

What China's Division of the Tibetan People Means to China and Tibet

(translation of the winning essay in Tibetan of the 2005 Light of Truth Essay Contest by ICT)

By Chokey Dolma

I. How the division of Tibet into smaller regions impact the Tibetan people

Here an ordinary woman wants to pour out her opinions but doesn't know how and where to start the discourse of writing this essay. However, I am penning down this essay after sensing the importance of taking part in this contest.

Although the terminology 'Three Cholkas of Tibet' shows Tibet as one united country the Chinese Government divided Tibet into five smaller regions after their occupation of Tibet. It is difficult to argue that the Chinese Government didn't nurture a hope of turning the terminology 'Three Cholkas of Tibet' into an obsolete historical term by dividing the entire Tibet into five smaller regions. However, for the new generation of Tibetans, the term 'Three Cholkas' in spite of becoming obsolete, it gives a special feeling to them and moreover terms like 'Snow land Tibet', 'Doe-U-Kham-Sum', 'Entire Toe-Mey Tibet', 'One same flesh-bone lineage ancestry' and 'Tibetan brethren' are powerful and touching terminologies used by Tibetan people regardless of the division of Tibet into smaller regions. In addition a paternal feeling of belonging to one family is increasingly becoming more ingrained and stronger amongst the Tibetan people.

The Chinese Government explained that the division of Tibet into smaller regions is for achieving national 'stability' and 'harmony' amongst the different

nationalities, beside they dubbed it as a commencement of a direction and a new beginning in nationalities affairs. If so, the question to be pointed out is whether the division of entire Tibet into smaller regions benefits in achieving stability inside Tibet and China. A valid and true answer for the issue of dividing Tibet into smaller regions thus runs out.

To our understanding, Tibet is only referred to the Tibetan population in the “Tibet Autonomous Region” (TAR), with a population of more or less 440,0,000 people in the Chinese Government policies and propaganda. This statistical data of population only constitutes forty percent of Tibet’s entire population. Having the rest of Tibetan population distributed along with the other areas in China, it is extremely difficult for the Tibetan population in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) to represent the population of the entire Tibetan people. Despite the fact that Tibet has more conditions and credentials that binds the entire Tibet into one ethnicity than other ethnic people such as Xinjiang Uighurs, Chinese Hu ethnic people and Inner Mongolia. In this light the division of entire Tibet into smaller regions starkly contradicts and violates the core provisions and articles stipulated in Marxism and Leninist guidelines to which the Communist China derives its rule and legitimacy. Speaking from the point of actual facts and realities, the sixty percent of Tibetan population excluded and distributed among the rest of China, not being included and incorporated into the “Tibet Autonomous Region” (TAR) is a gross violation of the Articles in the Chinese Constitution. In the Chinese Constitution, it is stipulated that the group of ethnic people not being scattered over a large territory, or resides in very small isolated pockets is entitled with a high degree of autonomous status within their region. However despite the Constitutional guarantees, since the issue of Tibet in the People’s Republic of China is exceptional in many ways that cannot be compared to any other ethnic minority nationalities, because of this reality the articles and provisions in the

Chinese Constitution are interpreted in a different way when it comes to the application.

In short, despite the non-feasibility of dividing Tibet into smaller regions in terms of territory and environment, language and traditions, religion and art and literature and still divided Tibet into smaller regions is an outrageous deprivation of the right to self-determination enjoyed by the Tibetan people for their unique ethnic characteristics.

Tibetan people are increasingly becoming convinced that the Central Government in China is implementing unfair and unequal policies towards them. This is being manifested through Government control and management of the promotion and propagation of religion, art and literature. This could be interpreted as an attempt on achieving unification of China and to divert general public's attention and opinions. If it is aimed at materializing stability in China but Chinese Government has left no room and conducive environment for the Tibetan people to co-exist, thrive and participate in every aspect, be it in economic, art and literature, history along with the Chinese, such is the lasting impact on the Tibetans. The purpose and objective of the successive protest and displeasure expressed by the Tibetans inside Tibet and in the exile is aimed and eyed at this prevailing situation inside Tibet and nothing else.

II. How law and policies of a particular region harms the law and policies of a local area

The law and order or policies of a particular region harming the law and order of a local area is a big question. However, if we approach this question by taking into consideration the prevailing circumstances and situation inside Tibet under the Chinese colonization, then it is not a special question. The situation that favors

Tibetans to decide and actualize their own daily affairs and activities in hand with their Tibetan characteristics and features are increasingly being pushed aside or inaccessible to realize Tibetan people's main purposes and objectives under the guidelines of their Tibetan education and heritage. Aiming at this goal regardless of whether Tibetan territories are divided or not, but fundamental reality still remains that in many big or small Tibetan autonomous regions, Tibetan people have to meekly follow the direction pointed by the finger the Chinese leadership. In juxtaposition to this reality, an example of Tibetan autonomous regions to decide their own regional affairs with their total authority, making use of their autonomous status is a situation that cannot be found even by making a strenuous search.

This is a general phenomenon, even if domestic affairs are under the authority of particular autonomous region, the Tibetan autonomous regions distributed under the umbrella of China's four large Provinces have to confirm to the policy directives and guidelines of the particular Province. It is an extremely rare phenomenon and opportunity for the Tibetan autonomous regions to implement a policy based on domestic needs and requirement. This is the harm inflicted by law, order and policies of the province to the law, order and policies of local regions.

