CHAPTER -II

NATIONAL MINORITIES' POLICY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
OF CHINA TILL :1966

The People's Republic of China is a unitary, multinational socialist state. From time immemorial, the ancestors of its various nationalities laboured, lived and multiplied on its vast, beautiful and fertile land. Industrious, courageous and intelligent, they opened up the land through painstaking efforts, developed the economy and created a brilliant history and splendid culture. "China, when seen by the Chinese, is one country many peoples. They say: China is a unified state of many nationalities." ¹

Through thousands of years of continuous disintegration and amalgamation, the numerous ethnic entities in China have gradually developed into the present day 56 nationalities. China's 1982 census placed the country's population at, 1,031,882,511. Of this figure, the Han nationality, the most populous of all the nationalities, accounted for 936,703,824. The Han evolved through the mixing of many ancient ethnic groups and now accounts for 93.3 per cent of the population.² The Han as a nation must have occurred during China's feudal period.³

The three big valleys of the Yellow river, the Yangtze river and the Pearl river and in the north-eastern plain area in Chinese Central Asia. This so called Central Asia covers the autonomous regions of Tibet, Sinkiang, Inner Mongolia, and Kansu and Ch'inghai provinces. On the other hand the 55 minority nationalities had a combined population of 67,233,254 approximately 6.7 per

cent of population. This small percentage belies the enormity of the nationalities question.

In China all ethnic groups who do not belong to the majority Han nationality are designated as, national minorities (shaoshu minzu). The policy pursued with these minorities and terms used in defining that policy employ the reference word ‘nationalities’ (minzu), as in nationality policy, nationality commission, nationality cadres, nationality territories, etc. Further the Chinese draw no distinction between people (minzu), nation (minzu), nationality (minzu), and ethnos (minzu). In China minority nationalities are so called because they are in the minority numerically. In other cases they are called “fraternal nationalities.” The contradiction in national minorities is that the Han from whom the national minorities are readily distinguishable. In fact however the cultural gap between the “Han Chinese” and “Minority” is often no greater than that between Han Chinese of different regions. Further it is generally speaking, Hans are more developed than the minority nationalities in the political, economic and cultural splurges. Therefore it plays a leading role in the life of the state.

The various nationalities are quite uneven in social development and their socio-economic structures differ greatly. In the early days of New China the great majority of the nationalities were still dominated by a feudal land lord economy, while some retained feudal serfdom, a stair owning system or even marked vestiges of the primitive commune. In the historical development of old China the various nationalities were unequal in their relationships and there was oppression, discrimination and even hostility between them. Nevertheless the unification of the country and the close political, economic and cultural relations among the nationalities did work together to propel history forward, this has

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5 Warren and Dowty, n. 1, p. 317.

always been the mainstream of China’s ethnic relations over the past several thousand years.

Besides the above, mutual help in production and economic exchange, mutual cultural impact and interdependence in livelihood have combined to forge inseparable relations among the nationalities. In fact the minorities influence on the majority Han is profound and their contribution to the motherland immense. For many years all the nationalities of the Chinese nation suffered common oppression and exploitation by imperialism and feudalism. In the common struggle against these, and especially in the revolutionary struggle led by the Chinese Communist Party the people of all nationalities fought shoulder to shoulder and by their united efforts established the People’s Republic of China.

Furthermore, more than ten million persons of the national minorities in south China who have been to varying extents accentuated to Chinese ways and in some cases they had no awareness of being different of being a minority until they were informed of the fact by the workers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences came to their areas after 1949. It is interesting to note that despite the fact that they constitute such a relatively small portion of the countries population most of the groups spread over some 63.4 per cent of the countries total land area.

Now coming to the various national minorities in China, fifteen of the national minorities--the Mongolians, Hui, Zaung (Tibetans) Uighur Miao, Yi Zhuang, Bouyei, Chaorvian (Koreans), Man (Manchu), Dong, Yao, Bai, Zujia and Hani have a population of over one million each and the Zhuang being the most numerous (topping 13 million). Thirteen the Kazakh, Dai, Li, Lisu, She, Lahu, Va, Sui, Dougriang, Naxi, Tu, Kirghiz and Qiang-- number between one million and one hundred thousand each. There are eighteen-- the Gelao,

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Maonan, Tajik, Primi, Nu, Achang, Ewenki, Jino, Uzbek, Gin, Deang and Yugur whose population range from under one hundred thousand to ten thousand. Nine nationalities have population of not more than ten thousand member each--the Bonan, Monba, Drung, Oroqen, Tatar, Russians, Lhoba, Gaoshan and Hezhen. The last named is the smallest having only 1,476 members as based on the 1982 census.

To come to a broad consensus it can be said that if only quantities are considered and the country looked at as a whole the same situation holds true in regard to China’s national minorities. The population graph of China’s national minorities registered a gradual downward trend before the founding of New China in 1949. Some minorities were even on the verge of extinction. The population of the Mongolians in Inner Mongolia fell by 150,000 to 300,000 in 174 years between 1772 and 1945. The Hezhen were left with only a little more than 300 persons before 1949. This tragedy was caused mainly by misrule, natural disasters, wars, privations and disease. During this juncture the infant survival rate for the minority people was deplorably low; as the saying went in those days, “you can often see women with child but hardly even any children frolicking about.”

During its early 1950’s the new China has launched efforts to help the minority people to improve their production and livelihood and gave them support in developing their economy and culture. When compared with the 1964 census, the 1982 census showed that the population of the minorities had grown by a little more than 27.3 million or 68.4 per cent, while its proportion of the national total rose from 5.8 per cent to 6.7 per cent over the same period. At present there are fifteen minorities with a population of one million or above, as against ten in 1964. In some cases the minorities with small population have achieved an even faster rate of population growth. For instance, the population of the Qiang nationality who live in south west China’s Szechwan province grew

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to over 102,700 in 1982 from 49,105 in 1964 a 109.3 per cent increase. Against, the Hezhen in north-east China's Heilongjiang province registered a 105.6 per cent growth of population over the same period or a jump from 718 persons to more than 1,470.

DENSITY OF POPULATION:

The density of population in China is quite uneven in various regions as revealed by the 1982 census. The minority areas are in general thinly populated, with the inhabitants living far apart. Their population distribution generally follows the pattern of wide dispersion, small concentration. It is needless to say though they are relatively underdeveloped in economic and cultural spheres than the Han and constitute a small portion of the countries population most of the groups spread over some 63.4 per cent of the countries total land area.

The discrepancy between the population density of the minority areas and that of the Han inhabited hinterland and coastal regions, which has come about for historical and geographical reasons is quite marked. According to 1982 census the density of population of some of the most important areas where minority peoples live in compact communities. Its 1.6 persons per square kilometer for Tibet, 5 persons for Ch'inghai, 8 persons for Sinkiang, 16 persons for Inner Mongolia, 43 persons for Kansu, 83 and 158 persons for Yunnan and Guangxi respectively. Whereas these figures afford a clear contrast with those for the following coastal regions: 590 persons for Jiangsu, 486 persons for Shandong, 446 persons for Henan and 382 persons for Zhijiang.

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9 Questions And Answers About China's National Minorities (Beijing, 1985). p. 34.

10 China's Minority People, Beijing Review, vol. 29, no. 52. 9 February 1979. p. 17. and also see. n. 7, p. 34.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINA’S MINORITY NATIONALITIES

Achang: The Achang are mountain farmers. Some groups believe in primitive spirits and practise ancestor worship, while others believe in Hinayana Buddhism.

Bai: A Tibeto-Burman people, the Bai were a major ethnic grouping and cultural elite in the Nanzhao kingdom which dominated the region to China’s South-west from the seventh century until 902. They are rice growers, whose religions include worship of ‘local tutelary spirits,’ Shamanism, Buddhism and Taoism. The Bai have close cultural ties with the Han, and are among the most acculturated of China’s minority nationalities.

Benglong: The Benglong speak a South Asian language close to that of the Va. They are subsistence farmers and are culturally similar to the Burmese. Some Benglong follow a form of Hinayana Buddhism.

Bonan: The Bonan are culturally close to the Hui. They speak a Mongolian language and are Islamic.

Blang: The Blang speak a Mon-Khmer language, and their culture is closely related to those of nearby Burma (Myanmar) and Laos. They are farmers, with an economy based on shifting cultivation. The main traditional religions are Hinayana Buddhism, polytheism and ancestor worship. Some people speak Thai, Va or Chinese.

Bouyei: The Bouyei have a similar way of life to the Miao and their language is closely related to those of the Zhuang and Dai. They practise polytheism and ancestor worship.

Dai: The Dai, who have a close affinity with the Thais, were one of the main ethnic groups dominating the Nanzhao kingdom (seventh century to 902). They are Hinayana Buddhists and their arts include colourful dancing and singing.

Daur: The traditional occupations of the Daur are grain and vegetable farming and animal husbandry; they also rely on logging, hunting and fishing. This nationality has a strong spoken-language and cultural affinity with the Mongolians. There is a rich oral literature, but no written script. The main religion is shamanism.

Dong: The Dong trace their origins back to about the third century BC. They speak a Thai language and have a close affinity with the Thais. Dong architecture features covered bridges and multi-storey drum towers.

Dongxiang: The Dongxiang are closely related to the Mongolians. They speak a Mongolian language and are Islamic.

Druung: These farmers speak a Tibeto-Burmese language closely related to Jingpo. Their traditional religion is nature worship, with belief in spirits, but there are also some Christians within the nationality group.

Ewenki: The Ewenki are a Tungus people who speak a Tungus language. Their religions include animal and ancestor worship, shamanism and lama Buddhism. Once migrant hunters, the Ewenki have led a more settled life over the past forty years; however, they still hunt, breed deer, tend flocks and farm.

Gaoshan: The aboriginal mountain people of Taiwan, the Gaoshan are millet farmers and hunters. Until the early 1900s the Gaoshan were head-hunters. They speak a Malay-Polynesian language and believe in polytheism and ancestor worship, although some are Christians.

Gelo: The Gelo are mountain subsistence farmers and hunters. A Gelo language exists but few use it, instead communicating in Chinese, Miao, Yi and Bouyei.

Hani: The Hani are subsistence farmers who speak a Tibeto-Burmese language. They practise polytheism and ancestor worship.

Hezhen: Among China’s smallest minority nationalities, the Hezhen speak a Manchu-tungus language. They are farmers who concentrate on rice growing. Their religion is based on nature worship and shamanism. Their main art form is sung folk narrative.

Hui: The Hui are Moslems who can trace their origins to the seventh century, when Arab and Persian merchants settled in China. They are involved in many occupations, with the Hui working as shop and restaurant keepers, artisans and peasants. The Hui culture is basically the same as that of the Han. Nationality members speak and write Chinese. Territorially they are very scattered.
Jing: The Jing cultivate rice and are good fishermen. They have their own language, but many now speak Cantonese. The Jing are descendants of Vietnamese migrants who arrived in China from the fifteenth century on. Some are Taoists and a few Catholics.

Jingpo: The Jingpo live along the Burma border and speak a Tibeto-Burman language closely related to Drung. The main traditional religion is polytheism, but some practise Christianity.

Juno: Subsistence farmers, renowned for their fine, colourful fabrics, the Juno speak a Tibeto-Burman language. The Juno are the latest minority nationality to have been classified as such. Their traditional religion is nature and ancestor worship.

Kazakh: Renowned for their horsemanship, the Kazakhs keep Bactrian camels and are wandering herders of goats and sheep. The Kazakh language has two scripts, one based on Arabic, the other on Latin, Kazakh people are mainly Moslems, but shamanism still survives.

Kirghiz: The Kirghiz are pastoral wanderers and herders of goats and sheep. They are a Turkic people who speak a Turkic language. Most are Islamic, but a few are lama Buddhists.

Korean: Korean migration into Manchuria dates from the seventeenth century, but did not occur in sizeable numbers until the nineteenth. The Koreans are mainly rice growers, but have also joined China’s industrialisation. The nationality’s culture and language are the same as in Korea.

Lahu: The Lahu have their own language, but most Lahu speak Chinese or Thai due to a close association with the Han and Dai peoples. They lacked a written script until 1957. Some Lahu practise nature and ancestor worship, but Mahayana Buddhism and Christianity are also found.

Lhoba: The Lhoba speak a Tibetan language, but do not have their own script. Their traditional religions is nature worship. The Lhoba are currently the least populous of all China’s nationalities.

Li: Natives of Hainan Island, the Li have a long history of rebellion against the Chinese authorities, and in 1943 rose against the Kuomintang government. They believe in polytheism and nature worship.

Lisu: Subsistence farmers, the Lisu have arranged, monogamous marriages, but rather free love before marriage. Their language belongs to the Yi branch of the Tibeto-Burman family.
**Manchu:** Once herders and hunters, the Manchus trace their origins back some 3000 years. They conquered China in the seventeenth century and adopted Chinese manners, language and culture to such an extent that little survives of their own distinctive culture. Very few now speak the Manchu language. The Manchus formerly practised shamanism and ancestor worship. Territorially they are the least concentrated of all minorities in China.

**Maonan:** The Maonan share a love of festivals and colourful dress with the Zhuang, and speak a related language. They are farmers who grow millet and buckwheat.

**Miao:** The Miao are one of the most ancient of China’s nationalities, tracing their origins back more than 4000 years. Prior to modernisation of farming methods they grew millets and buckwheat using the slash and-burn method. The Miao language has three main dialects, but there was no unified written script until 1956. Religions include nature and ancestor worship and Christianity.

**Moinba:** The Moinba are mountain herders. They have a way of life, culture and language similar to the Tibetans and are lama Buddhists.

**Mongolian:** The Mongolians once ran a gigantic empire, founded in 1206 by Ghengis Khan, which covered most of the Eurasian Continent. The Mongolian language belongs to the Altaic family; there are many mutually understandable dialects. The Mongolian script, still in use in the PRC, dates at least from the early thirteenth century. The main religion is lama Buddhism. Mongolians were traditionally nomadic (some still are), living in hide and felt tents called yurts. However, they are increasingly becoming settled and even urban dwellers. Industry is well developed among the Mongolians.

**Mulam:** The Mulam are an agricultural people with a self-sufficient village economy. Religions include Buddhism and Taoism the Mulam language is related to that of the Dong and Chinese characters are used.

