

SOCIAL  
SCIENCES  
in  
CHINA

1

---

---

1980

SOCIAL  
SCIENCES

in

CHINA

1

---

1980

# Ethnic Identification in China\*

*Hsiao-tung Fei*

How many nationalities are there in China?

When Dr. Sun Yat-sen founded the Republic of China in 1912, he defined it as a "Republic of Five Nationalities," meaning the Hans, the Manchus, the Mongolians, the Huis and the Tibetans. While extending nominal recognition to several ethnic names, the Chiang Kai-shek government asserted that all minorities were but offshoots of the Hans. Ethnologists thought otherwise, but no comprehensive ethnic identification was possible under the circumstances.

The People's Republic of China, inaugurated in 1949, committed itself to ethnic equality as a basic tenet. But the principle would have been meaningless without proper recognition of existing nationalities. For how could a People's Congress allocate its seats to deputies from different nationalities without knowing what nationalities there were? And how could the nation effect regional autonomy for the nationalities without a clear idea of their geographical distribution?

Immediately after the founding of the People's Republic many minority groups, long oppressed by Han chauvinism under the Kuomintang regime, openly announced their identities and proposed names for themselves. By 1953 over 400 names had been registered with the government authorities.

But were there really so many nationalities in China? A preliminary examination revealed that some were different names of a single nationality; others were the names of sub-divisions; still others applied to different localities inhabited by members of the same nationality, and some were merely variations of translations in the Han language.

Beginning in 1953, extensive field work was carried out to ascertain the claims. By early 1957, 11 independent ethnic groups had been officially defined through exhaustive investigation and study as well as consultation with the leaders and masses of each group. To date the State Council (the Central

---

\* The present article is based on a speech delivered by the author at a meeting of the Nationalities Section of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on September 1, 1978. He wishes to thank members of the Central Institute of Nationalities and the Institute of Nationality Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences for the advice and material they gave him in the preparation of the speech.

People's Government) has confirmed and announced the nationality status of 56 ethnic groups, including such long-acknowledged ones as the Mongolians, the Huis, the Tibetans and the Hans.

The task of ethnic identification remains unfulfilled, as will be shown later in this article. But the picture is much clearer today than at any time in China's history.

## I. The Ethnic Situation in China

Some Western scholars regard the Chinese as a homogeneous nation. Even in China, people used to say that there were no essential differences among the country's various nationalities in language, custom or ancestry. Actually, the ethnic situation in China is extremely complicated.

When Chinese ethnologists embarked on a large-scale identification of the country's nationalities in the early 1950s, they were confronted with the following circumstances:

- Some Hans had migrated to minority areas and their descendants had retained Han characteristics. Unaware of their origin, however, the latter registered themselves under a name given them by other residents in their locality. Examples were the Zheyuans of Yunnan Province and the Dans of Guangdong Province.
- Different groups of Hans had migrated to the same minority area at different times, and the earlier groups, long cut off from the rest of the Hans, had developed differences in language and custom from the more recent arrivals and were even discriminated against by the late comers. Thus the descendants of the earlier groups requested recognition as separate minorities. Examples were the Chuanqings of Guizhou Province and the Liuchias of Guangxi Province.
- In the days of national oppression, the upper strata of certain minorities were used by reactionary Han rulers to dominate other minorities. Seeing no difference between their oppressors and the Hans, after liberation the dominated groups refused to recognize the oppressor groups as minorities. This was the case with the Tujias in western Hunan Province.
- Some minorities had dispersed over history, migrated in all directions, come into contact with the Hans and been deeply influenced by Han culture. These groups had changed their language, lost many of their national characteristics and become economically inseparable from the Hans. But they still were discriminated against, lived in their own communities and considered themselves distinct minorities. An example is the She nationality in Fujian, Zhejiang and other provinces.

- Sections of single nationalities had broken off and migrated to different parts of the country. Although the breakaway groups had retained basically the same language, customs and historical legends as the parent nationalities, they had acquired different names in their respective localities, under which they registered after liberation. Examples were the Buzhuangs in Guangxi Province and Bushas and Bunongs in Yunnan Province.
- Sections of individual nationalities, distributed in a number of areas, had adopted the culture and life style of neighboring peoples. But they continued to speak their original languages and were known by the same names. An example was the "Xifans" in Sichuan and Yunnan provinces.
- Sections of nationalities which were scattered over wide areas had formed many disconnected communities, whose language and culture showed both similarities and considerable differences. The dispersed groups with the same ethnic origin had all along been known by the same name among other peoples and considered themselves one nationality. One example was the Miaos.
- In cases like that of the Daur of northeast China, opinions differed within a nationality as to whether it was an independent ethnic group or part of another group.

These complex circumstances were manifestations of certain characteristics of China's ethnic mosaic, which may be outlined as follows:

First, China's ethnic situation has gone through a long history of intricate changes.

Leaving aside the early beginnings of Chinese history, China's nationalities have experienced complicated processes of growth and decline, settlement and migration, integration and disintegration ever since a unified multi-national state was founded under the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty in 221 B.C.

Modern China's older generation has witnessed the enormous changes that have taken place among the Manchus just in this century. Tablets in the Palace Museum and the Summer Palace in Beijing bear inscriptions in the Manchu language which few Manchus can decipher today. But despite the fact that most Manchus can no longer read or write their language and have lost many other cultural traits, the overwhelming majority stoutly insist upon calling themselves Manchus. The number of people who registered as Manchus in the early years after liberation totalled 2,400,000, dozens of times their population in the 17th century when they came to north China from the northeast.

