the oldest Sinhala hymns extant are those composed by him.

#### 4.vi.a. Jacome Gonsalves' contribution to Sinhala hymns

Even before Gonsalves, however, there must have been some Sinhala hymns. A missionary who lived in 1610 in Malvana, the headquarters of the Portuguese administration, was renowned for his proficiency in Sinhala. It is recorded that he and Antonio of Matara composed Sinhala hymns. Joseph Vaz also translated a Portuguese book into Sinhala and composed a few prayers and litanies in 1687.<sup>63</sup> From Gonsalves' letter to the Bishop of Cochin in 1733, we can deduce which books were available to him on his arrival in Sri Lanka:

When I came to this mission, in Chingala [Sinhala] there was nothing more than the Sign of the Cross and the Our Father and even these not as they ought to be. Hence the first missionary, Father Joseph Vaz, commanded me to translate the prayers. I answered that I would not do it unless I had a thorough knowledge of the language to avoid that emendations should be made from time to time. Now among the Christians there was none who could fully explain to me the Chingala language. So Father Vaz granted me permission to converse with the religious Ganes [Buddhist monks of the Kandyan Kingdom], with whom I struck friendship. They taught me the meaning of many words and helped me to understand their books. Then I began to make use of their commentaries and of their dictionaries. Finally I wrote the prayers, the litanies, the instructions, ... fifteen volumes in all together with books in poetry and with anything else they needed.<sup>64</sup>

This provides us with information regarding the nature of the volumes then available and the reason for the new compositions and translations. Gonsalves then had to create an original corpus of works to meet the demand.

#### 4.vi.b. Hymns composed by Gonsalves

Among the variety of works by Gonsalves, the *Ânanda Kalippuva* and the *Mañgala Gîtiya* fall into the category of hymns. However, the former is not mentioned in the Oratorian mission reports or in the list of books belonging to the Portuguese, the *Biblioteca Lusitana*. This may be because the *Ânanda Kalippuva* is a very small book; however, because this work is similar to other works by Gonsalves, it is traditionally believed to be one of his compositions.<sup>65</sup> Further evidence can be found in the manuscripts at the Biblioteca da Ajuda to support this conclusion.

The *Ânanda Kalippuva* represents the older traditions of folk tunes, poems, *viridu*, *vañnam* and panegyrics, and its hymns are enriched by the influence of such elements. As narrated by Edmond Peiris, the story of the origin of the *Ânanda Kalippuva* runs as follows. King Narendrasimha of Kandy received a violin as a gift from the Dutch, but no one in the palace could play it for him. When the king asked Gonsalves if he could play it, the latter composed the *Ânanda Kalippuva* and sang it for the king while playing the violin. It is said, however, that (for reasons that will become clear) the ministers and officials in the royal palace were angry about its subject matter.<sup>66</sup>

The word *ânanda* in Sanskrit and Tamil means 'joy', and the Tamil word *kalippuva* means 'vanity'. This work is to instruct people on how to obtain joy and avoid vanities in life. The emphasis is more on joy than vanity. Therefore, the

meaning of the title is 'joyous canticle'. The *Ânanda Kalippuva*, is a set of twenty verses, written to a well-known Tamil metre. These verses are sung to a joyful melody, to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals.

The theme of the song is the vanity of worldly wealth, honour and pleasure. Since the elites in the royal palace sought these very things, they were hostile to this composition. The *Ânanda Kalippuva* recalls some verses of the *Lôvâda Saṅgarâva*, which also falls into the category of wisdom literature. This type of literature urges people of all classes and times to work for lasting and true values in life. Since the *Ânanda Kalippuva* was written for the entertainment and instruction of ordinary people, its language is simple.

Compositions such as these by Gonsalves involve both singing and music in accordance with the theme of the songs. According to C. B. Gupta, *saṅgita*, or music, consists of vocal music, instrumental music and dancing, and depends upon rhythm. While people generally consider *saṅgita* and *gita* (lyric) to be synonymous, there is a marked difference between the two. Vocal music deals with only one aspect of music and is a combination of tones and the musical scale.<sup>67</sup>

The *Ânanda Kalippuva* is full of these three elements of singing, music and dancing. Gonsalves makes use of existing indigenous tunes of traditional *vaṅnam* and *viridu*, such as the following:

*katâ baha balâ hapaniñne goda*  
*madin tibena gam kumburu madiva duppatun nivata*  
*minisungê - un*  
*atin sadagat gê dora gena batha demin dorata*  
*damamiñne - é de*  
*sapan kamak lesa kera nara lova vena satunta*  
*atkaramie - tada*  
*rosin ävit maru pämununu dina bända*  
*aranyañtadô paraveni paine*

The rich and the powerful people have enough estates and paddy fields and still they harass the poor and the innocent, chasing them out of their properties. They consider such deeds as great achievements. When death calls them, will they take their possessions with them? <sup>68</sup>

This verse is written to a well-known indigenous metre, one generally found in Tamil literature and particularly in South Indian folk drama.

Gonsalves also attempted to educate and instruct people to live by true social values. The *Ānanda Kalippuva* consists of verses to be sung according to traditional dancing tunes:

*kuda kuñda gajin*  
*kuda kuñda gajin*  
*ruvan thôdu kana lûvaṭ tala*  
*thelin varala opalâ pêrâ mal patin nibañda*  
*gäva sûvaṭ - däli*  
*andun nuvan vata kara gâmiñma*  
*sandun nalale gândaṭ - nada*  
*kalin bilin gâ valalu athe solavamin omari*  
*penuvaṭ - nara*  
*kayen dinañnata bäri mē dē sonda lesin*  
*sithata sihipaṭ karagañnē*

It is always better to remember that the world cannot be overcome by the physical and material things, though: one dresses up with golden ear-rings; combs hair after applying gingili oil and decorates it with flowers; uses cosmetic to beautify the eyebrows and forehead; and wears bangles which make a proud look.<sup>69</sup>

The tune of the verse is extremely effective when it is accompanied by drums. It recalls the *Uraga Vañnama* of old, which inspired dancing, and belongs to the *vañnam* style. These compositions were linked to traditional local tunes and are much closer to the indigenous people. An example of the *vañnam* style is given below:

*tadem ñana tana na tñanam ...*  
*tamde ñana tñana nã tñana nã tñana nã tanam ...*  
*ana ngã - pulin gatha vè ...*  
*sulã nga - bojùn evanga - mädin säma gã ...*  
*vãra nga - gilum polañ gã ...*

This composition is meant to be sung according to a dancing rhythm and the words do not carry meanings.

The tunes and rhythms familiar in folk dance and singing are quite visible in the *Ānanda Kalippuva*, and the *Mañgala Gītiya* is the earliest hymn book to be composed in Sinhala with local melodies. Its hymns were sung in churches, before and after the services, to the accompaniment of a drum and small cymbals. Sunil

Ariyaratna, commenting on the hymns, writes that they have more sound effect than meaning.<sup>70</sup> For instance, the following hymn has a *ra* sound in four or five places in each line:

*vadakara nova ivara asu gira gäsü kava ra*  
*andara migani sara sihi kara suva nita ra*  
*apanara udesä thara vada bara viñda kuru ra*  
*ambara para para jesusura vandu nita ra*

Due to endless troubles caused by unkind men, some people are discouraged. However,<sup>71</sup> reflecting on the cross of Jesus, they pay homage to Jesus all the time.

It is difficult to follow the meaning of such a verse. Yet the musical effect created by the repetition of sounds is remarkably effective. Another example is the use of the word *ratnê* 'gem' in the following verse:

*ratnê sura säpa salasana ratnê ratnê neka saga väsi vata ratnê*  
*ratnê mila kala nohäki su ratnê ratnê nam kañni mariel ratnê*

One who causes the heavenly blessings is like a gem [*ratnê*]: and [that one is] accompanying the celestial beings: that priceless red gem [*ratnê*] is the mother of Jesus.<sup>72</sup>

This verse is a good example of the language of folklore, which existed in oral form in Sri Lankan society. Its two key features are variation and repetition. This apparent

paradox is what gives folklore its dynamic tension: it is simultaneously artistic and functional; a fluid, creative process and a conservative repository; innovation and tradition.

#### **4.vii. The influence of Gonsalves on later hymns and songs**

Later composers of music, songs and hymns were inspired by Gonsalves' works, and his poetic compositions directly influenced the songs found in later dramas. As I shall demonstrate, his influence can be traced in four main areas: dramas, hymns, carols and *pasan*.

#### **4.vii.a. His poetic structure and its influence on later dramas**

Gonsalves created a corpus of Christian works and composed a variety of forms of literature on sacred history as well as on various other themes. As <sup>de</sup> Silva, a prominent dramatist, observes, Gonsalves' works became a source of inspiration to subsequent dramatists:

Pillippu Sinno was a Roman Catholic by religion, and his introductory invocations are composed to agree with his religious views ... the rest of the works are adaptations from existing common works and poems. Four of the works—St. Josephat, Susew, Helena, St. Nicholas—are from Catholic sacred history.<sup>73</sup>

As we have discussed earlier, the earliest existing dramatic compositions were by Gonsalves who created a special poetic tradition for drama, with the very structure of

his poetry having a dramatic outlook.

One can observe that major songs in the *Maṅgala Gītiya* consist of three parts. The first part of a song is called *rāgam* which is a Sanskrit and pan-South Asian term. This term is being used here to denote the musical mode. In the same way, the second part is called *siṅduva*, meaning 'song'. *Rāgam* introduces the music and song as a refrain while *siṅduva* consists of the actual mode of singing. Both *rāgam* and *siṅduva* are shorter phrases than the third part which is called the *viṣaya*. The *viṣaya* is a longer verse which includes the occasional repetition of elements from the first and the second parts. The *viṣaya* consists of the subject matter of the song in details. The song on the birth of Mary, the mother of Jesus, for instance, contains all three parts:

*rāgam*

*aruna udeepa veminē, andura binda harina lesinnē,  
dēva mâtâ upata, pau andura duru viyata, sakala  
laka sâpata, mok ananta lâbena me divya mari upata  
vandimuva adika bâti pem sita*

*siṅduva*

*upata deu mâtâ, vareva  
lâba ganuva diva sampatha  
upata ada upata dev mâtâ*

visaya

*nisaru dugi dilindu satha anantha, isuru dena mōksha sāpata ananta,  
rusiru deu mātāvan upana, vareva lāba ganuva diva sampata -  
upata - rōga duka bhēda dāna ayasin, siyanga dōsa pīrisindu va  
yasasin, nirōga suva labathi sāma elesin vareva - upata -  
kanu da koru golu da sāma pillu, pahadā sata nāgi sititi lol ū,  
ipida mau yasa kiyati siyalu, vareva - ...*

rāgam

The power of darkness is destroyed through the dawn of the sun.  
And the darkness of sin is eliminated with the birth of the  
mother of Jesus. Let us commemorate the birth of Mary which brings  
us all worldly comforts and the everlasting heavenly life.

siñduva

Come, [it is] the birth of the mother of Jesus. Obtain heavenly blessings,  
today is her birth.

visaya

The mother of Jesus is born to give the treasure of endless heavenly reward  
to the poor and the humble. Come and receive heavenly blessings.  
Come, be cured of all sorts of sicknesses and sorrows. Come, all you  
who are deaf, dumb, lame, and all praise the birth of the mother.<sup>74</sup>

This is the structure created by Gonsalves and followed by subsequent dramatists,  
who also used Gonsalves' song-tunes. Examples of the two-part structure can be  
found in Gonsalves' treatments of the 'Lord's Prayer' and the 'Hail Mary', from  
both of which Gonsalves composed religious songs for community singing. The  
following is a good example:

The Lord's Prayer

rāgam

Ādi vina binda harina  
lesa pavara manu vesin  
kurusê mata vâda inna teda devâja bâlame  
nirayê apa sathuruṅgen  
jaya gaṁna sânta kurusê adayâlamen  
pith da puth spiritu sântuget nâmen amen jêsu.

siṅduva

tri eka sura jêsu nê, paramaṅdalavala,  
paramaṅdalavala  
vâda sitinâ devi pituruge dakunê.  
âradîta vêvâ obe nâmaya  
emuladdêvâ obe dîvya rajaya  
vêvâ obe abimata sura bumi lova  
dêvâ niraturu bôjana apahata  
ape naya karu haṭa apa gevanâ lesa  
ape naya karu apa haṭa gevamuya tosa  
yaksha vina mâyam vâla apa novâtena lesa  
apa râka galavanu âmen jêsu

rāgam

Taking our human form, you destroyed the sin of old. [Help us]  
to overcome our enemies through the sign of your cross. In the name  
of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost - Amen.

siṅduva

Triune God, who is in heaven, and Jesus, the Son of God who stays in the  
right hand side of God in glory. Your name be held holy, your will be done.  
Always give us our food. As we settle our debts with others, be merciful  
to us your debtors. Protect us from all sorts of evil spirits, Amen Jesus. <sup>75</sup>

As for the 'Hail Mary', Gonsalves used this in both the *Maṅgala Gītiya* and the *Ānanda Kalippuva*, original works which greatly influenced subsequent dramatists. This too has a two-part structure, of which the first part, the *rāgam*, is identical to that given above for 'The Lord's Prayer'.

The *siṅduva* or 'song' follows:

*namô namô mariya presâden puraniya  
tri eka suravara obe kere kanniya  
sthrin atharen âsirvâda laddiya  
obe siri kusa palâ jêsus mahimaya  
sântha û mariyani devinduge mauveni  
pâpiu dasu apa rakinu adhareni  
dân saha ape maranaya velêdith  
apa rāka galavanu âmen jêsu*

Hail, hail, Mary, you are the blessed one in all these three worlds. You are blessed because Jesus is born of you. You are holy and the mother of Jesus. In your love for us, protect and save us sinners today and at the hour of our death, Amen Jesus. <sup>76</sup>

Gonsalves' ability to compose original religious songs from traditional prayers can be seen in these compositions. The verse, *ape naya karu hata apa gevanâ lesa*, in the 'Lord's Prayer' has the same composition as in the 'Hail Mary'. As I shall demonstrate, these songs have clearly been influential well into the twentieth-century.

This can be seen in the songs of one of the most popular Sinhala dramas, *Maname*, produced in 1958 by E. R. Sarathchandra. The conversation between

Prince Maname and King Veddha (a tribal king) run as follows:

Prince Maname: *pavara é nirinduge puth kumarâ vemi satara igena  
taksalâva gos emi*

King Veddha: *mulu damba divatama topa maha raja uva mage vijitaya meya  
mama vemi aga raja*

Prince Maname: I am the son of the great king [of Barana] and returning to my kingdom after the completion of my studies at Taksalava.

King Veddha: Even if you are the king of the whole Dambadiva [kingdom], this is my kingdom and I am the king of the place.<sup>77</sup>

The musical composition of this song is taken from the two hymns mentioned above.

It is also interesting to note that the most popular drama song in Sri Lanka, *prêmâyen mana ranjitha vê*, also part of the play *Maname*, was composed to the tune of Gonsalves' hymn, *âramben pera nirmita manu lova*. The latter hymn reads as follows:

*âramben pera nirmita manu lova  
adityâuru nirmaliyê sura  
êvâdam kala pau duralaîmata  
ananthabala - jesu upa - dintâ karunâ piruna  
âna mau kusayen bihi vê dulla  
dôsa jamma nirdôsa vê sundara  
nâsareth jusê min samagin kâra  
bandanaya-sidda kara-tunga pathi-vatha râka*

Even before the creation of the world [Mary was chosen] unstained as an angel. All powerful Jesus was destined to be born to take away the sin of Adam and Eve. Freed from original sin, [Mary] was born of Anne's womb. [She] lived a life of celibacy while living with Joseph of Nazareth.

This tune, composed for the purpose by Gonsalves is re-used for the popular song from the play, *Maname*, as is evident in the following extract:

Refrain: *prêmayen mana rañjita vê nañdita vê  
pushpayen vana suñdara vê lankruta vê*  
Prince Maname: *âlayen piri sädi me lathâ mañdapayen chañdâ-  
tapa kañditha vê hiru rajinduge*  
Refrain: *prêmayen mane ...*  
Princess Maname: *kôkila handa kan pinavai ran svarayai  
râna girau dena gî siñdu ama biñdu*

Refrain: The mind rejoices with love. The forest is beautified with the blossom of the flowers.  
Prince Maname: The wild creepers are embraced with love. The heat of the Sun King is reduced by the shade of the creepers.  
Princess Maname: The beautiful golden sound of the pleasant note of the black cuckoo is an entertainment to the ears. [Together with them] golden parrots sing their song of eternal life. <sup>78</sup>

Not only did later authors make use of many of Gonsalves hymn tunes, but they used his subject matter and terminology. At the beginning of a play, for example, verses are sung by the Potê Gura, the leader of the chant, who introduces the characters and the story in florid style. The following are the four verses of the prologue in the *Sinhavalli Nâdagam* of J. Ratnayake of Matara:

*sarva prâna trina artha padârtha srastikalâ sumula n  
sarva bala mahimôtma dēvâ. devituma n  
duruva siyaluma dôsa yômâ divya kulunaye n  
atva oba srivâda dinantara mâ räkadeva n*

The great and all-powerful God of gods [who] made all living beings, plants, meanings and words, remove all my faults by extending to me your divine

kindness, and make me the possessor of your speech, and protect me day by day.<sup>79</sup>

The terminology used here is that of Gonsalves, and the wide variety of tunes for his hymns greatly enrich the singing in plays. From Gonsalves' hymns there is a variety from which subsequent dramatists received guidance for their compositions.

#### **4.vii.b. The development of Christian hymns after Gonsalves**

Jacome Gonsalves is widely considered to be responsible for creating this particular branch of Sinhala literature. Although there was no continuation of his work immediately after his death, there was an enthusiasm in the composition of Sinhala hymns several decades later. It is worth mentioning here the efforts of the Dutch Reformed Church to encourage singing in church services. As psalm-singing was considered an important part of the Divine Service in all the Christian churches, it was thought desirable to give the converts the necessary training. Therefore, in 1723, the Governor himself proposed evening schools 'to train, if possible, the Sinhalese in psalm-singing'.<sup>80</sup> Added to this were metrical versions of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. However, since Gonsalves' hymns belonged to a different church, it was felt that these hymns should not be used in the Dutch churches. This diversity and competition became a hindrance for the growth of

hymns in the vernacular languages of the island.<sup>81</sup> Local records deposited in the Wolfendahl Church, Colombo, reveal that there was constant tension between the two denominations:

In 1750 the Roman Catholics in the Negombo district addressed a Memorial in Tamil to the Government, which was referred to the consistory for consideration. It contained the following complaints: that as the petitioners adhered to the Roman Catholic faith which had been taught two hundred years ago to their forefathers, they did not wish their children to learn in the Government schools tenets which are contrary to their belief, and it grieved them to hear rehearsed by their children on their return from school ...<sup>82</sup>

With the view of propagating their faith, the Dutch created a religious literature of their own. In 1755, the Government Printers published a hymnal with Sinhala words by Anthony Perera and Louise de Saram and music by Patrus Dateni, printed by order of Governor John Gedeon Loten. A second enlarged edition was printed in 1768 and this gives us the further information that the 1755 edition (which is now lost) contained the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, Psalms 23 and 50 and the Song of Simeon, to which were added Psalms 1, 2, 6, 24, 51, 87, 103 and 110 set by Henricus Philipsz. These hymns are written in simple, rough-rhymed prose with the plain music of psalm recitals added. They do not seem to have appealed to the Sinhala people; however, as far as the printing is concerned, these hymns deserve much praise, since these were the first items printed in Sinhala. An example is afforded by Psalm 23 which was translated into Sinhala and published in the hymnal:

1. *endëra û svâmi mâ tharakaran: evita kôlaru nâ kisidëkin  
nil trinayê mâ kavâ ävidavâ: obagê premâthiû karunâven  
gâhini magê prânaya satappan*
2. *mârêmê jamburata mama giyath: mârêmê châyâva mâ vata kalath  
numba mâ langa nisâ baya noven: numbê särayatiyen mâ sanasan  
saturan ediriyê magê mësaya: atrâtâvalin pôsath karamiya*
3. *suvanda tailê magê isê galvâ: magê pâtraya vâdiya puravâ  
balâvath svâmini numbê karunâva: nitara mâ langa thibenda devâ  
sadâkal svâmingê gei vâsaya karami: nâsmen pasu mâ krêta palandavami*

1. Lord, you are my shepherd, you shall feed me. Then I shall not be put to shame. Make me walk in green pastures. In your mercy comfort my soul.
2. Even though I am at the point of my death, I shall not be afraid, because you are near to me. Comfort and protect me and prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies.
3. You anoint my head with oil and make my cup overflow. Let me be happy in your power and mercy. I shall dwell in your house always and crown me, after my death.<sup>83</sup>

In this translation, which changes the psalm into a hymn, one finds awkward phrases and words such as *mâ tarakaran* for 'feed me', *kôlaru nâ* for 'not want', *mârêmê jamburata* for 'the valley of the shadow of death', *atrâtâvalin* for 'prepare a table', *svâmingê gei* for 'the house of the Lord'. These phrases and words are awkward in their use of colloquialisms and, in these instances, the Dutch composers exhibit their lack of familiarity with Sinhala. It is also obvious that the melodies of

foreign hymns were used without any consideration for indigenous musical concepts. These compositions appeared strange and alien to the Sinhala people, and were therefore, far less effective than those by Gonsalves.