**Naxi:** The Naxi speak a language belonging to the Yi branch of the Tibeto-Burman family. traditional religions include the national worship of Dongba, lama Buddhism and Taoism. Most Naxi follow a patriarchal family system, but one section of the nationality is matriarchal.

**Nu:** Farmers who are closely related to the Tibetans. the Nu speak a Tibeto-Burman language. Some follow lama Buddhism, while others are nature worshippers or Christians.
**Oroqen:** A Tungus people who speak a Tungus language, the Oroqen were once semi-nomadic, living in birch and hide tents. They are now more settled and work as hunters, herders of deer and farmers.

**Pumi:** The Pumi speak a language related to Tibetan and have a similar lifestyle to Tibetans, but only part of the nationality accepts lama Buddhism; the others have a polytheistic religion and sacrifice to their ancestors.

**Qiang:** Closely related to Tibetans and speaking a similar language, the Qiang are herders and farmers. They are, however, polytheists, nature worshippers and shamanists, not lama Buddhists.

**Russian:** Almost all of China’s Russian population arrived in the north-east and Sinkiang after the Russian civil war of 1918-22. Culturally and linguistically they are the same as in Russia.

**Salar:** Islamic Turkic speakers living in a semi-desert area, the Salar are herders of sheep and some cattle. Their diet consists largely of steamed buns and a variety of noodles made of highland barley, wheat and buck-wheat.

**She:** The She language belongs to the Miao branch of the Miao-Yao family. The origins of the She are unclear, but probably date back to the seventh century. Some are Buddhists, while others are polytheists or ancestor worshippers.

**Shui:** The Shui have a language close to that of the Dong. Most are nature worshippers, but some are Catholics.

**Sibe:** The Sibe speak a Manchu-Tungus language. They traditionally lived in the north-east of Liaoning with the Manchus, but in 1764 many were moved to the west as border guards on the Russian frontier, where a portion of the Sibe population still lives. They are traditionally polytheistic.

**Tajik:** Of Iranian stock, the Tajiks speak an Iranian language and believe in Islam. By means of extensive irrigation, they grow rice, wheat, fruit and cotton; some are herders. Houses are built of wood and stone, with square flat roofs.

**Tatar:** The Tatars are Islamic Turkic speakers and farmers. Their diet includes round cakes, with the outside crisp and inside soft. They also eat cheese, dried apricots and rice.
Tibetan: Prior to the implementation of 'democratic reforms' in 1959, Tibet was a theocratic state. The Tibetans have a highly distinctive culture, mainly based on lama Buddhism, and a rich written and oral literature. They are farmers of barley, peas and tubers and herders of yaks, sheep and goats. They are also the only one of China's minority nationalities to have created a tradition of drama independently of the Han people.

Tu: The Tu trace their origins to the thirteenth century. They speak a Mongolian language and are related to the Mongolians. They have two dialects and a rich oral literature. Originally pastoralists, they have practised agriculture for several centuries. Most believe in lama Buddhism, but some still adhere to polytheistic beliefs.

Tujia: The Tujia farm rice and corn, collect fruit and fell trees for lumber. They are good at handicrafts; and in many ways are very similar to the Han people.

Uighur: A Turkic people who ran a major empire centred on what is now Mongolia from 744 to 840, the Uighurs converted to Islam over several centuries. They grow fruit, wheat, cotton and rice through irrigation. Uighur customs, culture and art are similar to those of other Turkic people and they excel in music, song and dance. The Uighur language belongs to the Turkic group of the Altaic family of languages.

Uzbek: The origins of the Uzbeks go back to the fourteenth century. They are Islamic Turkic speakers and farmers with dress and food very similar to those of the Uighurs.

Va: The Va speak of Mon-Khmer south Asian language. Most are nature worshippers, but some are Hinayana Buddhists or Christians.

Yao: The Yao farm sweet potatoes, maize and rice. They have recently developed hydroelectric power and increased irrigation. There are several different mutually incomprehensible Yao languages, and Chinese or Zhuang are often used for communication. Traditional religions include nature worship, ancestor worship and Taoism.

Yi: The Yi speak a Tibeto-Burman language and have their own script. They once had a reputation as fierce warriors and those in Liangshan, Szechwan formerly had a heavily stratified slave system. They are polytheists, and also have a long tradition of Buddhism. with Taoism and Christianity introduced later.
Yugur: Descended from the Uighurs of the ninth century, the Yugurs are Turkic speakers. They are herders and farmers, with a few hunting as a sideline. Most practise lama Buddhism.

Zhuang: The Zhuang are the most populous of China's minority nationalities, and one of the best integrated with the Han. Zhuang origins go back well before the time of Christ. They speak a language related to Thai, but many speak Chinese. They Chinese written language was formerly used, but in 1955 a Zhuang written language based on Latin letters was devised. Religions include Buddhism, Taoism, Ancestor worship and Christianity.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHINA'S NATIONALITIES

China has gradually developed a peculiar pattern of geographical distribution of her nationalities over a long period of time. Large numbers of people of different nationalities, with the Han as they main body, live in overlapping communities; small members live in compact communities; and not a single place is exclusively inhabited by one single ethnic group. Though the minority nationalities are spread over 63.4 per cent of the country's total land area, it does not mean that they inhabit this much territory exclusively. In fact the territory contains large number of Han living in mixed communities with them. For instance in the three autonomous Ningxia, the Han population is even bigger than the minority population.

The Hans make up to about 40 per cent of the population in Sinkiang Uighur autonomous region which is next only to the Uighur, the rest of the population being composed of thirteen minorities. Likewise, 37.5 per cent of the country's Han areas contain members of many minorities. By the end of 1982 of the country's 2,369 counties and municipalities 2,310 had been peopled by Hui, 2092 by Manchu and 1,863 by Mongolians. In the past two decades there has

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13 Questions and Answers About China's National Minorities, n. 9, p. 34.

14 China's Minority People. Beijing Review, vol. 29, no. 52, 9 February 1979, p. 17 and also see Questions and Answers about China's National Minorities, n. 9, p. 34.

15 Liu Xing Wu and Alatan, n. 3, p. 146.
been a rapid growth in the population of nationalities living in mixed communities or in non contiguous areas.

Apart from the bigger nationalities the smaller ones - notably the Monba, Tu, Gin, Primi, Hezhen, Druung, Hani, Bouyei, Monan and Dong - have also increased their proliferation. Thus the pattern of geographical distribution of China's nationalities is certainly very complex and has been shaped over a long period. It is due to historical result of large scale ethnic shifts due to needs in production and daily life, mutual exchange, wars, natural calamities and regional separatist rule etc.\textsuperscript{16} As a result of this factors various nationalities live in mixed communities for e.g. Sinkiang now as Uighur autonomous region has not less than thirteen nationalities living in mixed communities. Yunnan is an ethnically mixed area to a still greater extent as it contains as many as twenty four nationalities. And Tibet though not so ethnically variegated, finds its Tibetans living together with quite a few other nationalities such as the Han, Hui Monba and Lhoba in addition to Dengren, who have not been identified as a separate ethnic group.

It is interesting to note that the minorities in general do not live in a very concentrated manner for instance Tibetan nationality, has a population of 3.8 million, some two million of whom live in Tibet while the rest are scattered in Szechwan, Ch'inghai, Kansu and Yunnan provinces.\textsuperscript{17} And in the case of 7.2 million Hui's, who are just more than a million live in compact communities in Ningxia Hui autonomous region. The rest live in small concentrations outside the region or in mixed communities in the Hun areas. Even in the Liangshan Yi autonomous prefecture where Yi live in the greatest concentrations they comprise a mere quarter of the total Yi population.


\textsuperscript{17} Moseley, n.6, p. 32.
The national minorities in China are distributed along her borders\textsuperscript{18} and a sizeable portion of China’s land frontier line, extending for more than 20,000 kilometers all the way from the Soughua and Heilong rivers in the north east, along the Sino-Mongolian border and down to Sinkiang, Tibet, Yunnan, Guangxi and Guangadong, fringes on minority areas. More than twenty national minorities inhabiting the border areas are cross the border people. They enjoy long-standing friendship or kinship relations with their fellow members across the borderland in Chinese history in north-west and south-west China used to provide international routes of travel which served as vital links for political, economic and cultural contacts between China and foreign countries. And routes like Tu Silk Road, Tu Szechwan--India route and Tub-Nepal route are of special importance. All this international routes passed through minority areas. This opening and maintenance owed much to the inhabitants of the minority areas they crossed.

Besides the above the land areas covered by the China’s ethnic population is vast and its resources are abundant. Apart from splendid landscapes, this minority areas boasts extremely rich natural resources which provide the essential material basis for the development of industry, agriculture, fishery, animal husbandry, and forestry. The tropical or sub tropical minority regions in the south enjoy farm crops and produce two or three grain crops a year and are also suitable for the large scale planting of variety of economic crops. About 90 per cent of China’s pastoral area, which takes up some 40 per cent of the country’s land area lies in Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang, Ch’inghai, Sinkiang, Kansu, Nangxia, Szechwan and Tibet where minority peoples live in compact communities who raise populous stock breeds. The minority inhabited forest regions, which contain half of China’s forest reserves, supply medicinal herbs and timber needed for construction purposes.

\textsuperscript{18} For details see \textit{Ibid}, n. 6, p. 31.
The minority areas are distinguished more for their mineral deposits for instance the Taidam Basin in Ch'inghai is known to have many minerals. The Basin also has rich deposits of petroleum, coal and many non-ferrous and precious metals. The minority areas account for an estimated 40 per cent of the total national coal deposits as well as 52 per cent of the nations total water resources. Minority areas are remarkable for minerals they include Tibet for boron concentrates, Sinkiang for Jade, Guangxi for Manganese and Yunnan for tin. Some have proved their worth as ideal sites for industrial complexes, as exemplified in the Karamai oil fields in Sinkiang and the Baotou Iron and Steel works in Inner Mongolia. The minority areas take pride in being the home of many others rare animals, science spots and historical sites and offer great potential to attract tourists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Areas of distribution</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Han</td>
<td>936,703,824</td>
<td>All provinces, municipalities and all autonomous regions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchu</td>
<td>4,299,159</td>
<td>Mainly in Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang and Hebei provinces, Beijing Municipality, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>1,763,870</td>
<td>Jilin, Liaoning, Heilongjiang and other provinces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hezhen</td>
<td>1,476</td>
<td>Heilongjiang province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolian</td>
<td>3,411,657</td>
<td>Mainly in Inner Mongolia and Sinkiang Autonomous regions Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Kansu and Ch'inghai provinces.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daur</td>
<td>94,014</td>
<td>Inner Mongolia and Sinkiang autonomous regions, Heilongjiang province.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ewenki</td>
<td>19,343</td>
<td>Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Heilongjiang Province.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oroquen</td>
<td>4,132</td>
<td>Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Heilongjiang Province.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hui</td>
<td>7,219,352</td>
<td>Mainly in Ningxia Hui and Sinkiang Uighur autonomous regions, Kansu, Henan, Hebei, Ch'inghai, Shandong and Yunnan provinces, Beijing and Tianjin Municipalities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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19 Questions and Answers about China's National Minorities, n. 9, pp. 5-6.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Region</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dongxiang</td>
<td>279,397</td>
<td>Kansu province.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>159,426</td>
<td>Ch’inghai and Kansu Provinces.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salar</td>
<td>69,102</td>
<td>Ch’inghai, Kansu and other provinces.</td>
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<td>Bonan</td>
<td>9,027</td>
<td>Kansu Province.</td>
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<td>Yugur</td>
<td>10,569</td>
<td>Kansu Province.</td>
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<td>Uighur</td>
<td>5,957,112</td>
<td>Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region.</td>
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<td>Kazakh</td>
<td>907,582</td>
<td>Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region, Kansu Province.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kirghiz</td>
<td>113,999</td>
<td>Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region and Heilongjiang Province.</td>
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<td>Xibe</td>
<td>83,629</td>
<td>Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region and Liaoning Province.</td>
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<td>Tajik</td>
<td>26,503</td>
<td>Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region.</td>
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<td>Uzbek</td>
<td>12,453</td>
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<td>Russian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>4,127</td>
<td>Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region.</td>
</tr>
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<td>(Zaung) Tibetan</td>
<td>3,870,068</td>
<td>Xizang (Tibet) Autonomous Region, Ch’inghai, Szechwan, Kansu and Yunnan.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Monba</td>
<td>6,248</td>
<td>Xizang (Tibet) Autonomous Region.</td>
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<td>Lhoba</td>
<td>2,065</td>
<td>Xizang (Tibet) Autonomous Region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qiang</td>
<td>102,768</td>
<td>Szechwan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yi</td>
<td>5,453,448</td>
<td>Szechwan, Yunnan and Guizhou provinces, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bai</td>
<td>1,131,124</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hani</td>
<td>1,058,836</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dai</td>
<td>839,797</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisu</td>
<td>480,960</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Va</td>
<td>298,591</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahu</td>
<td>304,174</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naxi</td>
<td>245,154</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jingpo</td>
<td>93,008</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blang</td>
<td>58,476</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achang</td>
<td>20,441</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primi</td>
<td>24,237</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nu</td>
<td>23,166</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deang</td>
<td>12,295</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drung</td>
<td>4,682</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jino</td>
<td>11,974</td>
<td>Yunnan Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miao</td>
<td>5,030,897</td>
<td>Guizhou, Hunan, Yunnan, Szechwan and Guangxi Autonomous Region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouyei</td>
<td>2,120,469</td>
<td>Guizhou Province.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dong 1,425,100 Guizhou, Hunan and Guangxi Provinces.
Sui 286,487 Guizhou Province.
Gelao 53,802 Guizhou Province.
Yao 1,402,676 Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Hunan, Guangdong and Guizhou Provinces.
Mulam 90,426 Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.
Gin 11,995 Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.
Tujia 2,832,743 Hunan, Hubei and Szechwan Province.
Li 817,562 Guangdong Province.
She 368,832 Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Guangdong and Anhui Provinces.
Gaoshan 1,549 Taiwan and Fujian Province.
Maonan 38,135 Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

Notes:
1. The ethnic population combined amounted to 67,233,254 as against the national total of 1,031,882,511, based on the 1982 census.
2. The figures in the table above, based on the 1982 census, involved twenty-nine provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions (Taiwan excluded).
3. The population figure of Gaoshan did not cover Taiwan.

LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE NATIONAL MINORITIES

LANGUAGE

The national minorities in China use some sixty spoken languages. Due to certain historical factors some of them speak two or several tongues. For instance the people of Yugur nationality speak Yaofuer, (of the Eastern Xiong branch of the Turkic group), Engeer, (of the Mongolian group), Han or Tibetan. The sixty or so spoken languages referred to belong respectively to five linguistic families, ten groups and sixteen branches. The family, group or branch of several other languages that minorities use has as yet not been identified. On the whole apart from the Hui and The Manchus who employ Han writing and speech, the fifty three of the others Chinese minorities have their own languages and literature. 21 Though in some cases the written languages are still

21 Liu Xing Wu and Alatan, n. 3, p. 137.
incomplete only the Mongols, Tibetans, Uighurs and Koreans can seriously be said to possess literature's, though other nationalities possesses more or less crude means of writing their languages often in connection with religious practices: some of these employ Chinese characters, while systems based on the Latin or Arabic alphabets are used by other, the Tai employ a script derived from India. The five linguistic families are:

The Sino-Tibetan: Most of the minorities speak Sino-Tibetan. It takes in four groups; Hanyu (the Han language) which is used by the vast majority of China's population, Zhuang-Dong, Tibeto-Burmese and Miao-Yao. The Hui, Manchu, and most of the She have adopted Hanyu as their speech. The other three groups are in use mainly in southern China. Two of them, Zhuang-Dong and Miao-Yao are chiefly spoken in Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, Hunan and Guangdong. The fourth group is employed in Tibet, Szechwan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Ch’inghai and Hunan. The undecided Gelao language group also belong to the Sino-Tibetan family. And same is the fate of Gin language, though enjoys provisional status under Sino-Tibetan family.

Altaic: This is composed of three branches-Mongolian, Turkic and Manchu-Tungus-which is further subdivided into eighteen varieties. These are used mainly in Sinkiang, Inner Mongolia, Kansu, Ch’inghai and the north eastern provinces. The undefined Chaoxian (Korean) language with its linguistic classification does provisionally come under this family.

Austro-Asiatic: Out of the minority languages only those of the Va, Deang and Blang belong to this family. They are in use in parts of south-western Yunnan.

Malayo-Polynesian: Gaoshan belongs to this family and used in the hilly districts of Tiwan provinces at eastern sea board, and Lanyu Island off its south

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22 Moselcy, n. 6, p. 40.

23 Ibid.
eastern shores. The Gaoshan is subdivided into three branches-Taiya, Cao and Piawan which include a number of vernaculars.

**Indo-European:** Only Russian, belonging to the East Slavonic branch of the Slavonic group, and Tajik, belonging to the Eastern Iranian branch of the Iranian group, come under this family. Thus few users live in various parts of Sinkiang.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sino-Tibetan family</th>
<th>Altaic family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hanyu</strong></td>
<td><strong>Turkic group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common speech for Han: <em>lingua franca</em> for Hui, Manchu and part of She</td>
<td>Western Xiong branch: Uighur, Kazakh, Salar, Uzbek, Tatar group Eastern Xiong branch: Kirghiz, Western Yugur (Yaofuer)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Zhuang Dong Group</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mongolian group</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhuang: Zhuang-Dai branch: Zhuang, Bouyei, Dai Dong Dong-Sui branch: Dong, Sui, Mulam, Maonan. Li Branch: Li</td>
<td>Mongolian, Daur, Tu, Dongxiang, Bonan, Eastern Yugur (Engeer)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Tibeto-Burmese Group</strong></th>
<th><strong>Manchu-Tungus groups</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Miao-Yao group</strong></th>
<th><strong>Group status given provisionally:</strong> Korean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miao branch: Miao, She Yao branch: Yao</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Group status to be confirmed:* Gelao

*Group status given provisionally:* Gin

**Austro-Asiatic family** — Mon-Khmer group: Va, Deang, Blang
**Malayo-Polynesian family** — Indonesian group: Gaoshan
**Indo-European family** — Slavonic group - East Slavonic Branch: Russian Iranian group - East Iranian Branch: Tajik

Considerable number of borrowings from Hanyu is the general feature of minority languages this is so due to the contact with Han people. And at the same time, the Han functionaries working in minority areas have also learned to

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use the local minority vernaculars. In other cases people of various nationalities in some multinational areas also use the major local minority languages as their lingua franca.

The uneven historical, social and economic development²⁵ some of the China’s minorities devised their own scripts early in ancient times. After the founding of Chinese People’s Republic in 1949, there were nineteen minorities who had their own scripts, the Mongolian, Tod, Zang (Tibetan), Uighur, Chaoxian (Korean) Kazakh, Xibe, Dai, Uzbek, Kirghiz, Tatar, Russian, Yi, Naxi, Miao, Jingpo, Lisu, Lahu and Va. Three others the Hui, Manchu and She had adopted the Han script as their own. The Dai have four different alphabetic scripts, the Naxi use a pictographic language known as Dongba and a syllabic language known as Geba, the Xibe adopt a script devised on the basis of the Manchu language. The Jingpo, Lisu, Lahu and Va all have a script based on the Latin alphabet or a variation of it. And in some areas Zhuang and Dong use characters from Hanyu or the Han language as phonetic symbols or ideogrammic symbols for their mother tongues. The Sui nationality has a script known as Suishu which has features resembling classical style of Hanyu and small number of pictographs.

Besides the above the Bai has brought in script called Baiwen which expresses sounds of their mother tongue by means of Hanyu characters. However the Chinese government since mid 1950’s assisted the minorities to carry out reforms of their scripts, involving the two types of Dai which were wider use - Yi used in the Liangshan mountains of Szechwan, Jingpo and Lahu used in Yunnan, and Uighur and Kazakh in Sinkiang.

Subsequently it helped the Zhuang, Bouyei and eight other ethnic groups to devise fourteen schemes of linguistic annotation adopting the Latin alphabet. Of these schemes, four are of Miao dialects and one for a Kazakh dialect. With the

exception of the scheme for the Zhuang language, the other schemes have not been
granted official recognition. The China’s minority script come under four categories
namely Hieroglyphics, Hanoi character and their variants, syllabic languages and
Alphabetic writing which has six systems; The system based on the Indian alphabet;
The system based on the Arabic alphabet; The system based on the Huihu (Uighur)
alphabet; The system based on Korean alphabet; The system based on the Latin
alphabet and the system based on the Cyrillic alphabet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table III: Scripts of China's Nationalities.26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hieroglyphics: Dongba (of the Naxi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han characters and their variants: Han Square-character Zhuang, Square-character, Dong, Suishu, Baiwen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabic languages: Geba (of the Naxi), Old Yi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian alphabet:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic alphabet:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huihu (Uighur) alphabet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean alphabet:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin alphabet:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyrillic alphabet:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RELIGIONS

Minorities are religious and thus religion was closely related to the socio-economic institutions of the various minorities and to their customs and lifestyles.

The religious faith of the minorities are multifarious. Islam and Buddhism enjoy the largest following and have existed the greatest influence. And animism, shamanism, Taoism and Christianity have moderate following.

**ISLAM**

The ten nationalities who live in the north west—the Hui, Uighur, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Tatar, Tajik, Uzbek, Dongxiang, Salar and Bonan are followers of Islam who account for more than eight million. Of these, the Hui had become believers before their formation as a nationality. Some of the other nationalities like Uighur had been converted to Islam from other faiths. The Muslims among the minorities in China used to be Sunnis. But later between the end of the Ming dynasty and the beginning of the Qing dynasty a number of Islamic sects surfaced such as the Heishan and Baishan among the Uighur of southern Sinkiang and the Laojiao and Xinjiao among the Hui The Muslims of China are collectively called Hui-Hui—the returnees; or turn abouts: A name for which no satisfactory explanation has been given.

**BUDDHISM**

The five people considered Buddhists are the Tibetans, Mongol, T'u, Yu-ku and Tai with a population of more than 4,600,000. This religion enjoys fairly large following among the minorities. The three denominations adhered to are Lamaism, Mahayana and Hinayana. Lamaism widely embraced by Tibetans, Mongolians, T'u, and Yugur and to some extent by members of the Naxi, Nu, Qiang, Primi, Xibe,

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27 Moseley, n. 6, p. 42.


30 Moseley, n. 6, p. 40; and also see Brian Hook ed., n. 24, p. 97.
Kirghiz, Ewenki and Daur nationalities. Its major sects were the Kadampa, Gelugpa, Nyingmapa, Kagyurpa and Sakyapa. Of these sects, the Gelugpa from sixteenth century onwards acted as the ruling sect in Tibet’s combined temporal and clerical government. The Mahayana is prevalent among the Bai in Yunnan. It also following among the Lahu, Zhuang, Bouyei, Manchu, Koreans, Dong, She, Haxi, Yi and Qiang. Hinayana has following among the Yunnan Dai, Deang, Achang, Blang and Va. Out of this the Yunnan Dai used to have monasteries and monks in their villages. The Muslims and Buddhist put together represent over one third of China’s national minority population.31

CHRISTIANITY

It is only in the modern age the members of various minorities have began to convert to this faith. The Roman Catholicism and Protestantism have very small following among the Lisu, Nu, Miao, Jingpo, Va, Yi, Bai, Lahu, Hani, Dai, Qiang, Zhuang, Dong, Sui, She Gin, Manchu and Korean nationalities. There are more adherents among the Lisu and Nu of the Nujiang region in Yunnan than among the other minority peoples.

Besides the above mentioned religions like Islam, Buddhism and Christianity they are other minorities who do not have systematised religions and for most past they retain their comparatively primitive polytheism; religious superstition.32 But for Catholicism and Protestantism which lately crept into China the remaining religions of the national minorities have long historical background.33 And except for the Muslims and Tibetans today the minority people do not in general practice the

31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., p. 41.
officially recognised religions as part of their daily life. It is also interesting to note that the masses in national minority areas which border on neighbouring countries to the south, there are many Catholics and Protestants counted as Muslims are the Huis, Uighurs, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Gilgiz, Dong, Xiang's, Tajiks, Tatars, Salars and Baonans.

CULTURE

The joint efforts of various nationalities has created a great treasure house of culture for the Chinese mother land. During this process they helped in their mutual needs, learned from each other and pooled their knowledge. In the field of culture the minorities have made exceptional contributions. Zamaluding, a Hui of the Yuan dynasty made a calendar entitled the permanent calendar which was officially adopted at that time. In another case Haidaer and his Hui colleagues who worked with the astronomical section of the Yuan court for years pooled their efforts to translate into Chinese, the western Regions Astronomy, Longitude and Latitude as applied in the Muslim calendar and their calculation and other works from Arabic. A Muslim calendar section in the charge of Hui experts operated for several hundred years from Yuan times down to the early Qing period.

The minorities in the past used variety of calendars. But now-a-days alongside the Gregorian calendar which is widely used among China's nationalities most of the ethnic groups adopt the traditional Chinese (Han) calendar that is the Lunar calendar. Besides this some apply calendars of their own at the same time. For example, the Tibetans and the Dai use their own individual calendars and the Muslim nationalities the Islamic calendar, in connection with their religious festivals.

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36 Ibid., pp. 42-44.
The Yi, Bai and Sui had their own calendars in the past, and some other ethnic groups, who in the early 1950's still retained vestiges of the primitive commune system, like the Va, Lisu, Drung, Jino and Oroqen, were known to have followed an earlier kind of calendar which reflected the features of local phonological phenomena.

In the field of medicine the national minorities have their own herbal medicine and medicinal herbs. The Li doctors of herbal medicine are normally acquainted with curative properties of more than 100 herbal drugs and capable of treating by oral administration, external application, Ju Han, moxibustion etc. They are especially skilled in treating bites by poisonous snakes and mad dogs. Other practitioners of traditional medicine like Mongolians, Hani, Naxi, Dai, Miao, Dong and Mulam are adept in the treatment of bone fractures and injuries from falls, contusions and strains. Tibetan doctors in medicine apply the three diagnostic methods of wan, wen, qie as well as healing arts as acupuncture, moxibustion, massage, blood letting, cupping and surgical operation.

The drugs traditionally used by the Uighur as well known for using skin disease, intestine and stomach troubles and arthritis. The Yunnan Bai Yao enjoys popularity as a haemostatic at home and abroad. In the field of medical literature quite a few classic works are accredited to the ethnic minorities. They are; a complete work of medicine in four divisions, Zuggrul Compendium Of Material Medica, Tripitaka Sutra, A Complete Work Of Mongolian Medicine and A Formula On Palpation, A Book Of Effective Prescriptions, Pediments of Medicine and Rhymes on the Treatment of severe cases of Typhoid Fever, Treatise on proper diets and Muslim Hui's Muslim prescriptions. In the fields of Science, Technological and Historical Documents, the minority people writings include, The Treatise on River Control by Shansi which deals with water conservancy.

37 For details see Questions And Answers About China's National Minorities, n.9, pp.131-35.

mathematics, *Essence of Mathematics and Physics, A Quick Method for Determining Segment Areas* are noteworthy. In geography and cartography include, *Geography of Unified China Under the Yuan Dynasty, Travels to the West, Complete Atlas of the Empire* prepared by the Qianlong Royal Court.

The minority nationalities produced abundant historical documents, the peace pledge given by the Tang dynasty and Tibet is inscribed in both Han and Tibetan languages erected in front of the Jokhang Temple and is known as monument marking the Union between the Tang dynasty and Tibet. And the historical documents in the ancient Tibetan language, discovered in Dunhuang Grottoes, constitute important data for the study of Tibetan history. There are also Kagyur and Tangur, Buddhist sutras which are well known.

