

HOW THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA COPES WITH HER 55 MINORITY NATIONALITIES*

ABSTRACT

Pensri Kanchanomai**

Abstract

Over centuries, China has had her history of pacifying a large number of minority nationalities on her border lands: the north, the west, and the south. Occasionally, she had to play both roles of the offensive and the defensive. Quite often, she was the defensive when Emperor Shi Huang Ti had the Great Wall of China built and when China was conquered respectively by the Mongol and the Manchu. Over the vast areas, China in the past solved the minority disturbances by sending the Han officials to rule them. Moreover, the Chinese government used the policy of "Divide and Rule" to extend the area by using one minority against the other, and finally, the Kuomintang took a severe policy of national assimilation, bringing the direct rule by forces to the minority nationalities. Such policy was fiercely opposed especially by the Tibetan and the Mongolian. Nevertheless, for hundreds of years, these nationalities were regarded outcasts and unequal in status.

After liberation, there was the national policy of emphasizing unity and equality among the Han and the minority nationalities. Because of the continuous minority problems, it was accordingly the heavy tasks of the administration of the state. Thus the minority nationalities were then able to overthrow three big mountains on their backs: imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrate-capitalism. Since then, the multi-national state has been united into a fraternal cooperative family in order to fulfill her ultimate goal of the socialist construction through laws and social activities.

At present, the minority nationalities are divided into five autonomous regions: the Kwangsi Chaung Autonomous Region, the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region, the Ningsia Hui Autonomous Region, the Inner Mongolian Automous Region, and the Tibetan Autonomous Region. The area comprising of more than one-half of the totality are proved to be more important to percipitate in the policy of the national modernization because of its rich natural resources. After liberation, the political and economic integration of these diverse peoples of China has been a major policy objective of the Chinese leadership.

The paper then will also tell about the life of these nationalities, the relevant policies of the Party and the Government, how social reforms have been carried out, and their achievement in industry, agriculture, education, public health, culture and happiness.

How to deal with the minority nationalities in each country is always a delicate and sensitive problem. Especially, China, along with her vast areas, has had her history of pacifying those minority nationalities on her border lands, the north, the west, and the south. Some

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**Associate Professor, Department of History, Faculty of Social Sciences, Kasetsart University.

of them were even powerful enough as to exercise control over all the Chinese areas, such as, the Mongol and Manchu. It was then interesting to see how the Chinese government in each period handle their minority nationalities, some of whom were for while some were against.

Over centuries, *the Hsiungnu (Huns)*, a nomadic people living on the Mongolian plateau in the north, often grew in strength and seized the area. Such a situation annoyed *Shi Huang Ti*, the Chinese emperor of *the Ch'in*. He accordingly conscripted peasants to build walls on a large scale, linking the original ones of the three states into a long one, known as the Great Wall of China, a wonder of the world.⁽¹⁾ And to solve the minority disturbances in the south, in 214 B.C., he sent an army of 500,000 to attack the Yueh people and extended the southern borders of the Empire to the present Kwangtung and Kwangsi. After taking over, he then sent officials to rule them including more advanced techniques to develop production (iron tools).⁽²⁾

During the T'ang, for years, the control was vigorously maintained in the far West. China had the policy of extending the area by using one minority against the other. With the aid of *the Uighur*, the western Turks were crushed (657-659 A.D.) and the Chinese territories were expanded into the borders of India where several sassanids sought the aid of the Chinese against the Arabs.

Upon the founding of *the Sung Dynasty* in the twelfth century, there were the Khitan in the northeast, Yunnan, and Nan Chao in the South coast who still maintained their autonomy. Then the external politics of the Sung began around 1127 A.D. Besides the Khitan, a new menace of China was a Tangut people whose territory was called *Hsi Hsia*. Threatened by the Khitan in the northeast and the Tangut in the northwest, the Sung had to ally with the Juchen (Manchu) in Manchuria to subdue the enemies. The manchu in turn got power over the present Manchuria and Peking around 1153 A.D.⁽³⁾

During the *Yuan or the Mongol Dynasty*, *Islam* in China who first entered in the T'ang became much stronger. It came in from two directions - from the sea by merchants to coastal ports in the south, and from the overland through the northwest by Muslims from Central Asia and Sinkiang. Muslims increased greatly in number under the Ch'ing or Manchu because of the conquest of the Dynasty (under Emperor Ch'ien Lung). These fellows were regarded by the Chinese as a distinct and separate group, like the Mongol and Manchu. They are most called the Hui-Hui, derived from the Uighur. The majority speak Chinese.⁽⁴⁾

In the *Ch'ing Dynasty* (1644-1911 A.D.), and even after the revolution in 1911, there was said to be the reactionary policy of national assimilation. "*Divide and Rule*" policy were introduced by the Manchu to the minority areas. They were divided into several provinces, controlled closely by the minority Han officials (Chinese). During the reign of Emperor Ch'ien Lung, Tibet had to recognize the Chinese superiority and paid tributes to China every five years (1792-1908 A.D.). The policy of the Chinese at that time was to shut off Tibet from the outside world.⁽⁵⁾

After the Revolution in 1911, the minority affairs were put under the Kuamintang control. It was the policy of enlightenment aiming to bring the direct rule to the minority nationalities. Of course, this direct rule of the minority Han brought about the fierce resistance from the minority nationalities, especially from Tibet and Inner Mongolia, when the Han officials were sent into the regions in order to suppress any rebellions by forces. Their "*Divide and Rule*" tactic opened class contradictions among nationalities. The Han setting up a garrison command and "*Bureau for the Establishment of order*", made the minority regions suffer heavily. For example, the Ningsia Hui people were badly treated by the landlords and bureaucrats who bled them white with taxes. A tenth of the population was pressganged into the Kuomintang army, causing much land to go unfarmed and communications were deplorable.⁽⁶⁾ The Kuomintang troops often committed crimes:⁽⁷⁾ breaking into houses, pressganging men, raping women, confiscating food and taking whatever money they could find.

