Minority or Baga Yastan in Mongolia – massive hidden influence on human rights and culture

Over the past two decades, Mongolia has gone through various challenges, just after the fall of the Socialist regime due to the silent democratic revolution of 1990s. Surprisingly, the nation has gone through it with significant changes in their mind, culture, and with positive results to my understanding, and of course the most challenging part was the economic transition from the centrally planned one to the market economy.

Everybody can speak about and calculate how much we lost and how much we gained, during the transition period, especially our economists, but, we, the social research community, need to see through what kind of mentality changes we have gone so far, and what was the result of it, and how it will further sit on the continuous challenges that the nation has to face.

Since the 1990, there is a non-official naming flying around in UB and whole Mongolia, that the western part of Mongolia is the minority, and everybody, including themselves: people from western provinces, used to use before even in the Socialist time, and started to use it more often as an official definition, a colloquial speech or a slang, which is “baga yastan”.

The Mongolian word “baga” goes for English words like, “small”, “junior” or “little”.

I see this as a direct translation of the Russian slang, “maly narod”, which in fact means the “minority people”, but, the wrong translation of this slang brought the totally different understanding into Mongolia, it has brought an idea of ignorance and non-competence, and the same time, even a big hesitation and shame to those who were counted as “baga yastan”, mainly from Uvs, Khovd and Bayan-Olge provinces.

The western region provinces of Mongolia, including also, Gobi-Altai, Zavkhan and Khovsgol, have played an enormous role in keeping traditional life styles and hospitality of the Mongols, along with unique inheritance of culture, religion and language, in details, if we encourage researchers to compare them with other regions in Mongolia.

The most important part of this topic is the direct influence of this slang, on to the language and ancient Mongolian dialect, which so far is kept in those western Mongolian provinces, along with poems, songs, fairy-tales and legends to tell and sing.

In Mongolia, people call it “baga yastan” language. This actually is the ancient Mongolian dialect, inherited by the western Mongolian Oirad tribe people: torguud, dorbob, myangad, oold, zakhchin, khoshuud, uriankhai and tuva.
This is not fair to name the ancient Mongolian dialect as the minority or “baga yastan” language, even when most researchers do know that this dialect is the direct language which is expressed in/by the Old Mongolian Scripts.

People started to get shy of their western Mongolian dialect, and their native mother tongue, by accepting the above “hidden and directed on purpose” influence, created by this non-official tittle-tattle, or simply the strategic and most tricky message of the Manchu Empire, to keep XIX-XX century Mongolia without any will to unite again under one flag.

Nowadays, this illusion has brought many “tragic” effects into the society, especially, into the new generations from the western region of Mongolia, where they start getting shy of their dialect, and got confused with their Mongol origin, being named as the “baga yastan” - minority people, in their own and home country.