

**A VISION OF SRI LANKA
FOR THE 21st CENTURY**

C. Sivanesan

FOREWORD

by

Prof. Ralph Buultjens

**A VISION OF SRI LANKA
FOR THE 21st CENTURY**

C. Sivanesan

FOREWORD

by

Prof. Ralph Buultjens

A HISTORY OF SRI LANKA
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

June 1985

All rights reserved by author

Acknowledgements: World Vision International, Sri Lanka branch for the original suggestion and subsequent assistance.

Contents

Foreword by Prof. Ralph Buultjens	
Preface	
Long term Global Outlook	2
World Trends in the Global Village	3
Common World Problems and Ideals	5
Basic Desires or Nobler Aspirations	10
Aggressive Identity, Detached Identity and Anatta	12
Violence or Nonviolence	16
Sri Lanka — Past History	21
Sri Lanka — Recent History	25
Psychological Attitudes on Ethnic Conflicts	33
Adversary Democracy and Consociational Democracy	40
Conflicts, Compromises and Consensus	43
Decentralisation for Democratisation and Integration	46
Equality, Excellence and Proportionality	51
Language Policy	55
Population and Development	59
Conclusion — A Vision of our Future	61

പരിചയം

1. പരിചയം
 2. പരിചയം
 3. പരിചയം
 4. പരിചയം
 5. പരിചയം
 6. പരിചയം
 7. പരിചയം
 8. പരിചയം
 9. പരിചയം
 10. പരിചയം
 11. പരിചയം
 12. പരിചയം
 13. പരിചയം
 14. പരിചയം
 15. പരിചയം
 16. പരിചയം
 17. പരിചയം
 18. പരിചയം
 19. പരിചയം
 20. പരിചയം

Foreword

If any nation is to develop, prosper and enjoy the benefits of modern society, it must plan for the future. In Sri Lanka because of the problems we have recently experienced, the need for visionary perceptions is all the more important. The twentyfirst century beckons us — only if we have ideas about the pathways to the future.

In troubled times, it is not easy to balance the stresses of immediate existence with conceptual thinking about the decades ahead. Yet Mr. C. Sivanesan, in his small book on Sri Lanka in the next century, has been able to do this. He begins his work with an overall perspective of human development through history. This leads to an analysis of Sri Lanka's ethnic problems and other concerns. Finally Mr. Sivanesan develops an intelligent blueprint for the Sri Lanka prospect.

What is particularly impressive about this effort is its broad historical theme and focus on values. Most analysis and observers of global and Sri Lankan events are concerned with immediate happenings and current actions. Mr. Sivanesan transcends this approach and takes a wider angle of vision. He established a link between values of tradition and of the heart and mind, and the development of national goals. More of this type of thinking is needed, if Sri Lanka is to move ahead peacefully.

The idea and the context in which Mr. Sivanesan presents his vision of Sri Lanka suggest that his own intellectual growth has developed from the difficulties of the society in which he has lived. That he is able to look to the future without colourations or emotional baggage is testimony to his liberality of thought and strength of mind. While I do not share all his ideas and approaches, I can only urge that he continue further with his examination of societies and their destinies. Every society needs objective, capable and thoughtful social analysis of this kind.

Although he is an experienced writer and social critic, this is Mr. Sivanesan's first book. Given the quality of this work, his diligence in studying new social trends, and his capacity for sustained effort, I am confident that we will have more literary work from him shortly. This will help us all to shape and focus a national debate on Sri Lanka's future. For our sake, as well as his, we must encourage him in continuing and expanding his service.

Ralph Bultjens

Colombo
April, 1985.

Preface

Scientific and technological changes are making fundamental changes, and the 21st century world would be much more advanced materially. Human beings have now a much better understanding of the external material environment. But the understanding of the human mind and social and political relations has progressed relatively little.

The social scientists have failed to contribute much to a better understanding of ourselves and society, as most of them in recent times, have followed the misunderstood methodology of the physical sciences, and tried to follow a value-free rigorous but inappropriate scientific methodology using mathematics and statistics. In the social sphere, too much of exact classified data, is not a substitute for deeper insights into human fears, prejudices and aspirations, which cannot be measured or quantified. Unselfish benovolent attitudes are more vital for social progress, than envious comparisons of quantified data, which encourages mutual destructions.

We need not wait till all data are obtained to frame a wise policy for our future. To keep our physical body healthy we need not know all that is happening within our body. We should only know how to respond intelligently to the symptoms of hunger, thirst, fatigue or pain, and to environmental changes. Similarly to keep society healthy and sane, we need not collect all data, but respond with insight and wisdom to the social problems in the global environment.

Tentative generalisations on inadequate but significant data on vital problems is more useful than exact knowledge on trivial matters. An interdisciplinary, holistic and non-linear approach is adopted here, attempting to institutionalise the aspirations for higher values within the context of worldwide trends and possibilities. A forward looking global approach is emphasised instead of the current backward looking tribal approach, favoured by the older generation. Only a society with an inspiring and uplifting vision of its future, can achieve anything great. Societies without ennobling visions usually stagnate, blunder, drift and eventually decline in culture and civilization.

As Sri Lanka is predominantly a Buddhist country, Buddhist values are emphasised. But similar values are found in all the great religions and quoting all of them would be repetitive. Part of the reason for the recent problems in Sri Lanka today is due to the perversions and misunderstanding of the universal and compassionate values found in all religions. If Buddhism is fully practised, all our individual, social and political problems can be solved, and all religions, languages and cultures, can live in full peace, freedom and harmony, with mutually beneficial interactions.

I am deeply grateful to the world famous social scientist, Prof. Ralph Buultjens, whose recent lectures and seminars in Colombo were highly educative and enlightening, for the encouraging foreword he has given to my amateur attempt. Rev. Celestine Fernando, from whom I am learning the deeper meanings of the Bible, read through the whole manuscripts and suggested many improvements, for which I am grateful. All the valuable suggestions of both could not be incorporated as the book would be further delayed.

I am also obliged to Mr. Godfrey Gunatilleke and the Marga Institute for allowing me to participate in a number of seminars on ethnic conflicts, where many international scholars participated. Mr. Yogendra Duraisamy, gave me the precious opportunity to participate in the All Party Conference, where much insight into political psychology was gained.

This book would never have been published if not for the request of Mr. B. E. Fernando, the retired Commissioner of Inland Revenue and the present Director of the Sri Lanka branch of the World Vision International. After listening to my paper on "The Psychology of Ethnic conflicts", presented at the annual sessions of the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science in December 1984, Mr. B. E. Fernando asked me to publish a book on our problems. I am extremely grateful to Mr. B. E. Fernando and the World Vision International for the request and the generous financial support.

Mr. K. E. Shiradhananda and his son Devendra of the Ananda Press published the book excellently, efficiently and expeditiously, at reasonable cost, for which I am thankful. Comments and criticisms from readers would be welcome to help further studies.

The book is dedicated to the younger generation in Sri Lanka, with the hope that they would realise genuine unity in free diversity, and cultivate excellence without obstructions in diverse fields according to their talents, for the benefit of themselves, Sri Lanka and the world.

C. Sivanesan

9, Vaverset Place
Colombo 6
May, 1985.

Faint, illegible text at the top of the page, possibly a header or introductory paragraph.

Second block of faint, illegible text, appearing as a separate paragraph.

Third block of faint, illegible text, continuing the document's content.

Fourth block of faint, illegible text, possibly a section separator.

Fifth block of faint, illegible text, appearing as a shorter paragraph.

Sixth block of faint, illegible text, possibly a concluding sentence.

A Vision of Sri Lanka For the 21st Century

Let us inspire our youth and children with *a noble and creative vision of the future, based on right understanding, right speech and right action.* Let that vision be a harmonious blend of all the highest values in Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam derived from our traditional past, and the deep insights and understanding gained from the political, economic and social experiences of the developed capitalist and socialist countries. *May our vision derive its inspiration from universal compassion, sympathy and joy in the happiness, success and excellence of all.* May that vision guide us to solve our present conflicts and problems wisely and constructively for the universal upliftment of all.

The youth and children who are studying in the schools, colleges and universities today may live till the middle of the 21st century, and their children may live till the end of the next century. It is the duty of the wise, learned or concerned intellectual, spiritual, religious and political leaders of this country, to educate or guide the younger generation, and create an environment and opportunities to develop and express their talents to the highest standards of excellence, so that they may be able to contribute their best to the emerging world community of the 21st century.

But unfortunately during the last three decades, we have been drifting with periodical destructive violence and conflicts, caused because of extremely adversary type of partisan politics, denial of opportunity, justice and participation, or exaggerated grievances, prejudices, misunderstandings, fears and hatred. Will we continue drifting with increasing conflicts and violence, insecurity, disunity and fragmentation, wastage of resources and stunted growth and declining quality of life for all?

Or can we get out of the rut, with wisdom and right understanding, and with clear foresight and inspiring vision, *create a new society with peace and justice for all, freedom and greater equality, brotherhood and cooperation, unity in diversity, and opportunities for excellence at the highest level for all with equal concentration on uplifting the poor, underprivileged and less talented?*

Long-term Global Outlook

It is said that a petty politician talks and acts with the narrow aim of winning the next election but the great statesman talks and acts for the long run benefit of the next generation. It is only what is good in the long run that can be good for the present also. One who drinks alcohol excessively for his present pleasure, not only ruins his health in the long run, but is not intelligent or wise now also.

We should learn from the successes and failures of our long term past experiences. We should also learn from the long term past and recent experiences of successes and failures of other countries, with similar relevant experiences. Otherwise we would be condemned to repeat our own past mistakes or repeat the mistakes of others with much harmful effects and damages. Then we would be learning only slowly by repeated trials and errors with much sufferings and losses. Experiments with trials and errors may be unavoidable for pioneers, who develop new democratic processes or new ways of organising societies, to reduce conflicts and enhance the quality of life of all. Late developers have the advantage of learning from the pioneers and innovate in even better ways with further improvements and with less mistakes and costs.

Our religions originated from other countries in Asia, our science and technology is mainly derived from European countries, and our system of government and administration was predominantly learnt from Britain. We cannot isolate ourselves from the knowledge, cultures and experiences of the world, nor can we escape the powerful trends in the world. To find realistic solutions to our problems and to create an inspiring vision of our future, we must adopt a long term global outlook, with a better understanding of what has been happening in the world and the long term future trends of the world.

World Trends in the 'Global Village'

For hundreds of thousands of years, humanity has been living on planet earth as hunters, gatherers and nomads. About ten thousand years ago agricultural civilisation started in several parts of the world. All the major world religions appeared in Asia between the sixth century B. C. and the seventh century A. D. The modern period of history started with the discovery of America and the sailing round the globe at the end of the fifteenth century.

Till the end of the fifteenth century the major centres of civilizations were relatively isolated with rare intercommunications. But there were large migrations, invasions and conquests, mostly within each region. From the sixteenth century Europeans started colonizing, conquering or exploring all parts of the world and the world was unified to some extent through European imperialism. There was greater interactions between the European and all other cultures. The European nations which pioneered in exploring and learnt from other cultures, progressed rapidly and the industrial revolution started during the latter part of the 18th century in Great Britain and spread to other countries. With the progressive development in science and technology human muscle power was replaced by machine mechanical power. With quicker transport and communications the world became more closely interrelated.

With the end of the Second World War in 1945 and the use of atomic weapons, tremendous changes started occurring in all spheres, spearheaded by further development in science and technology. The world was further unified with instant communications through satellites and supersonic transport. Humanity entered the space age with the landing on the moon and further probes into outer space. Electronics, computers and robots, are going to replace human brain power in many fields with greater efficiency, speed and accuracy. Nuclear weapons have given the power to destroy all humanity and other lives many times. The world has truly become a 'global village' with everyone our neighbour, with the potential ability to communicate with us, harm and destroy us or on the other hand benefit us.

In the political and social spheres three major trends can be observed. They are the trends toward universalization, diversification or differentiation, and democratization.

Universalization or the unification of the world which has already taken place scientifically and technologically, is proceeding in the political, economic and social spheres through the functioning of the United Nations Organizations and affiliates, and other worldwide governmental and non-governmental organizations, and regional organizations like the European Common Market and the ASEAN.

Diversification or differentiation or the maintainance of diversity of cultures, languages and ethnic identities appears to be contradictory to the universalization trend but is actually complementary. The universalization trend alone, might have submerged all other cultures leaving the dominant western culture alone to assimilate and destroy all others. Submergence of the diversity of cultures would have made the world a poorer, dull, monotonous and dreary place, without the rich-exhilarating variety we have developed from ancient times. Fortunately after the realization of political independence by all countries, the majority culture in each country has been revived and developed to some extent. From about the 1960s in most countries, minority ethnic groups are trying to revive their languages, religions or cultures, and demanding equal treatment by the majority cultures.

Democratization or the aspirations for freedom, equality, participation, justice and human rights, started on a large scale with the French Revolution, and spread throughout Europe, gained momentum with the Russian and Chinese Revolution, and became a powerful force after the Second World War, leading to the realization of political independence by all Third World countries. The grosser types of slavery, political imperialism, and open and oppressive domination have been almost abolished. But economic domination at the international and local levels, and discriminations against minorities in many Third World countries, and denial of fundamental human rights to political dissidents, continues. But today unlike in the past history of humanity, any oppression, subordination or even slight discrimination, is

being vehemently challenged in most parts of the world. Today it is not easy to subordinate or discriminate a person on the basis of race, colour, caste, language, religion, sex or even age and to get away with it.