However, during the War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945 A.D.), these various nationalities help the Han crush down those occupation troops in order to liberate China. Moreover, due to the reactionary Kuomintang, the government practised a policy of compulsory assimilation of the nationalities, for example; forcing them to use the Han (Chinese) language in speaking and writing, and they were deprived of the freedom to use their own spoken and written language. In case of culture, various religious belief, customs, and habits of the minorities were restricted. The exploiting classes of the minority nationalities used religion as a tool to enslave their labouring people, and the imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries used it for aggression. People of some nationalities were forced to embrace a given religion. It was said that the Tibetan and the Mongolian were forced to follow Lamaism and sent their sons to become Lamas, condemning them to a lifelong celibacy.⁽⁸⁾

There were several faiths as follows:

Islam was found among the Hui, Uighur, Kazakh.

Lamaism was found among the Tibetan, Mongoliam, Tu, Yuku.

Hinnayana Buddhism was found among the Tai, Pulang.

Shamanism, Eastern Orthodox' Christians, Polytheism, Protestantism, and Catholicism were also found among the minority nationalities.

In conclusion, over long history, these minority nationalities were outcastes and oppressed by the reactionary ruling class. The various nationalities were unequal in status and the central government had practised national oppression and brought suffering to the people of all nationalities. Some were killed by armed force, others were compelled to leave their native places, and still others were driven into disolate border, regions, and mountains. Moreover, the country in Kweichow Province issued an order forbidding Miao women to wear shirts or tie their hair in a bun. The Miao were also forbidden to speak their own language. For hundred years, the minority nationalities also suffered from imperialist aggression. Evil-doing imperialism invaded and occupied over territory, harmed and enslaved the people of various nationalities, sowed discord and splits among them. In Chiang Kai-shek's China's Destiny in 1943, he denied that there was any nationality other than the Han and carried accordingly out his Han chauvinistic policy of national oppression, exploitation, discrimination, humiliation, suppression, and even massacre of the minority people. On the other hand, over long history, these nationalities stood up against the tyrant rule of feudal dynasties; peasant revolts, and waged a common struggle against imperialist aggressors as Chairman Mao said, "National struggle is a matter of class struggle because of the social inequality".⁽⁹⁾ For example, the *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Movement* (1851-1864 A.D.) started in Kueiping County, Kwangsi Province where several nationalities lived together. Even during the Chinese people's revolution, many revolutionary bases were set up in minority areas and these nationalities also made contributions to the liberation. The Red Army could gain such support, especially while proceeding the Army through the vast areas of those minority nationalities during the Long March (1934-1936). As illustrated in "Recalling the Long March", the commander Liu Po-cheng mentioned Chairman Mao's policy toward the minority nationalities in 1934 while marching the Red Army along the Yi's communities that the Army had to try firmly to make an alliance with the chieftains by explaining that the Red Chinese's policy was to help the minority nationalities achieve liberation.⁽¹⁰⁾ Quite often, the Red Commanders showed their warm willingness to become their sworn brothers. The Red Army had also to manage the problem of the illtreated people by punishing the cruel Han or the slave-owners and returned the people their old property.⁽¹¹⁾ Chien Chih-an recalled the Long March in his "A Party Branch Committee Meeting" that the Red Army had to maintain their severe discipline and the policy not to take the food or tools even in need from the poor people by force or free in order to create people's trust toward the Army. They had to endure hunger and march on even by hands or feet. Thus, crossing the Tibetan areas in such bad conditions, the Army for-

unately found a few scattered grains of barley covered with hay. Though there was no one there, the Army had to call for a serious discussion. They then agreed that a Red Army had to have moral integrity and could rather die from hunger than touch it. Nevertheless, since they were unable to endure more, they found the other way to pay for the grain by burying some silver dollars instead with a piece of red paper written:

Dear Sir,

We are terribly sorry to have dug up your barley. Please accept our payment of fifty silver dollars for it.

Second Company
Chinese Workers' and Peasants'
Red Army⁽¹²⁾

Accordingly in 1949, China's nationalities together overthrew three big mountains on their backs-imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism. Since then the unitary multi-national state has been united into a fraternal cooperative family, opening a new chapter in the history of China's 5,000 years of civilization. To begin the era after liberation, China echoes the manifesto of the Communist Party following the saying of Marx and Engels... "In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanished, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end"⁽¹³⁾ Then to fulfill the ultimate goal, China collaborated this Marxist truth with fraternity and co-operation among her nationalities.

Right after the liberation, while wiping out the Kuomintang's reactionaries in the minority the peoples's Liberation Army and government cadres were strict in discipline and firmly carried out the Party's policy on nationalities. Concerning the practical actions, the Party and the government treated those minority nationalities as brothers, forbade national discrimination against them, respected their customs, habits and religious beliefs, mediated disputes, helped solve problems and supplying them with daily necessities and treated the sick free of charge. Accordingly, the Party gradually eradicated old suspicious and fear.

The Party and Central Government takes a good care of the minority problems since they know well that it is a very sensitive case. Both central and local government at various levels sent missions to the minority areas to convey Chairman Mao's deep concern for the people there and to propagate the nationality policy of the Party. Also, tours were organized for representatives of the various nationalities to go to Peking and to other provinces. Such activities promoted understanding and relations between the Han and the minority nationalities.

The central government then promulgated a series of decree forbidding all discrimination, humiliation, and disrespectful language and acts directed against minority nationalities, for example, the 1951 "Directive on the Handling of Terms of Address, Place Names, Inscriptions on Stone Tablets and Scrolls Discriminating Against or Humiliating to the Minority Nationalities", and the 1952 "Decision on Safeguarding the Right to National Equality for Scattered Members of Minority Nationalities"

The People's Republic of China puts the stress on unity and equality among peoples of China as the Article 4 of the constitution says :

The People's Republic of China is a unitary multi-national state.

All the nationalities are equal. There should be unity and fraternal love among the nationalities and they should help and learn from each other. Discrimination against, or oppression of, any nationality, and acts which undermine the unity of the nationalities are prohibited. Big nationality chauvinism must be opposed.

All the nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their own customs and ways.

Regional autonomy applies in an area where a minority nationality lives in a compact community. All the national autonomous areas are inalienable parts of the People's Republic of China.