Even after the island came under the rule of the British in 1815, Sinhala hymns did not develop in quality or numbers. During the English regime, however, several hymn-books were published. The Religious Tract Society's publication in 1850 contained hymns composed by David de Silva and J.F. Corea. It went into five editions and the final edition in 1929 contained 740 hymns.<sup>84</sup> By contrast the hymnal of the Anglicans contained Sinhala translations of English hymns, as is clear from the introduction by Cornelius Senanayake.<sup>85</sup> Thereafter several Christian denominations published hymnals consisting of both translations and original compositions.

Two observations can be made with regard to the hymns published within this period of 191 years, that is, from the death of Jacome Gonsalves in 1742 until 1933. First, these hymns were composed with phrases, sentences and a vocabulary that sounded awkward in Sinhala and therefore people generally found them strange and foreign. The second observation is that all the hymns were given foreign tunes and rhythms, which did not appeal to Sinhala tastes.

The person who continued the tradition of Gonsalves' hymns was Marcelline Jayakody, who began to compose Sinhala hymns in 1934. It is evident that Jayakody

took guidance from Gonsalves' example in his own compositions. Especially from the point of view of adaptation and inculturation, Jayakody made a remarkable contribution to Sinhala hymnography. His aim was 'to compose hymns easy for the organists and choir masters to learn'.<sup>86</sup> This initiative formed a continuation of the process of Gonsalves' indigenization of Christianity in Sri Lanka. As Leslie Fernando explains,

When Fr. Marcelline Jayakody was the parish priest of Duwa, the Duwa Passion Play was performed with images of sacred personages based on the centuries-old 'Nine Sermons' in the *Dukprâpthi Prasāṅgaya* written by Fr. Jacome Gonsalves. Fr. Marcelline Jayakody revised and recast the Duwa Passion Play based on Dorothy Sayer's famous play 'Born to be King', while maintaining the traditional outlook ...The credit of introducing Catholic hymns with both the Christian aspects and national outlook should go to Fr. Marcelline Jayakody.<sup>87</sup>

The first hymn he composed was *sapiri sâma asiri sôma*, published in 1934.<sup>88</sup> Even among Buddhists this is popular for the simplicity of its music and words. Thereafter Jayakody published several hymnals containing his own original compositions,<sup>89</sup> compositions which are of great value regarding the indigenization of Christianity. Jayakody's primary concern was to give a Sri Lankan gloss to religious concepts, persons and symbols; he was able to convey them while maintaining a Sri Lankan point of view. For example,

*mānik gaṅgê api mānik garāla valavê kalu ganga  
otumu sadālā hisa palandālā samanala gira obe ruva nangā  
heladiva rāginiya obava karalā laka tānna tānna obe dada nanvālā  
mariya kumāriya siri piri nāriya pudamu apê rājiniya tungā*

*indīya sâgara mutu kimidā karavata hara bandā  
sanda rās āda sudu sēla gothālā obe ruva vata andā  
damba domba ruk nā sapu seuvandīya mal mathe oba indā  
vandimu apê lassana lak rāginiya mudunê ath vānda*

Finding gems from the rivers of Mānik, Walawe and Kalu,  
Making crowns for you as you bear the image of Adam's Peak,  
We hail you as the Queen of the nation and hoist your flags everywhere.  
Mary, lady and princess, full of beauty and bright, we honour you as our queen.  
Weaving a necklace made of pearl from the Indian Ocean,  
weaving dresses with rays of the moon for you to wear.  
placing you on trees of rose-apple and Domba,  
and flowers of the ironwood, Sandalwood flower and white water lily.  
Let us pay our homage to the beautiful Queen of the nation,  
placing our hands over our heads.<sup>90</sup>

Some of the elements used in this hymn such as *mānik gaṅga* (the Mānik river), *sri pāda* (Adam's Peak), *mariya kumāriya* (Princess Mary) and *sudu sēla* (white clothes) have had a religious significance for Sri Lankans for centuries. They are traditionally considered to be places and concepts of reverence and worship. The tree *nā* is the national tree of the island, a beautiful tree with a comparatively long span of life. None of the other items mentioned in the poem—fruits, flowers, plants and the Indian Ocean—are foreign to Sri Lankans. The worshipper who sees Mary amidst these familiar elements receives her as one of their own. By making his compositions simple with a Sri Lankan flavour, Jayakody created hymns that remain

close to the people, appreciated even by non-Catholics. These hymns are a striking example of what cultural adaptation can achieve, following the footsteps of Gonsalves.

#### 4.vii.c. Christmas carols and the Buddhist Vesak songs

As mentioned earlier, Gonsalves' *Maṅgala Gītiya* and his *Ānanda Kalippuva* contained the first Sinhala carols. These literary compositions should be viewed as part of the process by which he indigenized Christianity in a way that touched the hearts of ordinary people. Following his example, in recent decades, Buddhist songs have been composed and sung on the occasion of Vesak, when Buddhists commemorate the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha. Carol singing has become an essential item in the Vesak celebrations: carols are sung both on stages and in open moving vehicles.

A variety of opinion has been expressed by scholars concerning the origin of the Vesak carols. According to Wilmet P. Wijayatunga, for example, the tradition of singing Vesak carols emerged at the suggestion of Olcott, an American Buddhist who impressed the Sri Lankan Buddhists.<sup>91</sup> D.V. Hapuaratchi maintains that it was introduced by C. Don Bastian, a pioneer in the organization of Buddhist catechism classes, who introduced colourful features such as decorated lamps and costumes.<sup>92</sup>

A better-founded opinion concerning the origin of Vesak carols is held by Tissa Kariawasam. In 1885, Vesak Day was declared a government holiday. When nationwide celebrations were organised the following year, a new feature added to the celebrations was carol-singing introduced by Charles Webster, a pastor in the Church of England. The performance took place in both Sinhala and English, and was accompanied by a variety of musical instruments.<sup>93</sup> The first Vesak carol, sung on 17 May 1886, is as follows:

*adai vesak pôdâ: somnasa satuta upan dâ  
auruddê ihala dinê: sâma dâvasema sâma rituvema  
aga minie oba  
apa hadê somnasa janitha kala: bodumuvani hâma ninden nâgitimu  
alâsakamin mara ninden nâgitimu: adai vesak pôdâ*

Today is the Vesak full-moon day, the birthday of gladness and happiness. The climax of the days in the year, of every day and every season it is the precious gem. Happiness is born in our hearts. Arise, all you who are Buddhists! Arise from laziness and the sleep of death! Today is the Vesak full-moon day.<sup>94</sup>

Thereafter, presumably, the tradition of Vesak carol-singing evolved gradually. The most prominent popular singers of the island learned their art from singing Christmas and Vesak carols and the Vesak carol-singing tradition is a direct result of Gonsalves' Christmas carols. His compositions created the necessary impetus for the evolution of the contemporary Vesak carol.

#### 4.vii.d. The tradition of *pasan* singing and the chanting of lamentations at funerals

Having examined the *pasan* of Gonsalves in the preceding chapters, it is important to consider how in subsequent decades this aspect of chanting and singing developed, irrespective of the religions, languages or cultures of the island. A particular area influenced by *pasan*-singing is the tradition of chanting at Buddhist funerals. Prior to Gonsalves a certain kind of mournful chanting had been used at Buddhist funerals such as that found in the books of *Vessantara* and *Butsarana*. It is interesting to see the same folk traditions of lamenting in the mournful compositions of Gonsalves.

Throughout human history, no society has produced literature without possessing folk literature.<sup>95</sup> As I mentioned earlier, Gonsalves combined existing *opâre*, lamentations sung by women around the dead body of a departed person, with elements from the Book of Job in his composition of *pasan*. There are also evident references to well-known stories such as that of King Vessantara in the Sinhala Buddhist classic, the *Butsarana*:

*aiyô mâgê kumârayeni, mâgê jeevithayeni mâgê ran âbaraneni,  
mê obagê sri muhunadô?  
divya sri kânthiyen dilihi dilihi tibune mê muhunadô?  
chandra suryayâ paradavâ tibune mê muhunadô?*

Oh! my prince, my life, my golden ornament, Is this your serene face?  
Is this the face that shone with divine rays?  
Is this the face that is brighter than both moon and sun? <sup>96</sup>

The chanting of *pasan*, or mournful songs, became common practice at funerals during and after the time of Gonsalves. Following this tradition, the Buddhists began to chant the *Vessantara Jâtaka Kāvya* at funerals. An examination of the use of the *Vessantara Jâtaka Kāvya* at Buddhist funerals reveals that this tradition evolved as a direct result of Gonsalves' *pasan*-singing. For example, the tradition of reading the *Vessantara Jâtakaya* at Buddhist funeral houses is restricted to those areas where the Catholic majority lives and is not found in the rest of the island. It may be deduced, therefore, that this Buddhist tradition owes its origin to the singing of *pasan* among Christians. It is also a noteworthy fact that there is no evidence of such a tradition in existence before the first half of the eighteenth century, during which period Gonsalves' *Pasan Pota* was composed and sung.

A comparative study of the two traditions reveals that both the books—*Pasan Pota* and *Vessantara Jâtaka Kāvya*—share the same quality in their literary composition. Both express the feeling of compassion. In rare cases, the *Vessantara Jâtakaya* can also be sung at wedding-feasts: according to D.A. Hettiaratchi, by singing the virtues of the King Vessantara, a blessing was invoked on wedding couples. <sup>97</sup>

For the purpose of chanting at funerals, the lamentations of Queen Maddri at the loss of her children was considered appropriate. Similarly, in the *Pasan Pota*, lamentations of Mary at the death of Jesus were given prominence. In both cases, chanting was done to slow and mournful tunes, and always at night. A group of men and women come together in the funeral house, and sit on mats on the floor. Here they drink tea and coffee together and sing. Usually such singing would go on for at least seven days after the funeral. However, there were occasions when this period was prolonged. For example, according to M.K.H. de Silva, in some areas the *Vessantara Jâtakaya* was sung for weeks.<sup>98</sup>

It is clear, therefore, that the contemporary tradition of singing the *Vessantara Jâtakaya* at funerals evolved as a direct result of *pasan*-singing introduced by Gonsalves. In subsequent decades, the practice of chanting *pasan* and the *Vessantara Jâtakaya* became popular. The same tradition is continued today, regardless of the religious affiliations of the concerned communities.

#### End Notes

1. King Sri Vijaya Rajasimha (1739-1747) was from South India.
2. Perera, S. G. 1943 : 2.
3. Perera, S. G. 1943 : 4.

4. Sudarshie, S. 1931 : 137.
5. Wickramasinghe, M. 1954 : 35.
6. Sudarshie, S. 1931 : 136.
7. Wickramasinghe, M. 1954: 83.
8. Wickramasinghe, K.D.P. 1965 : 11.
9. Wickramasinghe, K.D.P. 1965 : 303.
10. Vijesekara, N.D.S. 1943 : ii.
11. Vijesekara, N.D.S. 1943 : 48.
12. Parnavitana, S. 1953 : 2.
13. Keith, A.B. 1953: 77.
14. Peiris, E. 1978 : 92.
15. Gomis, O. 1990 : 27.
16. *Maṅgala Gītiya* 1993 : 54.
17. For Marcelline Jayakody, *pasan* comes from the Latin *passiochristi*. Some hold the opinion that it is derived from the English word 'passion'. Still others analyse the name of the 'Book of Psalms' in the Bible to argue that the word *pasan* is derived from the word 'psalm'. The English word 'psalm' is derived from the Greek *psalmos*, a term denoting a Hebrew sacred song of the type found in the Old Testament 'Book of Psalms'. The opinion of Edmond Peiris seems to me more persuasive.
18. Sannasgala, P.B. 1968 : 731.
19. *Pasan Pota* 1993 : 212.
20. *Pasan Pota* 1993 : 302.

21. Peiris, E. 1950 : 33.
22. Perera, S.G. 1943 : 129.
23. *Oratorian Mission Report* 1957 : 53.
24. Perera S.G. 1943 : 129.
25. *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya* 1924 : 228.
26. Ariyaratne, S. 1993 : 32.
27. *Pasan Pota* 1993 : 101.
28. These sounds are used in musical composition to create tunes suitable for singing and dancing; they carry no meaning.
29. *Pasan Pota* 1993 : 161.
30. The Four Last Things are: death, final Judgement, heaven and hell.
31. *Oratorian Mission Report* 1957 : 27.
32. Perniola, V. 1983 : 269.
33. Sivathamby, K. 1987 : 174.
34. *Sinhala Dictionary* 1982 : 2699.
35. Vesak is the commemoration of the birth, death and enlightenment of the Buddha, the celebration of which falls on the full-moon day in May.
36. *Columbia Encyclopædia* 1950 : 326.
37. *Collins Music Encyclopædia* 1959 : 113.
38. *Larousse Encyclopædia of Music* 1981 : 535.
39. *New Encyclopædia Britannica* 1990 : 579.

40. *New Encyclopædia Britannica* 1990 : 579.
41. *Collins Music Encyclopædia* 1959 : 113.
42. *Columbia Encyclopædia* 1950 : 326.
43. *New Dictionary of Music* 1958 : 62.
44. *Silumina* 1987 : 8.
45. Peiris, E. 1978 : 91.
46. Peiris, E. 1950 : 25.
47. Peiris, E. 1950 : 26.
48. *Maṅgala Gītiya* 1993 : 9.
49. *Concise Oxford Dictionary* 1995 : 664.
50. Ariyaratne, S. 1993 : 20.
51. *Sinhala Dictionary* 1982 : 2253.
52. *Sinhalese-English Dictionary* 1924 : 149.
53. *Catholic Concise Encyclopædia* 1965 : 73.
54. Amaramoli, V. 1954 : 365.
55. Piyaratana, M. 1960 : 461.
56. Sarananda, K. 1953 : 688.
57. *New Oxford Companion to Music* 1984 : 890.
58. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1983 : 159.
59. *Gee Kalamba* 1956 : 82.

60. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1983 : 159.
61. *Gee Kalamba* 1956 : 5.
62. *New Oxford Companion to Music* 1984 : 318.
63. Peiris, E. 1943 : 173.
64. *Oratorian Mission Report* 1957 : 27.
65. *Ānanda Kalippuva* 1974 : iv.
66. *Ānanda Kalippuva* 1974 : ii.
67. Gupta, B. C. 1991 : 69.
68. *Ānanda Kalippuva* 1974 : 7.
69. *Ānanda Kalippuva* 1974 : 17.
70. Ariyaratne, S. 1993 : 21.
71. *Maṅgala Gītiya* 1993 : 3.
72. *Maṅgala Gītiya* 1993 : 63.
73. Silva <sup>de,</sup> John, 1903 : 93.
74. *Maṅgala Gītiya* 1993 : 55.
75. Peiris, E. 1950 : 24.
76. Peiris, E. 1950 : 26.
77. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1966 : 26.
78. Sarathchandra, E.R. 1966 : 35.
79. Silva, W.A. 1903 : 94.

80. Silva, <sup>de,</sup> João, 1903 : 110 . -
81. Arasaratnam, S. 1988 : 215.
82. Palm, J. D. 1848 : 64.
83. *Bakthi Prabôdanaya* 1928 : 45.
84. *Christian Hymnal* 1977 : 18.
85. Senanayake 1888 : 32.
86. Jayakody, M. 1947 : vi.
87. Fernando, L. 1997 : 7.
88. *Bakthi Prabôdanaya* 1934 : 146.
89. *Käkuly Kinithi, Mal Kumâri, Mangalie, Tun Käkula, Kârolina, Rôsa Tita, Yâ Gee, Sarana Sirita, Vana Mala, Yâgikâ, Yâgini i and Yâgini ii.*
90. Jayakody, M. 1947 : 15.
91. *Javanika* 1960: 17.
92. Hapuaratchi, D. V. 1981 : 138.
93. *Silumina* 1987: 19.
94. *Silumina* 1987 : 20.
95. Sakthivel, S. 1976 : 7.
96. *Dukprâpti Prasâᅅgaya* 1924 : 215.
97. Hettiaratchi, D.E. 1950 : 25.
98. Silva, de, M.K.H. 1957 : 286.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE SINHALA LANGUAGE IN THE HANDS OF GONSALVES

#### 5.i. The origin and evolution of the Sinhala language

The language of a people provides a good indication of their intellectual complexity and their literature is a valuable key to understanding their national history. Since language is a people's chief national asset and a matter of paramount importance from a national point of view, a study of its origin and historical development can provide researchers with important insights into a particular culture.

#### 5.i.a. Theories of the origin of the Sinhala language

At least three theories have been produced by historians and linguists in their search for the origin of the language although there is a consensus that Sinhala originated with the coming of King Vijaya to Sri Lanka and that it is an Indo-Aryan language.<sup>1</sup> However, diverse opinions are expressed as to whether the Sinhala language evolved from the people of North-West India, those of North-East India or those of South India.

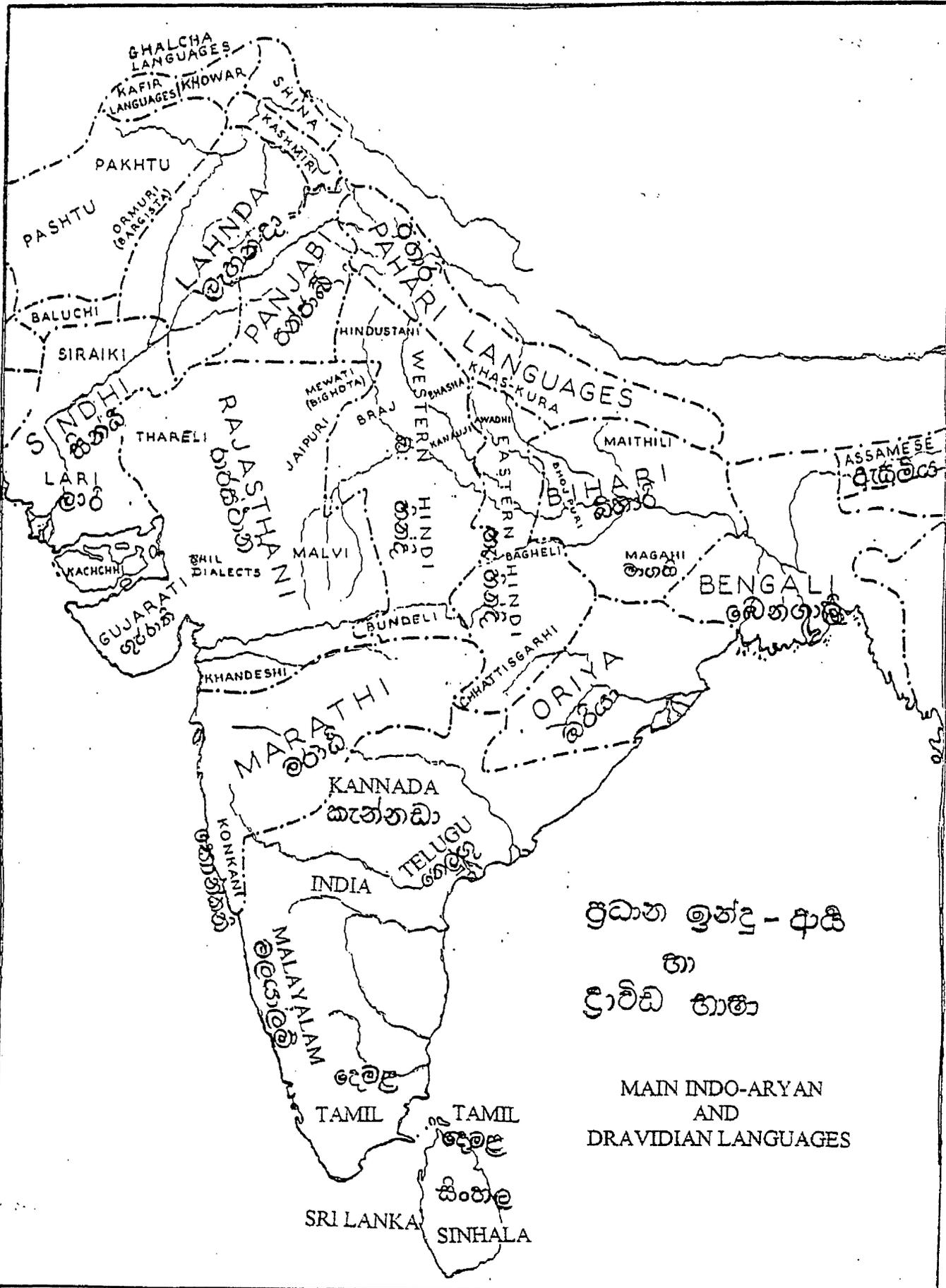
According to tradition, King Vijaya landed in Sri Lanka in 543 BC accompanied by a group of 700 men with their wives and children; however, there are no written documents or inscriptions dating from this period. The

earliest datable Sinhala documents so far discovered are a cave inscription belonging to the reign of Uttiya (207-197 BC) and a few records of rulers who flourished in the two centuries preceding the Christian era, including one at least from the reign of Dutthagamini (161-137 BC).<sup>2</sup> We may assume that the language spoken by the early North Indian immigrants to Sri Lanka would not have differed very much from that of these early inscriptions.

