

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## An Analysis of the Sri Lankan Buddhist Monk during the British Colonial Period

Ven. Olaganwatte Chandasiri

Professor, Department of Languages,  
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka

### **Abstract:**

*Changes in social institutions became widespread, extensive, and far-reaching since the British occupation of the whole Island. Although previously the country was invaded by the Portuguese and the Dutch, the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Colebrook Commission Report in the 19<sup>th</sup> century propelled Sri Lanka into a rapid change in its social and economic progress. The establishment of the printing press during the time of British rule can be regarded as a profound social event in the history of Sri Lanka. The introduction of modern technology into the country should be recognized as the greatest contribution by the British. It can be pointed out that this knowledge of technology changed the traditional social structures prevailing in Sri Lankan society at the time. Poets began to depict the emerging contemporary society in poetry.*

*This paper examines:*

- *The nature of the disposition of monks,*
- *The power exercised by the monks, and*
- *How the lives of monks changed during the colonial period*

*It also shows how the Christians portrayed the Buddhist monks from their point of view, and their attitude towards Buddhist monks influenced the ordinary people. From this perspective, the poetical works of this period are analyzed.*

*For this research paper, most materials used in this study have been obtained from publications and materials available at the Colombo Museum, the Department of Historical Documents in the main Library of the University of Peradeniya, the Asia and African Sections and Social Science Sections of the British Library in London.*

**Keywords:** *Booklets, colonialisation, newspapers, poetic, press, buddhist monk*

### **1. Introduction**

Changes in social institutions became widespread, extensive, and far-reaching since the British occupation of the whole Island. Although previously the country was invaded by the Portuguese and the Dutch, the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Colebrook Commission Report in the 19<sup>th</sup> century propelled Sri Lanka into a rapid change in its social and economic progress. The establishment of the printing press during the time of British rule can be regarded as a profound social event in the history of Sri Lanka. The introduction of modern technology into the country should be recognized as the greatest contribution by the British. It can be pointed out that this knowledge of technology changed the traditional social structures prevailing in Sri Lankan society at the time. Poets began to depict the emerging contemporary society in poetry.

This paper examines:

- The nature of the disposition of monks,
- The power exercised by the monks, and
- How the lives of monks changed during the colonial period

It also shows how the Christians portrayed the Buddhist monks from their point of view, and their attitude towards Buddhist monks influenced the ordinary people. From this perspective, the poetical works of this period are analyzed.

For this research paper, most materials used in this study have been obtained from publications and materials available at the Colombo Museum, the Department of Historical Documents in the main Library of the University of Peradeniya, the Asia and African Sections and Social Science Sections of the British Library in London.

### **2. Buddhism under Colonial Rule**

It is essential to describe the lives of monks in the social background of the period. In her research on '*Locations of Buddhism*' (2010), Anne Blackburn mentions that we know very little about Buddhism in Sri Lanka under high colonialism. She also mentions that we do not have a clear account of the nature of external stimuli to Buddhists of Sri Lanka during the

19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup>In her study, she discussed one pioneer Buddhist monk Hikkaduwe Sumangala thero. There is another prominent research done by Kithsiri Malalgoda. '*Buddhism in Sinhalese Society 1750 – 1900*.' This author also discusses the 19<sup>th</sup>-century religious background of the Buddhist priests and how the lay people were involved in Buddhist activity. From the point of view emphasized by Malalgoda, three major factors came up during this period.<sup>2</sup> Tissa Kariyawasam, in his research '*Religious Activities and the Development of a new Political Tradition in Sinhalese 1852 – 1906*', has discussed the emergence of three sects or Nikāyas of Buddhist society, in the first chapter titled 'Religious Activities of the clergy'. This has been a theme in the new poetical traditions too.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, modernization, which is defined as the revolution of knowledge, had already begun. Manfred Halpern says that 'the revolution of modernization involves the transformation of all systems by which man organizes his society- the political, social, economic, intellectual, religious and psychological systems.<sup>3</sup>Modernization, however, represents a serious challenge to the ability of religious traditions to accommodate change.<sup>3</sup>Modernization poses a dilemma for religious traditions and their adherence.<sup>4</sup>As Buddhism was colonized during the British period, it created a new context.<sup>5</sup> The other factor already mentioned is that Buddhist monks and Buddhist society were given good support by the kings before the colonial period. However, in the first three decades of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century colonial administration in Sri Lanka and the imperial government itself had been less enthusiastic in its response to Buddhism and Buddhist monks in Ceylon.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the more important matter was the state's neutrality in the increasing conflict between the Christian groups and the indigenous religions, especially Buddhism.<sup>7</sup> As mentioned by K.M. de Silva, Buddhism in Ceylon was fundamentally different from Christianity in that it had no central organization.<sup>8</sup> This point was very important for the existence of Buddhist monks. It is very clear that there was no pivot to generate the system of Buddhist society in this period, and consequently, there ensued a decadence in Buddhism. However, the Buddhist revival emerged in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, prompting active vernacular education and the resurgence of nationalism.<sup>9</sup> M.U.de Silva mentions that bhikkhus played a dominant role in society.<sup>10</sup> While analyzing the poems of this period, it became clear how poets have portrayed characteristics of diversity among the Buddhist bhikkhus. It might have been the impact of colonization and modernization. Basically, it is very important to define the role of monks during this period.

Through the explanation of the meaning of '*bhikkhu*'.<sup>11</sup> (bhikkṣuwa, pāviddā) according to the *Vinaya Pitka* (The book of discipline) is 'beggar'. The term *bhikkhu* connotes that meaning. Another meaning of this word is 'wearing torn robes.'<sup>12</sup> The household life hinders laymen who wish to earn merit as it gives rise to desires, which are treated as obstacles in the path of a *bhikkhu*.<sup>13</sup> A *bhikkhu* has to rid himself of all desires. That is one of the basic characteristics of a *bhikkhu*.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, a *bhikkhu* has to always refrain from amassing riches and avoid getting involved in economic activities. Robert Binning has explained this succinctly in his book.<sup>15</sup>Although the *Bhikkhu Sāsana*, the order of monks, had its first beginnings in India in the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, it is a well-known fact that Mahinda thero was the pioneer who established the *Buddha Sāsana* in Sri Lanka. He was the son of Emperor Asoka the Great, and he arrived during the reign of King Devanampiyatissa. His arrival marked a turning point in the history of the island, and it was since then that

1. Ann M Blackburn, 'Buddhism, Colonialism and Modernism' (A View from Sri Lanka) *Nethra* vol.5, no. 3 (Ed). Regi Siriwardana, (Colombo: International centre for ethnic studies, Jun-Sep, 2002), 1.

2. Kitsiri Malalgoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society 1750-1900*, (London: University of California Press, 1976), 2.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there emerged in Ceylon numerically small but socially dominant new 'elites' or status groups whose religious needs and interests, as much as their economic bases, were different from those of the traditional peasantry. Secondly, the political milieu of the colonial government, in which these changes in the traditional system of stratification occurred, also affected Buddhism in a more immediate and direct way and brought to an end the backing that had long been given to Buddhism by secular authority.

3. Halpern Manfred, *The Revolution of Modernization in National and International society*, (New York: Atherton Press, 1966), 179.

4. Ibid, 13.

5. George D Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka*, (Delhi: Motilal Bararsidas Publishers, 1992), 14.

6. K.M. de Silva, 'The Government & Religion: Problems & Policies c1832 – c1910' *History of Ceylon – Vol. 3 –* (Ed) K.M. de Silva, (University of Ceylon, 1973), 187.

7. Ibid, 188.

8. Ibid, 190.

9. Ibid, 203. At the time of Olcott's arrival in Ceylon, the Buddhist Revival in Ceylon was well underway. The Buddhist Revival of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the first phase in the recovery of national pride in nationalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

10. M.U.de Silva, 'Suppression of Buddhism under the British & the Resistance of the Buddhists' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka*, New series. Vol. XLIX (Colombo: 2004), 31.

11. Polwatte Buddhathatha, *Pāli Sinhala Akārādiya*, (Nugegoda: Ajith Printers, 1998)

12. Weragoda Amaramoli (Ed), *Vinaya Pitakaya. Pārājika Pāliya*, 56. *Bikkuthi – Bikkakoth'I Bikkhu, Bikkācariyam Ajjupagathoth'I Bikkhu, Bhinnapatadarothi Bikkhu*

13. Kuddaka Nikāya - Suththa Nipāthaya - Mahā Waggaya, Pabbajja suththa,

*sambādodāyan garāwāso rajasāyatanān ithi*

*abbhokāsocha pabbajjā ithi diswāna pabbajj*

*pabbajjthwāna kāyena pāpan kamman wiajjathi*

*wachiduchcharithan hithtwā ājiwan parisodai*

14. Ranweera Gunawardena, *Sivura ha Nagula* (The robes and the plough) (Colombo: The Society of Social Scientists, 1993), 53.

15. W.M.A Robert Binning, A Journal of two years Travel in Persia, Ceylon, etc. Vol. I (London: 1857), 19. (*The Buddhist priest was not a distinct caste like the Brahmins of India. On the contrary, they are devoted to a life of celibacy so that anything like a distinct tribe could not exist. They are chosen from among various classes and educated for the priesthood in colleges appointed for the purpose. They live principally on voluntary alms and abstain from fair sex altogether. Yellow is the sacred colour of Buddha's followers, and the priests wear a long robe of this hue. They have their heads clean-shaven and uncovered and generally carry a fan of palm leaf in their hand.*)

the history of Sri Lanka became more authentic than the previous period.<sup>16</sup> However, evidence shows that the order of the history of the indigenous Buddhist monks started with the Anuradhapura Mahā Vihāra Vāsi Bhikkhus of (Theravada Nikāya). With the arrival of Mahinda thero, the social system in Sri Lanka underwent a drastic change. With Buddhism becoming the state religion, the *bhikkhus* were able to consolidate their authority in the political arena.

Theoretically, Buddhism became the state religion and signaled the beginning of the assertion of power by the *bhikkhus* in the political arena. The first dwelling (*kuṭiya*) of the *bhikkhus* became the earliest spiritual and educational institution, and it shows that during that period, several basic powerful characteristics of the *bhikkhus* were formed. In the beginning, it was the 'common' (*sāngika*) vision to form the fundamental theories which were opposed to their personal desires'. The way of life of the ruling kings and the nobles influenced the *bhikkhus* to change their behavior. It was also seen that the excessive favors lavished on them contributed to this change. This was contradictory to the main aims of the *bhikkhu sāsana* even at the time of the Buddha. The *Vinaya Pitaka* clearly says the lives of *bhikkhus* underwent certain changes according to the time and places of their dwelling.<sup>17</sup> When the king granted his favors, the religious rites were performed well, but when no favors were available, things became very uncomfortable. In different eras of the history of Sri Lanka, it was seen to be so. If the traditional *bhikkhus'* main aims were to purge themselves of unwanted desires, their character would be undecided or undetermined in the traditional society. During the first stages, the *bhikkhu sāsana* was divided into '*grantha dhura and vidarsana Dhura.*' The contemporary *bhikkhus* understood the society they lived in. According to the analysis of *grantha dhura*, *bhikkhus* were directly involved in social activities. *vidarsana dhura* demanded them to rid themselves of unwanted desires. This division was strongly and deeply influenced by society. Although this division took place, one cannot say that *grantha dhura* is superior to *vidarsana dhura*, but there arose a competition between the two.<sup>18</sup> Before the invasion of the Europeans into the island during the Kotte period, the position of the *bhikkhus* in society was firmly established. However, when society changed, *bhikkhus'* behavioural patterns also changed, as was evident in the Seethawaka and Mahanuvara periods. In the Mahanuvara, known as the 'dark era', the *bhikkhus* who did not adhere to the traditional customs and principles of the *sāsana* were called *ganinānses*. They practised all kinds of arts and vocations. Some of them managed the temple properties and nurtured their families and relations with the income from those properties.<sup>19</sup> With the passage of time and when traditions changed, Venerable Welivita Saranamkara took the lead role in changing and re-establishing the true traditions of the *buddha sāsana*. He was the precursory instrument in the resuscitating of the modern *bhikkhuhood*. Thus, the name Welivita Asarana Sarana Saranamkara is held in high esteem even to this day and is respected as a remarkable character. It was in this background that the invasion of the island by the British and the beginning of the colonial era took place. The colonialists had their own way of thinking, forcing the *bhikkhus* to change their attitudes and outlook. Even during the time of the Buddha, this was very evident, and it was in direct infringement of the fundamental aims of the *bhikkhu* tradition. The *vinaya pitaka* says that *bhikkhus'* behaviour and aims changed according to the times and the places. Reverend Welivita's representation of the *Bhikkhu Ayojana* is clearly seen in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There were two problems that the *bhikkhus* had to solve at that time. Their chief problem was to eliminate the obstacles and criticisms that the Christians levelled at their behaviour. The other fact was to protect the traditional educational system.<sup>20</sup> The character of the *bhikkhus* became active due to these two reasons. In one way, the social changes brought about by the British were seen as a formidable challenge to the *bhikkhus*. According to the Colebrook proposals, in 1832, the state decided to close down the Sinhala and Tamil schools. The translation of the Bible and Christian missionary work was sponsored by the state, and full support was extended to it.<sup>21</sup> This development has led the *bhikkhus* to change their attitudes and behaviour. Therefore temple-oriented education was revived. The horoscopes of the children who came to the temple for studies were read by the head priest, and those who were found to be bold and brilliant were ordained. In this background, the temples and their traditional properties were protected, giving birth to an educated *bhikkhu* society.<sup>22</sup>

