

## WHO WROTE THE SECOND HALF OF THE *ALAKESVARA YUDDHAYA*?

It has been the good fortune of the Sinhala people that they have been heirs to a well-established tradition of history writing in this island. That tradition had its origin and was fostered by the labours of the elders of the Buddhist church in the course of recording its history. Perhaps, recording the vicissitudes and triumphs of the Buddhist faith may have been their primary motive; but in doing so they also composed works which presented a connected, continuous and substantially authentic record of what happened in the past.

The Chronicles and other compositions these monks were responsible for – the *Dipavamsa*, the *Mahavamsa*, the *Bodhivamsa*, the *Dhatuvamsa* and so on – belonged to what has been termed the *vamsa* tradition. This tradition has many distinct features. Chief among them was the primacy accorded to Buddhism. This was expressed in many ways. Eulogizing rulers who fostered the Buddha Sasana; censuring, sometimes excoriating, those who failed – such as Rajasinha I in the *Culavamsa*<sup>1</sup>; the ready acceptance of the supernatural and the miraculous are some of these features. Further, most of them, as for instance the *Dipavamsa* and the *Mahavamsa*, are based on earlier versions in Sinhala that are now not extant or on earlier commentarial literature on canonical Buddhist works known as *Atthakatha*. Other features of the *vamsa* tradition were that the Chronicles were composed most often by monks, the language they were composed in was Pali and some of them were in verse.

The *vamsa* tradition died out by about the middle ages but not the tradition of history writing. One of such later histories is the *Alakesvara Yuddhaya* (AY). It is an account of our more recent past but is unique on many counts.

First, its origins are mysterious. It surfaced in the strangest of ways. There was a Sinhala journal that was published during the years 1902 to 1911 entitled *Gnanadarsaya* (the “Mirror of Knowledge”). It described itself as “A Magazine of Arts, Science and Literature and was edited by A. Mendis Gunasekera. An issue was sold for the princely sum of twenty cents. The issues from 1909 to 1911 serialized an article. At its conclusion

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<sup>1</sup> *Culavamsa* tr. W Geiger and F Rickmers (Ceylon Govt. Information Dept. 1953) Vol II, Ch. XCLIII. Hereafter Cv

the Editor published a note to that the effect the article had been copied by A.D.A. Wijesinghe Aratchi from a two hundred-year old ola leaf manuscript in the possession of Mudaliyar Lewis Soysa Wijesekera Jayatilleke. This was the *Alakesvara Yuddhaya*. The Editor surmised that because of the manner in which the work commenced it was a continuation of a previous part which was now lost.

Another reason why this work is unique is that, as an historical account, the *AY* begins as it were, in mid-air. It does not begin at the beginning as all good histories should. In the case of the island's history the beginning should at least be the Vijaya episode, if not the visits of the Buddha. But the *AY* begins with the close of Chinese incursion in the 13<sup>th</sup> century under Cheng Ho. In addition the very first word with which the *AY* opens is *Thavatha* (තවඳ). The editor of the *Gnanadarsaya* therefore, argues that there must have existed an earlier part, now lost, that contained the precedent history and the word *Thavatha* (තවඳ) signifies the present *AY* as it is was a continuation of that.

The other reason for its uniqueness is that, as historiography goes, the *AY* is a departure from the *vamsa* tradition of recording history. It is not oriented towards Buddhism. It refrains from the supernatural and the miraculous. It is written in Sinhala and in prose. In fact there is even an argument that its author was a Christian.

But, and finally, its real uniqueness among our Chronicles is for entirely different reasons. It is the main indigenous source for the re-construction of the history of the lowlands from the arrival of the Portuguese to the fall of Sitawaka. None of the other usual sources enables one to do so.

Epigraphy, for instance, is one the most fruitful of sources for the reconstruction of the early history of the island. But it is of no assistance as far as this period is concerned. There is not one rock or pillar inscription, not one copper or ola *sannasa* that deals with the Portuguese presence in the island.

The literary sources that relate to this period are the *Sandesa Kavyas* or Messenger poems and the *Hatan Kavyas* or the War poems. There are scattered and sometimes very informative references in these compositions that shed some light on the events and life in these times. For instance, the *Sitavaka Hatane*, a war poem, describes in one passage how Dharmapala was baptized.<sup>2</sup> Another War Poem, the *Parangi Hatane*,<sup>3</sup> provides interesting glimpses of the Battle of Gannoruwa and the commissariat the Portuguese took to war. However these are but passing references and do not provide the material to reconstruct a coherent account of events.