And if we turn back the pages of history, many once-flourishing nationalities, such as the Huns and the Khitans, have vanished so completely that their descendants are hardly traceable. The tangled origins of China's ethnic groups have left a legacy of research problems.

Second, China has a multiplicity of nationalities spread over a vast territory.

Contacts between China's nationalities led to their intermingling, and they spread over countless mountains and river valleys in a kaleidoscopic assortment of large and small communities.

The vast grasslands of Mongolia and Xinjiang extending westward to central Asia have always been roamed by equestrian peoples. From the eastern reaches of these grasslands came nationalities whose descendants are still found in Eastern Europe.

The many ethnic groups inhabiting the great Changjiang and Huanghe river basins gradually merged into a single nationality known first as Hua and then as Han. With the blood of many peoples mixed in their veins, the Hans grew to become the most populous nationality in the world. The Tibetans are another ancient nationality. They also emerged from various ethnic groups.

The most complicated ethnic situation is found on the Yunnan-Guizhou plateau in China's southwest. Among the high mountains and deep ravines crisscrossing the plateau, minority communities are distributed in a maze of pockets and layers. Residents in some of the secluded villages may be likened to those described by the famous ancient poet Tao Qian (A.D. 365-427) in his essay, *Land of Peach Blossoms*. He portrayed a community which lived in such isolation that generations were born and died without knowing the dynastic changes in the country.

Of the 400-plus names of nationalities registered with the government in the early post-liberation years, Yunnan accounted for more than 260. It is surpassed by no other region in the number of ethnic units and the complexity of their sub-divisions.

Thirdly, China's nationalities have experienced an uneven socio-economic development.

The state of the nationalities in China in the early post-liberation years provided researchers with a living textbook on the history of social development. Centuries of feudal rule, plus another century of oppression by imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, had obstructed the socio-economic advances of China's ethnic groups. Capitalism was hardly in evidence among any of the minority peoples; most were in the pre-capitalist stages of social development. Four million people remained under early feudal serfdom, another million were under slavery, and about 600,000 lived in societies with the primitive communal system of ownership betraying no clear signs of class divisions.

It should be noted that China pursues a policy of equality for all nationalities irrespective of their size or cultural attainment. The Chinese term "min zu" or "nationality" is used in a broad sense, applying to ethnic groups in various stages of development and in different periods of history. This is a departure from the European concept of "nation," also translated as "min zu"

in Chinese, which took shape during the ascendancy of capitalism. A special feature of modern European history is the rise of nation-states in Western Europe. While the multi-national states in Eastern Europe are marked by uneven development among different ethnic groups, they also have adopted the Western European concept of "nation." Therefore, they have had to use other terms for pre-capitalist ethnic groups, such as "clan" and "tribe" for those in primitive communities and "nationality" or "narodost" for those under slavery or feudalism.

## II. Ethnic Identification: Two Case Studies

An ethnologist trying to identify a nationality in China must answer two basic questions:

First, is the group a national minority or is it part of the Han nationality?

Second, if the group falls into the category of national minorities, is it a nationality by itself or is it a part of a nationality?

The two cases described below should help explain how Chinese ethnologists go about their work.

Our first example concerns the Chuanqing people in Guizhou Province. "Chuanqing" means "clad in black," as distinguished from another group in the same region known as "Chuanlan," meaning "clad in blue." For simplicity, let us refer to them as the Blacks and the Blues.

The question of the Blacks cropped up as early as 1950, when a delegation from the Central People's Government arrived in Guizhou to look into the ethnic situation there. The Blacks, numbering more than 200,000, were the largest of 30-odd ethnic units which had applied for recognition as national minorities. But identification took time. The status of the Blacks was not clarified until 1955, when they were found to be part of the Han nationality through a field investigation lasting six months.

The Blacks applied for minority status on the basis of the following arguments:

- Their original language had been an "old-generation tongue," which differed from the language used by the local Han population.
- Most of them lived in their own compact communities in the countryside.
- They differed from the local Hans in religious belief and custom worshipping at their own altar.
- Their womenfolk differed from Han women in that they wore wide-sleeved embroidered blouses, combed their hair in three parts, left their feet unbound and did not ride in a sedan chair on their wedding day.

The Blacks were discriminated against by the Blues, and armed clashes often flared up in pre-liberation days. After liberation practically all the Blues registered themselves as Hans. But the Blacks did not follow suit, knowing that if they acquired a minority status they would get preferential treatment from the government and be better protected against bullying by the Blues.

A point of interest was that the minority peoples in the region did not refer to the Blacks as Blacks, but rather as a special kind of Hans, calling them the "poor Hans" or the "rustic Hans." Nevertheless, the Blacks seemed to have certain features in their language, areas of settlement, economic life and psychological makeup which might qualify them as a national minority.

We first tackled the question of their language. Our findings showed that, while a small number of them could still speak the "old-generation tongue," practically all of them were speaking the Han language with an accent common to Guizhou Province. An analysis of the "old-generation tongue" revealed a complete identity with the Han speech and no traces of the languages of other nationalities. It was found to be a dialect originating in earlier dialects spoken in Jiangxi, Hunan and Hubei provinces. The Blacks presumably spoke it when they first came to Guizhou, and changed over to the local dialect only 50-60 years ago.

This linguistic analysis alone, however, did not warrant the conclusion that the Blacks were part of the Han nationality. People speaking the same language may belong to different nationalities. English is spoken by a great many nations in the world. In China, such distinct nationalities as the Shes, Huis and Manchus all use the Han language. But the analysis did provide a clue to the origin of the Blacks, showing that they had come from neighboring provinces in the east, a discovery confirmed by family genealogies, gravestone inscriptions, markings on historical relics, local chronicles and popular legends.