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were many conspicuously prominent personalities among the Buddhist clergy. Wāliwitiye Saranakara Sangharāja thero, who had a close relationship with the community of monks, was an outstanding personality in the contemporary field of education. Walane Siddhārta, Galle Medhamkara, Hikkaduwe Sumangala, and Ratmalāne Dharmārāma were among the other distinguished theros. While initiating Vidyodaya and Vidyānkara Pirivenas, *bhikkhus* like Hikkaduwe Sumangala, Ratmalāne Sri Dharmārāma, Weligama Sumangala, Dodandūwe Piyaratana, Welitota Wimalasāra, Waskaduwe Sri Subita rendered a yeoman service in protecting traditional education.<sup>23</sup> In the beginning, only oriental subjects were taught in the pirivenas.<sup>24</sup> There were other *bhikkhus* who represented this generation of outstanding monks. Among them were Morapitiye Attadassi, Denipitiye Sangharakkhita, Walāne Sārānanda, Ratmalāne Sumanatissa, Galagamuwe Buddhārakkhita, Baduraliye Dirānanda, Pānadure Khemānanda, Tiyaṃbarahene Wimalatissa, Ratmalāne Wipulatissa, Walāne Dhammānanda, Godigamuwe Saranatissa, Kollupitiye Sunanda and Arukgoda Sēlānanda

16. E.W. Adikaram, *Pārani Lakdiva Bauddha Ithihāsaya*. (The Old History of Buddhists) (Colombo: J.K.G. Jayawardena & Co. 1963), 109.

17. Ibid, 191.

18. Aberathana Adikari, *Sri Lankawe Sambāwya Adyāpanaya hā Maha Saṅgana*. (Mardana: Godage & Brothers, 1991), 59 – 120

19. Kotagama Vachissara, *Saranankara Sangarāja Samaya*, (Colombo: Visidunu Publishers, 3rd printing, 2003), 6th chapter, Sanskruthika Ithihāsaya 'Pirihunu Bhikkhuwa'.

20. Rathnasiri Arangala, *Nuthana Sinhala Sāhiththiye Prabawaya* (Origin of Modern Sinhala Literature), (Colombo: Godage & Brothers, 2004), 75.

21. Tennakoon Wimalananda, *Buddhism in Ceylon under the Christian Powers* (1963), 159.

22. Horana Vajiragnana Himi, *Walane Siddharthama himi, & Parama Dhamma Chethiya Pirivena* (1992), 9.

23. Martin Wickremasinghe, *Sāhithyoda Katā* (Literary Tales) (1992), 357.

24. Ibid, 26.

who contributed in various ways to promote the cause of Buddhism.<sup>25</sup> During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Venerable Mohottiwatte Gunānanda stood out as a radical personality. In this background, poets tried to depict in poetry that these *bhikkhus* had broken away from the traditional *bhikkhu* society and were very progressive.

### 3. Poetry Illustrating the *Bhikkhu*

Protecting the traditional *bhikkhus* from missionaries and also from the changes in society was a problematical task. In the background of these changes and problems, it is impossible to talk about them separately. All living beings are members of society. The lives of *bhikkhus* are incorporated in many ways. In Buddhist society, people pay a lot of attention to the behaviour of *bhikkhus*. There are two important occasions in a *bhikkhu's* life, such as *upasampadā* (Higher ordination) and *pārūpanaya* (Wearing of Robes). While analyzing the traditional Sri Lankan *bhikkhus'* social lives, education and preaching were the most conspicuous aspects. Likewise, *bhikkhus* who violated the traditions were criticized by the laity. During this period, the critics who instigated the people to rise against the *bhikkhus* seemed to be those who were involved in the missionary movement or those from the Buddhist society. In traditional society, the Buddhist *bhikkhu* was placed in a stemmed position. However, those who acted contrary to the principles and precepts of the Buddha's teaching were condemned by the people.

### 4. The Behaviour and the Relationships of *Bhikkhus*

In the new economic, political, and social systems, the fundamental aims of the *life* of *bhikkhu* underwent a transformation. Earlier the main duty was to adhere to the tenets and duties of their religion. However, they were encouraged or persuaded to participate in various activities related to the life of lay people. This situation was a deviation from the Buddhist traditions. The cultural and social environment had ingrained in the laypeople an expectation that the *bhikkhus* should lead exemplary lives and had to be more refined and cultured than the ordinary laymen. They anticipated the *bhikkhus* to lead exemplary lives that demanded respect from the common people. The impression of the society in that period was that most *bhikkhus* were involved in activities to earn money.

*samaharu viya weddu e nisā dāna palak nā*  
*samaharu waduvot vē e ilauwat esemāi.*  
*yakāduru tawa ātmāi e bāvin nā nātēmat*  
*watukaru wādivēlā nāwāwēmat gihin wet māi*<sup>26</sup>

(Some became native doctors (veddu), Some were carpenters, Some were exorcists, Some were farmers and cultivators.)

*samahru godaweddui annu sindut wananno*  
*samaharu gahagannoi Jābukul kārayanwē*  
*samaharu wānijanuni e nisā nā mudal den*  
*samaharu badugannoi ai bāluwāta mandā*<sup>27</sup>

(Some of the *bhikkhus* were quacks (goda veddo), Some were traders and merchants, Some were engaged in leasing.)

*āthām aya govikam da karawati wawati watupiti nopamanā*  
*mein samaharu harak bokara weset wikunā milagenā*<sup>28</sup>

(There were others who became cultivators. Among these were those who bred cattle and sold them for money.)

*tāna tāna gewal rāhā nātek matpānut wē*  
*apata inna palak n ā eka sagunta vē den*  
*samaharu goviyot vē e nisā palak nā in*  
*medāka rata hārimāi kātākātāt obinne*<sup>29</sup>

Some owned taverns where they sold liquor.

(People had no huts to live in as they, too, had been taken over by these *bhikkhus*. Some became farmers and took over the livelihood of the poor. So the only thing suitable for the people to do was to leave their country.) (*Sangha Saṭana* describes that *bhikkhus* engaged in various occupations like carpentry, work, quack medicine, leasing, lending money on interest, writing auspicious times, etc.) Some had taken to the robes and learnt medicine. They went from house to house, caring for the sick and earning money. Some learnt astrology, and without even knowing their profession well, they wrote horoscopes and made auspicious times for people. This is how they earned money to provide for their families and relations. Because of the new social system that emerged, people were able to make money by engaging in business and trade. It was seen that *bhikkhus*, too, became a part of this social set-up to engage in business.

25. L.P.W Gunatilake, (1927), 101.

26. Don. P. Arnolis, *Sāsana Wrukshaya Nohoth Sāmāna Thathwa Prakāsaya* (A Statement of The Position of the Recluse or the tree of Buddhism), (Lakmini Pahana: 1884), 18 verse

27. Ibib, 19, 20 verse.

28. ....Sanga Satana (Bhikkhu Struggle) (1890), 6 verse.

29. Arnolis. op.cit., 19, 20

Wadukama (carpentry) Gode wedakama (Quack medicine) Mudal poliyata deema (giving money on interest)

Nakath katayuthu ( writing auspicious times): *garhitha vidyāwan vashayen salaka atha* (These were condemned as low and disgraceful methods)

'Conscious of the dubious and evanescent nature of their influence, the priests occasionally resort to these expedients to sustain it, and combining the practice of medicine and astrology with their spiritual profession, the superstitious mystery with which these are enveloped, contributes somewhat to the object desired.' (Sir Emerson Tennet, 218)

*samaharu naya dennoi lodananweth dugimu  
loku poliyama gannoi e nudunnoth sabemai  
mebadu saguruwan sasne päviddowa unnoi  
mebawa dosaya kiwoth nä ithin wäsimek<sup>30</sup>*

'Some *bhikkhus* lent money to the poor at high interest rates. If the loan was not paid back they would be harassed. If this information was divulged to others they would have had no peace.'

*mudal sapayā rägename nonisi wädawala yedemin ā  
asal ayata nayata dethi lokupoli gānumata satutin ā  
ekal ohuhata poliya dennata nohäki uninam wādiyn ā  
wisal wana adikarana salawāda ganithi naduwak wigasin ā<sup>31</sup>*

People tried to show that most *bhikkhus* participated in activities, thus, violating the principles of their religion. Because of such activities, these *bhikkhus* as a whole destroyed the *sāsana*.

*domu lesa nopen nā  
boruwen bawaya wana nā  
laya bada wada nā  
mahanu ek vi sasun nasa nā<sup>32</sup>*

'These *bhikkhus* do various things to protect their bellies. Together they destroy the Buddha *sāsana*.'

That this criticism gradually became more and more widespread. Perhaps the opportunists that helped the relevant missionary movement at that time were instrumental in building a society that was bent on criticizing those *bhikkhus*. This situation created the background for the poets who criticized those *bhikkhus*; to condemn them, the poets addressed them in abusive terms like '*sangaiyā, sangadando, hil palsangun, etc*'.

*mebandu jada siri lakdiv sasun asse gatte  
nunuwana saṅgadando bāv kiyami mam metanhi  
bali bili tawa me ādē noyek se kirimen  
sāsuna ruka kapantai me gonunge dān sadanne  
'emena mema hiwal wal pal saṅgun lakdivhi'*

This is how *bhikkhus* were being ridiculed by poets at that time. These Buddhist priests behave like rascals performing various activities, which lead to the destruction of the *sāsana*. These bulls will cut down the *sāsana* tree. *hiwal palsangun* means that *bhikkhus* who practise exorcism are not suitable for the priesthood.

During this period, *bhikkhus* who were not living in accordance with the '*vinya*' were criticized by society. The phrase, *sramana vedun saṅdaha*, means the *bhikkhus* wearing yellow robes, with clean-shaven heads, went from house to house, begging for alms and spending their time with women. That is how they were criticized by society. Buying paddy fields with the money they received from begging, they lent it at high interest all the time, praising themselves for qualities they did not really possess. These *bhikkhus* should be killed by setting dogs against them. These words show how severe was the antagonism of society.

The general impression among the people was that *bhikkhus* took up the robes because they came from poor families. When the low caste people took to robes, they destroyed the *sāsana*. Society expected people to pay respect and homage to *bhikkhus* only if they had not violated the rules of the Vinaya. They were not worthy of respect if they were corrupt.