Nor are the usual Chronicles of much assistance. Apart from the *AY* itself the only others that are relevant to the period are the *Culavamsa* and the *Rajavaliya*.<sup>4</sup> It is a characteristic of the former that it resolutely turns a blind eye to the Portuguese presence and, despite its Buddhist orientation, makes no reference to the active evangelization or even the less savoury missionary activities going on in the lowlands. In fact in the whole of the *Culavamsa* there are only two references to the Portuguese. One is to the campaigns of attrition and devastation during the regular invasions of the highlands in the reign of

<sup>2</sup> The *Sitavaka Hatane* ed. R Paranavitana (Cultural and Religious Affairs Ministry, 1999), vv 368, 369. hereafter SH.

<sup>3</sup> The *Parangi Hatane* vv 238 et seq.

<sup>4</sup> The *Rajavaliya* tr. B Gunasekera (AES Reprint, 1995), hereafter Rv.

Senerat by “the so-called Parangi”.<sup>5</sup> The only other reference – strangely – is to the missionary conversion tactics<sup>6</sup>, but this is in describing the times of Vijaya Rajasinha, long after the Portuguese were evicted.

Apart from these two references the *Culavamsa* observes a deafening, as it were, silence concerning the events in the lowlands. Of the turbulent happenings there, of the profound changes sweeping through those kingdoms, of the wars raging between Sitavaka, on the one hand, and Kotte and the Portuguese, on the other, there is nothing. One chapter is devoted to Rajasinha, it is true. But even in that a veil of silence is drawn over his military exploits, over his titanic struggle against the Portuguese, over his great siege of the Colombo fort and over his resounding battlefield victories. Instead the *Culavamsa* delivers a scathing onslaught in Chapter XCLIII on Rajasinha’s religious failings. Then ignoring the sensational political developments taking place in the lowlands at this time it makes a quantum leap in space and time and in the very next chapter goes on to deal with Wimaladharmasuriya in Kandy. In fact if the *Culavamsa* was the only source available for a reconstruction of the history of the times, the Portuguese never set foot on this island.

The other Chronicle that deals with these stormy times is the *Rajavaliya*. The account it provides of the events of the times is detailed and at first sight it appears an independent reconstruction of what has transpired. But as Suraweera has cogently argued in the Preface<sup>7</sup> to his edition of the *AY*, the *Rajavaliya* is not an original composition. It is a later work and is based on and closely follows the *AY* in the earlier sections. Suraweera has also pointed out the linguistic considerations and the repetitions, sometimes verbatim, of passages as well as other issues in support of his contention. The later sections of the *Rajavaliya* seem to have used the War Poem, the *Sitavaka Hatane*, as a source. The latter work was composed by one of Rajasinha’s generals, Alahaperuma Wijeyewardene, who was a contemporaneous eye-witness of the events he describes. The *Rajavaliya* relies heavily on it. For instance its account of the assassination of Bhuvanekhabahu<sup>8</sup> closely follows the *Hatane* account in verses 348 and 349. Similarly the caustic comments the *Rajavaliya* makes on Bhuvanekhabahu<sup>9</sup> are absent in the *AY* but closely parallel the *Hatane* verses 350 and 351, as also the chronology and the order of events depicted. In these sections the *AY* is not followed at all. The *AY* version, for instance, of the assassination is that the gunman aimed at a pigeon but hit the King. The *Rajavaliya* makes no mention of this cover story at all. The *Rajavaliya* is thus not an original composition.

The *AY* thus remains the only original Sinhala source dealing with the events subsequent to the Portuguese arrival and is unique also for the style of its historiography in departing from the *vamsa* tradition. But there has been speculation, even controversy about its authorship. The doubt relates to the religion the author of the *AY* followed and the lowland kingdom he belonged to. One view is that he was a Christian convert. If he was a convert there are two implications of this. The first and obvious implication is he was not a Portuguese. The second is that, since due to the incessant warfare of the times

<sup>5</sup> Cv. Vol II, Ch XCV, vv 4-9. Also Gaston Perera: *Kandy Fights the Portuguese-a Military History of Kandyan Resistance* (Vijita Yapa Publications 2007) Part II. Ch.III.