So we studied the history of the Blacks.

In the year 1381, the founding emperor of the Ming Dynasty sent his troops southward to wipe out the remnant forces of the Yuan Dynasty, which had just been overthrown, in Yunnan Province. As the army passed through neighboring Guizhou Province, it left some garrison troops there for land reclamation. People in China's interior began to migrate to this outlying province, among them Hans from Jiangxi Province performing forced labor in the army. These laborers settled in present-day Qingzhen in the province, which bordered on an area inhabited by the Yi nationality and marked the frontier of Han power at the time. They and their families were called "civilian households," distinguished from the privileged "army households." While the army households were allocated land by the government authorities, the civilian households had to lease land from the Yis and were exploited as tenant farmers.

Although these immigrants found themselves on a lower echelon of frontier society, the proximity of the Ming army enabled them to maintain



munities separate from those of the Yis. Neither were they assimilated by the Yis, because economically and culturally they were more advanced. When the power of the Yi headmen declined, they pushed into the interior areas of the Yis, which finally came under Han jurisdiction early in the Qing Dynasty in the middle of the 17th century. More and more Hans moved in to form compact communities.

We also traced the history of the Blues.

Arriving simultaneously with or after the Blacks, these Hans included quite a number of officials and merchants and settled mostly in cities and market towns. They enjoyed a higher political and economic status than the Blacks and looked down upon the poor people who had worked as tenant farmers under the Yis.

In early struggles against the Yi headmen, the two Han groups united. But the Blues gained the upper hand in the course of development of the feudal economy. The national market that took shape in China around the turn of the century upset the self-contained economy of the region. Modern commerce was largely monopolized by the Blues to the exclusion of the Blacks, who lacked contacts with the outside world. Outnumbered and economically weak, the landlords among the Blacks were in danger of being eliminated. Using the struggle against discrimination as a rallying call, they incited armed clashes which further divided the two groups.

On the other hand, as economic development brought the Blacks into closer contact with other Hans, their original regional characteristics gradually faded away. They became more and more indistinguishable from other Hans in language, dress and custom over the last five to six decades. Differences between the Blacks and the Blues blurred or even vanished in areas with better means of communication.

On the basis of these findings, we came to the conclusion that the Chuanqings or Blacks, originally members of the Han nationality, remained as such because they had neither been separated from the parent nationality nor developed into a different nationality. True, they had their own characteristics. But these were manifestations of the special features of Hans in certain regions in an earlier period, not the characteristics of a separate nationality.

Our second example concerns the Daurs of northeast China, whose identity was a controversial issue for decades.

When systematic ethnic identification started in China in 1953, the Daurs had a population of about 50,000. The biggest concentrations were along the banks of the Nenjiang River and its tributaries in Heilongjiang Province, a small number lived in the Hulun Buir League in Inner Mongolia, and a thousand or so lived in Tacheng in Xinjiang.

The question under debate was whether the Daurs were a part of the Mongols. We approached the problem from two angles: their language and their origin.

The language used by the Daur was a variation of the Mongolian language, but it differed from current Mongolian speech. Analysis of the pattern of development of the Daur language led to the conjecture that it might have been a Mongol dialect in the 13th century. It came under the influence of the unified Mongolian language after the founding of the Mongolian Empire, but took a path of its own after the fall of the empire and the disintegration of the unified language. As the Daur came into close contact with peoples speaking the Tungus-Manchu language, they borrowed much from that tongue, increasing the differences between the Mongolian language and their own.

Much had been written about the origin of the Daur, but the data provided an insufficient basis for drawing a definite conclusion. The study of their language, however, led us to investigate the circumstances under which they developed an independent language. To solve this question, we had to examine historical records of the changes in their settlements.

Around the beginning of the 16th century, some Daur settled on the banks of the Jingqili River, an eastern tributary of the Heilongjiang River. By the early 17th century, large concentrations of them were living along the middle and lower reaches of the river. Their eastern neighbors were peoples speaking the Tungus-Manchu language, while the Buriat Mongols lived to their west. As the Russian Empire expanded eastward from Siberia, its reconnaissance parties came upon the Daur in the Jingqili River basin during 1643-46. The Daur carried on a struggle against the Russian invaders that lasted more than 40 years and ended with the signing of the Sino-Russian Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689.

In the course of this struggle the Qing army adopted a policy of "clearing the fields and strengthening the ramparts," forcing the Daur as well as the Solun in the same area to abandon their settlements north of the Heilongjiang River and move to the west bank of the Nenjiang River. Then the Qing government incorporated the two peoples into the military-administrative "banner" organizations to augment the region's armed forces and military supplies. This development some 300 years ago had an important bearing on the formation of the Daur nationality, for it placed the Daur and the Mongols under different administrative systems and thus further separated them.

The origin of the Daur remains unclear today. But reliable historical records indicate that for 450 years they lived in communities separate from those of the Mongols. They maintained the closest relations with the Tungus-Manchu-speaking Solun. Politically, they were chiefly under the control of the Tungus-Manchu-speaking Manchus. While the Daur were separated from the Mongols by historical circumstances and developed a distinctive language, they also resisted assimilation by the Tungus-Manchu-speaking peoples in spite of the proximity of the latter.

But why did some of the Daur's living in northeast China subscribe to the view that they were a part of the Mongols? The answer was likewise to be sought in history.