The three interrelated trends toward universalization, maintainance of diversities and democratization, appear to be gaining force with further economic development and may become even more powerful ideals in the next century. *Wherever diversity is allowed to flourish without any discrimination in the economic and political spheres, ethnic identities would be accepted dispassionately without strong attachment or vehemence. Wherever differences in identities are discriminated or favoured in any manner, ethnic identities may be maintained with strong attachment and vehemence, leading to even violent conflicts.* The Protestants and Catholics were prepared to fight and die for their religion during the Thirty Years War in Germany in the 17th century, because there was discriminations. But today even the highly religious Protestants and Catholics in that country never fight because of religious differences, because all are treated equally without any discriminations, politically, socially and economically. North Ireland is the exception, where Protestants and Catholics are still fighting because of perceived discriminations.

Common World Problems and Ideals

Most of the problems in the global village are common to most countries and ideal solutions can be found only at the global level. But even small countries can go a long way to find solutions to most of the problems, which can be adapted by other countries and at a global level later. The advantage of small countries is that they can innovate in the political, economic and social spheres, to find solutions to problems on a smaller scale which large countries like India, U.S., or U.S.S.R., cannot afford to experiment. Small countries such as Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, Singapore and Cuba have innovated in diverse ways. Medium size countries such as Tanganyka, Yugoslavia, Romania and Canada can also teach us much instead of repeating costly experiments. Sri Lanka also has innovated much with one of the longest period of universal

suffrage in the Third World, with much successes and some tragic and costly failures, which have wiped out some of the successes.

To solve our present problems, we should completely avoid repeating our past mistakes and failures, and expand and enhance our wise actions and successes. We have to act here and now, but our action should not only be based on a clear and right understanding of our present problems, but also be inspired by a vision of our future goals in an increasingly interdependent and interrelated global framework. We should think globally while acting locally. Universal principles should be applied in solving particular problems. Our local action should help to solve the problems of the world and not worsen them. As a peaceloving country, preserving the pure teachings of the Enlightened Buddha, where all the major world religions have been practised harmoniously in an atmosphere of mutual respect and friendship, Sri Lanka can show the way to the world to avoid wars, violence, oppression, poverty and wastages, and realise peace, justice, freedom, equality, brotherhood and prosperity for all.

In the closely knit global society today, we find that most of the problems we face in Sri Lanka are similar to the problems faced by most other countries internally and also in the relations between states and superpowers. *Wars and conflicts originate in the minds of human beings, and all interpersonal, inter-communal and inter-state problems have the same source. A deeper understanding of the common aspirations and ideals of humanity would help us to solve our own psychological conflicts, interpersonal rivalries, violence and injustices in society, in a more creative and constructive manner.*

The common worldwide problems can be broadly divided into two sets. One set is due to *the excessive concentration of power internationally or within each state or ethnic group.* This leads to the domination by the powerful and the submission or subordination of the powerless. The powerful at the international level have been piling up powerful armaments in competition with each other, which can now destroy humanity about twenty times over. There is thus

today a danger of a total war and total destruction of humanity. The powerless states have to be satellites of the major powers, or subordinate their aspirations to the fancies of the bigger powers. Within states also where the concentration of power is not used solely for the maintainance of law and order, on the sole basis of justice and rule of law, and where power becomes the instrument of power rivalries, to gain or maintain power, the powerless lose their freedom, justice, dignity and even their human rights.

The other set of worldwide problems is due to *the excessive concentration of wealth internationally and within nations*. This leads to excessive consumption, inflation, wastage of resources, and pollution of environment on the one hand and under-consumption, unemployment, poverty, hunger and starvation on the other side. Science and technology have progressed to such an extent that the material needs of all can be adequately satisfied, but neither excessive greed nor the craving for egoistic power and glory, with increasing armaments, can be fully satisfied.

The great depression of the 1930s was due to excessive production and never due to shortages. If there had been fair distribution in the 1930s the poverty of the world could have been completely abolished from that time. Then there would not have been any excess, and the worldwide unemployment would have been solved, without any reduction in production. But the concentration of power did not allow such an humanitarian solution. Nor were the imperialistic powers prepared to allow political independence to countries such as India, which was demanding independence nonviolently. They were also revengefully demanding reparations from Germany for the First World war, despite warning from many great intellectuals. They also believed in the racial superiority of the White race, to justify their imperialistic dominations. Then Hitler rose to power in Germany with a even more extreme racial theory, justified by pseudo-scientists and pseudo-intellectuals, with the racial theory of Aryan superiority, and gave the same medicine to the then imperialistic powers, that they were giving to their colonies and dependencies.

The harmful effect of the excessive concentration of power and wealth was partially realised after the Second World War. Germany and Japan were treated magnanimously by the victorious western states and even helped to recover economically, partly to counteract growing Soviet power. The colonies, some of which were ruled for over three centuries by the Western imperialistic powers were granted political independence within three decades. Some economic aid was given by the richer countries to the poorer countries, though the international economic system facilitated the concentration of wealth in the richer countries.

But in recent years the partial trend toward greater freedom, equality and justice, at the international level appear to be partly reversed. There appears to be further concentration of power, wealth and armaments. Unfortunately within many third world countries also, there is excessive concentration of power, wealth and armaments. Therefore in the international economic and political order, most third world countries, do not have the moral authority to challenge the powerful countries for a more just world order, where there would be less economic and political exploitation and domination. Many third world leaders depend on some major powers to continue their undemocratic domination in their own countries with the partial denial of human rights, democratic freedom and dignity, to their own people.

Fortunately in the closely interconnected global village, there is a worldwide intellectual community of scientists, social theorists, philosophers and concerned persons, with wisdom and universal compassion, or a genuine spirit of service and sacrifice to humanity, who are actively advocating and propagating higher ideals and aspirations for a more humane and democratic world. Some of them are in some of the international organizations such as UNESCO, UNCTAD, ILO, WHO, or in non-governmental international or national organizations, such as Amnesty International, Red Cross Society, International League of Human Rights, International Commission of Jurists, The Club of Rome, Third World Forum and the World Order Models Project.

Almost all such organizations and humanitarian individuals, aspire for some common world ideals or goals, which can help us tackle the common world problems. They are for the establishment of peace with justice in the world internationally and within states. They aim to avoid all types of wars and violence. But they also realise that this can never be permanently realised with the domination by a few. It is only with increasing democratization, with greater freedom, equality and justice for all, that genuine peace and harmony can be realised.

They are against the excessive concentration of wealth and power. Such excessive concentration inevitably leads to the insecurity and to the decline of peace and freedom of even those who possess such concentration of wealth and power. It leads to overconsumption of excessive material goods with the accompanying diseases of civilization and the corresponding underconsumption and the diseases of poverty and suffering.

A few relatively more democratic countries, with less concentration of wealth and power within their own states, such as Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, Canada, Romania and Yugoslavia have been working actively even at the governmental level for a more peaceful and democratic world with unity in diversity. Sri Lanka also had such a noble image in the world arena till it was ruined by recent violence. We can recreate even a still better image in the future, if we can solve our problems democratically and peacefully for the benefit of all, with unity in diversity, with an inspiring and challenging vision of our future in the world for our younger generation, and become a model to the world like Sweden or Switzerland.

Baser Desires or Nobler Aspirations

Violence, conflicts and sufferings, or compassion, harmony and happiness, originate in the minds of human beings. Though all human beings are potentially equal and should be treated equally by society, they are in different stages of mental development. According to some spiritual traditions, it is not only the physical body that has evolved for millions of years, but also the consciousness of human beings which has evolved from the sleeping stage in the minerals, to the slightly conscious stage in vegetables, the semi-conscious stage in animals, the egocentrically conscious stage in human beings, and finally the universally aware or enlightened stage in the fully liberated individuals.

Most people in the world are in the childhood stage of human evolution, just awakened from the animal stage with an imperfectly developed egocentric consciousness, which drifts semiconsciously most of the time even in the waking state, without full awareness. They have little understanding, combined with much delusions, prejudices and misunderstandings. From this state of semi-conscious inertia, they are crudely awakened into a little more conscious state by passionate cravings, greed, anger, envy and hatred. They enjoy some crude pleasures, in a relatively more conscious egocentric state, with strong identification with physical body and sensations. Then they suffer the consequences of their excessive cravings, and uncontrolled hatred and anger, which when rightly understood awakens them further.

Even the more evolved human beings, who are a minority in the world, are not completely free from the semiconscious drifting of the mind, and succumbing to cravings, greed, anger, envy and hatred. But they do not allow such baser feelings to dominate their life, and even if they succumb to them, realise their mistakes and correct themselves immediately. They realise that they become relatively more liberated from the prison of their egocentric consciousness, and become more awakened and widely aware if they are devoted to truth, goodness, beauty, service and purity, according to the Western tradition, or by cultivating universal compassion, universal sympathy, joy in the happiness of others and equanimity, according to the Buddhist and Eastern traditions.

Human beings are not perfect and society should allow them scope to learn and experiment by trials and errors, without harming the freedom and liberty of others. They should be allowed some liberty to experiment with their greed, cravings and passions, as long as they do not hurt others, because of their excesses. But society should also educate and guide them especially in their childhood stage, mainly by example, the tremendous benefit in limiting the baser desires and feelings, and the great advantage in cultivating wholesome thoughts and feelings, and the nobler aspirations.

Though the majority of the people in most human societies are not perfect, the quality of any society depends on the quality of the intellectual, social, political, religious and spiritual leaders who lead or guide the society. *If because of their egocentric craving for power and glory, or because of their envy, fear, prejudices and hatred, they kindle the baser feelings of the masses, the society becomes insane, corrupt, and full of conflicts and destructions. But if the leaders, guides and teachers of society, understand their own egocentric baser, feelings, and control them, and never act on them, and only talk and act inspired by the nobler aspirations for truth, goodness, love and service, the masses can be uplifted and helped to transcend the baser feelings, and the society would be sane, harmonious and creative.*

In popular Western psychology the baser feelings are termed negative attitudes and the nobler aspirations termed positive attitudes. In Buddhism these are called kusala and akusala thoughts or wholesome and unwholesome thoughts. What is egocentric cannot be in harmony with the whole or totality, and therefore cannot be wholesome or holy. It is only what is good for all that can be wholesome. Greed, envy, anger and hatred should have limits and controls, if they cannot be completely abolished, as they are most harmful to oneself and partly harmful to others. But compassion, sympathy and joy in the happiness of others, need not have any limits and can be universal and infinite, as they are fully beneficial to oneself and others, and therefore wholesome and holy.

Aggressive Identity, Detached Identity and Anatta

Every individual has an identity or a self-image based on his family, class, caste, tribe, race, language, religion, ethnic group, nation, school, college, profession, hobbies, interests, inborn talents, inclinations, and all the past experiences, memories and conditionings. For each individual at different times of the day, different aspects of his identity become important. For different individuals and in different societies, depending on the circumstances, some aspect of their identity become vital and important and sometimes they are prepared even to fight and die for it.

Violent conflicts had been common between tribes at the tribal stage of social evolution. Tribes have fought with each other with their devotion to their totem animals. (Are we still at the tribal stage with our devotion to the lion and tiger totems?) Religious wars and crusades had occurred in different parts of the world. Caste, class and racial conflicts have also been common. In the modern period wars between nation states had caused tremendous destructions. In recent decades ethnic conflicts have become widely prevalent in most countries of the world.

How is it that difference in identities sometimes lead to violent conflicts? In addition to studying the social, economic and political causes, we should also look into the psychological source of conflicts, as identities are mainly mental self-images. In the infant and childhood stages, the child forms its identity through the love, security, guidance and education; provided by the parents, teachers, elders and friends. If the child is brought up in a friendly atmosphere with genuine love and sympathy, and is taught to love all human beings without any prejudice and discrimination by the example and precepts of the elders, the child evolves a healthy identity without any serious conflicts with others. But if the child is not shown adequate love and provided security at all times, or is brought up in an atmosphere of conflicts and hatred, or is taught by the example and precepts of his elders to develop prejudices, envy or hatred, against some outside group, the child may develop an aggressive and highly egocentric identity.

It is natural to love one's family, relatives, friends and neighbours, with whom one comes into personal contact. It is also natural to have a wider sympathy for one's own school and university, professional, language, religious, ethnic or national groups, though one has personal contacts only with a small proportion of the larger groups. This natural affinity and identity is beneficial to the individual, as it expands his compassion, sympathy and empathy, to a wider society, and helps in the initial relative liberation from limited egocentric personal interests and desires. It becomes psychologically harmful to the individual only if it leads to prejudices against outside groups or hatred against them.

All people can be divided into three broad groups according to the strength of their identities and the extent of their compassion. They are (1) persons with aggressive identities and narrow egocentric selfishness, (2) persons with detached identities and relatively enlightened self-interest and (3) persons with universal identity and selfless universal compassion.

Persons with aggressive identities have very strong attachment to their own tribe, language, religion, ethnic group or nation, which they may sometimes consider to be superior to all others. They usually have strong prejudices against some other group, with which their group is closely related or are neighbours. They exaggerate the minor weaknesses of the other group and underestimate their good qualities. They develop envy, fear and hatred, against the rival groups. If they are in influential positions they may pollute the mental environment in their society with unwholesome thoughts and feelings of fear, hatred and violence. If possible they would try to maintain the privileges of their own group and keep the rival group in a subordinate position.

Persons with detached identities and relatively enlightened self-interest also love their groups and would work for the welfare of their own groups. But they do not have any unreasonable prejudices or fears against any other group, and they would like to cooperate with all other groups in a spirit of friendship and equality. They would not like to have or maintain, any unjustifiable advantages or privileges over other

groups, and they would like to compete and cooperate as equals in an environment of justice and fairplay. But when there are real or imagined injustices, discrimination or threats from any other group, they may indignantly hate that groups, and may support the leaders with aggressive identities, to win justice to their side.

Persons with universal identity or selfless universal compassion, may be few but are not so rare. There are many despite their personal imperfections, who realise the value and immense benefit of such an ideal, and aspire to transcend all limited identities and try to be completely objective, impersonal and universal, in their approach to any intergroup conflict. Despite the lack of any attachment to their own groups if they are involved in any service to society, their speech and action do the maximum benefit to their own groups in the long run.