<sup>6</sup> Cv. Vol II, Ch XCLVI, vv 80-81

<sup>7</sup> *AY*, p viii et seq.

<sup>8</sup> Rv 78

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid* 79

evangelization had not penetrated into other lowland kingdoms, the author of the *AY* was a Kotte citizen. What is intended in this paper, therefore, is to examine these two issues – was the author of the *AY* a Christian? Was he from Kotte?

However, before dealing with these questions, it must be mentioned in passing that the lost earlier portion of the *AY* that was referred to earlier will, naturally, not form part of this examination. One cannot discuss who could have been the author of a precedent version that is now not available.

### Was the Author of the *Alakesvara Yuddhaya* a Christian?

Whoever else was a Christian the author of the present first part of the *AY* was certainly not. All the internal evidence clearly establishes a Buddhist authorship for the opening sections. For the very first words with which the *AY* commences are an invocation to the Buddha. The very first words are *Namo Buddhaya* (නමෝ බුද්ධාය), the standard formula, as it were, with which homage is paid to the Buddha at the commencement of any Buddhist composition. Suraweera contends that these words are an interpolation to cover the lacuna created by the missing first part. But such a protestation at the very outset could only come from a Buddhist author. In fact an acknowledged Christian convert would, as is well-known, make an entirely different kind of invocation. Alagiyawanna Mukaveti was such a Christian convert and well-known to be so. He was also the author of a War Poem, the *Kustantinu Hatane* or The War of Constantine de Saa. He also begins his poem with an invocation. But being a Christian convert his invocation is to the Holy Trinity - “The Father, the Son and the Spirit.”<sup>10</sup>

There are also other factors that lend support to the argument of Buddhist authorship in this early section. There is the description of the coronation and rule of Rukule Parakramabahu. There is also the fact that when it comes to recording chronology, the years are reckoned according to the Buddhist Era.

There can be little doubt, therefore, that the existing early sections of the *AY* were written by a Buddhist. However there still persists the claim of authorship by a Christian convert and this has gained fairly wide, popular acceptance and is even maintained by many scholars. For instance Strathern has stated that the *AY* “was composed by a Kotte Christian aristocrat.”<sup>11</sup>

This claim of Christian authorship is based solely on two lines of text that occur in the latter half of the *AY*. Now, if one accepts, as argued above, that the earlier portion was written by a Buddhist, and if this claim of Christian authorship also has any truth, it could only be that the latter half of the existing *AY* was written by an entirely different hand. There is, for reasons quite different from Christian authorship, grounds for believing that, commencing from the advent of the Portuguese, the latter part of the *AY* was indeed written by a different hand. These reasons will be made clear later.

<sup>10</sup> Fr SG Perera and ME Fernando: *Alagiyawanna's Kustantinu Hatana* (Catholic Press 1932).

<sup>11</sup> A Strathern: *Towards the Source Criticism of Sitavakan Heroic Literature. Part One-The Alakesvara Yuddhaya, Notes on a Floating Text in the Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, Vol XXXII (1&2) 2006

But does the claim for Christian authorship have any substance? The basis for this claim rests on two lines of text where Christian terminology is employed to describe two incidents. The first is the advent of the Portuguese to the island which took place

අපගේ ස්වාමි වූ යේසුස් ක්‍රිස්තු දෙවානුභාවයෙන්  
 (“--- by the godly power of our (Lord) Jesus Christ ---.”)

The other incident is with reference to Tammita Bandara. This was Dharmapala's uncle, the one person who was closest to him and adored by him.<sup>12</sup> He is forcibly abducted to Goa and converted. Of this it is stated –

දෙවානිදෙව වූ අපගේ යේසුස් ක්‍රිස්තු දෙවසමයමෙහි පිහිටුවා  
 (“--- inducted into the farce/joke of the Deva of Devas ---.”)

The whole claim of Christian authorship is based on these two lines of text out of a work consisting of about 44 pages. In this connection it would be useful not to forget Aristotle's warning to his students about reaching conclusions on incomplete data. Here, of course, we have not 'a single swallow' but two but would just two passing references suffice as complete data?