After the Daur's came under the "banners" during the Qing Dynasty, members of their upper strata attached themselves to the Manchu rulers, and quite a number acquired prominent posts. The 1911 Revolution which overthrew the Qing Dynasty deprived them of their Manchu backing, and they started a movement for Daur-Mongol integration to strengthen their position. Many of the claims that the Daur's and the Mongols were one and the same people dated from that period.

Again, during the years of Japanese occupation, the Japanese imperialists prepared to invade Mongolia and publicized the same claims among the Daur's for purposes of aggression, and the effects continued to be felt after China's liberation.

Our comprehensive study of the history of the Daur people resulted in the identification of their status as a separate nationality. The conclusions provided them with a correct understanding of their position and met with their general approval.

### III. The Remaining Questions

Although the composition of China's big family of nationalities is now basically clear, some questions remain to be solved. These fall into three categories:

- The status of national minorities in Taiwan and the southeastern areas of Tibet, where conditions are not ripe for identification through field investigation.
- The unidentified status of some nationalities in other parts of the country.
- The identified status of some nationalities which requires re-examination.

Groups in the second and third categories have an aggregate population of less than 100,000, which is 0.2 per cent of the total population of China's national minorities.

The nationalities whose status is not yet established include "Tibetans" of Pingwu County, Sichuan Province; the Dengs in Zayu County in the southeastern part of the Tibet Autonomous Region, and the Xiaerbans in Dinggye and the Tingri (Xegar) counties to the south; the Kucongs in the Honghe Hani and Va Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province, and the relatively unknown Bens, Kongges, Sandas, Akes, Buxias, Buguos, Chemans, Dengjiaos, Kezhis, Bejias, Jieduos, and other groups in the same areas.

I shall now deal with some of these remaining questions of ethnic identification.

### 1. The "Pingwu Tibetans"

The "Pingwu Tibetans" are a group of a few thousand people living on the border between Sichuan and Gansu provinces — the home of the giant panda. Many are in Pingwu County, Sichuan Province, and the rest are in Wenxian County, Gansu Province.

Before liberation they were oppressed by the Kuomintang regime and tribal chieftains. In 1935 the Red Army passed through their districts in the course of its Long March, and later Kuomintang massacres left behind a sadly depleted population of some 500. Persecution forced many of the survivors to change their names and attach themselves to a large Tibetan tribe in Songpan, and they were henceforth referred to as "Xifans," meaning "west aborigines."

After liberation, a team for nationalities work was sent here by the Northern Sichuan Administrative Office in 1951. Local people of the upper strata told the team that the "Xifans" were Tibetans, and they were temporarily identified as such.

In 1964 Nisu, a woman representative of the "Pingwu Tibetans," came to Beijing to attend the celebrations of the 15th anniversary of the People's Republic. She was introduced to Chairman Mao Zedong, who asked her which nationality she was from. Nisu was too excited to say anything, and somebody answered for her, "the White Horse Tibetans of Sichuan." Two close-ups of her appeared in *Glorious Festival*, a full-length color documentary on the celebrations. While everybody in Nisu's hometown rejoiced at the news of her reception by the Chairman, some expressed doubt at the name "White Horse Tibetans."

In fact, Tibetans of other areas did not recognize the Pingwu group as Tibetans, and addressed them as "Xifans." But the Pingwu people considered this an insulting name and refused to accept it. According to a recent report, they are now calling themselves "Dabus."

Linguistically, the differences between their language and the Tibetan language are greater than those between the various Tibetan dialects, and their grammar and ways of expression betray signs of similarities with the languages of the Qiangs and Pumis. They are more primitive than the Tibetans in their religious beliefs; they make fetishes of the sun, the moon, mountains and rivers, hilltops and rocks, rather than worshipping any single divinity. Though Lamaism has penetrated some of their areas, it has not become universal.

These facts point to the possibility that the "Pingwu Tibetans" may not be Tibetans at all. But what is their nationality? On the basis of the regions' historical records, some historians believe that they might be the descendants

of the ancient Di people. Yet records of the Di people are found to be lacking after the Wei (A.D. 220-265) and Jin (A.D. 265-420) dynasties.

To solve this problem, it will probably be necessary to broaden the scope of our research to include the entire corridor from Gansu in the north to Zayu and Lhoyu in Tibet's southwest. The history and geography of this region and the languages spoken here should be studied in connection with the identification problems which have already surfaced. This corridor is a border land between the Hans and the Tibetans and also between the Tibetans and the Yis. Political power was in the hands of one nationality or another at different periods of history. This is the corridor in which the Qiangs, Dis and Rongs were once active. At present the eastern sector is occupied by a Han community and the western sector by the Tibetans. It was precisely in this Tibetan sector that we found "Tibetans" speaking a Tibetan language not quite the same as that used in Tibet proper. The Tibetan spoken by the Jiarongs in northwestern Sichuan is obviously different from that spoken in Lhasa. South of the Jiarong region, there remains a language which has become secondary to the common local language but is still being spoken in families and intimate communities. The Living Buddha Gangs dKar, who was a professor at the Central Institute of Nationalities, came from Muya in Kangding (Dardo) County, which is called *Minyak* in Tibetan. The people here generally speak Tibetan, but at home they communicate in a different dialect which has not yet been identified by linguists. It is worth noting that the Tibetan name *Minyak* is similar to the Tibetan name of the basic nationality of the Western Xia Kingdom (A.D. 1038-1227) — the Dangxiang Qiangs. These people are referred to as *Miyaos*, pronounced *Mjeiaks* in ancient times, in the "History of the Dangxiangs" in the *History of the Tang Dynasty* (A.D. 618-907). Some people assert that the area between the Jinsha and Dajin rivers in the Ganze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture is the cradle of the Dangxiang Qiangs. The *History of the Tang Dynasty* states that the land of the Dangxiangs, "alias *Miyaos*, jut into that of the Tufans and came under Tufan subjugation." In other words, after part of the Dangxiangs in the area had departed for the north, the remainder came under the rule of the Tufans. It is worth studying whether the "dialect" now spoken in this region is in any way connected with the ancient language of the Dangxiang Qiangs.

