

that Tibetans who fled, set up a government-in-exile in India administering a multitude of refugee settlements. This is not one side of an issue – these are raw facts.

Many Chinese nationals apparently internalize the thought that “Tibetans should be happy to be absorbed into the Chinese culture”. Clearly this does not reflect popular Tibetan sentiment, and completely ignores the Tibetan viewpoint. The Chinese public only hears stories about the great things that are happening in Tibet – and of course – all thanks to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership and policies. It seems the Chinese public does not understand that the government completely controls the media as well as their schooling. There is no freedom of the press – period. Any despotic government can fabricate stories and data about happy, grateful subjects and paint rosy ideological pictures about “national minorities”. The continued use of old myths and old labels – “the peaceful liberation of Tibet”, “the cheering masses”, “democratic reforms”, “socialist transformation”, “the Dalai clique” – fly in the face of actual realities. They are contradicted by the clear fact of the continuous application of the Chinese use of brutal force on the Tibetans. It is now finally a time for honesty.

Is the Chinese abstract concept of “Great Harmony”, or more recently, “harmonious society”, realizable through methods of fear, intimidation, and violence? Do the Chinese authorities believe that they know what is better for Tibetans than the Tibetan people themselves? It seems that for the Chinese authorities, the answer is “yes”. Isaiah Berlin warns that when people put their faith in “immense, world-transforming phenomenon” then they “must believe that all political and moral problems can thereby be turned into technological ones.” How shall the Chinese resolve the Sino-Tibetan conflict? Shall it be resolved through the eradication of Tibetan language and Buddhist culture? Through the continuous use of population transfer, guns, and electric cattle prods?

The Chinese authorities take no account of Tibetans' true feelings, their resentment, and their deep dissatisfaction of Chinese rule – these are dismissed entirely, and the actual Tibetan voice is publicly prohibited from honest expression. This ideological blind spot is most unfortunate, as it obstructs the avenue for engaging in honest dialogue that is so crucial to the process of conflict resolution between peoples. When PRC officials assert that protests in Tibet are merely a radical “separatist faction” trying to “split the motherland”, and that the issue is “an internal affair of China”, they attempt to shut off the voice of reason, suppress further discussion, and prohibit thoughtful inquiry. Their strategy is to prevent any opportunity for meaningful, international dialogue.

Developing a public forum where honest inquiry is valued, and in which open, critical dialogue is firmly protected, are necessary conditions for creating a platform for real justice where the peaceful resolution of conflicts can begin. This is also the way a government could begin to realistically help the people it is supposed to represent – starting by recognizing real value in “honesty”. For the Chinese, instead of the advancement and enforcement of party allegiance, loyalty could be redirected from “the party” to “the people” through reconstructing a constitution that is based on universal norms of justice.

But such system-modifications are not what the Chinese party leaders seem to want, though it would do their entire country much good. Since the birth of the CCP, their party motto implies, “loyalty before