As I mentioned before, Xinjiang Uighurs, ethnic Hu Muslims and Inner Mongolia's territories are not divided but only in the case of Tibet, divided into five regions. It depicts a different ethnic outlook and treatment towards different minority nationalities with different policies. And more over to argue from another perspective, it clearly projects a biased and unfair policies implemented among the different ethnic minority nationalities.

This issue is not a new phenomenon when speaking in the context of Tibet. This is a part of experience learnt by all the successive Governments in China in their

strategy of divide and rule policy, their imperialistic outlook or a continuation of that imperialistic mentality and tendency. In nutshell, this is an imperialistic stand devised by China in colonizing Tibet by weakening the strength of Tibet. Nevertheless, the law and order in all autonomous areas are not same, a symbolic external autonomous status exist in the autonomous regions, autonomous provinces, autonomous counties but on the ground realities, the nurturing of academics, intellectuals, assistances and supports given by banks, education, health and revenue and taxation system are not standardized. The root cause for these differences is that there is special treatment given to “Tibet Autonomous Region” “TAR”, while in other parts of Tibet the planning and implementation of policies are same with policies implemented in areas of mainland China. In this sense, it is ‘autonomous’ per se while features of autonomous status don’t match with the conditions on the ground realities. Thus the human resource and technological know-how of Tibetan people are smothered under the direct control and authority of China although they do not wish to remain in that state. A scenario of disparity existing between prefectures under a province, a county under province, under these scenario opportunities for human co-operation and sharing of technological know-how and expertise are minute and remote.

III. The cause of policy disparities in regions and means for achieving uniformity

If the identity and value of heritage of Tibet is to be maintained and promoted, there has to be a uniform environment for the political affairs, cultural affairs, economic affairs and administrative affairs in all the Tibetan regions and there must one mechanism of control and management. This will ensure the present political set up, economy, art and literature to continue and make Tibetan people to shoulder the responsibility of promoting them further. However, the Chinese Government control and restriction in the past, present and future is a crucial issue

in chalking out a uniform livelihood for all the Tibetans. This is a root cause of the disparity of law, order and policies in different regions and thus failing to achieve uniformity. In this sense, so long as we succeeded in launching effective challenge to Chinese Government, until then the ways to achieve uniformity will remain illusive. However, we have wasted a number of our rights and that restricts or narrows down our road to progress and development.

In the past history, we had been mostly listening to what Chinese Government told us to do but we rarely put effort in claiming our rights, provisions of autonomous status and making use of provisions enshrined in the Constitution. It is not an ordinary matter. For instance, in 1979 the Central Government conducted a meeting on the affairs of the border ethnic nationalities. The outcome of the meeting spelt out that all ethnic nationalities were to shoulder the responsibility of managing many of their own matters and issues. Thus, the ethnic nationalities were given considerable exercise of power and authority. However, the outcome of the meeting was not fully circulated and informed to the Tibetan people, if at all circulated, the efforts to implement the new policies was too paltry and meager. Thus, in many Tibetan areas the policy only remained on paper. It seemed that although a very good opportunity began, it concluded just after its commencement.

At the same time some section of Chinese leaders voiced their displeasure and unwilling gesture to the special policy and it turned to be an opportunity for them to promote their Chinese Nationalism or by taking it as a requirement of that time to create disharmony and disrupt good ties between the nationalities. In that way a wonderful opportunity was lost and too late to retrieve back.

In this backdrop, what could be the remedy for removing the disparity in law, order and policies in the different regions? For this there is one remedy and that is

the decision stipulated in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, where the Constitution states that autonomous status will be given to areas where any ethnic group are concentrated. This can be argued and testified from Tibetan language, culture and the formation of geographical topography. The division of Tibet into smaller parts is a violation of stipulations provided in the Constitution. By proving it convincingly to the Chinese counterpart can we only realize a uniform environment for right of livelihood, other than this there is no other solution.

Even if under the impression that there are other solutions, we lack sufficient strength and capacity in pursuing the other solutions. If so, the changes we would be bringing to the present prevailing situation in order wise are, bringing all the Tibetan regions under one autonomous region if possible, if this is not possible than the rest of the divided Tibetan areas be turned into one autonomous region as a second Tibet Autonomous Region, for which we must fight.

Both of these two are not an activity that undermines the stability inside Tibet and China. Neither are the steps taken as if there is no other work to do. What we need is a big environment that could sustain and nurture our religion and heritage from degeneration and extinction. The need for China is to keep Tibet under their political rule. If there is a common mutual ground between the two, we can hope for realizing a high degree of self-rule and this is guaranteed and promulgated in Chinese Constitution from the earliest times.

Tashi Delek.

About the author

Chokey Dolma was born in 1971 in the Lhasa city. From 1982 to 1984 she studied in the middle school. She came to India in 1990 and studied in Tibet TCV Bir School. From 1995 to 1997 she continued her Ram Jam degree at the Tibetan Institute of Buddhist Dialectic studies. From 2002 to 2005 she completed her Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A). At present she is teaching Tibetan in the Dolmaling Nunnery. If any one wants to contact her, she can be contacted at Email: chokeydolma@yahoo.co.in