In case of the policy of unity, the state put the emphasis on this problem. The inscription in Chairman Mao Tsetung's handwriting says, "All nationalities of the People's Republic of China Unite!" In the past, there were always conflicts along the borders of each nationality: the disputes on the border of Szechuan, Hunan, and Kweichow provinces concerning a sandy island which was long called "Feud Island". After liberation, under the state programme to turn it into an experimental farm for the cotton seed, this island then had a new call, "*Friendship Island*". The minorities there said:

The Han brothers have sent us something precious
Gone forever are the days of the old society when it was said that "Copper cannot adhere to iron, nor can the Miao to the guests" (guests mean the Han).⁽¹⁴⁾

Moreover, several nationalities there, inspired by the spirit of fraternal co-operation, had finished the project of building "*Unity Dam*" after three years of hard work. Thus, at present, nationality unity flourished in all the minority areas. Not only are the Han and minority people as close as brothers, but the minority nationalities also regard one another as flesh-and-blood kin. It means all nationalities are united into one family as Chairman Mao has longed for.

Concerning equality, Chairman Mao regarded regional autonomy as a fundamental policy, applying the *Marxist-Leninist* theory on the national question... "Recognize the right to equality and autonomy of the minority within the border of China. The Party and the Government firmly hold the policy that the minority areas are inalienable parts of the People's Republic of China. the structure of the state includes the organs of self-government of national autonomous areas in the constitution. The minority nationalities then enjoy their political equality.

The organs of self-government of nationality autonomous areas enjoy certain rights to autonomy. For example, in financial matters, they work as the ordinary local organ but exercise greater powers in the scope and management of financial revenues and expenditure. The central government classified more types of revenues as local and increased income from such sources resulting from the economic development accrued to the locality. If the local revenue falls short, higher state organs assist with appropriations.

Organs of self-government may organize the public security forces and militia of their own areas in accordance with the unified military system of the state. They may also formulate rules of self-government and other special regulations after being submitted and approved by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, such as the question of health-care concerning special measures of free medical care.

Also, the organs of self-government have the rights to use the written and spoken language or languages of the resident nationalities.

In summary, the rights of autonomy in the areas proceed from the unity and co-operation of China's nationalities. Its aim is to promote socialist revolution and socialist construction in those areas.

At present, the minority areas are proved to be more important to participate in the policy of the national modernization because of their rich natural resources. Since the bulk of China's grasslands and forests and many kinds of mineral are in those regions, their active support and participation is indispensable to socialist modernization. At the same time, the minority peoples need modernization to overcome their backwardness left over from history. During this period of social modernization, the conference of State Nationalities Affairs Com-

mission, held in tianjin (Tientsin) from May 22 to June, 7, 1978 adopted the policy of establishing four measures to fulfill the ultimate goal of modernization as follows:

1. A special leading body has been set up jointly by the State Capital Construction Commission, State Economic Commission, State Nationalities Affairs Commission and other departments to direct the work of cultural and economic construction in the areas inhabited by the minority peoples;

2. State investments for capital construction and subsidies will be increased by a big margin for these areas. More motor vehicles, tractors, rolled steel and other materials will be allocated to them;

3. The various provinces and municipalities will give whatever manpower, material or technical support that is needed;

4. Educational departments will make special efforts to train more cadres and technicians in various fields from among the minority peoples.

While the minority nationalities still lag behind economically and culturally, the Commission urge party and government organizations at all levels to pay attention to construction in the regions, respect their rights to equality and autonomy. Their national characteristics and economic benefits must be given the same consideration as these of other nationalities living in compact communities, and that their rights to equality and their customs and religious beliefs must be respected and protected by law.

The State Nationalities Commission was re-established at the beginning of 1978. There are now 73 members. Its minister is Yong Jingren (Hui nationality).⁽¹⁵⁾

The policy concerning the minority nationalities has been successful mainly because of the co-operations from the national and local cadres. Following the policy concerning the minority nationalities, it can be successful mainly from the co-operations of the national and local cadres. Especially, there must be the co-operation from the minority-nationality cadres or it would be impossible to solve the national question thoroughly and to isolate the minority nationality reactionaries completely. The Party and the Government then follow the guideline:

Train cadres of minority nationalities everywhere and in large number.

(In the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region, over 16,000 cadres from among its minority nationalities have been promoted to leading position at various levels since the Great Cultural Revolution). At present, all nationalities have cadres of their own. Most of them are trained by the national institutions in order to be nurtured and tempered in fiery revolutionary struggles. They then have profound proletarian feeling for the Party and Chairman Mao. They have played an important role in helping the nationalities to be their own masters and be able to manage their own internal affairs, and in speeding up socialist revolution and socialist construction in the frontier regions inhabited by minority nationalities.

Geography of the Minority Regions:

In the north China, there are two autonomous regions of the minorities: *the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region* and the *Ningsia Hui Autonomous Region*. This part consists of one of the semi-arid steppes of Inner Mongolia. Historically, these minority nationalities were hostile nomadic groups and occasionally rural district of North China. People's life centers in a few irrigate river, valleys and oases, and in a mixed agricultural pastoral areas. The most productive agricultural area is based upon irrigation water obtained from the Yellow River, which particularly flows through the desert. The Mongol population of Inner Mongolia

is now small and outnumbered by the Han Chinese. Only a few Mongols still depend entirely upon animal husbandry. Because of the flood control measures, the production of hydroelectric power, the provision of irrigation water, and the improvement of stream navigability. Many more Mongols live in a fixed settlements where animal husbandry is practised and crops are grown.

In the south, the ethnic and linguistic pattern is complex because of the repeated migrations and much local isolation. We find the *Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region* in the area. Historically, two thousand years ago, this south was inhabited largely by non-Chinese tribes. Newcomers from the north migrated into the area, pushing the original inhabitants to isolated areas, or settling themselves there. The region was incorporated into China in the third century. After that, more newcomers escaped the alien oppression or famine from the north to settle in the south since hilly and mountainous terrain served to reserve their ethnic variations. Economically, these hilly areas contain a wide variety of ores, and small mines are scattered throughout the region. Most of the mines are of the open-pit type. Principle mineral resources include tungsten, antimony, manganese, oil shell, iron, tin, and coal.