*kandat adinnata watak näti kollo lakdiv  
sangaiyalā unumatin ugato nowemāi  
ringā katun wasana tām samano yatotin  
ännā päwiddo da owun nowadiv tama his<sup>33</sup>*

(Uneducated brats joined the *sāsana* because they had neither food nor clothes. They went into houses often and spent time with women. These *bhikkhus* should not be worshipped)

James Emerson Tennent maintained the same attitude the poets had about *bhikkhus*' behaviour. 'Generally speaking, the Buddhist priests in Ceylon adhered in practice to the rule of poverty imposed on their order. Although a few acquired property clandestinely, some connected with the larger temples and derived rich incomes from their endowments, the majority were wretchedly poor.'<sup>34</sup> If a *bhikkhu* is steeped in worldly life, his spiritual life is gradually destroyed. He eats from a decorated plate, not from a begging bowl (*pāttare*). He uses an expensive silk umbrella. He sells the robes that are donated to him and smokes cigars.<sup>35</sup> He does not like to travel without a car. However, he goes from

30. Arnolis, op.cit., 21

31 .....sanga satanala 1890, verses 4, 7

32. Mandawela Pubilis Gunawardena, *Mokshadānaya hewath Nivan Soyā Dima*, (Nibbana or Searching for Nibbana), (1893), 59. verse.

This book shows the importance of *Bhikkhus* walking along the Noble Eightfold Path as well as the criticisms launched against *bhikkhus* who lived as heretics and had non-Buddhist beliefs

33. Arnolis, op.cit., 35 – 53.

*Sangaiyalā, Sanga danda, Palsangun*

34. Sir James Emerson Tennent, *Christianity in Ceylon*, (London: John Murray, Albemale Street, 1850), 218,219

35 .....sanga hatana, 23 verse.

house to house begging shamelessly.<sup>36</sup> In the new commercialized society, the *bhikkhus* were induced to lead luxurious lives. When a *bhikkhu* receives some money, he uses an expensive watch, wears expensive sandals, etc., and goes hither and thither looking at beautiful objects.<sup>37</sup> He does not like to travel hither and thither without a car. This shows the decline and downfall of the order of monks during the Mahanuvara period. With all the material resources they had acquired, they were still not satisfied. Therefore poets were forced to reveal some of the hideous facts about the lives of the *bhikkhus*.<sup>38</sup>

*kollan dutuwitta āti ratu                      pātaya*  
*bālmen sita genwati häma                      dāmaya*  
*älmen deti soñdaguru thama                      rātaya*  
*Pulwan deviyani me kiyami                      kātaya*<sup>39</sup>

(When *bhikkhus* see fair-complexioned, good-looking boys, they summon them to the temple and cohabit with them. 'Oh Viṣṇu God! To whom should we say these things?')

*Bhikkhus* at that time ate sumptuous food and were infatuated with sexual desires. Society was aware that they would get disrobed at any moment.

*uchitan pacchithan kē basa situ situ pātu de nowedo*  
*evigasin ohu situ pātu deya divas nāti aya kese dani do*  
*wasana kala nek mihiri rasahara gatata supahas labā nira tura*  
*madana balayaku sitata wesami karai anuwana noyek jaramara*<sup>40</sup>

(These *bhikkhus* eat all the luxurious food and live in comfort. Their sexual feelings are aroused because of the life they lead. So they get involved in all sorts of misdeeds.)

The *bhikkhus* gave up eating from begging bowls and instead used gaily decorated plates. They smoked cigars too. They carried a walking stick, wore sandals, and put a silk sarong over their shoulders.<sup>41</sup> These were the new characteristics of modern *bhikkhus*. In the poem, *Kupādi Hatana*, Carolis Appuhamy admits, 'I learnt some Pali when I was a *bhikkhu*. When I grew a beard, I got all sorts of feelings and thought, 'I must earn some money.' Having thought so, I went begging to collect money to buy a silk sarong. I know everything about these *bhikkhus*. They take off their robes and lay them on their beds. However, they show that they are dedicated to the robes. Cheating people using their false wives, they buy silk sarongs, wear slippers, carry a walking stick, and put a silk sarong over their shoulders.<sup>42</sup> (This is how the young priests think of collecting money to buy essential goods and they then leave the robe) In the midst of the new social system women too changed their clothes and behaviour<sup>43</sup>. As we have seen, this made a strong impression on the lives of the *bhikkhus* who were leading a worldly life. According to Carolis Appuhamy, the women wore very short jackets showing their breasts. They wandered here and there, shaking their hips to entice the young *bhikkhus*. This was another reason that led the *bhikkhus* to change their attitudes.

According to Tissa Kariyawasam, another reason that contributed to changing the way of life of these *bhikkhus* was that there was no king, nobles, or prelates to guide them or sponsor them.<sup>44</sup> There was no central authority to supervise these young *bhikkhus* officially or lead them along the correct path. The society that existed then was not conducive to sustaining traditions. On the other hand, another set of *bhikkhus* tried to demonstrate to other *bhikkhus* the way of leading a righteous life. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were two types of renaissances. At the beginning of the colonial era, there were armed rebellions against British rule. At the end of the century, there was a Buddhist awakening (which was semi-political) and 'Désapremi Viyāpāra' riots.<sup>45</sup>

The pioneer of this resurgence was Reverend Mégettuwatte Gunānanda. He was a brave and energetic priest who created great enthusiasm among the people, both in urban and rural areas, as they had a lot of bitter grievances relating to

36. Ibib, 21 verse.

37 .....*sanga satana*, 1890, 22 verse.

38. *Dusilawatha hewath Dussilayan Handunāganime Lakunu* (Immorality or Recognizing Immoral People) (Colombo: Lakmini Pahan Printing Press, 1887), 13, 22, 32. verses.

39 .....*Sanga Satana*, (1890), 26 verse.

*Taruna liyeku kādawāgenauth tarunek satose*  
*Nomina adara situpalakara nithisurakina wilase*  
*Amana mgon mahanu ratukollan rākawese se*  
*Karana dusiri elokota mama pawasami koiwilase*

40. S.W. *Siwralu Hatanaya* (A Struggle to Disrobe), 1872, 9 verse.

This book of verses shows how the *bhikkhus* who were ordained in the *Sāsana* became lazy and did not behave virtuously and practice their precepts. Although this book aims to bring them back to the correct path, it was a criticism against the *bhikkhus* too. The poet also mentions how the character of the *bhikkhus* changed by degrees after ordainment.

41. Carolis. V. Appuhāmy, *Kupadi Hatana hewath Isthri Walippuwa*, (uncivilized people's struggle or women's convulsions), 1893, verse 48, 50 verses.

(The book of verses, *Kupadi Hatana hewath Isthri Walippuwa*, was written with the intention of criticizing people)

42. Appuhamy, op.cit., 49, 50, verses.

43. Ibib, 64, 59 verses.

*thanābāge eliya dmā thāna thāna āvidinawā*  
*pahatiya kona kara kawamin naya gānumata yanawā*  
*mana āle denadamālā sāmāthāna vimsanawā*  
*wara kole wihaga māthin me puda gandawā*

44. Kariyawasam, (RADPS) 51, 52

45 Ibib, 28.

religion and allied matters. He was also a vociferous and undaunted orator. He published many pamphlets and rose against Christianity and the missionary movement. Ven Mégettuwatte Gunānanda was identified as the chief protagonist who tried to combat the Christian and missionary movements, and his character was built up along these lines. Hikkaduwa Sri Sumangala, on the other hand, was instrumental in upholding the literary traditions of the country. The yeomen service rendered by these two renowned priests during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a great blessing to Buddhists. It was highly admired by the poets and the general public. Poets thought Mégettuwatte Gunānanda was worthy of respect and should be worshipped night and day because he vehemently opposed the missionaries and Christians. They also thought Hikkaduwa Sri Sumangala deserved the same degree of respect and admiration. Certainly, Migettuwatte Gunānanda was, of course, the most charismatic figure of the 1860 and 1870 eras.<sup>46</sup> The Pānadura Wādaya provided an occasion for Mégettuwatte Gunānanda thero to display his unparalleled oratorical skills and strength of character. It also impeded the Buddhists from reviving their religion against the attacks of missionaries. Consequently, they united under Mohottiwatte Gunānanda thero and other Buddhist priests and launched a Buddhist revivalist to fight against the conversion of Buddhists to Christianity. Accordingly, the Panadure debate was a great eye-opener for the Buddhists in Ceylon as well as others all over the world.<sup>47</sup> Megettuwatte Gunānanda thero's oratorical skills reflected the strength of character of the *bhikkhus* at that time. It attracted the poets' attention, whose poetry was well-received by society. To witness the Pānadura Wādaya, poets describe how beautiful English ladies accompanied by their husbands were seated happily in the best seats while the poor found it difficult to find seats. Some of them even had to creep between and under the seats to listen to the debate. People of different races came to view that debate. They were bedecked in gold jewellery studded with red and blue gems. Even Muslim women came to see the debate and wondered what sort of debate was going on when they saw women wearing a cloth tied around their waists and another strip of cloth across their breasts and young men lovingly touching them. Migettuwatte Gunānanda thero discoursed for an hour about the Bible and how barren and worthless its words were and created a lasting impression on the crowd who had gathered there.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, some people in the crowd were incited to criticize and insult the great monk.

A reaction to this debate was clearly seen in an article that appeared in the newspaper *Sathya Mārgaya*. Organized missionary groups began to attack Gunānanda thero verbally. While being attacked, Gunānanda thero displayed his caliber in various ways. According to a report in *Satyālamkāra* newspaper, his forceful debate had damaged the missionaries in a big way. The same source also mentions that Migettuwatte thero continued to deliver weekly sermons attacking the Christian doctrine to raise the spirits of the Buddhists,<sup>49</sup> He also made use of puppet shows to depict and criticize the Christian doctrine. He also used various ways and means to draw Buddhists to his temple. He organized folk-drama festivals to establish a definite impression of the authority of *bhikkhus* in the minds of the rural people. *Satyālamkāra* further shows that the main reason for holding these folk-dramas was to criticize the Christian doctrine. Ven. Gunananda's chief aim was to pay special attention to the places where large crowds of people gathered.

The Christians thought this was done to insult them further. It was also seen that although the *Satyālamkāra* newspaper criticized Gunānanda thero, the *Satya Mārgaya* newspaper tried its best to receive him. Many people in Sri Lanka knew that the High Priest of Kotahena Vihare, Venerable Mohottiwatte Gunānanda, gained many benefits and numerous favours for his sermons. Therefore, he won many accolades worldwide. Those who could not tolerate this spread strong false rumors that he scolded and abused and told untruths about other races, misleading people.<sup>50</sup> He had to face a lot of opposition from the missionaries and even from some of the Buddhists who had their own personal reasons for criticizing him.

*Satya Mārgaya* says that the construction of the statue of Buddha at the Colombo Kotahena Dipaduttrāma temple started about 25 years ago. However, it had not been completed because people who were not pious took back their donations and used them for their own purposes. When they could not pay back the money to the temple, they converted themselves to Christianity and abandoned and insulted Buddhism.<sup>51</sup>

It is a well-known fact that Mohottiwatte Gunānanda thero did unparalleled service in uplifting the *Buddha Sāsana* and received praise from all over the world for his great contribution. However, there were some who were not in favour and spread rumors rapidly about him and tried to lead people astray.<sup>52</sup> Gunānanda thero was criticized not only by

46. Malalgoda, op.cit., 257.

47. K.D.G Wimalaratne, 'The Buddhist Revival and the Panadura Religious Controversy' *A new Preface for the Panadura Controversy*, (Edit), Kahapola Sugatharatana thero and some others, (Colombo: Lake House Newspapers Ltd.), P 34, 35.

48. K.R. Prera, *Gunanadanawana* (well-known Mohottiwatte Gunananda thero for showing the world his Velour, His Passing away and Cremation.) (Colombo: Sudarshana Printing Press), 19, 22 verses.