East of Kangding are the Qiangs, already recognized as a single nationality, who live on the upper reaches of the Minjiang River as a more or less isolated ethnic group. Further east on the upper reaches of the Fujiang and Jialing rivers we find the "Pingwu Tibetans," who are asking to be identified. South of Kangding there is another minority living between the Yalong and Jinsha rivers which, like the "Pingwu Tibetans," used to be called "Xifans." Since liberation, the part of them living in Sichuan have been called Tibetans, while the other part, living in Yunnan, have been known as Pumis. In actual fact, the language spoken by these "Tibetans" are different from the Tibetan lan-

guage but similar to the Pumi language, which is close to the Qiang and Jiarong languages. Going west from here and crossing the Lancang River, we meet the Nus in the Nujiang River valley who have already been recognized as a single nationality. The Nus, however, speak different languages. A part of them speak a language similar to that of the Dulong to their west, and both are close to the Jingpo language spoken in areas to the south. The Jingpo and Qiang languages are now considered two branches of the Tibetan-Burmese family parallel to the Yi language. A closer study will have to be made of the historical connections between all these languages.

A trip across the Dulong River and the nearby mountain ranges beyond the west banks of the Nujiang River takes us to Zayu, an area inhabited by the Deng people, whose ethnic identification we shall discuss under the next heading.

Taking Kangding as the center, we have drawn the outlines of a corridor extending from east to south where we find a whole chain of long-standing historical and linguistic problems, and a break-through at one point may clear up the entire picture. Fortunately this corridor lying between the Yi and the Tibetan communities provides us with much living historical evidence, and a solution is likely sooner or later.

## 2. The Dengs in Zayu

The Dengs are a group of 10,000-20,000 people living in the Zayu area on the southeastern tip of Tibet. Although they have been called the "Dengs" since liberation, their true name remains to be established.

The settlements of the Dengs are on the eastern end of the illegal MacMahon line, and that is the reason why only part of their community was liberated in 1950. A 1976 census in Zayu placed the Deng population at 977. They were scattered in seven production teams under four people's communes. All the other production teams in the communes were Tibetan.

The Dengs are divided into two branches, each with its own name and language. One branch calls itself Darangs, the other Gemans. The Assams of India call the former "Digalu" and the latter "Miju." In English they are called "Mishmi" together with the Yidus along the Danba River. According to their own legends, the Darangs were originally part of the Yidus and came to Zayu seven to eleven generations ago. The Gemans came from Burma nine generations ago. There are fewer Gemans than Darangs in Zayu today, the ratio being 1:3. Their languages are similar to those spoken by the Dulong and Jingpo peoples in Yunnan Province. The Gemans and Darangs speak Tibetan as well, and they are merging their languages.

It is also known that the Zayu area was once inhabited by a group of people called the "Jiongs." Remains of the terraced fields they built shows that they were excellent farmers. About six generations ago they were conquered

by the Tibetans, after which some moved away and the others were absorbed into Tibetan life. As in the case of the Dengs, their ethnic identity remains unclear, and so does their relationship with the Dengs.

As a clue to the ancestry of the Dengs, we have found a group the Tibetans called "Zhas," whose language seems to be a mixture of Geman and Tibetan. Numbering only about 300, the Zhas are not followers of Lamaism and do not intermarry with the Tibetans, even though they call themselves Tibetans for fear of discrimination. Since the Geman language is akin to the language spoken by the Dulong in Yunnan, the presence of the Zhas suggests that the ancestors of the Geman could have come from that province.

Geographically, the Zayu area is separated from the Nujiang River valley in Yunnan Province only by a mountain ridge. In his *History of the Aborigines*, Fan Chuo of the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907) wrote about a trail leading to this area from Yunnan. Could the ancestors of the Dengs and other groups, whom we still have to identify, have come here by that trail? This is a problem we should look into.

### 3. The "Kuong" in Yunnan

The "Kuong" are a people distributed over the Ailao Mountain region in Yunnan Province, which extends to Jinping near the Sino-Vietnamese border in the south. They are divided into two groups.

About 2,000-3,000 live in Xinping and Zhenyuan in the north. With a production level similar to that of the neighboring Yi and Hani peoples, most of them have amalgamated with the Yis and no longer insist on being treated as a separate people.

Another group which numbered 3,600 in 1971, inhabits the jungles in Luchun and Jinping in the south and in Mengla in the southwest. This group is more primitive in its methods of production. It is the group that has asked for identification of its ethnic status.

"Kuong" is a name given by the Hans. The "Kuong" call themselves by "Lahus" and other names. Their sub-divisions are referred to by the Hans as Yellow, White and Black "Kuong" or Lahus.

Two tendencies have emerged in the research on the status of the "Kuong."

One is to list them under the Hani family and regard their sub-divisions as branches of the Hanis, which denies them any status as an independent group. The basis of this assumption is a comparison between a number of "Kuong" terms and their equivalents in the Hani language. A 1955 study, for instance, showed an almost 60 per cent coincidence between the two.