The books on Mongolian history include *A Secret History of the Mongols, The Heyday of the Mongols* and *The origins of the Mongols*. And among Manchu’s, there are old files in Manchu language, *Notes of an Imperial Inspector and Origins of Manchu Nationality*. Books like *The History of the Bai, The Yi in south-west China* and *Ancient History of Xishuangbanna*, enable to know about the south-west China’s minorities. And Dictionaries like *A Turkic Dictionary* and Xixia and Han combined—*A pearl in Hand* are well known. In the field of architecture, the art built in minority areas is the Potala Palace of Lhasa, Tibet with its harmonious combination of Tibetan and Han architectural styles and its colourful frescoes are really striking. In Yunnan, home of the Bai nationality, the three pagodas built in the Chongsheng monastery are known for their unique style. In Dong area of Guangxi the lofty Drum Tower and the ingenious Fengyu Bridge are outstanding. Besides, the Yuan dynasty palace project in Dadu is also striking.

As far as the Grotto Art and Murals are concerned Grottoes are carved in different faces in many places and were meant to be a sort of Buddhist temple. The best known among them are the Dunhuang Grottoes in Kansu province, the Yungang Grottoes in Shansi province, the Longmen Grottoes in Henan province and
the caves of *A Thousand Buddha's* in Sinkiang. They are the outcome of joint efforts of Han, Xianbei and other ethnic groups in the western regions. Placed in the western section of the Hexi corridor, Dunhuang, the *Mogao Grottoes* are well known for their finely executed statues and murals. The murals, besides depicting stories from Buddhist sutras and carrying Buddhist images, have themes on the temporal world portraying the life and work of the labouring people in various periods. In Sinkiang there are seventeen thousand Buddhist caves with a total of more than 960 grottoes, spread over the Tarim Basin, the Yanqi basin and the Turpan Depression. The murals of Zhuang nationality in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and stone carvings of the *Jianchuan Grottoes* in Yunnan province are highly placed in China's traditional art.

The handicrafts of minority nationalities have enjoyed popularity since times immemorial. During the Han dynasty, the articles made of the sterling Jade mined in Sinkiang’s Yutian were highly prized. The bronze drum which the various divisions of the Baiyue nationality in southern China began to cast early in the period of the kingdom of Wei was famed for its colourful designs and gave rise to 'bronze drum culture' in Chinese cultural history. *Brocades* made by the Zhuang, Dong and Dai, *Phrue* by the Tibetans, *Zongbu* by Tujia and Miao, *Poluobu* by the Dai and *Yaobandu* by the Yao are all reputed for their fine workmanship. Mention may also be made about the batiks produced by the Bouyei, Miao, Yao and Gelao, each has its own national colour and serves for ornamental purposes. *Carpets* and *tapestries* from Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet are well liked as artistic articles. In the south, the minority people produce a rich variety of bamboo and satin wares, such as the *Maonan bamboo hats* Bouyei broad rimmed hats. The *Dali knives* and Achang knives in Yunnan, as well as the *Bonan waist-knives* in Kansu is the north west are noted for their fine workmanship.

Efficient skills in music and dance is a common feature for the minority nationalities, the musical instruments introduced to the central plains by minorities from the western regions and north of the Great Wall run into dozens. Among those
still frequently used today are the di, the pipa, the koughou, the huqin, the yaogu, the jiegu and the tongho. Like that of music, the dances of each western region, have become a craze arousing great enthusiasm from spectators. Many of the minorities have two or three instruments which their members are reputed to play well and take a special fancy to. For example, the matouqin for the Mongolians, the rgan-cha for the Tibetans, the doughula for the Kazakhs, the Jiayeqin and Changgu for the Koreans, the dasanxian and yueqin for the Yi, the tonggu for the Zhuang, Dong and Bouyei, the Xiangjiaogu for the Dai, the Lusheng for the Miao and the Bajiaogu for the Manchu. In vocal music, the huaer is a favourite with the various ethnic groups in Kansu, Ningxia and Ch'inghai in the north west.

In the fields of literature and arts the minorities' contribution is well known. The epics are of two kinds, national epics and heroic epics. The national epics found in many of the minorities, for example, in the Naxi--The creation of the world, in the Yi--Leeteyi and Axidixianji, in the Lahu--Mupamipa, in the Yao--The Seven Temple Immortals, in Dai--Busang Gaiya Sanggai, in the Miao--The song of the world's creation and The song of the Pangu, in the Bouyei--A pair of Lovers create the population and in the Hani--A pair of lovers work to continue the Race.

And coming to the heroic epics they are the Biography of king Gesar by the Tibetans, Zhanggai and Gesaer by the Mongolians and Manass by the Kirghiz. And among the best known narrative poems by minorities are: The Song About Zhang Xiumei by the Miao, Gadameilin by the Mongolians, Qijiayenxi by the Tu, Ashma by the Yi, Ebing and Sangluo and Zhaoshutun by the Dai, Brother Mawu and Sister Gadou by the Hui, Huang Dai Chen by the Yugur, Rhymes on Escape from A Proposed marriage by the Lisu and Kutadolu Biliq a work by the Uighur. Besides the above literary works, others also requiring equal importance are: A Collection of Poems Dedicated to Yanmen by Sadule a Hui poet, The Biography of Yogi Milarepa a Tibetan work, The Twelve Mukams a Uighur work, A collection of Tshangs Dbyangs Rgyam-tsho's Love Song, a Tibetan work, A study of the Origin of the Manchu Nationality, and A Dream of Red Mansions of Manchu's.
There are traditional operas of the Tibetan, Bai, Zhuang, Bouyei, Tujia, Dong, Dai, Korean and other nationalities. In its own style each nationality has developed its present form on the basis of folk literature, music and dance of the relevant nationality, with themes usually derived from tales, historical stories and present day life. The Tibetan Opera, which is known to have been deeply influenced by religious faith is characterised mainly by singing and dance, while the Bai Opera, called chuichui qiang, presents a happy combination of dialogue, ballad, folk songs and dance.

The traditional sports of minorities are quite varied. They are in general practised during national festivals or on other festive occasions, together with other recreational folk activities. Archery is a traditional sport for the Mongolian, Tibetan, Hui, Xibe, Salar, and Oroqen nationalities. And among Mongolian Tatar, Yi be, Kazakh, Kirghiz and Yi nationalities wrestling is popular. Fighting is practised as a recreational item by the Miao, Yi, Dong and other ethnic minorities during festivals. And a traditional sport, combined with acrobatic feats, called dawazi (rope walking on high) is a favourite with the Uighurs. The spring board and swing are great favourite sports for Korean women, and Miao and Achang women are also fond of it. The Bai favour the Bawangbian (a style of exercise in which two players exchange whip lashes with rhythmic tempo). Other games popular among the minority people include feixiuqiu for the Zhuang, Taoma for the Ewenki and top spinning for the Yao.

As regards to the habits and customs, they vary greatly from one nationality to the other due to differences in living conditions, uneven economic development and the peculiarities in the historical development of various nationalities. There are differences even between the communities of the same

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39 For details see Questions And Answers About China's National Minorities, n.9, pp.135-38.

40 For details see Questions And Answers About China's National Minorities, n.9, pp.79-81.
nationality living in the non-contiguous areas. And with respect to diet, it is closely related to the economic life of the nationality concerned. But few people have taboo foods or drinks. Muslims strictly eschew pork as well as the meat of other animals slaughtered in a certain way. As a consequence of uneven social development various minorities have preserved vestiges of their outmoded marriage systems and follow a variety of matrimonial customs. And with respect to minorities’ funeral customs they are quite varied and in general related to their traditions and religious beliefs. Funeral customs are: Burial in the ground, cremation, burial in the fields, burial by heaven (leaving the dead-body to vultures), committing the body to the deep (the dead body is simply hurled into the river to be washed away), and burial in the pagoda.

The minorities have their own traditional festivals. Of all the nationalities, the Miao claim the largest number of festivals as many as forty a year of which the major ones are Miaojiang, (the Miao New Year’s Day) Jingquiaojie, (Respect the Bridge), Papojie, (Slope Climbing) Chixinjie, (New-Crop Tasting, held in honour of a legendary Miao hero by sharing a rice meal cooked from ripening grain) Lushengjie, (Reed Pipe) Dunyang, (Dragon-Boat Festival), Siyueba, (April the Eighth), and Cai huashan, (Touring the Flower Hill). And New year’s Day is the most important traditional festival for the Tibetans, The Torch Festival is common to the Yi, Bai, Va, Naxi, Lahu and Lisu nationalities. The Water Splashing is a traditional festival for the Dai to usher in the New Year by their own calendar. And during the third month by their calendar the Bai people in Dali hold the san yue jie (Third month Fair) at the foot of dancing mountains. The Sui observe duanjie, the Jingpo-munaojie, the Lahu-kuotanjie, the Jing-hajie and the Wangyuejie (Moon-

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41 Ibid., p. 43. also see Hinton, n. 25, p. 322.

42 For details of the festivals see Questions And Answers About China’s National Minorities, n.9, pp.81-106.

Watching Festival), for the Koreans. The three major festivals for the Hui, Uighur and eight other Muslim nationalities are *Bairam, Corban* and *Molid Nabawi*.

**PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA’S POLICY TOWARDS ITS NATIONAL MINORITIES**

Before we get into the People’s Republic of China’s policy towards its national minorities, it is all the more important to know why the national minorities are important for the government in Beijing. The Chinese Leviathan, with a population in excess of one billion, contains nearly every fourth of the Homo Sapiens of our planet. It is a unified multinational country with 56 nationalities in which a single ethnic group ‘Han,’ constitutes 93.3 per cent of the population. And the remaining 6.7 per cent constitutes national minorities. Though the minorities constitute a very little numerical strength with relatively less developed economy and culture, most of the ethnic minority groups spread over nearly 63.4 per cent of the countries’ total area.

Like everywhere, the nationalities question in China is basically a problem of integration and assimilation, the fact is that most of the minority populated areas are situated in frontier areas which are of strategic and military importance, such as border along with Soviet Union towards north, India and Vietnam towards south and east where China has had diplomatic and military skirmishes. Added to the above strategic importance of these areas, the national minority areas are very rich in materials such as coal and petroleum as well as ferrous and non ferrous metals and various other rare metals. It is also noteworthy to mention about the forest

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45 Lin Xing Win and Alatan, n. 3, p. 136.  
46 Autonomous Regions: Hefty Growth, n. 7, p. 34.  
47 Moseley, n. 6, p. 32.
lands and over 80 per cent of China's meat, milk and wool supplying animals are in the minority regions and their effective use could result in a marked improvement of the Chinese standard of living. The minority areas account for an estimated 40 per cent of the total national coal deposits as well as 52 per cent of the nation's total water resources.

Most minority areas are under-populated in comparison with the rest of China. Large portions of this area are inhospitable mountains or desert terrain not inhabited by Hans, thus is no doubt that many parts of their area are capable of absorbing emigrants from over-populated Han areas. Moreover, for the sake of national pride, the Chinese Communist Party intends to amalgamate the complete minority areas into one Union by putting down the separatist and secessionist tendencies of the minorities. This was apparent the way the Beijing government dealt with Mongols, Tibetans and Uighur Muslims in Sinkiang who had manifested separatist tendencies.

Following its establishment in 1949, the People's Republic of China abolished the centuries old system of national oppression, formulated a series of policies on nationalities and carried them out. These policies are equality of all nationalities, national unity, national, regional autonomy and common development and prosperity of all nationalities. Against this backdrop the Chinese government was confronted with problems both at home and abroad. In the domestic sphere, they inherited a legacy of antagonism created by years of bitter confrontation

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49 *Questions And Answers About China's National Minorities*, n.9 p.109.

50 Dreyer, n. 48. p. 4.


52 Moseley, n. 6. pp. 121-27.
between majority Han and minority nationalities and the irreparable damage done by the policy of assimilation and integration which had been implemented by the Nationalist rule.

According to communism, 'nations' are artificial units which came into being with the rise of capitalism and which are destined to disappear when capitalism is replaced by communism. According to this theory, when the proletariat seizes power throughout the world, then nations and nationalism will disappear.\(^5\) In practice, their problem has cropped up when the Chinese communist party came to power under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung. In order to overcome national animosities, Mao and his followers quoted at length the stages of socio-economic and political development. In areas inhabited by some thirty million of the total national minority population, the socio-economic structure is identical with or very similar to that of the Han regions of the country, while in the areas inhabited by other ten minority nationalities the situation is basically dissimilar or completely different as compared to the Han regions.\(^4\) Among this, ten minority nationalities Tibetans, Dai's and some other minority peoples still maintained not only the feudal system but the slave system, even more backward than feudalism survives among others. The system of primitive communes generally remained in a dozen or so national minorities.\(^5\) Minority nationalities under the socialist system are still underdeveloped both economically and culturally. This backwardness is invariably attributed to the oppression of the minorities by previous Chinese regimes.

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\(^5\) Dreyer, n. 48, p. 3.
THE EMERGENCE OF CHINA'S NATIONAL MINORITY POLICY

The Chinese government's relations with the minorities have never been entirely smooth and successful. In the past, various nationalities very often fought and committed aggression against each other, the Han nationality committed incursions against minority nationalities on more occasions and for a large period. Historically, the Han were also attacked by other nationalities on many occasions and ruled by them for a short period of time. However, in retrospect, Han nationality invaded other minorities on more occasions. As a result of the extremely widespread and cruel oppression of national minorities by pan Hanism, historically the national minorities tend to regard the big nationality with suspicion and to cherish narrow nationalism.

Ever since the time of the Qing dynasty, successive Chinese governments have strongly upheld their belief that Han culture and civilisation were pre-eminent. This notion of cultural superiority evolved over a long period of time. This began as a means of intellectuality compensating for the Han’s inability to maintain physical control over the non-Han people. It later evolved into a concept of a Chinese state not just defined by its territorial boundaries. Though the Han belief of their cultural superiority persisted, this argument did not carry much weight among the non-Han. There are instances in China’s history where the non-Han formed alliances which excluded the Han or even openly conspired against the latter. The cultural superiority of Han Chinese gained ground until Sun Yat Sen’s time. In the


beginning, Sun was of the view that eventual assimilation of the non-Hans into Han culture could be achieved through social intercourse and intermarriage. For this purpose, he planned to open up Mongolia, Tibet and Sinkiang by rail roads and fill them with Chinese colonists who would develop their territories.  

