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## **UNDERSTANDING THE 'SINHALA-BUDDHIST' MOVEMENT IN SRI LANKA**

**Are Buddhists ant-Christian?**

**Are Sinhalese anti-Tamil?**

When Pope John Paul II visited Sri Lanka in January this year, the decision taken by the Buddhist clergy not to participate in any ceremony organized for his welcome was considered an event big enough to be reported in all the major newspapers of the world. In fact the decision was very unusual, because Buddhists generally are reputed for their non-aggressiveness and for their tolerance towards other religions. The characteristic virtue of Buddhism is benevolence or friendliness (*maitriya*). The decision of the Buddhist clergy was all the more striking because representatives of all the other religions such as Hinduism and Islam as also of all other Christian denominations were present at the public reception given to the Pope.

The Buddhist clergy are said to have taken that stand because they felt offended by a remark that the Pope had made about Buddhism in his recent book, "Crossing the Threshold of Hope". In that he had asserted that the Buddhist version of liberation was not acceptable to a Christian, because it was atheistic and also because the nature of withdrawal from the material world that it espoused led people to a state of lethargy and passivity. For an outside observer such remarks could appear sufficiently derogatory as to justify the stand taken by the Buddhist clergy. But there is certainly much more to that stand than a show of disapproval of the Pope's views. There was something else that the Buddhist community wanted to protest against, and the pope's visit only provided a welcome opportunity for that. The real object of their protest was the Sinhala Christian community of Sri Lanka.

Such a conclusion could no doubt appear to be very arbitrary and without any solid foundation. But that is a conclusion from which

no one who looks impartially at the last few centuries of Sri Lanka's history can escape. Since it came to Sri Lanka along with colonialism, Christianity has always been looked upon by the Buddhists as a vestige of colonialism, and as a religion which makes people give up ancestral traditions in favor of Western patterns of life. Buddhists probably also feared that Christianity would undermine the position that Buddhism held for centuries in the country. As they saw it, even though a minority, Christians were organizationally strong because of the patronization they received from the West. Therefore their progress had to be impeded and their powers curtailed. That is the simple reasoning behind the Buddhist antagonism to Christianity.

The opposition to Christian institutions began already during the colonial era. The great controversy at Panadura in 1873, when the Buddhists made a show of their strength in a public open-air debate with Christian missionaries, may well be the event with which they inaugurated their attack. Soon after independence, the Buddhists forced the government to nationalize all the missionary schools, to send away the nursing nuns from hospitals, to try to substitute the Sunday holiday with the Poya day, and to definitively close the doors to foreign missionaries. The opposition to the Pope was just one in a sequence of such events.

### **Sinhala-Buddhist Trend**

In the light of that background, it should be clear that the present clash in Sri Lanka between Buddhism and Christianity is not a clash on matters of doctrine or philosophy. Christianity as a doctrine is not the issue here. Buddhists are in no way opposed to Christianity as a religion, or even its acceptance by the Sinhalese. Anyone who has even a faint idea of who Sri Lankan Buddhists are will be aware of that fact. The Sri Lankan Buddhists are universally recognized as upholders of the Theravada system. They are credited with being the creators of the Pali Buddhist canon.

But still, they are far from being exclusivist in their attitude towards religion. As a matter of fact the ordinary Sinhala person prays to the Hindu deities as much as he meditates before the statue of the Buddha. The worship of Hindu gods is so much part of Buddhism today that there is hardly any Buddhist shrine without a Hindu temple attached to it. They further adhere to certain ancient shamanistic

rituals that are neither Buddhist nor Hindu. With such an elastic attitude towards religion, it is not likely that they would oppose Christianity for doctrinal reasons.

To understand the exact nature of the opposition to Christianity, it is very necessary to have an idea of the movement that has been dominant in Sri Lanka for quite some time now, termed "Sinhala-Buddhist". The word "Sinhala" here applies to both the majority race (Sinhalese) in Sri Lanka as also to the language (Sinhala) they speak. "Buddhist" refers to the religion of the majority. In the population today, 74% are Sinhalese and 69% Buddhist. These two words combining race with religion have been used very widely, particularly from the time of the country's independence, as a banner-slogan in public campaigns organized by certain religio-social organizations and political parties. But what we are concerned with here, is not so much such campaigns and activities but the thought pattern that motivates them and even makes them possible.

