

The 'Sav Sat Dam' Controversy

NO controversy in this Island engaged the attention of the literati of the day (about 1873—74 A.D.) as the "Sav sat dam Vādaya," a controversy on the three syllables 'sav,' 'sat' and 'dam.' Two Sinhalese monthlies were engaged in the tussle: the 'Śāstrālaṅkāraya' and the 'Yatalaba' edited respectively by John Perera, author of 'Heladiy Rajaniya,' a history of Ceylon, and Pandit Baṭuvantuḍāve. The latter collaborated with the Ven'ble Hikkaḍuve Sumangala nāyaka Thera in translating the *Mahāvamsa* into Sinhalese.

The revival of learning started by Vāliviṭa Saraṇaṅkara Sangha Rāja was bearing good results. His pupils Siṭṭināmaluve Dhammajoti Thera, Karatoṭa Dharmārāma nāyaka Thera, Sāliāle Maṇiratana Thera, Viragule Guru, Valpola Guru and others had carried this learning to Mātara, and had spread it throughout the length and breadth of the Southern, Western and even the Sabaragamuwa provinces. The education received by the village lads then was not inferior to that imparted today. Perhaps it was better. Every village had one or more schools, the temple schools.¹ In the town of Mātara and its environs flourished a number of poets both lay and clerical; and they set about writing with great vigour and enthusiasm. They did most of their correspondence in verse; even when they wanted to rebuke a person they employed verse in preference to prose. Versification was a rage then.

It was at this time, in 1807 to be precise, that Thomis Samarasekara Disānāyaka of Tārāpēriya near Tangalla, wrote the famous *Gaṅgārohaṇa Varṇanāva*, a poem of one hundred stanzas, in praise of a religious festival conducted on the Nilvalā Gaṅga, under the patronage of David de Saram², Mudaliyar of Mātara Gaṅgaboda Pattu. Disānāyaka was residing at Mātara then, in the service of Mudaliyar Ilangakoon of Mātara. There was a grand pageant in connection with this festival. Buddhist monks were rowed in decorated boats from Mātara to Goḍaṭṭiya, near Akurāssa, a distance of 11 miles. Large numbers of people had followed them listening to the *pirit* chanting conducted by the monks.

1. See de Alwis' Introduction to *Sidat Sangarā* (1852) pp. lxxiii, cexv et seq; Forbes' *Ceylon*, p. 245; *Friend*, May 1839.

2. Author of *Mahākāṇha Jātaka kāvya*.

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Disānāyaka presented his poem to his patron, Mudaliyar Saram, who was so pleased that he promptly sent copies of it to several famous poets of the Mātara District, inviting criticism. As no reply came he felt quite justified to send a copy of the poem to his friend and relative Abeysinha, Mudaliyar of Gālu Korale, requesting him to "show this new poem written in praise of our *Piṅkama* to the poets of Galle, and get them, if they can, to find a blemish of the least significance in it, and communicate their observations to me." Mudaliyar Abeysinha was himself a learned man, as was his friend Mudaliyar Saram, but he was not competent enough to undertake such a job. He passed on the manuscript to the foremost poet of his district, Mihiripāṇṇe Dhammaratana Sāmi, chief incumbent of Ariyākara Vihāraya, Mihiripāṇṇa, a village six miles from Galle, on the road to Mātara.

The wise monk knew the implications involved in the task, and wrote back to the Mudaliyar excusing himself in the following terms : "This is not a matter that concerns either you, dear Mudaliyar, or me ; and hence it is not proper to do so (to find faults)." But the Mudaliyar was insistent. He appealed to the monk to make an attempt at detecting any error, however small it may be. Dhammānanda Sāmi could not turn down this earnest appeal, and he wrote :

“ කාගේ වන වරදක් කියන්නට කමක් ඇත්තේ නැතැයි මා විසින්
 පින්වත් වූ මැතිඳුන්ට මම එම පවති දන්වා එවුවා නමයි
 ඒ ආකාර ලියා එවූ සඳ යළිත් මේ කවිහි යන්තම් නමුත්
 ඇත්නම් යම කිසි දෝසයක් මෙහි ලියා එවුවොත් හොඳයි කී නිසා

සසර සරණ සව් සන දම කීවූ තුන් ගෙණෙහි
 අග කුර නරකයි කිව්වා නමයි ඒ මිසක්වා
 සඳ විසරණ ලක්නෙන් දෙස් පෙනෙන්නේ නොමැත් මැයි
 මෙම පොත පද බැනද ඒ ඉතාමත් කදිමයි

පොදු හොඳ හඟනෙක්වා එ යි කියාලා පසස්මී
 මද එද වරදක් නැතවූ දෙයක් දැන් කොසින්දැයි
 නද ගද මැහෙනා දුල් පුල් යහස්පත්ති දන්මෙ
 නද තොරසැයි තිබ්බා ඇයි පෙනෙන්නේ පනාමැත් මැයි ”.

(It behoves me not to find faults of others ; and I intimated this fact to your worthy self. But even after my writing to you in that manner you have requested me to find the minutest error in this poem and communicate it to you. Hence

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It may be noted that in the three feet *sasara*, *saraṇa* and *sav sat dam* the last *akura* (syllable) is wrong. That is all. Except for this no fault can be seen either in respect of prosody or of grammar. This composition has been very well done.