Failing to achieve the desired objectives with respect to eventual assimilation of non-Han people into the Han culture, he changed his posture during the later days. At the first National Congress of the Kuomintang in 1924, Sun Yat Sen asserted that “The nationalism of the Kuomintang has a two fold naming, the self-emancipation of the Chinese nation, and the equality of all national minorities in China. The Kuomintang can state with solemnity that it recognises the right of self-determination of all national minorities in China and it will organise a free and unified Chinese Republic”. Besides this, the manifesto of the Kuomintang’s first National Congress in the same year also upheld that “the government should help and quick the weak and small racial groups within its national boundaries towards self-determination and self-government”.

Soon after the birth of the republic, Sun Yat Sen asserted that in contrast to the situation in other countries the terms “state” and “nation” meant the same thing in China for there alone single state was developing from a single race. And for those who did not belong to that race, they should be kept within the state and be urged to merge themselves with that race. Although there are a little over ten million non-Han in China, their number is small when compared with the Han population... China is one nationality. He further stated that the name ‘Republic of

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60 Wilson, n. 57, p. 102.

61 Grunfeld, n. 58, p. 57.

62 Dreyer, n. 48, p. 17.

Five Nationalities' exists only because there exists a certain racial distinction which distorts the meaning of a single republic. Thus, we should facilitate for the demise of names of individual peoples inhabiting China that is the Manchu's Tibetan's Hui's and we must ratify the demands of all the races and unite them politically and culturally.\textsuperscript{64} Sun Yat Sen's contradictory pronouncements or national question did little to alleviate the ambiguity.

Sun Yat Sen favoured the 'dying out' of individual nationalities in order to unite them in a single whole, but he also called upon the government to help and guide the weak and small racial groups within China's boundaries towards self-determination and self-government.\textsuperscript{65} The official view of Kuomintang shifted to more traditional pattern after Chiang Kai-shek rose to power. He was of the view that the differentiation among China's five peoples is due to regional and religious factors, and not to race or blood.\textsuperscript{66} The theory of the 'Greater Han,' popularised by Change Kai-shek and the right wing elements of the ruling Kuomintang was the most notorious innovation of the Republican period. This philosophy holds that the five nationalities of China--Han, Tibetan, Mongol, Manchu and Tatar--come from the same racial stock and are separated from one another by artificial factors of language, religion, the accident of geographical distribution.\textsuperscript{67} Chiang and his followers meant to eradicate the divisive characteristics and reunite the greater Han race through forcible assimilation.


\textsuperscript{65} Dreyer, n. 48. pp. 16-17.


CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY'S POLICY TOWARDS MINORITY NATIONALITIES

The Communist Party of China have evolved a specific programme to deal with the national minorities in China. This programme was an adaptation of Marxist-Leninist theory on the national question, which was originally formulated by the Austrian Social-Democrats and then modified by Lenin and Stalin. The CCP was content to adopt the soviet theory during its pre-Maoist period. It was for the first time in July 1921 the national question was considered by the CCP. It was laid down that the party’s main task was to secure the social and national liberation of the peoples of China. Its position was clearly stated at its second congress in July 1922. It proposed that separate republics be formed for the Han, Mongol, Tibetan, and Turkic peoples of China, and reaffirmed at the sixth congress in September 1928 when it urged for:

The achievement of a genuine democratic republic by the liberation of Mongolia, Tibet and Sinkiang. The establishment of a Chinese federated republic by unification of China proper, Mongolia, Tibet and Sinkiang into a free federation.

The federal state structure was made even more explicit in the constitution of the Soviet Republic of China promulgated by the CCP in 1931.

It recognised the right of self-determination of the national minorities, their right to complete separation from China and to the formation of an independent state for each national minority, while Tibet, Sinkiang and even the provinces of Yunnan and kweichow were mentioned at Chinese communist meetings as candidates for independent statehood in the future.

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72 Ibid., p. 217.
Here it is interesting to note that there was no mention of assimilation, but the constitution even held out the possibility of a loose confederation or even no confederation at all. But this approach was discarded by Mao Tse-tung soon after the assumption of leadership of the Party following the Zunyi conference in 1935. Mao evolved a new line of thinking in his presidential report to the second national congress held at Ruijin in January 1934. The main thrust of Mao's argument was that the national minorities had been oppressed by their traditional ruling class and by the Kuomintang government, and in the case of Tibet, Sinkiang and Inner Mongolia, in particular, had succumbed to imperialism. Mao implied that the answer to the national minority problem was not independence from China but liberation from oppression. He was of the view that national question which was appropriate to Soviet context was not necessarily correct for China. In Maoist version, anti-imperialism rather than national self-determination became the corner stone of the communist party's nationality policy. For Lenin and Stalin the adherence of the Russian peoples to the Bolshevik cause was considered to be an important factor in the revolutionary struggle, whereas in China the seizure of power was exclusively a Han Chinese affair. Mao wanted to prevent the loss of national minority areas in the course of the revolution.

In his presidential report to the Second National Congress in January 1934 Mao proposed his line on national question. By December 1935 the line was being implemented. This report was an outline of what it called the national policy of Soviets which began to influence the Chinese communist policy towards the national minorities almost immediately. The basic premise of the report on national question was that the Chinese communists would cease to call for self-

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determination even for anti-imperialist rhetorical purposes. It considered autonomy sufficient. 76

The CCP outlined the Maoist policy in its declaration of December 20, 1935 to the Mongols of Inner Mongolia and on May 25, 1936 to the Muslims of northwest China. At the same juncture in the midst of the Long March Mao made an appeal to the people of Inner Mongolia to fight together with the communists to preserve the glorious of the epoch of Genghis Khan, prevent the extermination of their nation, embark on the path of national revival and obtain the freedom and independence. 77 The declaration of Chinese communist party of December 1935 pledged that non-Han peoples who co-operated with the Chinese communist party in resisting Japanese aggression and defeating Chiang Kai-shek would be accorded autonomous and equal status in the new China. 78 This implied national self-determination was to extend only to local affairs.

The reason behind dropping the idea of right to self-determination may have been due to the growing relaxation of Soviet Union’s designs on Sinkiang. Chang kon-Tow, then a high ranking figure in the CCP had stated that the long marchers were not informed by the Soviet Union of its foothold in Sinkiang, and it had been suggested that this might have been done deliberately so that the Chinese communist party would not decide to settle there. Another reason for dropping the right of self-determination was surely the establishment of Japanese-backed states in the so-called homelands of the Manchus must have shown the inadvisability of making it easier for an outside power to ally with a minority group in order to diminish the authority of the Chinese central government over what it considered its territory.

76 Norbu, n. 73, p. 335.


78 Moseley, n. 70, p. 5.
Thus, in the given background, according to the Party, any guarantee of the principle of national independence, including the right of secession, would only be an invitation to the imperialists to detach actual possessions of China, so one had to be for China or for imperialism.\(^7^9\) Considering this view Mao was of the opinion that the first duty of all nationalities in China was to unite against the foreign aggression. After 1936 there was no further mention of right to secession and also no mention of a forced confederation. Being the leader of the Party, Mao spoke to American journalist Edgar Snow in 1936 in which he made no mention of the possibility of minority secession. Mao said:

> When the peoples revolution has been victorious in China the outer Mongolian republic will become part of the Chinese federation at their own will. The Mohammedan and Tibetan peoples, likewise will form autonomous republic attached to the Chinese federation.\(^8^0\)

Later to the same journalist Mao said in 1970 that “China was in itself a United Nations,” with several of its minority nationalities, much larger in population and territory than some states in the United Nations.\(^9^1\)

The new policy guidelines of the party in 1940 were based on the premise that the best way to unite the national minorities against Japan was to practice the principle of national equality. It is only by fundamentally implementing the principle of national equality that the objectives of unity, mutual help and trust among the nationalities can be reached.\(^8^2\) In this connection Mao had pointed out that the unification of the country, unity of the people and unity of the nationalities were the fundamental guarantees for the success of its revolutionary cause.\(^8^3\) The communist

\(^7^9\) *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.


\(^8^2\) Mosley, n. o. p. 67.

party urged the government to enable the national minorities to manage their own affairs; to respect their religious beliefs, spoken and written languages and customs and habits, and to assist them in improving their economic conditions of life.  

Mao in his work "On Coalition Government" while dealing with "The National minority question he upheld Sun Yat sen's policy towards minorities as expressed in the first Kuomintang Congress adding that his own goal was to give minority nationalities in China a better treatment and grant them autonomous rights.  

Mao made the matter more clear by declaring:

The broad masses including the leading personalities who are connected with the masses, of all National Minorities must be assisted in the liberation and development of their governments, economics and cultures and in the establishment of their own military units to protect the rights of the masses. Their spoken and written languages customs and habits and religious beliefs must be respected. 

Mao upheld that minority populated areas could voluntarily attach themselves to Chinese central rule. 

Since the establishment of communist rule in Beijing the communist views have undergone a rapid shift. And replacing right to 'self determination by a vague and weaker concept of regional autonomy is a clear testimony to this fact. In fact it was a direct revision of the Marxist-Leninist teachings on the national question. In order to justify this nationalistic policy, the Chinese communist theoreticians claimed that according to Karl Marx

National consciousness was a manifestation of bourgeoisie society and nationalism and ethnicity were tools which the bourgeoisie utilised to mark the true cause of tension -- class difference -- and there by perpetuate its own rule. In a socialist state on the other hand, ethnic

84 Moseley, n. 6, pp. 113-120.
antagonisms should not become a problem because the adoption of a tolerant, non-repressive attitude towards all ethnic groups would have the workers of different nationalities to identify their interest in class terms; in other words, as a result of a common proletarian culture, ethnic differences like the state itself would simply wither out of existence. 87

The Chinese communist felt that with each nationality in the country having achieved liberation, with the system of nationalities of China having already entered the era of national equality, there was no need for any separate national liberation movement.

Besides, this as the system of nationalities oppression no longer existed, the aim of national liberation had already been achieved. In case it was said that people of certain nationalities still suffer from oppression and slavery and still have the task of liberation, that did not mean that the oppression of small and weak nationalities by large nationals, rather it had to do with the continuing existence of the system of oppression—the slave system and the feudal system within certain nationalities. 88

Quoting Stalin, the Chinese communists said that nationalism might be either progressive or reactionary, depending on the circumstances, and he implied that nationalism in Sinkiang before 1949 especially the soviet inspired revolt of 1944 was of the progressive variety. Since the liberation of 1949, however, nationalism had become reactionary. "At this juncture, any national movement which seeks separation from the Chinese People's Republic for independence will be reactionary, since objectively considered, it would undermine the interests of the various races and particularly the foremost majority of the races concerned, and this would work to the advantage of imperialism." 89 They also argued that the aim of Marxist-


88 Bowie and Fairbank, n. 83, p. 564.

89 Hinton, n. 25, pp. 323-324.
Leninists in insisting on the necessity of recognising the right of national self determination was that of opposing imperialism by seeking to make allies of oppressed nationalities in the socialist revolution of the international proletariat and it was clearly not their aim to advocate indiscriminately the separation of each nation nor to urge the establishment of a great member of small nation states.

The above analysis clearly exposed the policy shifts made by the Chinese communists. But this shifts were not without any influences from out-side China. In fact, soon after the establishment of People’s Republic of China, it had seen the outbreak of Korean war with the result of that it was diplomatically and economically isolated from the industrialised nations when China was in need of economic and scientific aid and technological know-how. In the given friendless state of affairs, her communist neighbour Soviet Union gave aid to China with certain restrictions. Moreover, the United States’ support for Kuomintang regime at Taiwan, the establishment of the US military bases along China’s periphery and American support to French colonialism in Indo-China all posed a direct threat to the newly established state. These threats contributed to the raise of ardent nationalism in the mainland China.

**CHINA’S POLICY ON NATIONAL MINORITIES SINCE 1949-66**

Now coming over to the post 1949 period, the communist party and the government leaders have attached due importance to the national interests and have personally handled issues concerning it. As for Mao’s rule, the policy on national question had seen a regular contradiction between local minority nationalism and the Han cadre chauvinism with Beijing coming down against one side over the other in an attempt to keep both the tendencies under control. The Chinese communists agreed with Lenin and Stalin that the right to secession applied only to colonial cases and that the principle of self-determination in socialist context meant only self government as autonomy⁹⁰. In fact, in this context Lenin’s essay on *The Socialist
Revolution and the Right of Nations' to Self-Determination might as well be considered as the communist manifesto of the twentieth century. The Chinese Marxists were known for their independence from the Soviet influence and for their Sinification of Marxism.

Though the Chinese Marxists agreed to the views of Lenin and Stalin with respect to right to secession and principle of self-determination, they differed on the question of self-government. The soviets adopted a federal framework and China opted for regional autonomy. Nevertheless, the Marxist had to tackle the national question but the difference in position of Soviet and Chinese was, while Lenin and Stalin thought that it might occasionally be necessary to recognise the right of self-determination even in a socialist context to oppose imperialism as well as in the longer term interests of socialism, but Mao felt otherwise. He argued that national minorities should be mobilised to oppose imperialism without the pledge of national self-determination. Self-government was enough to entice them. Ultimately, the soviets recognised the right to self-determination for their national minorities by enshrining the same in the Soviet Constitution. But the Chinese communist party position changed over a period time after 1934 and ever since Mao's ascendancy to power. And finally it dropped the right of its national minorities to self-determination.

Mao Tse-tung argued that "the unification of the country, unity of the people, and the unity of the nationalities are the fundamental guarantee of success in its revolutionary cause." To achieve this goal, the Chinese policy makers

93 Norbu, n. 73, p. 323.
94 Devendra Kaushik, Socialism In Central Asia (Bombay, 1976), pp. 3-28.
95 Bowie and Fairbank, n. 83, p. 564.
advocated for the amalgamation of all the nationalities within China by force, following the natural law that the stronger always absorbs the weaker. The policy makers declined to accept the existence of national minorities but viewed the nationalities as merely branches or clans of the people. Others opposed the use of force and felt that it would be a Han-chauvinistic attitude. It recognised the complete equality of nationalities of China irrespective of their numerical strength. They maintained that equality was the political basis for the amalgamation of the country into a single whole and the unity of the nationalities was also the basic principle of the party which had accepted it as the guideline while tackling nationalities' problem.

The People's Republic of China's policy towards her national minorities, as expressed in the Constitution, included the policies of national autonomy, training a large number of national minority cadres, enabling all nationalities to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, allowing national minorities to develop their own economies and culture and respecting their customs and ways.