Quite understandably, a movement with such priorities will lead not only to religious clashes but even to purely racial clashes; and as everybody knows, almost from the time of independence, a conflict has been raging in Sri Lanka between the Sinhala and the Tamil races. The Tamils who form 17% of the population, are the second biggest racial group in Sri Lanka. The conflict between the two races has during the last two decades even escalated to armed warfare. The origin and the causes of that conflict do not come within our scope here, but we can't overlook the fact that a considerable part of the responsibility for the aggravation of the conflict is very commonly laid on the Sinhala-Buddhist movement. And that movement is also looked upon by many as the biggest obstacle to making any compromises that could bring about a settlement.

All that indicate how important it is for us to understand this movement. If, on the one hand, it could have led to a religious conflict between Buddhists and Christians and, on the other, to a racial conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils, it is an issue that seriously deserves to be taken into account by people interested in religion, and even by those interested more broadly in inter-human relationships.

What actually is this movement or tendency about? What is it motivated by? Is the Sinhala-Buddhist movement just an anti-Christian, anti-Tamil movement? Or is it a movement that has come into existence by a combination of circumstances that is beyond anybody's control? Is such a movement to be condoned or condemned? Those are questions which must by all means be asked if the issue is to be introspectively grasped. If such questions can be rightly faced, the answers would give us better insight not only into the problems plaguing Sri Lanka, but even into those vexing many other parts of the world. As everybody knows, Sri Lanka is not the only place where movements that link religion with race are causing grave concern to ordinary peace-loving people. In the way formulated, the expression "Sinhala-Buddhist" may not be very different from expressions such as "Irish-Catholic" and "Arab-Muslim".

There may be many ways of analyzing the Sri Lankan movement, but my personal feeling is that we are here before an issue that has to be looked at very dispassionately. There is much more to this issue than meets the eye. Its intricacy is such that if we are to grasp it objectively we have to approach it with great sincerity, sympathy and sensitivity. To understand it we have to go a little into the history of the country, and examine very particularly the impact that 350 years of colonization has had on the entire Sri Lankan community.

### **Colonization: Good and Bad Effects**

Widely referred to as "the pearl of the Indian ocean", Sri Lanka is a small island situated to the south of India. It has a population of over 19,000,000. The population consists of four racial groups, Sinhalese, Tamil, Moor and Burgher. Of these the first two are considered its oldest inhabitants, being groups that migrated from India before the Christian era. Prior to the colonial era, which started around 1600 AD, the Sinhalese spoke only Sinhala, and Tamils only Tamil. Today within both of these communities, about 10% have a good command of English as a second language. Then again, prior to the colonial era, the Sinhalese were, by religion, all Buddhist, and the Tamils all Hindu. During the colonial era, under the three Western powers of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British, a number of Sinhalese and Tamils became Christian. Today 8% of the population is Christian. Of these, Roman Catholics make up about

90% the Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians are small in number.

Like most socio-political happenings with which human beings have to put up, colonization is something of which it is difficult to say categorically whether it is good or bad. Because of the subjection to a foreign power that this involves, no patriotic citizen will say that colonization is good. Further, colonizers do not capture foreign lands purely out of good-will for the people of those lands. They are always motivated by greed for wealth and power.

But, like a surgical operation that becomes necessary for recovery from a grave sickness, colonization too, though undesirable and hurtful, may have good effects and so it may have to be tolerated and accepted as a necessary evil; for, everywhere and in every era, colonization is what has helped socially secluded communities to enter into the socially open international community. It is what has helped inhabitants of traditionally static communities to acquire new knowledge, develop abilities, and improve patterns of life, so that they could come in contact and be in communication with people of countries enjoying higher socio-economic standards of life.

We have to admit that all of the three colonial powers, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British, – and probably the British more than all others, because they were the only power that was able to conquer the whole country, – helped Sri Lanka in this regard. If we are honest and impartial, we have to give the devil his due, and say that if not for colonization, Sri Lanka would not have entered the international community so quickly and become so fully a member of it. Thanks to the colonizers, Sri Lanka achieved a higher level than in the pre-colonial era in a number of spheres, such as trade and commerce, law and jurisprudence, medical care, transport and communication, a parliamentary form of government, and very particularly education. The language diffused by the British, namely English, and even the Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity propagated by the three powers, were a positive help.

