



Ehelepolas, Molligoda and Kapuvatta with D'Oyly

Part 2 (Final)

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D'Oyly gazed at his informant. This man had served him for so many years. But his words implied where his loyalty actually laid, D'Oyly thought. Even Juan Appu might be thinking that he was merely supplying information of the Kandyan kingdom to me as a friendly act. He clearly had not understood he was doing something against his loyal kingdom. For him even this reporting of the tragedy was simply a talk of something that had happened in his beloved Mahanuwara.

"So people had to accept it as another cruelty by the king?"

"I was in Mahanuwara for three days unable to come here. The check points have been established almost all over the country, especially at the boarders of every disavany. The king wants to capture those who are suspected of helping MahaNilame. So I had to stay there. Not a single house had fire for cooking for three days. Only the royal palace did the cooking. The whole capital silently expressed its shock, disgust and sorrow for the atrocities in this way while I was there."

"The incident has affected everyone in the kingdom?"

"I do not know much about all over the country. But I heard that even far away villagers observe condolences without lighting fire." Juan Appu sat on the floor. "The bravery shown by the nine year old son, MaddumaBandara, at such a fearful situation is the talk of the town. They say that if he could live to the adulthood the country would definitely be free from the Nayakkar gang. Unquestionably the Kanda Udarata lost a brave son who could do a great service to the country oneday."

Granting permission to Juan Appu to leave D'Oyly remained in his chair. He could not believe the story. He never expected such inhuman treatment from the king though he was an uncontrollable tyrant. However D'Oyly had told Brownrigg that until an extreme or unbearable crime done by the king the allegiance of his subjects would be with him. Was this the incident he expected to move the people away from the king? Perhaps. The glimmer of hope of conquering the Kandyan kingdom soon popped up in his mind.

The chain of actions began rolling since he received that fateful letter from the First Adikar or the Prime Minister of the Kandyan kingdom. It was on 31 January 1814. Not the date it was

written. Only the date he received it. In this undated letter the Prime Minister had written something D'Oyly never dreamed of receiving from the second highest office holder of the Kandyan kingdom.

Only a couple months ago he had written to the English administration the reasons for not accepting the kedapana sent by the Governor Robert Brownrigg to the king. The paper on which the letter was written was not a suitable one for his majesty and the kedapana, the container in which the letter was kept was only ceremoniously carried after Gurubewila, from the boundary village of the kingdom. Not from Colombo to the boundary of the two administrations. He had the temerity to suggest that the English seek advice from the Sinhalese officials of the Colombo administration, Mudaliarshow the kedapana was brought with traditional ceremonial customs during the Dutch period. Using all the Sinhalese words to praise the king, the First Adikar had refused to hand over that letter to the king, presenting these hilarious excuses.

But within a couple of months he was a changed man. If you have a desire for our country it is good that anything which is done be done without delaying. That was D'Oyly's translation for the Governor Brownrigg, from Sinhalese to English of his letter, actually the ola. The usual Sinhalese saying - mekata ashawak thiyenawanam karana deyak denma karana eka hondai had been written in the same way substituting rata or country for the word mekata.

It was the turning point in D'Oyly's lengthy process that took a number of years to build the trust between him and the Kandyan chiefs, especially with the First Adikar Ehelepolas's mind. D'Oyly would never forget the surprise beaming smile that spread across the Governor's face when he read the English translation done by D'Oyly. Taking the ola into his two palms he stared at it as if he could read Sinhalese.

"Are you sure that that he is sincere when he says this. He wants us to take possession of his kingdom. Unbelievable. Are you sure Mr D'Oyly that he really intends what he has said."

"I can't say for sure, sir. This could be a trick. We know how Governor North danced to the tune of the then First Adikar Piliमतलാവුva. We must be careful. Let's wait and see."

"This could be a ploy. Perhaps he might have written this with the knowledge of the king. Who knows? If he has written this by himself I

think we should tell the king of his Prime Minister's views?"
"No, no, Sir. It is better to wait for his next move."
"But we may be able to win the heart of the king."

