

Champika denies the heritage of Muslims

Friday 20 February 2009, by [KARUNARATNE Vickramabahu \("Bahu"\)](#) (Date first published: 23 November 2008).

'We have smashed the Tamil resistance, now we take on the Muslims' appears to be the slogan of Sinhala chauvinists who support the Mahinda regime. Muslims who could not tolerate anymore the blatant attacks on their image and very existence came out protesting. With many other parties together we took a stand against this inhuman situation. In fact all opposition parties and some pro government Tamil and Muslim nationalist parties signed this common document. Thereafter some Muslim youth organisations staged a protest at Maradana. The state reacted very harshly by taking dozens of youth into custody claiming that they were involved in attacks against Sinhala shops. Though they claim that they have evidence, the only incident they have on record is of one young protester kicking at a shop window.

Deliberate attempt

The story has been blown out of proportion to claim that Sinhala shops were attacked at Panchikawatta. What do these people want? Can anybody believe that organised Muslim youth would attack Sinhala shops in Colombo while the regime is celebrating the victory over LTTE? There is a deliberate attempt to spread satanic lies about Muslims. For example according to LAKBIMAnEWS, JHU spokesman Nishantha Warnasinghe has said, "on one occasion, a prominent Muslim moulavi and some other Muslim gangs had entered the school and the moulavi had stroked the stomach of a Sinhala girl who was in lama sari saying, 'duwa, you should not have your stomach out like this'. This is child abuse." Exactly, so what did this JHU leader do? Did he go to the child protection section of the police and make a complaint? Did he mobilise the parents and others committed to fight against child abuse to make a protest? No, because there was no such incident.

Instead Nishantha is making statements to the press giving the impression that Muslim moulavis are waiting at every daham pasala to stroke the bellies of girls in lama saris. No date, no name, no time, but he has come out with details of an event involving a Muslim priest. As far as I can see, this statement itself is criminal, as it is, he is provoking Sinhala people against Muslims. Is not there a law in this country against such criminal provocations?

JHU irresponsible

The JHU is quite irresponsible to say the least. For instance, Champika the leader of the movement while denying that he ever said "this country does not belong to the Muslims", in the same interview says "other nationalities and religions have been established here. They are like migrants." In the first place how could a nationality be migrants? Nationality arises with a homeland where the community has been living to create a history for themselves. If his position is that Muslims are like migrants then obviously he is denying the heritage of Muslims in this country.

Champika cannot have the cake and eat it. Is he denying that Muslims have been living in this country for centuries participating in major events of history? Muslims ruled cities, they participated in royal courts and fought wars side by side with the Sinhalese. Before Prophet Mohamed, Mediterranean people were referred to as Yonaka in Sinhala literature. During Buddha's time, the term Naga was used for the Mediterranean people. Thus the history of Mediterranean people in Lanka goes back to the pre Sinhala era.

Early homo sapiens arrived in Lanka around 40,000 years ago from the Middle Eastern area while they were drifting out of Africa. Thereafter waves of humans arrived in Lanka from the Middle East and India. At the time of Buddha, Naga people were abundantly present all over the Indian subcontinent. Michelinda who helped Buddha in the rainy season with a temporary cover was identified as a Naga prince.

Sinhala tradition

Also Buddha came to Lanka to settle a dispute between two Naga princes. In addition to Nagas there were Yaksha Dravidians and Buddha's life was full of incidents where he met Yaksha Dravidians both in India and in Lanka. Sinhala tradition starts with the arrival of Aryan warriors and only later became a Buddhist tradition. In this scenario it is absurd to pin the title of migrant on Muslims and Tamils and claim Sinhalese to be the natives of Lanka.

It is futile to group humans in any other way except as social and cultural identities. The fact that Lanka is a country with ancient cultural identities is a good thing and it is a part of our natural wealth. Any party or organisation that wants to make false claims to divide the people into first and second class citizens is doing a great disservice to the country.

P.S.

* From <http://www.nssp.info/ninawwa/bahusc...>