The true nature, origin and reality of a language can only be understood by considering the proto-language from which it developed, and this can only be examined through a comparative study of contemporary languages.<sup>3</sup> Thus the origin of Sinhala can only be uncovered when we compare particular words with related words in Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, Konkani and Tamil. Such a study reveals that Sinhala is a sister-language of those languages spoken in North India, and that it differs fundamentally from Tamil and the cognate languages of South India, its nearest neighbours.<sup>4</sup> There is, therefore, substantial evidence for Wilhelm Geiger's opinion concerning the origin of the Sinhala language:

I hold that the first Aryan colonists, under the guidance of Vijaya, came to Ceylon from North-Western India, but that, immediately after this event, a lively intercourse began to take place between the Island and the provinces of North-Eastern India. By later immigrants from this part of the Indian Continent, who brought their own dialects to Ceylon, the North-Western language that was originally spoken here was, of course, considerably influenced.<sup>5</sup>

Scholars such as Codrington and Chatterjee also support this opinion.<sup>6</sup>



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MAIN INDO-ARYAN  
 AND  
 DRAVIDIAN LANGUAGES

### **5.i.b. The historical development of the Sinhala language**

The earliest Sinhala inscriptions show that, at that time Sinhala remained phonologically uncontaminated or unaffected. However, Sinhala was later influenced by Pali, the sacred language of Theravada Buddhism, and by Gujarati, the language of later immigrants from the North-West. Further, although Sinhala is an Indo-Aryan language, it diverged from its sister-languages under the influence of the nearby Dravidian languages.

One of the nearest three Indo-Aryan languages to Sinhala is Konkani, which was the language of Gonsalves. As Fonseka explains, it was because of this closeness that Jacome Gonsalves found learning the Sinhala language to be not a very difficult task.<sup>7</sup>

Sinhala gradually diverged from Konkani because of the influence of Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu, just as elsewhere Marathi changed under the influence of Tamil and Kannada. The Tamil and Telugu influences in particular distinguish Sinhala from the Oriya language.<sup>8</sup> This did not happen, however, until a late date:

For a number of centuries the Sinhalese language does not seem to have had any connection whatever with the Tamil and there is even no trace of Tamil words being used either in Sinhalese inscriptions or books till after the eleventh century AD.<sup>9</sup>

Of all the Dravidian languages to influence Sinhala after this date, Tamil has made the greatest impact, and many Tamil words and phrases were absorbed into it. Examples of such words will be given later in this chapter, in relation to the works of Gonsalves.

In addition to the number of Tamil words that have been absorbed into Sinhala vocabulary, Tamil also provided a way for Sanskrit words to come into Sinhala. The absorption of Pali and Sanskrit words into the Sinhala language gave rise to that aspect of Sinhala now called *misra sinhala*, or 'mixed Sinhala'. Furthermore, the subjection of the maritime areas of Sri Lanka to the Portuguese and, after them, to the Dutch, and then the passing of the entire island to British dominion have led to many words from the languages of these European peoples being naturalised in Sinhala today. When a group of people invade a country they form a community in it, in the course of time they form a culture of its own. The historical evolution of such communities' language is a part of the cultural heritage, and it continues to evolve amidst a variety of influences both inside and outside the country.

#### **5.ii. Sinhala literature before the time of Gonsalves**

The period prior to the arrival of Gonsalves, the Kotte period, is considered to have been the golden era of Sinhala literature. Under the reign of King Parakramabahu VI the socio-political and cultural development of the country

reached a peak with the birth of the Sinhala message-poems (*sandēsa kāvya*) and eulogistic poems (*prasasti kāvya*). The periods of *Seētavaka* and Kandy, which came immediately afterwards, are characterised as ages of decadence in Sinhala literature. These periods coincided with the Portuguese and the Dutch presence in the island, when internal unrest raged almost continuously:

From the period of *Sitavaka*, Sinhala literature marked a remarkable decadence. Conventional grammatical forms were neglected in the literary creations of the period of Kandy. It was during this period very many Tamil and Portuguese words were received into Sinhala.<sup>10</sup>

Although many writers mark these as dark ages in Sinhala literature, there were several men of letters who were well versed in the Sinhala classics of the past and they were bold enough to strike out into new fields of prose and poetry. Moving away from the rigidity of formal poetry, which the classical writers had preferred, they successfully created a more flexible and passionate type of poetry.

The authors of this period preferred to be realistic, taking full account of the society around them and its attitude. Although they kept close to the classics in their message-poems (*sandēsa*) and in their *jātaka-kāvya* (poems based on Buddhist birth-stories), the new trends are evident even here. A departure from tradition is more obvious in the battle-poems (*haṭan-kāvya*) and in the historical

poems. The two periods of Seetavaka and Kandy brought a certain newness to literature, both in Sinhala and in Tamil, and the origin of this newness was Christian thought and action.

Alagiyavanna Mukaveti, who belonged to <sup>the</sup> Seetavaka period, kept alive the spirit of the literary revival of the Kotte period. Among his literary works, the *Kustantînu Hatana* was composed after his conversion to Christianity. It contains Christian sentiments and begins with an invocation to the Christian Trinity. It is evident from the *Kustantînu Hatana* that Alagiyavanna was sincere in his new faith. However, the ancient line of Sinhalese poets and writers came to a close with his death. <sup>11</sup>

#### **5.ii.a. The Sinhala language during Gonsalves' time**

The spirit of the literary revival of the Kotte period had declined, and a new era began. Certain characteristics, which mark the Sinhala language of the new period, were due to foreign influence and cultural intermixture. The salient features of the language at this time can be traced by examining the *Râjâvaliya*, a contemporary work on royalty in Sri Lanka. It is also an immediate predecessor of Gonsalves' works. The *Râjâvaliya* was written during the time of Kings Rajasinghe and Wimaladharma Suriya II. Referring to the marked Christian outlook in the second half of the book, Edmond Peiris comments:

It is fascinating to conjecture whether a Christian hand had passed over the second half of this well-known historical work. The presence of such expressions as: '*apagê svami û jêsus christungê varsayen, dêvârubhavaya, deviyan vinâ nodanith*'. 'From the year of Our Lord Jesus Christ, divine inspiration, only God knows',<sup>12</sup> the dropping of the Buddhist era and the retention of the Saka era, and the intimate knowledge the author shows of the titles, customs and the manners of the Portuguese and the Dutch and of their policy of Government in addition to a fair acquaintance with the history of his own land, are facts which cannot be passed over unnoticed. An extended version of the *Râjâvaliya*, called *Vijithavelli Râjâvaliya*, which takes the narrative up to early British times, notes carefully certain events of particular interest to Catholics; for instance, the stringent measure adopted by the Dutch against Catholics and the heroic ministry of Ven. Fr. Joseph Vaz, especially during a plague in Kandy. But the authorship of the *Râjâvaliya* is still a problem.<sup>13</sup>

Notably, traditional grammatical rules were neglected in the language at the time of Gonsalves or in the period of Kandy. For example, there was a tendency to use a singular subject with a plural verb in the construction of sentences:

*ekala raja anik bisovak agamehesun kalâha.*

Then the king made some other woman his wife.<sup>14</sup>

In this sentence the singular subject *raja* 'king' is matched with the plural verb *kalâha* 'made', when, strictly speaking, the verbal form <sup>k</sup>*alêya* should have been used. Similarly:

*raja sri yahan geța vanha.*

The king entered into the royal chamber.<sup>15</sup>

In this sentence also the subject *raja* is singular and the verb *vanha* is plural. This is a common feature which is quite noticeable in the literary works of Gonsalves too. This will be discussed below when I consider salient features in the works of Gonsalves.

The remarkable influence of the Tamil language led to the inclusion of many Tamil words in Gonsalves' books. Even in the *Rājāvaliya* one can find Tamil loanwords: they appear in both halves, and in the second half there are also Portuguese words. As we have seen in the preceding pages, this absorption of Tamil words into Sinhala began in the tenth and eleventh centuries, as can be observed in the inscriptions of the *Dampiyā Atuvā Gātapadaya*, the *Pūjāvaliya*, the *Saddharma Ratnāvaliya* and in the *Jātaka Pota* (the book of the Buddhist birth-stories). However, more than any one of those, this is visible in the *Rājāvaliya*, which contains the salient features of the language at the time of its composition. For example, the following Tamil terms are given instead of their Sinhala equivalents:

<u>preferred Tamil term</u>	<u>Sinhala equivalent</u>	<u>meaning</u>
<i>aduttu</i>	<i>adangu</i>	contain
<i>ammaittu</i>	<i>vālakīna</i>	prevent
<i>uḍarppalam</i>	<i>udāngu</i>	proud
<i>usāu</i>	<i>usāvi</i>	court
<i>sillavai</i>	<i>svalpa</i>	little
<i>udau</i>	<i>udau</i>	support
<i>attu-pattu</i>	<i>arttu</i>	to fill
<i>adisu</i>	<i>adassi</i>	imprison
<i>vāḍi</i>	<i>kandaura</i>	camp
<i>vāḍimaṭṭu paḍuttu</i>	<i>samataya</i>	to reduce the tension in the camp
<i>terisanam</i>	<i>darsanaya</i>	to see
<i>paḍi-ei-taleivār</i>	<i>paḍattalaya</i>	chief in the Army
<i>nei-adel</i>	<i>neyāḍan</i>	comedy. <sup>16</sup>

One can also find many Portuguese words in the *Rājāvaliya*, although not as many as Tamil words:

<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Sinhala</u>	<u>meaning</u>
<i>capitao</i>	<i>capitan</i>	captain
<i>capitao mor</i>	<i>capitan mor</i>	captain major
<i>orfanada</i>	<i>oroppuva</i>	orphanage
<i>vice-rei</i>	<i>visuræ</i>	viceroi
<i>padre</i>	<i>padiliya</i>	priest
<i>fidalgo</i>	<i>pidalgua</i>	high cast. <sup>17</sup>

The *Rājāvaliya* is contemporary with Gonsalves and similar examples can be found in his language.

### 5.iii. Gonsalves' proficiency in the Sinhala language

Literary critics and scholars divide the literature of a country and the evolution of its language into periods derived from a variety of criteria. In his consideration of Gonsalves' compositions, Degammeda Sumanajothi comments that the history of literature should not be categorised according to kingdoms, but by the quality of the literature itself. Gonsalves produced a unique literature <sup>18</sup> and most literary critics agree that Gonsalves' contribution is a turning-point in the literature and language of Sri Lanka. His contribution to literature and language created a new era in a period otherwise dark. Commenting on the language ability of Gonsalves, Sannasgala writes that the *Dēva Vēda Purāṇaya* of Gonsalves is a mirror in

which one can see the author's proficiency in Sinhala despite the fact that he was a foreigner. For Sannasgala, nothing has been composed in Sinhala which has equal knowledge of and feeling for Christianity.<sup>19</sup>

Gonsalves was proficient in Konkani, his mother tongue. In addition, he was proficient in Latin, Portuguese and Spanish before he came to Sri Lanka.<sup>20</sup> Since he came to the island as a missionary, he had to gain proficiency in all its languages—Tamil, Sinhala and Dutch—if he was to be effective in his mission. He therefore, associated himself closely with the learned Buddhist priests in order to learn Sinhala. Since Konkani was an Indo-Aryan language, he had an advantage as he learnt other Indo-Aryan languages, and as Perera explains, being a Konkani Brahmin whose mother tongue was akin to Sinhala, he was able to write with great facility. His compositions are still read for their purity of diction and elegance.<sup>21</sup>

Gonsalves was familiar with every part of the country and fully conversant with the customs, habits and prejudices of all the races inhabiting the island. Being a gifted man of letters, he composed books in every language spoken in the country; besides his compositions in Sinhala and Tamil, for example, he wrote books in Portuguese for the use of the Portuguese-speaking community. Seeing the success of his written works, he even acquired proficiency in the Dutch language in order to write in Dutch. For the guidance of the missionaries themselves, he wrote a book elucidating cases of moral theology and a most

valuable trilingual dictionary containing the Sinhala and Tamil equivalents of every Portuguese word. This last was copied out by every new missionary; the few copies that have come down to us possess the added interest of having preserved a number of words and locutions current on the island during his time.

The quality of Gonsalves' writing is so high that his compositions can be evaluated also in literary terms quite apart <sup>from</sup> ~~for~~ their religious interest. Not all his writings have survived, however; some of those composed during the Portuguese period later disappeared due to political instability.<sup>22</sup> Responding to the need of the era, Gonsalves created a good quality, Sinhala Christian literature and since there was no such literature before him, he had to create a suitable religious language in which he could express himself clearly and correctly. His proficiency in Sinhala helped him to form a vocabulary in which to express his feelings and ideas. As I have shown in my early chapters, Gonsalves was influenced by the Sinhala classics in the way he accomplished this task.

#### **5.iii.a. The variety of Gonsalves' literary compositions**

One cannot help noticing Gonsalves' skilful use of literary devices. Among the Sinhala writers prior to him, there was none who composed such a variety of literature. Any reader who studies the compositions of Gonsalves may wonder whether they are the works of many authors, since he wrote on a variety of themes

and in a variety of literary forms. He wrote both poetry and prose; some of his works are written in scholarly language for men of letters, and some in a more colloquial style for ordinary people to read and listen to. They also differ in literary form. The *Dêva Vêda Sañksepaya* is written in the form of questions and answers. The *Mañgala Gîtiya*, *Ânanda Kalippuva* and *Pasan Pota* are compositions to be sung. The *Christiâni Palliya* and *Âtma Raksanaya* are books of prayer while the *Dharmasagnâva* is a book of spiritual advice. The *Agnâna Ausadaya*, *Bhedakârayange Tarkaya*, *Mâtara Pratyakṣaya* and *Budu Mula* are controversial treatises and the *Suvisêṣa Visadhanaya* is a commentary on a number of biblical passages. The *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya* and *Suvisêṣa Visâdhanaya* are compositions of lamentations to be chanted. The *Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya*, though not a drama, has many of the elements of drama. In addition to this variety of compositions, Gonsalves compiled three dictionaries. Before Gonsalves, there was no single author in Sri Lanka who composed such a variety of books in Sinhala, Tamil or in European languages.

A work of art often holds up a mirror to contemporary society and its language. The works of Gonsalves reveal the nature and the salient features of the language used during his time and show the customs prevalent in his society. Sannasgala comments that more information can be gathered concerning the folklore and the contemporary society of Sri Lanka from the works of Gonsalves than from any other books written in his time.<sup>23</sup>

#### 5.iv. The salient features in the language of Gonsalves

Gonsalves' linguistic ability is apparent in all his works. Enriched by earlier folk and classical sources, he formed a creative language of his own to communicate his themes to his audience effectively.

A salient feature of his linguistic ability can be seen in his selection of letters and words to convey his desired meaning through sound. From his works, we can see that Gonsalves carefully studied the pronunciation of letters and the art of using them to create different sound effects before he used them in poetry. The following passage from the *Suvisêṣa Visarjanaya* gives a good example of his linguistic ability:

*karuvala ändiri biṅda dasata räs vihiduvâ jvalita tēja pratâpayen  
udâvana divya rājaya menda, râtri kâlayehi ghora tâpanaya nivâ vahina  
sihil pini varshâva menda agñâna timira andakâraya durahâra pâpâgni  
tâpanaya nivañnâ û deu puta ada polavehi upan maṅgalya atilutkrusta  
vañnêya.*

As the sun rises eliminating all darkness and gloomy clouds, as the cold rain in the night-time cools the blazing heat that eliminates the darkness of ignorance and cools the heat of the fire of sin, the birth of God's son took place among us, and today we have a grand celebration of this feast.<sup>24</sup>

In this excerpt one can see how the author has skilfully selected appropriate sound effects in order to reflect the event described. Different types of letters are used to create different sounds to convey the desired meaning. The letters *la*, *sa* and *va* convey softness and serenity while the letters *ka*, *ri*, *tha* and *re* create

rough sounds. These two types of sound combined with other letters and sounds enable the author to emphasise the intensity of the event of the birth of Jesus. Gonsalves' diary contains a poem in which we can see all the notable features of his literary compositions:

*patala putagana andura bindahāra udāvana rivi chandra mandala dā  
ekata vatakara melova sāmatāna lelavana mahā megha kūta dā  
jalata methikal gāmbura nomadat samudurada mahā ahasa polava dā  
balata māuve devindu hāra vena surek muniyek kiyava kauru dā*

To separate thick darkness from light he made the sun and the moon, to encircle the whole world he made the immense rocks, mountains, the endless deep and the far ocean and the horizon; if not God, who created all these, tell which of the celestial beings made them? <sup>25</sup>

Here, through carefully articulated poetic diction Gonsalves conveys the wealth and power of nature. The tasks performed by the sun and the moon are brought to the attention of the reader by the sound of the phrase *patala putagana andura binda hāra*. Gonsalves was clearly aware that poetry is literature that evokes a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience or a specific emotional response through language chosen and arranged for its meaning, sound and rhythm.

Also significant is Gonsalves' specific language usage, the language and the customs of ordinary village folk being used in order to make his literature more appealing to the indigenous people. For example, it was common practice among Sri Lankan village folk to greet someone by saying *āi* (literally) 'Why?'

and the other person returns the greeting by saying *hondai* 'Fine'.<sup>26</sup> This typical feature is used by Gonsalves at the beginning of the *Agnâna Ausadaya*. This book is presented as a dialogue between a pundit and a priest or teacher, which begins;

Priest: 'Why, pundit?'

Pundit: 'Fine, teacher'.<sup>27</sup>

Another characteristic can be seen in this composition. The author uses the word *guru* or 'teacher' for the priest in a way peculiar to common speech at the time of Gonsalves. The same usage can be observed in the *Râjâvaliya*. For members of the royal family the word *adahasin* is used, and in the same way *astânaya* is used for the elite, reflecting the respect due to them because of their positions in society.<sup>28</sup> By using the word *guru* for the priest, Gonsalves highlights the teaching aspect of the Christian priesthood. His indigenization was effective and meaningful because of his ability to use the existing forms of folk literature.

Gonsalves even made use of popular and ancient traditions connected to witchcraft, sorcery and the devil dance. These had a literature of their own in which verses were chanted while accompanied by a variety of musical instruments.<sup>29</sup> The literature and music peculiar to the tradition of the devil dance is reflected in Gonsalves' *Ânanda Kalippuva*, which can be compared with

the popular local *Kohomba Kankariya*, which was transmitted through oral tradition.<sup>30</sup> A comparison of these two compositions reveals close similarities in words and rhythms, as indicated in a study made up-country by Natyacharya.