The first line of text refers to the coming of the Portuguese from Goa by ship braving the dangers of the deep. And the *AY* goes on to describe these new arrivals as strange, unusual beings wearing strange attire - “යකඩ සැට්ට් අඟලාගෙන යකඩ තොප්පි ඉසලාගෙන” - (“iron jackets and iron hats”) with strange weapons imbibing strange liquor and behaving in an altogether strange manner. It is as if the author of the *AY* here is giving vent to the feeling of wonderment and astonishment at these outlandish, alien, bizarre oddities and it here that a reference to the religion is also included.

The second line of text refers to the conversion of Tammita Bandara. Two words in this line are of fundamental significance. The first is the word “දෙවානිදෙව වූ” (“devathideva vu”). In Buddhist discourse this is a word used exclusively to denote the Buddha and no one else. It implies the *deva* surpassing all other *devas*. Its significance lies in relation to Buddhist mythology in which there are a myriad of devas or to be precise “තිස්සත් කෝටියක් දෙව්දේවතාවුන්” – (33 millions of *devas*). It is because Buddhists believe that the Buddha is supreme among these countless hosts that the title of “දෙවානිදෙව” is applied to him. It is difficult, therefore, to conceive how a Christian writing of the One God would use such a term, the essence of which is the multiplicity of deities.<sup>13</sup> Many Buddhist religious terms had passed into Christian discourse. The early Portuguese missionaries were forced to adopt them due to their language deficiencies. Hence words like ‘දේව’ (deva) and ‘දේවානුභාවයෙන්’ (devanubhavayen) are used in Christian contexts. But this word “දෙවානිදෙව වූ” (devathideva vu) has never become current.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Fr. V Perniola: *The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka-The Portuguese Period* (Tisara Prakasakayo, 1989)

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<sup>13</sup> Strathern opcit in a footnote: This line is written “with the greatest respect, referring to the religion as ‘divine’ and Christ as ‘Lord of Lord’.

<sup>14</sup> In a private conversation Fr. Dr. Anthony Fernandopulle of the St. Joseph's Church Paiyagala told me that the only instance where he has come across this term is in a hymn by Gonsalves.

The other word of fundamental significance in this line is the word “සමයමෙහි” (samayamehi). What is of paramount importance here is the fact that the word used here is not “සමයෙහි” (samayehi). If that was the word used the meaning of this line would have been completely different. Then it would have translated as “Inducted into the fraternity of Jesus Christ.” But the word actually used is “සමයමෙහි” (samayamehi). In this context this is a derogatory word. Originally used in connection with dance and drama, its core meaning connotes something put on, something strange, something artificial and in common parlance is associated with a hoax, a joke or a fraud. Thus the real effect of this line is to ridicule the Christian religion. What it really suggests is that Tammita Bandara has been led into a farce. The identical comment is next repeated about Dharmapala and the other chieftains of Kotte as well. It is difficult to associate such ridicule with a Christian convert.

Strathern<sup>15</sup> also states –

C.R. de Silva 1994: 319 says that a deliberate copying error in the *Rajavaliya* may have transformed *Kristu Samaya* (Christian faith) into *Kristu Samayama* (Christian farce) but also records a comment by Goonewardene to the effect that that *Samayama* need not have a pejorative connotation in this context.

In this connection three issues arise for clarification. First since the *Rajavaliya* is a later work, it is difficult to understand how a “copying error” in this later work would affect the earlier *AY*? Secondly, and more significantly, why should a deliberate copying error be made in this later work? Perhaps, the paper<sup>16</sup> in which these arguments are presented would clarify these issues. Thirdly why is it that the word “සමයම” (samayama) does not have “pejorative connotations” in this particular context alone?

Strathern bases his argument of Christian authorship on the “manner” Christianity has been described and as evidence the use of the word “our” with reference to Christ is cited. Resting the whole basis of Christian authorship on a single word may not be entirely free of ambiguity since the word “our” can not only connote an affectionate possessiveness but even a disrespectful familiarity.