The southwest is separated from eastern China by vast distances and difficult terrain. This location is modified by limited transport, it has had a large Han Chinese population, but because of its insular location, it has historically maintained at various times considerable administrative independence. Despite a large influx of Han Chinese in recent decades, the province of Yunnan and Kweichow still have large numbers of the minority peoples who comprise an estimated 30 per cent of the population. Most of them live in much backward provinces in China with only isolated and scattered small basins suited for agriculture among the hilly and mountainous areas. The modern economic development of the southwest began shortly after the eruption of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937.

The West of Sinkiang is a vast region of desert and high mountains, lightly populated and largely undeveloped. The important basins are the *Dzungarian Basin* with deserts and steppe lands in the north, and the larger and more arid *Tarim Basin* in the south. Sinkiang contains China's lowest and driest areas, so its yearly precipitation is inadequate for agriculture. Yet some of its oases agricultural products—Hami melons and Turfan seedless grapes and dried fruit, are well-known throughout China. Traditionally, Sinkiang has been an area inhabited by nomadic herdsmen: the *Kazakh*, the *Mongol*, and the *Kirghiz*. They graze sheep, cattle, and horses. They grow dry farming with wheat and other grains by means of irrigation. Also, there are oil discoveries in the Dzungarian Basin including industry of iron and steel works and factories producing cement, farm machinery, fertilizers, textiles, fruit and vegetable canning. Strategically, Sinkiang shares an 1,800 miles along the boundary with the Soviet Union. The Chinese have then throughout history tried to prevent the region from the hostile bands. This area comprises one-sixth of China, but in population, it accounts only one per cent of the total. Of the 8 to 10 million people in Sinkiang today, as many as two-fifths are Han Chinese.

The West also consists of the *Tibetan highlands* which contain more than one-fourth of the Chinese area but less than one per cent of the population. It is the mother of many rivers: Huang Ho, Yangtze, Mekong, Salween, Indus, Sutlej and Brahmaputra (Tsangpo). Because of higher mountain ranges, Tibet is called the roof of the world. Such geography has produced a unique civilization relatively unchanged by outside forces until the Chinese occupation in 1951. The Tibetan Autonomous Region is in the southern half of the region. People used to be Buddhists, having written Tibetan language. Its south and southeast are stationed by Chinese military and administrative personnel because of the continuous Tibetan resistance. Historically, people were fierce and stoutly resisted the Chinese invasion and prevented the Chinese control until 1959. The Tibetans tend herds of yaks, sheep and goats. Now, they are developing industry, agriculture, and husbandry.

China has *five administrative levels: central government, provincial, prefectural, county, and people's commune*. The autonomous regions are at the provincial level.⁽¹⁶⁾

China is a unified multinational state. The people of the Han nationality are the majority, the rest belong to 55 different nationalities. Five autonomous regions have been established in areas where minority peoples live in compact communities. Autonomous areas once used to be the lands of civil unrest, warlordism, foreign occupation, and civil war. In many remote frontier provinces, local administration had even supplanted national control.

Nearly 60 per cent of China is inhabited by various non-Han Chinese ethnolinguistic groups, and the provinces they predominated are called "autonomous regions"⁽¹⁷⁾

Autonomy, according to the People's Republic of China, is not outside the Chinese tradition. Essentially, it involves symbolic cultural indulgence of local minorities, along with the appointment of local people who are sufficiently reliable to assure effective administration of Peking's policies.

Tibet did not gain the status as an autonomous region until 1965 because of its rebellious people against the Chinese rule. Ever since it has been called the Tibetan Autonomous Region.

The minority nationalities differ, at present, greatly in size. The largest is the Chuang with about 10 million people. The Olunchun members about 2,700, the Hoche has just over 700.

Among the 55 minorities. Ten have a population of over one million each:

Mongolian	Yi
Hui	Chuang
Tibetan	Pui
Uighur	Korean
Miao	Manchu
Eighteen have a population over 100,000 each	

Tung	Tai	Tungshiang
Yao	Li	Naxi
Pai	Lisu	Lahu
Tuchia	Wa	Shui
Kazakh	She	Chingpo
Hani	Kaoshan	Lopa
Seventeen have a population under 100,000 each with 10,000 or more		
Khalkha	Sala	Nu
Tu	Maonan	Uzbek
Tahur	Kelao	Pumi
Mulao	Sibo	Monba
Chinag	Achang	Jinuo*
Pulang	Tajik	
Ten have a population under 10,000:		
Russian	Yuku	Tulung
Owenke	Ching	Hoche
Penlung	Tartar	
Paoan	Olunchun	

* Just recently, the State Council recognized the Jinuo people as one of China's minority nationalities, they live in the Tai Autonomous Prefecture.

Before liberation, some were badly treated by the enemies at home and abroad which led to a decline in their population. In 1930's, the warlords perpetrated massacres of the Hui in Kansu, the Miao and Yao in Kwangsi; in 1940's, the Kuomintang government slaughtered the Mongolian and suppressed the Uighur, Kazakh and other nationalities in Sinkiang; the Japanese slaughtered the Hoche in the Northeast and nearly extinguished the Owenke by inhuman bacteriological experiments; in Tibet, the population decreased under the barbarous serf-owner rule. After liberation, along with the socialist construction and medical services, they have become more numerous and prosperous.

The minorities live mainly in the country's western half, a smaller number live in the other parts of China, islands the southern coast';

Taiwan Province	-	Kaoshan
Hainan Island	-	Li, Miao
The Tumen River in the northeast	-	Korean
Wasuli River	-	Hoche
The Heilungkiang River	-	Owenke, Olunchun
Inner Mongolia	-	Mongolian
Sinkiang	-	Kazakh, Uighur, Khalkha, Tajik
Tibet	-	Tibetan, Monba, Lopa
Yunnan	-	Lisu, Tulung, Nu, Chigpo, Wa, Tai, Yi
Kwangsi	-	Chuang, Ching

70 per cent of all countries and cities in China contain people of more than two nationalities. The Hans, the most numerous are spread throughout most of China, even in all the minority communities as well.⁽¹⁸⁾

The minority areas are also rich resources which lead to the development of agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, and forestry.