According to all the great spiritual teachers of humanity, it is only the persons with selfless universal compassion or universal identity, who can be called liberated individuals. According to Buddhism, the nature of the world is anicca, anatta and dukha or impermanence, unsubstantiality and unsatisfactoriness. Attachment to the impermanent physical, mental or even spiritual identity, is the fundamental cause of all suffering. Physical identity is the most vulnerable and difficult to protect identity, and unevolved persons think that they are mainly the physical body and suffer through fear and limitations. Caste, colour, racial, ethnic and national identities are purely based on the physical body, which has to be first transcended before one can limit fear and sufferings and appreciate the anatta doctrine. Developing universal compassion and sympathy, and appreciative joy in the success and happiness of others, is the easy way to transcend all limited identities, fear and sufferings. Love and compassion even if expressed to one's own family and neighbours, cannot have any boundaries. If love has a boundary with hatred or prejudice against any outside group, it is not actually love, but an expansion of the ego.

It is said that those who have strong identities based on the physical body, and have not developed universal compassion but only expanded their ego, with prejudices against outside group,

become mentally senile, when their physical strength declines with old age. Only those who transcend their physical identities and cultivate universal compassion without hatred or prejudice against any group, would develop their compassionate wisdom with increasing age despite declining physical powers or diseases. It is only such truly liberated individuals who can guide us to face the problems of the unified global village of the 21st century, and help to liberate society, including their own ethnic group.

According to Christianity and other theistic religions the individual soul must surrender himself fully to the Divine Will or the Universal Will or the totality. Then one transcends egoism and becomes universal and completely objective. The individual identity becomes identified with the universal identity. Such a person sees the Kingdom of God within himself and also transcending all. According to the Bagavad Gita, such a person, 'Sees the self in all, and all in the self'.

Whatever may be the subtler or fundamental differences between the different religions and philosophies, *all agree that one should go beyond limited egocentric identities and be in harmony with the totality.* Even in the materialistic philosophy of Marxism, the relations in society should be transformed in the socialist and communist stages, to enable the individual to develop a social consciousness which is classless and international, or without the artificial barriers in identities which perpetuates exploitation, discrimination and injustices.

Hitler and Mahatma Gandhi are examples of two leaders in the 20th century, who exemplified the two extremes of aggressive identity and extreme chauvinism by the former, and at least a partial application of selfless universal compassion in active politics by the latter. Hitler believed that the Aryan German race was the highest chosen race, destined by providence to rule humanity, and he attempted to realise this ambition through wars and aggression. Germany is still divided, because the Germans acceded to the aggressive chauvinism of Hitler. In contrast Gandhi never hated even the British who were ruling India and refusing the demand for independence. He has said that he was prepared to sacrifice the benefit of India for the welfare of humanity. Gandhi was assassin-

ated by a Hindu fanatic, because he was suspected to favour the Muslims in the Hindu-Muslim communal riots. Though Gandhi might not have been as perfect as some of his followers may believe, he sincerely attempted to practice truth, non-violence and universal compassion in active politics.

Gandhi's ideals of truth, non-violence and opposition to all brutal force, less centralisation of power and full village self-government with power derived from the people at the base, and simple living with less wastage of resources and pollution of environment, are all ideals which would have more relevance in the 21st century, if we are to have a new society. These policies are especially in accordance with the Buddhist and Hindu teachings, and also with the teachings of Christianity and Islam, and should be seriously considered by all concerned with the welfare of our future generations in Sri Lanka.

Violence or Nonviolence

Aggression and violence have been widely prevalent in almost all human societies, both primitive and highly civilized. Therefore it is concluded by many that aggression and violence are natural and inevitable in human societies. Is it actually so?

What is practised by the majority, need not be what is ideal or natural for humanity. In the history of almost all civilizations, illiteracy, slavery or oppression of lower castes and classes were common. This does not mean that in the future also such illiteracy slavery or oppression, would be accepted as natural or inevitable. Avoidable and potentially dangerous imperfection should be rectified in the future global village.

Though violence was widely prevalent, the degree of violence varied in different societies. Some societies were relatively more peaceful and others more aggressive. A good proportion of educated and cultured or saintly individuals in almost all societies have lived peaceful lives, without any violence throughout their life. In fact it appears that the majority of people of all communities in Sri Lanka, even during violent ethnic conflicts never indulge in any physical violence. Some anthropologists who have made a comparative

study of primitive societies state that there is less violence in societies where children are brought up with tender love and care from birth.

Violence might have been inevitable at a cruder stage of human evolution, when the glory of any powerful adventurer, king, emperor, nation or civilization, depended on the extent of the empire they were able to rule and the people they were able to enslave, dominate or subjugate. Today with the spread of the democratization ideals of freedom, equality, fraternity and human rights for all, such aggressive domination or subordination is universally condemned by world opinion.

In the past history of humanity though violence in wars was accepted as inevitable, as people became more civilised, rules were framed on how a righteous battle should be conducted both in Asia and Europe. According to the laws of Manu, the ancient Indian codifier of laws, women, children and old people should never be killed. Even among soldiers, the soldier who is sleeping, the soldier who is unarmed and the soldier who surrenders should not be killed. According to these rules, only the soldier who is courageously fighting with his arms or ready to fight, can be killed even in the battle-field. Can we have such righteous wars today when bombs are hurled from planes, or directed from a long distance, and innocent people are killed, or when guerilla fighters hide and kill and run away. We seem to be less civilized than the ancient Indians.

The relative Dharma of the world seems to have been radically changed, after the dropping of atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasake in 1945 and the killing of thousands of innocent civilians. In all previous wars, usually the victor prosper economically more than the vanquished. But after the Second World War, we find the two main defeated countries, the Federal Republic of Germany and Japan, having faster growth rates than the victorious powers. After 1945 we also find that none of the countries, which took part in wars, fully winning any war and prospering after victory, as in the previous history of humanity.

The United States, which is the greatest super-power, was unable to defeat small Vietnam, mainly because of the fear for world opinion and the danger of a Third World War. Nor did Vietnam, which believed in violent means to gain freedom and unity, gain peace and prosperity, to their people. Thousands of Vietnamese died in the violent conflicts from both sides, and in the boats when they migrated abroad, and they are still fighting in Cambodia and with China. What did the Vietnamese as a whole gain and how much did they lose and suffer? In the global village of worldwide communications and world opinion in favour of freedom and human rights, if the Vietnamese had adopted the nonviolent method of agitation and demonstration for freedom, would the French or any other foreign power have remained in Vietnam to interfere in their affairs beyond the middle of the 1960s?

In West Asia did any party which believed in violence gain a successful permanent victory? Can we say that the Jews of Israel were victorious, with their inflation of about 300% per annum, half their expenditures spent on defence, heavy finance and aid from abroad, and still lacking peace and security for its citizens? Iran and Iraq are causing mutual destructions without any hope of a successful victory for any side.

No guerilla freedom fighters or terrorist movement have gained any final victory without negotiations by the moderates. The I.R.A. and P.L.O. have been fighting for over three decades, without any hopes of success. Nor did the governments who fought the terrorists or guerilla freedom fighters win except in Malaysia and Italy, where the governments obtained the spontaneous support of the people, because they were careful not to hurt innocent non-involved people, and the people had no major grievances against the government.

In America, Martin Luther King, followed and further developed the nonviolent methods of Mahatma Ganthi, to gain freedom, and equality, and political, civic and human rights for his people. His nonviolent methods based on truth, love and all the highest human values, gained the sympathy and support of a majority of the white people, and it became relatively easy without much violence to gain most of their aspiration. Today the majority of the whites in America are strongly against

any racial discrimination. Canada and Belgium were able to resolve and contain or manage their serious ethnic conflicts, with minimum violence, because they were able to express their conflicts nonviolently and overcome them through talks, discussions and negotiations in a civilized manner. Nonviolent demonstrations and agitations in the form of peace marches, sit-ins, writings, pamphlets, speeches, are common throughout the democratic world, where dissent can be expressed freely. Such countries have much less violent conflicts and problems are solved in a humane manner for the benefit of all.

The great philosopher Kant said that if the principle of an action cannot be universalized it becomes immoral. Even in the past if the principle of violent conflicts was universalised, it would have caused much destruction, and therefore was considered immoral. But wars according to the laws of Manu, even if universalised, would not cause much destruction, and therefore can be considered righteous or Dharmic wars, by the side whose cause was just. Today if the principle of violent conflicts is universalised, the nuclear powers may destroy the world. Therefore the principle of violence in any form has become throughly immoral. Today humanity's moral standard must keep pace with the destructive technological capacity available. *If small countries cannot solve their petty internal or external conflicts nonviolently through talks and discussions, they have no moral right to condemn the nuclear powers for piling up armaments which may destroy humanity. Then they would also be equally responsible for any impending catastrophe.*

It is the responsibility of every intellectual, social, political religious or spiritual leader, belonging to either the majority or minority communities, if they wish to preserve our vulnerable planet earth for future human generations, not to encourage any type of violent conflicts at any level, and to help to solve any problem nonviolently in a spirit of universal compassion, sympathy, understanding, justice and fairplay, without allowing fear and arrogance to confuse their minds.

A purely military solution or violence alone cannot succeed today. In the future world it is only truth and nonviolence which will triumph and nothing can be hidden in the future. If violence is allowed to continue even in the Dharmadweepa,

where the peaceful teachings of the Enlightened One is preserved in its pure form, what hope is there for humanity? In the 21st century even a single individual may get the technological capacity to destroy a city. It is only justice for all, unto the last, as Christ said in one of his parables, and elaborated by Gandhi in his philosophy of Sarvodaya or awakening of all, which can save humanity from total destruction. This ideal of justice for all has been spreading in diverse form, especially from the 18th century. The technological capacity to provide the material needs of all has been attained in the 1930s, with the Great Depression, caused by excess production because of maldistribution.

Let us not repeat that mistake again because of our ignorance of world trends, because of our arrogance, fears and the consequent petty violent quarrels which have ruined our noble image abroad. Let us in Sri Lanka show a way to the world, that despite our conflicts during the last three decades, our traditional peace and coexistence, when other countries were having religious wars, can reassert itself and bring about a peaceful solution to all our current problems nonviolently, and we can again become a model to the world for high quality of life, peace and justice for all. *A violent victory by any one side would only perpetuate frustration, hatred and revengeful violence into the 21st century, without any lasting peace. Noble means have to be adopted to obtain universally beneficial results. Let us not deceive ourselves by adopting revengeful violent means by any side. "Those who raise the sword, will die by the sword" has become virtually true after 1945. World opinion today, formed by instant communications, would not allow the destruction of any side which believe in complete nonviolence and reasonable justice.*

Any individual who is fully convinced by the wholeness of truth and nonviolence, and realises the values of compassion, sympathy and empathy with all, who renounces greed, envy, anger and hatred, and escapes the isolating prison of his ego, becomes individually free, liberated and utterly fearless. It is only such liberated individuals who are completely free from fear, prejudices and hatred, whatever the outer circumstances may be, who can liberate their own group without harming any others, in the highly interdependent global

village of the 21st century. Even today if we wish to solve our problem efficiently, let us invite such individuals with universal compassion, who are not after glory and fame, and therefore are avoiding the corrupting public life of today, to at least advise the government and people on how our problems can be solved wisely for the good of all. *Let us listen to wholesome wisdom and not to advocates of fears, prejudices, revenge and violence. Individually and collectively, it is our own thoughts and actions, based on hatred, fears and violence, which would do us the maximum harm, and not the action of others.*

Sri Lanka — Past History

The past experience and history of individuals and societies should be wisely and rightly understood for the purpose of present liberation and upliftment, and should never bind us in past conflicts and failures, or imprison us in past prejudices, fears and hatred. *Individuals who are bound by their past conflicts become neurotic and sometimes if the past conflicts were more serious even insane. Societies also get involved in serious conflicts and violence because of their misunderstood past.*

Our present memory of our past is predominantly determined by our present moods and inclinations. A husband and wife who have a love-hate relationship, usually remember only their pleasant relationships of the past, when they are in a happy-loving mood, and remember only their past unpleasant relationships when they are in an angry-hating mood. When Germany and France were involved in the two world wars, they remembered and over-stressed their past centuries of violent conflicts. But after the Second World War, when all in Europe realised the futility and universal destructiveness of violent conflicts, they rewrote their histories to highlight the common European culture which evolved in a predominantly cooperative relationship despite interrupting violent conflicts. This enlightening perspective of the past, created the intellectual climate, which facilitated the formation of the European Economic Community.

Our physical bodies daily accumulate dirt in the system which has to be evacuated in the toilet without publicity. Similarly dirt and dust accumulate in the house, which has to be cleaned daily, preferably when there are no outside visitors. *For the psychological health of individuals, it is good rightly to understand, dissolve and forget dirty or unpleasant experiences on that day itself, before going to bed, without submerging them into the subconscious mind. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath", according to the New Testament.*

We always like to clean, polish or preserve, the beautiful things and ornaments in our homes. It is not harmful to remember and cherish beautiful experiences, (though it may be better to live fully in the present, without being burdened with even pleasant past memories). In understanding the past history of Sri Lanka also, *it would be better to emphasize more the predominantly beneficial interactions among all the communities for most of our past history, than to exaggerate the rare violent conflicts.* If one can calculate the man-hours of violent relationship, and the man-hours of nonviolent relationship, it is doubtful whether the violent relationship would be more than one hundredth part of the nonviolent relationship. *Unfortunately our remembrance of our past has been distorted and lopsided. We have collected all our past dirt and thrown away the ornaments and beautiful things.*

Journalists and historians show greater interests in reporting violence and conflicts, and tend to ignore completely the prevailing cooperation and mutually beneficial relationships in society. Highlighting the present evils in society, and investigating their causes, may help to reduce crimes and violence in society. But at the same time to have a correct perspective, we should not ignore or underestimate the good relationships in society. Especially in the understanding of our past history, the predominantly beneficial interactions despite conflicts should be stressed. *Conflicts may be remembered only to avoid future conflicts, and not to perpetuate ancient brutal conflicts or perpetrate new conflicts.*

In the history of human civilizations, when the power of destruction was limited, there were innumerable invasions, wars and violent conflicts, in all parts of the world. Such

limited violent conflicts, might have helped humanity to awaken from lethargic ignorance. But today the technological capacity for total destruction, have made any type of violence taboo, if we wish to survive on planet earth. Therefore in most parts of the world today, people have forgotten their past violent tribal and national conflicts, and living in relative peace, the best example being Europe. Though there is much publicity about violence in the world today, major violence takes place only in about ten countries out of a total of about 160 countries. Sri Lanka is one of the violent countries in terms of violent deaths as a proportion of total population. We may even top the list in some years, coming within the first five. Even our neighbour India can be only considered more violent proportionately in a year, if more than about 50,000 persons die there, when 1000 persons die through violence here.

