

Short Story

The path towards north

By : Anupiyari Kongsam

"Mom, why did you give away my boots? You know how much I love them."

"But they don't fit you anymore." "So what? This is why dad left you alone."

She stared at me for a moment and then turned away. I knew I shouldn't have said it but I was so angry.

My dad left us when I was five. It's been ten years now. My mom and I never talk about him. I have no idea where he is today, whether he is alive or not. But one thing is sure, the world is cruel! This is why I didn't understand when mom kept on donating things to the charity. When my own father can abandon, why worry about the people around. The world if full of selfish people, people who do not care anymore, people..... self-minded demons. I'm one of these people. I took my back pack and rushed out. I didn't want to yell at my mom so I thought I should take a ride alone. I paddled my bicycle towards the north. The City Park is some six kilometers away and that was where I was heading towards to.

Suddenly — My bicycle turned all wiggly. I stopped.

"Stupid! Who is the devil owner of this stupid nail!!" Now I've to get this flat tyre fixed."

I was still walking forward, pushing my bicycle when I heard a bike honking. It halted in front of me.

"Hey boy! Looks like your cycle broke down. I've my repair shop nearby. I can have a look at it."

"No, thank you." "May be I can give you a ride—" "NO! WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?"

About ten minutes later, I reached the bus stop. Just beside it was a repair shop. The man from earlier was there, working.

"It's flat tyre. Get it fixed. I'll be back in an hour or two."

"I will get it done," he smiled as he said this.

"So, it's you- the devil." "Huh?"

I didn't stop there any longer. The bus moving to the City Park had arrived. As I was trying to board the bus, a young boy was helping his grandfather get on the bus. I took the seat opposite to them.

"Sir, what is your name? And where are u headed to?" the young boy asked the old man whom I thought was his grandfather.

I paid no heed to the rest of their conversation.

"This boy must be trying to steal something from the old man." I thought to myself.

I closed my eyes and drifted away. A while later, the bus conductor

shouted, "City Park!" I got down. As I strolled, I could see a woman and a little boy who were sitting on a park bench. Immediately, I recognized the stitch I made on my boots. I sat next to the boy.

"Ma'am, he is your son?" "Yes, he is my son. I've been taking care of him since the day he arrived at our orphan center. He is physically challenged." She replied.

"Where did you buy his boots? It's cool." I asked because I wanted to be sure.

"A special boy gifted you, didn't he, Tomba?"

Tomba just giggled away. I and I smiled. At that moment, I felt a warm rush in my body.

Later that afternoon, I boarded a bus to go back home. It was a crowded one and I didn't manage to get a seat. An old man was standing too.

"Excuse me, but can you please give him your seat?" I said to the man sitting.

"I've a long way to go." "You can have my seat." The boy beside him said. "It's okay father. I won't be tired." He said to the man. Finally, the man stood up and gave his seat to the old man.

I reached my stop. I got down and rushed to the cycle repair shop.

"I've repaired it. You can take it." "How much do I need to pay?"

"Go home. Your parents must be worried." Saying this he got back to work.

I didn't know what to do. How was I supposed to leave just like that without paying him a penny? But the shop owner was so stubborn. He wouldn't even listen to me.

"Thank you." I said. As I rode my bicycle, I thought to myself "I know how I can always pay him back."

I raced with the wind. As I got back home, I rushed to my mom. I was silent for a moment.

"Where did you go? You must be starving!" "Tomba has my boots. I'm glad he has it."

"Who is Tomba?" "I just smiled. My mom.....she is my mom. The shop owner is a very good person. That child has a heart of gold. Tomba is a wonderful kid and is in the hands of that selfless woman. That son will be a great man. And I'm a changed man.

Little things can change one's life forever. The path I chose that day has changed me to what I'm today. I take care of my mom, people around me and the world. One can always repay good deeds and kindness with kindness.

"Kindness like grain, increases by sowing."

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20 Congress MLAs are right while Home Minister is wrong. Why?