In the composition, China's national autonomous areas are of three types:

1. Those set up on the basis of compact communities of one minority nationality, such as the Ningsia Hui Autonomous Region. Most autonomous prefectures and countries are of this kind.

2. Those set up on the basis of compact communities of one numerous nationality but also including compact communities of several less numerous ones, such as the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region which includes the Ili Autonomous Prefecture of Kazakh Nationality, and the Kawangsi Chuang Autonomous Region which includes the Chinghsiu Autonomous Country of Yao Nationality.

3. Those set up on the basis of the compact communities of two or more equally numerous nationalities where they jointly practise self-government, such as the Hsianghsi Autonomous Prefecture of Tuchia and Miao Nationalities in Hunan Province. These generally bear the names of both nationalities.

There are Han people living in the autonomous areas of all three types. Altogether, within the People's Republic of China, there are 5 autonomous region at the provincial level, 29 autonomous prefectures at the prefectural level, and 69 autonomous counties and banners at the country level.

National Movements to Promote the Prosperity and Development of the Minority Nationalities:

Chairman Mao pointed that “*Only socialism can save China*”. Thus, after being long oppressed, these minority nationalities needed building up social reform and transformed the former society into a socialist society. The Party and the state then adopted the active and careful policy. They took full account of the characteristics of each area. They respected the people’s wishes and public leader’s who had ties with the masses. They relied on the cadres and the activists of each nationality to do the social work.

In the minority areas where economy and culture were backward and complex (Sinkiang, Yunnan, Kansu, Chinghai, Szechuan, Tibet, etc.), more moderate methods of carrying out democratic reform were used. In few areas with still remnants of primitive communism, they developed their economy and culture with state help and later through the mutual aid and co-operative movement moved gradually on to socialism. Following democratic reforms, the party and the state started the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, capitalist industrial and commercial enterprises there. By 1958, the methods were co-operation of joint state-private management. People’s communes were set up in most nationality areas. The late communes were found in the frontier regions of Tibet and Yunnan.

To illustrate how minority nationalities at different stages of social development underwent social reform and entered socialist society, we can follow these following examples:

The Chuang: They live in compact communities in the *Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region*. Before liberation, it was the feudal landlords who owned most of the land. They exploited people through rent, hiring of labour and usury and practised dictatorship over all the labouring people. The social reform could be seen after liberation. From the end of 1950, a vigorous and reform movement was launched, relying on the masses of the labouring people. The land reform wiped out the feudal landownership, established the superior position of the poor and lower middle peasants, and liberated the productive forces in the countryside. Subsequently, because of the principle of voluntariness and mutual benefit, the Party activists led them on the co-operative road towards prosperity for all. By 1956, the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, and capitalist industrial and commercial enterprises had been basically completed. The setting up of people’s communes was set up in 1958. So far, economy and culture in the Chuang area have developed rapidly.

The Tibetan: Before liberation, it was the darkest, most cruel, savage and reactionary feudal serf system. There were three types of manorial lords—the nobles, monasteries, and officials. These lords constituted less than 5 per cent of the population but owned all the land, most of the livestock, serfs and slaves. After liberation in May 1951, the Party carried out a great deal of beneficial work to the Tibetan: highways, hospitals, interest-free loans grant and trade. But these democratic reforms were obstructed by Dalai and the *counter-revolutionary rebellion on March 10, 1959* with the foreign aids raising the slogan as “Independent Tibet” and “Drive out the Han”. On March 28, 1959, the State Council issued an order dissolving the reactionary local government. The movement was set in motion known as the “*Three against the two reductions*”: against rebellion, coverts, and personal enslavement; reductions in rent and interest. Pastoral serfs were emancipated and become hire workers at reasonable wages. The next step in democratic reform was land distribution. The properties of the serf-owners who had participated the rebellion were confiscated and the others had to follow a buying-out policy. Thus, shaking off the feudal yoke economically, the Tibetan won full emancipation and became masters of the new society. Accordingly, they established over 20,000 mutual-aid teams. In 1966, they triumphantly carried out the socialist transformation of agri-

culture and animal husbandry. Thus, people's communes were established throughout Tibet by 1975. They then hold their destiny in their own hands.⁽¹⁹⁾ Moreover, since the Tibetans were well-known to be devout Buddhists, the Article 46 of the Chinese also provided religious freedom. Accordingly, the famous Zuglakang Temple in Tibet is open at present three days a week to visitors and worshippers. Their chants can be heard constantly in the temple. When Tibet had been liberated in 1951, the temple with its many historical and religious relics came under the state protection. At present, there are nine lamas in charge of religious affairs with a fixed monthly salary by the state.⁽²⁰⁾

In summary, since liberation, all of China's 55 minority nationalities have leaped forward into socialism through social reform under the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Party. In a short period of over twenty years, their societies have changed profoundly.

Advances of Agriculture, Industry, Transportation, Education, Medical works, and Culture and Art

Agriculture

In 1964, Chairman Mao issued the great call, "In agriculture, learn from Tachai". This initiated the great movement of the agricultural development in China.

"Tachai" is a production brigade in Hsiyang County, Shansi Province. For over two decades, it has persisted in the socialist orientation and, through self-reliance and hard struggle, built a poor and backward mountain village into a new and thriving socialist one. Taking the Tachai road is crucial to changing the economic and cultural backwardness of the minority areas is located mainly in the eastern half of the country. Thus, China has long faced the problem of insufficient food for her immense population. Accordingly, under the socialist program, the state puts the emphasis on the agricultural expansion into the border lands- the lands of the minority nationalities. However, the potential for opening new land in western China or the Northeast to cultivation is limited because of aridity, short growing season, and other inhibiting physical factors.