The other tendency is to regard them, or at least part of them, as a more primitive branch of the Lahus found in Lancang County of Yunnan Province and in northern Thailand near China's borders. This argument also is based

on language study. A recent report compares the "Kucong" language with the Lahu language spoken in Lancang and concludes that the two coincide in basic grammar and vocabulary and show only slight differences in pronunciation.

There is an earlier belief that part of the "Kuong" is close to the Hanis and the other part is akin to the Lahus. If this be the case, one has to explain the differences as well as the connections between the two groups and answer why the two have joined with each other as "Kuong."

Language is an important measure in ethnic identification, but not the only one. And even apparent similarities or differences between two languages cannot determine whether they belong to the same family. Classification of languages should be based mainly on historical analysis. Unfortunately this is an area where Chinese scholarship is rather weak, particularly with respect to minority languages. We still have a long way to go to meet the country's needs in the study of the nationalities.

— *Translated by Wang Huimin  
and Wu Zenfang*





# CURRENT SCENE

## DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

### CHINA: ETHNIC MINORITIES AND NATIONAL SECURITY

by Lucian W. Pye

Among all the varied cases of the relationship of ethnicity and politics China is unique because of the degree to which national security considerations have transformed once tolerable relations into delicate and potentially explosive matters. Elsewhere in the world societies have either long lived with ethnic tensions or the process of modernization has brought to light new tensions as demands for justice and equity magnify all lingering differences. In the past in China the minorities were either overwhelmed by the Han majority, which had its own significant regional and dialect differences, or strong enough in their geographical isolation, as in Tibet and Outer Mongolia, to be left alone by weak Chinese governments.

As the Communists began governing the issue of the "national minorities" had to yield to the spirit of Chinese nationalism, first during the Japanese war and second during the confrontation with the Soviet Union. For reasons which spring from deep within the Chinese spirit and which were reinforced during the era of Western encroachment and of the "Unequal Treaties," the Han Chinese have developed a powerful sense of their territorial identity, which, some might say, overrides their sense of cultural identity. The concentration of minorities in border territories is at the heart of this linkage of ethnic and national security questions.

Lucian W. Pye is professor of political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His most recent book is *Mao Tse-tung: The Man in the Leader*, Basic Books, 1976.

This article is reprinted by permission of the publisher from *Ethnicity, Theory and Experience*, edited by Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan: Harvard University Press, © 1975 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

### CONTENTS

CHINA: ETHNIC MINORITIES AND NATIONAL SECURITY, by Lucian W. Pye	1
CULTURAL WINDS OF CHANGE	17
BRIEFS	21

It has been considerations of national security which have forced the Chinese to vacillate in their minorities policies. Security policies have been for the Chinese the functional equivalent of industrialization for other societies in elevating the importance of assimilation and the desirability of having a more homogeneous culture. The Chinese Communists have moved from espousing the right of self-determination to tolerating only surface cultural differences.

But before I analyze these current developments a few words about the traditional Chinese minorities problem are in order. Historically all who lived beyond the pale of Chinese civilization tended to assume that the Chinese were blessed with a homogeneous culture and a common racial stock. The Chinese themselves, in their reverence for their ancestors and their reference to their multitudes as being of the "old hundred surnames," seemed to stress their common biological ties. As knowledge of China grew, foreigners began to discover that behind the Chinese posture to the world there were in fact important internal divisions.

Divisions of significance, however, did not seem to challenge the biological unity of the Han people. In the modern era outsiders learned about regional differences, particularly between the rice-growing south and the wheat-growing north, and further, between the more cosmopolitan, urban coastal peoples and the more parochial and rural interior peoples. Finally, modern Chinese politics was increasingly seen in terms of clashes between classes: of peasant against landlord, of soldiers against scholars, of modernized professions against traditional interests. An extensive literature has analyzed the divisions which have

played so important a role in the "Chinese revolution" of the last hundred years, but among them one did not find ethnic problems. Cursed by a thousand problems on its road to modernization, China seemed to have been spared that ultimate challenge to national unity, ethnic division and conflict.

It is true that almost as soon as the Chinese moved out of their national homeland and established overseas communities, especially in Southeast Asia, it became apparent to all that there were differences among the Chinese. As the Chinese sorted themselves out among benevolent associations and secret societies, observers were left groping for the right words to describe the differences among them. The British in Malaya and the Dutch in the Indies tried for a while to use such terms as "tribe" and "lineage" before settling on "dialect group" and "community."<sup>1</sup> To this day considerable confusion remains as to whether there is any legitimate basis for classifying different Chinese in Malaysia and Singapore.

It is therefore appropriate in beginning our analysis of "national" minorities in China to note briefly the problem of classifying the differences among the Chinese immigrants from Amoy as Hokkiens, from Swatow as Tiechius, from Hainan as Hailams, and the Kheds from Kwangtung and Fukien as Hakkas, and so forth. For Westerners through the generation of Victor Purcell these distinctions caused no trouble for all could be equally treated as tribes. Subsequent scholars, however, have severe problems. The various groups have all the social attributes usually associated with ethnic differences: they have different spoken languages, they marry among themselves, they pursue different skills and occupations, they trust those of

like identification over others, and finally and above all, they accept as a basic feature of their personal identification their ties with a distinctive community.

However outsiders, and especially the British, may have been making too much of the parochialism of Chinese who, in spite of all being Han, have their local differences in language and custom. But the problem cannot be so easily dismissed because among the different communities there are some, specifically the Hakkas or Kheds, that historians and anthropologists would say are indeed ethnographically "more different" from the Central Han Chinese than others. More important, all Chinese in a subtle manner know that the Hakkas are a special minority group. Only the very highly trained outside observer, and any insider, can tell that the Hakkas are distinctive.