But then there is the other side to that coin of development, and a very unhappy one at that. The two principal races, the Sinhalese and the Tamils, had to pay a great price for these advancements. If we restrict ourselves here to just the Sinhala race, colonial rule

introduced a double split into its ranks. In terms of language, the Sinhalese race, which until then had been only Sinhala speaking, broke into two, a Sinhala-speaking majority and an English speaking minority. And in terms of religion, the Sinhala race, which had been exclusively Buddhist, became one with a Buddhist majority and a Christian minority. Of this double split, the first, namely that caused by language, was the one destined to bring about the most disastrous repercussions.

### **English: Rise of Few, Fall of Many**

That the colonial powers brought Sri Lanka to an international level is true. They did so by educating roughly 10% of the population with a good knowledge of English. Since English was an international language the Sinhalese who became fluent in it were able to advance in different fields of knowledge and maintain contact with elites in the rest of the world. But by the same token, 90% of the Sinhalese totally lost their bearings. They were not only denied admission into the new international world order, but were condemned to be imprisoned for life within their old uni-racial world.

What is tragic here is not so much what happened to the rank and file of society, but what happened to those who formed the elite and upon whose shoulders the stability of the country's culture had previously rested. These elite were principally the Buddhist monk, the ayurvedic physician, and the school teacher. The lack of English made them lose the position they had held in society. Thus the traditional Sinhala elite were simply ousted from their position; and what was more painful to them, they saw before their very eyes their position being taken by the new elite, whose strength lied in the English in which they had been educated.

Anybody can imagine the frustration that such a situation would cause. For persons who have been long respected for the service they have rendered to society, there is no greater torment of mind than to realize that they are no longer wanted. The displaced community-leaders had no alternative but to retaliate in the best way they could. So they gathered the rest of the Sinhalese community around them, and adopted their traditional language and religion as a shield to protect themselves from being trodden down by the new elite who had replaced them. The Sinhala-Buddhist

movement so formed was destined to become a powerful socio-political force in Sri Lanka. We can see how powerful its impact on the country has been by looking at just three of the most important episodes in Sri Lanka's recent history.

The first of these was the response of the new post - colonial government to the plight of the Sinhala elite. There is not the least doubt that the fate of the Sinhala rural elite was well understood by those who were at the helm of the government in the first decade after independence. It remains uncertain however, if the solution that was finally offered was the proper one. If it wasn't, nobody can be blamed for it. It was not an easy problem to solve especially so soon after regaining independence. The country needed time to get acclimatized to the democratic form of government, and particularly the parliamentary system, that the British had bequeathed to the nation.

In any case, with the intention of temporarily pacifying the people, the government declared Sinhala the official language of the country and gave Buddhism a special priority among the country's religions. It is almost certain that at that time many didn't see clearly enough that what the people really wanted was not so much for Sinhala or Buddhism as to have a respected place in the new society. What the 90% wanted, rather was a place not second to that gained by the 10%. However justifiable it may be, to fulfill that desire, in the given circumstances, was not easy; and the way would be far from short. So the less difficult solution had to be preferred to the more correct.

The second episode was the Tamil reaction to the above. The declaration of Sinhala as the official language, though a measure taken to pacify a rural elite in despair, was bound to have an ill-effect in a country where the mother-tongue of everybody was not Sinhala. It is only natural therefore, that the Tamil minority would begin to clamor for their rights at this juncture. But we must be very careful here not to use the cause of the Sinhala - Tamil conflict to judge the attitude of the Sinhalese to the Tamils. That the Sinhala - Buddhist trend is what instigated the Tamil - Sinhala conflict has to be accepted without any question. However, if we consider the inner motivation, we will see that the Sinhala - Buddhist movement is not primarily an anti-Tamil movement. The

Sinhala elite clamored for the Sinhala language not to hurt the Tamils, but to hit the English - educated Sinhalese group who had usurped the position in society that they had previously held.

If we look at the ordinary Sinhalese people, it is difficult to say that they have any animosity towards Tamils as such. One has only to see how the ordinary Sinhalese people patronize the Tamil restaurants and grocery shops which are in their areas to see that they have no ill feelings whatsoever towards the Tamils as a race. The Sinhala - Tamil problem could have taken another direction if the Tamil leaders had understood the Sinhala - Buddhist movement a little more introspectively, and seen that it was not primarily meant to hit them. It has to be acknowledged however, that there have also been opportunists among the Sinhalese who, either to enhance their position in the community or to get an extra vote, have roused ethnic conflicts. Such people are everywhere. They are like people who, in the language of the Sinhalese villagers, take delight in lighting their cigar from the beard of the neighbour that has caught fire!