But China has tremendous manpower to overcome those natural difficulties. They were able to turn rocks into soil- "*nine parts rock and one part soil*," as seen in the *Tuan Autonomous County of the Yao nationality*, in the rocky mountainous area in western Kwangsi. For three years of constantly chopping away the brambles, dynamitting rocks and building stone embankments, they removed over 6,000 cubic metres of stone and built a 24-mu terraced field with 61 levels which has yielded successive fine harvests. And to bring in water to irrigate the fields, the multi-national people of the Tuan Country dug over 230 tunnels in its rocky mountains. This hard labour developed the story of the "*sledge hammer of three generations*"⁽²¹⁾ (*Lu Wan-feng's family*).

Also, in the Wushenchao People's Commune, in the Maowusu Desert of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous region, consisting of the Mongolia, Han, and Manchu, it was once portrayed their misery in the past by a folk ballad:

Outside the gate there are only mounds of yellow sands.
The poor herdsmen have no cattle or sheep of their own.
They're clothed in tattered skins;
They drink bitter-herb soup;
They live in willow-withe sheds.

But after liberation, when people's commune was set up in 1958, with collective strength, the cadres and herdmen of various nationalities mounted an attack on the desert. They raised the bold battle cry, "We'll force the desert to field-grass, trees, grain, water and turn it into an oases". This shows the great victory of people in building up the grasslands, put an end to their nomadism.

Especially, in Sinkiang, tremendous work in agriculture gradually took the road to people's communes. In four years, from 1971-1974, pastoral areas in Sinkiang built over 600 water conservancy projects and sank over 1,180 wells which can irrigate over 600,000 mu pastures. Thus, the Kazakh herdsmen, after having been unable to resist natural disasters and had no fixed dwelling for themselves, now have a settled mode of life.

In case of the *Changbai Korean Autonomous Country* which was founded in 1958, it is situated at the southern bank of the Yalu. It consists of five nationalities - Korean, Han, Manchu, Mongolian and Hui. Though rich in natural resources, uncertain weather with a frost-free period of only 100 days create problems in agricultured production. Through hard struggle, peoples have overcome many difficulties and are now able to exploit the resources. Much development is in forestry, animal husbandry, side-occupations, and fishery.⁽²²⁾

Industry

Industry in the minority areas has been vigorously built up since China's liberation. Besides the farmers, the workers increase rapidly in number, high spirited, and strong willed. They have made a great contribution in the socialist revolution and construction.

In old China, the vast border regions inhabited by the minority nationalities remained very backward economically, despite their wealth of natural resources. Modern industry was a blank there. In Tibet, there were few handicrafts served the feudal manorial lords. Sinkiang had no spinning machine. Inner Mongolia had a few factories, mostly handicraft workshops though they have abundant raw material as livestock, furs, hides. However, among some minorities, such as Manchu, Korean, Chuang, Hui, and Pai, industrial works appeared in mines, railways, and shipping, but the working conditions were extremely bad wages very low, not enough to support a family. Accidents, injuries, and death were frequent.

After liberation, the Party and the government gave active help to the minority areas in developing their industries, vigorously fostering the growth of the indigeneous working class. Everywhere the mass movement "*In industry, learn from Taching*" has been launched, speeding industrial development.^(*)

Today on the vast grasslands of the *Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region*, one of the largest modern iron and steel in China has been built-the Paotou Iron and Steel Corporation. Also, many small and medium-sized factories of woolen textile, leather, meat processing, dairy and animal product-processing industries turn out different products, not only for domestic markets, but in some cases for export product.

* Taching is an important petroleum base in China. The workers, self-reliant and full of vigour have achieved outstanding results in China's oil production. Taching is an example of all China's industries.

Formerly, the *Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region* produced no steel. Now, its steel output in 1971 exceeded that of all China in 1949. Its total industrial output in 1974 was nearly 3.49 times that in 1965. The gross value of industrial output in the city of Liuchow in 1974 was 75 times that at the time of liberation.

In the old society of the *Ningsia Hui Autonomous Region*, there had been a few handicraft workshops, employing less than 300 people. In the last twenty years, the state investment in Ningsia's industrial construction since 1966 has exceeded by 85 per cent that of the entire seventeen years before the Cultural Revolution. The region's industrial output for 1974 in terms of gross value was 4.5 times that of 1965.

The *Tibet Autonomous Region* in the past had only some blacksmiths and coppersmiths. Today, it has over 250 small and medium sized industrial enterprises, including coal mining, metal-lurgical, machine, electric power, woolen textile, leather and sugar. The gross value of the industrial output 1974 was almost 4 times that in 1965. Formerly, dependent on the interior provinces or abroad for almost all its industrial products, Tibet is now self-sufficient in some industrial goods for daily use.

The Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region has become a modern industrial base producing iron, steel, coal, petroleum, electric power, non-ferrous metals and motor vehicles. Industrial goods have increased in 1974 from less than twenty varieties in 1949 to over 2,000 today. Especially, Karamai, in northern Sinkiang where was once a desert without plants or animal life, was one of China's famous oilfield (its name means "black oil" in Uighur). Now, it takes less than two days for the Karamai oilfield to turn out more than the total amount of crude oil extracted over decades by the Ching and the Kuomintang. Moreover, *Khotan*, at the foot of the Kunlun Mountains, is famous for its silkworms and mulberry trees.

Significantly, people in mountainous minority nationalities have set up numerous small hydroelectric stations which help develop industry. The Changbai Korean Autonomous Country is now supplying electricity to the state's network after fulfilling its own need. The nature of the Dayao Mountains produces the power potential as a gift to China⁽²³⁾ Even the Naxi nationality in Yunnan, they are able to make economical progress. The melting snows are abundant for a natural reservoir for irrigation as well as motive force for hydropower stations that supply electricity for industry through the area.⁽²⁴⁾ Moreover, countless emerald-green valleys and ridges are a veritable treasure house of industrious woods as the raw material for construction, wrapping paper, handicrafts, and spinning mills, etc., Upon the development, the Chingpo nationality along the western frontier of Yunnan Province poured their sensitive feeling praising Chairman Mao in a song:

Chairman Mao sprinkled stars with his hands;
The stars fell on over Chingpo mountains.
Bright lights shine on the world of man;
The glad songs of the Chingpo linger among the cloud.⁽²⁵⁾

Transportation

Industrial and agricultural development in the minority nationality areas is inseparable from development of their communications and transport. Since ancient times, travel through these regions has been difficult and dangerous. Transport used to depend on animals and human carriers.