The following verse from the *Ânanda Kalippuva* is a good example:

*bala peñna mema prutuviyatat baya  
ganvâ dasa ata desa nirindun sâma genvâ  
siri lâba gattat - sonda  
nannâyan bisoun rusi râti nidosin genvâ  
sâpa vindat - neka  
panchâbaranin sârasi mini sinhâsana  
pita vâda unnat - tada  
ennâ maranaya lan unu dâ teda  
pervâlâ novadinta yeddô.*

Although a person acquires all comforts and powers on earth among  
The kings; although he enjoys the company of many beautiful queens;  
although a person occupies a throne with gems and wears ornaments,  
when death comes with its power, can he/she refuse to go?<sup>31</sup>

Here Gonsalves uses the combined words peculiar to the *Kohomba Kankâriya*, such as *bala-baya*, *dasa-desa*, *tada-teda*, in his composition. It is said that Gonsalves sang this in front of the king while playing a drum, and that he took his rhythm too from the *Kohomba Kankâriya* the above literature. Thus he used his language ability and his feeling for the rhythm of the local people to produce an indigenous literature appealing to them.

#### 5.iv.a. Gonsalves' use of folklore

Gonsalves' proficiency in the languages of Sri Lanka gave him unparalleled opportunities to come into contact with all the classes and races of the island. As his writings demonstrate, he was able to adapt literary works <sup>to</sup> bear witness to his ability <sup>to use</sup> simple folklore with which local people were much familiar, to address the unlettered sector of the populace. As noted above, one can trace in his works certain words and phrases peculiar to village folk:

*ada sita äs härī tamunnânse adahâ gânnêya.*  
From today I shall open my eyes and believe in you.

*ouna bohô achchu urdhi päminei.*  
They will have more punishments and troubles.

*vätichcha karal aulanta äge piyâ gaman karavêya.*  
Her father went to pick up the fallen wheat on the road.

*êkige athata asuunu karal lê pirī tibunêya.*  
The wheat in her hand was full of blood.

*tamunnânsege achchuvata bayâdu kamin inda.*  
Having submitted [myself] to your punishment. <sup>32</sup>

These words and phrases - *tamunnânse*, *gânnêya*, *achchu urdhi*, *vätichcha karal*, *êkige athata*, *bayâdu kamin inda*, are carefully selected from the language of the common people; since his audience were simple village folk, this kind of

language would have appealed.

Gonsalves' literary structure also followed that of the centuries-old literary tradition. For example, the ancient Buddhist birth stories (*jâtaka katâ*) commonly began with the narration of a parable or incident before the main story, a device also seen in the *Saddharma Ratnâvaliya*. This technique can be observed in the *Prâthihâryavaliya*<sup>33</sup> in which most of the narration is structured to begin with the reporting of a prior incident or story. In some other instances, Gonsalves presents the main story first, which is then followed by a parable of Jesus.<sup>34</sup> Another salient feature of the language of Gonsalves is his use of proverbs from the ordinary day-to-day lives of people. As observed above such proverbs address the hearts of the village folk since they were closer to their lives:

*sâli valan hadannâ sâli valan valaṭa samâna novei.*

The potter is not equal to the pots he makes.

*tuvakkuva pipikî veḍi tiyâpu ayama miya yannêya.*

When the gun bursts, the gunman himself will die.

*lumu diya beepu ayṭa pipâsaya vâḍi venavâ vinâ aḍu novê*

He who drinks salt water will feel more thirsty than before.

*dumata bayê ginnata panina aya môḍaya.*

He who jumps into fire for fear of smoke is a fool.

*kanekuṭa kanek pâra penvannata nupuluvana.*

The blind cannot lead the blind.<sup>35</sup>

Even the words used in these sayings are drawn from the language of the village folk. For instance, *tiyâpu*, *pipâsaya*, *môdaya* and *kanekuta* could have been replaced by more scholarly terms; but Gonsalves retained them for their popular and traditional flavour:

#### 5.iv.b. Specific characteristics of the language in different works by Gonsalves

The volume of religious literature produced by Gonsalves bears witness to his proficiency in the Sinhala language, each work having its own linguistic form and characteristics. The *Prâthâryavaliya* falls into the category of wisdom literature: it consists of miracles to instruct people and to encourage them to grow in righteousness. The language of the author helps him to achieve his purpose:

*'evâni mudal mâ gatâ âtnam mê geima ginderan mâ dâla giyâve yai kîyêya.'* *esê kiya vittî karayava naduvata kândâgena gos é boru vachana kiyâ nadu sabâvedie é mudal ayakara ganta avasara lâbâgena âvêya. esê numuth mudal geta enta issara deviyân vahansêge avasarayen gindara ohuge ângata âvêya.*

'If I have taken that money, let me be burnt in fire in this house itself.' Saying false words in the court, in the presence of all, he obtained permission to collect money from the other party. However, before the money came home, through the power of God fire came upon him.<sup>36</sup>

Since this book is a storybook, a simple and colloquial style is used, in keeping with its nature and purpose. The book is of special interest to the critical student of eighteenth-century Sinhala, as it mirrors faithfully the words, phrases and even the imperfect grammar in common use at the time.

The style of the language of the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya* is very simple, yet powerful enough to move the reader to the depths of his soul. In this work, there are many Sinhala words, which are now considered to belong to the vocabulary of the unlettered along the west coast of Sri Lanka:

*evita dura sita vada bera gasana sabdaya asâ vêdanâven handa handâ hêvâ hamudâva mâdin peeravâgena lanvî , kumârayâva dutu vita dedenâge bâlma ou noun pita vâtonu velê hata gath shôkaya mona upamâ vakin tôrâ denta puluvanda? Irath handath ediri kota sambaha vee grahana una sêda, vâsi pirunu meghavalâ kalu unâ sêda, dedena vahanselâge muhunu mandala kaluvara vâsi, nêtravala kandulâli pirie, dedenâge herdaval dekhi kadu munu dekak âmunâ sê duk vêdanâven eka vachanayak vath katha karanta nupuluvanva mahâ varsha vatura sê polove galanta sri netra valin kandulu vasiñnêya.*

Then, hearing the drum which is beaten in front of the person being led to execution, lamenting with sorrow, breaking through the barrier of soldiers, she [the mother] went to see her son. What similes could be employed to express the sorrowful feelings they felt when the eyes of mother and son met? It is as if there was an eclipse of the sun and moon causing a deprivation of light, like a dark cloud on a rainy day. The faces of both became dark and gloomy, their eyes full of tears. As swords pierced their hearts, in sorrow, without a word, they shed tears creating floods upon the earth.<sup>37</sup>

The intensity of the scene is conveyed by the careful selection of words. The reader or listener is made to feel the sound of the executioner's drum by the repetition of the sounds of such words as *handa handâ, vêdanâven, peeravâgena, shôkaya, kandulâli pirie, eka vachanayak* and *kandulu vasiñnêya*. These words are used to present the incident dramatically. As the passage continues, an emotional response is created in the audience by frequent repetition of such expressions as *Iioô, annê* and *ahoô* in the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya*.

Repetition of words and images is an effective technique, often used in folk literature to commit something to memory.<sup>38</sup> In the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya*, the same themes are repeatedly presented in different ways and forms. The reader or listener is thereby reminded of the immense suffering endured by Jesus for the sake of humankind. A major part of the *Dukprâpti Prasāᅅgaya* is in the form of a descriptive narrative, a form popular for centuries in both Asian and western civilisations.

The language of the *Dharmôdyâᅅnaya* (The Garden of Virtues) is also simple, even colloquial, with a tendency to repeat and to use the present tense instead of the past, like a graphic storyteller. The language of the *Sukrita Darpanaya* (The Mirror of Virtue) is simple too. This composition expresses accurately ideas current in Christian ascetic and mystical theology through Sinhala words. The *Suvisêᅅa Visarjanaya* was written to be recited aloud to the assembly of the faithful, in the chanting style so familiar in the East. Hence, there is in the prose of this work a cadence and modulation in the ebb and flow of the balanced sentences that hold the attention of the listener. The presence of a large number of Sanskrit loan words makes the style majestic and muscular, like the language of the *Saddharmâlaᅅkâraya*.

Although the language of the *Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya* is simple, there is in it a movement so musical that it has to be chanted rather than read to be appreciated. Even to this day, the custom persists in many Christian homes of chanting this

book, as it is popularly styled, during the week that follows a bereavement. This work provides us with clear proof of Gonsalves' wide acquaintance with Sinhala and with the customs of diverse people: it refers to the customs of both up-country and low-country inhabitants, who form two groups that are geographically, politically and socio-culturally different from one another. The *Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya* has a dramatic language. This work on the Last Judgement is so arranged as to deserve to be called a drama in prose. It has three acts: 1. The preparatory scenes (the crack of doom, the summons to all, and the coming of Christ to judge); 2. The charges, under three heads (crimes against the commandments of God, the sin of despising the examples of the saints, and the sin of neglecting the soul for the sake of the body; and 3. The judgements (against various categories of people). The epilogue describes the torments of the wicked and the happiness of the just. The dramatic element in the language is strong in this work, especially where the devils mock their victims and the just bear witness against the wicked. The author skilfully uses the language to create dramatic situations and characters that portray the gravity of sin and its terrible consequence:

*raja, bamunu, velanda, govi, mahâkula, adukula âdiû siyalleni; naduvata vareuva. demala, sinhala, pali, magada, sañskruta, nagara, grantâdiû dvi sâtta bâshâ bhedayen bhedaû siyalu janayeni; naduvata vareuva. bâla bolanda, ladaru, taruna, tirihan, prâurdha, kartapa yana mé âdiû siyalu vayasvala janayeni, naduvata vareuva. duppat, pohosat, nila âti, nila nâti, maha nila, seneviratdura adiyen rataval olongu kara, muvaraval suva shobana kara, viduru pumbâ sitina raja daruvani naduvata vareuva.*

All of you who are kings, ministers, traders, farmers, high caste and low caste,<sup>39</sup> come for the Judgement. All of you who are divided according to seventy-two different languages - Tamil, Sinhala, Pali, Magadha, Sanskrit, Nagara<sup>40</sup> and so on - come for the Judgement. All of you who are in different age groups - infancy, babies, childhood, adolescence, youth, middle age, elders and the very old - come for the Judgement. All of you who are poor, rich, those holding offices and those without offices, important officials, chief commanders of the army, and kings who have conquered nations and built beautiful cities and lived in all their splendour and regalia, come for the Judgement.<sup>41</sup>

It is a superb summoning of all categories of people, both living and dead, to attend the Last Judgement. A specific characteristic of the language used in this description is the use of sentences with pauses. Although the same theme is repeated in several sentences, the author was able to move the hearts of the readers in this narrative: the repetition of such words and phrases as *janayeni* (people) and *naduvata vareuva* (come and face the Judgement) evokes an emotional response in both listener and reader. The author also uses words of his own invention, such as *tirihan* (beasts) and *kartapa* (sorrow). The word *olongu*,<sup>42</sup> a Tamil loan word, maintains the musical quality of the narration so as to dramatise the created situation.

In the *Gnânânjanaya*, the author's fondness for metaphors and similes is evident. He knows the efficacy of illustration when instructing minds unaccustomed to intricate abstract reasoning. He also shows himself an adept in the art of making a complicated argument seem simple and clear, by using illustrations drawn from nature and everyday life:

*sarvāṅga mal pipunā sē santōsayen lol piṛṭṭi kiyannē; anē! mē sarīraya pera leda duk peedittha vē sâpipâsayen thâvi galkatu añṭi visa sarpâdie siyalu dē vadayatat maranayatat kârâna vē thibunâ ve da? dān é dhukkaya kisivak nātuva sâma kalata sâpasē jeevath vē indiñnemi. pera mē sarīraya vili vasanta redi kadaval soyâ äviddâya. dān kisi vastrayak bôjanayak kâri nātuva sūrya rās vâdunu palingu patrayak sē abarana valatath vadâ alankâra äthuva sitiñnem vêda?*

Then, with joy as overwhelming as the blossoming of flowers all over the body, one says: 'Oh! This body has been subjected to (1) suffering from diseases, hunger and thirst, (2) to the danger of pick-axes and poisonous snakes, and (3) to death.' Now, freed from all those adversities, it lives in everlasting joy. Then it went about searching for clothes to cover up its nakedness; now there is no need of clothes or food, but the whole body is in a state of brilliance more splendid than sunlight, in a crystal vessel or ornaments of gems.<sup>43</sup>

Allegories, metaphors and similes like this effectively convey the mind of the author to his audience. Through this and other techniques, Gonsalves powerfully presents the life after death as a glorious state, far better than life on earth. In these ways, the language of Gonsalves invariably reinforces the message communicated in his compositions.

#### **5.v. The evolution of the Sinhala language**

The Sinhala language originated from middle Indian Prakrit, which had displaced the language spoken by the then indigenous population of the island. However, Sinhala was probably influenced by more than one of the forms

of Prakrit which were spoken by the early immigrants from different parts of North India. That early form of Sinhala, which was predominantly Middle Indo-Aryan in character, continued to develop, being influenced by Pali and Sanskrit <sup>44</sup> and later by Dravidian languages, especially Tamil. Thus, when the Portuguese appeared in the sixteenth century, Sinhala vocabulary consisted of only a percentage of indigenous words, the rest being inherited, semi-loan or loan-forms taken from Prakrit, Pali and Sanskrit as well as loans from Dravidian. In the writings of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly in books like the *Rājāvaliya* and in the *Hatana* (war-poems), one notices a considerable number of loan words, the result of a mingling of different cultures.

As the *New Encyclopædia Britannica* says, 'culture may be defined as behaviour peculiar to *Homo sapiens*, together with material objects used as an integral part of this behaviour: specially, culture consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, ceremonies, and so on.' <sup>45</sup> Each nation possesses a cultural heritage built up through the past centuries. Powerful nations, which consider themselves developed and advanced in many respects, have a tendency to evaluate other cultures in terms of their own. According to the *Britannica*, 'culture is contagious', <sup>46</sup> meaning that customs are sometimes transmitted from one culture to another. Both the early immigrants and the later colonials had a huge impact on the culture of Sri Lanka, and as a result of such cultural diffusion, the indigenous languages were enriched in terms of both vocabulary and grammar.

Culture is a broad concept, with both secular and religious aspects. Most religions have a scriptural and liturgical language, as well as their own ritual acts. Along with its specific doctrines and moral code, a religion also embraces particular cultural practices. Each religion, therefore, has a particular identity alongside the universals one finds in other religions.

In Sri Lanka, one finds all the great 'world religions'.<sup>47</sup> However, none of these originated in the country and the foreign immigrants who brought them presented not only the doctrines proper to their faiths but also their religious cultures. With Indian Buddhism, for instance, came not only Buddhist doctrine (Dhamma), but its religious language (Pali), its religious literature, (the *Tripitaka*) and the forms of architecture, sculpture, painting and so on which flourished in the Mauryan culture of that period in North India.

However, when an alien culture enters a country, adaptation and indigenization often take place. Again, we can see this in the example of Buddhism. Cultural elements relating to Indian Buddhism in the third century BC have been adopted and indigenized and are now considered to be Sri Lankan, and aspects of Indian culture have become mixed with the existing culture of the island; this is especially noticeable in popular Buddhism. The ancient Indian cult of local deities, for instance, has become part of the common practice of Buddhism.

With regard to Christianity's encounter with culture, the Second Vatican Council expressed the following opinion:

Just as it is in the world's interest to acknowledge the Church as a social reality and a driving force in history, so too the Church is not unaware how much it has profited from the history and development of mankind. It profits from the experience of past ages, from the progress of the sciences, and from the riches hidden in various cultures, through which greater light is thrown on the nature of man and new avenues to truth are opened up. The Church learned early in its history to express the Christian message in the concepts and language of different peoples and tried to clarify it in the light of the wisdom of their philosophers: it was an attempt to adapt the Gospel to the understanding of all men and the requirements of the learned, insofar as this could be done. Indeed, this kind of adaptation and preaching of the revealed Word must ever be the law of all evangelisation. In this way it is possible to create in every country the possibility of expressing the message of Christ in suitable terms and to foster vital contact and exchange between the Church and different cultures.<sup>48</sup>

According to this view, when two or more cultures or languages come together, each is enriched as a consequence. Today this is happening faster than ever, thanks to radio, television, the printed word, travel and tourism, all of which lead to closer and more frequent cultural contact. For instance, no one would say that a Sri Lankan who wears trousers, or trousers of the latest fashion from the West, is not truly Sri Lankan. Cultural intermixture has been going on all the time in the history of the island, as in other countries, and this is clearly reflected in language. To take only the recent centuries of Sri Lanka's contact with the West, and speak only of Sinhala, there are numerous foreign loanwords which have become indigenized or naturalised.<sup>49</sup>

### 5.v.a. Gonsalves' contribution to the development of Sinhala vocabulary

When different languages coexist for centuries, they infiltrate and enrich each other, and it is worth examining how Sinhala vocabulary evolved as the result of such influence. Since Gonsalves was proficient in several languages of both East and West, and since he wrote many books on a variety of themes in different languages, a remarkable linguistic development took place as a result of his intervention. The process of linguistic intermixture also paved the way for the indigenization of Christian liturgical language in Sri Lanka. Historically, as Don Peter explains, Christianity was a new faith from the West with its own Western religious culture that was introduced into Sri Lanka by the European missionaries of the Portuguese period. Many people accepted this faith and it struck deep roots in the cultural soil; <sup>50</sup> however, this acceptance was only possible thanks to the efforts of inculturation, a process in which language played a major role.

Popular Sinhala at the time of Gonsalves incorporated a mixture of Pali and Sanskrit and the style of his writing is thus heavily Sanskritic. For instance, his writings in both verse (for example, *Maṅgala Gītiya*) and prose (for example, *Dēva Vēda Purāṇaya*) were composed in this mixed form of Sinhala. Examples may be found in almost every chapter:

*mesē unvahansēge gāthra avayavayehi rūpa  
kalyānaya nam, āta usmitida sthulakruṣada  
nova ārōha parināhayen sampūrna gata  
madyama pramānayata sessak dikvīya.*

A description of the gracefulness of form of the limbs of his body: not very tall or short, nor bulky or thin, his whole body is well-proportioned and moderate in height.<sup>51</sup>

In this passage, appropriate mixed Sinhala words are skilfully used. Words such as *gâthrá*, *rûpa*, *kalyânaya* and *sthulakruṣada* are used to create a sound effect. Some sentences are long and the author creates situations and characters through these sentences and words:

*eka dilindu gâthiû lom vastrayak misa vivarna  
pâhâyen peu saluda ran ridi vibhuṣana  
alankârayada kisivak nâtuva uthuru saluven  
mastakaya vasâ muhuna mandalaya muvâ kalâya.*

Since no colourful garments or beautiful ornamentation of gold and silver were found, but only a poorly woven woollen cloth, his head was covered with a cloak to shade his face.<sup>52</sup>

Here Gonsalves has deliberately selected the Sanskrit words *vivarna*, *vibhuṣana*, *mastakaya* and so on to emphasise and bring to life his portrayal of the poor person. If he had chosen equivalent Sinhala words such as *pata*, *abharana* and *hisa* instead of the above, it would have not been such a beautiful piece of writing. Gonsalves made contemporary Sinhala vocabulary richer by incorporating Pali and Sanskrit words into it.

Gonsalves' verse compositions made similar use of this mixed language, the vocabulary explored in the *Maṅgala Gîtiya* reflecting the language of the Kandy

period. A unique feature of the verse of this period is the influence of South Indian dance tunes, a feature which greatly influenced the language of Gonsalves. His use of it is one of the achievements of his indigenizing genius and the following verse demonstrates his ability to use the existing language and rhythm for his own compositions:

*anâdi devi piturun chitta adyâsa-  
yôda tibu rūpa vilasa-  
kanyâ danin yasa prêtu deviyan râsa-  
vihidemin dasa desa bihiva prakâsa-  
dêvamâtâ guna ada kiyan,  
karava âti udêpta mangala tosa-*

According to the will of the living God the Father and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Mary is born with great splendour and therefore today her birthday is celebrated proclaiming all her virtues.<sup>53</sup>

In this song commemorating the birth of Mary, the author uses mixed Sinhala words such as *anâdi*, *adyâsa*, *rûpa*, *prêtu* and so on to create a melody with a dancing rhythm. Rhythmic words are still more skilfully used in the *Ânanda Kalippuva*. The metre here recalls the traditional folk-dance of *Uragâ Vañnama*:

*tamde nana tana na tanam ...  
tamde nana tana na tana na tanam ...  
ana ga-pulin gata ve ...  
sula ga-bojun evaga-madin sama ga ...  
vera ga-gilum polanga.*<sup>54</sup>

These words are arranged to bring about rhythmic tunes for dancing and singing. The words used in this particular composition belong to *Elu*, one of the ancient

linguistic forms found in Sri Lanka and which, with Magadha, was responsible for forming Sinhala. <sup>55</sup> The dance-rhythm in the piece is associated with the ancient Sinhala language, and are rhythms which have been familiar to Sinhala people ever since.

