

A tale of two nations – Part VI

The Gramscian concept of hegemony goes beyond the political sphere and to a certain extent encompasses the cultural sphere as well. However it does not adequately deal with domination exercised by the western knowledge. This domination is nothing but part of cultural colonialism and even a “benevolent” westerner would not adequately admit that the so called third world is dominated mainly using the supremacy of the western knowledge system that has been established by western Christian colonialism. The so called objectivity of western science is one of the weapons used by western Christian colonialism in this respect. Western science like any other system of knowledge is relative and is relative to the western Judaic Christian culture.

It is not only the English nation of this country that has come under the domination of western cultural colonialism. Even the members of the Sinhala nation who are Sinhala emotionally have been under the domination of the western knowledge system and unless one is Sinhala intellectually as well is not aware of this domination. The political colonialism and economical colonialism could be “felt” but it is very difficult to realize that certain seemingly innocent statements such as western science is objective are the corner stones of domination by the western knowledge system.

Nobody is impartial or objective in this world, meaning the universe, as no knowledge is impartial and those with some kind of knowledge who believe in that knowledge are not impartial. Everybody knows that I am partial to Sinhala Buddhist culture while some think that they are very objective and impartial. I am not ashamed to be called a Sinhala Buddhist who is partial to that culture. After all I have been trying to develop a so called non objective system of knowledge based in the Sinhala Buddhist culture. Invariably most of those who think that they are objective and impartial are partial to the western Judaic Christian culture and believe in knowledge created in the Greek Judaic Christian Chintanaya.

The English nation and the associated members of that nation in Sri Lanka talk of multiculturalism without analyzing what is meant by this “hallowed” concept. Even the members of the Sinhala nation agree with multiculturalism and express the opinion that Sri Lanka is multicultural. It is because most of them are not Sinhala intellectually though they are Sinhala emotionally. I challenge anybody to name a country which is multicultural in the sense that all cultures in that country are treated equally in all respects. The English national anthem begins with the words God save the queen. The English flag consists of a cross and the union jack illustrates the compromise between the crosses of three saints in the landmass that has come under the hegemony of the English. There are some western countries that do not allow the Muslim women to wear their traditional dress, and how many Muslims would say that these countries treat the western Judaic culture and the Muslim culture on an equal footing? The above are nothing but characteristics of western Judaic Christian domination.

In India they pay only a lip service to the Buddhist culture, and though Shri Ambedkar was instrumental in drafting the Indian constitution Buddhism is now considered as the religion of the Dalits and up to now no Buddhist has become a President or Prime Minister in India. The Indians when they meet somebody from a foreign country would claim that they are Indians but in their hearts they know that

they are Bengalis, Maharashtrians, Keralites etc. Most of the poor in India would not have heard the concept of Indian and as far as they are concerned they are from Bihar or some other part of the country. In South Africa, the country sometimes referred to as a role model for so called reconciliation, the Afrikaans are thinking of ways and means of preserving their language and other customs. The English nation and the associate members of the English nation in Sri Lanka very often try to deceive themselves and others by pretending that except for Sri Lanka the countries are multicultural. According to them in Sri Lanka there is Sinhala Buddhist supremacy whereas in other countries multiculturalism is practiced. This is nothing but rubbish. No country big or small treats all cultures in the country on an equal footing.

It is in most of the other countries one finds dominance by one culture and not in Sri Lanka. India is a Hindu country for all the purposes and one needs not mention England in this respect. They have imposed on us their educational system and we are not in a position to teach our students the knowledge that has been created in other *chinthanayas* under the pretext that western knowledge spearheaded by western science is objective and very often reflects what is known as reality. Many of us are like the proverbial slave who does not realize that he is a slave. The dominance and supremacy of the western Anglo Saxon Christian culture is seen not only in the colonies of England in the British Isles but everywhere in the world, but the members and associate members of the English nation in Sri Lanka pretend that there is no such dominance. As a teacher, though unsuccessful, I have been conscious of this fact for the last twenty five years but have not been able to do much to convince the authorities who are more often than not English intellectually though some of them may be Sinhala emotionally.

Before the Europeans came this country was Sinhala Buddhist (there were no Burghers then and no Tamil majority even in the present Northern Province as the present day Tamils in the Jaffna peninsula are descendants of the Sinhala, some Tamils, Keralites who spoke Malayalam in the Yapa Patuna and those Tamils who were brought by the Dutch for the tobacco cultivation after 1650 and who became the majority in the area.) and undoubtedly people fought to defend *rata jathiya agama*, meaning of course Sinhale, Sinhala nation and Sinhala Buddhism. If people did not fight against the western European Christians who invaded the country to defend *rata jathiya agama* the country would have come under the Portuguese in no time and some would have been very happy of the outcome. The Dutch and then the English were keen to displace Sinhala Buddhist culture from the significant position it held and to impose by force variants of western Judaic Christian culture. It was a significant position and not a dominant position as there were no other community on whom the Sinhala people exercised their dominance. There were some Muslims in Sri Lanka when the Portuguese arrived but the Sinhala people did not dominate them, unlike the English who wanted to dominate the others in the British Isles. In fact when the Muslims were terrorized by the Portuguese it was the Sinhala king who took steps to settle down the former in the present Eastern Province.

The English first tried to form the so called Ceylonese nation with the leadership given by the Burghers and later the leadership went to Tamils, especially to the Ponnambalam Coomaraswamy family. The Ceylonese were opposed by the Sinhala Buddhists and the Sinhala nation under the leadership of Anagarika Dharmapala and it was clear from the latter part of the nineteenth century the fight was between the

Sinhala nation who were Sinhala at least emotionally and the English nation and their associates. It is unfortunate that the English educated Tamils became associates of the English nation if not full members that nation and all that the full and the associate members wanted was to deprive the Sinhala nation and the Sinhala Buddhist culture the significant position that they held. The Sinhala nation on the other hand was keen to hold on to the significant, not the dominant, position of the Sinhala nation and the Sinhala Buddhist culture and they were prepared to fight for *rata jathiya agama*, whereas the others were fighting for the king in England in some form or the other. The Nandikadal victory has not stopped this fight and when people want to ban uttering of *rata jathiya agama*, we know that we have a long way to go. (To be continued)