49. Ibib, 26 verse.

*Tawat baibalaye sāra nāthi noyek dewal penna pennā*  
*Mahat e sabaye sitapu sāmadenage siwala ganna gannā*  
*Āwith ehi sīti kuditi balalun samaharak aya panna pannā*  
*Wiyat apa himitumā gat pāya ikuth karamin unna unnā*

50. *Satyālamkāra*, (Vol. I) (1874 – May 13th Wednesday – 16th paper), 136.

51. Ibib, 'Among these people, there are now about three Christian families. From Saturday the 2nd of this month, they are going to start a puppet show on the roads. It will start in Silva Kankanamage's garden, and there will be such a commotion that we will not be able to stay here. Mahaththaya (gentleman), we cannot even spend one night here.

They started this puppet show (*Bahubuta*) with the thought of insulting our Christian doctrine. This is because each day they have this show, a jester comes and jokes and uses insulting words. This is done to insult a dead priest. Their brutal behaviour is shown by their actions. Although they say they are pious and offer a lot of alms daily, they act like brutes in every way. Oh, foolish humans! They blame others and hide their faults. They praise their own actions, but before civilized people, they are worse than excrement.'

52. *Sathya Mārgaya*, (1867 November, Monday 23), 23.

the missionaries but even by some Buddhists who had secret dealing with missionaries. On the occasion of his funeral, there were some people who spoke disparagingly about him as if he were a joke.<sup>53</sup>

'Pious people stood around the coffin and sprinkled rose water while heathens talked jokingly.' Some stood beside his coffin until sunset, while others spent their money on the funeral and gathered there to pay respects to him. While gentlemen gathered and sprinkled rose water on the body, other foolish people made various accusations.<sup>54</sup>

'I worshipped Mohottiwatte thero for chasing the pig-like heathens. I bow down to him in worship.'

*situminikata bandu me sudul sasna rukhi  
gedi kadamina dennāu danan wet budinwas  
e yatidu neka bas dat sipkaduwe terunmaya  
emena divi pudannem e yatidunge pāmūl*<sup>55</sup>

(It was no one but our thero who uttered his sermons to convince us to protect our sāsana, which is so pure and like a wish-conferring gem; therefore, I worship at the feet of Hikkaduwe Sumangala'). The Panadura Wadaya drew attention because of the nature of the verses. It was reported that after reading the verses *Dunapare Wādāya* and insulting people coming and going on the road, a certain person was sentenced to prison with hard labour.<sup>56</sup>

While many facets of the character of Venerable Mohottiwatte Gunānanda are well-known, the character of Hikkaduwe Sumangala thero deserves equal recognition. In her study- '*Locations of Buddhism*', Anne Blackburn introduces Bhikkhu Sumangala as one of the most central figures in Lankan Buddhism and the Island's wider society during the British period.<sup>57</sup>

Another fact to be noted here is that Hikkaduwe thero's main aim was to react against the forces that were detrimental to the Sasana and to rebuild and revive it. He lived up to his ideals that Buddhism emphasized peace and good relations, especially in a pluralist society, and its qualities such as tolerance, compassion, and co-existence. Hikkaduwe Sumangala thero was the chief incumbent of the Paramadhamma Chetiya Pirivena and also the torchbearer of the national religious revival movement. He was actively involved in its activities during that crucial period. During this time, several viharas were built in Colombo and many suburbs. Vidyodaya and Vidyālanakara pirivenas were established to promote religious education, and Welivita Saranankara thero played an important role in the revival of arts and ----- . Between 1873 and 1875, Vidyodaya and Vidyālanakara Pirivena were started, and primary education was imparted to novices by Hikkaduwe Sumangala thero, Ratmalāne Dhammāloka thero and Walāne Siddharta thero.<sup>58</sup> At that time, the English language had slowly taken root in the country as the medium of instruction. Thus, the service of these Pirivenas had rendered to revive the Sinhala language and literature admirable. The bhikkhus who contributed to the present renaissance were scholars such as Hikkaduwe Sumangala, Ratmalane Sri Dharmārāma, Weligama Sumangala, Dodanduwe Piyaratana Welitota Wimalasāra, Waskaduwe Sri Subūthi theros, and Pandit Batuwanthudāwe. These *bhikkhus* were the chief architects of the present revival of learning in the country. Amidst this background, Sumangala thero was very vigilant and concerned about the conduct of some of the *bhikkhus*, and he tried to chastise and reform them and retaliated against their behaviour.<sup>59</sup> The pious and good Atthadassi thero, having continuously learnt all the arts and crafts, resided in Vanavasi Vihare.<sup>60</sup>

It is clearly seen here that when a bhikkhu showed his noble qualities, abilities, or piety as a *bhikkhu*, his brethren never hesitated to respect him and show their appreciation. *Bhikkhus*, who had led an unblemished life, were respected by society. Thus, Yogiyāne Nandārāmatissa thero's character drew the special attention of the laity.

*sasuanabare sarakal hima rāsa bandū  
muwatabare thiwāsu sarasavi landū  
thedesature path yasasāti para sindū  
neka satare therapat dam sugatinadū*<sup>61</sup>

(Like the moon shining in the *Sāsana*-like summer sky, his mouth like a pond filled with lotus flowers, bhikkhu Yogiyāne Nandārāmatissa's education, and fame have spread all over the country). Lankāgoda Dirānanda thero's character

53. Ibid. 23

54. K. R. Prera, op.cit., 43, 46.

55. Arnolis, op.cit., 47, 59, 60.

56. *Sathyālanakāra*, (Vol. 4), (1876 – August, Wednesday 23, - Paper 107), 21.

57. Anne M Blackburn, op.cit., xii.

58. Chandima Wijebandara, 'Samakalina bhikkhu adhyāpanaya, ehi ārambaya hā vikāshanaya', (The Beginning and Broadcasting to Contemporary Bhikkhu Education) *Shri Amarawansha Pñanamānjali*. (Edit) Akuratiye Nanda thero and some others, (1994), 112.

59. Arnolis, op.cit., 59, 35, 60, verses.

*emena mema hiwalwal palsangun lakdiwehi*

*karana balā e sat ugath hikkaduwe*

Hermanis Prera, *Gāla sita Colombata yana mārga wistaraya* (Description of the road from Galle to Colombo) printed by S.A.Z. Siriwardena, (1892), 23 verse.

*sat dāruwe elu saku magada basa yati  
pakeruwe nāyaka tanaturak ruti  
kit dāruwe namenuth megamai niti  
sipkaduwe visituru dā yamu yuwathi*

60. Albert de Silva, *Himathirhālankārāya or Benthota Lakara*, (Dodanduwa: Vidyaparakasha Press, 1890), 45 verse.

61. Mukalangamuwe Sirisummedhatissa, *Naradam Therawatha Hewath Mukalangamuwe Suwisuddārmadhipathiwa Wāda visu Yogiyāne Nandārāmatissa Theruwamvahanasege Jiwitha kathwa*, (The life story of Ven Mukalangamuwe Nandaramatissa), shri bu. wa. 2438, 30 verse.



has also drawn attention and appreciation as he was also a prominent figure in the Buddha *Sāsana*. *Bhikkhus*, whose chief vocation was delivering sermons, were highly regarded by the Buddhist society.

### 5. Upasampada (Higher Ordination) and Relevant Social Attitudes

Even though a *bhikkhu* could reach the highest level in society, according to Buddhist tradition pertaining to ordination, his monkhood is not complete without *upasampadā* (Higher Ordination). Since *upasampadā* is a pivotal stage in a monk's career, he has to strive to attain it, and a *bhikkhu* has to think about *upasampadā* and the disciplinary laws binding it.<sup>62</sup> Although the poet's vision does not pay much attention to *upasampadā*, the attitudes of the society have taken root and are deeply ingrained.

Following is a dialogue between a mother and a daughter whether an *upasampadā bhikkhu* or a *sāmanera* (novice) *bhikkhu* is in a more powerful position .....

Elder daughter..... 'As I wanted to be happy and enjoy a pleasurable life, I offered *dāne* (alms) to a *sāmanera* priest and enjoyed all the pleasures. Don't find fault with me, mother.'

Mother..... 'Daughter, I brought you up with all the comforts. I am surprised at what you have done this time. What is the purpose of your action? To enjoy sexual pleasures, I got an *upasampadā bhikkhu*'

Elder daughter..... 'Whatever the insults you got from the world mother, you took an *upasampadā bhikkhu*. I too if I want to enjoy a pleasurable, sexual life in the future, will take nobody else but an *upasampadā priest (mahaneke)*.'<sup>63</sup>

When a *bhikkhu* is stripped of his *upasampadā*, it is considered a serious matter of losing the *bhikkhuhood*. If *Vinaya* rules governing *upasampadā* are incomprehensible or confusing or if *upasampadā* is conferred on a *Bhikkhu* without conforming to the rules of *Vinaya*, then it is not considered a proper *upasampadā*. During colonial rule, though the society underwent drastic changes, attention paid to the traditional disciplinary rules was never relaxed. When the boundaries were overlooked, it even led to divisions in the sects (*nikāyas*). With the decline of the *Sāsana*, Venerable *Sangharāja*, during his time, re-established *upasampadā* traditionally according to the Lanka *sāsanika* traditions. It is compulsory that the place where *upasampadā* is bestowed on a *bhikkhu*, should be clean and pure. *Upasampadā* is bestowed on a *bhikkhu* after completing five factors, one of them being the *Sima* – boundaries. If the boundaries are not in accordance with the rules, then *upasampadā* will not be conferred.

The first step towards the present deterioration of the *sāsana* in Sri Lanka precipitated when *bhikkhus* from the *Ambagahapitiya* faction received *upasampadā* using the wrong boundaries and continued to say that there was nothing wrong with it. They received *upasampadā* on the boundaries of *Balapitiya Modera river, udakukkepa sima* (boundary built as water). Although this was not *upasampadā* in its real sense, they insisted that it was and behaved as if they had actually received Higher Ordination. 'Fight for the righteous. Raise the flag of the Dhamma. Surprisingly, there are no tears shed over these acts. This is a reason for you to weep, beating on the floor. Alas! Is this the Buddha *Sāsana*?'<sup>64</sup> The writer airs his feelings with great distress. Through his poems, '*Sankara Kurullā*,' the writer was able to build up and incite the people against the *Ambagahapitiye* faction accusing they did not possess authentic *upasampadā*. Thus, he raised a revolt against that faction.

*gauatulehi atalle unyatingen ekek yam  
nāgita diya gānimen bōbelen e mūdakal  
godsita dāmuwāu pālame e wādimen  
sakarabawa penemāi dora dāse udahas*

'On the bank they stood and threw water which fell on the bridge. That is how they mixed up the boundaries.'

*upasapuwa nomāttāu movun me karanne  
sasuna wānasumai aiyo mese āi karanne  
bada wiyata nisā lānenth budunge sasun me  
sunu visunu kirimen āi apāye apāye wātenne*

('These *bhikkhus* who have no *upasampadā* are ruining the *sāsana*. They want to make a livelihood from the *sāsana*. They are destroying the Buddha *sāsana* for the sake of their own gains. Why are they doing these things to end up in hell?')

*budina kata raseyā sādāyen danan dun  
widina kata dukeyā gos apāye wātīlā  
mahanakama ntāheyā gihikamat nāteyā  
yasatama wātaheyā damlesin sevbāluvoth*<sup>65</sup>

62. *Vinaya Pitakaya*, Maha Vagga Pāliya, Duthiya Bāgaya, In the Tripitaka- Sutta, *Vinaya* and *Abhidharma* are divided into three parts. The *Vinaya Pitaka* describes precepts that are essential for their ordained lives. Especially *bhikkhus* who have received Higher Ordination should observe the precepts that are compulsory to them. Also, there are necessary instructions on how they should behave during the rainy (*vas*) season.