A right understanding of our past history as a part of world history, and in the light of present worldwide aspirations for nonviolence and democratisation, would help much to reduce present violent conflicts. Because of present prejudices among some historians and intellectuals, (who have not developed universal compassion), there is a tendency to underestimate the beneficial interactions between Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka. In the past history of humanity, because of the slowness of transport and communications, conflicts and cooperation were predominantly with neighbouring peoples. In Sri Lanka also the Sinhalese and Tamils interacted, interrelated, intermarried, intermixed, and also fought more with each other than with outside peoples. In fact there might have been even more violent conflicts within Sinhalese communities and within Tamil communities than between Sinhalese and Tamil communities.

According to the interpretation of unprejudiced historians, the legend in the Mahawamsa about Vijaya and his seven hundred followers, show that they intermarried with the Tamils of the Pandyan kingdom in Madura and a thousand families belonging to various guilds also came from the same place. From the beginning we find intermarriage and intermixture. Throughout Sri Lanka's history, we find frequent intermarriage among the Sinhalese and Tamil royal families. In the final

stage of the Sinhalese royal family also we find four Tamil speaking Nayakkar kings ruling in Kandy, based on matrimonial relationship.

The wars between the Sinhalese and Tamil kings cannot be compared with the nationalistic wars or ethnic conflicts of the modern period. There were usually two or more major kingdoms in South India, and two or more kingdoms in Sri Lanka also. There were frequent wars among Tamil kings and also frequent wars among Sinhalese kings. When Tamil kings invaded Sri Lanka, we usually find another Tamil king supporting the Sinhalese king. A Sinhalese king defeated by another Sinhalese king usually went to South India to get the support of a Tamil king to win back his kingdom. Even the famous battle between Dutthagamani and Ellara was not a Sinhalese-Tamil fight as there were Tamil soldiers in Dutthagamani's army and Sinhalese soldiers in Ellara's army.

Buddhism flourished among the Tamils in South India and Sri Lanka from the second century B. C. till the tenth century A. D. Thereafter it declined and disappeared in South India only about the 14th century A. D. There was much exchange of knowledge and scholars on Buddhism between the Sinhalese and Tamils during that period. As the closest neighbours to the Sinhalese were Tamils, naturally there should have been more cultural interactions with the Tamils than with any other ethnic group. The Tamils in Sri Lanka also had much interactions with the Sinhalese and their distinctiveness compared to South Indian Tamils may be due to this relationship. Today more than 90% of the Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamils of ancient origin, cannot be distinguished by their physical appearance alone. There would have been much intermixture of genes.

Those who wish to preserve the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka, with its rich diversities, should make a serious attempt to interpret our past history not with a divisive ethnocentric attitude, but with a spirit of understanding and universal compassion, to suit the goals and aims of reconciliation, harmony and peace in the 21st century. Otherwise we may become one of the bad failures in the nonviolent democratising process of the world. Let us not allow the historians of the future

generations, with a worldwide perspective, to blame the historians and the intellectual, religious and political leaders of the present generations, for misleading our people into chaos and conflicts, because of their narrow-aggressive-identities and negative-akusala thoughts.

Sri Lanka — Recent History

When even ancient history is being distorted today, it is very difficult to be objective about our recent history. Divergent interpretations are given according to the liberal, socialist, communist, Sinhalese or Tamil viewpoints. To create a realistic vision of our future in the 21st century for our younger generation, we should have a right understanding of our recent experiences and current problems, which are the products of our recent history. An attempt is made here to have an objective understanding of our recent history from the point of view of an outside impartial observer, with a deep concern for the welfare of all humanity.

The analysis made here is tentative, provisional and subject to correction. The aim is to find out what went wrong in order to avoid repeating past errors with disastrous results, and not to find who was wrong and fight immaturely with personal abuses. Let us in a magnanimous and noble manner rightly understand our past mistakes, forgive them and forget them, in order to create a more healthy society in the future.

When there is a quarrel between one's own child and the neighbour's child, the wise parent would correct the fault of his own child, allowing the neighbour to correct the fault of his child. But if one starts scolding the neighbour's child, the neighbour would also scold one's child, and both would be spoiling their own children. Similarly to reduce conflicts between groups in society, it would be much wiser for any group to correct their own faults first, which would be fully within their own control. This would induce the other group also to correct their faults. Even if the other group does not respond, the moral strength of the first group would improve considerably, as the impartial public and world opinion would morally give more support to the first group. *In the emerging global society with instant communications, truth,*

nonviolence and moral strength, may become more efficient and powerful than falsehood, violence and brutal physical strength.

With less than a half percent of the world's population, and being at the crossroads of international transport and communications in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka cannot isolate itself easily from the powerful worldwide trends. We were one of the first countries to come under European imperialism, when that powerful dominating trend originated. We were also one of the first countries to obtain political independence, when the worldwide political liberation trend started after the Second World War. We also led in the democratisation trend in the Third World, by granting universal suffrage in 1931. Because of such democratisation and the agitations of the socialialists, we were able to achieve a relatively high physical quality of life among the poorer countries. We were also one of the first countries to have violent ethnic conflicts, which has now become a common worldwide problem. *Can we become one of the first countries in the Third World to find a solution beneficial to all with compassionate creative cooperation?*

Let us very briefly look at some aspects of our recent history to enable us to have a better perspective of our future problems and opportunities. From ancient times in Sri Lanka both among the Sinhalese and Tamils, caste was the chief barrier among the people, and religion, language, nationality or ethnicity were much less divisive. How did ethnicity become an aggressive divisive factor during the last three decades? Though the caste system was rigidly divisive, hierarchical and unjustifiably oppressive, to the lower castes, it did not lead to violent conflicts, as the system was accepted as natural and inevitable. Why are ethnic divisions sometimes leading to violent conflicts in many parts of the world today? How is it that most highly democratic countries with strong ethnic consciousness are able to accommodate ethnic diversities without serious conflicts?

Only a global long term perspective with a deep appreciation of the powerful trends in the world, can help us to understand our own ethnic conflicts and the best way to solve them.

From ancient times till the latter part of the 18th century, nationalism was rarely asserted in any part of the world. States were based on royal dynasties or created by adventurous conquerors, the extent of which may be large empires embracing several nations, or small principalities within a part of a potential nation. The royal families and aristocrats or feudal chiefs ruled. The mass of the people including the emerging bourgeoisie had little political rights. In some states people were suppressed or subordinated with limited civic and human rights. During and after the French Revolution, nationalism, emerged as a mass movement in Europe, combined with the democratic demand for liberty, equality and fraternity. Nationalism from the beginning was against oppression by local or foreign rulers or the division of a single nation into many principalities.

Based on the principle of national self-determination many nation states were formed in Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries by combinations or divisions. They are Greece, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Romania, Yugoslavia, Norway, Bulgaria, Albania, Finland, Czechoslovakia, Hungaria, Austria, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ireland and Iceland. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were later included in the U. S. S. R. as states in the federal union. After Russian Revolution, Lenin accepted the principle of national self-determination and nation states and autonomous regions were formed within the Soviet Union.

This does not mean that the whole of Europe is divided into homogenous nation states, with one nation and language in each state. Switzerland has four official languages, Belgium two and Finland two languages. Many states have diverse ethnic minorities. Except for North Ireland and Spain, (which appear to be less violent than Sri Lanka), violent conflicts is almost unknown. Nonviolent conflicts or conflicts with very limited violence takes place in some countries. On the whole Europe, which pioneered in scientific and technological development and democratic institution building seems to have found fairly adequate solutions to ethnic aspirations and ethnic conflicts, and is further innovating in the democratisation process. All Third World countries have much to learn from the European experience, not only in science and technology but also in democratic processes and institution building.

From ancient times in Sri Lanka as in most other countries, wealth, power and knowledge, were heavily concentrated in the royal families, aristocrats, feudal chiefs and the Sangha and temples. The mass of the people were relatively poor living in mud houses, highly submissive and ignorant with simple folk culture. Caste identity was predominant, and Sinhalese, Tamil, Pali and Sanskrit were used without prejudice by intellectuals in the Sangha and administrators in court. The nationalist, democratic, socialist and Marxist ideals and aspirations, which aimed at the development of national cultures and the wider sharing of wealth, power and knowledge among the masses, evolved in Europe and became a powerful force in the 19th century. Their impact was felt in Sri Lanka only from the 1930s among the masses.

But before that, in the latter part of the 19th century some pseudo-scientific racial theories, which tried to justify the white man's superiority seemed to have influenced the Sinhalese Western educated classes. They also identified with the ruling Aryan race and blindly imitated European culture and manners and even adopted English names. They spoke Sinhalese only with their servants. However Sinhalese language and culture and Buddhism, were preserved by the Sangha and by the respected ayurvedic physicians and Sinhalese teachers in the villages. The Tamils because of their relative isolation in the north and east, relatively preserved their culture even among the upper classes and the Christians.

The majority of the English educated and Westernised ruling elite in Sri Lanka, wanted to preserve and expand their own privileges, sharing an increasing proportion of powers with the British rulers. A good proportion of this local elite, both among the Sinhalese and Tamil leaders, did not favour the granting of universal suffrage in 1931. Nor did they agitate for complete independence as the great Indians leaders were demanding. In the Jaffna boycott of the 1931 elections, there was a section which followed the Gandhian ideal of complete political independence and the simultaneous upliftment of the depressed castes and classes.

The solcialists, and trade union leaders, helped the democratisation process in Sri Lanka with political agitations

for the widespread sharing of wealth, power and knowledge among the masses. They also vehemently opposed imperialism and agitated for political independence. Just as the agitations of the socialists and the threat of revolution in Europe in the 19th century, induced the ruling elite in those countries to adopt welfare and socialist measures to pacify the working classes, in Sri Lanka also the agitations of the socialists and trade unionists induced the government to adopt welfare measures.

Though the socialists played a catalytic part in the democratising process of wider sharing of income, power and knowledge, though not implemented by themselves, when a socialist government came into power, socialist programmes were not systematically implemented as in the Scandinavian countries, or by other socialist governments in Western Europe. Corruption and inefficiency in the public sector would not create much harm in a capitalist or free enterprise countries, as most of the production is done by the private sector, with internal honesty, discipline and efficiency within each private enterprise. Socialism with predominant public sector ownership and management can only succeed with a high standard of honesty, dedication and efficiency, by the political leaders and managers in the public sector. As many of the political leaders in most parties and the managers in public sector, (according to rumours and public opinion) do not appear to possess very high moral standards in their public life, socialism could not succeed in Sri Lanka. The word "socialism" itself has become a bad word today. Unless a fundamental transformation takes place among the socialist leadership, or leaders with high standards of honesty, sincerity and dedication arise, there is very little hope for socialism in Sri Lanka in the near future.

Whatever political theory may dominate in the future, if we are successfully to adapt ourselves and contribute our best to the emerging more democratised world of the 21st century, there has to be more widespread and fairer sharing of income or wealth, power or participation, and knowledge, among the masses.

Unfortunately in Sri Lanka, the elite among both the Sinhalese and Tamil communities, were not deeply concerned with a fairer sharing of income and power among the

mass of the people, especially with the traditionally underprivileged and depressed classes. The privileged classes fought to maintain or increase their privileges on a selfishly ethnical basis. The divisive ethnicity of the majority community masqueraded as patriotic nationalism. The similar divisive ethnicity of the minority community was condemned as separatism. Few realised that both were equally evil and destructive. Most of the leftists were above divisive ethnicity, but they lacked the honesty, sincerity and dedication, essential for the success of socialism, and some of them became opportunists to gain power.

Let us very briefly review the origin and escalation of ethnic conflicts. As repeatedly mentioned by Minister Thondaman recently, most of the Tamil leaders were very good lawyers but bad in negotiation. They were extremely good in antagonistic confrontation or debates and arguments, which may be an asset in the courts, but usually counterproductive in discussions and negotiations, especially of emotionally divisive issues. They were very good in winning elections in Tamil areas using communal slogans, but very poor in gaining the support of enlightened and moderate Sinhalese opinion, which favoured justice and human rights for all without discrimination. By their adversary or antagonistic style in politics, they antagonised even enlightened Sinhalese opinion, and consolidated the Sinhalese opposition to even some of the just demands of the Tamils. The minority complex among the Sinhalese, which imagines a serious threat from the Tamils, was nurtured equally by the chauvinistic Tamil and Sinhalese leaders.

The demand for fifty-fifty and the anti-Sri campaign were two serious blunders by the privileged class Tamil Leaders, which threatened the natural preponderance of the Sinhalese in the only country where they lived as a majority community. The unity and integrity of the country under a federal constitution was not sufficiently emphasised by the Tamil leaders, and they never attempted to convince Sinhalese opinion that federalism is not division of the country. Their general confrontational attitude to the Sinhalese leaders and people, made federalism a dirty word to the Sinhalese masses who were easily led to misunderstand what federalism really

meant. The Federal Party and the Tamil people were hated and feared by the Sinhalese extremists.

