

The famous Kalinga war that took place in India around 262 BC had been a seminal moment in Emperor Asoka's personal journey, in India's history as well as in the history of Buddhism. The Maurya King Asoka waged the war to bring the province of Kalinga under the empire's control. Thousands died and their bodies lay scattered all over with blood drooping from their limbs. This experience stirred a spiritual revolution in the psyche of Asoka. Deeply shaken by the tragedy of that war the King underwent a personal transformation that made him eschew all violence and develop sorrow and compassion for all human beings. He became a convert to Buddhism- a religion that had already gripped his subconscious for its powerful message of peace and non-violence. The futility, tragedy, waste, and immense sorrow that war brings was graphically set in his memory. From that point on, historians have recorded how the Emperor transformed his empire into a truly blessed land where compassion towards the human being became the central focus of government policy. King Asoka had already demonstrated his undoubted skill in military conquest. Now, he showed his greatness and nobility in peace as exemplified by a series of projects throughout the length and breadth of the great subcontinent that came under his sway.

The significance to Buddhism was that the religion now had a powerful ruler as backer. All great religions in the world spread as a result of finding a monarch or powerful ruler as convert. For Buddhism it was Asoka as much as for Christianity it had been Constantine or for Islam it had been Muhammad himself.

Said the bard: "There's a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries." To Emperor Asoka the Kalinga experience constituted the great tide. He took governance completely out of the square occupied by traditional rulers and built a totally new and remarkable model that made him a major and peerless historical giant for all time. Praise has since been showered on Asoka from all quarters of historians. HG Wells, in his Short History of the World stated thus: "Amidst the tens of thousands of columns of



# HOW MAHINDA RAJAPAKSE LOST HIS KALINGA MOMENT

future in focus. This has made it abundantly clear that reconciliation cannot be achieved by his regime. A change of regime is a necessary setting for reconciliation.

Not only has the regime failed to reunite the country; it has worsened the island's state of national unity by letting extremist rhetoric play to other dangerous ethnic prejudices. A hitherto unknown Buddhist monk militancy was allowed an unhindered free space to operate. Government is complacent about this unhealthy phenomenon and thereby is complicit in it. For a regime that has been unsparing about its democratic critics this complacency is strange and it fosters a charge that the government is tied up firmly with irrational sectarian forces. This simply rules out its ability to engage in national reconciliation and unity.

entrenched and scandals are rife. Even the Prime Minister's office had been involved in a huge drug scandal. These are all swept under the carpet.

We Diaspora Sri Lankans watch a lot of TV Drama from Sri Lanka. A prominent theme that emerges in this drama is how greed and corruption and utter opportunism manifests in their characters. No one is to be trusted and the honest guy is deemed a fool. Education is undervalued. Since public art reflects social values one can surmise that this is how Lankan society is turning out to be.

Clearly, a condition of anomie or normlessness is getting hold of our society.

In this way, President Mahinda Rajapakse and the government have lost its great Kalinga moment. It is symbolic that the Government is now hauled before the international community for alleged crimes against humanity- a total opposite of the outcome of that historical Kalinga moment.

We humble citizens can only reflect on what could have been.

**Making Sense**

**Shyamon Jayasinghe**

world history the name of Asoka stands alone; a star."

Such a feat has since never been achieved in history. Least of all, one would be out of one's mind to expect our own Mahinda Rajapakse to achieve that. On the other hand, one could hypothesize in imagination how Mahinda Rajapakse could have transformed his triumph in Lanka's thirty-year war against terrorism into establishing a system of governance that would have achieved lasting reconciliation and unification in the island, efficient administration, and prosperity to the people. That Mahinda Rajapakse failed to do that has made the triumph seem something terribly hollow and something tagged with the potential of the return of militant separatism to the island.

One cannot destroy a powerful idea by brute force; like a wound spring it will snap back, perhaps with greater force. Only a genuine process of reconciliation could defuse the idea and render it irrelevant. King Asoka obviously had an embedded spiritual and intellectual potential within him. Mahinda hadn't that. He was made of different stuff. That's the difference. That Mahinda Rajapakse hadn't even an embryo of such spirituality was shown when he decided to triumphalize the event. King Asoka was saddened; King Mahinda wasn't one bit so saddened. He blew his trumpet and continues to do that without an inkling of understanding that he shouldn't do that if he had the country's

What discerning Sri Lankans have seen is an opposite trajectory to the Kalinga conversion. Government thought it a smart thing to do by utilizing the victory for the purpose of entrenching and expanding its power base. The first step was to take the Army Commander Fonseka out of the scene. Government didn't want to share the victory with its other participants. The next step was to get rid of the 17th Amendment and the next was to bring in the 18th Amendment. The next was to get rid of the 43rd Chief Justice in highly controversial circumstances. The President and his men simply didn't care about norms and criticism.