I congratulate him. He is, indeed, a clever man. But where can you find, today, any thing which has not some little fault? Do you not notice that that the stalk of the gorgeous, sweet-smelling lotus bloom, has a very thorny surface?)

A very fair comment indeed. Yet neither Mudaliyar Saram nor his admirer, the poet Disānāyaka, could take it without a challenge, for, though the criticism was a mild one, it undermined both the reputation of the poet, and worse, the dignity of his patron, and both had to be retrieved at any cost.

The three feet referred to by Mihiripāṇne are the first three feet in the fourth stanza of the poem, and they contain the name of its hero, Saram :

SAsara saRAna sav sat daM

The dispute arose not because this construction was wrong but because the instructions of the poet regarding the clues for the detection of the name, were considered faulty. These instructions are found in the second half of the stanza in question :

“ සසර සරණ සඵ සන් දම් අමාවෙන් සනොසඵ
සග පවග සැපන් දුන් දම්රදුන් දම් සහන් පසඵ
අල මැද්ග වනින් මේ තුන් ගෙනේ මුල් කෙටෙන් නම්
පතල මැති සපදක් වී මම් පුරේ කින් දෙදෙක් වන් ”

[In this city (Mātara) there dwelt a gentleman who resembled a banner of fame, who sought the company of the Dharmarāja (Lord of Truth, the Buddha) that conferred the riches of Heaven and of *Mokṣa*, His Doctrine, and His disciples, and who is known by the name formed by the initial, medial and final *varṇas* (letters)³ of these (i.e. of this stanza) first three feet.]

The letters the poet expected the reader to take, are ස of the first foot සසර (SAsara), ර of the second foot සරණ (saRAna), and ඵ of the third foot සඵ සන් දම් (sav sat daM). According to Mihiripāṇne the letters that must be taken in conformity with the poet's instructions are ස (sa), ර (ra) and දම් (dam), which when put together do not read *saram* but *saradam* meaning

3. Skt. *varṇa* or *akṣara* (Sinh. *vaṇa* or *akura* or *kura*) can mean 'letter or syllable,' but the poet expected the reader to take it in the sense of 'letter' only.

“ a taunt.” The resentment that was caused by this interpretation can well be understood. Not only was the much talked of poem reduced to a joke by this simple comment, but the estimable gentleman, who was the hero of the poem, was also, by implication, reduced to a ‘ joke.’

Poet Disānāyaka hastily wrote a reply and sent it, probably through his patron, whom he felt, he must appease :

“ කවි සත් සිත මෙත දන් පසස්න දන සව් සන දම් විසු මේ ගෙණේ
 දක්නා තුන් ගුරු මත් නමින් වන සයෙක් මේ ඉන් කිවෙමි අක් වනැයි
 දන්ටන් මේ වන අල් මයන්ත ම ගනිත් කිවා විනා මේ යළිත්
 කී තනහි යවහන් නයන්ත ද වලනක් මී නම නිදෙස් මේ ම බස්

ඉන් ඒ කී නිදෙසින් වදන් ගෙන ඉසින් දෙස් මෙන් සිතා කී නමුත්
 කවි දෙස් මක්ව පෙනී තිබෙයි ඔබ වහන්සේ කී පනායෙක් නැන්වලන්
 ඒ දේවල් විමසා බලා සිතු ලෙසින් නාසා අනුන් කී තෙපුල්
 මක් මී සින් සැක අන් හරින්තම දෙසා ආවොත් සොදැයි මා කරා”

[Reputed men well versed in Poesy have recognized six ‘ *varnas* ’ (letters), in the form of *mātrās* (syllabic instants), in the three *guras* (long syllables) that constitute the foot සව් සන් දම් (sav sat dam) referred to ; and hence I used the words අක් වන (last letter). Those who are conversant with the distinctions of *varnas* will take only the consonant ම (m) (for this *ak vana*). Nothing else did I say. Then again if, in the reference where the letters ය-ව-හ-න් (ya-va-ha-n) are found,⁴ න් (consonant n) is considered a *varna* my contention cannot be wrong.⁵

You have, out of spite, found fault with my faultless composition. Besides, in the compositions of Your Reverence, too, in more than one place, errors are noticeable. Therefore you will do well to come over here, without giving ear to others in order that we may get together, discuss, examine well, and obviate all doubts (on the subject).]

Evidently Disānāyaka had consulted others before he sent this reply (*vide* his reference to reputed men), but Mihiripāṇne was not going to give

4. යවහන් සනර කුරන් පදන මක් කුරක්වන
 මයම එදිරි කර කිසි එක කුර නො පැව මහදෙස් *Lakṣṇasara* (a treatise on Prosody), Verse 54 [If any one of the four letters ය,ව,හ and න් (ya, va, ha and n) comes at the end of a line (in a rhyme) the penultimate letter in all the lines of the rhyme should be the same. The non-observance of this rule is a grave fault.]

5. What he wants to say is that in සව් සන් දම් there are six syllabic instants, and these six instants are represented by 6 letters.