In such an environment of prejudice and misunderstandings, the demand for Eelam or separation by the TULF, and the militant tone and the chauvinistic rhetoric adopted in the 1977 election, made the situation much worse. Today it is the demand for separation and belief in violence by some of the youth, which is the biggest obstacle to the acceptance of regional or even provincial autonomy by the Sinhalese. They fear that any measure of genuine autonomy may lead to separation. The over-reliance on Tamilnadu and India, has also aggravated the fears and prejudices and made a lasting settlement very difficult.

The similar confrontation style of the Sinhalese leaders contributed equally if not more, to the aggravation of ethnic conflicts. From the beginning the leftist parties who believed in the wider sharing of income (and power ultimately) were impartial and objective in their approach to ethnic conflicts, but they also had to adopt a partly opportunistic approach because of insufficient response to an enlightened approach by both the Sinhalese and Tamils, in an environment of divisive ethnocentric attitudes. *The fundamental difference between the ethnocentric Sinhalese and Tamil leaders was that the Sinhalese leaders, because of their ability to form government were able to implement their ethnocentric policies to some extent in the name of nationalism and patriotism, whereas the Tamil leaders were only able to mislead the Tamil people to destruction and decline because of their ethnocentric speeches. Ultimately all suffered because of retarded development, violence and increasing insecurity.*

Till 1955 there was no violent ethnic conflicts between Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka. In the 1952 elections, the Federal party was defeated and the UNP won a few seats even in the north. Except for some sympathy for the plight of the Indian Tamils, who were losing their citizenship rights, there was very little ethnocentric feelings among the Sinhalese or Tamils. The governing party expected Sinhalese and Tamil to become the official languages of the country in the long run. The situation fundamentally changed in

1956. One party adopted the slogan — 'Sinhalese only in twenty-four hours', and the other leading party also responded and accepted Sinhalese only as the official language. This naturally frightened the Tamil voters, who feared that British imperialism may be replaced by a worse Sinhalese imperialism, and supported the Federal Party with an overwhelming majority in the Tamil areas. The violence against the peaceful Satyagraha against the Sinhala only policy at the Galle Face Green and the mob violence used against the Tamils were the beginnings of violent politics in Sri Lanka.

In 1957 and in 1965, the governing party was prepared to rectify the genuine grievances of the Tamils, but because of the low level of opportunistic and adversary politics practised, the ethnocentric opposition prevented any reasonable settlement or accommodation. When the constitution was revised in 1972 and 1977, the governing parties with two-thirds majorities in parliament, did not make a serious attempt to accommodate Tamil aspirations, though some adjustments were made.

Today the situation has become very bad as both the Tamil and Sinhalese extremists with aggressive identities are believing in violence as the only means of settling the problem to their own selfish advantage. But it is only a minority on each side who seriously believe in violence. The majority on each side, who would prefer a nonviolent solution on the basis of justice for all, are unable to communicate with each other because of censorship and false propaganda on both sides. They also support violence by their own side, as they feel that the other side is threatening by unjustifiable domination or demands, and extreme violence. Each side feels that they may be dominated and suppressed, unless they defend themselves violently or even attack and defeat the other side. They do not realise that in the world today, no one who aspires for freedom and justice nonviolently, can be subordinated, suppressed or submerged permanently. The ethnocentric leaders on both sides, by their own speeches and actions, have brought about a situation where their worst fears are being fulfilled. They may be secretly satisfied that their prophesies are becoming true.

All wars and violence have their roots in the minds of human beings. Even if human beings have conflicts in their minds, if nonviolent means of resolving such conflicts are provided by society, violence can be managed in society, and peace, harmony and universal brotherhood can be preserved. Let us now briefly look at the psychological causes and the external institutional structures and processes, which have exaggerated conflicts and violence in our society.

Psychological Attitudes on Ethnic Conflicts

The psychological attitudes on ethnic conflicts can be classified into three very broad groups — (a) ethnocentric, (b) enlightened and (c) moderate. Those with ethnocentric attitudes think that their own group has been badly discriminated mainly by the opposite group, the opposing group has no real grievances and wants to dominate them, yielding to their demands would lead to domination and even violence should be used to maintain or regain the rights of their own group. The people with enlightened attitudes fully appreciate the real grievances of the opposing ethnic group, and realise that there can be full freedom, justice and progress for all, only by attempting to remedy the genuine grievance of all, blame the faults of their own leaders more than the faults of the opposing leaders, and realise that only through nonviolent means a stable and beneficial solution can be found. The moderate groups are those in the middle, the mass of the people who are less articulate and influenced by either side according to external circumstances. The ethnocentric and enlightened Sinhalese and Tamil attitudes are listed below in an approximate and tentative form.

Ethnocentric — Sinhalese

1. Sinhalese were the earlier settlers. Tamils were later invaders who destroyed Sinhalese Buddhist culture in north and east.
2. Tamils are generally selfish, clannish, and shrewd, and would dominate the Sinhalese if given the opportunity.

3. Unity should be preserved at any cost. No devolution beyond District Councils with limited powers should be allowed.
4. Democracy means majority rule and minorities should submit to the will of the majority.
5. Sinhalese should be the only official language with limited use of Tamil.
6. Sinhalese have been discriminated against in education, employment and business under foreign rule, which should be now rectified.
7. Sinhalese should be settled in predominantly Tamil areas in order to prevent the demand for federation or separation.
8. Violence should be used drastically to suppress the demand for separation.

Ethnocentric — Tamil

1. Tamils were the original ancient settlers. Sinhalese ousted the Tamils in the south or assimilated them.
2. Sinhalese are brutal and inhuman and Tamils cannot live with security in a unitary state.
3. Separation may be inevitable if Sinhalese refuse to give federation or at least Regional Council.
4. In a multi-ethnic society, democracy means federation and accommodation of minority views in the centre with equal rights and non-discrimination at all levels.
5. Sinhalese and Tamil languages should have parity of status.
6. After independence Tamils have been discriminated in education; employment and development, which should be rectified.
7. No Sinhalese should be settled in predominantly Tamil areas with government support.
8. As regional council and equal treatment have been refused, and violence used against the Tamils repeatedly, Tamils should violently fight for separation.

Enlightened — Sinhalese

1. It does not matter at all who came first. Sinhalese and Tamils have lived together peacefully, with mutually beneficial interactions and rare conflicts.
2. Tamils on the whole are good people, who are hard-working because of the lack of opportunity in their land. Some have been misled by power-hungry politicians just as some Sinhalese have been misled.
3. The unity of Sri Lanka can be preserved by granting federation or real autonomy. Such devolution would strengthen unity promote the sense of justice and increase participation by all the people.
4. In a multi-ethnic society democracy should include regional autonomy, local participation, and accommodation of all aspirations in the centre.
5. Sinhalese, Tamil and English should be given their due place allowing the people to have a free democratic choice, except for compulsory education through the mother tongue in the early stages.
6. All political parties have favoured their supporters and discriminated against other parties, while in power, which has reduced efficiency, retarded development, and led to frustration among both Tamil and Sinhalese youth. Merit should be the sole criterion in all spheres to develop excellence and unity, though backward areas or sections may be favoured temporarily on an objective basis till facilities are equalised.
7. State aided settlements should not fundamentally change the ethnic identity of any area, but such settlements need not be limited to the people of the area or one ethnic group.
8. Political solution is the only viable solution. Violence may be used by the state only to suppress violence and protect all innocent people.

Enlightened — Tamil

1. Same as enlightened Sinhalese.
2. Most of the Sinhalese have been good and helpful to the Tamils. Some Sinhalese have been misled by power-hungry politicians who caused much destruction just as some Tamils have been misled.
3. Some measure of devolution is essential. Provincial Councils with real autonomy, may be an acceptable compromise, provided the government fully allows real devolution.
4. Some autonomy and accommodation is essential. But the minorities should willingly accept the natural predominance of Sinhalese Buddhist culture even when equal rights are given to all.
5. Same as enlightened Sinhalese.
6. Same as enlightened Sinhalese.
7. Same as enlightened Sinhalese.
8. The minorities should use only nonviolent means to redress their grievances, which is much more effective today, because of the instant communications, and nonviolent demonstrations to gain justifiable rights would gain the sympathy of the majority and the whole world.

The above classification of attitudes may not be agreed by all, and is given only to give a rough idea about different psychological tendencies. *Those with ethnocentric attitudes usually have aggressive identities, and motivated by baser feelings and negative or akusala thoughts, such as prejudices, fears anger, envy and hatred, and believe in violence. Those with enlightened attitudes can identify themselves with all human beings or have selfless universal compassion or aspire for it, and are predominantly motivated by nobler aspirations such as truth, beauty, goodness, love, service and purity, and do not believe in any type of violence.* Perfection is not possible but a strong aspiration for such higher values and acting on them as much as possible is sufficient, for an enlightened approach to create a sane society.

According to psychologists an insane person is one who is isolated from society and environment psychologically, and is not in touch with reality, ignorant of others feelings and attitudes, and obsessed with his own self-centred and self-created problems, living sometimes in a world of illusions, delusions and hallucinations. A fully sane person can be said to be fully in touch with reality, aware of the feelings and attitudes of others, able to empathise and sympathise with others sufferings, and be joyful in the happiness and success of others, and have boundless compassion and understanding for others.

The enlightened attitude is definitely more sane psychologically than the ethnocentric attitude, because the former is able to empathise and sympathise with the fears, grievances and frustrations of the others ethnic group more effectively, and is relatively less isolated in an egocentric world, and therefore more in touch with reality. Only those with enlightened attitudes are relatively liberated and can help to liberate their own people and others. Those with ethnocentric attitudes are themselves bound by prejudices, envy and hatred, and live in fear and insecurity or try to dominate others aggressively. They only help to increase the sufferings of their own group.

Attitudes are formed by the type of early upbringing and education, the effort of the individual to understand himself and transcend his limitations, the nature of the environment, and the influence of others, especially the opinion creators.

The majority of the people are neither congenitally ethnocentric nor congenitally enlightened. They are more malleable and are influenced by the external environment and the political, religious and intellectual leaders, and media. *If the external environment is full of suspicions, fears, tensions and violence, and if the leaders and the media foster such suspicions and fears, the majority would tend to become ethnocentric themselves and support and follow congenitally ethnocentric leaders. If the external environment is relatively peaceful, with greater harmony, cooperation and beneficial interactions among the diverse cultural groups, and conflicts are resolved nonviolently, through discussions and negotiations, and if the leaders and media adopt an enlightened attitude,*

the majority would naturally tend to support and follow the congenitally enlightened leaders.

The attitude favoured by one ethnic group is powerfully influenced by the attitude adopted and the leaders supported by the other ethnic group. When ethnocentric policies were supported by the Sinhalese majority in 1956, the Tamils also supported ethnocentric policies, whereas in 1952 the Tamils defeated the ethnocentric leaders. The ethnic violence against the Tamils in recent years have progressively increased the support for even violent ethnocentric aggression, among the Tamil youth. Similarly the threat of separation and the use of violence by Tamil movements has increased the ethnocentric attitudes among the Sinhalese. The vicious circle of ethnocentric attitude in one group leading to increased ethnocentrism in the other group, had made the solution of the problem more difficult. How can this vicious circle be broken? (A friendly neighbour can lift us out of the vicious circle)

Only a right understanding of the problem created by ourselves, can help to find a solution beneficial to all. The political, religious, intellectual and social leaders, the social scientists, educators, and the media, can easily save us from the vicious circle if they adopt an enlightened attitude. But some of them who are highly motivated are virulently ethnocentric especially in the political field. They create the fears and suspicions on both sides, and their prophecies become self-fulfilling, as they themselves create the poisonous environment of suspicions, fears and hatred. Then their worst prophecies are fulfilled they claim to be more realistic and the more enlightened are condemned as unrealistic or idealistic. Ethnocentric leaders have a knack to see that their worst fears are fulfilled just as neurotic individuals get their fears fulfilled by their own imaginations and actions.

Today we find the pathetic situation where even the congenitally enlightened politician, if he wishes to remain a successful politician, has to pretend in public life that he is also ethnocentric. This is mainly due to our type of elections and adversary democracy badly imitated from Britain, which is analysed in the next section. The unhealthy psychological climate prevailing today favours only ethnocentric attitudes on both sides. Any enlightened person who sincerely criticises

the ethnocentric attitude of his own side, (the wise parent would only try to correct his own child), is immediately condemned as a traitor.

The social scientist, academic scholars or intellectuals, by the nature of their professions are compelled to be impartial, objective and non-ethnocentric or enlightened. Even ethnocentric individuals among the social scientists pretend to be enlightened and objective, when they go abroad, or want foreign recognition. Their research and studies ultimately influences the educators, media, religious leaders, politicians and the public at large. They can play a vital role in solving the political, economic and social problems in society, especially by learning and propagating the lessons from other countries. They need not worry about public popularity like politicians and can be relatively immune from the insane psychological climate.

One who cannot empathise with the attitudes and feelings of others cannot be impartial and objective, and cannot claim to be a competent social scientist, though he may be competent to collect data and analyse them, using rigorous mathematical techniques. Much ethnocentric attitudes are being propagated in the name of academic studies and social science research, which have contributed their part to create and escalate ethnic conflicts. According to all the great religions, one who cannot empathise or sympathise with other groups is not competent to be even an ordinary preacher. How can one who is egocentric and partly neurotic teach or guide others?

