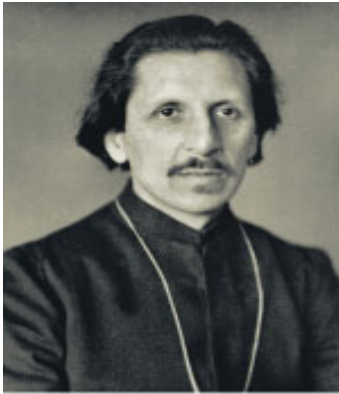


Have you heard of Ananda Coomaraswamy?

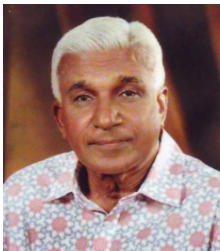
•Written by By KS Sivakumaran •

••Sunday•, 05 •May•, 2013 19:27• - •Last Updated•

••Sunday•, 05 •May•, 2013 19:41•



Ananda Coomaraswamy



It is not a joke. Honestly how many of the younger generation have heard of him. With history books and social studies books written with lot of grammatical and factual errors and even hiding and distorting history, one cannot expect our young people to know about him for the simple reason that this man who has a Tamil name. With enthusiasm all around to establish a Sinhala only state with Buddhists alone and discarding all minorities as aliens as a hidden agenda is pursued in the name of Sinhala Buddhists as opposed to Buddhist Sinhalese, the rest of the sane Sinhalese, Tamilians, Muslims, Malays and other minorities in the country and the outside world watches the scene in awe. Because of the activities of such a minority of people who have influence and patronage shame is brought to the vast majority of the people belonging to the majority community. Even a street named after him in Colombo is taken away and instead some other name has been planted as if to erase all traces of contributions made by many Lankans to build up the nation. This scholar Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy was born to a Tamilian father and an English lady. Even then he is considered a full blooded Tamilian by a knavishly ignorant people who are in the forefront of politics discarding all the tenets of what the noble Buddha preached. As a Lankan Tamilian Hindu fond of Buddhism, I find it hard to believe that some members of the clergy behave like common criminals resorting to crime.

The irony is that this Coomaraswamy did research on Medieval Sinhalese Art. Let me quote a portion from the book: "The Sinhalese are not, in my opinion, happier or better than they were in the 18th century. Talk of progress, and the reality, is not the same. Civilization is supposed to advance by the creation of new desires, to gratify which the individual must Endeavour to improve his position. But in reality IT IS NOT QUANTITY, BUT QUALITY OF WANTS THAT MAY BE TAKEN AS EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS IN THE Art of living. No one acquainted with modern Sinhalese taste will pretend that it gives evidence of any improvement in the quality of wants. Indeed, it is sufficiently obvious that quantity, variety, and novelty are not really

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compatible with quality”

Another quote from him: “I am convinced that the human cultures in their apparent diversity are but the dialects of one and the same language of the Spirit, that there is a ‘common universe of discourse’ transcending the differences of tongues.”Coomaraswamy also mentioned, “the Western nations are feared and hated by other peoples, not alone for obvious political or economic reasons, but even more profoundly and instinctively for spiritual reasons.” This is found in his Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art.Among Coomaraswamy’s memorable work is also Dance of Shiva. It has essays on Indian art and culture.

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