In a strange fashion this peculiar character of the Hakkas in Malaysia is typical of the more general problem of minorities in China. From one perspective many of them do not seem that distinctive: from another there is no question of their being of a different category. Pushing further the model of the Hakkas, this has meant that under some conditions it has been easy for the Hakkas to assimilate under the general label of overseas Chinese, while under others they have maintained their distinctive identities. Similarly, with the minorities in the home country it has at times seemed as though assimilation into the larger community was a natural process, while at other times the technically non-Han people have seemed to be distinct ethnic communities with more than just the customary regional and dialect differences.

These considerations have shown that in modern times China's ethnic minorities have been somewhat anxious over the question of whether they do or do not have peculiar problems as ethnic minorities. On the one hand, the major divisions of Chinese society involving region and dialect have so threatened the unity of the country that until the Communist regime there was little time left over for worrying about ethnic minorities. On the other hand, whenever Chinese officials did have to confront the fact of such minorities they accepted their non-Han character and felt the need for special policies.

During the period when the Nationalist government was able to set policies, the assumption was that most minorities, and most particularly those in the southwest, were historical remnants, living with backward cultures, who would soon be assimilated into Han civilization once China as a whole had regained its rightful claim to greatness in the international arena. Such aborigines as the Miao, Pai, T'ung, and the Yi or Lolo, who had for thousands of years resisted assimilation into Chinese civilization, would be, it was believed, easy to assimilate if only the government could get its policies focused. The larger minorities such as the Tibetan, Uighurs, and Mongols were recognized as being more difficult to assimilate but ultimately they too would come to recognize the superiorities of Chinese culture.

The confidence of Chinese Nationalist officials in the all-enveloping powers of assimilation was fully the match of the faith of European colonialists in the ultimate victory of their more "advanced" civilization, or the once-undaunted confidence of Americans in the assimilating

...ers of American society. When the Chinese Nationalists introduced Han language and sought to spread Han Chinese schooling they were acting with the not surprising expectations of those who are better off materially than those who are less well off will welcome change. Evidence of resistance to Han culture was ignored, or at least not publicized, and the argument was made that simply more time and more resources would be necessary to accomplish the inevitable.

The Nationalists' goal of Sinicizing the minorities was frustratingly similar to that of many other colonial efforts, in spite of the fact that it all occurred within the acknowledged territories of China. As in many colonial situations the Nanking government's first insoluble problem was that of finding an administrative handle with which to apply leverage in order to influence and organize the different minorities. Historically the Chinese had usually followed policies of various forms of "indirect rule," in the sense of relying upon minority leadership and their own institutions of power. When the Nationalists followed such methods they discovered that the minority leaders usually displayed great skills in building their own powers while obstructing the Chinese policies they opposed. When the Nationalists sought to ignore or break down traditional minority authority systems they usually could find no one to cooperate with them.

Just as in the case of colonial authorities, the Nationalists fell back upon the hope that by offering desirable, if not desired, services they might win over to inevitable assimilation the stubborn minorities. Hence they introduced into minority areas hospitals and schools and sought quite explicitly to emulate the practices of Western missionaries.<sup>2</sup>

With respect to the larger minorities, the Nationalists had, as might be expected, even less success in their goals of assimilation. While they were in power, the Nanking government had to accept the de facto autonomy of Tibet.<sup>3</sup> In 1928, when the Nationalists were establishing their regime, they sent a mission to Tibet which failed to convince the Lhasa authorities of the merits of joining the Chinese Republic; and on the eve of the Kuomintang departure from the mainland they failed to obtain the consent of Tibetan officials to the application to Tibet of the new Chinese constitution. The Nationalists never gave up the claim that Tibet belonged to China; they were simply incapable of deploying enough force to compel the Tibetans to acknowledge Chinese rule.

A more conspicuous failure of the Nationalists was their inability to uphold Chinese claims to Outer Mongolia. Here failure meant the loss of territory and thus a dramatic indication that minority problems might be linked to security considerations, a matter that has become increasingly a central concern in Chinese "national minorities" policies. But before coming to the present we should chart briefly the high points in Chinese Communist policies toward minority people.

#### From Ideology to Security Calculations

From the inception of their party, the Chinese Communists adopted Lenin's views that "national minorities" should have the right of secession, but the "proletariat" should seek to consolidate ever larger units of rule and hence should work to diminish any desire for separation. At the Second Party Congress, when they were in close

contact with the Cominform, the Chinese for no reason relating to local issues proclaimed the doctrine of regional autonomy for "national minorities." This Leninist concept was later sanctified in the 1931 constitution of the Kiangsi Soviet, which proclaimed "the right of self-determination of the national minorities in China, their right to complete separation from China, and the formation of an independent state for each minority nationality."<sup>4</sup>

As a result of the Long March, which carried the Red Army through several minority populated territories, the Chinese Communists discovered that the politics of minority interests was complicated and that ideological proclamations were not enough to win over people with deep historic distrust of Han power. First they had to bribe their way through Lolo territory,<sup>5</sup> and then they had to make their way through Eastern Tibet against a completely hostile population.<sup>6</sup> Experience as contrasted to ideology was such that by the time the Communists came to power their earlier ideal of a federated state had given way to an appreciation of the value of a unitary state. After 1949 the Chinese stopped speaking of the rights of secession and recognized only the possibility of "autonomous regions."