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in easily. He wrote another letter further clarifying his position ; and meeting the points raised by Disānāyaka :

“ එක ගුරු පද පමණක් වෙයි තුන් ගුරුවක් වන සටසක් වෙයි
 එනකොට පද ගණනක් වෙයි තුන් පමණක් කී නැවතත්
 නියමය වැරදිලා සිටී ගණනක් වී තිබෙන්නා
 හොඳ හැටි සිහිපෙන් යන වී බැඳුණාට මන්දා

කළු සන්ති යටතේ වියු පටපද ගලන දුපය වණක් තනිව වී
 කිව්වේ නැත් බැවිනුයි ගණක් නියමයක් මේ පොත්හි මුල් තුන් පමණක්
 කී තනිව වැරදිනිව වෙයි ව ගුරු තුන් දිව්වාත් වීසිත් මත් සයක්
 ඒ අයිදැයි සත්‍යයක් වෙලා ගණ නිවෙයි පසුවවාට මන්දැයි යළිත්

වලවිහි කළු සන්ති විසන්ත්‍රු මොහොවයි සැලු පොවන යම පදසක්
 අනුන්ම වී සුදුවන දැනිත් අප වගේ සන්දන්තොදන්නා මනමනක්
 කිව්වාසින් වරදක් කළත් නැත අපේ ඒවා ඉතාමත් හොඳයි
 ආවේනිත් වලව වී නමුත් පද පදනමේ සිනිහි සැකක් අත්හැරෙයි

පද බැඳු කළු වී පොත්හි මෙමස යන්තමක් වන
 අද පද අප කිව්වාසින් සිතලා තවක් මොස
 පද වැද පනා පවත්වා මමත් සිනිහේ යුත්ව යවදිව
 වීද වීද සිටි කවිසන් සිත් මිණක් මස දිවෙන්නා.”

[One *gura* (long syllable) constitutes two syllabic instants, so three *guras* will be equal to six instants, which in turn, will give two feet (where only one is meant). And then, contrary to the stipulation, the three feet intended have become four feet. It is well to examine the matter with clarity of thought.

In the prosodial work (*Lakṣṇa Sara*), in the stanza which discusses (the use of the symbols ‘ya’, ‘va’, ‘ha’ and ‘n’ in final position of lines in poetry)⁶ the consonant න් (n) is reckoned as a *varṇa* (in the primary sense of ‘letter’), as no reference is made therein to any metrical foot. But in this book (*Gaṅgārohaṇa Varṇanāva*) it is definitely wrong to equate the three *guras* (long syllables) in the first three feet in question to six *varṇas* (letters) in the form of *mātrās* (syllabic instants), as there will then be, four feet (where only three are meant). It is well to examine again.

6. The monk says this because in Disānāyaka’s reply reference was made to six *varṇas* in the form of *mātrās*, (syllabic instants), using the term *varṇa* in its primary sense, namely “letter.” Otherwise the monk would not have made this statement, when the stanza in dispute has been composed in the *varṇa* metre, which is concerned only with syllables.

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In this world there are many scholars who are conversant with Poesy. If there is any error in your work, therefore, those worthies only will know. It matters little if a person like me unaccustomed to the poetic art, points out some error. Yes, they (the stanzas in the book) are really good. Yet if you care to come over here we can disabuse our minds of any faulty notions lurking there.

Do you not be offended for my having reluctantly pointed out some little error in your poetical composition, and harbour an ill feeling in your heart. Rather do you cultivate a benevolent disposition and ever shine like a *cintā māṇikya* (wish-conferring gem found in Heaven) enjoying the benefits of Poesy.]

It is said that on receipt of this communication Poet Disānāyaka stopped quarrelling, and the controversy ended. But unfortunately—or is it fortunately?—more than half a century after this incident the Hon'ble James de Alwis, advocate and member of the Ceylon Legislative Council, made a reference to it in the critical introduction to his learned English translation of *Sidat Saṅgarāva* (circa 1850), the standard Sinhalese Grammar, justifying Poet Disānāyaka's contention.

“ This critique of the priest,⁷ no less unjust than wrong, surprised the author of “ The Descent into the River ” (*Gaiṅārohana*) not a little. He was not in error : no, not in the expression which has been pointed out. He could therefore have torn the critic to tatters, but unfortunately he was not a great disputant. He wrote in reply ; and well indeed did he meet his opponent : but his unfortunate allusion to “ syllabic instants,”⁸ instead of standing by his first allusion to “ letters,” gave his subtle opponent much room to quibble.”⁹.....[Introduction to James de Alwis' *Sidat Saṅgarāva* (1852 edition), pp. ccxxxix, ccxl.]

“ Nor have I been at all enlightened on the subject by what has been said for him by his pupils whom we consulted not very long ago. This however is clear, that he (to use his own words) “ not free from faults,”¹⁰ and with all the respect which we have for his eminent talents and truly

7. See foot note 4 p. 120.

8. Disānāyaka's reply to Mihiripāṇne.

9. See Mihiripāṇne's second letter.

10. Mihiripāṇne's 1st letter pointing out a blemish in Disānāyaka's Poem.

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poetic genius, our faithful pen cannot withhold from recording such poetic blemishes as the following which his writings exhibit¹¹.” [*ibid.* p. cclii.]

No one seemed to have taken this criticism seriously at the start. It looks as if there had been nothing but praise even from the pupils of the monk Mihiripāṇṇe : “ The eagerness with which the natives had purchased the greatest part of an impression of 400 copies of the *Sidat Saṅgarāva* which I lately published, and the approbation of that edition expressed by some of the ablest of the Sinhalese scholars of the Southern Province, more especially by those attached to the Mihiripāṇṇe Temple, induce me to believe that the text which has now gone through a second edition.” [*ibid.* cclxxviii].

