

A tale of two nations – Part IV

We can formally say that the Sinhala nation comprises those who are emotionally Sinhala and who are conscious that they are Sinhala. Once upon a time a pundit asked the question as to how does one know whether one is a Sinhala. He wanted to find out whether one becomes a Sinhala by birth in the sense at least one of the parents being Sinhala. However, it is clear that the next question would have been how does one know that the parent concerned is Sinhala. The questioning and answering could go on *ad infinitum* or until we define (or leave undefined) the first Sinhala in the typical western Christian manner. However these pundits would never ask an English how does he or she know that he or she is English. The pundits during the LTTE days when they had accepted the Eelam mythology were interested in showing that there was no Sinhala nation as such. The pundits probably believed in what are known as nation states in western political science parlance and for them a citizen of a nation state belonged to that particular nation. However, as there is no nation state by the name England or Britain according to the pundits probably there were no English or British but only United Kingdomians who are in fact subjects of their queen Mrs. Elizabeth Windsor. I find it difficult to coin a word for the nation that occupies United States of America. They are not subjects of Mr. Obama but only his objects. In any event pundits would dare say that there are no English or British or Irish for that matter.

There are problems with definitions as my fourth form Chemistry teacher taught me with his two brilliant questions, define explanation and explain definition. One has to go in cycles as otherwise one has to go on *ad infinitum* or end up with the western Christian concept of a first person or event, which is not defined! Western Mathematicians attempt to be honest in this jargon, and have many undefined concepts in their vocabulary the point in Geometry being one such concept. They would say a point is an undefined Mathematical entity and stop at that. Incidentally the Chemistry teacher who introduced me to cyclic thinking was himself a Christian. I do not hesitate to “define” Sinhala nation in terms of Sinhala and it is the holistic concept that matters. If the pundits are not satisfied then they could design a questionnaire to find out what is common to all the United Kingdomians and they would find out there is nothing other than the sterling pound, the common currency, unless Miliband or somebody else has thought of projecting himself as the common candidate.

Sinhala emotions are based mainly on Sinhala Buddhism, and to a certain extent on Yaksha culture, and many Sinhala Catholics in spite of being Catholics in religion for many generations share those emotions with the Sinhala Buddhists. There are many Sinhala Catholics who are culturally Sinhala Buddhists and are emotionally Sinhala. To be a Sinhala one has to feel that he/she is a Sinhala and be conscious of being Sinhala irrespective of the nationality or otherwise of the parents. Ven. S. Mahinda Thera who came to Sri Lanka from Sikkhim was a Sinhala though his parents were not Sinhala, whereas Colonel Olcott who came from USA could not become a Sinhala and hence neither a Sinhala Buddhist, and attempted to be an international Buddhist Theosophist, if it was possible to do so. Ven. Mahinda Thera having become a Sinhala Buddhist addressed the Sinhala Buddhists whereas the colonel managed to make some Sinhala Buddhists so called international Buddhists or Olcott Buddhists. Some of the “intellectuals” in Sri Lanka at one stage made an attempt to project Ven.

Mahinda Thera as a fascist having had connections with fascists in Hitler's Germany but they were not successful and their effort was exposed to be another "Mahinda Prabhandu" or invention. The people behind this exercise were "sama vellendas" or peace vendors and they must be happy now as peace has dawned on the country albeit by not listening to them.

Nobody can deny that there is a distinct culture that can be called Sinhala in spite of the fact that there are small scale differences between say for example Southern Sinhala culture and *Udarata* Sinhala culture. The fact that one is able to identify these differences implies that there is a broader entity that can be called Sinhala (or Sinhala Buddhist) culture. A Sinhala person or a person who belongs to the Sinhala nation is conscious of this culture and he identifies himself with that culture from his heart and not intellectually. It is the pundit who tries to identify with the Sinhala culture intellectually who finds himself bewildered and begins to utter "intellectual rubbish". In any event mine is not an exercise in defining Sinhala nation and as far as I am concerned I am happy that I can identify myself as a Sinhala Buddhist. I am thankful to journalists such as Malinda Senviratne and Rajpal Abenayake for the nice words they have used to describe me and my work but in the eyes of the pundits I am a Sinhala Buddhist Chauvinist, extremist and what not. I am not bothered of what they write and talk but I am somewhat confused as I do not know how one could become a Sinhala Buddhist extremist without being a Sinhala Buddhist first. In the world of the pundits there are Sinhala Buddhist extremists though there are no Sinhala Buddhists!

The Sinhala nation constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population of the country and they are Sinhala emotionally though some of them are western intellectually. The Jathika Chinthana School concentrates on the emotional part where as I and a few others want the Sinhala people to be Sinhala intellectually as well. Dr. Gunadasa Amarasekera himself took a partial step in this direction with his "Sinhala Kavya Sampradaya" concentrating on what he calls the "hada basa" or roughly the language of the heart in an intellectual way. The day at least a substantial number of the Sinhala people who are at present only Sinhala emotionally become Sinhala intellectually as well, we would become an independent or sovereign state.

This brings me to the thoughts of some people in Sri Lanka on Sovereignty. These people being products of "prestigious" universities here and abroad are definitely western intellectually. If the "prestigious" universities do not produce such people what is the purpose of maintaining these universities? It is said no country is sovereign as no country is isolated and states are bound by bilateral as well as international treaties. However what is not realized by the products of the "prestigious" universities is that all treaties are there to be broken if one has the strength to do so. The sovereignty may have been defined by western Political Scientists and others in many ways and they may have also come out with the "fact" that no country is hundred percent sovereign. If no country is hundred percent sovereign then we have relative sovereignty or graded sovereignty. It could be seen easily it is a kind of graded sovereignty that exists in the world today. (I am not sure, not being a Political Scientist, whether the concept of graded sovereignty has been introduced by a western Political Scientist of a "prestigious" or otherwise university. According to at least one engineer turned out to be a sociologist I am not a serious writer who knows the jargon of Social Sciences and only a populist writer who contributes only to newspapers, and perhaps I am not supposed to introduce anything

like graded sovereignty to the hallowed sciences practised by eminent people who use the jargon) The concepts such as Right to Protect result from this graded sovereignty and what has happened is that USA the grade one sovereign state has more sovereignty when compared with a grade hundred state. The state superior in graded sovereignty has the strength to break the bilateral treaties with a lesser graded state and also the so called international treaties.

As far as Sri Lanka is concerned we have experience of breaching bilateral treaties (whether or not they were called such treaties then) for about five centuries, including the so called Kandyan convention or the Sinhala English treaty. We know what happens in Afghanistan, Iraq and other places but is there a state superior in grade to USA to tell them what they should and should not do? The pundits following the western Political Scientists may pontificate that sovereign states are not found in the modern world. They may be correct as far as absolute sovereignty is concerned but when it comes to graded sovereignty the grade one state has almost absolute sovereignty but those countries below grade twenty five or so have sovereignty only in their constitutions unless of course there are heads of states with backbones backed by powerful national movements that can counter the concepts emanating from the “prestigious” universities. Unfortunately for the pundits Sri Lanka at present enjoys such head of state and national movement. It is this national movement of the Sinhala nation in Sri Lanka that has been able to defeat the alien English nation of the country led by the UNP. It should be emphasised again and again that not all those who vote for the UNP or the UNF belong to the English nation. (To be continued)