**NATIONAL MINORITIES AND REGIONAL AUTONOMY**

Regional autonomy was an important political institution in China. The national minorities were offered a political substitute for national self-determination to solve the nationality question. Under the unified leadership of the state, regional autonomy was instituted and autonomous organs were set up and the power of self-government was exercised in areas where people of minority nationalities lived in compact communities. It represented the combination of the Marxist-Leninist universal general principle of regional autonomy to solve the nationality question in heterogeneous countries and of achieving the goal of establishing a democratic centralist country in the context of the conditions prevailing in China.97 According


97 Liu Xingwu and Alatan. n. 3. p. 141.
to the successive constitutions since 1947, the regional autonomy meant that in China any area where a minority nationality lived in a compact community or where a member of minority nationalities lived together could exercise regional autonomy and set up organs of self-government as long as it constituted an administrative unit—Autonomous Region, Autonomous Prefecture and Autonomous County.  

As early as 1 May 1947, the Chinese communist party established China’s first national autonomous area equivalent to a province in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. This followed after the founding of the policy on regional autonomy. And the meaning of autonomy remained ambiguous until the promulgation of a ‘General Programme for the Implementation of Regional Autonomy’ in 1952. Later, this marked the beginning of a full-scale institution of regional autonomy in the country with the result that the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region was established on 1 October 1955, followed by Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on 15 March 1958, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region on 25 October 1958 and Tibetan Autonomous Region on 9 September 1965.

The autonomous areas were of three levels: region (equal in status to a province), prefecture, and county (known as “banner” in Inner Mongolia). They can be classified into four types, firstly, an autonomous area set up with a single nationality as the main body, whose members live in compact communities, such as the Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Sinkiang Uighur, Guangxi Zhuang and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Regions. Secondly, an autonomous area set up with two nationalities as the main bodies, whose members live in compact communities, such as the Xiangxi Tujia Miao Autonomous prefecture in Hunan province and the Qiandongnan Miao-Dong Autonomous prefecture in Guizhou.

99 Dreyer. n. 48. p. 94.
province. Thirdly, autonomous area are set up jointly by a number of nationalities whose members live in compact communities, such as Guangxi’s Longsheng multinational autonomous county jointly set up by the Dong, Zhuang, Miao and Yao nationalities, whose members live in compact communities, and the Longlin multinational autonomous county jointly set up by the Zhuang, Maio, Yao, Yi and Gelao nationalities, whose members live in compact communities.

There are cases in which a given nationality, apart from establishing an autonomous area in its main compactly inhabited area, had set up more areas in places where its members lived in compact communities. For example, the Tibetans in addition to the Tibetan Autonomous Region, have set up the Aba and Ganze autonomous prefectures in Szechwan province, the Gannan Autonomous Prefecture in Kansu province, and the Yushu, Nainan, Huangnan, Haibe and Golog autonomous prefectures in Ch’inghai province.

Table IV: Autonomous Areas and Dates of Establishment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Administrative division and Location</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of establishment</th>
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<td>1 May 1947</td>
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<td>Yanbian Korean Aut. Pref</td>
<td>Sept. 1952</td>
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<td>Kansu Province</td>
<td>Gannan Tibetan Aut. Pref.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ningxia Hui Aut. Pref.</td>
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<td>Ch’inghai Province</td>
<td>Yushu Tibetan Aut. Pref.</td>
<td>25 Dec. 1951</td>
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<td>Hainan Tibetan Aut. Pref.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Huangnan Tibetan Aut.</td>
<td>22 Dec. 1953</td>
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101 Ibid. n.11,p.1280-81; and also see Questions And Answers About China’s National Minorities, n.9, pp.186-93.
<table>
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<td>Ewenki Aut. Banner</td>
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<td>Dorbod Mongolian Aut. County</td>
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<td>Qian Gorlos Mongolian Aut. County</td>
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The institution of regional autonomy was justified by the People's Republic as a means of solving the nationalities problem in the country. The communists asserted that this institution embodied the state's guarantee of the right of minority nationalities to administer their own affairs, and its adherence to the principle of equality, unity and common prosperity of all nationalities. The policy was to develop among them a Socialist relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance and consolidating the unification of the country and promoting socialist construction in the national autonomous areas and the rest of the country.

The communists said that the concept of regional autonomy was based on the principle of Marxism and Leninism. With due regard for the historical background and the present situation of the various nationalities of China, they cited Lenin's comment on the question of nationalities:

Marxism absolutely demands that in Analysing any situation, we must bring it up with a certain historical scope, and then extend it to the country concerned and in this connection, its concrete characteristics and the characteristics of the other countries is that historical period must be taken into full account .... Since the countries are different from one another in the speed of development and in the composition and distribution of this nationalities, failure to pay due attention to those historical and concrete
conditions will prevent the formulation of nationality principle of the Marxist order.102

The Chinese communists had set forth the status of national minorities in the common programme of the Chinese peoples’ political consultative conference in 1949. They discussed about the general programme for the implementation of Regional Autonomy for Nationalities and the National Minority Policy which made it explicit by saying that:

Each national autonomous region is an integral part of territory of the People’s Republic of China. The autonomous region is a local government led by the peoples government of the next higher level, under the united leadership of the Central Peoples government. The local government can draw up special regulations for the region, but these shall be submitted for approval to the peoples government of the two higher lives.103

The above policy statement makes it clear that there are certain limitations to the regional autonomy. In fact, it says that the autonomous regions must exist within the unity of the country and, more importantly, under the guidance of the communist party and central government and at the same time it must also be in tune with socialism.

The communist leaders in Beijing desired that the minorities should rule themselves as well as follow the path of communism. In case if both of the objectives become irreconcilable, then the second must naturally take priority104

The autonomy in real sense of the term meant that once they have trained minority cadres and on their way to socialist road, they would be free from direct Han participation in the organs of administration, also by implication, they are allowed more time and latitude than the Chinese people themselves in taking their first

102 Bowie and Fairbank. n. 83. p. 564.
103 Grunfeld. n. 58. p. 58.
104 Bowie and Fairbank. n.83. p. 567.
painful steps towards socialism. The importance attached to the ethnic work was enshrined in the Constitution which states that:

All nationalities in the People’s Republic of China are equal. The state protects the lawful rights and interests of the minority nationalities and upholds and develops the relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all China’s nationalities. Discrimination against the oppression of any nationality are prohibited, any acts that underlie the unity of the nationalities or instigate their secession are prohibited.\textsuperscript{105}

Regional autonomy was introduced so as to ensure that the autonomous areas, under the unified leadership of the state, enjoyed completely the rights of self-government with regard to politics, economy and culture. Under this principle, the organs of self-government, guided by state plans, were to run local economic construction independently, such as in the establishment and management of local factories, mines and other enterprises. Moreover, they were to have the power to implement state laws and policies flexibly, in accordance with actual local conditions.\textsuperscript{106} Besides, it was proposed that these organs of self-government would work out the guidelines, policies and plans for their economic development. They were also to have autonomy in administering the finances of their areas. All revenues, accruing to the autonomous areas concept, under the financial system of the state, shall be managed and used by the organs of self-government of their respective areas on their own.\textsuperscript{107}

The organs of self-government were entitled to enact autonomous regulations and specific regulations by referring to the national characteristics of the locality concerned. The aim was to translate their autonomous rights and obligations into concrete terms, integrate them with concrete conditions and make it easier to implement the relevant stipulations in the Constitution and the Law on

\textsuperscript{105} Questions and Answers about China’s National Minorities, n.9, p. 17.


Regional Autonomy for Minority Nationalities. In cases when decisions, decrees or instructions from higher levels were found unsuitable to local conditions, the organs of self-government might either subject the same to the approval of the higher levels, carry them out in a flexible manner or stop implementing them altogether. They have the authority to adopt special policies and flexible measures, so long as they do not go against the Constitution and law to speed up the economic and cultural development of their areas.

When the above legal stipulation is analysed it becomes clear that autonomy was not independence by any definition. On the contrary, it allowed the minority nationalities to make their own laws and regulations appropriate to conditions in their own areas. In this connection there were certain limitations because the legislation's passed by local autonomous bodies had be submitted to the National Peoples Congress for approval before going into effect.108 Besides this, another restriction on autonomy was the role of the party which, rather than any other state organ, held maximum share.

The communist victory over the Kuomintang in 1949 made the party policy makers to turn their thoughts towards post-revolutionary planning. In so far as this was concerned, in minority areas planning was conditioned by a number of factors—the most important among them are: adopting Soviet policy to the Chinese milieu which remained within the bounds of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy, differentiating party policy from that of Kuomintang, knowing about their position in the minority areas and in their inadequacy in knowledge to know the conditions in many minority areas.109 In fact, during 1949-1955 the regime's minority policy was characterised by gradual and pluralistic approach and their first test in nationality affairs was to

109 Dreyer. n. 48. p. 93.
convince the minorities that the communists were Han of different sort and not greedy land thieves, but the bearers of freedom and equality for all.\textsuperscript{110}

In the beginning, due to different levels of development of individual nationalities, the party failed to develop a comprehensive policy. For instance, the scattered Yi communities in the greater and lesser Liangshan mountains on the Szechwan and Yunnan border practised slavery, and the Tibetans had developed theocracy and it was under the regime marked by the merging of clerical and secular rule, the local regime was composed of hierarchic living Buddha's, grand Lamas and high aristocrats; besides this it had a written language and extensive literature and a distinct culture.\textsuperscript{111} The communist leaders, unaware of the conditions in minority areas and uncertain of their own position there, moved to integrate this areas into the Chinese state. They paid attention to local circumstances and needful not to repeat the mistakes committed by Kuomintang. It was a time of patient experimentation, combining recognition of the special characteristics of the minority people with efforts to build up national cadres.\textsuperscript{112}

The policy makers' approach differed from one nationality to another. Where a minority had indigenous communist leaders and a level of social and economic development approaching that of the dominant Han Chinese, there was relatively less compromise with minority traditions and culture and greater emphasis on early social reforms. And at the same time, when similar conditions were not present they employed a greater degree of tolerance. In the areas where the advanced minorities lived, land reforms were carried out at approximately at the same time as in the Han areas.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid. pp. 98-104.


\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., pp. 109-13.
By employing the same approach in other minority areas the early communist approach was generally characterised by compromise. All the minorities have the freedom to preserve or reform their own habits and customs. In accordance with this principle the government had formulated some appropriate policies and regulations. An early outstanding instance is the decision on Ensuring People of the All National Minorities Living in Scattered Groups the Rights of Equality issued by the Central government in 1952. It stipulated that the minority people had the right to preserve, as far as possible, their own life styles, religious beliefs, and habits and customs. In each matter, the decision asserted that the minority people should be respected and shown consideration, and nobody should interfere with them.

The above compromising approach of the early communists becomes amply clear when the case of Hui's is examined. They were not only allowed to continue the practising of their religion (Islam), but a number of prayer leaders were absorbed into the governing bodies at various levels. Besides this, while considering the conventional practice of abstaining from eating pork followed by Muslims (the Hui Uighur and eight other ethnic groups), the government at various levels made it a rule to supply members of such nationalities with beef and mutton, instead. In cities and towns, Muslim restaurants catered to the needs of the Muslim residents, while factory and office canteens supplied Muslim food during the Bairam festival of Hui Uighur. Other Islamic nationalities' holidays were officially granted for the people to hold celebrations. No butchery tax was exacted on cattle slaughter intended for Hui consumption.\(^{113}\)

A similarly relaxed policy was evident in the western frontier province of Sinkiang, where the communists were anxious to avoid giving way for a possible separatist movement among the Uighur minority.\(^{114}\) The policy towards minorities

\(^{113}\) Survey of China Mainland Press (hereafter SCMIP). (Hong Kong). no.129. p.11.

\(^{114}\) MacFarquhar. n. 85. p. 18.
in the south west as well as in Tibet, following the Chinese military take over in 1950, was also tolerant. During 1949-1955, Beijing rationalised its concessions to the minority nationalities by officially declaring that social stratification among the minorities had not progressed to the extent where the class struggle was necessary. Later, a system of autonomous areas ranging from the equivalent of a province down to that of a township was instituted and in these areas minor concessions were made to minority languages and cultural forms.

With respect to minority languages, the minorities were given the freedom to use, reform and develop their own languages. Research centres and other organisations were set up in various parts of the minority areas to conduct research and investigation into the minority languages. These minority language departments or courses were opened at the Central Institute of Nationalities in Beijing and at similar institutes in other major cities, as well as at institutions of higher learning. Learned societies, devoted to minority language research, were established. It was stated that instruction should be conducted either in Chinese language text or those texts customarily used by the nationality concerned. In 1956 the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the State Nationalities Affairs Commission jointly organised seven teams of more than 700 members for the investigation of minority languages. These work teams, penetrating to various provinces and autonomous regions, carried out general survey of more than 40 minority languages being used there. They collected linguistic data and presented their views on the classification of the bulk of the minority languages. Besides this, they made a study of the sound system, grammatical structure, vocabulary and script of all the languages investigated.

The government decided to help the minorities to improve their scripts, or if they did not have one, to devise scripts for them. Entrusted with this task.

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115 Current Background (Hong Kong), no. 152, pp. 10-15.
116 SCMP, no. 194, p. 20.
linguists helped Dai in Yunnan, the Yi in Liangshan mountains of Szechwan, the Jingpo and Lahu in Yunnan and the Uighur and Kazakhs in Sinkiang to improve their respective scripts. The teams worked out fourteen phonetic schemes for language annotation based on the Latin alphabet for ten nationalities viz. Zhuang, Bouyei, Miao, Li, Naxi, Hani, Lisu, Va, Dong and Yi, including four for Miao dialects and two for Naxi dialects.

The minority languages provision in the Constitution enabled the organs of self-government of national autonomous areas to employ the spoken and written language commonly used by the nationalities in their locality. Added to this, the autonomous prefecture or county within an autonomous region, while using the language in common use throughout the region, may employ its own language simultaneously. For example, the Ili Kazakh autonomous prefecture of Sinkiang Uighur autonomous region, the Kazakh, Uighur and Han languages are used simultaneously but with Kazakh as the chief instruments. For broadcasting purposes, the Central Peoples station offered programmes in the five minority languages of the Mongolians, Tibetans, Uighur, Kazakhs and Koreans in addition to Han. Some local stations also broadcast minority languages commonly used in their localities. For example, the Yunnan broadcasting station would send out programmes in Dai and Jingpo as well as in Han.