The third episode was the rebellion of rural Sinhalese youth that took place on two occasions, in 1971 and 1987, with the aim of taking control of the government. Because of the frightful way in which the insurrections were both conducted by the rebels and suppressed by the government, they are without any doubt among the most gruesome episodes of Sri Lanka's entire history. Organized by a movement called the People's Liberation Front, referred to in short by the first letters of its Sinhala name as "JVP", this rebellion was really an attack by the rural Sinhalese on the urbanized and well-established Sinhalese leaders of the nation. It was not an attack on the Tamils or even on the Christians. If the real problem of contemporary Sri Lanka is, as many seem to assume, a problem of the Sinhalese against the Tamils, such a rebellion of the Sinhalese against the Sinhalese is inexplicable.

### **Effects of Demoralization**

To understand the Sinhala - Buddhist movement as also the causes of the deep problems raging in Sri Lanka, all these three episodes have to be taken together. What is at the bottom of all these, is an unfortunate side-effect or by-product of the otherwise very good work done by the British colonial government. Through the



medium of English they uplifted a minority to a very high urbanized stature. When this urbanized minority took over the management of the country, the traditional Sinhala educated elite lost their position. When, in a gesture of retaliation against the urbanized Sinhala minority, the rural Sinhala majority had Sinhala declared as the national language, its execution hit the Tamil group. From this it should be clear that what is at the bottom of both the Tamil-Sinhala conflict and the JVP insurrection is the disgruntlement felt by the Sinhala-educated elite at their inability to find a respectable place in the post-colonial Sri Lanka.

The JVP rebellion clearly showed that what the traditional elite as well as the Sinhala educated rural youth want is nothing other than a secure future. Towards this aim, language and religion were very secondary. There could be more than one national language. Religion, in fact, was even totally ignored as the leaders subscribed to the Marxist antipathy towards religion. All this goes to show how one and the same frustration, specially when it is in a numerically large group, can cause diverse types of disasters; and the disasters caused by the Tamil-Sinhala conflict and the JVP rebellion are by no means small. Together the two have caused over sixty thousand deaths since 1971, and have created over one million refugees since July 1983.

The problem highlighted by the Sinhala-Buddhist movement is by no means an easy one to solve. Solutions have to be offered from various angles. But, of course, we must not forget that the problem first arose in the area of language. And so, in keeping with the Sinhala village saying that a person who falls into a well has to come out through the same "mouth" as the one through which he fell, the solution to the problem has to be mainly in the area of language. Therefore, the biggest part in providing a solution to the problem has to be played by educators.

The rural Sinhala elite, namely the Buddhist monk, the ayurvedic physician and the Sinhala school teacher, and now, the students who come to universities from rural areas as well, must be provided with facilities to learn a second language. The language chosen is immaterial. It could be Hindi, Tamil, German, Japanese, or French. English however, is the language that historical circumstances have bequeathed to Sri Lankans as the closest international language.

To teach a second language to adults is not easy. New methods that fit the Sinhala mentality, - such as Sinhala-English contrastive methods - have to be evolved after careful research and experimentation. A *usable* knowledge of English however, does not necessarily have to be a *conversational* knowledge of English. For example, in Japan there are many who translate English books for publication in Japanese but still cannot hold a conversation in English. If the methods used are good, it is not impossible to help an adult acquire a preliminary book-reading knowledge of English in one year, with just two hours of class-work a day. It goes without saying that this preliminary knowledge has to be further developed by assiduous effort on the part of the student. What is urgent, however, is that the rural elite attain the ability to consult books which will help them to execute their profession with self-confidence and with a certain pride and joy.

A country like Sri Lanka can't afford to make available in translation all the latest research works published in other languages. We must admit however, that even on a subject such as Buddhism there are better books in languages other than Sinhala today. The critical situation in which the country finds itself is, of course, not one that can be put right over night. Any little success, therefore, should be valued. If 10% of the Buddhist monks, 10% of the ayurvedic physicians, 10% of the village school teachers, and 10% of the university graduates can be given a book-reading knowledge of English in 10 years that would be an achievement to be proud of, for that would create a solid hope for a rurally-strong, ethnically-united, and an economically-stable Sri Lanka. Whatever it be, the advancement of the rural elite to a standard at which they can come in communication with the international world is a requirement that anybody who envisages the speedy progress of the country must give priority to today.