Perhaps as de Alwis' book was in English many of the Sinhalese scholars he refers to, took a number of years to understand the real implications of his criticism, and once they did, there was quite an uproar. Some of the statements made during the controversy that later ensued, clearly show that there was a deal of gossip aimed at belittling the erudition and poetic skill of the monk Mihiripāṇṇe. This campaign seemed to have reached its peak about 1871 or 1872 when Koggala Dhammatilaka Thera, an eminent pupil of the late monk, unable to hold his tongue any longer, wrote a letter to the *Śāstrālaṅkāraya* justifying his teacher's view. It was this monk Koggala, who later reverted to a lay life, and under the name of Johannes Kavatilaka Gurutumā started the Sinhalese daily, *Lakmiṇi Pahana* (1862). A large part of his letter was devoted not for the elaboration of his argument but for ridiculing not only de Alwis' book but also de Alwis himself. The chief argument he advanced in reference to the subject was that according to rules of Prosody a metrical foot consists of three *varṇas* (syllables), and never of six, as Poet Diṣānāyaka had maintained, and approved of by de Alwis.¹² In reckoning the number of *varṇas* of any metre, he added, uninflected consonants are not counted as *varṇas*.¹³

The reply to Koggala came not from de Alwis as might be expected, but from one D. C. F. Obeyesekara of Galle. But by the time it appeared in the *Śāstrālaṅkāraya* a number of letters from various persons had already

11. Here, de Alwis referred to two stanzas written by Mihiripāṇṇe and adversely criticized the way in which two words therein had been used.

12. This is not correct. See Alwis' criticism quoted on p. 122, para. 4.

13. The uninflected consonant along with the preceding vowel or vowel-inflected consonant, is reckoned as one single *varṇa* (long syllable) of a metrical foot.

been published there, all condemning de Alwis' view in very strong and offending language. The reason given by the editor for delaying the publication of Obeysekara's reply was the omission of the correspondent's address. It was this strange state of affairs that prompted a member of the public to write to Mr. John Perera, the editor, and ask him why he referred to certain correspondence in his journal as a controversy, when to all appearances, all the letters came from one party. There must be two parties to a controversy. Was Mr. John Perera the unrepresented party ?

Here are Obeysekara's arguments :

1. The poet had made no mention of ' short and long syllables.' He merely pointed out which letters had to be picked up to make the name Saram. This is legitimate.

2. If the term *varṇa* can mean a syllable or a letter standing for an uninflected consonant or vowel or a consonant inflected with a vowel, it may be used to denote an uninflected consonant. *Lakuṇṣara* uses the term in the different senses mentioned.

3. When explaining the rule regarding the ending of lines in a rhyme *Lakuṇṣara* puts ṣ , an uninflected consonant, in the same category as $\text{ṣ}(ya)$, $\text{ṣ}(va)$ and $\text{ṣ}(ha)$, vowel-inflected consonants ; and refers to all the four as *varṇas*.¹⁴

4. Further, the four syllabic instants, ṣ , ṣ , ṣ and ṣ mentioned above constitute the first foot of a stanza, and this foot is an anapaest, which is not outside the recognized eight varieties of metrical feet. [The argument is that although a foot can have only three *varṇas* in the sense of syllables, these same three *varṇas* can be referred to as four, five or even six *varṇas* in the sense of syllabic instants or letters.]

5. There are 20 consonants in Sinhalese according to Grammar.¹⁵ To make this twenty we must include the *anusvāra* or *bindu* (the nasal represented by the symbol "o"), which is never inflected with any vowel. Since all these twenty are called *varṇas* it follows that *varṇa* may refer to an uninflected consonant (like ṣ in ṣṣṣṣṣṣ).

6. Mihiripāṇṇe had stated that if one *gura* (long syllable) is equivalent to two syllabic instants, then the three *guras* in question— ṣṣṣṣṣṣ and

14. See foot note 4 on p. 120.

15. *Sīdat Saṅgarāvā, Sīr alīyāra, Sections 6 and 8.*

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ඤ (sav, sat, dam)—are equivalent to six instants,¹⁶ and hence to two feet. How can this be reconciled with the fact that three syllables whether long and/or short constitute only one foot? [Obviously Obeysekara misses or refuses to take notice of an important point in the controversy. This was only a *reductio ad absurdum* of the monk Mihiripāṇṇe in answer to Poet Samarasekara who had stated that in the foot in question there were six *varṇas* in the sense of instants.]

It was a well reasoned out argument devoid of irrelevancies, and must have received the attention of all scholars. But Koggala could not be convinced, and he wrote a further reply, the chief points of which are as follows :

1. The term *varṇa* is generally used to denote a long or short syllable; and in the foot සඵ සන් ඤ there are three long *varṇas* or syllables, the last of which is ඤ.

2. If one were to take away one *varṇa* from a foot there can be left behind only two *varṇas*, for a foot can have only three *varṇas*, and no more. But if ඵ alone is considered a *varṇa* in the foot සඵ සන් ඤ, with its removal one would expect to find only two *varṇas* in that foot. Yet we get three complete *varṇas* exclusive of ඵ—සඵ සන් and ඤ — and this is absurd.

3. It is true that Poet Samaranayaka, when speaking of metrical feet here, is only concerned with the formation of a person's name, and does not mean to make any technical statement on prosody, but even so, how can the consonant ඵ alone of the foot සඵ සන් ඤ be considered a *varṇa*?

4. In the stanza on the incorrect uses of සඵසන් mentioned in the controversy¹⁷ the four letters ස, ඵ, ස, and න් are clearly indicated in this order. Why see an anapaest in that connection ?