The harmful effects of ethnocentric attitudes should be clarified and exposed by social scientists, intellectuals and religious leaders, to prevent major catastrophes. Ethnocentric attitudes fulfill the worst fears but rarely satisfy the beneficial aspirations. Sinhala might have become a more widespread and effective official language if not for the 'Sinhala only' policy, as most of the Tamil schools and colleges were teaching Sinhala in the north before 1956. The aspiration of the Sinhalese to maintain unity of the country can be better realised without much security expenditures, through an enlightened attitude. Unity may be temporarily endangered by an ethnocentric attitude which provokes a demand for separation and terrorism. The aspiration of the Tamils to have some

measure of autonomy or devolution of power, may be more easily conceded if the Tamils adopt an enlightened attitude. *Ultimately it is only the enlightened attitude which can find a lasting beneficial solution, which would help our youth to develop their talents to high standards of excellence, and contribute their best to create a nonviolent, peaceful and creative world where wholesome (kusala) thoughts would prevail over the unwholesome (akusala) thoughts.*

Adversary Democracy or Consociational Democracy

Monarchy was the most widespread form of government in most parts of the civilised world till recent times. Rigid class or caste systems and slavery was also common. Democratic experiments were made in ancient India during the time of the Buddha and in Greece, but they did not survive. There had been a large measure of self-government and self-reliance in the villages in India and Sri Lanka and in other parts of the world, from ancient times, because of the slowness of transport and communications.

The democratic parliamentary institutions found in some parts of the Third World today have been adapted or copied from Europe just as science and technology have been copied from Europe. In Europe itself democratic institutions evolved only during the last two centuries, and further developments are taking place. The Westminster style of majoritarian democracy is not necessarily the best type of democracy. It suited Great Britain to select the most ambitious and power-hungry individuals to rule the British Empire. After the Second World War, Britain is one of the most backward countries among the developed countries in the First World. One of the reasons may be the slightly obsolescent democratic institutions, which increases divisions and conflicts, which were appeased when there was an empire to dominate and exploit.

The British system of majoritarian democracy is essentially an adversary system of government, with government and opposition seated on opposite sides, mostly opposing each

other with arguments and debates. After an election the winner takes all the powers of government, and the loser has only the right to criticise without any fear. This system has not been harmful to Britain because there is an underlying unity created by the expansion and domination of empire, where all sections and minorities were able to do business or obtain high posts. The common loyalty to the monarchy whichever government is in power, also helped to unify the country. Whichever government is in power, there is strict rule of law, and merit is the sole criterion for selection to government jobs and there is no discrimination or favouritism. Persons belonging to any ethnic group can rise up to the highest posts, including that of the Prime Minister. There had been Welsh, Jewish and Scottish Prime Ministers. In fact from the latter part of the 19th century there had been proportionately more Scottish Prime Ministers than the share of the Scottish population justifies.

Therefore the majoritarian adversary democracy under strict rule of law and meritocracy, had not created any fundamental or permanent divisions in Britain, though temporary divisions among diverse groups such as between employers and workers have retarded British development.

The majoritarian adversary democracy has been found to be unsuitable to Third World countries with fundamental ethnic divisions. Most of them have abandoned this system, but unfortunately gone back to a more authoritarian, dictatorial or military government. In Sri Lanka the major problems arose because of the formation of ethnic political parties or political groups such as the Tamil Congress, the Federal Party, the Sinhala Maha Sabha, the Eksath Bikkhu Peramuna etc. In 1952 it appeared that communal politics among the Tamils may fade away with the defeat of the Federal Party. But communal politics among the Sinhalese in 1956, strengthened communal politics among the Tamils.

In a multi-ethnic society, where there are allegations or suspicions or discriminations, and where a minority may be permanently out of power under the 'winner-take-all' adversary model, minor divisions would naturally get exaggerated and ultimately lead to violent conflicts and fragmentation of the

country. In the elections and in parliamentary debates those who are ethnocentric and chauvinistic score better than the enlightened leaders. Even enlightened leaders who are ambitious for power are obliged to adopt ethnocentric policies to win elections or attack their opponents. Adversary politics corrupts enlightened politicians. That may be the reason why the British describe politics as a dirty game. Should it necessarily be dirty?

Though we were under British rule for about one and a half centuries, we need not be still tied to the British apron-strings, in our democratic institutions. We can learn much from the other democratic countries with multi-ethnic societies and sometimes relatively cleaner politics. Some of them never had a history of imperialism. Western Europe as a whole in recent decades has evolved towards increasing universalisation, while maintaining cultural diversities and increasing democratisation, with less concentration of power and wider participation, greater equality, freedom and human rights, more dynamic and creative transformations, and very limited violent conflicts internally or externally. We have much to learn from all these countries.

Austria, Switzerland, Belgium and Netherlands, have a system of democracy described as consociational. In consociational politics, adversary politics is reduced to a minimum and they try to arrive at a consensus, or compromise differences, or arrive at a proportionate outcome, avoiding majoritarian decisions. Consociational democracy is a better system of managing conflicts and promoting unity and cooperation. There would not be sudden changes in policies after each election, pulling the country in contradictory directions. Consociational democracy is the best system devised so far, to accommodate diverse ethnic groups, without making any group a permanently powerless minority, and for promoting the development of the whole country without violent conflicts.

The United States democracy is also less adversary and more consensual. After elections party politics becomes much less important. In the House of Representatives and the Senate, subjects are discussed in Committees, where there is no party divisions. There is no government and opposition

confronting each other, as in the Westminster system. We also had a similar committee system in our State Council before independence. Elections were contested on an individual basis. Every member had the opportunity to influence and even initiate policies in the committees.

Democracy may evolve further in the 21st century with further democratisation, decrease of violence, and maintenance and development of rich diversities, while simultaneously expanding cooperation in larger regional and international institutions. While learning from the highly evolved democratic countries, Sri Lanka can also intelligently and creatively innovate, in accordance with our ancient religious traditions, especially Buddhism, which is highly democratic, universal and scientific, and is for the liberation of all individuals on the basis of self-reliance, individual excellence, and human rights. We can institutionalise our common religious values to reduce violence and conflicts and to promote peace and harmony and raise the quality of life of all, to become a model for the world in the 21st century.

Conflicts, Compromises and Consensus

Differences in opinion or interests can lead to (a) irreconcilable conflicts harmful to all, (b) domination by the powerful with frustration for the powerless, (c) weak compromises with everyone partially satisfied or (d) fruitful consensus which is beneficial to all, better than the original opinion of any group.

Most people think that fundamental differences in interests of opinion between different groups in society would naturally lead to conflicts, domination or weak compromises. They are not wrong because most societies today are based on egocentric competition motivated by greed, envy and hatred which leads to inevitable conflicts, authoritarian domination or weak compromises.

But if a society can be predominantly motivated by the higher values of truth, beauty, goodness, compassion and service, based on wisdom and understanding, any differences of opinion or interests, can lead to a more mutually beneficial consensus at a higher level of satisfaction for all. No human

society has been perfect, but it is the ratio of the egocentric baser feelings based on aggressive identities, to the self-transcending higher values based on universal compassion, which determines whether a society is predominantly peaceful and progressive or full of conflicts and retarded. No great civilization has developed nor any democratic civilised society survived without a devotion to the higher values by the elite, or the spiritual, intellectual, social and political leaders of the society. It is only the predominance of the egocentric baser feelings over the higher values among the elite, which have led to the decline and deterioration of any civilisation or society.

The wise persons who are motivated by the nobler aspirations know that it is only what is beneficial to all that can be best for any group. What is harmful to some cannot be good for any group in the long run. According to the Buddhist and Hindu theory of karma, no one else can harm oneself. Only one's own bad action can harm oneself. If one tries to cause any harm to another, one is definitely harming oneself in the long run. If these truths are fully realised there would not be any unnecessary conflicts in society, and any conflicts should ultimately lead to mutually beneficial consensus.

Arriving at a consensus beneficial to all is not an impossible utopian ideal. It has been realised to a great extent in a few highly democratic countries. It may be impossible for those who are predominantly motivated by the egocentric baser feelings. *As Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King demonstrated in their public life, even if one person and one side is deeply devoted to the higher values, truth and non violence, the other side will ultimately respond, and beneficial consensus is possible. If all sides are predominantly motivated by self-transcending higher values, mutually beneficial consensus would be simple. It is especially the duty of religious and spiritual leaders to propagate the higher values based on wholesome thoughts, and decrease the baser egocentric feelings based on unwholesome thoughts. Otherwise religion may become the opium of the people. Let us not forget that Christ was crucified on the instigation of the religious priests, and most of the violent conflicts in the world today are based on religious conflicts. Religions should help to unite people on the*

foundations of universal compassion and, not divide people by instigating suspicions, prejudices, envy and hatred.

On scientific or technological problems, consensus is possible among experts with the available knowledge and resources, to find out the most efficient and economical way of solving the problems. In judicial cases one impartial and intelligent judge can give universally acceptable decisions in most cases on the basis of available evidences and the law. On political, economic and social problems also, if the sole aim is to find what is good for all, and what is just on the basis of higher values, or what is Dharma, it is possible to arrive at a universally acceptable consensus. It is only the craving to have egocentric advantages over the others, which leads to inevitable conflicts, domination or compromises. *Mature people never seek for egocentric petty advantages, which degrades oneself more than the harm done to others.*

The size of the national cake to be divided can be stable, decreasing or increasing. We can play a zero sum game with a stable cake, where the gain for one is an equal loss for the other, a negative sum game with a decreasing cake, where the loss of one leads to a greater loss by the other, or a positive sum game with an increasing cake where the gain of one leads to an equal or greater gain by the other. It appears that in Sri Lanka today we are playing a negative sum game where the loss of one is causing a greater loss to the other, in a vicious circle.

Baser feelings of suspicions, prejudices, envy and hatred decreases the size of the cake. Higher values such as truth, beauty, goodness, sympathy, compassion and service, increase the size of the cake. It can be tentatively said that societies in which higher values predominate over baser feelings, play a positive sum game, with much beneficial consensus and limited conflicts, and prosper. Societies in which the higher values and baser feelings are roughly balanced, play a zero sum game, with lesser consensus and more compromises and some conflicts, and the society stagnates. Societies in which the higher values are submerged by baser feelings, play a negative sum game, with little consensus, some compromises and violent conflicts, and the society deteriorates. What is

the game we would like to play in the future? Conflicts, compromises or beneficial consensus? Baser feelings or higher values? Aggressive identities or universal compassion? Violence or nonviolence? Negative sum game, zero sum game, or positive sum game?

Decentralisation for Democratisation and Integration

Mahatma Ganthi said that violence would lead to centralisation and concentration of power, but nonviolence would lead to greater decentralisation and wider participation. Under dictatorship, tyranny or divine right of kings, power was derived from the ruler and delegated to his subordinates. Under democracy power is derived from the people at the base and temporarily delegated to their representatives. The people would naturally like to manage the problems of their local community directly themselves or by chosen representatives well known to them. At district, provincial and state levels, they would like democratic decisions and control exercised by their representatives selected for their efficiency, integrity or public service, though not familiar to everyone. In a democracy ultimately all power is derived from the people at the base and not from the centre downwards.

But democracy is a recent phenomenon in human society, just as modern science is also a recent phenomenon, and very few states have successfully developed democracy. Democracy have much scope for further development in the 21st century. Among the Third World countries, Sri Lanka was one of the few countries leading in the democratising process. Will we be left far behind in the next century, or can we recover our lead and pioneer in further democratisation, while raising the freedom and dignity of all our people.

Because we have preserved in a relatively pure form one of the most universal, democratic, scientific and nonviolent humanitarian philosophy that the future world needs, because all the great religions have been practised here in peace, amity and mutual respect, for centuries when there was religious strifes intolerance or discrimination in most parts of the world, because

our citizens are relatively better educated and have distinguished themselves in diverse fields in the world, because we have a relatively longer experience of democratic practices and because we are one of the first countries to suffer the evil consequences of the slight distortions and perversions of democratic processes, we are in a privileged position to learn from diverse sources, and innovate democratic practices on the basis of nonviolence, universal compassion and the highest ennobling values.

In the 21st century the world would become more universalised with greater international and regional cooperation in diverse fields, more decentralised with local initiatives and the flourishing of diversities of cultures and lifestyles with beneficial interactions for enrichment of all, and increasingly democratised with greater freedom, fraternity, equality, dignity and justice for all. The univisation, diversification and democratisation trends, would help in the liberation of all people in the future. For liberation in all its aspects (excepting spiritual which does not depend on external circumstances), there should not only be freedom, equality of opportunity and justice without discrimination, but also a widened universal consciousness with universal sympathy and compassion, and maintenance of an individual identity without being lost in a mass uniform culture lacking diversity and free choice.

Alvin Toffler, the author of *Future Shock* and the *Third Wave* has stated that the guiding principle of industrial society is standardization, specialization, concentration, massification, maximization and centralization. *But in the post-industrial society that is emerging with further scientific development, the guiding principles would be diversification, demassification and decentralization, with greater scope for variety, individuality and realization that 'small is beautiful'.*

The basic principles of biological and social processes and evolution, is increase of heterogeneity and symbiotization, differentiation and integratsion. In the future world, survival will be not of the fittest or the strongest but the most symbiotic. Diversity contributes to a higher rate of cultural creation and cultural evolution, through higher cross-fertilization of ideas, inspirations, stimulations and peaceful coexistence with healthy competition. *Cultures have developed highly only in societies with heterogenous cultures or societies which have strong*

interaction with other cultures. Uniform and homogenous cultures lead to dogmatic conformity and limitations of the freedom of individuals, with monotony, stagnation and lack of creativity.

In the past history of humanity, cultural interactions with dynamic creativity took place only in a few cities in the world. Dynamic cultural developments took place in the small city states of Greece, in the small states in Italy during the period of Renaissance and in the small states of India. There were relatively less cultural, intellectual or spiritual creativity in isolated societies or in large empires and massive states with high concentration and centralization of power, with power flowing from the centre.

