

Revival of Inner Mongolian Protests

Yoshiko Sakurai

Han Chinese have cracked down on, cleaned up and massacred Inner Mongolians so thoroughly that Inner Mongolians themselves believe they can no longer rise up in protest.

In his voluminous book titled "Cultural Revolution in Inner Mongolia -- Basic Data on Mongolian Genocide," Professor of the University of Shizuoka Prefecture Yang Haiying has concluded that no Inner Mongolian family has avoided any family member death under the crackdown by the Chinese Communist Party.

2,000-strong demonstration by students

Since May, however, protesters have staged demonstrations one after another in Inner Mongolia. A small-scale demonstration took place on May 23 after trucks hit and killed two nomads in succession. On May 25, 2,000 people participated in a bigger demonstration.

Leading the demonstrations were middle and high school students. They belong to a new generation succeeding those who were cleaned up during the 10-year Cultural Revolution from the 1960s and died or plunged into silence in a bloody clampdown on the 1982 large-scale protests against Han Chinese' massive immigration into Inner Mongolia. All intellectuals in Inner Mongolia were reportedly purged through the Cultural Revolution.

The 2,000-strong demonstration may turn out deeply meaningful and significant, given the Chinese government's thorough crackdown on and genocide in Inner Mongolia, and the region's population mix. During the Cultural Revolution alone, 15% of Inner Mongolian population was killed. Inner Mongolians now total more than 4 million against more than 20 million Han people in the region. The dominant Han race has police and military power to mercilessly suppress Inner Mongolians. As in the past, the Chinese government may quell the present protests. But ethnic minorities in China will never cease anti-Beijing protests.

Democratization demand growing

At a U.S. House hearing in May, lawmakers criticized the Chinese government's recent crackdown on human rights as the worst since the 1989 Tiananmen Square

massacre. China's domestic security outlays in 2011 total 624.4 billion yuan, or about 7.8 trillion yen, exceeding its defense spending. This demonstrates the characteristics of the Chinese government that has mercilessly cracked down on citizens' anti-government criticisms and discontents. Nevertheless, the Chinese government faces some 200,000 uprisings annually.

In addition, the world now sees the communications revolution working to change national regimes. The revolution has emerged in Tunisia and spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa, enabling citizens to initiate and expand protests against single-party dictatorship, suppression of free speech, oppression of freedom and extreme crackdown on human rights. The Chinese government is fearful of such protests. None can stop democratization movements by citizens armed with new, powerful communication tool. Human history is turning slowly but dramatically in the direction of even China having no choice but to accept a democracy taking the place of the single-party dictatorship.

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