63. Bentota Albert de Silva, *Sinnamuththu katāwa*, (Colombo: Dam Street, Sudharshana Printers), 2, 3 verses.

*sapathin wadā āthi kala doniyani se semā  
nubha dān med kala kāriya aruma kimā  
rathikam sadā apahasakara thath sāvoma  
upasampadā kenekuna gennam memā*

64. T.W. de Silva, *Sankarakurullā hewat ambagahapitiye paksayata upasampadāwa nāta kiyanana panividakārayā* (Sankaraduthayā or *Ambagahapitiya* party has no *Upasampada*, says the messenger) (Welithota: Printed at Welithota Vidyarathanakara Press Shri Bu. 2436), 05.

65. *Ibib*, 43, 49, 50 verses.

(These *bhikkhus* enjoy with great relish the alms given with great devotion by the lay people. However, owing to their actions, they end up in hell. Because of this, they have lost their lay lives and their *bhikkhuhood*.)

By expressing his views, the author of '*Sankara Kurullā*' is trying to justify himself in this manner. He wants to prove that the decline of the *Sāsana* was due to the fact that the Ambagahapitiya *bhikkhus* did not possess *upasampadā*. So when there is no *upasampadā*.....there is no *Sāsana*.

'.....The chaos and confusion in the Buddha *Sāsana* are because these novices are not aware of what damage they cause to the *Sāsana* by their misdeeds. I have written the book *Sankara Kurullā* so that they would understand it. The absolute confusion of boundaries by the Ambagahapitiya faction and that they have no proper *upasampadā* is clearly proven in this book. When there is no *upasampadā*, the *Sāsana* can be destroyed completely.....'

The *bhikkhus* and the principles of the *Sāsana* were the root cause of various debates among lay people. The book *Dussila Mardanaya and Buddha Dharmaya*<sup>66</sup> shows that it was written in response to the debates and differences of opinion about the discourse *Dussila Dāna Vādya* that occurred at that time. The book titled *Dulhi Karma Hatanaya* also shows that owing to the Ambagahapitiye *bhikkhus* having no *Upasampada*, to overcome the chaos caused by their actions, they were punished by the act of *dalhi karma*. They were ordered to engage in *dalhi karma* by Vidurudam thero.<sup>67</sup> This book shows the behaviour and character of *bhikkhus* on whom the *upasampadā* was conferred again after they had accepted their faults and were subjected to *dalhi karma* fines.

*nisilesa heranasikawat nomadat      dudana*  
*samtāsa sasuna nasanā devdat      lesina*  
*dāka yasa therindu saha nānatilaka      himiduna*  
*bakalesa 'kudā mahana' unneya      dukina*

(Those who did not know even the basic principles of Buddhism acted like Devadattas to destroy the *Sāsana*, but when they saw Venerable Gñānatilake, they lost all their power and arrogance and behaved like young *bhikkhus*.)

*balapiti muwadorehi simāwa      sankara*  
*wanahāti kiyā wajirārāma      yatiwara*  
*ambagaha piti mahana hata punkikaya waratara*  
*sitaati kara labana lesa kiya sāra      kara*

The writer further says that those *bhikkhus* who had entered the *sāsana* and were trying to destroy it, looked and acted like the Jūjaka Bamunā of the olden days and have forgotten all the precepts they learned.<sup>68</sup> Venerable Vajirārāma, too, severely reprimanded the Ambagahapitiye *bhikkhus* and insisted that they observe the precepts and gain *upasampadā*, which they had lost because of the confusion of boundaries at the Balapitiya Modera river.

*apamana wehesa daramin usabha gon thera*  
*sapāmina vidururam teradunta namakara*  
*mepamana kal hāga vi tibuna sankara*  
*helawena medakama lābagenamin vehera*

According to the writer, these priests who behaved like bulls worshipped Vidurudam thero, accepted the confusion of boundaries and the mistakes they made, and started doing '*dalhi karma*' again to regain their *upasampadā*.<sup>69</sup>

During this time, since criticisms and opinions centred on *upasampadā* were rampant, some *bhikkhus* paid more attention to their monastic life. *Bhikkhu* Illukwatte Medhankara<sup>70</sup> was once thoroughly displeased with one of his disciples who had said that the *dāne* (alms) he had been given was not to his taste and had tried to cook separate meals for himself. Because of this incident, Medhamkara thero was so displeased that he relinquished his *upasampadā* and became a *sāmanera* again. The people had gathered there and escorted *bhikkhu* Medhamkara to the Malwatte Vihāre. There disregarding even the King's orders, *upasampadā* was conferred to him for the second time, which is recorded as an unprecedented event. It is clearly seen that some traditional *bhikkhus* were steadfast in their adherence to Vinaya rules. In various stages of *bhikkhuhood*, putting on robes for the first time (*pārūpanaya*) is treated as a very important occasion. It was a way of manifesting their own traditions. However, there were different opinions on this. Some people showed resentment even through the newspapers.

The Chief of the low-country Amarapura nikāya, Venerable Kapugama Dhammakandha got himself disrobed and embraced Christianity. He had so many reasons for doing so. The main reason was that donations from the laity to the temple had been misused by some priests for their own needs, and the temple was not built. So as a stratagem to avoid the issue, they embraced Christianity.

'.....With the degeneration of the principles of the Siamese sect (*nikāya*), Upali Mahā thera, instilled the original principles in the *bhikkhus*, and they started wearing robes in the correct way. However, after some time, *bhikkhus* reverted to their old ways and began to wear robes as they wanted. People who did not know the principles accepted it, and it continued to go on.....'

66. H.L. Adiriyas Appuhamy, *Dussila Mardanaya saha Buddha Dharmaya*, (Buddha's Doctrine and Suppressing Misconduct), (Colombo: Lakminipahana Press, 1895), 2.

67. Viduru thero, A powerful Bhikkhu, was there in that relevant chapter.

68. P.J.D. Silva, *Dulhi Karma Hatanaya* (The Loss of Upasampada by the Ambagahapitiye party. Because of this incident and to release themselves from the blemishes that occurred (Sankara dosha) they had a Dulhi Karma riot.), (Welihotta: Vidyārathanākara Printing Press, Shri Bu. 2436), 42, 43 verses.

69. Ibib, 111, 114, 41 verses.

70. Udagampola Swaṇnanajothiyathi thero, *Illukwatte Medankara himiyange Jiwitha katāwa* (Venerable Illukwatte Medankara's Life Story), (Colombo: Buddhist Printing Press, 1889), 05.

'.....When these priests wanted to go to Colombo, they covered both shoulders with their robes. However, in the village, they covered one shoulder only. When they visited houses where the devotees liked both shoulders covered, the *bhikkhus* covered both shoulders. If in some houses the devotees liked only one shoulder to be covered, then the *bhikkhus* covered one shoulder only .....

..... *Bhikkhus*, who were studying at Maligakanda Pirivena, covered both shoulders. However, when they returned home, they uncovered one shoulder only.....The most contemptible thing about how they wore their robes was to see some *bhikkhus* from the same temple walking in the streets of Colombo with both shoulders covered while others from the same temple walked with only one shoulder covered.<sup>71</sup> In summing this up, these problems arose because there was no consensus regarding the way how a *bhikkhu* should wear robes. Even traditions changed with time. What is the connection between the *bhikkhu* practising the precepts of his religion and the way he wore his robes (*pārupanaya*)?

## 6. Criticisms Levelled by the Missionaries against the Institution of Bhikkhus

The priests like John Bole and Thomas Moonser took the leading role in agricultural riots in England and Germany during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the same way, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, riots and rebellions arose in Ceylon against British colonial rule, and Buddhist *monks* played a prominent role.<sup>72</sup> The authority of the *bhikkhus* originated from two sources. Firstly, they were considered spiritual leaders and protectors of Buddhism during the feudal period. Secondly, the status and the cordial relations *bhikkhus* had with other classes of society in Sri Lanka. It is also essential to consider the fact that there were two sides to the Buddhist revival movement. On one side, it was a patriotic movement that was totally against the pressure of colonial and foreign powers in the country. Their aim was to use maximum force and revolt against colonial rule and missionary education. On the other hand, it was also a revolt against depriving the majority of Sinhala Buddhists of their political and economic power, which they used to enjoy earlier.<sup>73</sup>

Against this background, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, two powerful institutions came into being- The Christian Religious institution and the Sangha institution. To sustain their image in society, both these rival factions were engaged in an incessant conflict. Due to this rivalry, the Christian clergy was always inclined to criticize the character and conduct of *bhikkhus*. *Bhikkhus*, who had a powerful image in society, were a challenge to upper-class Christians. To establish themselves firmly in society, the missionaries thought it was necessary to tarnish that image. Therefore, they tried to generate displeasure among the common people towards *bhikkhus* and stabilize their missionary movement. It was clearly seen that to achieve their objective, they used their very powerful mechanism of propaganda. Missionaries and poets held the same views and attitudes. It was also seen that their purpose was to challenge and attack the Buddhist doctrine and every object associated with Buddhism. The poets focused on attacking the *bhikkhus'* character, but not on sacred values.

*Bhikkhus* used to enjoy royal patronage from very early times. However, the missionaries could not tolerate this situation. The colonialists disliked the fact that the upcountry Sinhala gave continuous support and loyalty to the king. So their displeasure was expressed by trying to secure state sponsorship to propagate their religion.<sup>74</sup> In the past, it was the custom of *bhikkhus* to educate the laity, and the missionaries opposed this system. After Sri Lanka came under colonial rule, literature began to deviate from Buddhism. The books on Christianity and the dictionaries compiled by the Portuguese and the Dutch to propagate their religion were given priority. The pressure was applied on Buddhists to embrace Christianity, thus, depriving the rightful freedom of the *bhikkhus*. It was a big blow to the traditions that had existed for a long period of time.<sup>75</sup> The sole aim of the missionaries was to propagate their religion somehow or other.

'.....From Mondays to Thursdays, the heretics (as they called the people who did not accept the Christian religion) went to the city to work; therefore, I was able to meet only a few families..... Usually, I was able to meet about twenty people by themselves to teach them the virtues of Christianity. After talking to them, I gave them some booklets I had with me, which were refused because most of them were illiterate.....<sup>76</sup> By this incident, it is shown that it was more profitable to teach the native language than teaching English which could have unsuitable effects. It was not only that, if the state took an interest to see that they learned some sort of occupation or industry to survive, it would benefit the people.<sup>77</sup>

The pioneers of the Buddhist renaissance or revival of Buddhism thought that as long as vernacular education was in the hands of the missionaries, it would not be possible to prevent the harm it would cause to Buddhist children. So to prevent such a situation, they took steps to form societies like the Paramaviññānārtha Society. During that period in question, the *bhikkhus* foreseeing the dangerous results of missionary education to the native people made an effort to educate them in the vernacular language.<sup>78</sup> On many occasions, an assistant Lecturer of the Vidyodaya Pirivena, Venerable Heiyantuduwa, drew attention to the fact that *bhikkhus* should know the gravity of this situation and mentioned that they

71. Sirisena, (Year 1898, February 5th, an extract from the Lakmini Pahan newspaper and printed at the Suboda Printing Press.), 2, 3.

72. A. M. Nawaratna Bandara, *Britannya Yatath Vijitha Yugaye Sri Lankāwe Jātika Vyapāraya*, (The National Movement in Sri Lanka during British Colonialism), (Colombo: Fast Publishing Pvt. Ltd.), 21.

73. *Ibid.*, 31.

74. *Ibid.*, 52.

75. M.W.S De Silva, *Budusamaya hā Sinhala Sāhitya*, (Buddhist Era and Sinhalese Literature), 49.

76. The Archives of the Church Missionaries in Sri Lanka, (September, Wesleyon Mission Press, 1873), Kundasale Report. By D.A.S. Weerasinghe, written between the Years 1872 –1873. Written for the archives in Kundasale area report.) 98.

77. *Ibid.* 205

(Their idea was that when people learned English, they would resort to writing petitions and go from place to place, seeking jobs and creating trouble.)