### **Christian Attitude to Buddhism**

Language however, as we said before, is not the only feature that the colonizing powers bequeathed to the nation. They handed down a religion too, namely Christianity. And in the judgment of those who refer to themselves as Sinhala-Buddhists, this too brought about a split in the Sinhalese race. According to them, the Sinhalese Christians have alienated themselves from their ancestral traditions. In face of the continued opposition that the Sinhala-Buddhists have shown

Sinhala Christians, particularly after the country's independence, it may not be inopportune for Christians to ask themselves if there is any ground to this accusation made against them.

We have to grant that there is some justification for looking at Christianity as a vestige of colonialism. This is because the missionaries did not come alone or by themselves. They came with the colonizers, the Catholic missionaries with the Portuguese, the presbyterian missionaries with the Dutch, and the Anglican missionaries with the British. And so, what the colonizers and the missionaries have together effected in a minority group may not be just Christianization; it could well also be Westernization. Furthermore, as is commonly known today, like any other religion "Christianity" stands for both a spirituality and a culture. Since it was in the West that Christianity developed for twenty centuries, quite naturally, Christian spiritual values were presented in a Western garb. But an Easterner who accepts Christianity is not obliged to accept it in that Western garb.

Unfortunately, many missionaries do not seem to have paid much heed to that aspect of conversion to Christianity. As a matter of fact, outside a few far-sighted individuals, such as Fr. Joseph Vaz and Fr. Jacome Gonsalvez, hardly any missionaries cared to examine the culture of the country and its values. As a result, Christians today have set aside a large number of ancestral traditions respected by the Sinhalese people. The Sinhala New Year celebrations can be taken as one example. A large number of Christians do not join their compatriots in celebrating this annual festival which falls in mid-April, and is common to both the Sinhalese and the Tamils. They are satisfied with the Western New Year which falls on January first. In general, most Christians have very little idea of what the New Year means to a Sinhala villager. In Christian homes the traditional way of greeting elders has also been practically abandoned. The Sinhalese always prostrate themselves in worship before their parents, teachers and priests when greeting them. In all such matters, Christians today follow Western traditions. Such behavioral patterns could provide a justification for the accusations made by the non-Christian Sinhalese.

Then again, shouldn't the Christians take a more enlightened attitude to Buddhism now than in the past? In a Christian community

which is about 400 years old, Christians have had enough time to reflect on the teachings of the Buddha. In terms of the terminology in which they are expressed, Buddhism and Christianity are by no means identical. That is only to be expected. The Buddha and the Christ lived in two different historical eras. They belonged to two very different cultural traditions. The religions of Hinduism and Judaism that created the framework for their ministry are very different from each other. So there is nothing unusual if the mode of expression of the two religions is different.

But does the difference of expression imply that the values which the Buddha and the Christ upheld are different? Are the virtues that the Buddha upheld such as benevolence (*Mettā*), compassion (*karunā*), meekness (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*), opposed to the values that Christ upheld when he said "Blessed are the poor", "Blessed are the meek", "Blessed are those who show mercy", "Blessed are the peacemakers"? In a context like Sri Lanka therefore, could it be considered wrong for a Sinhala Christian to bow down before the statue of the Buddha or offer a flower at his feet? Christians have no problem about putting a garland on living teachers and political leaders or on statues of national heroes. After all, the Buddha is taken even by the Buddhists only as a religious teacher and not as a god. Has a Christian to reject the Buddha, the most revered teacher of the Asian people, to worship Christ? Must one to cease to be Sinhalese to be Christian?

A suggestion such as this could no doubt appear to some as smacking of racism. According to them, Christians must be above their race and be international. Such people are confusing genuine love of the race with racism. Nobody can love the world if he or she cannot love his or her race. Anybody who claims to love mankind at large and does not love his family cannot be very sincere. Furthermore, we must not forget that God did not make abstract human beings, but only Sinhalese, Tamils, Chinese, and Indians, and it is as such that they have to become "children of God".

