

The New Colegio de Salcete at Rachol

TENSING RODRIGUES

KONKANAPURANA



Tensing Rodrigues is engaged in research on Konkani language and people

According to 'Oriente Conquistado', among the distinguished benefactors of the College featured the noble 'gaunkars' of Raia Village who contributed by leasing for perpetuity the paddy fields on the island of Junvo [Ilha de Rachol] with the hill therein; "holding back for themselves the ground thereof and a small isle adjacent to it".

"In the year 1576, eight brothers were admitted for the study of 'lingua' Canarina [Konkani language], so necessary for the culture of Christians and the conversion of the natives. The Padre Visitador [Father Visitor - a senior priest appointed by the Society of Jesus for assistance of the Local Provincial] ordered that these be kept free of any other ministry; he also directed that they not speak among themselves except in the 'lingua da terra' [local language]. Father Rector was very strict to ensure that these orders were adhered to. He ordered that at certain time every day they practice speaking with the locals; that they learn to read write in 'proprios caracteres do paiz' [correct local script]. With such a diligence, and with grace of God, in three months the brothers learned to write and speak the language perfectly well. When Father Visitor came for a visit, they received him in the parlour with speeches in the same language. And soon set out to preach to the locals in public. The local people were greatly pleased with the fact that now they have so many teachers, and so efficient. They thanked the fathers for taking so much trouble for their sake."

"One poet among them sang of the great good done to them; and they began singing; not just the converts but even the gentiles. The main difficulty of this language is with its



Wondering which saint to dedicate it to, one gaunkar by name Bartolomeu Marchona told him that as he was coming down the hillock, where the church stood, he saw an old lady with a cane in hand for support and a hat on her head for shade, who said to him that this was her house and she wanted to stay in there. The Father wondered who this old lady was. But when another old braman lady and many more people told him of a similar old lady appearing in their dreams, that she was seriously disabled and that she disclosed her name as Anna; and further that she desired to stay in that village, it is then that Father decided to dedicate the church to St. Anna."

pronunciation. Because its alphabet has more characters than ours has; which are different from ours, and we find it difficult to pronounce them. It is necessary to utter them in a particular manner; particularly in Salcete. Few among us can pronounce them properly and naturally, which is required by the ears of the country people. The second difficulty is with our ears; they talk so fast

that they cut their words short rather too frequently. They devour entire syllables and pronounce double letters and aspirates with ease."

"In the year 1577, we bought a piece of land in which we established the Quinta de Santa Ana [now the Santana village], where the students of Collegio de S. Paulo go for recreation every week. The father who was reading here, thought of converting

the villagers of Moula and Talaulim. After a good number of them were baptised, he decided to build a small church for them. Wondering which saint to dedicate it to, one gaunkar by name Bartolomeu Marchona told him that as he was coming down the hillock, where the church stood, he saw an old lady with a cane in hand for support and a hat on her head for shade, who said to him that this was her house and she wanted to stay in there. [Oriente Conquistado, Part 2, p. 109] The Father wondered who this old lady was. But when another old braman lady and many more people told him of a similar old lady appearing in their dreams, that she was seriously disabled and that she disclosed her name as Anna; and further that she desired to stay in that village, it is then that Father decided to dedicate the church to St.

Anna. The vestiges of that church still stand. Subsequently the parish was divided into two - the parish of Moula with Our Lady of Loretto as the patron, and that of Talaulim with St. Anne as the patron; the latter is one of the best churches on the island of Goa."

Let us now shift for a while from 'Oriente Conquistado' of Fr. Francisco de Sousa, to another source on the "obra da conversão" [in words of Fr. Gomes Vaz; meaning evangelisation campaign], for a difference in perspective. The other source is the letter of Fr. Gomes Vaz in 'Documenta Indica' [Wicki (ed), 1962: Documenta Indica VII, (1566-1569), Fr. Gomes Vaz S. I., Goa 12 Decembris 1567], again a Jesuit priest.

"There were a large number of temples in these lands, where God Our Lord was greatly offended and the devil was worshiped and served by all these people, with honors, offerings and vain sacrifices. And because of the many occupations, which years ago hear in the conversion of the Gentiles of this island of Goa, and others around it, the Fathers will not be able to understand so much of purpose in the conversion of the Gentiles of the land of Salcete. Four or five years hence, when the work on the conversion of the islands will begin to take place, as it has already commenced, our Fathers will begin to understand on purpose the conversion of Salcete; together they will seek the destruction of the temples harming its prospects. And because destroying them all together would cause some scandal among the gentle residents and alter the land, a way was sought; they were to be destroyed little by little." [Documenta Indica VII; (1566-1569), Fr. Gomes Vaz S. I., Goa 12 Decembris 1567, p.388]

(to be continued)