All the above arguments against a Christian authorship are based on textual and linguistic analysis. There are also arguments that are based on the internal evidence of the *AY*. For one thing, the villain of the piece in the *AY* is Vidiye Bandara. The main theme of the *AY* in fact is how the hero, Rajasinha, vanquishes him. One of the main aspects of the villainy of Vidiye Bandara is his ruthless destruction of churches when after his escape from prison he went on a rampage of devastation. This should be of concern to a Christian. He would highlight it in his account and condemn it unreservedly. But the *AY* has not a single reference to this issue.

For another, there is the manner in which the *AY* has recorded the conversion of Dharmapala. Now this would have been an event of prime importance to any Christian.

<sup>15</sup> Op. cit., footnote

<sup>16</sup> “Beyond the Cape: The Portuguese Encounter with the Peoples of South Asia” in S. Schwarz (ed.), *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting and Reflections on the Encounters Between European and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge) 295-322

How significant an achievement it would have been is seen, on the one hand, in the rapture and triumphalism with which Portuguese chroniclers themselves have recorded it and, on the other, the almost sullen silence with which indigenous sources have responded. The response in the *AY* is one such instance. There is no jubilation as with a Christian author. The conversion is just mentioned and the subject changed abruptly.

### Was the Author of the Alakesvara Yuddhaya from Kotte?

Even if he was not a Christian could he still have been from Kotte? There was a faction in Kotte at the time that was strongly opposed to Christianity and missionary activity. In fact the Kotte King, Bhuvnekhabahu, by his own uncompromising refusal to convert and his steadfast opposition to the manner evangelization was being conducted by missionaries, would have been typical of that strand of opinion in Kotte. The most striking demonstration of an anti-Christian faction in Kotte is seen in the aftermath of Dharmapala's baptism. According to Queiros there was an uprising in Kotte and a mob advanced on the palace and attacked it. In the ensuing violence Dharmapala himself was stoned and wounded on the face. So uncontrollable did the insurrection become that a Portuguese military detail was sent to quell it and these took the extreme step of executing Buddhist monks to subdue it:

Thirty persons, anchorites of the Demon were taken and hanged for traitors.<sup>17</sup>

Queiros himself is shocked by the extreme harshness of the measures which he describes as: "a horrible sacrilege for they were persons dedicated to Buddun."

However despite the existence of this strong anti-Christian feeling in Kotte it is not likely that it was a Kotte aristocrat who was the author of the *AY*.

For one thing the assassination of his King would have excited a far angrier demonstration from an anti-Christian Kotte aristocrat than is evident. In fact the introduction of the detail of the Portuguese assassin shooting at pigeons and hitting the King to suggest an accident is almost a cover-up. Such a detail is not there in the *Sitavaka Hatane* which is a contemporaneous account nor in the *Rajavaliya*. A striking contrast to the lukewarm treatment in the *AY* is the treatment in Portuguese chronicles themselves. Queiros<sup>18</sup> himself openly accuses the Portuguese Viceroy, Affonso de Noronha. And it is Queiros more than the *AY* that records the fury the assassination evoked among the Sinhala people as a whole –

Incredible was the hatred which the Chingalas conceived against the Portuguese for the murder of their king.<sup>19</sup>

He goes on to describe how the Kotte people vented their rage and says "they razed the factory and even Mayadunne was so furious he evicted all those who had sought his protection. Thus the statement in the *AY* that some say the shot was deliberate and others,

<sup>17</sup> F Queiros: *Conquista Temporal e Spiritual de Ceilao* tr, as *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon* (AES Reprint 1992), page 337. Hereafter Q.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid 293

<sup>19</sup> Q 296

accidental is too tame and neutral to come from one of those Kotte citizens who had gone on the rampage.

Similarly a Kotte author would have been more critical of the Viceroy Noronha's marauding expedition to Kotte, where in his indecent urge to loot Bhuvengkhabahu's supposed treasure he even dug up his palace, tortured his mohottalas and expropriated the Temple of the Tooth. It is Queiros again who records this while all that the author of the *AY* permits himself to say is that the Viceroy got hold of much treasure and embarked.

### The Case for a Sitavaka Author

If then the author of the *AY* was neither a Christian nor from Kotte at all, the only other possibility is that he was from Sitavaka.