The two conditions essential for cultural creativity, appear to be local self-reliance, freedom and initiatives, and beneficial interactions with the wider world and other cultures. Citizens who become the subject of centralized bureaucracy and concentration of power, and passive recipients of rules and regulations, lose their creative initiatives. Those who are isolated from the wider world and separated are also less creative. The particular and the universal should be complementary. The extremes of absorption in the universal losing individuality, or isolation in the particular separated from the universal, are both harmful to cultural creativity.

In the future world there would be a greater complementarity, balance and harmony, between universalisation and diversification or differentiation. Thinking globally with a long term outlook would be interrelated with acting locally in the present. Universal values would be applied with full freedom and initiative to the unique local situation. *Excessive centralisation, concentration of power, standardization and bureaucratization, would stunt voluntary local initiatives, decrease freedom and self-reliance, and dry up the sources of dynamic creativity.*

Karl Marx visualised that in the ideal communist society the state would wither away. He might have seen the harmful effects of the concentration of power and the exploitation of the powerless. *The powerful become egoistic and imprisoned in their personal petty glory, and the power-*

less lose their dignity and initiative, and both get corrupted and debased. It may be that when the state withers away, concentrated bureaucratic power may wither away, but the diverse functions of society at different territorial and functional levels, would be managed by diverse types of organisations, without domination or the limitation of the freedom and initiative of anyone, as long as they do not seriously harm others. Unfortunately in the countries adhering to Marxist philosophy, concentration of power has not decreased much, though there is some measure of autonomy and decentralisation.

The Western liberal ideal is also for the decrease of unnecessary government controls and the centralization and concentration of power. Britain developed dynamically in the 19th century, by removing restrictive controls and encouraging widespread private initiative. Britain also has strong local governments with local initiatives. But in Britain imperialism necessitated the concentration and centralization of power. Though Britain allowed decentralisation of powers in the countries they ruled, there was also much concentration of power.

Before the industrial revolution, when transport and communications were relatively very slow, there was much decentralisation and autonomy in all parts of the world. The different regions in Sri Lanka also had real autonomy. But because they were relatively isolated from other cultures there was limited cultural creativity in each region. Increased speed of transport and communications, especially in the 20th century increased interactions with the wider world, but at the same time decreased local autonomy and initiative and increased the centralised bureaucratic controls.

In the U. S. under the Reagan administration, it was realized that excessive centralisation after industrialisation, has diminished the public spiritedness and the healthy spirit of voluntarism and private initiatives, found in the independent township of the past which was the 'life and mainspring of Americal liberty' according to Tocqueville. Action has been taken to increase the powers and initiatives of the states and local authorities and to allow voluntary private initiatives to flourish.

Today according to political scientists the state is too small for certain functions and too big for some other functions. The state is too small for large scale economic specialization and integration, controlling inflation and maintaining international monetary balance, international transport and communications, defence and security, controlling crime, controlling pollution and maintaining ecological harmony, and to create a peaceful regional or international environment. The state is too big to tackle any peculiar local problems, to develop and maintain local infrastructure, schools, dispensaries, reading rooms, libraries, and initiate voluntarily any new functions to enhance the quality of life of the people. Some of these functions may be done in a more standardized form by the central government, but it would stifle local initiative and self-reliance. For example a school or reading room built with some voluntary finance locally and some voluntary labour by those who are able, would be better utilised and maintained, and would have more significance for the local people. It would decrease the selfish isolation of families, foster the community spirit, increase the social consciousness and social responsibility of the people, to maintain public property, to serve society in whatever way possible and to contribute their best for the upliftment of the quality of life of all.

In Sri Lanka those who ask for separation, do not appreciate the universalising trend in the world. The next century may see Sri Lanka partly integrated with the South Asian regional group to a greater or lesser degree, to deal with the common South Asian regional problems more efficiently. If we develop according to the powerful world-wide trends there would also be some real devolution or autonomy. Those who refuse to allow real devolution today do not appreciate the diversification or decentralisation trend in the world. By supporting excessive centralization, (which is violence according to Mahatma Gandhi) they are also responsible for the violence prevailing today.

It is wrongly feared that any measure of genuine autonomy would ultimately lead to separation, but history proves that only the reverse is true. Ireland was denied 'home rule' in the 19th century, and as a consequence Eire separated

in 1921. Bangladesh was denied genuine autonomy and equality by Pakistan and it separated in 1972. Cyprus separated because of continuing violent conflicts. Any devolution must be peacefully negotiated with mutually beneficial consensus for all, to strengthen unity while preserving diversities.

All federal governments and government with real autonomy for their regions are highly integrated and unified countries. Switzerland is the best example of a Confederation of cantons, where the cantons perform almost all the functions that can be performed efficiently at the local level and the central government does only the functions common to all the cantons. The population of Switzerland is about 6 million, comprising about 70% Germans, 20% French, and 10% Italians. Though Switzerland is surrounded by Germany, France and Italy, no neighbour ever thought of invading Switzerland. Even Hitler who wanted to unify all the German areas, and invaded Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, never thought of invading Switzerland. Such is the strength of unity derived from full local autonomy.

In the future it is full decentralisation or devolution which would strengthen democratisation and participation and foster economic, social, intellectual, artistic, cultural and spiritual creativities in many centres, and integrate the country in a voluntarily accepted unified whole, with close relations with other countries in the region and the world, without losing our unique identity. All identities would be preserved and developed with detachment in the spirit of anatta, without isolation or separation from the larger wholes, with unity indiversities.

Equality, Excellence or Proportionality

Both liberal and Marxist philosophy agree that there should be greater equality in the distribution of resources and opportunities. Absolute equality in distribution is not favoured even by the revolutionary Marxists as talents and needs vary. "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work" is the policy professed to be followed by all countries — conservative, liberal or socialist, who are trying to promote a rational pattern of development.

A good society should provide equal opportunities and facilities to each and every individual to develop his or her talents and capacities to the maximum, enabling everyone to contribute his or her best to society. It is only countries which recognises merit with equality of opportunity, whether capitalist or socialist, which have realized high levels of development and raised the standard of living of their people.

It is only by striving to achieve excellence in diverse fields — scientific research and discoveries, technological innovation and applications, improved organizations and management, better skills and performances, improved compassionate and nonviolent social and political processes to promote freedom and cooperation, and intellectual, artistic and cultural creations of high standards — which can raise the quality of life of a society and its citizens to higher planes of achievements and individual actualization and fulfillment.

Promotion of excellence with equality of opportunity, may not lead to ethnic proportionality in every field of activity, but can create an harmonious balance, where no group is on the whole adversely affected, and everyone benefits because of excellent development. Experience in other countries show that it is the slightly discriminated section with equal talents, which does better economically than the slightly favoured section, because the former is urged to greater effort and perseverance, because of the discrimination and the latter become complacent and lethargic because of the favours. In a family with several children, the child which is specially favoured and pampered usually get spoilt. Therefore it is only equality of opportunity, which would create a better balance at a higher level of development and prosperity for all. Otherwise there has to be periodic destructions to bring about equality at a lower level of poverty and suffering for all, with fear, anxiety and conflicts.

When everyone gets the opportunity to contribute his or her best according to one's talents, there would not be envious comparisons or calculation of proportionate shares. If proportions are calculated, excellence cannot be fostered and encouraged to the maximum without discriminations. Nature does not distribute all talents proportionately among

all groups of people. At different times different people excel in different fields, which may be greatly due to environment and facilities. *The best way to equalise opportunities is to equalise facilities and not to equalise results proportionately.*

Experience of other countries show that if a politically dominant ethnic group has a predominant share in politics, bureaucracy and the military services, that group always does relatively and proportionately less well in the economic sector and the privately practised professions. In South Africa the Boers, who dominate the government sector do not do well in the private economic sector, and the English who are much less involved in government, do much better in the private sector. The experiences of Malaysia, many Latin American and other Third World countries confirm this.

Instead of competing for privileged positions enviously, what is more vital for a more egalitarian society, is the upliftment of all the poorer and depressed classes. The Third World countries have no moral right to demand a more egalitarian international economic order, when they allow extremes of poverty and wealth to perpetuate in their own countries. *Among the Third World countries, Sri Lanka's achievement in egalitarian welfare measures is relatively better. But more efforts should be made to supply the basic minimum needs of all and provide equal opportunities and facilities with less social discriminations.* Any type of discrimination would not be tolerated in the 21st century, if present trends continue. It is those who discriminate or try to dominate others, who would be considered as low, selfish and uncultured by future world opinion.

The young people aspire to develop their talents to the full according to their interests and abilities with equal competition and not with special favours, handicaps or discriminations. A society with equal opportunities enables all to contribute their best to its economy and culture and promotes unity in diversity. Discrimination in any form leads to frustration, conflicts and fragmentation of the country, with retarded progress harmful to all. A strictly temporary period of favouring backward areas, to rectify only the lack of equal facilities, may be justified, but ultimately merit should

be the sole criterion in all fields where excellence counts. In the 20th century it was because of the equal competitions confined to the English educated elite in Sri Lanka that many Sinhalese and Tamils were able to distinguish themselves in diverse areas in the world, much more than our proportionate share of world populations. It is very doubtful whether a similar proportion among our student populations during the last three decades would equally distinguish themselves in the world. *Have we lost excellence through mismanagement of our society, motivated by baser feelings and not by the nobler uplifting values?*

In the long run a new set of values based on our ancient spiritual traditions should be practised by our elite. In the developed countries it is now realised by many that excessive or conspicuous consumption of material goods, wastage of resources and pollution of the psychological, social and material environment, have increased stresses, tensions and conflicts in society, and lowered the quality of life of all. They believe in another type of development more in harmony with the teachings of the Middle Path, with moderate consumption of material goods and all round raising of the quality of life with more concern for the welfare of all.

Those who are more intelligent and talented should set an example of voluntary simplicity and austerity, with lesser search for material goods and greater pursuit of intellectual, cultural and spiritual values. They should use their intelligence and talents to serve society better instead of selfishly claiming a higher share of material goods or more privileges from society. It is the less educated and cultured who should have more rights to consume more material goods, to satisfy their greed and baser desires. The more intelligent and wiser people should be more concerned about their duties to society, inspired by more compassionate values. Then development of excellence, would not lead to petty envious competition and destructive frustrations. At least a few highly successful and recognised individuals should set the example of simplicity, austerity and humility, combined with dignity and nobility. They can have a tremendous influence on future generations and uplift the quality of life of our whole society.

If Sri Lanka can promote excellence in all fields and at all levels, with a more egalitarian distribution and the supply of basic needs of all, and if a certain proportion of the elite can voluntarily dedicate themselves to the highest values that humanity has been aspiring for, with simplicity austerity and universal compassion, we can raise the quality of life of all and provide opportunity to each and every youth to develop and express their excellence without frustrations, and become a model to the world in the 21st century.

Language Policy

What would be the ideal language policy which would promote efficiency, excellence and the development of our diverse cultures, overcome conflicts and facilitate positive, creative and mutually beneficial interactions? Language is the medium of communication and the medium through which diverse cultures evolved and developed. In the global village of the 21st century, we should be able to communicate efficiently with the whole world, and we should also develop our diverse cultures, as our contributions to the rich diversity of world cultures. The complementarity of the universalization or globalization trend, and the trend to maintain and develop diversity of cultures, should be fully appreciated by all to evolve a wise language policy.

Unfortunately some appreciate the globalization trend only and stress the importance of English. Some others realize the importance of developing their own culture, without appreciating that others also may have similar aspirations, and without sufficient appreciation of the globalization trend, give importance to the development and use of their mother tongue only. Others appreciate the importance of promoting national unity, and advocate a bilingual policy with the compulsory study of both the indigenous languages, which would limit international communication and the benefit of globalization to the elite with a sound knowledge of an international language. Only a full understanding of the powerful and inevitable worldwide tendencies and aspirations can help us to adopt a sound policy.

It is mainly during the last three decades that the aspiration to revive, maintain and develop one's own language and culture, has become a powerful worldwide trend, in almost all parts of the world. Till the 19th century the submergence and assimilation of weaker languages by the dominant language was accepted as inevitable, and was fairly common and not resisted seriously. The languages, of the Welsh, Irish and Scots were submerged by English in the United Kingdom. In all parts of the world minority or weaker languages were subordinated by the majority or powerful language. Today the Welsh, Irish, and Scots are attempting to salvage their languages at least for limited home and cultural uses. In Switzerland, Romansh which is spoken by less than 1% of the population, has been recently recognised as the fourth official language. In Spain the Basques has revived their language, though not used by their own leading authors recently. When any ethnic group becomes conscious of its language identity and rights, it is very difficult to suppress their aspirations. Suppression would lead to increasing assertiveness and aggressiveness of identities, but accommodation would lead to gradual detachment and wider sympathy and compassion.

In the 21st century with universal literacy and education, everyone would like to be directly aware of what is happening in the world on general matters, and on subjects on which each is specially interested. More people may travel, seek temporary employment abroad, or study abroad to gain wider experience. In the global village no country can be isolated. Even those who remain at home would like to read some worldwide journals or view worldwide television programs directly, without translations. Therefore a much large proportion of people will feel the necessity of competence in a world language. They would like to have a direct link with the wider world in addition to essential links with the other communities within their own countries. Such links have been there in all the great civilizations of the past. For the Buddhist countries, Sanskrit and Pali were common languages. In India Sanskrit was a common link. For the Islamic countries Arabic was the common language. In Europe though the Roman Empire declined during the 4th century, Latin remained the common language till the 20th century. Today

though the British Empire has collapsed, English may remain the predominant world language for another thousand years.

If one wants to study the ancient religions, philosophies, classics or cultures of the world, or the latest development in any field of scientific or technological research and studies, or if one is interested in the recent philosophies, literary, historical or cultural writings, or if one wants to know the latest thinking in any social science subjects, the best source is available in the English language written originally or translated by some of the most competent persons in the world. Even if we translate all the useful material it may be outdated, or done by less competent persons who are not equally competent in both languages and the subject they translate.