"We have tried to build a close relationship with him. Even for our presents the king has not said a word. When he is silent and his highest office holder, only second to him, speaks why do we want to close the door?"

After the debacle in Kandy of the Governor North's stupid invasion in 1803 London was even frightened to think of another expedition to the hill capital. Governor Brownrigg had been doing his best to change the British Government's policy of non-military action against the Kandyans. But he had been bitterly disappointed by the fear of London's refusal for a policy change. All forty four disastrous invasions of Kandy initiated by the Portuguese and the Dutch in the last three centuries and especially our own experience in 1803 had made London think that it was impossible to subjugate Kandy. Former Governor Maitland had been at the forefront against any military action. He had been still in fear of such adventures even after leaving the governorship of Ceylon some years ago. They had not realised that the ground situation had changed and with a minimal force Kandy could be annexed to Colombo even now. The British would lament the loss of a great chance that would not come on their way so easily again.

Applying his Sinhalese language skills D'Oyly had done his best to serve the King of Britain and the empire. He shrewdly replied Ehelepolas, following the governor's guidance, expressing his belief that the Adikar's feelings were genuine and the English government's awareness of the wrong doings by the king to the Kandyans. D'Oyly emphasised that the English were always taking the side of the oppressed people and ready to help them. To entice him more to the English he pointed out his government's honest hope to maintain a good friendship with him by encouraging him to keep the sentiments he had.

The response for it excited him and Brownrigg immensely. Ehelepolas had expressed his pleasure for accepting his view regarding the wrong doings done by the king. He had understood that the English were with him to further his endeavours.

Then came Ekneligoda as Ehelepolas's special envoy to meet D'Oyly for ask-

ing military assistance for a war against his own king. D'Oyly's response was the English support would be available for them if Kandyans showed their willingness to topple the king. Furthermore, he did not forget to encourage Ekneligoda to rise against the king. Avoiding a definite commitment by the English D'Oyly successfully planted the impression in the envoy's mind that the English support would be coming forth when they had risen. As D'Oyly expected Ehelepolas understood that the English were with him on his struggle to dethrone the king and started his campaign.

They revolted against the king without a plan or proper organisation. Now their campaign had been crushed easily by the king. And Ehelepolas would be a refugee under the British protection. Still he was asking military support from the English to fight against the king while his followers had fled hearing the arrival of the king's forces.

One army officer came and saluted D'Oyly. "Sir, two messengers from the Adikar are waiting for you."

"Bring them here." D'Oyly stood up.

Your struggle is over. MahaNilame. Now you are a man of fallen fortune. As the Prime Minister of a country you should have been more intelligent. Now you have lost your position and your whole family has been mercilessly murdered. I know I am responsible for all of them. I encouraged you to go against your own king. When you needed help from me I used only the most beautiful Sinhalese words I knew to deceive you. The killing of your dignified wife and innocent children will haunt me in the rest of my life. I can't escape from my conscience. But you have forgotten that we have come to Ceylon to expand our empire. You did not understand it. It is ironic that now I am here in Sitawaka, the base of one of your greatest warrior kings.

Sitawaka Rajasingha who was equalled to Alexander the Great by the Portuguese themselves, to welcome you as a refugee. You have not realised that I am only a cog in the machine of the British Empire. The only assistance I can offer for you now is to provide comfortable lodgings for you. You requested a number of times a definite answer from us for your miserable campaign. I am sure you would get it sooner from the governor. It would be something like this - the Kandyan king has not done anything against us. So we are unable to go against him. I know if we gave this answer to Ekneligoda that fateful day in last March you would be still the Great Dissave of Saparagamuwa and Pallegampaha Maha Adikarama. And above all your beautiful wife is playing with your little kids in Kandy at this time in your sacred Vesak month. Not only me, not only we the English, but also the Sinhalese now living and future generations will not forget your brave second son. Yes, Not Sri Wickrama Rajasingha but John D'Oyly following the advice of the Governor Robert Brownrigg destroyed the whole Ehelepolas Family. I am sorry First Adikar!

THE END

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