Gonsalves also adapted some words and names from European languages for use in local vernacular languages. Examples include: Luther, Lutheru; Calvin, Calveenu; German, Jermani; Holland, Olandawa; Belgium, Belgiu. In this way, Gonsalves incorporated contemporary words into Sinhala. Sinhala vocabulary thus developed in various ways in the hands of Gonsalves.

#### **5.v.b. Gonsalves' use of Tamil words**

A living language is always complex, because it has the ability to evolve and adapt to the living situations and needs of the time. As Sinhala and Tamil co-existed for many centuries, they had a positive influence on each other. Such interaction is already in evidence from the tenth and eleven centuries. In the Kandy period, it was particularly intense due to the immigration of the elite from South India. As I mentioned earlier, the literature of the period of Gonsalves, such as the *Rājāvaliya*, bears witness to the fact that there was a great influence by Tamil at that time.

In spite of the apparent defects examined earlier, we can still affirm that Jacome Gonsalves was proficient in both Sinhala and Tamil. The influence of the Tamil language on Sinhala in the compositions of Gonsalves is greater than in those of any other author in the history of the island. For example, in the following quotation he uses two Tamil words to make it poetical.

*ketuva pau devâthi deu yasa  
latâval palagath tudañguva  
pituva ran giri sisârâ gos  
mahat sura bavanata padañguva*

The creepers bear much fruit, as it were, through divine intervention; piercing through the Golden Mountain they entered into the celestial mansion.<sup>56</sup>

Here Gonsalves incorporates the Tamil words *tudañguva* and *padañguva* into his poem. They are not loan words but considered as Tamil words. In the following example too, Gonsalves uses two Tamil words to give a musical flavour to his composition:<sup>57</sup>

*eru maru kiyamin tada vada karati*  
They called out from different sides [of the Cross] and often made him suffer.<sup>58</sup>

The Tamil phrase *eru maru* means 'different sides'. Occasionally, Tamil words are used to maintain the rhyme and the arrangement of the words in poetry, for example, the word *kalla* in the following verse:

*sura kalla* 'divine being'<sup>59</sup> *kara vella; nara kolla; mera alla.*

Similarly, the rhyming words of verse 99 of the *Vêda Kâvyaya* are all Tamil: *sanju* 'pure', *ranju* 'flock' and *konju* 'gladly'. Many more Tamil words are found in the *Vêda Kâvyaya*: *piramâva* 'concern or respect' (vs.345); *mariyel* and *mariyal* 'Mary' (vs.144); *sumându* 'cure'; *amându* 'subdue' ( vs.70).

In the above examples from the *Vêda Kâvyaya*, Tamil words are used without any adaptation or modification. Gonsalves used Tamil words with particular frequency in the compositions he made for the instruction of ordinary people. For example, the first verse of the *Dharmasagnâva* contains a Tamil word:

*dêva vêtâgamehi tun prakara janayô nirbâgyayô veth*  
Three types of unfortunate people are found in the religion.<sup>60</sup>

By using words and phrases such as *dêvâgama* and *dêva vêtâgama* for 'religion' and 'doctrine', Gonsalves gives his meaning a particular colour. The word *vêtâgama* is a Sinhala word. *Vêtam* means 'saved knowledge' and it originated from the Sanskrit word *vêda*. Gonsalves has even used this word in the names of some of his books such as the *Dêva Vêda Purânaya*, the *Dêva Vêda Sañksêpaya* and the *Vêda Kâvyaya*.

In two consecutive sentences the author has used the word *prasangaya*, which is a Tamil loan-word in the *Dharmasagnâva*, the Sinhala word for 'sermon' being *pirasañgaya*.<sup>61</sup> One of Gonsalves' Sinhala works, the *Dukprâpti Prasañgaya*, was also named by this Tamil loanword. The *Dharmasagnâva* contains a number of other Tamil words where there are Sinhala equivalents that could have being

used instead. These include: *aththuvanam* (Tamil), *athvanaya* (Sinhala) ‘alone’;<sup>62</sup> *pisinikkanam* (T), *pisinikama* (S) ‘miser’ (p.11); *parâparam* (T), *parâpara* (S) ‘all powerful’ (p.1); *vîriya* (T), *vîrya* (S) ‘strength’ (p.11); *kôle* (T), *kôlama* (S). ‘comedy’ (p.11).

The *Ânanda Kalippuva* was also composed to instruct people and this work could well be classified as wisdom literature. The name of the book *Kalippuva* is itself a Tamil word *kalippuva* meaning ‘futile’.<sup>63</sup> Gonsalves also used common Tamil words quite freely here: *nêsam* (T), *nêsa* (S) ‘loving’;<sup>64</sup> *nañmayam* (T), *nañmayan* (S) ‘beautiful’ (p.12); *pavalam* (T), *pavalan* (S) ‘pearl’ (p.15).

Therefore, it is quite evident that the Tamil language had a great impact on Sinhala during the time of Gonsalves and he deliberately and consistently used Tamil words in his compositions, effectively making his language more in accordance with the common people than with the language of the learned. This is why so many Tamil words are found in his compositions. Further examples of Tamil words may be found in the *Gnânânjanaya* and the *Agnâna Ausadaya* which were composed to instruct the ordinary folk. For example,

*eka châritra padimâvaṅkuth ekama âgna olaguvakuth  
pavathî nam ê ratata eka rajjuruvô yâi kiyathi.*

If only there were one tradition and one order exist in a country,  
then one could say that there is only one king in that country.<sup>65</sup>

In his Sinhala compositions Gonsalves uses the word *olaguvakuth*, adapting the Tamil word *olukku*, which means 'order in a country'. In the above excerpt, the Sinhala word *padimâva* is adapted from the Tamil word *padimâval*, which means 'a tradition'. Similarly, the *Agnâna Ausadaya* contains several common Tamil words such as: *kôlâru* (Tamil), *kôlârûva* (Sinhala) 'imperfections';<sup>66</sup> *ittam* (T), *ittan* (S) 'to free a slave' (p. 22); *vanthu* (T), *vanthu* (S) 'income or treasure' (p. 14); *saththurâdi* (T), *sathuradi* (S) 'enemy' (p. 40).<sup>67</sup> Some Tamil loanwords are often used in the Sinhala compositions of Gonsalves as synonyms. This suggests that those words were in common usage among people of that period.

In one of my research tours to Bolawatta, the village on the Western coast of Sri Lanka where Gonsalves spent many years and where he died, I gathered that even to this day the people of the village use Sinhala and Tamil equally in their religious worship and in their secular life. Such bi-lingual communities exist throughout the Western coastal belt of the island. People who spoke Sinhala and Tamil co-existed for centuries in these areas, where the Catholic population is predominant. Hence, the liberal use of many Tamil words in the Sinhala compositions of Gonsalves was prudent and appealed to the general reading and listening public.

### **5.v.c. The influence of Portuguese on the Sinhala language**

Gonsalves came from Goa, which was the first Portuguese colony in the East.

The Portuguese language was predominantly used there for several centuries and it was Gonsalves' main language throughout his life. As a scholar Gonsalves had mastered it, and he continued to use it when he arrived in Sri Lanka. There is no evidence that he used his mother tongue, Konkani, after leaving Goa. The other languages, such as Tamil and Sinhala, he studied and used only after he was appointed to work in Sri Lanka. However, Portuguese was widely used on the island at that time as well and so Gonsalves continued to use this European language. His proficiency in Portuguese undoubtedly influenced his writings in the vernacular languages of the island but we must also be aware that the Portuguese nation exerted a wide influence on Sri Lanka and its languages three hundred years ago. The extent of that influence in shaping Sri Lankan polity is still not fully recognised.<sup>68</sup>

The Portuguese did not look down on Asiatics or despise them, unlike the Dutch and the British who came after them. The foreign policy of the Portuguese colonists was not merely to associate their colonies with the motherland but to consider them as parts of it. Therefore, the Portuguese government encouraged its citizens to settle in their colonies permanently;<sup>69</sup> consequently, Portuguese male settlers adapted some Sinhala and Tamil customs in food and so on, intermarried with local women. Locals were allowed free social interaction with them, and were admitted to high posts in the government and army. Christianity can be seen as conducive to the development of such equality; by religion and

custom the Portuguese were opposed to the idea of the caste system and considered all people as equals, and what were perceived to be the more undesirable features of caste distinctions and discrimination ceased in Portuguese territory. Christian ideals of marriage, particularly monogamy, gradually influenced the people in the districts under Portuguese rule.

Very few Portuguese women came to the East in the early days of colonisation. According to the records, the first woman to come was Gracia de Sa, the wife of the Portuguese viceroy in India (1548-1549),<sup>70</sup> forty years after the advent of the Portuguese in Sri Lanka. Those women who left their motherland for personal reasons and for the sake of the kingdom of Portugal and settled in the colonies were called *orfas del rei* (orphans of the king) while a Portuguese man who married a local woman and settled permanently was called *casado* (married). The influence of Portuguese on the vernacular languages increased through this practice of intermarriage. In vocabulary, a large number of Portuguese words crept into the languages of the country, especially words describing dress and food. Words relating to Christianity also came into the languages of Sri Lanka from Portuguese, and many are in still use today.

Before the advent of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, Sinhala vocabulary consisted of the inherited, semi-loan forms taken from Prakrit, Pali and Sanskrit with loans from Tamil and a number of indigenous words. In the writings of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one notices a

considerable number of loan words and, while many words of Portuguese origin can be found in Sinhala literature, it is in the spoken form of Sinhala that Portuguese influence is particularly noticeable. While some of these borrowings have found a permanent place in the language, others have since disappeared or are on the decline. S.G. Perera, in his article 'The Portuguese Influence on Sinhalese Speech', observes:

The Portuguese soldier and the lascoreen likewise were comrades-at-arms, and shared the dangers and privations of war as well as its triumphs and spoils. Portuguese soldiers served under Sinhalese Disaves. The Portuguese, moreover, lived on such terms of intimacy with the Ceylonese, that they intermarried with them without it ever entering their heads to think themselves demeaned thereby ... But the greatest force at work to bridge the gulf between East and West was Christianity. Nothing levels men like a common religion. The Portuguese did not merely 'convert'. They also fraternised. Conversion brought the Sinhalese closer to the Portuguese and it also dealt the first blow to caste. Once begun, the influence of the Portuguese passed far beyond the pale of the converts. It manifested itself in every department of life, and thus affected the common speech. The Portuguese language could not affect the Sinhalese grammar or syntax. It affected the vocabulary ... There is, however, no record of Portuguese being spoken quite as largely then as English is now, nor does it appear that Portuguese books had any great circulation in Ceylon. The language that was spoken was not book-learnt, but picked up by the direct method from the surroundings. Without a standard to go upon, without a literature, language naturally deteriorates, and frequent communications between the Portuguese and the Ceylonese tended to introduce vernacular idiom into the spoken Portuguese, just as much as Portuguese words into the Sinhalese spoken in the forts and camps ... It was mainly through this Ceylon dialect that Portuguese words infiltrated into colloquial Sinhalese.<sup>71</sup>

In all the ports frequented by the Portuguese, there arose in the sixteenth century simplified forms of Portuguese called Indo-Portuguese, Ceylon-Portuguese and Malaio-Portuguese,<sup>72</sup> that promoted understanding among different nations and served as a medium of communication. Even after the appearance of the Dutch, the English, the Danish, the French and the Spanish languages in the seventeenth century, the Portuguese language continued to be the medium of communication between the European nations and the native populations in Sri Lanka. S.G. Perera states that the early British officials were obliged to learn this dialect and it became the medium of communication between the British officials and the people of the country. Robert Knox conversed in Portuguese with the Dutch Officials in the Dutch period and, when Governor North sent his embassy to Kandy, a Portuguese-Sinhalese interpreter accompanied the party.<sup>73</sup>

To this day Colonial Portuguese has survived in a number of Creoles, the chief among them being those of Sri Lanka, India and Java. It is from these Creoles, the result of the political domination, commerce and missionary activities of the Portuguese, that we can trace the entry of many Portuguese terms into the languages of the East such as Sinhala and Tamil.<sup>74</sup> Even after Portuguese power collapsed, Portuguese missionaries continued their activities and continued to exert an influence on language. Some of the phonological changes that Portuguese words generally underwent in the process of being adapted into Sinhala are noted below.

Portuguese words ending in a consonant are made to end in a vowel by the addition of a new vowel: thus *dedal* (Portuguese) becomes *didalaya* (Sinhala), 'thimble'; *cruz* (P) becomes *kurusiya* (S), 'cross'; *emperador* (P) becomes *emparadoru* (S), 'emperor'.

As most Sinhala words end in a vowel, those Portuguese words that end in a vowel are given an extra vowel in their Sinhala form: thus *birlo* (P) becomes *biralu* (S), 'bobbin'; *grade* (P) becomes *garadi* (S), 'railing'; *dose* (P) becomes *dosi* (S), 'sweets'.

As Sinhala words do not often end in *u*, some Portuguese words that are spelt with a final *o* are made to end in *a* in Sinhala: thus *avano* (P) becomes *avana* (S), 'fan'; *sarampo* (P) becomes *sarampa* (S), 'measles'; *bautismo* (P) becomes *bautisma* (S), 'baptism'.

The nasalized *ao* occurring at the end of some Portuguese words is usually represented by the bilabial nasal *m*: thus *godao* (P) becomes *gudam* (S), 'store'; *leilao* (P) becomes *lellam* (S), 'auction'; *cidrao* (P) becomes *sidaram* (S), 'citron'; *pregao* (P) becomes *peragam* (S), 'banns'. Sometimes a medial consonant is doubled when adapted into Sinhala: thus *alfinete* (P) becomes *alpenettiya* (S), 'pin'; *arco* (P) becomes *arukkuva* (S), 'arch'; *bico* (P) becomes *bikku* (S), 'point'.

Occasionally, the meaning of a Portuguese term seems to have come via Tamil into Sinhala. Thus Portuguese terms *mosquetaria de pe* (musket on supports) and *mosquetes de pe* (foot musket) seem to have been translated into Tamil as *kaltuppakku* and that seems to have been loaned to Sinhala as *kala-tuvakku*.

As well as this purely linguistic influence, the culture brought by the Portuguese also had an effect on Sinhala vocabulary. Of greatest importance was Portuguese Christian literature, and here Gonsalves, with his proficiency in the Portuguese language, had made a major influence on Sinhala. This is particularly evident in his devotional and liturgical compositions, such as the *Kristiyâni Palliya* where the terms used for the Christian observances are largely Portuguese in character.<sup>75</sup> Gonsalves was so familiar with the Portuguese language that he organised choirs to sing Portuguese songs at Bolawatta, where he staged his passion plays:

When the procession returned, the Lord was placed in the sepulchre that had been prepared and the people sang improvised verses in two choirs. The ladies of Colombo, who had come with their violins and fiddles and mandolins and players, accompanied the choir with these instruments and also sang some mournful ditties in Portuguese.<sup>76</sup>

This quotation is also evidence for the influence of Portuguese on Sinhala in the hands of Gonsalves. Since the people gathered there had inherited their new religion from the Portuguese, they had many prayers and religious songs in the

Portuguese language. The other elements mentioned in the above quotation, such as the public procession, would also have reflected aspects of culture received from the Portuguese.

#### **5.v.d. The Dictionaries of Gonsalves**

The most important item in the equipment of a missionary is knowledge of the language of the people with whom he or she comes into contact; in this respect Jacome Gonsalves gained a high reputation in Sri Lanka and extended a considerable influence. It is obvious from every page of his writings that he made a thorough study of the languages and literatures of the island. His writings contain explicit and implicit references to many well-known works and show him to have acquired an extensive vocabulary and a surprising familiarity with idiomatic expressions, metaphors and comparisons.

The dictionaries compiled by Gonsalves are themselves a powerful witness to the extent of his proficiency in Sinhala in particular and in the languages of the island in general. They were compiled under difficult circumstances and amidst a busy schedule of work and responsibilities and they occupy a specific place in the history of the Sinhala language for two reasons. First, he was the first person to involve himself in making a lexicography; and second, no individual to this day has achieved so much in the compilation of dictionaries.

No extant or partially extant Sinhala lexicon can be dated earlier than the Kotte period (fifteenth century ). These ancient Pali lexicons, such as the *Abhidhânappadipika*, were destroyed by foreign or native enemies such as Magha, the Indian invader (thirteenth century ) and Rajasimha I (sixteenth century ).<sup>77</sup> The three lexicons of the Kotte period that still exist (the *Piyummala*, the *Ruvanmala* and the *Puraṇa Nâmâvaliya*) provide only a limited vocabulary. This was the context within which Gonsalves compiled Sinhala lexicons, completing this work as a private individual. The enormity of this task can be understood when we compare his contribution with more recent co-operative efforts to compile a comprehensive etymological dictionary of the Sinhala language. W. Sorata records a project from 1941, in which the work of compiling a Sinhala dictionary was undertaken by the University of Ceylon. The project revived the hopes of scholars who had long awaited such a work, and who thought there would now be a speedy conclusion to this great task. However, scholarly and public confidence were premature; such were the problems that the dictionary never appeared.<sup>78</sup>

P. B. Sannasgala greatly admires the scholarly ability so evident in Gonsalves' dictionaries. Sannasgala, the chief editor of the Board of the Sinhala Dictionary, argues that whereas it was the need to make translations of the Bible which first stimulated Christians to learn foreign languages, it was Gonsalves who first made the effort to compile complete dictionaries of the vernaculars of Sri

Lanka.<sup>79</sup> This may be so, but several missionaries were involved in the history of compiling vernacular dictionaries. The first European to master Tamil was Anriquez Anrique s.j. (1520-1600 ), who began to study on the recommendation of St. Francis Xavier. One of his many literary works is entitled, *A Vocabulary for the use of Missionaries*.<sup>80</sup>

Two other missionaries, J.D. Voogt and A. de Mey, were credited with the compilation of a Portuguese-Sinhala and a Sinhala-Dutch dictionary. The latter was printed by Colombo Printing Press in 1759.<sup>81</sup> The Ferguson Collection of the Government Archives of Sri Lanka contains a manuscript copy of a Dutch-Sinhala dictionary entitled *Netherduitsch En Sinhaleesch Woorden*,<sup>82</sup> also by a missionary. A list of the documents preserved in the Dutch Reformed Church of Wolvendaal Colombo in 1757 contains the following six dictionaries: *Sinhala-Dutch and Portuguese-Tamil* by Simon Cat; *Sinhala-Dutch and Dutch-Sinhala* by Johannes Amos Comenius; *Dutch-Sinhala-Tamil*; *Portuguese-Sinhala and Sinhala-Portuguese*, and *Portuguese-Tamil-Sinhala-Dutch*.<sup>83</sup> They were compiled mainly for the use of the foreign missionaries and so were written with their needs in mind. A contemporary missionary has many aids to help him or her learn the languages of a missionary country; however, in those early days there were few books and missionaries had to learn the vernacular languages by the direct method. Among them there were a few exceptional individuals who were able to master completely the vernaculars and

some were so successful in their grasp of the languages concerned that <sup>they</sup> were able to produce dictionaries and even compose grammars. As none of their works are extant today, it is not possible to form an exact idea of their success. We know about them only from reports and letters.