20 Congress MLAs can bring a new Congress government in Manipur. How?

In the Manipur Assembly of 60 MLAs, the ruling Indian National Congress Party has 47 MLAs, and the rest 13 seats are distributed as; AITC (5 MLAs), NPF (4 MLAs), BJP (2 MLAs), NCP (1 MLA) and LJP (1 MLA).

If 20 INC MLAs revolt and go along with AITC (5), BJP (2), NCP (1) and LJP (1), then the combine strength is 29 MLAs, which is 2 MLAs short to form a new government or to clear the no-confidence motion against the present Ibobi government. To get the magic number of 31, 2 more MLAs can be made to move out of the remaining 27 MLAs of INC to join the team of 20 MLAs. In the case of NabamTuki government's downfall in Arunachal Pradesh, the opposition came from the Congress MLAs only, and after the formation of the new Congress government under the new Chief Minister of another Congress MLA Kalikhpu, who also has proved majority and passed the floor test in the state assembly, with the support of 40 MLAs (27 of INC, 11 of BJP and 2 independents) out of 58 membered House [60 seats: 58 sitting MLAs and 2 seats vacant], the Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi congratulated Kalikhpu on becoming the new Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh. Congress' NabamTuki has 18 MLAs. According to NDTV news, Chief Minister Kalikhpu proves majority in Arunachal Pradesh floor test, dated 25th February, 2016. Mr.Pul says, "Whoever has the majority can form the government. In a House of 58 members, 30 MLAs are required to form the government and we have support of 41. Moreover, to become the CLP leader, support of only 23 members is required and I have 28 with me."

The point of bringing Pul's formation of a new government in Arunachal Pradesh, another North Eastern state of India, is to acknowledge that the Congress party forms another government under a new leadership and more importantly than it is the fact that the party's Vice President Rahul Gandhi, instead of taking any otherwise actions, congratulated the new leadership of Pul. So, in Manipur, if 20 Congress MLAs revolt and are not happy with the present Manipur Government's decision taken by the state Home Minister, then the Congress MLAs too, like their counterparts in Arunachal Pradesh, can alter the state government of OkramIbobi Singh and bring another Congress government under a new leadership which may, and

even can, also be supported by BJP, like in Arunachal Pradesh's 11 BJP MLAs supporting the Pul Congress government.

Why is the revolt and demand of 20 Congress MLAs logical and right?

20 Congress MLAs revolted not to bring a new Congress government but to question the illogicality of the decision of the state Home Minister. The state Home Minister who is also both the Deputy Chief Minister and President of MPCC, has first stated, not informally in any meeting like party's meetings or CLP or function, but on the floor of the House in Manipur Assembly, in his own full right and knowledge as the Home Minister of the state, that Manipur police personnel have done no wrong in connection with 14th February, 2016 incident. If the Home Minister has tabled his own statement on the floor of the House, then to take a decision, which becomes inconsistent and contrary to his own official version tabled in the House, it not only leads to the illogicality of the Home Minister's own tabled statements but also the contempt of the privileges of the House as the House is in session. A privilege motion can be moved against the decision of the Home Minister outside the Manipur Assembly as that decision of his has become both public and contempt of the constitutional proceedings of the Manipur Assembly because no member of the House can act or take any decision which becomes contrary to what he or she has tabled on the floor of the House, and if such decision is taken, then it only amounts to the mockery of not only the Manipur Assembly which is currently in its session, but also the Constitution of India under which not only the Home Minister has taken an oath but also the existence of Manipur Assembly is ensured and safeguarded. The present budget session of Manipur Assembly, with 15 days of session and 11 sittings, will conclude on March 4, 2016. The Home Minister, in Manipur Assembly, states, "The Government of Manipur or the State police do not have any communal outlook and this I would like to convey to the NSF through the Manipur Legislative Assembly." This statement of his results in admitting, all by himself, the Home Minister, that the Manipur police personnel had done no wrong to NSF on 14th February, 2016. But, the suspension decision, taken against the 5 Manipur police personnel, within 24 hours by the Home Minister shows nothing but the exposure and painting of Manipur Government as communal. By suspending, the communal colour of