Such an authorship would explain those traits in the work which were observed earlier. It would explain the sly attitude towards religion. For one of the consequences of the consistent hostility between Sitawaka and the Portuguese was that the Portuguese missionaries never penetrated into its territories nor made any attempt to spread the Gospel there. Hence this incessant warfare and antagonism would have bred in the Sitavaka citizen an antipathy to all things Portuguese, including their religion. For another it would also explain why the *AY* is indifferent to developments that would arouse a much more angry response from a Kotte citizen such as the assassination of his sovereign or the pillage of his city by a marauding foreigner.

But apart from these negative considerations there are many instances of internal evidence in the *AY* that lend positive support to the argument of a Sitavaka author. In the main this is demonstrated in its attitude towards Sitavaka rulers, mainly Rajasinha.

When Jayawira is ousted by his son Karaliyadde from the Kandyan throne it is to Mayadunne he turns. The latter's power and majesty is symbolized by the servility of the refugee, a royal at that. He falls at Mayadunne's feet and worships him. It is the epithet applied to the feet that suggests respect and dignity by being described as Sri Pada<sup>20</sup>.

But it is the son, Rajasinha, who is portrayed in heroic proportions. Such are his warrior qualities even at a tender age that he is twelve or thirteen and still with his wet nurse<sup>21</sup> when he leads his father's troops to battle against the redoubtable Vidiye Bandara.

From then onwards the *AY* becomes a virtual panegyric on Rajasinha's martial prowess. He is triumphant in the subsequent campaigns against Vidiye Bandara. He driveshim out of Pelenda, routs him again in the Satare Korale and finally hounds him to Jaffna where he is killed in a brawl.<sup>22</sup>

It is not only his victories over Vidiye Bandara that are thus highlighted. The *AY* describes the other great battles Rajasinha fought and won in which his martial qualities and military prowess were displayed such as the campaign at Denipitiya and the victory at Mulleriyawa.<sup>23</sup> The *AY* also goes on to illustrate his skill with weapons where he

<sup>20</sup> *AY* 36

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid* 37. "කිඹිමුළුන්ගෙන් මෙන් ටුනෙන් නැත" (had still not left his wet nurse).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid* 37 et seq.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid* 41

personally trains a cannon with such unerring aim as to demolish a water craft approaching to attack.<sup>24</sup>

But it is not only by recounting his exploits in glowing colours and eulogizing him that the Sitavaka authorship is revealed. It is the extravagant, even rapturous, terms that are applied to him. He is referred to as:

ශ්‍රී ලංකාද්වීපය එක්සත් කලා වූ රාජසිංහ මහරජේජුරුවෝ<sup>25</sup>  
(the Mighty King Rajasinha who unified the island of Sri Lanka)

Significantly this grandiose title is applied to him in referring to his birth as well as his death.

### The Attitude towards Kotte and the Portuguese

But on the face of it there is one consideration that seems irreconcilable with a Sitavaka author for the *AY*. If the author was a Sitavaka citizen, how can one explain his treatment of Kotte and the Portuguese? In the background of Sitavaka's expansionist policies where Kotte was concerned and consequently its consistent opposition to Kotte and its Portuguese ally and the incessant warfare that was the sequel to those policies, one would expect a Sitavaka author to give expression to what were built-in animosities. But here both Kotte and the Portuguese are never criticized, never attacked, never condemned.

One would expect any Sitavaka citizen to treat Bhuvanekhabahu as its greatest enemy. That hostility had its origins, perhaps, with the division of the lowlands. Mayadunne, the most dynamic of the three brothers, was not satisfied – as events showed – to be merely the ruler of a principality like Sitavaka. He had expansionist ambitions from the start and aspired to over-run Kotte and be the *cakravarti* or overlord of the whole island in place of his brother, Bhuvanekhabahu. And these aspirations were not without any grounds. If the normal rules of succession were followed, since Bhuvanekhabahu had no sons, it was Mayadunne as the next eldest brother who should succeed him.<sup>26</sup> But once the former chose his grandson, Dharmapala, to succeed him and even went further and got the Portuguese to underwrite the succession, the seeds were sown for the bitter enmity and incessant warfare that characterized the political scene in the lowlands of the island in the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the treatment even the *Rajavaliya* metes out to Bhuvanekhabahu is a total contrast. It heaps on him, not once but thrice, the entire blame for all the ills that have befallen the island and its religion.<sup>27</sup> But of this one sees nothing in the *AY*. Bhuvanekhabahu is not castigated. Nor are the Portuguese on whom he relies for military assistance.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid 42, "උන්වහන්සේ ම කුරුමානම් බලා" (the Divinity himself took aim)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid 33, 42

<sup>26</sup> Vide MB Ariyapala: Rules of Succession to the Throne in Ancient Ceylon in *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol XII, No 4. For a contrary view vide GPV Somaratne: "Rules of succession to the Throne in Kotte" in *Aquinas Journal* Vol. III (August 1991). Also Gaston Perera: *The Portuguese Missionary in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century Ceylon-The Spiritual Conquest* (Vijita Yapa Publications 2009) pages 235, 236.