With respect to publishing, the Central organisation began translating Han language books into minority languages and minority language books into the Han language. Likewise, the same kind of organisations were set up at provincial, and local levels of various autonomous regions and prefectures to translate or publish books, newspapers or magazines in minority languages.

The legislation on Regional Autonomy for Minority Nationalities provided that schools enrolling chiefly minority nationality students were allowed to use minority language text-books and also teach in such languages in primary schools, senior classes and middle schools. Schools in the minority areas included the Han
language in their curricula. Here, certainly, the objective was to teach everyone to read and write Chinese eventually, but to minimise the possibility of conflict with those minorities who had a well developed language and literature in which they took pride. Thus, in Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang Uighur autonomous regions and Yanbian Korean autonomous prefecture, schools enrolling chiefly Mongolian, Uighur and Korean students respectively in primary, junior and senior middle schools used text books written in the respective languages and taught in them as well.

The Beijing government encouraged the Han Cadres working in minority areas to learn the minority languages in common use, and conversely, the minority cadres to learn the Han language to enable them to do a better job. Besides, the law on Regional Autonomy for Minority Nationalities enabled the citizens of all minorities to enjoy the right to use the language of their own nationality in legal proceedings. Those who did not know the language in common use in the local area were provided with interpreters.

Besides the educational aspect the cultural aspects were not neglected. Mobile teams were set up to organise culture clubs in minority areas. These clubs used impressive methods and concentrated on bringing the revolution themes. Picture books, lantern slides, plays, films, storytellers, balladeers and exhibitions on revolutionary themes were included. Dubbing tales and ballads into local languages enabled the masses to understand them. The mobile teams visited minority areas on festive occasions. Performers taught dance in the traditional north China Yang-Ko and playing drums and would in turn ask to be instructed in the nationality’s dances and music.

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117 Dreyer, n. 48, p. 117.
118 Ibid.
119 Quoted from Dreyer, n.48, p. 118.
120 SCMP, no. 258, p. 16.
To preserve and develop minority cultures, a Central Nationalities Song and Dance Group was founded in 1952. The Group consisted of 200 performing members and was expected to tour within China and in foreign countries. It was also asked to collect and collate minorities music and dance forms. According to the Central directives the use of various derogatory epithets for nationalities was banned. In general minorities were to be known by the name they called themselves with, rather than the name by which the Han had known them. The term assimilation used by Kuomintang had become a taboo. The party propaganda emphasised that their objective was not assimilation but amalgamation of all nationalities. Further, as a protector of minorities' culture the party also arranged a large celebration in honour of the seven hundred and twenty seventh death anniversary of Genghis Khan. As a part of the festivities the Mongol leader's bones were reinterred. On this occasion Chairman Mao urged his fellow Mongols to unite closely with the rest of the Chinese people so as to "construct together our great country." The Minorities were also exempted from the provisions of the marriage law, being unaffected by the raised minimum marriageable age and its provisions concerning concubinage, the frugality of wedding ceremonies and divorce. Since the party projected an image of protector of minority culture and languages, the ministers were made to vow the same. After examining the Chinese communist party's policies towards minorities it becomes amply clear that this compromise arrangement was intended to be the first stage in an unforced growing togetherness of nationalities.

The Chinese communist party accepted the fact that the major reason for the difficulties in the minority areas was the problem of "Han Chauvinism" which was manifest in the superior attitude of Han cadres towards the minorities and a

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121 Quoted from Dreyer, n. 48, p. 119.
122 Ibid.
123 MacFarquhar, n. 85, p. 19.
tendency towards 'commandism.'\textsuperscript{124} By looking at growing Han Chauvinistic attitudes among the Han, the Chinese communist party called on the press to publish more articles based on specific facts to criticise Han Chauvinism openly and educate the party members and the people. The Beijing government warned cadres time and again to avoid arrogant attitude and great Han Chauvinism. The cadres were instructed to modify policies in recognition of the special characteristics of the local populace, laying stress on their languages and social customs.\textsuperscript{125}

The Deputy Director of the United Front work Department of the Chinese Communist Party, Zhang Zhiyi, opined, "If we compare the tendency towards local nationalism with the tendency towards big Han Chauvinism, it becomes evident that it is the existence of the later that remains the most dangerous at the present times."\textsuperscript{126} On the basis of this, the Chinese communist party formulated a two pronged policy to create a united front with the local ethnic elite’s and initiate reforms through them, while at the same time trying to convince the minority peasantry that support for the Chinese communist party was in their interest.\textsuperscript{127} With a very cautious and slow approach, land reforms and other social changes were introduced in minority areas. In Tibet even the most minimal reforms were postponed in 1956 because of international opposition, but were finally carried out only after an unsuccessful revolt in Lhasa in March 1959, during which time a majority of the Tibetan ruling class fled to India.

The Beijing government’s venture to attack Han Chauvinism with the help of the press resulted in denunciations of Han Chauvinism and local nationalism. The party constitution, adopted by the Eighth Chinese communist party congress in 1956, addressed the problem of relations among nationalities as “The party opposes

\textsuperscript{124} Grunfeld, n. 58, pp. 61-62.

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., p. 61.

\textsuperscript{126} Moseley, n. 6, p. 153.

\textsuperscript{127} Grunfeld, n. 58, p. 62.
all tendencies to great nation Chauvinism and local nationalism. Both of which hamper the unity of nationalities. Special attention must be paid to the prevention and correction of tendencies of great Hanism on the part of party members and government workers of Han nationality. This shift in the policy happened to coincide with the aftermath of the Hundred Flowers campaign of 1956 when the Chinese were encouraged to speak their minds concerning criticisms they may have had about the Chinese communist party and government. Mao's presumption in launching this campaign was to learn about party and government mistakes and correct them in order to unify and strengthen all Chinese under the socialist state.

The minority leaders and intellectuals were asked to speak their views frankly. The results surprised the Chinese communist party leadership which that considered its policies towards the ethnic minority groups were imbued with tolerance and accommodation. It was officially stated that many erroneous views had been advanced. It was these views that led to the virtual abandonment of the campaign against great Han Chauvinism in favour of an all-out drive against local nationalism. Some had demanded autonomous republic, some even independence, "we want independence even if it means we have to forgo socialism." The same was the case with Sinkiang whose people advocated an independent republic called Uighuristan. The people of Sinkiang asked the Chinese to leave their land and go home. In the case of Kazakhs they wished to unite with their fellow Kazakhs across the Sino-Soviet border, while the Hui wished to set up an Islamic state. The minorities also demanded all Han's to leave their areas, for it was implicit in the

130 MacFarquhar. n. 85. p. 20.
131 ibid.
132 ibid.
party's promises to nationalise minority areas and to allow minorities to be masters in their own houses. Some even advanced the idea that unitary state be replaced by a federal system, others asked for larger administrative areas and more positions for minorities there in with larger control over their own finances. A common complaint was that minority areas were being exploited by the Hans. Besides this the minority cadres felt that Han cadres tended to be arrogant and overbearing. They were unwilling to learn minorities' languages, both to observe local etiquette when it did not suit their convenience, and in general exuded an air of what the party had called great Han Chauvinism.

With the result of the above opposition expressed by the minorities the party made of efforts to rectify certain minority grievances. The main effect of this revelations seems to have been to convene the party leaders that their policy approach of gradualism and tolerance were not achieving the results that the regime had hoped for with no delay the rectification and anti-rightist campaigns in minority areas concentrated on correcting tendencies towards local nationalism. Following the decisions of the party the mass media denounced local nationalism and righteous indignation at the ingratitude of a small group of minorities malcontents and those who had been misled by them. Local nationalism was equated with anti-socialism, whether or not the local nationalist was actually against social reform. The party secretary general Deng Xiaoping in his report on the rectification campaign stressed that criticism of local nationalist tendencies must not be made too hastily and should have the support of the majority of party personnel and non party activists of minority nationalities.

133 Dreyer. n. 48. p. 150.
134 Ibid.
135 Dreyer. n. 48. p. 152.
136 Current Background. no. 477. p. 43.
The rectification and anti-rightist campaigns in minority areas concentrated on correcting tendencies towards local nationalism. Some leaders of a number of minorities were removed from office as they were sacrificing the interest of their own peoples to advance their own selfish interests. While it cannot be supposed that these campaigns were greeted with joy by the 'broad masses' at whom they were directed. They apparently succeeded at least to the extent of driving criticism underground. When Han intellectuals were attacked in China proper, cadres working among the minorities responded by carrying out their own campaign as part of the nation-wide effort. Since minority intellectuals were few in number, the campaign was translated into attacks against 'local nationalism' which was condemned as being rightist.

During the rectification campaign anti-Communist activities grew in Tibet and spread from Eastern Tibet into the central region and Lhasa. In Yunnan some Dai people fled to Hong Kong while others attempted to create an 'Emperor of Yunnan for the Yunnanese.' In Sinkiang there were numerous uprisings. The campaign against great Han Chauvinism was abandoned due to the opinions expressed by the minorities during the Hundred Flowers movement. And there was an all-out drive against local nationalism.

The above shift in the views of Beijing government was hinted at during the nationalities work conference in Qing dao, in July and August 1957. In September, Deng Xiaoping told a meeting of the Eighth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, "It was now similarly necessary to emphasise opposition to local nationalism among officials of minority nationalities." Explaining the situation,

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138 Ibid.

139 Ibid., p. 63.

140 Ibid., p. 62.
the Vice-Chairman of the Nationalities Affairs Commission of the National Peoples Congress, Wang Feng, said, "For several years the party among the Chinese people tendencies of Chinese Chauvinism still exist today even to a great extent. But now, local nationalism has become so conspicuous among many minorities, or tendency against which we must be vigilant. According to Wang, local nationalists are bourgeoisie rightists wearing nationalist overcoat. They are reactionaries who oppose socialism and the communist party leadership. The contradictions between them and ourselves are contradictions between the enemy and ourselves." The government was doubtful about the wisdom of their conciliatory policies they hitherto pursued, but decided to take risk and decided not to make any basic change in the policy of attempting to win over the minorities.

GREAT LEAP FORWARD AND THE CHINA'S NATIONAL MINORITIES

The minorities' desire to maintain separate identities was short lived. Moderate policies of national integration came under sharp attack from radical factions of the Chinese communist party during the rectification campaign as a result of the set backs of the Hundred Flowers Campaign. Many party leaders were convinced that gradualism and tolerance were not achieving the desired results. This dissatisfaction fed into a general mood of impatience with China's progress towards her communist goals and finally culminated in the sweeping reforms of the Great Leap Forward.

The plan according to the Great Leap Forward was to increase production, simplify administration, eliminate bureaucratism and achieve pure communism. This kind of ambitious program required unity, diversity being the antithesis of unity, ethnic diversity came to be regarded as a hindrance to the achievement of the Great Leap Forward's goals. Thus, with its slogan--more, better, faster and cheaper--

141 Wang Feng, "On Rectification Campaign" Xinhua, 28 February 1958, p. 6, quoted from Grunfeld, n. 58, p. 62.

142 Dreyer, n. 48, p. 159.
the Great Leap aimed at reducing differences among peoples as quickly as possible. It brought together groups with widely differing customs, languages, and levels of technology into large communes. Peoples of widely differing stages of development and widely differing diets were dumped together on communes and served one menu in communal mess halls.  

In their zeal to increase production religion was attacked as it was taking time away from constructive work. Local customs such as sacrifices to god of the harvest were eliminated by persuasion because they were economically wasteful. Numerous festival days were abolished in the name of increasing production. A thousand year-old custom of Tai women not working in the fields was reportedly "smashed." Besides this, the Lamas were forced to work and temples turned into store houses. A drive to encourage inter-marriage, of which the Hui had been the chief opponents, was begun.

At the same time the idea of class struggle was introduced in an extreme form there by endangering the position of the traditional elite who had been co-opted into the Chinese People’s Republic’s organisation structure and who had profited by the party’s decision that class structure in minority areas was not well developed. The local leaders and priests were denounced for crimes against the people. As in Han areas the past attitude of reverence towards folk heroes and famous people of the past was now declared reactionary and counter-revolutionary.

Even aspects like entertainment were not left untouched. Minorities’ song and dance troupes began to sing revolutionary songs in the Han language and to adopt Han dance forms it was asserted that art forms of a nationality, like other

143 Dreyer. n. 137. p.99.
144 MacFarquhar. n. 85. p. 20.
nationality forms, were not permanent. They must develop and change according to a nationalities own development, it was argued. And in the tide of neighbourliness brought about by Great Leap Forward, each nationality would unavoidably absorb the progressive and good things from the more advanced nationality. This definitely must have received favourable treatment from Beijing Government.

Emphasis was laid on class struggle so as to facilitate the erection of communes in minority areas. Rural communes were established in most minority areas as well as in Han areas. The communist leaders who had denounced Han Chauvinism now started claiming that Han were more advanced in all fields. The government began to encourage small-scale migration of the Han into some minority areas, specifically to Inner Mongolia and Sinkiang. The number of Han cadres of the local Chinese communist party organisations grew in proportion to that minority’s members.

The minority intellectuals were charged with slandering Chinese communist party policies, putting their religious interests over that of the state’s, and of generally being nationality chauvinists. Chinese leaders have felt that the final solution lay in assimilation. These official opinions of the Chinese Communist Party made the cadres in minority areas to further disregard local cultural traits in their rush to conform with official policies.

The results of the above policy shift were disastrous. Hence many aspects of the Great Leap Forward which the minorities had found most objectionable were abrogated. It was decided that mere ‘mechanical application of the methods used in other parts of China, neglect of nationalities’ special characteristics, and neglect of historical nationality barriers would all lead to disputes among the nationalities and that exclusive emphasis on class struggle was to cease. It was felt that minority


147 *Peoples Daily* (Beijing), 14 June 1959.
customs were not to be reformed except by the minorities themselves, and the upper strata of the minority nationalities were promised a bright future. The reorganisation of communes in 1959 permitted the segregation of ethnic groups which had been merged together, such as Szechwan and Yunnan, and certain other communes were disbanded completely.