Manipur Government is accepted and publicly exposed by the Home Minister. The question is also, has the Home Minister accepted that Manipur Government was communal and therefore, the decision of suspending those 5 Manipur police personnel had to take place later? But, the reality is Manipur Government under the leadership of OkramIbobi Singh is not communal, but if Ibobi's government is not communal, then whether the Home Minister's suspension to prove and probe the communal nature of Manipur Government is to be accepted or the secular and inclusive character of Ibobi's Government is to be acknowledged? What has the suspension order proved other than merely showing the communal colour and agenda of the present Manipur Government, thereby meaning both the Chief Minister and Home Minister besides Congress Party as communal in Manipur? Is this presentation and display of the Congress Party as communal in Manipur wanted by anyone other than the state PCC President? Is this suspension order not an acceptance of showing that the Congress Party's government is communal in Manipur and hence, a probe is required to get down into the truth of it?

Why has the Home Minister tabled the police report in the assembly and said that the Manipur police had done no wrong to NSF in the presence of the Speaker of Manipur Assembly? Will the Home Minister accept his own official statement in the Manipur Assembly or his own decision to suspend 5 Manipur police personnel? He will accept to honour the authority and constitutionality of the temple of democracy, Manipur Assembly, stand by his own judgement, settled and made out of the Manipur Assembly, thereby ridiculing his own official statements tabled in the Manipur Assembly?

It is in this context of honouring the Constitution of India and dignity of the House (Manipur Assembly) in session that the revolt, anger and decision of 20 Congress MLAs is not only ethically right but also both constitutionally and legally right. The revolt is very much constitutional as the revolt is essentially and primarily to uphold the dignity and honour of the Manipur Assembly, enshrined in the Constitution of India. It is here that the 20 Congress MLAs have initiated and openly supported the very ideas of true democratic principles given by the founding fathers of the Constitution of India under which all the MLAs, including the Home Minister also, have taken an oath.

Conclusion: Honour Manipur Assembly and the people of Manipur

If the present Home Minister who states an official statement in the House and takes an official decision outside the House that ridicules and rejects the honour and sanctity of the House, then both the people of Manipur and MLAs in Manipur Assembly will democratically, constitutionally and legally bring the present Home Minister into task. The resignation of the Home Minister by himself will not only send the maturity in his own political principled life but also strengthen and uphold the honour and dignity of the Manipur Assembly which ultimately is nothing but the honour and dignity of the people of Manipur. The Indian National Congress party has a rule of its own party of 'No two posts to an individual', in which the present Congress MLA Gaikhangam should not hold both the posts of Home Minister and MPCC President together, but in the case of Manipur PCC, not only the PCC President holds Home portfolio but also is the Deputy Chief Minister of Manipur. In fact, the same individual holds 3 posts (Deputy Chief Minister, Home Minister and MPCC President), though there is no post called 'Deputy Chief Minister' which is recognised and deliberated separately and distinctly in the Constitution of India because 'Deputy Chief Minister or Deputy Prime Minister' is treated like any other minister while taking an oath.

If one Congress man can hold 3 posts at the same time, thereby going against the principle of the party which says 'one post per one man', then the larger fundamental question is not only posing against Manipur BJP that how long its President Th. Chouba will continue as its President in Manipur, but also to ask Indian National Congress party in Manipur that when will the Congress Party start honouring its own principle and start publicly showing to the people of Manipur that the Congress Party is a party of principles and ethics, thereby the rule of 'no two posts to one person or one post per one person' is to be followed by all Congress men and women including the gentleman who enjoys the position of 3 chairs - Deputy Chief Minister, Home Minister, President of Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee.

The people of Manipur are extremely so tolerant but their tolerance should not be considered as a sign of weakness and disunity, rather such tolerance of expediency nature is the sign of matured civilization of more than 2000 years of Manipuri civilization and philosophy.

(Ningombam Bupenda Meitei, educated at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, is a poet and author of 2 books and Founder of The Nehruvian. His third book 'On Nehru Gandhi family' is awaited.)