### **Towards a Solution**

From the few observations made here, it should be evident that there is more to the religio-racial movement of Sri Lanka termed "Sinhala-Buddhist" than is visible on the surface and that they can

fulfill a role for which they will be recognized. It is the lack of assurance in that regard that torments the Sinhala educated elite. The Buddhist monk, the aurvedic physician, the school teacher as well as the graduate coming out of the university, feel that they are condemned to be eternally just second class citizens in their own homeland.

The demoralization that such a feeling causes can drain all the energy out of the best minds of the country. Those who are expected to become the mental stalwarts of the country could lose their self confidence and cease to be inventive, enterprising, industrious, and hardworking, - qualities very necessary for the independence and stability of a developing country. Demoralization of the leading citizens of a country is also the biggest obstacle to a good economy and even to a healthy democracy. Therefore, it is important that the government as well as social and religious institutions and even far-sighted private citizens give great importance to the task of building up *the morale* of the people.

The two groups that have, - through no fault of their own, - been instrumental in bringing about the double split in the Sinhala community have a particular obligation in that task of building up the morale in the Sinhalese community. They are first the English speaking urbanized minority, the members of which, given the ratio of the country's population, are, by majority, Buddhist. The second group are the Christians. For reasons that are self-evident, the two groups hold a privileged position in the country. They have within their power much they can do to heal the wound of the Sinhala-Buddhist community.

But both parties must go out of their way in order to do this. Otherwise the outcome could be detrimental even to their own welfare for, as it often happens in society, if the strong minority does not draw the weak majority up, then the weak majority draws the strong minority down. Therefore, it is not right, nor even safe, for the Christians now to be concerned exclusively with the welfare of their own communities, or for the urbanized English elite to make their own position secure. Whatever little is done by the two groups will have its repercussions in the not too distant future. Even a short period of ten years will be enough to show the

results of a proper attitude to the Sinhala Buddhist problem. In ten years Sri Lanka could be a divided and bleeding nation, or a unified peaceful nation; it could be a starving nation or a self-supporting self-confident nation. That will depend on the sensitivity with which the Sinhala-Buddhist problem is looked at today.

It should also be apparent that the numerous problems facing Sri Lanka today, are largely due to a wrong or very superficial understanding of that movement. From what I have said, one could of course get the impression that I am trying to exonerate the Sinhala Buddhist community from any responsibility in the Sinhala - Tamil and the Buddhist - Christian rift, and to paint them as a very innocent and a non-belligerent group. That is not my intention. I am not denying their belligerence. I am only saying that this belligerence has to be rightly understood.

Belligerence may come from two very contrary sources. It can come from a powerful group trying to subjugate a weak group, or it can come from a weak group trying helplessly to defend itself. The situation of the second is like that of a dog with an injured leg. At such a moment, because of the unbearability of the pain, it may become fierce and attack even the members of the house with which it normally plays. The way to control such a dog is not to hit it but to heal its wound. All that I want to say is that those who, either from inside or outside the country, want to see the Tamil-Sinhala rift as well as the Christian-Buddhist rift solved and the country at peace should help to heal the wound from which the Sinhala race is suffering, - a wound which, however unintentionally, has been inflicted by the colonial system of government.

To heal such a wound, of course, is not easy. In the view of many, the basic problem of the Sinhalese community and of Sri Lanka as a whole is an economic one; as they see it, as long as people have what they need in terms of food, clothing, shelter as well as jobs with good salaries, all the problems of Sri Lanka will be solved. There is no doubt that economic development is one of the most urgent requirements for Sri Lanka; and there is equally no doubt that along with the government, all responsible institutions and individuals are obliged to do whatever they can to realize this aim.

However, for the genuine well-being of a nation much more is necessary than just a good economy. People are looking not just for money, but for *human dignity*. They want to feel that they have a place in society, and that they can fulfill a role for which they will be recognized. It is the lack of assurance in that regard that torments the Sinhala educated elite. The Buddhist monk, the ayurvedic physician, the school teacher as well as the graduate coming out of the university, feel that they are condemned to be eternally just second class citizens in their own homeland.

The demoralization that such a feeling causes can drain all the energy out of the best minds of the country. Those who are expected to become the mental stalwarts of the country could lose their self confidence and cease to be inventive, enterprising, industrious, and hardworking, - qualities very necessary for the independence and stability of a developing country. Demoralization of the leading citizens of a country is also the biggest obstacle to a good economy and even to a healthy democracy. Therefore, it is important that the government as well as social and religious institutions and even far-sighted private citizens give great importance to the task of building up the *morale* of the people.

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