The shortages in the scales of economic and social disruption unleashed by the Great Leap were more or less same in both minority ethnic groups' areas and Han areas of China. The production teams, not the commune, became the accounting unit, mess hall menus were diversified to meet ethnic food restrictions and preferences and some unsuccessful Great Leap-policies were quietly discarded. When we analyse the above fact there is a salient difference. In the minority areas Great Leap policies and their consequences were perceived as having been imposed by a non-indigenous group bent on assimilation.

The fear of drastic reforms had caused the revolt in Tibet and the disturbances in Sinkiang were the direct result of Great Leap Forward's pressure on minorities to adopt radically new institutions and social patterns. Militant opposition to the reforms occurred in several areas in 1958 and 1959 but this resistance was apparently not well co-ordinated and was put down without much difficulty. The Tibetans who are said to be the most nationalistic of all the non-Chinese races have shown their opposition. Though the revolt was an accident and active participation constituted a minority of the population, the Beijing leaders put it down within no time. This resulted in the flight of thousands of persons including the Dalai Lama himself out of China.

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The onset of Beijing government control over Tibet led to the introduction of democratic reforms, a preparatory committee was established with a view to making Tibet an autonomous region of the People's Republic of China. Tibet officially became an autonomous region in September 1965. The end result of the revolt was to integrate Tibet with China. A bulk of the estimated 60,000 Tibetan refugees are now relocated in northern India and Nepal, ideally situated to cause trouble in China.\textsuperscript{151} The outbreak of the revolt in Tibet has given an immense blow to Chinese prestige in Asia.\textsuperscript{152}

With respect to opposition in Sinkiang, the people of Sinkiang expressed their displeasure to the reforms of Beijing government and found sympathy from Soviet Union, when its officials openly declared their contempt for the Great Leap Forward. The economic difficulties occasioned due to Great Leap made the Uighurs and Kazakhs to migrate to Soviet Union with the help of the later. Despite Chinese efforts to stop the migration, an estimated 70,000 refugees had crossed into Kazakhstan in Soviet Union,\textsuperscript{153} to live with their ethnic relatives.\textsuperscript{154} The Soviet displeasure towards Chinese Great Leap Forward resulted in deterioration in the relations between both the countries. This became further evident, when in 1959, the Soviet Union ceased to aid China in material and technical help and decided to cause agitation among minorities in Sinkiang with the hope of creating difficulties in China.\textsuperscript{155}

\textsuperscript{151} Dreyer, n. 48, p. 169.

\textsuperscript{152} MacFarquhar, n. 85, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{153} SCMP, no. 2018, pp. 16-18.


Commenting on this issue, in December 1964, at the First session of the Third National Peoples Congress, Chou En-lai said, "Under the instigation and direction of external forces, a group of the most reactionary protagonist against of local nationalism rebellion in Ili Kazakh Autonomous Chou, and incited and enabled the flight to foreign territory of a large number of people near the frontier and this subversive and traitorous activities had been resolutely crushed by the people of all nationalities." 156

The flight of Dalai Lama, the opposition by the people of Sinkiang, uprising in Yi and Hui areas have all together contributed to a major turning point in the nationality policy, for soon the gradualist policies were abandoned. Since then a dualism between liberalism and radicalism has characterised the development of Chinese nationality policy. But the split within the party elite over policy in the aftermath of the Great Leap did not become public knowledge until the onset of the Cultural Revolution. 157

In a way the Great Leap slowed down the process of integration. Some of the minority customs were effectively destroyed and never resuscitated. And after the Great Leap it became more possible to speak of a policy towards minorities rather than a broad goal--that is, integration through the gradual introduction of socialism with very different manifestations in policy for different areas. A wide variety of economic arrangements used by minorities had been replaced by communes. Many goals of the Great Leap policies with regard to them had to be undone. But the minority areas never fully returned to their pre-leap situation. 158

Since the aftermath of Great Leap the goal of national integration came to take on a more explicit and narrow definition. Economic debacles and inclement

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156 SCMP. no. 3370, p. 12.
157 Dreyer, n.87, p. 53.
158 Dreyer, n. 48, p.717.
weather during the period of the Great Leap added to the tensions throughout the nation. It led to struggles among the Chinese leadership over the best way to solve the problems. The main objective of the party now was to reconnect the links between itself and the minority people. This was done by loosening centralised economic controls and by disbanding communes in many areas.

Besides the above, minorities' special characteristics were again stressed as more minority cadres were trained and an emphasis was put on local languages. The policy stressed that solution to the minority problem would be found only after a long period of time. The Chinese Communist Party also reversed itself and acknowledged that there is a natural commonality of interest among the members of a given national minority without reference to class. The new policies were meant to walk a middle ground between those of 1949-1950-dubbed 'right deviations' and post-1950 dubbed ‘left deviations.’

The objective to integrate minority people with China proper did lead to some unifying actions like construction of roads, railways and telecommunications which began to interconnect all parts of China. National propaganda campaigns encouraged patriotism for the People's Republic of China and loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party, stressing the historical links among the ethnic groups and the Han. The local media organs such as radio stations, newspapers and films developed programmes in the local languages. It emphasised a common culture that leaned heavily towards Han culture rather than that of the minorities culture. But at the same time local culture was allowed to continue their existence.

\[159\] Moseley. n. 6, p.16.
CONCLUSION

The People's Republic of China is a unitary, multinational socialist state. Through thousands of years of continuous disintegration and amalgamation, the numerous ethnic entities in China have gradually developed into the present-day 56 nationalities. Of these, 93.3 per cent are Han and the remaining are non-Han ethnic-national minorities. They are called national minorities since they are numerically less in number.

Most of these minority groups are spread over some 63.4 per cent of the country's total land area mostly in the frontiers regions, and speak in different languages, practise different religions and hold different cultural beliefs. It is due to economic, political and strategic importance of these minority areas that the CCP has been making concerted efforts at bringing the non-Han to the mainstream.

The People's Republic of China's policy towards her minorities was no doubt motivated by their desire to integrate these ethnic groups with that of main land China. The question of nationalities problem has hinged on the basis of Mao's thought, which said that nationalities problem is in essence a problem of class. If this analysis is considered then the nationality and ethnic distinctions will disappear soon after the class difference disappears, resulting in homogeneous proletarian culture.

The policy towards the minorities was always conditioned by the dominant party group's assessment of the class situation in China. In the beginning the Chinese communist leadership felt that a transitional stage of revolution should be completed before China could move towards socialist revolution and thus finally entering a phase of real communism. During this period of transition those with different political background could join in United Front, including minorities against the enemy i.e., imperialism. It was expected that the minorities would remain in the transitional phase for a longer period, for they were more backward
than the other. Further it was also felt that in this transitional period the administrative skills committed upper strata who were drawn from traditional minority’s elite could be accepted till a successor generation of proper proletarian background was trained.

The Marxist-Leninist formula for nationality policy has presented the Chinese communists with required scope for its interpretation. There was no doubt that an element of ambiguity existed with respect to the definition of nationality characteristics and the rate and completeness with which they would be expected to disappear. And the questions whether and under what conditions to support national liberation movements and the rights of self-determination and secession were also surrounded with doubt. In fact there is no clear-cut guidelines on which ethnic minority group characteristics or forms must be removed in order to achieve a truly socialist contact. On the other hand there was no precise definition worked out of which minority rights to support and if so to what extent. Added to this the differences of emphasis among Marx, Lenin and Stalin were future amalgamated by a considerable disparity between socialist theory and soviet practice and differences within soviet practice itself over a period of time.

The only eternal characteristics of Marxist theory and practice concerning the nationalities question are assertion on equality of all nationalities, commitment to self-determination and a linkage of nationality characteristics with class structure. This last feature became more vague as Lenin and Stalin came to experience Soviet conditions, in which the nationalities characteristics were found more imbibed in workers than in the bourgeoisie.

The end formula in the above analysis is Stalin’s contention of national in form and socialist in content. The soviet experience has exposed the lacuna of a theory which linked social class and nationality characteristics and Marx’s references to self-determination and federation were developed into a new concept of national autonomy. However when the leadership considered it necessary to
stamp down nationality characteristics, those who were considered to have been incorrect were attacked as bourgeois. And local autonomy was bounded by the decisions of the party. Further the Soviet experience has also exposed the inherent difficulties in a policy which aims at wiping out ethnic differences by enabling them to have a free hand in governance. In retrospect it can be said that the Chinese could design minority policy in various ways and still remained ideologically orthodox.

The Chinese communist policy towards the minorities prior to the 1949 imbibed with the equality of nationalities, right to autonomy within a unified state, respect for nationality forms, right to education in one’s native language and overall development of living standards. This particular scheme was based on the soviet policy towards her nationalities along with the party’s experience in minority work. But unsuitable clauses like right to secession were discarded and the Chinese communists benefited from Kuomintang’s mistakes in handling minority problems. In fact it is difficult to ascertain whether the Chinese communists were reacting positively to the soviet model or negatively to Nationalists policies for both the Soviets and Nationalists were antithetical on many points with respect to their policies towards national minorities. To make mention few of them, the Soviet and Chinese communist parties defended the issue of autonomy, upheld the right of minorities to be educated in their own languages, which was opposed by Kuomintang regime and was backed by the support of communists in China and Soviet Union. Further the Stalinist view on achieving union of nationalities by encouraging the development of their diverse cultures and languages was also adopted by CPC in contrast to the Kuomintang’s emphasis on the policy of assimilation.

However, it was not the Chinese communists party policy towards minority areas that brought the latter to a position of prominence in minority areas, rather it was due to the military victories in Han areas by making the minority leaders isolated and with no other option other than negotiations, which might enable them
to retain at least their former powers or else to fight till the end which would result in loss of everything whatever they had.

Added to this the CPC having only a small segment of minority group membership and afraid of imperialist encroachment in the border areas where most of the minorities lived was in fact inclined to negotiate as were many minority group leaders and erstwhile Kuomintang administrators in minority areas. And those who tried to resisted this state of affairs or those who were unacceptable to the people were removed by force. But by and large efforts was made to persuade the traditional elite to cooperate. But it would seem probable that many who did choose to cooperate did not believe that the party's pledge to them would be honoured, but felt that behaving as if the promises would be kept was the best of several alternatives. It remained for the CPC to execute its policy statements in a manner that would win the loyalties of their intended constituency or to reconcile theory and practice.

The first five years Beijing leadership efforts in minority areas were characterised as moderation and flexibility. Sincere efforts were made to benefit from the experiences of the Soviet Union and the Kuomintang. Further efforts were made to construct roads, telegraphs, newspapers and radio stations with a view to connect the infrastructure of minority areas with that of the Hans.

To remove the Han and non-Han grievances, the minorities were provided legal equality, and derogatory names of the places and proper names for minorities were replaced with more dignified titles.

The Scheme of 'doing good and making friends' enabled the party to gain the trust of the minorities while obtaining a basic knowledge of their areas that would provide future moves to bring about social change. Moderate efforts were ventured out to improve the economic position of the minorities but in general these were attempted only when they could be achieved without coming into conflict with
the goal of attaining solidarity with minorities, that is by introducing new cultivation
techniques where they were not forbidden by religious beliefs and superstitions or
by making available certain desired commodities that had been in short supply. the
concomitant result was to tie-up the economy of such areas with that of Han.

Many wide variety of policies were followed in various minority areas,
which differed according to the party’s assessment of the conditions in a given area.
This in turn resulted in different policies being pursued towards two groups in the
same nationality. Further selective health, educational and cultural programmes
were launched. To ensure minority representation a system of political units was
devised on experimental basis, which was later revised and codified. the political
work chiefly concentrated on instilling a consciousness of being Chinese in minority
people and also on helping them to feel a sense of participation in multi ethnic state
of China.

And portrayal of Mao as the leader of all nationalities was to exemplify this
new unity. Active minorities and cadres were trained and more promising were
recruited into the party. Further party organs were established in those areas where
they were not in existence, and the already existing once prior to the establishment
of communist government at Beijing were expanded.

The National party and government organs portrayed themselves as patrons
of all minority cultures. Despite unmistakable connotation of the majority (Han)
people burden no effort was left to popularise the idea that each nationality had not
only something to learn from other but at the same time something to contribute as
well.

The Great Leap Forward reforms were regarded as assimilative in it aims by
many minority nationalities and aroused intense reaction among them. Followed by
the Leap there was scarcity in economic sector which resulted in competition for
limited resources which increased displeasure among ethnic groups. However the
efforts to remove the differences among nationalities resulted in heightening minorities awareness of these differences and seemed to induce a strong desire to retain them. In this respect the Great Leap slowed down the process of integration. However the impact of the Leap on integration was not wholly negative.

Some of the minority customs were effectively destroyed and were never resuscitated. Some of the minorities though unwillingly may have been to study Chinese the net result was to provide communication between them and the great majority of their countrymen. The changes that were brought in the field of animal husbandry and agricultural techniques were apparently not very successful in increasing the productivity, but there is no doubt that it may have encouraged the spirit of innovation and willingness to throw off the fetters of tradition.

In the post Great Leap Forward it became more possible to speak a policy towards minorities rather than a broader goal with very different manifestations in policy for different areas. The communes came in the place of wide variety of economic arrangements used by the minorities. And many goals of the Great Leap Forward in connection to minorities could not be implemented and other Great Leap policies with regard to them had to be undone.

But it is to be noted that the minority areas never returned to their pre-Leap situation. Further these benefits were at best modest in terms of size when compared to the economic hardships and widespread resentment of the party and government which the Great Leap had engendered among minorities. If the Leap is considered a failure in Han areas, it was a fiasco in minority areas. A vocal segment of the party leaders came to favour modifications in its policies.

Coming to the Socialist Education Campaign passed through the same stages and time as it was in the Han dominated areas but with less number of minority participation. Even if the radical allegations are taken into consideration that the campaign had been undermined in Han areas, the campaign appears to have
been still moderate in minority areas. The Administrators tried to defend the continuation of the united front and due allocation for minorities special characteristics as absolutely necessary at this stage of history. It may be due to the disruptions caused by the rapid changes during the Great Leap Forward, they tried to avoid major reversals in policy or criticism of cadres fearing that it would result reopening nationalities schisms and would disrupt production.