78. *Lakdiva Baudha Pātasālā Sangamaye Wārtāwa*, (Lakdiva Buddhist School Society Report), (Sarasavi Sandarasa Press, 1894) Inauguration.

should be more alert and aware of their teaching activities.<sup>79</sup> He had tried to show them the disastrous effects of missionary education on the natives.

'.....At present, the missionaries have 1000 schools. In those schools, there are about 20,000 Buddhist boys and girls and 20,000 Hindu boys and girls. From the taxes paid by the citizens for various things (to the state), the missionaries earn about 2 lakhs annually because of these children. This is a serious situation. Among the natives, there are some who put their own generation in danger by leaving room for these actions. For this reason, we have built fortresses (schools) every year for the Buddhists to prevent such calamities and save our children from the snares of the Christians.....'<sup>80</sup> The missionaries were perplexed and bewildered in some areas where *bhikkhus* took an active role in the revival movement. The missionaries were determined to overcome and suppress Buddhism, which they compared to a lion. The *Satyāṅkārā* newspaper explains this as distressing information.<sup>81</sup> When the *bhikkhus* took the lead to spread Buddhism and education, they were isolating the people from culture and wisdom. The missionaries' argument was to act to emancipate them from this state.<sup>82</sup> It was seen that the missionaries were surprised and shocked when *bhikkhus* took down girls to the temple to teach them.<sup>83</sup>

The *bhikkhus* continuously expressed that before colonialism, when they played a leading role, society in Sri Lanka was good and virtuous. However, the missionaries vehemently denied that they accepted that fact. In '*Morality in Buddhist Countries*'; this fact is clearly emphasized.

The main reason for this is that the shortcoming in the character of the *bhikkhus* and their various activities were regularly reported in the *Satyāṅkārā* newspaper. According to their reports, these *bhikkhus* earned money by extortion, fake deeds, trading, cultivating lands, starting industries, cultivating paddy fields, etc. Other than that, they collected subscriptions, sold religious books, charged for sermons, and wrote auspicious times, thereby cheating people and continuing to protect their livelihood by these unscrupulous methods. These *bhikkhus*, who handled money, came under intense criticism. Before the beginning of the colonial era, a society guided by *bhikkhus* was invariably virtuous, as the *bhikkhus* stated. However, the missionaries rejected it as unacceptable. In '*Morality in Buddhist Countries*'<sup>84</sup> It was also alleged that a 'Buddhist priest performing a Ball'<sup>85</sup> 'Millionaire Priest.'<sup>86</sup> such derogatory statements resulted in strong criticisms against *bhikkhus*. When the new social system was introduced, transactions in money became inevitable. However, how *bhikkhus* handled money came under strong criticism from the missionaries, who alleged that Instead of '*atāpīrikara*' (the 8 accoutrements or articles required by a *bhikkhu*), they demanded a '*nawaveni pirikara*'.<sup>87</sup>

Under the new social system, new codes of conduct were introduced to Sri Lanka society by the colonialists. Among them, various kinds of games and liquor were given prominence, and the newspaper *Satyāṅkārā* hints that flocking *bhikkhus* to these social events was expected. This news story was presented in a sarcastic tone. On some occasions, the derogatory words used to address *bhikkhus* appear to be the meanest and most contemptuous forms of expression: '*mahana Pāta*'! Last night, two of these fellows, without even telling the other *bhikkhus* and the High Priest, hung their robes somewhere, dressed like two Muslim boys in pieces of cloth, and set off.<sup>88</sup> These words were used to ridicule them. 'Fools make feasts. Wise men eat them.'<sup>89</sup> - The different kinds of clever tricks of *bhikkhus*.<sup>90</sup> These forms of ridicule were incessant, and the character of *bhikkhus* was assassinated in public. This was done with the ulterior motive of weakening the strength of the *Samgha Samsthā* (order of *Bhikkhus*). The conclusion that can be drawn is that this situation arose due to the manner in which the *bhikkhus* conducted themselves. In a way, newspapers and magazines posed a threat to the existence of the *bhikkhus*. The *Satyāṅkārā* newspaper continued to peep into the internal lives of the *bhikkhus*. In *pansal hatana*<sup>91</sup> the cases that took place in two different temples were also described. Using temples for various activities was a hindrance to the existence of the *bhikkhus*. Many *bhikkhus* strove to become the heads of their temples mainly because of their greed for the material resources of the temple. For *bhikkhus*, it was not suitable to go to low courts always. The income derived from the temple was spent on litigation to maintain the families of the *bhikkhus* and not for the benefit of the *sāsana*, as it was revealed in the *Satyāṅkārā*.<sup>92</sup> In Godapitiya's *apuru sivuru peravimaka*<sup>93</sup>

79. Ibid, 6.

80. W.M Wijayasinghe, *Sapthawarshika Githikā Potha* - (Seventh Annual Song Book) Regarding The Triple Gem (Rathnathraya.), (Dharmawarādena Printing Press, 1895), 4.

81. *Satyāṅkārāya*, Volume 4 – 1876, Wednesday 23rd August, (Paper 107), 178.

82. Ibid, Wednesday 4th February, (Paper 10), 76.

83. Ibid, Wednesday 23rd August, (Paper 107), 178.

84. Ibid, Volume 1 – 1875 – Wednesday 20th of January, (Paper 35), 191.

Volume 1 – 1874 – Wednesday 4th of February, (Paper 10), 76.

85. Ibid, Volume 1 – 1874 - Wednesday 19th August, (Paper 24), 191.

86. Ibid, Volume 4 – 1876 - Wednesday 31st May (Paper 93), 114.

87. *Ara Kollange hāti* (O Those Boys!), Printed for the Church Missionary Society, (Colombo: Wesleyon Press, 1886), 6.

*Nowadays, from the High Priest to the small sāmanera (Novice), they are all exchanging money. They lease out land and collect a lot of money. They treat the sick and earn money. Hi, hi, the British govt. will think that we are poor beggars who have nothing, but we even know how to print money. So they do not ask us for taxes. Hi, Hi, Hi, this is how poor we are. They recite the tenets of the Buddha, but the priests in Colombo ride in horse carriages, bhikkhus in the rural areas ride in bull carts. If they find out how the bhikkhus give money on interest to villagers, our poverty will be exposed. Whatever it is, I have enough pirikaras (gifts), and I am not afraid to say so. My 9th pirikara is nothing but money.*

88. *Satyāṅkārāya* - Volume 1 – 1874 – Wednesday 23rd December (Paper 16), 270. Ibid, Volume 4 – 1876 - Wednesday 2nd March, 22 (Paper 85), 62. *Panshala – Mgalkande – A small bhikkhu, who lived here, kept his robes under a coconut tree, hid himself, and went home. Why wear robes you do not want? If the trees in the temple garden did not help the other bhikkhus, they would have left by now. The small bhikkhu had come to the police, as we heard. If he had been handcuffed from the beginning, would such a thing have happened?*

89. Ibid, 1874 Volume 1 – 1874, Wednesday 13th May, (Paper 16), 152.

90. Ibid, Wednesday 2nd September, (Paper 25), 191.

91. *Satyāṅkārāya* - Volume 1 – 1875, Wednesday 17th March, (Paper 39), 310.

92. Ibid, Volume 4 - 1876, Wednesday 4th October, (Paper 113), 114.

(marvellous way of wearing robes), the weaknesses of *bhikkhus* at that time are disclosed. During this time, the *bhikkhus* realized that the best way of conserving their societal position lies in the teaching profession. This device was one way of projecting their image among the people. For this purpose, *bhikkhus* adopted various strategies. Governor Brownrigg's attitude towards the *bhikkhus* was that 'they were good at memorizing, carrying messages, and were clever at inciting and practising traitorous feelings towards the state. The manners of *bhikkhus*' conversations were very secretive. They would devise various ways to go places and had many opportunities to meet people. By education and habit, they were crafty and deceitful, and it was difficult to know and understand their real feelings. ...'<sup>94</sup>

H.E, the governor's name, is said to have been misused by *Sumanasāra* thero.<sup>95</sup> *Bhikkhu* Sumanasāra had been provided funds by the state to renovate the Ruvanvālisāya at Anuradhapura, and the *bhikkhu* had explained that the state was giving him full support and help for Buddhist religious activities. Nevertheless, Dr. Wilders once stated that the *bhikkhus* of Sri Lanka were the most learned, knowledgeable, and religious in the world. The missionaries strongly opposed and objected to this statement and said that the common people of Sri Lanka knew the *bhikkhus* better than anybody else.<sup>96</sup> Based on these opinions, not only the missionaries but also the rulers found the behaviour of the *bhikkhus* somewhat problematic. The inadequate knowledge of general matters possessed by some *bhikkhus* was the cause of the low status the *bhikkhus* had in society. While *bhikkhus* like Mohottiwatte Gunānanda thero argued and prevailed over the missionaries, the lack of sufficient knowledge of some *bhikkhus* was ridiculed by society.

Following is a conversation that took place between a Buddhist priest and a Christian missionary at Beligama Missionary: Missionary: *But why do you pray to Budhu?*

Buddhist Priest: *Because he was a God. It may be so. Our religion teaches that Budhu was a good man who, by his holy life and excellent sermons, became a God afterward.*

Missionary: *My friend, you must be aware that there is a great difference between a man and a God.*<sup>97</sup>

Many missionaries criticized the way of life of *bhikkhus* and their conduct. D.J Gogerly was one of the staunch critics of the *bhikkhus*. His book *Christiyani Prajñapthi*<sup>98</sup> was a big blow to Buddhist society at that time. However, it also impeded the Buddhists from organizing themselves to confront such threats. The Buddhist revivalist movement adopted various means to uplift the declining standards of Buddhism.

## 7. Criticisms about Changing the Religion

In those days, it was a common practice for a person to change religion. During the period under review, the Chief *Bhikkhu* of the low-country Amarapura sect, Kapugama Dhammakandha thero, left the robe and embraced Christianity. It was reported that he changed his religion due to many reasons. '.....The building of the 'image house' of Colombo Kotahena Dipaduttārāma Vihare started 25 years ago but remained incomplete. This was because these sinful priests had misappropriated donations given to them by generous and virtuous people for their own sake. As a measure of atonement and to exonerate themselves, they have embraced the Christian religion, and now they are engaged in insulting and disgracing Buddhism.'<sup>99</sup> 'Plain Reasons Why I should Give up Buddhism and Become a Christian.'<sup>100</sup> . Here it is explained that where good conduct is concerned, there is a big difference between Buddhism and the Christian religion. Polyandry and polygamy were not forbidden in Buddhism. They have cited this as another reason for them to give up the Buddhist religion and embrace the Christian religion.

*siyanu kataku desa  
nohelan rāgayen āsa  
bālu pamani nelasa  
wadāle himi kerei pau dosā*

(‘The *bhikkhu* preached that it was a sin to look at a woman with unblinking, lustful eyes’)

While such developments were taking place, some people abandoned the Christian religion and embraced Buddhism. The reason for Christians to abandon their religion was that certain things were not allowed in Christianity.

*Kolān so Bisop āpadiwarana  
taman lat nānin baibalaye tibena  
ekin ekata wimasā aliboru rāgena  
aran nobāluda poth sādunada*

(‘Bishop Colan reads his Bible, thinks with his brain and utters all kinds of lies.’)

*mahath boru basāthi basāti baibala kuditu dana*

93. *Ibib*, Volume 3 – 1875, Wednesday 4th August, (Paper 52), 404.

Here a certain person married and, after the child was 1 1/2, started thinking like Lord Buddha and left his wife and 1 1/2 child, and thought it was better to become a *bhikkhu* and go to the new temple and get ordained. Now his wife has complained that she and the child have no means to live and is asking him for money. Alas! He got rid of all his desires, and without thinking ahead, he got ordained, but now he has this hindrance from this woman.

94. Braunnrigg.

95. *Sathyālakārāya*, Volume 4, (1876 Wednesday, 27th September, Paper 112), 202.

96. *Ibib*, 1876 – Wednesday 13th December, (Paper 123), 266.