Contd. from yesterday

The root causes for emergence of regionalism and unrest in northeast India

By : Prof. M. Horam
c) Special Provision under the Constitution

The provision of 'Sons of the Soil' has been explicitly included in the Constitution for Nagaland, Assam, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Manipur under Articles: 371 A, 371B, 371G, 371H, 371F and 371C. These provisions are one of the main causes of emergence for Regionalism.

d) Cultural Identity

The fear of losing cultural identity is another cause for the emergence of Regionalism. In the North East India there is deep seated discontent, suspicion, distress and bitterness against the mainstream, i.e. Delhi Government that the North East Indian States are given a step-motherly treatment and being exploited in the name of economic development. We all believe that any development whether political economic or social must really spring from the zeal of the people whom it concerns and should not be something in the nature of a degree or fiat, imposed by a top-heavy bureaucratic process. The North East Indians are afraid that their identity will be eroded in case 'large migration' is checked. Let us take the case of Assam. Assamese think that they have become political orphans in their own State because of the balance, the "foreigners" migration. Assamese say that the way the Muslim population is increasing through "large

migration" from the other side (Bangla-desh), the State would one day become a Muslim-majority State and it would then demand a referendum to join Bangla Desh. Again, the Assamese consider the Bengalis as the Israelis of Assam who want to appropriate their land and their resources.

The position in Tripura is no better. In fact the word "Tripura" sums up the North East's fear and rallies its peoples. Tripura's original inhabitants are now hopelessly outnumbered by Bengalis. As a result of which there has been armed clashes between the original inhabitants and the outsiders.

In Arunachal Pradesh there is problem of the refugee Chakmas. This refugee problem has been bone of contention and demand were raised for eviction of the Chakma refugees in the State Assembly from Tirap and Subansari districts. Even in Mizoram, the Mizos have asked the non-Mizos to leave Mizoram. The fear for loss of cultural identity is one of the most important causes for Meitei nationalism in Manipur and hence, for the slogans of "Sons of the soil" theory. In Manipur there are ethnic problems among the various tribal groups. In Meghalaya there are problems between the outsiders (namely Dkharis) and the Khasi and the Garos for they consider the outsiders a threat to tribal heritage.

e) Economic exploitation

Economic exploitation of the natural resources of the North Eastern

States by the Centre and persons coming from other states without giving due share to the concerned State is another cause for regionalism. For example, Assam Oil refinery, Crude oil is taken away to other states without giving proper share to Assam State.

f) Insurgencies

There are insurgencies in almost all the North East Indian State. These insurgencies movements are often termed by the Centre as mere law and order problem. I would like to remind the policy makers that Insurgency in the North East India is not a mere law and order problem. It is both human and political problem. Insurgency problem thus be solved politically through negotiations. The Central Government must invite the Insurgent Groups to a negotiating table for dialogues without pre-condition. I have briefly stated some of the cause, which I consider right, for the emergence of regionalism in the North East. Those are the several sometimes petty and often grave, incidental deep-rooted, "inherited problems of the North-East in general. They all require expert and imaginative handling which is possible only after the problems are sympathetically studied by dedicated workers. There is a crying need to establish a dialogue between the common men of the North East with their counterpart in the rest of the country. That political development is a concomitant of

economic development must never be forgotten. The people of the North-East should be free to choose a path that suited to their own genius, unfortunately this has not been done. The development programmes have failed because the Centre Government has not involved the North East people in working out their own system of development. The development programmes which are given to the North Eastern people are often manned by non-North Eastern people. "The Government of India has never seriously thought of tackling the problems of the North East development and the funds allotted to the North Eastern States have been always meagre. A major problem, therefore, in any underdeveloped society like the people of the North East is to decide what rights that society should have on the resources of its traditional environment, and what role the locals should play in the exploitation of these resources. The laws and programmes made by distant bureaucrats in the State Capital and in New Delhi should be minimised and local people must be allowed to involve themselves in making such programmes. In Indian context the volumes of laws, programmes and administrative reforms drawn up to project and develop the backward classes of the North Eastern States have proved to be little more than paper tigers.

(concluded)