After liberation, Chairman Mao called for "*Defy difficulties and work hard to build the highway in order to help our fraternal nationalities*". His call was answered by the present

15,800 kilometres of Tibet's highway linking with neighbouring Szechuan, Chingbai, Yunnan, and Singkiang while Tibet had not had a single kilometre of highway in its vast area of 1.2 million square kilometres. Such case is also seen in Sinkiang where, in the past, had not had a railway over its 1.6 million square kilometres including high and precipitous mountains and vast desert, and more than half of Singkiang were unreachable by truck, bus, or car. But, by 1965, all Singkiang's counties were linked by highway. Such conditions were as same as the other minority regions.

Thus, since liberation, trunk railways and highways have been built in Inner Mongolia and Sinkiang. One can go by train from Peking directly to their regional capitals. We can also see the achievement of building railways linking minority nationality. Such transportation has played a very important role in strengthening the unity among Chinese of all nationalities, promoting industry and agriculture in minority areas and accelerating socialist construction.

Education

In the past, one could hardly speak of the educational growth in those minority areas. Some had a few schools set up by the policy of assimilation. At the time of the liberation, Sinkiang had only one school of higher education, 20 middle schools and 1,300 primary schools. Most of them were concentrated in the cities. Tibet had only education of monasteries and private family schools where those serfs' children were deprived of all rights to education. Such were few of the examples.

After liberation, the minority nationalities follow the guideline: *"Diversified methods should be adopted in setting up rural schools. A part from those established by the state, energetic steps must be taken to encourage people to set up schools by collective effort"*. And over the last few years, all minority nationalities worked hard to universalize five-year primary schools. The Party Committee of the commune has not only set up all-day primary schools but adopted many other forms suited to the local conditions: mobile teaching, multigrade classes, morning, noon, and evening classes, part-farming, part-study classes, literacy classes, and teachers going to the pupils' homes. There were also "teaching points" for children who live far from schools, or unable to attend in regular hours because they have to help the family. Moreover, the peasants (lowermiddle peasants) were urged to participate the school activities, even teaching their children. Such schools are full of vitality and satisfy the masses. Right now, it is the mass criticism of the Confucian idea that men are superior to women. Daughters are sent to school as well as sons.

The minority children has now no sense of inferiority when their local languages are recognized in schools. In some cases as in the Mongolian areas, separate Mongolian and Han primary school or joint schools to teach in both languages are set up. Where a nationality has no script of their own, the textbooks are in Han but oral teaching is in both Han and local language.

The ones who do play the most important impact on the growth of the national education are the cadres, especially the local cadres who will contribute their labour to the revolution. Chairman Mao accepted their important role in 1949 that without a large number of communist cadres of minority nationalities, it would be impossible to solve the national problem thoroughly and to isolate the minority reactionaries completely. Accordingly, in 1951, the Central Institute for Nationalities was inaugurated in Peking. Later, such institutes were

set up in several parts of minority areas. More than two decades, the state has trained considerable numbers of cadres for minority nationalities. After graduation from the above institutes, they most go back to work in their home-towns with a strong desire for socialist revolution and construction by their own people. So equipped by socialist indoctrination, they help consolidate the unity of the motherland and strengthening unity among nationalities.

Higher education among the minority nationalities has developed greatly, both in numbers of their own institutes and numbers of the minority students at universities and colleges in Peking and elsewhere. Many minority nationalities have now their own first generation of college students. They are ready to serve the people, the poor and lower middle peasants.

Medical work

China at present puts great care for the medical and health work. Such work has proved to be successful and very interesting. Her "barefoot doctor" is the center of concern and curiosity of the world, especially, among underdeveloped countries. Chairman Mao himself, was very energetic in this matter, he declared, "*In medical and health work, put the stress on the rural areas*". These rural areas are said to be the minority areas. Before liberation, the medical situation in the minority areas was deplorable. The poor could not afford treatment. For them, there was only the witch doctor or will of the God. Some begged the Buddhist abbot in the temple to sprinkle them with holy water.⁽²⁶⁾ For example, the western frontier of Yunnan was generally called a "*pestilential area*" and a saying said, "*If you are passing through Mang-shih, buy a coffin first*". The popular diseases in the South (among the Tai and Chingpo) were *malaria, plague, cholera, smallpox* and *dysentery*. Among the Tai, there was a superstition that sickness was due to a "pipo" spirit which could be cured only by exorcism. Such religious and superstitious practices cost the lives of countless labouring people. Or, in Inner Mongolia and Tibet, cattle and family property would be sold to pay the lamas in the monasteries to chant sutras.

Beginning in 1950, the government sent many medical teams into the vast grasslands and desolate deserts to fight against the diseases. The main thing at the time (1950's) was to spread scientific knowledge among the people and to train medical workers from the minority nationalities. Communes and production brigades have, in general, established their own medical institution along with the growth of the barefoot doctors who play both roles in farming and medical treatment throughout the minority areas. Through study and practice, these barefoot doctors generally learn how to treat common and recurrent diseases in the rural areas. They are able to combine traditional Chinese and Western methods of prevention and cure, for example, those who suffered from arthritis will be treated well by acupuncture. Of course, these doctors will travel all over the land to inoculate the herdsmen in their tents. At the beginning, they worked very hard because they had to face the serious obstruction from superstition and old methods of treatment.⁽²⁷⁾

Some minority areas give free medical service to all. Some develop co-operative medical care. Each commune or brigade allocates a part of its public welfare fund for the co-operative medical fund. Several hospitals were built. Great importance is that some nationalities have their own traditional medicine which is proved to be very valuable for the medical science. Then everywhere organizes and trains traditional doctors and young modern doctors at the same time. Premier Chou En-lai particularly paid great attention to the problem of medical care for the minority peoples. Thus, at his suggestion, every year since 1971, a large

team of experienced doctors will travel in wind and rain with socialist zeal and can be sent for by day and night to serve people with their heart and soul.⁽²⁸⁾