5. In the Elu Grammar (*Sidat Saigārāva*) the twenty (*gatakuru*) consonants do not include the *anusvāra* (symbol "o" transliterated with *m*) by itself. It is considered a *varṇa* only when it is preceded by ආ (*a*). If one were to take the *anusvāra* alone as a *varṇa*, the number of consonants would exceed twenty by one (i.e. with the addition of ආ that precedes the *anusvāra*).

16. See foot note 5 on p. 120.

17. See foot note 4 on p. 120.

As further proof of this last point that the *anusvāra* together with the preceding vowel, is counted as one *varṇa*, Koggala gives many examples three of which will suffice to understand his point of view. He resorts to prose in this part of his argument :

- i. “ ශොකා රාත්‍රී හයනුනං ප්‍රීති විග්‍රහණ හාපනං
කෙන රත්තමිදං සාසං විග්‍රහණකමර මයං”

—*Hitopadésa*

We are concerned only with the last compound word in the stanza, විග්‍රං + ඉති + අකමර + මයං meaning the two *akṣaras* (letters) මී and නුං.

- ii. “ පවර බුද්ධිවේදනං අකමර දවසවකුනං

—*Rasavāhīnī*.

[These two noble *akṣharas* (letters) බුද් and ධං (බුද්ධං + ඉති + ධනං = බුද්ධිවේදනං) are wonderful.]

- iii. “ බුද්ධිං සරණං ගවණමි, ධම්මං..... සංසං..... ගවණමි, යන පමි
තුන් පදයෙහි සුචිඨ අකුරක් කියා.....”

(.....that there are 24 *akṣharas*¹⁸ (letters) in these three sentences)-
Sinhalese Paraphrase of *Sundarika Bhāradvāja Sutta—Sutta Nipāta*.

There are said to be 8 letters in each of the above sentences, i.e. බුද්, ධං, ස, ර, ණං, ග, ව, ණ, මී. The term *akṣhara* (Skt. *akṣara*) in the above examples has been used in the sense of “ syllable.” If consonants uninflected with vowels including the *anusvāra*, can be considered as *varṇas* when they are used in the formation of a name what can they say of the above examples ? Hence the “ partial *varṇa* ” මී in සවිසන්දමි cannot be a *varṇa*.

6. If according to Poet Thomis (Samarasekara) the three *guras* සම සන් and දම are equivalent to six *varṇas*, then Mihiripānne’s contention that there will be two feet where only one is meant and found, is also correct.

A very dexterous refutation of the arguments advanced by the Saram camp was thus made by Koggala. Hereafter the Saram camp relied on the *Journal Yatalaba* to present their point of view, and the Saradam camp made use of the *Śāstrālaṅkāraya* exclusively. Pandit Baṭuvantudāve, the editor of the *Yatalaba*, himself contributed an article (in prose) in support of the Saram theory. The following are some of the points he made :

18. Skt. *akṣara* (Pali *akkhara* and Sinh. *akara* or *akura* or *kura*) and Skt. *varṇa* (Pali *vaṇṇa* and Sinh. *vaṇṇa*) are identical in meaning.

2. The *anusvāra* (*m*) is referred to in many a grammar as a *varṇa* :

“ අනුස්වාරයා-අකාර ඉහතවාරණාවි - “ - ” ඉති වින්දු මාමුරා චන් අනුස්වාර සංචය හවිති ”

—*Dauravasiṅha*

[අ is the *anusvāra* ; the අ here (preceding the *anusvāra*) is merely for purposes of pronunciation. Thus the *bindu varṇa* alone gets the nomenclature of *anusvāra*].

3. In the foot සඵ සඵ දඵ there are six syllabic instants (ස.ඵ.ස.ඵ.ද.ඵ), and they are six *varṇas* (letters); but as Mihiripāṇṇe contends these six *varṇas* need not constitute two feet, merely because they are referred to as *varṇas*.

4. No purpose is served in giving examples (in proof of a grammatical or prosodial theory) from *Rasavāhini*, *Hitopadeśa* etc., but only from treatises on Grammar and Prosody. A man does not attempt to walk with his hands, and practise carpentry with his legs.

Koggala’s reply to Obeyskara refuting the latter’s contention that the term *varṇa* included pure consonants, was a long prose account with numerous examples from Sanskrit poets like Māgha and from Buddhist Canonical literature similar to those he had already quoted in his earlier contributions. He could give only one example from Grammar, namely *Bālāvatāra*, a Pāli Grammar for beginners ; and that too is from a list of particles consisting of one, two, etc. up to six *varṇas*, the term *varṇa* being used in the sense of ‘ syllable.’

This time the reply to Koggala came from one who wrote under the pen-name අම අ (Ām-aḥ). The following are the chief points he made:

1. If the term *varṇa* connotes only long and short syllables why was it said that there were four *varṇas* in the word සඵහන්?

2. If one were to pick out the medial *varṇas* in the first six feet of Karatoṭa Nāyaka Thera’s composition රැකලා මකචුල්ලියයිම etc.²⁰ in the

20. It is said that the reputed poet Karatoṭa made a request to a friend to send him a copy of the poem *Kavsilumina* by means of the following stanza :

“ රැකලා මකචුල්ලියයිම තැළුවා මකමී	න
මැනලා රිය මම ගණ සස මැද වණ මකමම	න
දැනලා මම නම ඤා මහන විටසා මකාදි	න
නුචුලා සිව් වලන ජල මවන මෙහි මෙදි	න

[Note and pick out the medial (චක්ක) letters in order, in these first six feet රැකලා, මකචුල්ලි, යයිම, තැළුවා, මකමින and මැනලා and ascertain correctly the book answering to that name, and send it on to me, today, without fail.]