With its tentacles complete, the government acts with total impunity and non-transparency. Human rights violations take place on a daily basis even while the United Nations is deliberating on Sri Lanka. Massive capital projects are being launched with little being known about their procedures. While the Highway projects have great benefits some other projects are dead ducks or white elephants. The other day, a Divaina writer indicated how the supply chain is shared at the periphery by corrupt government politicians who provide metal, sand etc. to contractors. The report stated how contractors act under intimidation from these politicians. Thus a sharing of spoils takes place from top to bottom of the echelons of power. Since the corruption factor has to be reckoned in costing, all these projects are being operated at inordinate cost to the public. I guess, by the sharing of spoils throughout the supply chain government has set up a force of political supporters who are ready to add extra-military muscle when needed. Most of the huge cabinet ministers don't shine with any competence at all. Hardly any policy development takes place in Ministries. Corruption is

## මෙල්බන් ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂය හෙළ උරුමය දෙසට හැරෙයි?

ආණ්ඩුවේ සිදුවෙන්නේ අරුම පුදුම දේවල්ය. මට එහෙම හිතුවේ පසුගිය ආකාරයේ අන්තර්ජාලයෙන් දේශීයව පත්වරය කියවුණි. මාර්තු මැද දවසක පත්වරයක නිවුණේ මෙල්බන් ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයට ආධාරයක් එකතු කරන ලද මුදලක් හෙළ උරුමයේ උදය ගම්මන්පිලට ප්‍රදානය කළ බවය. ඒ ගම්මන්පිලගේ මැතිවරණ ව්‍යාපාරයට ආධාර පිණිසය. මෙල්බන් ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයේ නිලධාරියෙක් දෝර්නිම හෙළ උරුමයේ ගම්මන්පිලට සැලකිලි දෙනවා පිණිසදැයි අප විමසුවා.

මගේ හිතට එක පාරටම ආවේ තමන්ගේ ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයේ අපමන දුප්පත් සන්ප්‍රාප්තියකින් සිටියදී හෙළ උරුමයේ

ගම්මන්පිලට මුදලින් ආධාර කරන්නට මෙල්බන් ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයට හිතුවේ මන්දැයි යන්නය.

මේ ගැන දිගටම කල්පනා කරන විට හරි උත්තරය මට ලැබුණේ ජන්ද ප්‍රතිඵල හිඟව ව්‍රාමාට පැයසේය. ජන්දයෙන් පොදු පෙරමුණේ ජන්ද පදනම හොඳටම පහළ වැටීලාය. මේ දෙය වන බව මෙල්බන් ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයේ උදවිය කල් ඇතිව දැන සිටියා වෙන්නට ඇත. ගිලෙලන නැවේ මියේ පතින්නා සේ කල් ඇතිවම ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයෙන් ඇත් වෙන එක හොඳ යයි ඒ අය විනාශ වීමට ඉඩවටා සැකයක් නැත. මුහුදේ දවසක මෙල්බන් ශ්‍රී ලංකා නිදහස් පක්ෂයට ආධාරයක් දෙන්නට හෙළ උරුමයේ බෝඩ් ලැප්ටොප් එල්ලන්නට යන බවට නියෝග රාචය ඇත්ත වෙන්නට ඇතැයි මේ වෙත දේවල් දිනා බලනකොට මට හිතෙයි.

රටවත් ගුණසේකර කුමාරතුංග

**ජ්‍යෝතිෂය / ASTROLOGY**

හාව කේන්ද්‍රය අනුව පලාපල කර්මය,  
කේන්ද්‍ර සෑදීම, නැකැත් සෑදීම,  
පොරොන්දුම් බැලීම හා විවාහ දෝෂ පරීක්ෂා කිරීම  
සියළුම ජ්‍යෝතිෂ කටයුතු සඳහා විමසන්න.

ජ්‍යෝතිෂවේදී  
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