With reference to Gonsalves' dictionary work, the *Oratorian Mission Reports* credit him with the authorship of four dictionaries or *Vocabulario*. These are: *A Portuguese-Sinhala dictionary* (1720); *A Sinhala-Portuguese dictionary* (1730); *A Dictionary of select phrases in Tamil* (1731); and *A Trilingual dictionary, Portuguese-Tamil-Sinhala, with phrases explained* (1735).<sup>84</sup> Imperfect copies of the first two have been found and are kept in the Archives in the Archbishop's House, Colombo. Of the third there is no trace so far although there are two copies of the fourth: one is in the Edmond Peiris Library of the National Seminary, Kandy; the other is in the Library of the Benedictine Monastery in Kandy. The one in the National Seminary is in a good condition. It bears the following title:

*VOCABULARIO / ordenado / Para os que se applicao ao Tamul e Cingala / comecado / Pello Portuguez, proseguido pello Tamul / e accabado pello Cingala / Tresladado / Pello Pe. Euzebio do Rosario de Congregacao / do Oratorio de Goa / No anno de 1772 /.*

Word-book compiled for students of Tamil and Sinhala, proceeding from Portuguese to Tamil and thence to Sinhala. Transcribed by Fr. Euzebio do Rosario of the Congregation of the Oratory of Goa, in the year 1772.<sup>85</sup>



The manuscript consists of 324 pages quarto, a page containing on average 32 Portuguese words, against each of which are Tamil equivalents varying from 1 to 8 words, and Sinhala equivalents varying from 1 to as many as 15 words. The Portuguese words are arranged in alphabetical order, evidently taken over from a standard Portuguese dictionary. The script is small, but clear and legible, written in the same neat hand from beginning to end. It is possible that this copy is the much closer of the two to the original of Gonsalves.

The *Vocabulario* is of special interest to students of Sinhala since it has preserved for us a large number of words that were current in various parts of the island in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They were collected by personal contact with people of every rank and the *Vocabulario* also helps us to understand a number of words found in Gonsalves' books.<sup>86</sup>

Gonsalves' contribution to the evolution of the Sinhala language is an important factor in the process of Christian indigenization. He invented and copied from local use some indigenous words and terms and they have a particular importance in terms of indigenization. Gonsalves consequently acquired a rich vocabulary, including words used by village folk. For example, the word *bólatta* (in the citation given in the Appendix) from the *Portuguese-Tamil-Sinhala* dictionary is a typical example of Gonsalves' use of an indigenous word. *Bólatta* is 'a besom' or 'a broom' made of twigs tied around a stick and the

word is used only in the Kotmale district, a rural village area in the hill country of Sri Lanka. Gonsalves adapted it, incorporating it into his vocabulary. The word subsequently came into general use.<sup>87</sup>

Gonsalves employs indigenous terminology to present Christian teachings especially using the Sinhala Buddhist terminology with which the vast majority of his ordinary village audience would have been familiar. For example, in the *Agnâna Auṣadaya*, Gonsalves discusses the Ten Commandments; however, he does not deal with either the content or the form of the decalogue. All ten chapters of the book are dedicated to the concept of *dasa agnâna* (the ten ignorances), terminology along the lines of the Buddhist concepts of *dasa seelaya* (the ten abstinences) and *dasa kusal* (the ten virtues).<sup>88</sup> The Buddhist term *dasa seela* refers to the tenfold duty to abstain from killing, theft, falsehood, sexual intercourse, intoxicants, dancing, singing, witnessing ludicrous exhibitions, unguents or personal adornments; and the acceptance of gold or silver or money. *Dasa kusal* refers to the ten demerits or sins, which are listed as follows: killing, theft, adultery, lying, reviling, slander, vain talk, covetousness, malice, and heterodoxy. In accordance with these religio-cultural concepts with which the people were so familiar, Gonsalves dealt with ten Christian demerits as the ten forms of ignorance of the truth in the *Agnâna Auṣadaya*. These are listed as ignorance of God, the soul, the Christian doctrine, the saints, the

teachers; truth and falsehood, evil forces, hell, and heaven. Gonsalves' careful selection of indigenous diction made his efforts effective. As Edmond Peiris has commented, Gonsalves' writings are not all of the same literary standard, ranging from the colloquial to the classical. In his many missionary journeys up and down the length and breadth of Sri Lanka, he came in contact with the high and the low, with the learned and the illiterate. He also read widely the Sinhala classics. Consequently, his vocabulary was both rich and varied, and from its vast store he drew 'not laboriously but luckily', with the accuracy of a trained mind and the sense of an artist.<sup>89</sup>

As a scholar of the Sinhala language, Gonsalves could create, manipulate and contextualize the words he used. To give one example, the word *kalakûduvena* (which he coined) is pregnant with meaning. It refers to the time when one begins his or her married life separate from the parental home. In Hindu culture human life is divided into four stages, described in Sinhala as *ladaru* 'infancy'; *bâlaka* 'childhood'; *gruhasta* 'marriage'; and *sannyâsi* 'ascetic life in the jungle'. Following this indigenous concept, Gonsalves narrowed down all the significance of married life to his new word *kalakûduvena*. The word *koladeema*, on the other hand, was broadened by Gonsalves from a particular event to a universal situation. <sup>The</sup> Word simply means 'to give a corn-stack'. However, Gonsalves invested it with a broader meaning to describe in general the activities that take place in a threshing-floor.<sup>90</sup>

Gonsalves often associated himself with the ordinary peasant and fishing folk, both on the maritime coast and in country areas. His vocabulary evolved in relation to their social customs and professions and his works also reflect the contemporary socio-cultural life of the people.

#### End Notes

1. Perera, T. 1932: 7.
2. Ray, H.C. 1959 : 394.
3. Karunatilake, W.S. 1994 : 7.
4. A map of the main Indo-Aryan and Dravidian languages is on p. 224.  
Karunatilake, W.S. 1994: 10.
5. Geiger, W. 1938 : xii.
6. *Sinhala -Sinhala* <sup>Sabda Kōṣaya</sup> 1956 : 1185.
7. *Dēva Vēda Purāṇaya* 1924 : xvii.
8. Karunatilake, W.S. 1994 : 24.
9. Perera, T. 1932 : x.
10. *Writers' Union* 1965 : 4.
11. Wickramasinghe, M. 1949 : 198.
12. Suraweera, A.V. 1976 : 51.
13. Peiris, E. 1950: 82 .

14. Suraweera, A.V. 1976 : 132.
15. Suraweera, A.V. 1976 : 133.
16. Suraweera, A.V. 1976 : 149, 170 and 209.
17. Suraweera, A.V. 1976 : 216, 231.
18. *Gnanartha Pradeepaya* Nov. 1966 : 6.
19. Sannasgala, P.B. 1968 : 726.
20. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1991 : 7.
21. Perera, S.G. 1932 : 247.
22. Peiris, E. 1950 : 15.
23. Sannasgala, P.B. 1968 : 725.
24. *Suvisêsa Visarjanaya* 1905 : 2.
25. *Dêva Vêda Purânaya* 1924 : xxxii.
26. Knox, R. 1956 : 123.
27. *Agnâna Auṣadaya* 1961 : 7.
28. Suraweera, A.V. : 139.
29. Weerasuriya, D.S. 1951 : 284.
30. Kolamunne, T. 1993 : 109.
31. *Ânanda Kalippuva* 1974 : 12.
32. *Prâti-hâryâvaliya* 1928 : 27, 39.
33. *Prâti-hâryâvaliya* 1928 : 59, 64 and 73.

34. *Dêva Vêda Sañkșêpaya* 1925 : 70.
35. *Agnâna Ausadaya* 1961 : 8. 12, 37.
36. *Prâtihâryâvaliya* 1928 : 20.
37. *Dukprâpti Prasângaya* 1924 : 52.
38. *New Encyclopædia Britannica* 1990 : 315.
39. By mentioning kings, ministers, traders, farmers and high and low castes Gonsalves has made a very clear reference to Hinduism, one of the main religions in Sri Lanka. There is a theological foundation for the castes in Hinduism, as Brahma is the creator god. Each of these castes is said to have originated from different parts of Brahma's body. This reference to the existing caste system in Sri Lanka is evidence for the indigenizing aspect of Gonsalves' language.
40. Evolution of these major languages forms seventy-two other languages.
41. *Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya* 1942 : 3.
42. The Tamil word *olongu* means 'to conquer' or 'to put the thing in order'.
43. *Gnânânjanaya* 1994 : 62.
44. Perera, T. 1932 : 2.
45. *New Encyclopædia Britannica* 1990 : 874.
46. *New Encyclopædia Britannica* 1990 : 876.
47. According to the order of each religion's number of adherents, these are: Buddhism (60%), Hinduism (15%), Christianity (8%) and Islam (7%).
48. Flannery, A. 1977 : 946.
49. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1995 : 66.
50. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1992 : 236.

51. *Dêva Vêda Purânaya* 1924 : 184.
52. *Dêva Vêda Purânaya* 1924 : 185.
53. *Mañgala Gîtiya* 1993 : 158.
54. These words carry no meaning, but the author has his own purpose.
55. *Sinhalese.-English Dictionary* 1924 : 729.
56. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993: 295.
57. Tamil words used by Gonsalves in the *Gnânânjanaya* are given in Appendix I on p. 310.
58. *Vêda Kavyaya* 1993 : 229.
59. *Vêda Kâvyaya* 1993 : 353.
60. *Dharmasagnâva* 1974 : 1.
61. *Dharmasagnâva* 1974 : 21.
62. *Dharmasagnâva* 1974 : 26.
63. *Ânanda Kalippuva* 1974 : 12.
64. *Ânanda Kalippuva* 1974 : 12.
65. *Gnânânjanaya* 1994 : 64.
66. *Agnâna Ausadaya* 1961 : 9.
67. Tamil words used by Gonsalves in his Sinhala compositions without any adaptation are given in Appendix II on p. 310.
68. Perera, S.G. 1922 : 45.
69. Perera, S.G. 1922 : 46.

70. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1978 : 70.
71. Perera, S.G. 1922 : 47.
72. *Dictionary of Ceylon Portuguese* 1819 : 205.
73. Perera S.G. 1922 : 48.
74. *Silumina* 1997 : 4.
75. A list of Portuguese words used in the works of Gonsalves is given in Appendix III on p. 311.
76. Peiris, E. 1951 :17.
77. *Sinhala -Sinhala-Sabdar* <sup>Kōsaya</sup> 1956 : xxi.
78. *Sinhala -Sinhala-Sabdar* <sup>Kōsaya</sup> 1956 : xxiii.
79. *Gnanartha Pradeepaya* June 1996 : 1 (reporting on a lecture given in Colombo on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of that month); see also, Sannasgala, P.B. 1968 : 725.
80. Perera, S.G. 1941 : 157.
81. Peiris, E. 1943 : 34.
82. Dutch and Sinhala words.
83. *Minute Book of the Dutch Reformed Church* 1750 : 18.
84. *Oratorian Mission Report* 1957 : 250.
85. The first two pages of the manuscript of the *Portuguese-Tamil-Sinhala Dictionary (Vocabulario)* of Gonsalves are given on p. 268.
86. Examples taken at random from the *Vocabulario* are given in Appendix IV on p. 312.
87. *Sinhalese-English Dictionary* 1924 : 457.

88. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1963 : 7.

89. Peiris, E. 1943 : 174.

90. Examples of words of Gonsalves' own invention are given in Appendix V on p. 313.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6. AN EXAMINATION OF THE LITERARY STYLE AND THE POLEMICAL WORKS OF GONSALVES

Gonsalves produced a large volume of literary work in the vernacular languages of Sri Lanka, both in prose and in verse. They are all of a high quality, yet it seems that he was more efficient and skilful in prose than in poems. His literary style was determined by the purpose of a particular work's creation, which was to provide materials for religious instruction.

Sinhala in the eighteenth century had its own particular form and common features. It is therefore, not appropriate to judge the language and the literary style of that time by the grammatical norms and literary standards of present times.

For instance, Gonsalves was fond of using stereotypical similes. His greatest book of poetry, the *Vêda Kâvyaya*, contains several examples. The similes *ran ruva* 'golden figure' and *ran rasa* 'gold and mercury' are repeated so often that the reader or listener tires of them.<sup>1</sup> For example, the following verse from the *Vêda Kâvyaya* contains the word *ran* 'gold', three times repeatedly:

*ran kendi sê varala di sê*  
*ran kusa sê gagana rã sê*  
*ran ruva sê gata vena sê*  
*rusiru me sê asana le sê*

Hair is as bright as gold; golden sky is brilliant. His beauty is seen as a golden figure.<sup>2</sup>

Gonsalves makes similar use of phrases such as *ran vatha* 'golden garments' *ran valâ* 'golden clouds' and *ran ahasa* 'golden sky'. Certainly, gold is a precious metal and the term is often used to communicate something precious; among conventional similes many valuable and precious items are compared to gold. None the less, Gonsalves' repetitive use of these similes makes dull reading.

Following the literary style of his day, Gonsalves also displays a disregard for spelling using certain words without concern for the correctness of their spelling. He changes, reduces or adds letters freely in some works. For instance, *naukâva* is the correct Sinhala word for 'ship'; however, Gonsalves used *nâukava* in its place.<sup>3</sup> In this verse the correct word would not have caused any difficulty in either the poetical rhythm or in chanting. Similarly, the words *ûtare* 'answer' and *deviyanda* 'to God' are misspelled:<sup>4</sup> they should read *utare* and *deviyanta*. *Ragu*, the name of a caste, is written as *ragû*.<sup>5</sup> A different and inappropriate meaning is given by the word *meda* 'this', used in place of *medâ* 'this day'. Again the word *thema* 'this person', is used to replace *themê* 'soaked'. These are two different words; it is not possible to substitute one with the other. Similarly, in a sentence the subject, *mama* 'I', always takes the verb *mi* 'am'; yet Gonsalves has used the word *mê* as a substitute for the verb. The word *danî* 'knew' is used to replace the word *dân* 'now'; the meaning of the whole verse is obscured by this inappropriate usage, if we judge by present-day standards. Gonsalves followed

the literary style of the time and we find the same style in the *Rājāvaliya*.<sup>6</sup>

Particularly ungrammatical by today's standards is Gonsalves' tendency to misuse the Sinhala letters *na/ṇa* and *la/ḷa* in the construction of words. For instance, the two words *naya* and *ṇaya* have entirely different meanings: *naya* means 'law' and *ṇaya* means 'borrow'. Inaccurate usage of *na* for *ṇa* and vice versa communicates a different meaning. Similarly, Gonsalves uses *la* for *ḷa* in some contexts and vice versa. For instance, *kaḷa* means 'done' and *kala* means 'time'. *La/ḷa* are often used in the Sinhala language to communicate different meanings. Strictly speaking, by modern conventions, *la* and *ḷa* (and *na* and *ṇa*) are not interchangeable. They communicate entirely different meanings. However, contemporary usage was more feasible as one finds the same in the *Rājāvaliya*. Gonsalves adopted this style to make his writings appealing to ordinary people.

Occasionally the author uses images and metaphors inappropriately. They do not convey the message that he wants to communicate in his writings. Therefore, he loses the attention of his reader or listener. Nobody could agree with certain misconceptions that appear in his compositions. For example:

*evita svāmidaruvō vadārammahu, 'agnāna tīrisaneni! linde, gangē vatura  
mepaṃana nam maha samudraye vatura uā bāsa nāvōth siyalu oyaval  
viyalī noyēda? ... samudrayen unā ena vātūren noyek tan ulpath pāhādē,  
lin, gangu, oyaval pāhādē, itirê...'*

Then the Lord God says; 'You foolish beasts! If there is this much water in a well and in a river, how much more water is there in the great sea?

If water does not flow from the sea, will not all the water reservoirs dry out?  
... Water that comes from the sea causes springs to create wells, rivers and tanks and causes them to overflow'.<sup>7</sup>

This is inconceivable: common sense denies that wells and rivers are fed by water from the sea. A similar instance can be found in the *Agnâna Auṣadaya*:

*ävidina sarpayekugen igilena pakshiyek noepedêya.*  
A flying snake will not be born of a walking snake.<sup>8</sup>

'A walking snake' is inconceivable, snakes do not walk or fly. Perhaps a simple contrast between the air-borne and earth-bound is what is intended; but considering the purpose of the compositions and the literary standards of the time, his audience, including literary critics, would not have been offended at such expressions.

### 6.i. Gonsalves' grammatical style

Writers are normally expected to observe the grammar of the language they are using, following the rules of inflection, the established relationship between words and the phonetic system.<sup>9</sup> While it may not be appropriate to judge Gonsalves' works by present-day grammatical standards, doing so reveals a pattern of what today would be considered errors. Common mistakes are the failure to mark subject and object, the use of a plural verb with a singular subject, and the use of a singular verb with a plural subject.

*dēva dūtayek ... bayankāra handak gasā kiyāñnāhu ... sattakamayai kiyāñnāha.*  
An angel ... in a terrible voice say ... and [he] say certainly it is so.

*ikbithi é rājendra dēva dūtaya ... prabhā nivañnāha ... jalaskandayak vañnāha.*  
Thereafter that archangel ... cease to be great ... [he] become a pillar of water. <sup>10</sup>

In the first sentence, the subject *dēva dūtayek* is singular and the verbs *kiyāñnāhu* and *kiyāñnāha* are plural. Similarly, in the second sentence, the singular subject *rājendra dēva dūtaya* is given a plural verb (*vañnāha*). In a sentence from the *Prāthihāryāvaliya* we find:

*mesê é tapasvarayā ... gini kurusayak dutuvōya.*  
In this manner the hermit ... saw a cross of fire. <sup>11</sup>

The word *tapasvarayā* (hermit) is a singular subject while *dutuvōya* (saw) is a plural verb. We see a similar use of language in the contemporary *Rājāvaliya*.

*krama kramayen rajun varnayen adu aduva giyāha.*  
Gradually the king became pale looking. <sup>12</sup>

In this sentence the subject is *rajun* 'king', which is singular, and the verb *giyāha* 'went' is plural. If it were to be grammatically correct, either the subject should be in the plural '*rajahu*' or the verb should be in the singular '*giyēya*'. In Sinhala, one person can be spoken of in the plural to show respect. But it should be consistent, unlike this example:

*apa budun palamu yakun duru kara dāgabak karavai kī sēka*  
First, Our Lord Buddha cast out devils and instructed that a temple be built. <sup>13</sup>

In this sentence the subject is *budun*, which is singular, while *kā̃ sēka* is a plural verb. It should have either a plural subject (*buduhu*) or a singular verb (*kē ya*) for it to be a correct sentence according to present-day norms. However, a literary work has to be understood in its own context and it is clear that Gonsalves used the literary style of the time in his compositions.

Gender rules are also an important consideration in Sinhala grammar, but these are often ignored by Gonsalves. The key words in the following passage are *ohu* ‘he’ and *duñmāya* ‘gave’:

*ohu lova vādiyāin pasu pau kārāyin nisā tamā bili panduru venda ōnai kiyā  
... varam duñmāya.*

When he came into the world he laid down his life to make the sinners free and gave the command to commemorate this event. <sup>14</sup>

According to gender rules the masculine subject *ohu* should take the masculine form of the verb *duñmēya*, but in the above citation the masculine subject *ohu* ‘he’ has a feminine verb, *duñmāya* ‘gave’. Similar usage appears elsewhere – *eyin illandāriya ... nāsunāya*: ‘With that the boy ... died.’ <sup>15</sup> In this quotation the subject *illandāriya* ‘boy’ is masculine while the verb *nāsunāya* ‘died’ is a feminine word. According to the gender rule, *illandāriya* it should take the verb *nāsunēya*. Another similar instance is *bakthi kārāyek uñnāya*: ‘There was a pious man.’ <sup>16</sup> In this citation the subject is *bakthi kārāyek*, ‘a pious man’ which is a masculine phrase, while the verb *uñnāya* ‘there was’ is feminine. Strictly

speaking, it should take the verb *umēya* for it to be grammatically correct. It seems that Gonsalves did not take the gender rule seriously, and in this he followed the contemporary linguistic style. As we examine the grammatical style of that time, we notice that the *Rājāvaliya* is similarly indifferent to the gender rule. For example,

*agabisova ohu vasa aī marā tomō sâramasak rājaya kelēya.*  
The queen poisoned him and she herself ruled the country for four months. <sup>17</sup>

According to the present-day gender rule the feminine subject *agabisova* should always have a feminine verb '*kalāya*'. This tendency to ignore the above should not be seen as ignorance on the part of Gonsalves, but should rather be understood as typical features of that particular literary period. He was naturally a part of this existing literary tradition and one would not do justice to his works by judging them according to present-day literary standards.