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manner advocated by Mihiripāṇṇe one would get not කඩුසිප්පින (කඩසිප්පින) but කඩුලුසිප්පින quite contrary to the learned monk's expectations.

[The poet stipulated that the medial *varṇas* in the first six feet of the stanza should be picked out in order to ascertain the name of the book he wanted. The fact that by *varṇas* he meant only 'letters' becomes evident if one attempts to carry out the poet's instructions:

යකලා / පකඞුලුලි / ය සිප / තලුපි / පසපින / පනලා.

If one would interpret *varṇa* as 'syllable' in accordance with Mihiripāṇṇe's theory one would have to pick out ඞුලු as the medial *varṇa* of the second foot, and would then get කඩුලුසිප්පින, which is nonsense.]

3. The *bindu* or *anusvāra* (ṁ) is a *varṇa* and hence ට is also a *varṇa*. [He quotes several examples from grammatical works in support of his contention.] How can ඞ be a consonant? The *bindu* alone is the consonant. ඞ is a vowel, and when this ඞ is accompanied by the *bindu* (ṁ),- that combination cannot be called a consonant.

Koggala wrote again in an attempt to meet the arguments both of Ām-aḥ and of Obeysekara :

1. According to the Sinhalese paraphrase of *Vṛttaratnākara* the 10 *akṣaras* in the *paribhāṣā sūtra* beginning මාරයාප්පනපෙඵඵ are ම.ය.ස.ත.ජ. හ.න.ඵ and ල. One does not find a ම.න. or ය there. Also see examples like පමානාටි යඤ්ජ.ප්පිනි. පනසාප්පින විඤ්ජි, සරලා භ.ස.මාලා. නාගරිකපිනපොලපො etc. in the same book. [These examples only show that symbols like ම, පනසා, මා, හපො and ලපො are counted as single syllables for the purpose of illustrating certain metres].

2. We admit that *Lakuṇṣara* makes statements like යපිනන් සතර-කුපෙන්නි [of the four *akṣaras* ය,පි,හ, and න්] and තුණකර පපයින් හණනම්²¹. [Three of these *akṣaras* constitute a foot.] If anyone contends that these statements are faulty he is only blaming the learned author of *Lakuṇṣara*, and no other.

Not a convincing reply ; and Obeysekara makes the following four points in refuting Koggala :

²¹. *Lakuṇṣara*, 10th stanza.

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Examples :	No. of <i>varṇas</i>
1. ස,ස,ර, ස,ර,ණ, ස,ඵ, ස,න්, ද,ඵ, ද,ඵ,වෙ,න්, ස,නො,ස්,ඵ 20	
11. ඵ,ස,ර,ස්,න, ඵ,ණ,න, වෙ,ඵ, ඵ,න්,වෙ,ඵ 14	
111. ස,ඵ,න,න්, ස,න,ර, ක,රෙ,න් 10	

3. Yet in referring to the *varṇas* in the foot සඵසන්දඵ the term *varṇa* has to be construed in the sense of long and short syllables only, as it is part of a metrical line. The words සඵ, සන් and දඵ constitute one foot, and hence three *varṇas* (syllables), of which the last is දඵ.

A correspondent by the name of Pālātamantrige Johānas Alwis also gives a helping hand to the Saradam camp. He says that the stanza quoted by Ām-ah in support of the 'Saram' theory is erroneous. The correct reading of the phrase කෙටුල් ලියවීම in the quotation should be කෙටුම් ලියවීම. Once it is thus corrected²² one would get the name කටුම්පමණ without any difficulty, and in conformity with the instructions of Poet Karatoṭa, the author of the stanza, and with the theory advanced by Poet Mihiripāṇne in reference to the 'Sav sat dam' controversy.

Another correspondent Gumaratna by name, also supports the 'Saradam' theory in a rather jocular way. "When one is instructed to pick out a *varṇa* from a foot one has to find a short or long syllable, and none else," he said. "Why produce nuts from a breadfruit tree when one is asked to fetch nuts from a coconut tree?" he added. "After recognizing the feet in the stanza in question, in accordance with the ancient rule stipulated in prosodial works, if one were to pick out a *varṇa* from each of them, as instructed by the poet, without recollecting any particular name, one is sure to get the name Saradam. Such a revelation, however, will be painful. But what can we do about it now?"

Yet another correspondent, Kavatilaka by name, offers a few comments in support of the 'Saradam' theory. His argument, in brief, is as follows :

A metrical foot consists of three syllables, long and/or short. Accordingly the foot සඵසන්දඵ has three syllables (සඵ, සන් and දඵ), all long; and the last of them is දඵ. There is no system of reckoning the *varṇas* in a foot other than that pertaining to long and short syllables.

22. රකලා, කෙටුම්, ලී වීම, නැවත, සෙවීම.
 මැනලා.....

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In the stanza beginning with *සවනන් සතර කුරෙන්* (often quoted in the controversy) there is no reference whatever to metrical feet. Therefore one has to take *සවනන්* there to be four *akṣaras* and not *varṇas*.²³ Even here (i.e. in the line *සවනන් සතර කුරෙන්* etc.) if one is asked to pick out the last *varṇa* of the first foot one has to take *න්* and not *න්*.