Today small countries in Europe and big powers which have never been under British rule, such as Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Netherlands, Japan, China and U. S. S. R., have given importance to the study of English. In South Africa the racialist government does not want the Blacks to have a good knowledge of English, fearing that with better knowledge, they may be better able to challenge the unjustified domination. In Sri Lanka also it appears that some of the English educated elite, who are keen to see that their own children are competent in English, do not like the wider masses to have a good knowledge of a world language, fearing stronger competition and the erosion of their privileges. Some of the elite are sincere, but do not appreciate the universalization trend.

Taking all factors into consideration, the best policy appear to be competence in the mother tongue for maintaining cultural diversities, and competence in a world language to be closely interrelated in the global village. In the case of Sri Lanka the obvious world language would be English, which would link us together in Sri Lanka and with the world outside. Now everyone appear to aspire for some knowledge of English. Excepting for compulsory education through the mother tongues up to a certain stage, no other compulsion is necessary. But facilities should be provided to all to study English, Sinhalese and Tamil in any part of the island. Let the people freely

choose for themselves in a democratic manner. Public servants who work in any area should be competent in the languages of the area spoken by more than 5% of the people of the area.

Without compulsion most of the people may voluntarily choose to study English in addition to their mother tongue. Without compulsion a good proportion of Tamils may study Sinhalese, especially those living in Sinhalese areas. Some Sinhalese staying or working in predominantly Tamil areas may voluntarily choose to study Tamil also. Unity and harmony can be promoted without much compulsion.

In the 21st century Sinhalese and Tamil would be used even more competently and widely than now for home use and for literary and cultural creations such as music, dancing, drama, plays, films, and in writing stories, novels and other original literature. Some of the excellent creations may be translated or dubbed into other languages and contributed for world cultural development. English would be used to appreciate the cultural activities in other parts of the world and for international communications with other parts of the world, for higher education, wider knowledge, and for the development of science and technology, and international commerce.

A good proportion of our people may become fluent in all three languages — English, Sinhalese and Tamil. All three languages would become link languages, and English the predominant link language with the whole global village. Many Tamils may even contribute to Sinhalese cultural and literary activities as has happened in our past history. A few Sinhalese may even contribute to Tamil culture. There can be a more civilised and mature peace and harmony, with mutually beneficial and stimulating cross-fertilization and enrichment of cultures. Sinhalese Buddhist culture would remain the predominant culture in the island, with the traditionally noble example of tolerance and appreciation of all other cultures. Because of the supreme example in practice, the pure form of Buddhism may be voluntarily and spontaneously accepted by large proportions of people in the world, for individual serious practice, and not for political and social domination, as some other religions have been abused.

Population and Development

At a certain stage of modern industrialisation and development, family planning is spontaneously adopted by the people, even if the state and religion discourages such population control. This happened in Western Europe in the latter part of the 19th century. Today in the Third World countries, because the natural development that should take place at this stage in human history is being hampered by the mismanagement of the local rulers, and the international economic system, population control has to be propagated with extreme propaganda. This has created myths about the relationship between population growth and density, and economic growth and standard of living.

It is wrongly presumed that population growth and high density of population, always lowers economic growth rate and lowers the standard of living. But the study of the economic development process of all the highly developed countries, show that at the initial stage of industrialization and modernization, all these countries had high rates of population growth, with a higher rate of youthful population entering the labour market, which facilitated the necessary changes in the economic structure. When we study the highly developed area in the world today, we find all of them to have high density of populations. Japan, Netherlands, Belgium, Hongkong and Singapore, have very high total population densities. Even in countries which have smaller populations for the total area, such as the U.S., Australia and Canada, it is only the thickly populated areas which are highly developed with all economic infrastructures, and social, cultural and all other facilities of civilization available fully. Singapore and several other highly populated countries are able to give additional employment to migrant labour from other countries.

We find another peculiar phenomenon in the history of population migration. Any country from which political refugees flee away, because of persecution or insecurity, appears to be cursed and faces an inevitable decline, though population density has decreased. We also find that all countries in history which have given protection to refugees, prospering in the long run. The Jews in Spain because of insecurity went to Netherlands and England. Subsequently Spain declined and remained stagnant and backward for about four centu-

ries, whereas Netherlands and England prospered continuously. Britain always gave refuge to all refugees from any part of Europe for religious or political persecutions, and is it surprising that Britain developed and English has become a predominant world language today? On the whole the British Empire liberated most people from the oppression of their own rulers and elite, though there was some British oppression, and they remained too long in the Empire without promoting quicker independence.

Sri Lanka should learn from the past experience of other countries and should create a peaceful environment here controlling all types of violence by anybody and not allowing any serious frustrations, (which may due to misperceptions), leading to violence. Another factor which should be realised from history is that the intellectual, scientific, cultural or spiritual contributions, of a society to the world, does not depend on the quantum of population. The citizens of the small city state, Athens, contributed tremendously to all aspects of European and world culture and civilization. The Jews, comprising a small proportion of the world population, without even a homeland for nearly two millennia, have contributed to world culture in almost all fields. Did the discriminations they faced in most societies urged them to greater effort and success? In the long run the persecuted appear to do far better than the persecutors.

A right understanding of the relationship between population and economic and cultural development, would help us to frame wise policies to promote developments in all aspects. A wrong understanding of the relationship caused by the misunderstanding of the family planning propaganda, (which may be necessary to influence the people), may lead to the adoption of shortsighted and immoral policies, which would harm all in the long run. A deeper study of history shows that righteousness or Dharma ennobles and benefits in the long run, and unrighteousness or Adharma degrades and harms in the long run. Whether we succeed or not, let us always follow the path of righteousness based on higher values, as life on earth for each individual is impermanent, and we are not sure whether we would be reborn in our enemy's group to rectify our karma, as believed in some of our philosophies. According to these philosophies anyone with

strong hatred toward any group, and does harm to that group, would be inevitably reborn in that particular group.

While judiciously adopting family planning, let us not enviously compare population proportions, or fear excessive populations, or unrighteously hope that decrease of population of the other group may benefit us, or that forced population settlements, would solve conflicts. *It is the assurance of law order, security and justice in all parts of the island, and the control of all types of violence, which would lead spontaneously to the settlement of all ethnic groups in any part of the island, without fear, hatred or conflicts, and promote genuine unity in diversity on the basis of the more compassionate values.*

Conclusion — A Vision of Our Future

When we look at the clear night sky, we see millions of stars, some of them millions of light years away, according to the astronomers. If we look at our planet earth with the naked eye from our nearest star, four and a half light years away, it would not be visible, too small like a particle of dust. Only our sun would be visible as a star. In this small particle in the immense universe, Sri Lanka is a tiny spot. Within this spot in the particle, we have our petty egocentric arrogance, divisions and conflicts and make our lives miserable.

An individual's active life on earth does not exceed 60 years, from 15 to 75, whereas life has existed on earth for billions of years. If we can transcend our limited egocentric prison, we can commune with the distant stars and have boundless universal compassion for all beings in the universe, because we are intimately interrelated with the whole totality. It is only our egoism, limited aggressive identities, and lack of boundless compassion, which makes our lives petty, foolish and brutish, and full of suffering and conflicts. Many petty leaders do not know the beauty, joy and liberating effect, lying hidden in universal compassion. They only know the petty glory in the expansion of their imprisoned egos, causing much harm to themselves and others, especially their own people, with whom they ethnocentrically identify.

Because of adopting too rigorous an approach and excessive specialization, many social scientists do not look at our problems in their totality, and they pretend to be value free.

Many religious and spiritual scholars, preachers and teachers, despite their concern with fundamental values, are relatively ignorant of the social and political processes in the world. We have tried to approach our problems, taking an interdisciplinary and holistic approach. The relevant universal values and powerful worldwide trends, and the individual psychological attitudes and social and political processes were investigated.

We saw that the psychological obstacles to individual liberation and social peace, progress and harmony, are the baser egocentric values such as greed, envy and hatred or negative, unwholesome or akusala thoughts, aggressive identities ethnocentric attitudes and belief in violent methods. The only realistic way to realise individual and social liberation, is to overcome these obstacles and become inspired by the ennobling, higher values, based on universal compassion, such as truth, beauty, goodness, service, sympathy, equanimity and joy in the happiness of other, or through positive, wholesome, kusala thoughts, detached identities with worldwide compassion, enlightened attitudes and belief in nonviolent methods to solve social conflicts.

The related obstacles in political and social processes, are separatism or isolation, denial of decentralisation and wider participation, excessive concentration of wealth and power, adversary political and social processes and procedures, and the suppression of dissent or the free expression of diverse views and interests. These obstacles should be overcome with an appreciation and implementation of the universalization or globalization trend, free promotion of diversities and decentralization, and increasing democratization with a more equitable distribution of wealth and power, promotion of consensual or consociational political and social processes, and the nonviolent resolution of all conflicts with full freedom of expression.

What is the type of society we would have in Sri Lanka in the 21st century, if we follow the highest values and the noblest aspirations? Sri Lanka would become more closely interrelated, with the global village, with increasing international cooperation on both governmental and non-governmental levels, in a South-Asian, Asian and worldwide basis. More people may travel, study or temporarily work abroad, and more foreign people may visit us for similar purpose and to study Buddhism, which would have helped to create

a peaceful and creative society in Sri Lanka. There would be increased worldwide communications through television and other media and the majority of the people would be competent in English or an international language.

Despite universalization or globalization, Sri Lanka would maintain its distinct identity, with the traditional diversity of cultures, and with mutually beneficial interactions. There would be less concentration and centralization of power, and much decentralization and wider participation, with greater self-reliance. Self-reliance and interdependency would be complementary and not contradictory. Increased decentralization would strengthen unity and integration. There would be economic and cultural development in a number of regional centres, and not concentrated in Colombo, with the relative neglect of periphery. As in the small city state Athens, and the small states of Renaissance Italy, intellectual, artistic and diverse cultural activities would flourish in a number of small communities, closely interrelated, but without excessive centralization, which stifles creativity. There would be an ideal balance and harmony between diversification and integration.

There would be greater democratization with greater freedom, equality of opportunity, and fraternity, among all communities, based on justice and rule of law. There would be less adversary politics, confrontations or conflicts. There would be consensus on most issues, with the sole aim of finding out what is best for all, on the basis of universal compassion, justice and fairplay. Any serious conflicts would be expressed in a civilised nonviolent manner, leading to talks, negotiations, conciliation or arbitration with compromises, if consensus cannot be reached. There would be less authoritarian management at all levels, with greater dignity and respect for all, and with order, democratic discipline and efficient work.

Because of lesser conflicts and the inspiration of the higher values, we would be playing a positive sum game with increasing prosperity for all. The essential basic needs of all, including the unemployed, old, sick and orphaned, would be provided. A proportion of the highly intelligent and wise individuals, who may be taking a leading part in diverse fields, would adopt voluntarily a simple and austere life-style with limited consumption of material goods, and

dedicated to the highest scientific, intellectual, artistic, cultural, social or spiritual pursuits. There may be a larger or smaller proportion of people, who would indulge in some excessive consumption to satisfy their lower cravings. But because of the widespread prosperity, this would not seriously harm others, as there would be sufficient excess after satisfying the basic needs of all. The majority of people would be neither austere nor indulgent, but satisfy their material needs moderately. There would be a diversity of cultural and material life-styles, but the austere simplicity and humility of the few wise persons, would be respected and appreciated by all. Because simplicity and austerity is appreciated, those who have to manage with the minimum satisfaction of basic needs only, would not feel serious inferiority, frustration or deprivation.

Excellence would be pursued by all in diverse fields, and at diverse levels from simple manual work to highest creative activities. Everyone would have the full opportunity and facilities to develop his or her talents to the highest degree, and contribute his or her best to society. There would be much creativity in scientific research, innovations, management, democratic processes and in the intellectual, artistic and diverse cultural fields. The majority, especially the more talented would be more concerned about their duties than their right, as most rights would be assured in society. There would be less envious or revengeful comparisons and more creative cooperation. Sri Lanka would become a model for excellence in diverse sectors, including democratic political and social processes, with a high quality of individual and social life and genuine unity in diversity.

May we in the near future pass from revengeful conflicts and crisis to cooperative harmony and peace, from violence to nonviolence, from authoritarian domination by a few to democratic participation by all, from adversary democracy to consociational democracy, from excessive centralisation to liberating decentralisation, from aggressive identities and ethnocentrism to enlightened identities and universal compassion, from ego-centric baser cravings to liberating higher values, from greed, envy and hatred to sympathy, compassion and joy in the happiness and success of others, and may we create a liberating, exhilarating and creative environment, in this beautiful island, where all excellence can be realised by our younger and future generations.

A Vision of Sri Lanka

- May we be inspired by forward looking universal visions,
without being bogged down in backward looking tribal delusions.*
- May we achieve a spontaneous and voluntarily acceptable unity,
on the basis of a free, equal and enriching diversity.*
- May our citizens realize liberty, equality and fraternity,
with justice, human rights, basic needs and full security.*
- May there be a wider sharing of power and prosperity,
and let us promote the same aims for all humanity.*
- May we be liberated by love, truth, goodness and service,
and not incarcerated by hate, greed, envy and prejudice.*
- May our leaders serve all without discrimination,
inspired by ennobling values based on universal compassion.*
- May we allow all dissents to be expressed non-violently,
and let us show the world that all violence is superfluous.*
- May there be less conflicts and more consensus and compromises,
for only what is good for all can be best for oneself.*
- May we give equal facilities and opportunities to all Sri Lankans,
to cultivate all excellence in all fields without frustrations.*
- May our youth make Sri Lanka a paradise in our planet,
and for the upliftment of humanity contribute their best.*

— C. Sivanesan