

China's Minority Nationalities

Edited by Ma Yin

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
BEIJING

First Edition 1989

Hard cover: ISBN 0-8351-1952-1 ISBN 7-119-00001-2

Copyright 1989 by Foreign Languages Press

Published by Foreign Languages Press
24 Baiwanzhuang Road, Beijing, China

Printed by Foreign Languages Printing House
19 West Chegongzhuang Road, Beijing, China

Distributed by China International Book Trading Corporation
(Guoji Shudian), P.O. Box 399, Beijing, China

Printed in the People's Republic of China

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

China's Minority Nationalities systematically surveys the 55 ethnic minorities who inhabit vast areas of the People's Republic of China. Each minority nationality is given a separate chapter describing its population, history, culture, language and customs, as well as its pre- and post-liberation forms of society. Taken together, these chapters constitute an overview of the development of China as a multi-national country, and they illustrate how the government's policies for minority nationalities have worked.

The English edition is based on the Chinese book of the same title, which was published by the People's Publishing House of Beijing in 1981. This edition, however, revises as well as translates the original text, while taking new facts and statistics into account.

The book is enlivened by close to 200 photos showing how ethnic minority groups live and the natural environment they inhabit.

The original Chinese edition was sponsored by the State Nationalities Affairs Commission. The editorial board for the book included Ma Yin as editor-in-chief, Chen Yongling as deputy editor-in-chief, and Professor Fei Xiaotong as advisor. The board has also edited four series of books on the history, languages and social development of China's ethnic minorities and the geography of the areas in which they live.

Taking part in the original book's writing and editing were teachers and researchers of the Central Institute for Nationalities, the Nationalities Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and other organizations. Participants included Ma Shouqian, Wang Ersong, Wang Bin, Wang Furen, Wei Shiming, Zhu Ning, Lu Guangtian, Liu Xianzhao, Li Jinchu, Yang Xuechen, Wu Heng, Song Shuhua, Shao Xianshu, Hu Qiwang, Zhao Bingkun, Zhao Shuxun, Xiang Meizhen, Suo Wenqing, Mu Junqing, Chang Fengxuan, Huang

Youfu and Dai Qingxia. The English edition was translated and edited by Liu Qizhong, Chen Gengtao, Zhang Shuquan, Shi Songqing, Li Yao, Zhu Shida, Jin Shaoqing, Zhou Yougao, Wang Bo and Ma Jianmin.

China is a unified, multi-national country with 55 ethnic minorities besides the Han nationality, the largest of them all. The population of the 55 ethnic minority groups combined is 67.23 million, 6.7 percent of the national total. Since remote times, each of these nationalities have been making their own priceless contributions to the history and culture of China and the development of interracial brotherhood, economic cooperation and cultural exchanges. For a variety of reasons, however, the social-economy in the areas inhabited by the ethnic minorities has been generally backward. Until recent decades feudal land-ownership prevailed in most of these areas; in some areas feudal serfdom was dominant, while in a few areas vestiges of primitive communes remained. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the oppression of all nationalities was brought to an end, a system of regional national autonomy put into practice and social reform carried out in a nationwide move to develop China's economy and culture and to improve the living standards of her minority nationalities. Building on a foundation of mutual interest, all of China's 56 nationalities have established a new pattern of relations based on the principles of equality, unity and mutual aid.