Culture and Art

It is unquestionable to say that the minority nationalities are the contributors of the treasure of national tourism. Several years ago, an American painter toured China and described Kweilin's scenery that, "I have painted mountains for decades, but only now I have found the world's most beautiful mountains and rivers".⁽²⁹⁾ The other fascinating things come from the rich and colorful arts, crafts, and local culture of all the nationalities. Many nationalities are famed for their singing and dancing. The Uighur are famed with their emotional singing and dancing; the Miao with reed-pipes and dancing; and the Tai with the "tsanha" or the ballad singer. In Hsishuangpanna Tai autonomous Prefecture, people said, *"Life without the tsanha would be like food without salt"*

Before liberation, these singers or dancers were ill-treated. A folk song then said.
All because I sang a song
My neck is licked in a cangue
You wonder what is in my song
The cangue itself tells the story.⁽³⁰⁾

But it happened that the greater the oppression, the more violent the resistance. The labouring people used their art as a weapon to express their will against the reactionary rulers who exploited and looked down upon them.

After liberation, Chairman Mao knew well that he could recruit these folk artists as his weapons moving forward the socialist revolution. Then he proclaimed the new policy that, *"All our literature and art are for the masses of the people, and in the first place for the workers, peasants and soldiers"*, *"let a hundred flowers blossom"*, and *"weed through the old to bring forth the new"*. Thus, over 60 professional national ensembles were set up throughout the country with the Central Nationalities Ensemble in Peking. All are to develop the songs and dances of the nationalities so they can better serve the workers, peasant and soldiers.

Moreover, in view of the vast and pastral areas, many small but effective red cultural troupes (ulan muchir) have been organized as the light cavalry of literature and art. They penetrate to all corners and make up about 150 performances a year. Also, the singers and dancers of the minority nationalities are in the ranks of the country politices. Thus, the literature and art of the minority nationalities have flowered, combining national form with socialist content. Ten of thousands of these propaganda teams of Mao Tsetung thought are active north and south. In this way, people are embodied with the spirit of the socialist era and are rich in national culture. Chairman Mao then praised them as he said to a Tai tsanha, *"I'm of the Han nationalities and you are Tai. I live in Peking and you on the southern border. The pressure of work had prevented me from going to see you, but we are of one heart"*⁽³¹⁾

Moreover, to strengthen the Chinese unity among different nationalities, the government put forth the policy of equality even in the cultural area. Each year they will held a national festival of folk songs in Peking. At present, Chinese folk songs are being broadcasted on the radio and television. (But when the Gang of Four were in power, folk songs were rejected. Chiang Ching often said, "I hate folk songs. They're all about love and so vulgar").⁽³²⁾ At present, there was the folk song festival last autumn (1978) which stimulated the return and

development of folk songs and music. The themes include traditional folk songs, current life, and also love songs. There were 200 singers who came from fifteen nationalities. Even the older singers were welcomed by a thunderous applause.

Thus, we can see how cautious and careful the state is for the policy of handling the minority problems. This is the wonderfully successful job which has been done in only a few decades. It is also the wonderful work that the People's Republic of China can create unity and equality among her various minority nationalities which were once the big burden of the long history of the country. Moreover, these minority nationalities along with their rich natural resources, can also fulfill the policy of modernization of the state. In other words, since the minority nationalities, trained well by socialism, prefer going back home to work on the socialist line, they then supply the nation by proving to be very capable manpower.

Footnote

1. *Peking Tourist Pictures*: The Great Wall, one of China's ancient wonders, is the last scene to see on earth in the spaceman's sight.
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3. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The Chinese: Their History and Culture* (New York: The Mea-millan Co., 1962), pp. 179-181.
4. Latourette, *op.cit.*, pp. 556-557.
5. John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer, Albert M. Craig, *East Asia, The Modern Trans-formation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965), pp. 219-225.
6. Ma Yu-Huai, "Twenty Years of the Ningsia Hui Autonomous Region", *China Recon-structs*, Vol. XXVIII, No.2 (February, 1979), p. 37.
7. Fei Xiaotong, "Revisiting the Mountains of the Yao People", *China Reconstructs*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 5 (May, 1979), pp. 46-47.
8. Yin Ming, *United and Equal* (Peking: Foreign Language Press 1977), p. 8.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
10. Lin Po-cheng and others, *Recalling the Long March* (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1978), p. 15.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-75.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
13. Lin Po-cheng and others, *op.cit.*, p. 15.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 21
15. "Speeding up Development of Minority Nationalities," *Beijing Review*, No. 25 (June 22, 1979), p. 5.
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18. Yin Ming, *op.cit.*, pp. 3-5
19. Zheng Benxing, "When the 'Roof of the World' Was Formed" *China Reconstructs*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 5 (May, 1979), p. 27.
20. Xiao Zhi, "Lhasa's Zuglakang Temple", *China Reconstructs*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 9 (Sep-tember, 1979), pp. 8-12.

21. Yin Ming, *op.cit.*, p. 65.
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23. Fei Xiaotong, *op.cit.*, pp. 44-48.
24. Zhao Jingxin, "Yunnan's Yulong Mountains", *China Reconstructs*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 5 (May, 1979), pp. 37-43.
25. Yin Ming, *op.cit.*, p. 57.
26. Chang Yen, "Medicine for the Tais- 'Demons' to Doctors", *China Reconstructs*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1 (January, 1979) p. 57.
27. Hui Min, "A Hani Woman 'Bare-Foot Doctor'", *Women of China*, No. 3 (1979), pp. 34-36.
28. Yin Ming, *op.cit.*, pp. 84-92.
29. "Ballad Singer of the Tais", *China Reconstructs*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2 (February, 1979), pp. 74-76.
30. Yin Ming, *op.cit.*, p. 95.
31. "Ballad Singer of the Tai", *op.cit.* p. 76.
32. Mao Chi-tseng, "National Folk Song Festival", *China Reconstructs*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1 (January, 1979), p. 39.

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