It is also unusual to use a mixed Sinhala word together with a proper Sinhala word. However, mixed Sinhala words and pure Sinhala words were often used together in the compositions of Gonsalves, particularly in the *Dukprāpti Prasāṅgaya*, again in line with the literary style of his time. An example of this is the phrase *sri lē māṅṣa* 'holy blood and flesh'. <sup>18</sup> The word *lē* is a mixed Sinhala word and the other words are proper Sinhala words. Strictly speaking, the word *rudhīra* should have been used instead of *lē*. The two words *sarva dē* 'all things' <sup>19</sup> are of mixed Sinhala and proper Sinhala respectively. More correct

would be either *siyalu dē* or *sarva dā*. Similarly, the two words *varṣa vatura* 'rain-water'<sup>20</sup> do not go together: either *varṣa jalaya* or *vāsi vatura* would be correct. Again, the words *guru pradāni* 'senior teachers'<sup>21</sup> should read as *guru bavatun*, while the words *srī muhuna* 'holy face'<sup>22</sup> are of two linguistic traditions and hence do not go together; either *srī vatha* or *suddau muhuna* would be correct. This usage is a common feature of the literary style of Gonsalves' time and he has reflected it in his own work without hesitation.

#### **6.ii. Scribal errors and the contemporary literary style**

Further, the way that Gonsalves separates words is not conventional, and he often introduces ambiguity that causes difficulty in understanding the intended meaning. This problem is compounded by copyists' errors. Gonsalves' spelling and the way he separates words are different in the various manuscripts and printed works due to the mistakes of scribes or editors. Regarding copyist errors, Katre makes the following observation:

The deviations from the original are due to two well known causes: visual errors and psychological errors, and each of these will differ to a greater or less extent with every compositor or copyist. The scribe or copyist is prone to commit both types of error, and thus deviate, even if slightly, from his original. Visual errors comprise substitutions, omissions or additions which the eye of the scribe makes through weakness or inattention. Psychological errors arise from the tendency

of the mind to read some meaning into its own mistakes or the mistakes in the exemplar from which the copy is made. The main corruption in classical texts are largely due to errors of this class. Even the best scribe cannot copy mechanically for long without allowing some play to his intelligence; even at the worst he hardly ever copies letter for letter any writing that he understands. In most instances it will be found that the scribes copy words and not letters.<sup>23</sup>

It is interesting to note that in <sup>both</sup> manuscripts and printed works the letter *ṣ* (ṣ) is used for *s* (s). For instance, the *Dêva Niti Visarjanaya* mentions *granthâdiû dvê ṣâtta* ‘Seventy-two books’ and *aluthen ṣânakin amuthuva ṣâdê* ‘new and strange’.<sup>24</sup> Strictly speaking, the words *ṣâtta*, *ṣânakin* and *ṣâdê* should read as *sâtta*, *sânakin* and *sâdê*. These apparent mistakes are due to both the scribes and the literary style of the time of Gonsalves.

To take a contemporary example, the king of Kandy writes to the Dutch governor in 1726 *wickrama prasasta* (instead of *prasasta*) *râjâdhi râjendrau* ‘Praise the great emperor Wickrama’.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, in a contemporary manuscript in the British Museum we find *oun gimam hâra ṣâta* (instead of *sâta*) *pê yañmata tânâyam atakuth ṣâduna* (instead of *sâduna*) ‘Made eight rest-houses for them to rest on their way’.<sup>26</sup> According to today’s literary norms, *ṣâta* should be *sâta* and *ṣâduna* should be *sâduna*. However, in the *Râjâvaliya* we find written *rahas ottu krayôyai ṣâka* (instead of *sâka*) *sitâ* ‘suspecting them to be spies’.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, we may conclude that Gonsalves’ writings reflect the grammar and style of the period. The demand of the time was the factor that moved the missionaries to produce Christian literature and make copies available to the people.

Manuel de Miranda once wrote the following to the Prefect of the Oratorian Congregation, Antonio Pereira:

It [production of Christian literature] is a thing very much needed In this mission, for even the ancient Fathers of the time of Portuguese had not done it, and there is nothing in the Sinhalese language about our faith. This work will therefore, be of great use to souls, for there are not a few who ask for that kind of nourishment in their mother tongue.<sup>28</sup>

Gonsalves' purpose in producing such a large volume of books was not to have them preserved in libraries and archives for the learned elite. Rather, the author wished to make as many copies as possible for distribution among the people, for them to read and to listen to. Hence, the books needed to be copied. A printing press was available to the Protestants during the time of Gonsalves, through the patronage of the Dutch colonial masters of Sri Lanka.<sup>29</sup> Gonsalves, however, had no such facilities to produce copies of his works and, as S.G. Perera reports, his writings were copied by hand, page by page, with a stylus on palm-leaves. This was a very slow and laborious operation which could be satisfactorily performed only by scribes trained for the task. By Easter 1707, Gonsalves had produced enough compositions to provide occupation for several clerks<sup>30</sup> and eventually he engaged as many as twelve scribes to make copies of his writings.<sup>31</sup> His books were copied and circulated among the people for the next hundred years, before they were finally printed. However, even full-time scribes were unskilled and consequently many mistakes can be found in the books they

copied. This in turn affected the printed works, as the same mistakes entered them due to inadequate editing. As Katre explains, <sup>(4,5)</sup> ^ editor should personally compare, if possible, the transcript with the original and rectify in it any scribal or other errors due to the personality of the transcriber.<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, this crucial task was neglected by some editors.

As mentioned earlier, during my research study tour to Lisbon I was happy to discover in the Biblioteca da Ajuda a manuscript copy in four bulky volumes of all Gonsalves' works in Sinhala, except the dictionaries. I believe that this is the most complete manuscript collection of his works at present available. In the British period (1818 - 1948), his works were printed and, thereafter, the manuscript copies in Sri Lanka seem to have gradually disappeared. A note attached to the Ajuda collection states that the collection had previously belonged to the Oratory in Lisbon. The manuscripts are of great value for the process of recovering the author's original writings. S.G. Perera observed the neglect of the vernaculars which came with the social and political upheavals of British times and with the change of ecclesiastical regime after the extinction of the Oratorian Congregation. A new generation of priests, unable to read, appreciate or utilise the labours of Gonsalves, led to a disregard for his works even amongst the laity, except those most essential to the Church in Sri Lanka.

Now, however, times have changed. As Perera explains, the Sinhala revival has affected the Christians also, and the Christian Literature Committee

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of Colombo [has] decided to bring out a new and complete edition of Gonsalves' works. However, one of the chief difficulties—<sup>e</sup> it not in Gath!—<sup>was</sup> that of finding editors sufficiently versed in classical literature to eliminate critically the numerous copyists' errors that have come into the manuscripts. <sup>33</sup>

Editors to date have ignored fundamental procedures for creating critical editions. Language which belongs to the eighteenth century, and which should have been preserved, has been changed. Subsequent editors who approach Gonsalves' works must be careful not to change the original text to suit contemporary linguistic standards. For example, the first edition of the *Agnâna Ausadaya* was printed in 1847, the second in 1864, the third in 1926, while the fourth and most recent edition is dated 1995. In the third edition, Carlo Edmond Fonseka has seriously misrepresented the original work by trying to 'correct' it. In the same way, Don Domingo Wijesinghe altered the original words of the *Dêva Vêda Purânaya*, Gonsalves' magnum opus, when he edited and printed it for the first time in 1864. For example, he completed some Biblical stories by incorporating them into the original composition. He included the Old Testament story of Susanna, a miracle that took place at the birth of Jesus, the journey of Mary from Egypt to Nazareth and the Song of Mary. He also freely inserted excerpts from European Christian authors and from great scholars, theologians, saints and philosophers. The following passage may serve as an example of these uncalled-for editorial insertions:



*tavada ehi dutu vadâ vishesaû prathihâryak nam, ermôpuli yana nuvarehi dēvālayaka tumsiya pansāta dēvatāunge rūpa tabâ auruddehi tumsiya sātāpas dāvas ganānin eka eka dāvasata eka eka deviyāta pūjākara pāvata enatāna dēva maunta rā maga laginta stānayak nolābī kumarun vadāgena é stānayata vādiya sandehi ekie tumsiya pansāta pilima muhunin talā vātunāha. é bava aprodisiu nam dēvāla nāyaka pūjāchārie guru dāka dēva kumārāyan desa balā mē kumārāyā apē deviyāta nāyaka devi heyin ohugē pādāyata moun bāhādākka sattakāyai kiyā tamanuth vānda namaskāra kalēya. é dāka é ratehi vāsi bohōdena svāmidaruvan veta pāhadunōya.*

Once there was a splendid miracle which took place. As Mary [Mother of Jesus] was going along with her son from Egypt to Nazareth, she had no place to stay overnight. At a place called Ermopuli there was a temple dedicated to three hundred and sixty-five gods each of which was worshipped once a year. When Mary reached there all the three hundred and sixty-five statues fell on their face and worshipped the child. Having seen that the chief priest of the temple believed that the child was superior to his gods he himself paid him homage. Thereafter many people in that country believed in the child Jesus.<sup>34</sup>

The editor should not have inserted them into the original works of Gonsalves.

Carlo Edmond Fonseka has edited and published most of the works of Gonsalves in this manner, thereby doing great damage to the original compositions. He also 'corrected' Gonsalves' language. For example, in the preface of the *Buddha Bana Pratyakṣaya*, edited by him in 1932, he explains that he has simplified the book so that everyone can understand it without difficulty.<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately he has misrepresented the originals in the process. Gonsalves' sources were both the Sinhala classics and the folklore. He wrote for the unlettered people in language appealing to them. It seems that Fonseka misunderstood the literary style and the audience for which Gonsalves was

writing.

As I have discussed earlier, some people consider folklore, which is preserved in the language of the ordinary people, to be ungrammatical and unsuitable for using in the composition of books. However, others would agree that it has its own positive value which has to be preserved and respected and that it has more opportunities to evolve and adapt itself to the life situations of people than the language of the classics. It is therefore always better to present the works of the author as they are as much as possible, so that the language of the period and the language of the author can be transmitted to generations to come.

### **6.iii. An account of the polemical works of Gonsalves**

Throughout Sri Lankan history, the relationship between Christians and Buddhists has been remarkably good. Gonsalves himself studied the Sinhala language with the Buddhist monks who were the masters of it. When Christians had difficulties with the colonial powers, the Sinhala Buddhist kings came to their rescue. In particular, Kings Wimaladharmasuriya II and Narendrasimha helped the Catholics to construct churches, to organise processions and to conduct religious services.<sup>36</sup> They also helped the Catholic priests to protect themselves from their Dutch persecutors. King Narendrasimha provided candles to be used in church services. King Sri Vijaya Rajasimha presented an ivory

statue of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, to Bolawatta church. If the relationship between the two communities had not been not so good, the Catholics on the island would have had serious difficulties.

It seems that under such circumstances Gonsalves should have taken every step to maintain religious harmony and relationships with people of other faiths, particularly with Buddhists. However, his composition of controversies caused problems. Four of Gonsalves' works may be termed polemical: the *Bhedakârayange Tarkaya*, the *Mâtara Pratyakṣaya*, the *Bud<sup>dh</sup> Mula* (including the *Buddha.Bana Pratyakṣaya*) and the *Agnâna Auṣadaya*. The *Bhedakârayange Tarkaya* is a record of a discussion between him and Nanclairs de la Nerolle, held in the presence of King Narendrasimha at Hanguranketa. For the instruction of the converts at Matara, a district in the south of Sri Lanka, he wrote the *Pratyakṣaya*. It is termed 'polemical' or 'controversial' because it criticises Buddhist teaching. The *Bud<sup>dh</sup> Mula* (an account of Buddhism) was written in 1737 and was presented to the Crown Prince Kumara Astana, who on his accession took the throne name of Sri Vijaya Rajasimha. The *Agnâna Auṣadaya* discusses controversial issues in different faiths and contradicts their conclusions.

P.B. Sannasgala, commenting on the controversial works of Gonsalves, remarks that even many Catholics would not agree with certain views and criticisms he presented in them. He maintains that those controversial works, particularly the *Pratyakṣaya* and the *Bud<sup>dh</sup> Mula*, caused conflicts between

Buddhists and Christians in subsequent decades.<sup>37</sup> It is also notable that (probably for this reason) Don Peter has omitted certain parts of the *Agnâna Ausadaya* published in his 1995 edition.<sup>38</sup> The whole of page 11 of the 1961 edition by Edmond Peiris, which discusses the concept of Nibbana, has been purposely omitted. Here Gonsalves criticises the Buddhist concept of Nibbana because he says that it can cause pain in the minds of believers. At the same time, he imprudently tries to rationalise a religious concept of life after death. In this case, it seems that Gonsalves was unwise in his articulation of arguments and in his presentation of views on the teachings of other faiths.

These works aroused the anger of the Buddhists when they appeared. It caused considerable damage to his literary and missionary endeavours as well as to his personal credibility. Gonsalves was arrested on the order of the king of Kandy and brought before him as a criminal. The king had prepared blazing braziers, pincers, cauldrons of iron, leather whips, and other similar instruments with the idea of torturing him on account of a book in which he claimed to have found errors in the doctrine and practice of Buddhism, assertions which the king and all Sinhala Buddhists found repugnant. This book, the *Agnâna Ausadaya*, came into the hands of the king, who enjoyed reading it for its style. The king showed it to many nobles at court and to some Buddhist monks of the Kandyan kingdom. The latter were so offended by the book that they were determined to destroy both it and its author. Several times they complained to the king. They

accused Gonsalves of the crime of lese-majesty, both divine and human, since he had uttered blasphemies against the gods worshipped by the king and also against the king himself, implying that he was in error with regard to his religious beliefs. At the same time Pedro Gascon (a good friend of Gonsalves) died and, as the king had not found in his house the wealth he wanted to confiscate, the enemies of Gonsalves seized this occasion to convince the king that the treasure was with Gonsalves, and that he was hiding it in his church instead of handing it over to His Majesty. The king was so enraged that he was determined to inflict on Gonsalves a most cruel death. While Gonsalves remained cheerful and undisturbed, others were afraid of what was being said at the palace: the exaggerations with which his enemies represented his crime; the anger of the king; and the instruments of torture that had been made ready. The record in the Oratorian Report for 20 January 1747 reads:

The executors of the king's order went to Bolawatta, in which church were Fathers Ignacio Mesquita, Francisco Leytao and Lourenco Collaco. At fall of night they seized them all. On the following day they removed the tiles of the church, and broke down the gates. Some statues they broke, others they burnt, but the ivory statue which the king of Kandy had sent some three years before and had been placed on the main altar, they did not break but removed to the palace. Finally they robbed the church of everything that was in it and in the presbytery, all the ornaments and furniture and books. Not content with these acts of hostility to the Fathers, they did the same to the Christians living in the neighbourhood of the church.<sup>39</sup>

The following day Gonsalves was taken prisoner to the palace. On reaching the place of questioning, he was shown the fire and the instruments, which had been prepared. He was questioned about the book he had written in Sinhala against the doctrine of the Buddha. He admitted that he had written it and asserted that it contained truth and that it was a work of reason. The king asked what he had done with the great sum of money left in his possession by Pedro Gascon. Gonsalves replied that anyone could go and search the church and take away whatever belonged to Gascon. The king was convinced of Gonsalves' innocence, put aside his anger and set him free. Some time afterwards, on 11 August 1747, King Sri Vijaya Rajasimha died and was succeeded by King Kirthi Sri Rajasimha. The new king ordered a stop to the persecution and permitted the Fathers to resume their work in the kingdom.<sup>40</sup> However, Gonsalves' polemical works affected his relationship with others in the country. Perhaps, if he had been more conscious of strengthening his relationships with others and working for religious harmony, he might have contributed more to Sinhala literature and religion and to the country's culture.

However, some scholars maintain that Gonsalves composed these works for good reasons and therefore, each work should be examined in the specific context in which it was written. For instance, in 1732 a Special Commissioner of the Dutch Company arrived in Sri Lanka to regulate the affairs of the island. A number of Sinhala chieftains came to Colombo to meet him from Matara. This is

an area where Sinhala literature was greatly cultivated, and the chiefs had evidently heard of Gonsalves and read his works. They expressed an earnest desire to meet him in order to discuss religion with him. The Catholics of Colombo immediately informed Gonsalves, who came to the capital in disguise, met the chiefs in secret conferences, and received a warm invitation to preach the faith in Matara.<sup>41</sup> He immediately set to work and composed a book called the *Mâtara Pratyakṣaya*. Copies of this work were distributed in Matara, so that when Gonsalves arrived there he was able to instruct a large number of people.

Similarly, as I mentioned earlier, Gonsalves wrote a book for the special use of the Crown Prince of Kandy, Astana Kumara. This young man was a Hindu by birth, but had to profess Buddhism on accession to the throne. Therefore, the *Buddh Mula* was written by Gonsalves at the request of the prince and he presented it to him.

In the preface to his edition of the *Buddh Bana Pratyakṣaya*, Carlo Edmond Fonseka states that it contains nothing that could upset people of other faiths<sup>42</sup> and that if its readers approach it with an open mind they should be able to grasp the true intention of the author. Gonsalves had an excellent knowledge of world religions in general and of Buddhism in particular, mentioning in his book the actual teachings of the Buddha. However, he uses this book to criticise the worship of deities. He recalls that the Buddha was never subjected to the powers of gods and that thirty-three thousand gods came and worshipped the Buddha on

the occasion of his enlightenment. Through the centuries, popular Buddhist practice had established many rituals in which gods were worshipped <sup>43</sup> and Gonsalves criticised the people whom he said had deviated from the pure teachings of the Buddha. Popular religious practices, he wrote, were absurd according to the doctrines of Buddhism. This was Gonsalves' critique of elements of Buddhist worship which due to the influence of Hinduism had become prominent in the Kotte and Kandy periods of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. King Sri Vijaya Rajasimha and all his successors were Hindus by birth and they were all of the Nayakkar dynasty of Madura, India. Gonsalves also made direct reference to the Sinhala Buddhist classic, the *Budugunâlañkâraya* of Veedagama Thero, in which the author powerfully presents the nature and the origin of uncontaminated Buddhist doctrine. As Gonsalves explains,

The Lord Buddha through his virtuous life showed the way to attain enlightenment without any aid from gods. Furthermore, at the beginning of the *Budugunâlañkâraya* it is stated that gods such as Vishnu, Eishvara, Natha, Pattini, Kataragama are of very low origin and the Buddha is far more superior to them all. Therefore, the Buddhists are foolish in worshipping gods, making *devâlayas* for them. <sup>44</sup>

In this citation, Gonsalves refers to the Buddha as *Budu Rajânan* 'Lord Buddha King of all', that is, highly respectful and devotional terms. Considering Gonsalves' clear intention, V.J.M. Lokubandara, the Sri Lankan minister of Cultural Affairs, in a message on the publication of the *Selected Works of Fr.*

*Jacome Gonsalves* <sup>which</sup> appeared on the occasion of the commemoration of Gonsalves' three hundredth birthday, states that Gonsalves always worked for religious harmony and ecumenism. <sup>45</sup> However, non-Christians did not like the idea of a Christian missionary discussing religious concepts such as *nibbana* and *anatta*. As a result, people tended to misinterpret some of his works. Don Peter, explaining why he omitted a page from the original writings of Gonsalves, states that 'it may lead people of other faiths to misunderstand'. <sup>46</sup> However, Gonsalves composed these works with the best of intentions and these works too indicate the variety and richness of his themes and subject matter.

Gonsalves' works belong to the eighteenth-century. Literary critics ought to consider several factors such as the literary style, linguistic and grammatical patterns of the time when analysing his works. They have to be studied in their own socio-religious and historical context and not according to the present-day standards. When editing and re-publishing the works of Gonsalves, they have to be presented as they are, without 'correcting' them, for they reflect their own period of literature. The polemical works have to be taken in the holistic context of the works of Gonsalves. They were written in a certain historical background. Therefore, it may not be fair to judge the intentions of the author, looking at few pages or phrases of few works. The literary style or the polemical works may not devalue the works of Gonsalves, rather they reflect a positive and remarkable contribution of the author to the Sinhala literature, language, culture and more specifically towards the indigenization of Christianity in Sri Lanka.