If a man, desirous of some garden-lilies, sends a man to a lake named by him requesting him to fetch some lilies, he will never get garden-lilies. In like manner if you refer to a *varṇa* in a foot it has necessarily to be one of the three *varṇas* that constitute the foot. So the final *varṇa* of the foot *සඵ සන් දඵ* should be *දඵ* and not *ඵ*. If the *malakura* (uninflected consonant), *ඵ* were a *varṇa* its removal from the foot, should make the foot one syllable too short ; but this does not happen. *සඵ සන් ද* is still a complete foot.

Another correspondent called A. D. C. Sekara, a supporter of the Saradam camp makes his contribution in the form of an allegory illustrated with diagrams. He compares the three feet *සසර*, *සරණ* and *සඵ*, *සන්*, *දඵ* to three chariot wheels, three chariot chassis, and three whole chariots respectively, and converts the whole controversy into a strange story. Poet *Disānāyake* is a chariot-maker. He proposes to construct a chariot consisting of two wheels and a chassis, but selects for the purpose one wheel, a chassis, and instead of another wheel, a whole chariot ; and thereby creates a ludicrous monstrosity. What the writer means by this allegory is that Poet *Disānāyake* proposed to construct the name *Saram*, but having assembled together constituents not relevant to the name, he constructed a different name *Saradam*, to his dismay, and thereby subjected himself and his patron to the ridicule of the learned.

When the controversy was dragging on in this manner without showing any signs of a solution some enthusiasts of the Saradam camp, in order to strengthen their case, declared that *Karatōṭa Dharmārāma Sāmi* of the *Bārasa Kāvya* fame and *Bovala Dhammānanda Sāmi*, another famous poet, both contemporaries of the monk *Mihiripāṇne*, had expressed their approval of the theory put forward by the last named :

“ ටි සී	යුරු සකු මගද සිහල බස තොරතුරු දැන මොනව	ඵ
ඉ සී	වර රද දෙනකු ලෙස මෙම ලක්දිව සුදිලෙව් හැම වී	ඵ
සී සී	යුරු සොමී ගුණ දුරු බෝවල හිමි සමගින් කරනො	ඵ
කී සී	බොරු හැනි මෙ යනි දෙ දෙන කීවසී එම දෙස කදිම	ඵ

Siṭṭināmaluve Dharmārāma.

23. *Akṣaras* and *varṇas* are identical in meaning. What he means is letters as opposed to syllables, both of which can be referred to as *akṣaras* or *varṇas*, and hence all the confusion.

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[The two monks Bovala and Karatoṭa devoid of any deceit, who were well versed in the languages of Sanskrit, Pali and Sinhalese, who, in the manner of two *ṛṣis* (sages) made this Island of Lanka ever shine, and bore a gentle character like unto the moon, pointed out that error (in Poet Disānāyaka's famous composition in question) very clearly.]

The 'Saram' camp, however, published two letters one each from two pupils of the celebrated poets. The first letter was from Kodāgoḍa Sumedha Thera of Mātara Pīkvālla Temple, purported to have been sent to James de Alwis on 11th March, 1854. It said that during a conversation at the Veragampīṭa Vihāra, Mātara, between the monk Karatoṭa and the "proponent" of Akmīmana,²⁴ who was at the time still a Buddhist monk, The monk Karatoṭa, in the presence of the correspondent and a number of others, observed that the error "Mihiripāṇṇe umāṇse" pointed out was no error.

A similar letter dated 4th April, 1854, also supposed to have been sent to James de Alwis, was published in the *Yatalaba*. It was from Kodāgoḍa Silavaṇṣa Thera, an incumbent of the Kodāgoḍa Temple in Talpe Pattu in the District of Galle. He declared that his teacher, The monk Dhammānanda of Bovala, told him that the former did not approve of Mihiripāṇṇe's theory.

Two other letters, one dated 15th November, 1853, written by one Deedrek Levanārdas Disānāyaka Appuhamy declared that his teacher, the monk Galātuṃbe, who was versed in the science of prosody, told him that the name Saram could be obtained as desired by the author ; and the other dated 6th December, 1853 from Denagama Guṇaratana Thera of the Palleva Temple, said :

“ සි හ ල සක මගද විසරණ දන් මවමස	ස
මී ත ල පහල කිවි ගුරු වන් යුන් නැණැ	ස
මොවල කිරම නම ලන් මද මනවිදු ශ්‍රීමද	ස
එ ක ල මම ඇසිමි මී වදහළ විල	ස

මපර මැද්ග වගින් සැමදෙයි සරම නම විසු බස්
මම දැසිමි එ කල්හි දම අනන්දස් ගිමින් මගන්”

24. A pupil of the Monk Karatoṭa, who later gave up robes and became a 'proponent' or a Christian lay preacher. Lay preachers during the Dutch times were known by the term 'proponent.'

[I heard then what was said in this connection (*sav sat dam* controversy) by the two faultless monks Bovala and Kirama (Dhammānanda of *Siyabaslakara* fame) who were expert at Sinhalese, Sanskrit and Pali Grammar, and who, in their wisdom resembled Śukra and Brihaspati (teachers respectively of the *Suras* and *Asuras*) manifest on earth.

I also heard from our teacher, The monk Dhammānanda, then, that the name Saram could be obtained from the initial, medial and the final *varṇas* (as desired by Poet Disānāyake).]