97. T. Vimalananda, *Buddhism in Ceylon under the Christian Powers*. (Colombo: Y.M.B.A Press, 1963), 184.

98. D.J Gogerly, *The Christiyani Prajñapthi* or the evidence and doctrines of the Christian religion. (Colombo: Christian Vernacular Education Society, 1885), 1 (British Library). *In 1848 the Rev. D.J. Gogerly published in Sinhalese parts 1 and 2 for the Christiyani Prajñapthi. The second and third editions were issued in 1853 and 1857. The first part is a refutation of Buddhism, and Gogerly published the following English verses in 1862, the year in which that eminent scholar died. The Sinhalese version produced a profound impression on the Buddhists of Ceylon.*

99. *Sathya Mārgaya*, (1867 – September 14th, Paper 2), 03.

100. *Uragala*, Volume 7, (Christian Vernacular Society, 1860), 6-7.

*Kiyat dev basāi tama anuwana      bāwina  
viyat pañdi basāti halo ehi āthi dosut      dena  
Sugat desū satahata mena kadima      bana*

('The falsehoods in the Bible, according to the Bishop, are divine words. They are fools who believe him. But learned pundits always show the truth about Buddhism and that it transcends all other religions.') These words were expressed by a Christian who, after seeing the wrongs of the Christian religion, studied and found that Buddhism was a true religion. Realizing this, he is now spending his days as a follower of Buddhism.<sup>101</sup>

It was seen that the missionaries resorted to whatever means they could to criticize the *bhikkhus*. At Bulathgama Mudiyanse Ralahamy's Walauwa, Polgaskorale Agranayake Mudiyanse Ralahamy's wife delivered a baby boy. However, a *bhikkhu* had said that instead of getting a son, it would have been better if he had got a calf. Moreover, this *bhikkhu* was noted for lending money on interest.<sup>102</sup> The weakness in this remark was also criticized. The behaviour of the *bhikkhus* and lay people was not conducive to the existence of the *Sāsana*. When the missionaries noted these shortcomings, they took advantage and tried to establish their religion at the expense of Buddhism. People showed their unity to prevent the harm done to the *Sāsana* by the *bhikkhus* of this nature. The 'Company for the Detection of the Sacrilegious'<sup>103</sup> (*sāsanachora gavesaka samāgama*) was a society that was organized to detect both *bhikkhus* and lay people who were engaged in acts detrimental to the *Sāsana*. For this, they also made use of the newspaper *Satya Mārga*. The criticisms of the missionaries were not only confined to the conduct of the *bhikkhus*, but also extended to the sacred relics of the Buddhists. They dared to make some disparaging remarks at the sacred Tooth Relic in the following manner.

'.....There is no doubt this is a piece of man-made elephant tusk, discolored and turned yellowish due to age.....'

'.....At present, there is a tooth in the Daladā Māligāwa, which is 2 inches long and 1 inch wide. Can any intelligent man believe that there was a man who lived in this world with 40 teeth like this? If the tooth was kept on a blacksmith's anvil and struck with a hammer, would it rise in the air? Why not do an experiment on it even now?'<sup>104</sup> According to Robert Binning, 'I believe it is not really the tooth of a man or a beast, but a bit of ivory, about two inches long, wrought in the form of a canine tusk.'<sup>105</sup> By criticizing the Sri Mahā Bodhi and the *Daladā Māligāwa*, which are two important hallowed places of the Buddhists, they hurt the feelings of the Buddhists in the country. While criticizing the cultural and religious heritage of the people, they tried to impose western values on the society. Paying homage to the Bodhi was regarded as an animistic form of worship. Moreover, making clay images and paying homage to them was branded as an act of fools.<sup>106</sup> Through this sort of criticism, they pretended that they were trying to lead the people along the correct path. The people who came as missionaries gathered small crowds and spoke to them about the futility of worshipping clay images and their efforts towards liberating them. For this purpose, they found the bungalows of the mudalias' (businessmen) useful.<sup>107</sup> The final aim of their efforts was to establish the kingdom of Jesus Christ in the country.<sup>108</sup>

There were no hard and fast disciplinary rules regarding disrobing bhikkus or staying in robes. Although the spiritual life of the *bhikkhus* had deteriorated, they still continued to command respect and attention of the people, which surprised the missionaries.<sup>109</sup> Although there were frequent altercations between the missionaries and the *bhikkhus*, there were also occasions when they worked together in co-operation. The missionaries criticized some of the *bhikkhus'* attitudes, religious ideas, and sacred objects, but on occasions of some Buddhist religious ceremonies, they co-operated with them. One such occasion was the *Wālivita Pinkam Varuna festival*, in which Christian priests in black robes participated.

*iñduran wisikaramin boho uwasurut sityiyo  
wādumen epirit asamin burumawarut sityo  
adumen kalu pādiriwaru pitatin wāda sityo  
āñduran saha avudin sisupelakut ehi      sityiyo<sup>110</sup>*

(There were Burmese listening to pirith chanting, and there were some students with their teachers and priests wearing black robes standing on one side)

101. *Patipada*, The magazine of the Ceylon University Buddhist Brotherhood. 1951- 52, (Ed. S.L. Kekulawa). (Printed at the Times of Ceylon), 4.

102. *Ara Kollange hāti* (O Those Boys!) Printed for the Church Missionary Society, (Colombo: Wesleyan Press, 1886), 2.

103. *Sathya Mārgaya*, Volume 1, (Year 1867, Monday 12th October, Paper 4), 14.

104. *Dalada Māligawa*, (Colombo: Ceylon Religious Tract Society, 1892), 7, 8, 10.

105. W.M. Robert Binning, *A Journal of Two Years Travel in Persia, Ceylon. Etc. Volume 2* (London: 1857) 38.

106. *Uragala*-2251, Volume 7, (Christian Vernacular Society, 1860), 8, 10.

107. Ebenezer Daniel, *The Model Missionary of Ceylon, Colombo*. (Holmes & Son, Printers, 95, Silversmith Street 1885), 3, 5.

108. Leitch Mary and Margaret, *Seven Years in the East*. (London: 1847), 64.

109. James Selkirk, *Recollections, Recollections of Ceylon, after a residence of nearly thirteen years*, with an account of the Church missionary society's operations in the island and extracts from a journal (J. Hatchard and son, 1844), 215 – 216.

110. M. D. Silva, *Weliwita Pinkan Waruna*, (Panadura: Sucharidodaya Printers, 1899), 49 verse.

Although the discussions between the *bhikkhus* and missionaries were definitely based on personal matters, it was quite evident that its ultimate aim was to propagate their religion in Sri Lankan society. While The *bhikkhus* maintained that Buddhism existed in the country and was an authentic and complete religion, the missionaries, on the other hand, made efforts to show that their faith was the true religion. They strove hard to establish it in the country. It appeared that it was a struggle between the cultured and uncultured parties to gain supremacy on the island. The missionaries showed that worshipping statues, as well as the behaviour of *bhikkhus*, was uncivilized. While certain *bhikkhus*, who were active, powerful characters, struggled to establish their own opinions in society, some other *bhikkhus* led disgraceful lives, bringing discredit to the *Sāsana*. As such, they were a hindrance to the Buddhist renaissance. According to the Vinaya books on the basic principles of the *Sāsana*, the external behaviour of the *bhikkhus* was the cause for the unfavorable opinions that surfaced in the society regarding them. Most of these sinful activities took place in rural areas. Attention was drawn to the activities of the *bhikkhus* and their common weaknesses with the missionaries and other social groups. Ironically very few criticisms were aimed at the missionaries by the Buddhists. Education, sermon, and the press were three major expedients resorted to by the missionaries in their endeavor to spread Christianity,<sup>111</sup> and these were used to consolidate their position. The missionaries distributed free copies of the Bible's translation and various leaflets and texts. 'The missionaries visited the temples when the monks were engaged in religious ceremonies and took the opportunity to speak to the gatherings. They criticized worshipping of images and making offerings to effigies, *bo* - tree, and *dagabas* and distributed printed leaflets condemning such acts. As usual, the Buddhists tolerated these acts for some time. However, soon they realized that the missionaries were using these opportunities to disparage and vilify them.'<sup>112</sup> The missionaries used the press to make their criticisms and opinions penetrate the minds of people.

## 8. Poets Engaged in Analyzing the Life of Bhikkhus

Since the introduction of the printing press to Sri Lanka, several new developments have taken place. The institution of Buddhist monks (*Bhikkhu Sanstha*), which had been developed as the most prominent social organization in Ceylon, began to face many challenges with the introduction of the printing press. That challenge was not only confined to the Buddhist social organizations but was also extended to the conduct of the *bhikkhus*, who were held in high esteem as respectable characters in society. The *bhikkhus'* code of conduct came under strong criticism from those who were engaged in the missionary movement and also from the lay Buddhists. The printing press proved to be a sharp weapon for the colonial rulers to attack them by making various accusations. The authority the *bhikkhus* maintained in the society was shattered due to strong attacks by different sections of the society. In this context, the attention drawn by the poets to the character of the *bhikkhus* was very noticeable. This study identifies three types of categories among the *bhikkhus* of that period. Some *bhikkhus* were educated and involved in social activities, then there were the *bhikkhus* who led normal traditional lives, and lastly, there were the *bhikkhus* who led a life similar to ordinary lay people (From the lower stratum of the society). In this background, monks like Hikkaduwe Sumamgala and Migettuwatte Gunānanda can be classified as dynamic characters in the higher stratum of this *bhikkhu* society. Thus, they became the main targets of attack by the missionaries. On the other hand, they were the persons who had strongly challenged the missionary movement. In return, missionaries attacked these leading monks through newspapers and magazines.

While the missionaries attacked and challenged the integrity of the *bhikkhus*, those who were educated in vernacular schools and temples always developed and appreciated the discipline of these *bhikkhus*. *Bhikkhu* lives were also appreciated by those *bhikkhus* who followed the traditions of monastic life. It was interesting to note that the conduct of the *bhikkhus* of the lower stratum was criticized in public. *Bhikkhus*, leading lives similar to ordinary people, were viewed unfavourably by missionaries and lay Buddhists. When the sinful conduct of *bhikkhus* was exhibited in public in the presence of their lay devotees, it was a challenge to the authority of the orthodox *bhikkhus*. *Bhikkhus* who were engaged in social activities with the upper classes of society found it a hindrance when some *bhikkhus* acted in a contradictory manner expected of them. It was mainly because people engaged in the missionary movement were always pointing out the weaknesses in the *bhikkhus'* conduct in public. Some of the prominent groups who criticized the behavior of *bhikkhus* were those who had received vernacular education. Among the others were poets who were ready to criticize *bhikkhus* in poetic compositions and earned many by selling them. They made a living from that income. One can see that these readers, who specially desired to buy those pamphlets, enjoyed reading them. It is said that a villager living in Gandara wrote fake verses and sold them. He had also collected money from people on the pretext that it was for religious purposes.

<i>dudana pavitu purusa adhama niwatu pelak</i>	<i>kavisadamina</i>
<i>sobana saṅgunhata garahati gat dāneta dos</i>	<i>kiyamina</i>
<i>i gena maṅdak dahame tibenā sāti mama</i>	<i>kavikaramina</i>
<i>kiyana wadan asā sudana adamitu is iwata</i>	<i>damamina</i>
<i>ladaru kāle kiripevve sāsana wanasai</i>	<i>dānagana</i>
<i>kumaru kāle toku bāta kā wādune umbhamai</i>	<i>apamana</i>
<i>pāvīdi kale nāta mā tharaya nidutumā pamana</i>	<i>hādina</i>

111. M.U. de Silva, *Suppression of Buddhism under the British and The resistance of the Buddhists*. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, 2004, Volume XLIX, New series (Colombo: 2004), 29.

112. Ibid, 33.

*patala kale rata sāmatāna boru kavi gotamin dina dina*<sup>113</sup>

('This wicked person with sinful ideas is disgracing these good and pious *bhikkhus*. In his childhood, when he learned his lessons receiving knocks on his head, he wanted to get ordained but did not do so. Now he is spending his time at different places in the country, writing verses.')