## End Notes

1. Further examples from the *Vēda Kāvya* (1993) include:  
*rane ruvak se mai vadune lol le* ‘Grown up beautifully as a golden figure’ p. 376;  
*ran ruva vilasin deu kumaru ta* ‘The golden figure of the divine prince’ p.392;  
*senehasa kara ran rasa se venasa novie eka pana se* ‘No difference in love and life as gold and mercury’ p.407;  
*vada vada ran ruva se pun sanda se pera ruva se* ‘He was brought up as a golden figure like the full moon’ p. 420;  
*dilihena ran ruva se ve* ‘Like a brilliant golden figure’ p. 428;  
*ran ruva se deu kumaruvo* ‘The divine prince is like a golden figure’ p. 430;  
*ran rasa se nova venase* ‘Inseparable as gold and mercury’ p. 444;  
*ran ruva u deu kumara* ‘Golden figure of the divine prince’ p. 456;  
*ran van siyolanga lalala une kima pavasan kumaruvane* ‘Prince, tell us how your golden figure is disfigured like this’ p. 480;  
*tan taramin vademini ran ruva se vada inda rivi lesi ne* ‘You have grown up as a golden figure shining like the sun’ p. 482;  
*ran ruva van rusiren vadi piyakaru sundara kumaruva ne* ‘Handsome prince, your body is like that of a golden figure’ p. 489.
2. *Vēda Kāvya* 1993 : 441.
3. *Vēda Kāvya* 1993: 6.
4. *Vēda Kāvya* 1993: 355.
5. *Dēva Nīti Visarjanaya* 1942: 17.
6. For example, *mama asaval gama vādiya*, ‘I am a *vādda* [a person <sup>who</sup> belongs to a tribe] of that village. In this sentence the verb *vādiya* should have been *vādivemi*. Suraweera, A.V. 1976: 159.
7. *Agnāna Auṣadaya* 1961: 7.
8. *Dēva Nīti Visarjanaya* 1942: 1.
9. *Concise Oxford Dictionary* 1995 : 590.
10. *Prāthihāryāvaliya* 1928: 79.

11. *Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya* 1942: 47.
12. Suraweera, A.V. 1976 : 177.
13. Suraweera, A.V. 1976 : 162.
14. *Prâthihâryâvaliya* 1928 : 23.
15. *Prâthihâryâvaliya* 1928: 51.
16. *Dêva Vêda Purânaya* 1924 : 198.
17. Suraweera, A.V. 1976 : 185.
18. *Dêva Vêda Purânaya* 1924 : 87 .
19. *Dharmôdyanaya* 1926 : 92.
20. *Dharmôdyanaya* 1926 : 65.
21. *Dêva Vêda Purânaya* 1924 : 36.
22. *Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya* 1942 : 5 .
23. Katre, S.M. 1941 : 22.
24. *Dêva Nîti Visarjanaya* 1942 : 23.
25. *Ceylon Antiquity Register* 1726 : 122.
26. *Olanda Patumu*. A manuscript, British Museum, No. OR. 6611, 8.
27. Suraweera A.V. 1976 : 116.
28. *Oratorian Mission Report* 1957 : 14.
29. The first page of the first printed Sinhala book in Sri Lanka is shown on p. 289.
30. Perera, S.G. 1943 : 21.
31. Kolamunne T. 1993: 106.

32. Katre, S.M. 1941 : 14.
33. Perera, S.G. 1967 : 119 .
34. Wijesinghe, D.D. 1864 : 216.
35. *Budda Bana Pratyakṣaya* 1932 : ii.
36. Sannasgala, P. B. 1968 : 723.
37. Sannasgala, P.B. 1968 : 723.
38. *Agnāna Auṣadaya* 1963 : 17.
39. *Oratorian Mission Report* 1957 : 18.
40. *Oratorian Mission Report* 1957 : 20.
41. Peiris, E. 1943 : 175.
42. *Budda Bana Pratyakṣaya* 1932 : i.
43. Dissanayake, M. 1990 : 18.
44. *Budda Bana Pratyakṣaya* 1932 : 31.
45. Ariyaratne, S. 1993 : vi.
46. Don Peter, W.L.A. 1963 : 17.

## CONCLUSION

This study has been undertaken with the contention that any religious belief, which claims to be authentically contextual, must emerge from a contextualized church. In order to establish the basic ingredients for the process of indigenization, I examined this concept against the dense background of its original literature and historical development. I then proceeded to investigate the works of Gonsalves from the angles of their socio-religious content and their cultural ethos.

In the foregoing pages, I attempted to analyse critically the significance of Gonsalves' literary works in Sri Lanka. To place such an analysis in the right perspective, I sought to make a *tour de horizon* of the complex historical ensemble against which Gonsalves exercised his indefatigable missionary life as a writer, dramatist and poet. I referred to the fact that Christianity was implanted in Sri Lanka by the Portuguese, and that it was through them that it spread and flourished in the island.

The Portuguese-sponsored Christian mission in Sri Lanka, as elsewhere in the East, brought into existence a joint state-Church venture. Much of what has been written in the present day proves this beyond doubt. Portuguese power in Sri Lanka attained its widest territorial expansion in the 1620s and 1630s; Portugal at that time held in the island the largest expanse of land it had ever controlled in any country in Asia. It was then too that the Christian mission reached its highest point, both numerically and in terms of area. It must be acknowledged that Christianity would

not have spread as it did if the Portuguese had not controlled the land and given their support to the mission drive. Without state patronage it would most probably have been limited to expatriate Portuguese officials and merchants, and to a restricted number of local dependants. It is true in almost all the Portuguese colonies such as Goa, one of their earliest occupations until it received independence from Portugal in 1961.

It was because of this close state-Church union and the dependence of mission on the Portuguese that the Christian mission in Sri Lanka acquired its many Portuguese features. In the section on the evolution of the Sinhala language of this thesis, I have made a study of the impact of the Portuguese on Sri Lankan culture, language and the society as a whole. However, the Portuguese outlook in the Christian mission alienated it from what was in many ways truly Sri Lankan. Therefore, there was a felt need for a paradigm shift in the organisation of the mission.

It was into this political, social, religious and cultural background that the Oratorian missionaries, Joseph Vaz and Jacome Gonsalves, appeared. A parallel situation in which individual missionaries who had a new vision, played a key role, can be drawn from the mission of Ricci in China and of Joseph Beschi and Robert De Nobili in South India. The importance of the two Sri Lankan missionaries, Vaz and Gonsalves is summarised by Perera:

Two priests stand out pre-eminent in the history of the Catholic faith in this island [Sri Lanka]; one as the Founder of the modern church, the other as its architect and builder. The former is Father Joseph Vaz, the Apostle of Ceylon; the latter his disciple, companion and eventually his successor, Father Jacome Gonsalvez. Father Vaz planted and Father Gonsalvez watered the vineyard of Ceylon and God gave it increase. It is to these two priests, more than to any other before or since, that the modern Church in Ceylon owes its existence, its numbers, its traditions and its literature.<sup>1</sup>

Gonsalves was a gifted linguist, poet and writer. Recognising the remarkable talents of his companion, Vaz entrusted to him the task of composing the literature that was required for the gatherings of Christian communities. History attests that these compositions were among the most powerful devices keeping the faith alive.

Sinhala classical literature developed and progressed under the influence of Buddhism on the one hand and the inspiration of Sanskrit and Pali literary forms on the other. Such a literature could not be expected to treat of the Christian God, the Incarnation and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, all distinctly Christian subjects. In spite of its excellence, however, Sinhala literature need not be considered incapable of further development by contact with life and thought from outside. The impact of Christianity has resulted, first, in the urge for a systematic study of grammar and vocabulary; second, in the absorption of new ideas; and third, in the introduction of a new leaven that made for a forthright and simpler style of expression. It is not contended that Sinhala Christian literature, within the short period of its existence, excelled or even equalled either in volume or in literary quality the literature produced outside the influence of Christian thought in Sri Lanka. However, it must

be conceded that Christianity—even in the first three centuries of its existence in the island, and in spite of wars and strife, fears      disappointments—made a significant contribution to Sinhala literature, one that is worth recording with gratitude.

Gonsalves wrote many books, so varied in content, and both verse and prose and some very long, in a language new to him on his arrival in Sri Lanka. Gonsalves had remarkable achievements under difficult circumstances and with astonishing success unequalled before or since. With regard to the works of Gonsalves and their importance, Godakumbura writes:

One of these [missionaries] was Father Jacome Gonsalvez (1676-1742), a Konkani Brahmin of Goa who had come to Ceylon with Father Vaz. His *magnum opus* in prose is the *Dêva Vêda Purânaya*, a compendium of the Holy Bible and of the Catholic theology. The most important of his poetical works is the *Vêda Kâvyaya*, a poem of five hundred and thirty-seven stanzas, on the same theme as the *Purânaya*. Gonsalvez is known as the 'Father of Sinhalese Catholic Literature', and he did indeed set the style for the Christian writers who followed him. His style is a mixture of Kandyan Sinhalese with borrowed Sanskrit words, sometimes corrupt or used with new and strange meanings. His importance lies in the fact that he used the vehicle of the Sinhalese language to convey ideas which were foreign to Sinhalese classics.<sup>2</sup>

What is unique in Gonsalves is that he made a lasting impact on Sri Lankan culture and language through his literature, which is truly indigenous in nature. The claim of the argument I built up with regard to the material I have studied in this thesis is that Gonsalves made a pioneering, successful effort in the process of indigenization of Christianity in Sri Lanka. His literary works are an expression of the fact that first

and foremost he himself was an indigenized person. He, a Konkani Brahmin of Goa and a missionary, who had no knowledge of the socio-cultural, religious and linguistic background in Sri Lanka, became a disciple of local Buddhist monks of the Malwatta Chapter in Kandy. He studied the Sinhala classics, which are all in the category of Buddhist literature. By forming a guru-disciple relationship with the Buddhist monks and studying Sinhala literature, Gonsalves absorbed the fullness of all that is Sinhala. The hypothesis I have built up in this thesis is that Gonsalves first indigenized himself; he was then able to express his newly indigenized thoughts in various forms of Sinhala literature. In this way, he made Christianity, which was foreign in its outlook and origins, a truly indigenized religion in the island.

Gonsalves' audience was never restricted to the limited reading public, since his works were used in liturgical gatherings and public performances on stage. The copies of his works were not circulated among individuals but within communities. Therefore, he always addressed a larger audience than the use of writing at that time might suggest. In a time when no forms of public entertainment were available, his passion plays, the chanting of *pasan* and the singing of carols and hymns drew large crowds irrespective of religious or other differences.

The indigenized seed of thought and action of Gonsalves influenced subsequent dramatists, composers of songs, hymns and carols. It is unfortunate that, since

his compositions of *pasan* no one has tried to make a further contribution to that form of religious literature. However, other forms of literature and drama have evolved considerably. For example, the only national passion play in Negombo, Duwa, that draws thousands of people today, is based on Gonsalves' *Dukprâpti Prasāṅgaya*. Therefore, evaluating his contribution towards indigenized Christianity in Sri Lanka, we may conclude that Gonsalves is the Father not only of Sinhala Christian literature but also of the dramatic tradition, of the Sinhala carol, of *pasan* and of hymns. Perhaps the most persuasive evidence that the indigenization of Christianity in Sri Lanka presupposed the indigenizing of its key exponent, Jacome Gonsalves, is the fact <sup>that</sup> the outcome was not mainly the spreading of Christianity to the island but a further evolution in Sinhala literary forms. His literary compositions created great traditions in the island. May they continue to be a source of inspiration and guidance to all now and <sup>in</sup> years to come!

#### End Notes

1. Perera, S.G. 1943: I.
2. Godakumbura, C.E. 1955: 346.

## Appendix 1 (see page 254)

The following is a list of some of the Tamil words used by Gonsalves in his work *Gnânânjanaya*. In the Sinhala column, I present the Sinhala version of the Tamil words used by Gonsalves in his Sinhala work.

<u>Tamil</u>	<u>Sinhala</u>	
<i>enakkam</i>	<i>enakkam</i>	= 'suitable'
<i>oppukkuchchiya</i>	<i>oppuchehiya</i>	= 'to be praised by others'
<i>kâppal</i>	<i>kâppara</i>	= 'ship'
<i>kurachchal</i>	<i>kurachchala</i>	= 'lacking'
<i>kôlaru</i>	<i>kôlaru</i>	= 'conflict'
<i>nesturam</i>	<i>nesturakam</i>	= 'persecutions'
<i>vlakku</i>	<i>valakku</i>	= 'excuses'
<i>sammatti</i>	<i>sammetti</i>	= 'whip'
<i>ayattam</i>	<i>ayittam</i>	= 'ornaments'
<i>kedu</i>	<i>keduva</i>	= 'hardships'
<i>kôppu</i>	<i>kôppu</i>	= 'proud'
<i>nerekkam</i>	<i>nerekkam</i>	= 'to suppress'
<i>pahattu</i>	<i>pahattuva</i>	= 'to trap'
<i>perumai</i>	<i>perumaya</i>	= 'haughty'
<i>madduppadataththu</i>	<i>mattu-padataththu</i>	= 'to surrender'
<i>mâru</i>	<i>mâruva</i>	= 'a way'
<i>vasakkêdu</i>	<i>vasakkêduva</i>	= 'to tire'

## Appendix II (see page 257)

The following is a list of some of the Tamil words used by Gonsalves without any adaptation in his Sinhala compositions.

<i>pâlam</i>	= 'bridge'	<i>padakkam</i>	= 'badges'
<i>kody</i>	= 'flag'	<i>pangam</i>	= 'humiliation'
<i>achchu</i>	= 'frame'	<i>nadu</i>	= 'justice'
<i>adi</i>	= 'shot'	<i>appa</i>	= 'father'
<i>pâru</i>	= 'ferry'	<i>idam</i>	= 'land'
<i>kândam</i>	= 'magnetic'	<i>pandu</i>	= 'ball'
<i>athtivâram</i>	= 'foundation'	<i>ali</i>	= 'elephant'
<i>pâdam</i>	= 'lessons'	<i>kadinam</i>	= 'instant'

The following is a list of some of the Tamil loan-words used by Gonsalves with certain adaptations in his Sinhala works, excluding the work in Appendix 1.

<u>Tamil</u>	<u>Sinhala</u>		<u>Tamil</u>	<u>Sinhala</u>
<i>kûdei</i>	<i>kûda</i>	= 'basket'	<i>poliu</i>	<i>polie</i> = 'interest'
<i>vayal</i>	<i>vell</i>	= 'paddy field'	<i>kappan</i>	<i>kappam</i> = 'commission'
<i>katthi</i>	<i>cathi</i>	= 'long knife'	<i>nampu</i>	<i>nambu</i> = 'honour'
<i>ampalam</i>	<i>ambalam</i>	= 'rest house'	<i>urumai</i>	<i>uruma</i> = 'heritage'
<i>chîni</i>	<i>sini</i>	= 'sugar'	<i>karavadu</i>	<i>karavala</i> = 'dry fish'
<i>puthumai</i>	<i>puduma</i>	= 'surprise'	<i>chelvam</i>	<i>sellam</i> = 'games'
<i>elau</i>	<i>elaû</i>	= 'funeral'	<i>nankei</i>	<i>nangi</i> = 'younger sister'
<i>kallu</i>	<i>gall</i>	= 'stones'	<i>saval</i>	<i>saul</i> = 'cock'

### Appendix III (see page 263)

The following is Gonsalves' use of Portuguese words in his Sinhala compositions. They are Gonsalves' creation of Portuguese-derived words in Sinhala.

<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Sinhala</u>		<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Sinhala</u>
<i>anjo</i>	<i>anjus</i>	= 'angel'	<i>quaresma</i>	<i>korosme</i> = 'Lent'
<i>espírito</i>	<i>ispiritu</i>	= 'spirit'	<i>veronica</i>	<i>boralikkam</i> = 'medal'
<i>santo</i>	<i>santu</i>	= 'saint'	<i>barote</i>	<i>borottiya</i> = 'tippet'
<i>bautismo</i>	<i>bautisma</i>	= 'baptism'	<i>lobo</i>	<i>loguva</i> = 'cassock'
<i>bencao</i>	<i>bensaru</i>	= 'bless'	<i>dedal</i>	<i>didala</i> = 'thimble'
<i>catecismo</i>	<i>katikisma</i>	= 'catechism'	<i>garade</i>	<i>garadi</i> = 'railing'
<i>navena</i>	<i>nuvana</i>	= 'novena'	<i>arco</i>	<i>arukkuvu</i> = 'arch'
<i>officio</i>	<i>opis</i>	= 'office'	<i>iscola</i>	<i>iscole</i> = 'school'
<i>sacramento</i>	<i>sacramentuva</i>	= 'sacrament'	<i>casado</i>	<i>kasada</i> = 'marriage'
<i>orasao</i>	<i>orasan</i>	= 'prayers'	<i>guitarra</i>	<i>kittarama</i> = 'guitar'
<i>tastamento</i>	<i>testamentuva</i>	= 'testament'	<i>orgao</i>	<i>orgalaya</i> = 'organ'
<i>pregao</i>	<i>peragam</i>	= 'banns'	<i>viola</i>	<i>viyole</i> = 'violin'
<i>tombo</i>	<i>tombu</i>	= 'register'	<i>porcelana</i>	<i>pusalana</i> = 'cup'
<i>padrinho</i>	<i>padrinna</i>	= 'Godfather'	<i>rabequin</i>	<i>rabakinna</i> = 'fiddle'
<i>madrinha</i>	<i>madrinna</i>	= 'Godmother'	<i>reformado</i>	<i>reparamadu</i> = 'protestant'
<i>padre</i>	<i>padiri</i>	= 'Father'	<i>santan</i>	<i>satan</i> = 'Satan'
<i>sacristao</i>	<i>sankristian</i>	= 'sacristan'	<i>senhor</i>	<i>sinno</i> = 'Sir'

<i>apostolo</i>	<i>apostulu</i>	= 'apostle'	<i>charola</i>	<i>sorole</i>	= 'processional car'
<i>contas</i>	<i>kontaya</i>	= 'rosary'	<i>susse</i>	<i>susi</i>	= 'sister'
<i>bentinho</i>	<i>bentinna</i>	= 'scapula'	<i>cruz</i>	<i>kurusaya</i>	= 'cross'
<i>bispo</i>	<i>bispu</i>	= 'bishop'	<i>papa</i>	<i>pap</i>	= 'Pope'
<i>vesperas</i>	<i>vespara</i>	= 'vespers'	<i>natal</i>	<i>nattal</i>	= 'Christmas'
<i>pascoa</i>	<i>pasku</i>	= 'Easter'			

#### Appendix IV (see page 269)

The following is a list of examples taken at random from the *Vocabulario (Portuguese-Tamil-Sinhala Dictionary)* of Gonsalves:

<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Tamil</u>	<u>Sinhala</u>
<i>agoa</i> 'aqua or water'	<i>tannier, nier, ampu,</i> <i>athakam, thirththam</i>	<i>diya, diyavara, jala,</i> <i>vathura, ambu, pan,</i> <i>appu, appo, udaka,</i> <i>thirtha, bola, pan,</i> <i>apaya, vari, pani</i> <i>silila, thoya (p. 12)</i>
<i>rabo</i> 'tail'	<i>vaal</i> <i>thokai</i>	<i>nakuta, valupata, valadiya,</i> <i>hunara, bava, penda,</i> <i>pil valalla, pila,</i>
<i>vassoura</i> 'a broom'	<i>vilakkumaru,</i> <i>alakutudaippam,</i> <i>varatukale</i>	<i>ilapata, bolatta, boll atta,</i> <i>heen dandu, mitiya, munasna</i>

**Appendix V** (see page 271)

The following is a list of some of the Sinhala words invented by Gonsalves.

<i>amandu</i>	= 'surrender'	<i>usau</i>	= 'conspiracy'
<i>karthpata</i>	= 'old'	<i>kalakuduvana</i>	= 'marriage'
<i>prematthi</i>	= 'late'	<i>akampalaya</i>	= 'mercy'
<i>arovitti</i>	= 'injustice'	<i>koladeema</i>	= 'thresh'
<i>peni</i>	= 'nurse'	<i>andayama</i>	= 'camp'
<i>bolatta</i>	= 'broom'	<i>dauvee</i>	= 'hang'
<i>siksha</i>	= 'trouble'	<i>ekkam</i>	= 'anxiety'
<i>padimava</i>	= 'order'	<i>rajangama</i>	= 'kingship'
<i>kudie</i>	= 'house'	<i>sottu</i>	= 'knock'
<i>tuninchi</i>	= 'courage'	<i>konduru</i>	= 'ear-wax'
<i>poksha</i>	= 'wealth'	<i>rola</i>	= 'rubbish'
<i>tollil</i>	= 'industry'	<i>sahinin</i>	= 'seat'
<i>bagu</i>	= 'some (people)'	<i>gahapahadi</i>	= 'explain'
<i>udaya</i>	= 'dress'	<i>mulasi</i>	= 'astray'
<i>hunara</i>	= 'tail'	<i>balapattuva</i>	= 'force'
<i>vartamanaya</i>	= 'present time, (in terms of news)'	<i>uttinichchiya</i>	= 'agreement'

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