<sup>27</sup> Rv 78, 79, 81

At first sight, therefore, this neutral attitude in the *AY* would seem irreconcilable with a Sitavaka authorship. The reason for this has to be sought in the period when this part of the *AY* was written or rather the political situation and diplomatic relationships that persisted in the lowlands when this part was written. It is possible to identify then the existence of an *entente cordiale* between these powers as the main reason for the manner in which Bhuvanekhabahu and the Portuguese are treated in the *AY*.

For it was in this period that there was a major shift in their policy toward each other from confrontation to co-operation and joint action. A Tri-Partite Alliance had been formed between Kotte, the Portuguese and Sitavaka which had as its sole object the destruction of an enemy, the elimination of whom was in the common interest of each.

This enemy was Vidiye Bandara, easily the foremost soldier of the time who had escaped from prison and was rampaging in the lowlands. The Tri-Partite powers had each an over-riding interest in his elimination because of the threat he posed to each. To Kotte he was a threat to the faction that supported Dharmapala whom he wished to control and over-ride as regent. To the Portuguese he was a threat because he opposed their domination and was destroying their churches. To the missionaries he was a threat because he was the one obstacle to the conversion of Dharmapala, now that the rest of his support base had been eroded. To Sitavaka his formidable military capabilities was the one impediment to the realization of their expansionist aims. It was this common threat to these three powers and the common interest they had in eliminating it that was the rationale for the evolution of the Tri-Partite alliance.

The formation of this alliance has confirmation in the major Portuguese chronicles. According to do Couto the initiative for it came from Mayadunne and the terms of the alliance are also noted.<sup>28</sup> The alliance is confirmed in both Queiros and Trindade as well.<sup>29</sup> But what is of paramount significance in this regard is what the *AY*<sup>30</sup> itself has to say. It too records quite clearly that Mayadunne negotiated such a covenant:

මායාදුන්නේ මහරජනෙම කෝට්ටේ මහරජපුරුවන් හා ප්‍රධානීන් හා ප්‍රතිකාල  
කප්පිත්තාමෝරු

(The great king Mayadunne came to an agreement with the great king of Kotte and his chieftains as well as the Capitao-Mor)

What the *AY* confirms here is the version in do Couto that it was Mayadunne who was responsible for organizing this alliance between Dharmapala and his faction in Kotte and the Portuguese. That the object of this Tri-Partite alliance was the systematic elimination of Vidiye Bandara by the three powers acting in unison is made clear in what the *AY* has to say subsequently. The succeeding sections of the *AY* are an account of how Rajasinha leading the Sitavaka troops supported by a Portuguese force sets about attacking and defeating Vidiye Bandara:

පරංගීන් දෙසියයකුත් උදව් ගෙන්වාගෙන මහරජපුරු අදහසින් ටිකිරි රජපුරු අදහසින්  
ඇතුළුව රජදෙකට්ටුව හා වික්‍රමසිංහ මුදලියාරුන් ඇතුළුව පඩිත්තලයින්ට අවසර දෙවා  
සුද්ධයට පිටත් කළාහ

<sup>28</sup> Do C 170

<sup>29</sup> Q 321; PT 100

<sup>30</sup> AY 37

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(the two kings with an auxiliary force of two hundred Portuguese troopers)<sup>31</sup>

If, therefore, the author of the *AY* adopts this neutral and non-critical stance towards what were normally his inveterate enemies it is because of the compulsions of the alliance. Whatever the past and however ephemeral in the future the relationship would be, one cannot condemn one's allies. Perhaps, it is another illustration of the adage that between states there are no permanent friends or enemies but interests.

**C.GASTON PERERA**

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<sup>31</sup> *ibid*