Towards the close of the controversy the leader of the 'Saradam' camp retired from the contest complaining that he was not prepared to participate in a discussion in which people used improper language bringing to ridicule not only himself but the whole Saṅgha. That even drunkards did not use the kind of language that some of his opponents employed, he remonstrated. Though he put the entire blame for this deterioration on his opponents the impartial student would see that he is chiefly responsible for provoking improper language.²⁵ It is the other party who levelled the same criticism at the start at Koggala and his supporters. It is unfortunate that the participants were not restrained in their language. In spite of his retirement more and more joined his ranks, and carried on the campaign with vigour. But from now on there was hardly anything relevant to the debate in their contributions. They seemed more concerned with the prestige of their community than with finding a solution. This led to abusive language on both sides. Towards the close of the controversy Hikkaḍuve Sumaṅgala Nāyaka Thera was invited by the 'Saram' camp to express his views on the subject. The request was made in spite of the attack made by the other party openly ridiculing the Nāyaka Thera as being the author of the letters that appeared under the name of Obeysekara, asserting that they had evidence to that effect.

The Nāyaka Thera, in his contribution, incorporated some of the points made by the 'Saram' camp, and generally attempted to justify the stand taken by them. The following are the chief arguments he advanced :

1. Examples like 'Hasābyañjanā' etc. quoted in the debate have proved that uninflected consonants are also *varṇas*. This fact has been accepted by some of the Saradam party too.

25. Later Monk Koggala published a booklet called *Saradam Yāgaya* utterly ridiculing all those who opposed him.

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2. Each of the four lines in the Sanskrit stanza illustrating the *Śārdūla vikrīḍitā vṛtta*²⁶ (a specific metre), consists of 19 *varṇas* long and/or short. But if the initial and final *varṇas* of the stanza are to be picked out in the manner advocated by Mihiripāṇne one would not get *ආමානෙමනෙකරිවෙ* as intended by the poet, but *ආමානෙමන්නෙකරිවෙ*. This shows that in this composition the writer has used the term *varṇa* not in the restricted sense of syllable, but in the sense accepted by the world at large i.e. letters. Therefore Saram alone is correct.

3. According to the Mihiripāṇne theory the word *යවහන්* in the stanza *යවහන් සතර කුරෙන්* etc. has to be considered an anapaest. In that case one cannot speak of four *varṇas* in it, (for an anapaest or any other foot can have only three *varṇas*). But the learned author of *Lakṣmīśara* does speak of four *varṇas*, and he is right. As this is not an instance where the quantitative character of metrical feet is discussed, he has ignored the syllable-sense of the term *varṇa* and has used it in the sense of "letter," or symbol. In like manner in the stanza *සසර සරණ* etc. one has to pick out the *varṇas* as they are spoken of in reference to a name, as this too is not an instance where the writer refers to the quantitative character of metrical feet.

4. In Prosody the compound-word *මෙමාමෙතකතා* has been analysed as ('m' and 'ga' are 'mgau'). Here the 'magana' (molossus) ends at *මෙමාමෙතන්*; *යා* is an additional *gura* (long syllable). This one long syllable *මෙමා* has been referred to as two letters ම and මා (one an uninflected consonant, and the other an inflected consonant). Similarly the compound *මුහනා* in the line "*මුහෙනරයානාං ත්‍රියෙන ත්‍රිමුනියතිසුතා ශ්‍රුග්-ධරා කීර්තීතෙයම්*" has been analysed by Candrabhārati as මච, රචෙ, හිච, නචෙ, මුහනා, මෙතෙ: ['m', 'ra', 'bhi' and 'na' constitute mrabhanāh, taih]. Here the single long syllable මුහි has been split up into three letters ම, ර and හි. In this manner when the writers wanted to refer to matters not connected with metre, feet, caesura etc. they broke up a foot into more than three parts and yet referred to them as *varṇas* meaning letters.

26. ආයාතස්තව කීර්තිනාවරතමා ශ්‍රුත්වාන්විභං කර්ණනෙ
මායාවෙ ගජවාචී නොන රජනං නස්ඵර්ණකං රක්ෂක
කෙසාද්විත්තහි වෙදනං නරඵරස්ඵස්තාන්තු පදොපරි
මන් ප්‍රාර්ථනාව විබුධානාං වරණග්ඵාදාන්ත ග්ලොකො: කවෙ.

From the introduction to the Eng. translation of *Nalodaya* by Dr. Yates, p. 255.

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5. Muhandiram Thomis Disānāyaka, I presume, in order to locate the places where the letters that constituted the name of the hero of his poem were, fixed the limits of those places by means of metrical feet, and then directed the reader to pick out the letters in the manner stated. The idea of quantitative character of letters or syllables, therefore, has to be ruled out. There are numerous instances (as have been pointed out) where writers have referred to individual letters in a foot. Yet some of those supporting the 'Saradam' theory try to maintain that one should always refer to them as syllables, long or short. I challenge them to quote any such rule in support of their contention.

There is a great deal of other correspondence connected with the controversy but I have omitted it as it has little or no relevance to the subject under discussion and as a good deal of it is mere mud slinging.

It is not possible to arrive at a definite conclusion in a controversy of this nature. No one may presume to declare that the ayes or the noes had the day. So the controversy remains unresolved; no conclusions are warranted.

P. B. J. HEVAVASAM

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