People who had lived as priests knew better than anyone else the insidious ways of the conduct of *bhikkhus*. Those who had disrobed also created problems for the order of *bhikkhus*.

*siuralu viparamā  
Kolompura wasamin mā  
kalaka sita nopamā  
bani apa buduraduta arumā*

'A person called Viparamā was ordained in Kalutara. After disrobing, he is now living in Colombo, and as of late, he has started scolding our Lord Buddha.'

The main aim of writing the verse 'A fool from Galle' (Gālu Palāte Amanayek) was to criticize an individual who went to temples and engaged in various forms of malpractice.

*theruwan guna kit nodāna nitiyen garahanne  
salakannata sudusu wehera maluwala hiñda dum bonne  
dugañdin yuth kelasotu ādiya e tula gasaminne  
adamin sityadi mohu yama palnirayta gena yanne*

'This person knows nothing about the virtues of the Triple Gem. He sits in compounds, smoking cigarettes, spitting, and dropping mucus everywhere. That is what he does all the time.' Some people who appeared as poets lived in temples to pass their time. It was people like them who degraded the *Sāsana*

*ayukta karamina wāda sasuna padī neka  
nogatta kisi sika vida dudana guna uta  
niyuktawama wāda siti mahanayaku weta  
ābitteku wana mama kalemi mema pota*<sup>114</sup>

(This book was compiled by myself, an acolyte, regarding a *bhikkhu* who destroyed the *sāsana* by his injustice)

This discloses the fact that the 19<sup>th</sup>-century poets found it a good opportunity to level either their criticisms or express appreciation regarding the *bhikkhus* describing their conduct. While the *bhikkhu* organization was built up as a powerful social institution, printing technology was also established in society, and it exerted considerable influence on the way the *bhikkhus* conducted their lives. *Bhikkhus*, who held sway over societal norms and were acknowledged as authorities in that respect, had to struggle to protect their status by defying the criticisms levelled against them. In the transitional social background in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the prominent role played by the *bhikkhus* to safeguard religion and culture is remarkable.

## 9. References

- i. A. M, Nawaratna Bandara, *Britannya Yatath Vijitha Yugaye Sri Lankāwe Jātika Vyapārāya*, and (The National Movement in Sri Lanka during British Colonialism), (Colombo: Fast Publishing Pvt. Ltd.).
- ii. Albert de Silva, *Himathīthālankārāya or Benthota Lakara*, (Dodanduwa: Vidyaparakasha Press, 1890).
- iii. Ann M Blakburn, "Buddhism, Colonialism and Modernism" (A View from Sri Lanka) *Nethra* vol.5, no .3 (Ed). Regi Siriwardana, (Colombo: International centre for ethnic studies, Jun-Sep, 2002).
- iv. *Ara Kollange hāti* (O Those Boys!) Printed for the Church Missionary Society (Colombo: Wesleyan Press, 1886).
- v. Bentota Albert de Silva, *Sinnamuththu katāwa*, (Colombo: Dam Street, Sudharshana Printers). Brothers, 1991).
- vi. Carolis. V. Appuhāmy, *Kupadi Hatana hewath Isthri Walippuwa*, (uncivilized people's struggle or Chandima Wijebandara, "Samakalina bhikkhu adhyāpanaya, ehi ārambaya hā vikāshanaya", (The Beginning and Broadcasting to Contemporary Bhikkhu Education) *Shri Amarawansha Pfanamānjali*. (Edit) Akuratiye Nanda thero and some others, (1994).
- vii. D.J Gogerly, *The Christiyani Prajñapthi* or the evidence and doctrines of the Christian religion. (Colombo: Christian Vernacular Education Society, 1885).
- viii. *Dalada Māligawa*, (Colombo: Ceylon Religious Tract Society, 1892).
- ix. Don Andiris Kurukularathna, *Gandara Adāniel Pralāpakathura or Sagabathvibāge*, (Matara: Siridara Press, 1895).
- x. Don. P. Arnolis, *Sāsana Wrukshaya Nohoth Sāmāna Thathwa Prakāsaya* (A Statement of The Position of the Recluse or the tree of Buddhism), (Lakmini Pahana: 1884).
- xi. *Dusilawatha hewath Dussilayan Handunāganime Lakunu* (Immorality or Recognizing Immoral People) (Colombo: Lakmini Pahan Printing Press, 1887).
- xii. E.W. Adikaram, *Pārani Lakdiva Baudha Ithihāsaya*. (The Old History of Buddhists) (Colombo: J.K.G. Jayawardena & Co. 1963).
- xiii. Ebenezer Daniel, *The Model Missionary of Ceylon, Colombo*. (Holmes & Son, Printers, 95, Silversmith Street 1885).
- xiv. George D Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka*, (Delhi: Motilal Bararsidas Publishers, 1992).

113. Don Andiris Kurukularathna, *Gandara Adāniel Pralāpakathura or Sagabathvibāge*, (Matara: Siridara Press, 1895), 46. 87. Verses.

114. Ibid, 35 verse.



- xv. H.L. Adiriyas Appuhamy, *Dussila Mardanaya saha Buddha Dhařmaya*, (Buddha's Doctrine and Suppressing Misconduct), (Colombo: Lakminipahana Press, 1895).
- xvi. Halpern Manfred, *The Revolution of Modernization in National and International Society*, (New York: Atherton Press, 1966).
- xvii. Hermanis Prera, *Gālla sita Colombata yana māřga wistaraya* (Description of the road from Galle to Colombo) printed by S.A.Z. Siriwardena, (1892).
- xviii. Horana Vajiragnana Himi, *Walane Siddharthama himi, & Parama Dhamma Chethiya Pirivena* (1992).
- xix. James Selkirk, *Recollections, Recollections of Ceylon, after a residence of nearly thirteen years, with an account of the Church missionary society's operations in the island and extracts from a journal* (J. Hatchard and son, 1844).
- xx. K.D.G Wimalaratne, "The Buddhist Revival and the Panadura Religious Controversy" *A new Preface for the Panadura Controversy*, (Edit), Kahapola Sugatharatana thero and some others, (Colombo: Lake House Newspapers Ltd.).
- xxi. K.M. de Silva, 'The Government & Religion: Problems & Policies c1832 – c1910' *History of Ceylon – Vol. 3 –* (Ed) K.M. de Silva, (University of Ceylon, 1973).
- xxii. K.R. Prera, *Gunanadanawana* (well-known Mohottiwatte Gunananda thero for showing the world his Velour, His Passing away and Cremation.) (Colombo: Sudarshana Printing Press).
- xxiii. Kitsiri Malalgoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society 1750-1900*, (London: University of California Press, 1976).
- xxiv. Kotagama Vachissara, *Saranankara Sangarāja Samaya*, (Colombo: Visidunu Publishers, 3<sup>rd</sup> printing, 2003).
- xxv. Kundasale Report. By D.A.S. Weerasinghe, written between the years 1872 –1873. Written for the archives in Kundasale area report.).
- xxvi. *Lakdiv Bauddha Pātasālā Sangamaye Wārtāwa*, (Lakdiva Buddhist School Society Report), (Sarasavi Sandarasa Press, 1894) Inauguration.
- xxvii. Leitch Mary and Margaret, *Seven Years in the East*. (London: 1847).
- xxviii. M. D. Silva, *Weliwita Pinkan Waruna*, (Panadura: Sucharidodaya Printers, 1899).
- xxix. M.U. de Silva, *Suppression of Buddhism under the British and The resistance of the Buddhists*. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka, 2004, Volume XLIX, New series (Colombo: 2004).
- xxx. M.W.S De Silva, *Budusamaya hā Sinhala Sāhitya*, (Buddhist Era and Sinhalese Literature).
- xxxi. Mandawela Pubilis Gunawardena, *Mokshadānaya hewath Nivan Soyā Dima*, (Nibbana or Searching for Nibbana), (1893).
- xxxii. Martin Wickremasinghe, *Sāhithyoda Katā*" (Literary Tales) (1992).
- xxxiii. Mukalangamuwe Sirisumedhatissa, *Naradam Therawatha Hewath Mukalangamuwe Suwisuddāarmadhipathiwa Wāda visu Yogiyāne Nandāratissa Theruwamvahansege Jiwitha kathwa*, (The life story of Ven Mukalangamuwe Nandaramatissa), shri bu. wa. 2438.
- xxxiv. P.J.D. Silva, *Dulhi Karma Hatanaya* (The Loss of Upasampada by the Ambagahapitiye party. Because of this incident and to release themselves from the blemishes that occurred (sankara dosha), they had a Dulhi Karma riot.), (Welithota: Vidyāathanākara Printing Press, Shri Bu. 2436).
- xxxv. *Patipada*, The magazine of the Ceylon University Buddhist Brotherhood. 1951- 52, (Ed. S.L. Kekulawa), (Printed at the Times of Ceylon).
- xxxvi. Polwatte Buddhathatha, *Pāli Sinhala Akārādiya*, (Nugegoda: Ajith Printers, 1998).
- xxxvii. Ranweera Gunawardena, *Sivura ha Nagula* (The robes and the plough) (Colombo: The Society of Social Scientists, 1993).
- xxxviii. Rathnasiri Arangala, *Nuthana Sinhala Sāhiththiye Prabawaya* (Origin of Modern Sinhala Literature), (Colombo: Godage & Brothers, 2004).
- xxxix. S.W. *Siwralu Hatanaya* (A Struggle to Disrobe), 1872.
- xl. *Sathya Māřgaya*, (1867 November, Monday 23).
- xli. *Sathya Māřgaya*, (1867 – September 14<sup>th</sup>, Paper 2).
- xlii. *Sathya Māřgaya*, Volume 1, (Year 1867, Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October, Paper 4).
- xliiii. *Sathyālankāra*, (Vol. 4), (1876 – August, Wednesday 23, - Paper 107).
- xliv. *Sathyālankāraya*, Volume 1 – 1875 – Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January, (Paper 35).
- xlv. *Sathyālankāraya*, Volume 4 – 1876, Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, (Paper 107).
- xlvi. *Sathyālankāraya*, (Vol, I) (1874 – May 13<sup>th</sup> Wednesday – 16<sup>th</sup> paper).
- xlvii. Sir James Emerson Tennent, *Christianity in Ceylon*, (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1850).
- xlviii. Sirisena, (Year 1898, February 5<sup>th</sup>, an extract from the Lakmini Pahan newspaper and printed at the Suboda Printing Press.).
- xliv. T. Vimalananda, *Buddhism in Ceylon under the Christian Powers*. (Colombo: Y.M.B.A Press, 1963).
- I. T.W. de Silva, *Sankarakurullā hewath ambagahapitiye paksayata upasampadāwa nāta kiyana panividakārayā* (Sankaraduthayā or Ambagahapitiya party has no Upasampada, says the messenger) (Welithota: Printed at Welithota Vidyarathanakara Press Shri Bu. 2436).
- li. Tennakoon Vimalananda, *Buddhism in Ceylon under the Christian Powers* (1963).
- lii. The Archives of the Church Missionaries in Sri Lanka, (September, Wesleyon Mission Press, 1873).
- liiii. Udugampola Swařnanajothiyathi thero, *Illukwatte Medankara himiyange Jiwitha katāwa* (Venerable Illukwatte Medankara's Life Story), (Colombo: Buddhist Printing Press, 1889).
- liv. *Uragala -2251*, Volume 7, (Christian Vernacular Society, 1860).

- iv. W.M Wijayasinghe, *Sapthawarshika Githikā Potha* - (Seventh Annual Song Book) Regarding the Triple Gem (Rathnathraya.), (Dharmawaradena Printing Press, 1895).
- lvi. W.M. Robert Binning, *A Journal of Two Years Travel in Persia, Ceylon. Etc. Volume 2* (London: 1857). A Journal of two years Travel in Persia, Ceylon, etc. Vol . I (London: 1857).