It was possibly in the area of the "national question" that the Chinese made the first explicit break from the Leninist tradition in that they openly rejected Lenin's principle of "self-determination" and the right of secession. The Chinese argued that the experience of the Japanese war had united all elements in support of the Chinese revolution and therefore, "It was in accord with this noble wish of the people of all nationalities that the Chinese

Communist Party advocated the abandonment of the principle of nationalistic equality and national regional autonomy within the unity of the great family of the motherland and discontinued emphasizing the slogan of national self-determination and federalism. Consequently, the question of national division or national separation does not even arise in present-day circumstances: such schemes would inevitably meet with the violent opposition of the broad masses of nationalists.... Anyone wishing to advance (the slogan of national separation) could only expect to find himself completely isolated."<sup>7</sup>

Once the Communists had the responsibility for ruling all of China, their policies toward the minorities took up from where the Nationalists had left off. With even greater vigor than their predecessors the Communists sought to bring the "benefits of progress" to all minorities. It was acknowledged, at least initially, that minority peoples would have to be treated according to a slower timetable than Han people, but as the confidence of the Communists grew, before the failures of the Great Leap became apparent, they became convinced that in a matter of a few years they should be able to assimilate the smaller minority peoples into the mainstream of Chinese life. During this period, men who had studied and worked with the national minorities, most notably the famous anthropologist Fei Hsiao-t'ung, were accused of having failed before "liberation" both to show respect for minority customs and to facilitate minority progress. First these scholars and later the Communist government were confronted with the awkward task of finding a clear path between the two contradictory policy requirements.

How was it possible to respect the minorities and avoid the evils of "Han chauvinism" while at the same time seeking to revolutionize the minorities and bring them into the world of socialism?

With the Great Leap, and during succeeding years of the early 1960s, the pressures for assimilation increased and concern over manifestations of "Han chauvinism" declined. In part the attitude of the regime changed because of the shock of discovery that the mere act of spreading the word of the New Socialist China was not enough to cause the minorities to drop their "feudal" ways and enthusiastically join in the workers' and peasants' revolution. To win over the smaller minorities would require the vigorous application of more explicitly assimilationist policies which, although more effectively implemented, represented the logical and historical continuity of the program of the Nationalists and previous Chinese governments.

In part, however, the Peking authorities had to change their approach toward the national minorities because of the dramatic resistance of the Tibetans.<sup>8</sup> Once the decision was taken to assert Chinese authority in Tibet, it became necessary to deploy military force and this in turn left the Chinese with no alternative to breaking down traditional forms of authority and imposing Han leadership over the Tibetans. Inexorably the goal of spreading revolutionary progress to all within the domain of what Peking considered China raised tensions between the niceties of forms and the realities of power. In 1962 the Chinese established the Tibetan Autonomous Region, which in practice meant the introduction of Han cadres to

provide the steel framework of administration. The pattern was the same as that in 1974 when the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region was established and in 1955 when the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region was recognized.

In these areas to the north and west the form of "indirect rule" was accompanied by policies of encouraging the in-migration of Han settlers, the expansion of central administrative authority, and ceaseless efforts to point out that the future lay unambiguously with the road of progress defined by Peking. That is to say, even though on the surface the Communists appeared to give greater legitimacy to the "autonomy" of the largest minorities than had the Nationalists, in practice their objective was to strengthen China's territorial claims, in part by stimulating Sinification. Communist capabilities ensured a more complete penetration by the Han of the Tibetan, Uighur, and Mongol societies and raised the prospect that even if assimilation were not at hand, administrative integration was.

Earlier Chinese governments had sought to encourage the migration of Han peoples especially into Sinkiang and Inner Mongolia, but only the Communists have had the mobilization capacity to implement effectively such a policy. In 1947 when the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region was established the ratio of Chinese to Mongols was 3 to 1, but by 1971 the ratio was 15 to 1.<sup>9</sup> The Sinkiang immigration raised the Han proportion from 5.5 percent in 1949 to 20.5 percent in 1962 and 45 percent in 1966.<sup>10</sup> A belief that has deeply depressed the Tibetan refugee colonies in both India and the United States is their understanding that Han migration into Tibet has now reached

the point at which Hans now outnumber by possibly 2 to 1 the native Tibetans. Most dramatic of all was the upsurge in migrations after the border incidents with the Soviet Union. In 1969 and 1970 over one million Han settlers were moved into Inner Mongolia.<sup>11</sup>

It is thus possible to observe a steady change in the attitudes of the Chinese Communists toward the ethnic minorities in China. They began by accepting the extreme Leninist view of the right to separation but by the time they came to power they had rejected this right and spoke of the need for all peoples in China to be "liberated" from feudalism and share in the common unity of revolutionary participation. After scarcely a decade in power the somewhat romantic view that all differences between Han and non-Han might dissolve in the camaraderie of working together to shed "feudal thoughts and customs" and gain proletarian insights and dedication had to give way to a new appreciation of how hard it would be to break down the differences between Han and non-Han. The shock of the Tibetan revolt and the widespread defections of nationality cadres during the Great Leap period forced the Chinese to take a more sober and less trusting view of their minorities problem.<sup>12</sup>

Then came the decisive break with the Soviet Union and the discovery that the problem of national minorities was directly linked to the larger problem of China's national defense. Possibly the event which most traumatically shocked the Chinese was the dramatic exodus in the summer of 1962 of some 50,000 Kazakhs and other non-Han Chinese from Ili-chou in Sinkiang across the border to the Soviet Union and the Kazakh SSR.<sup>13</sup> There is still no reso-

lution of the conflicting Chinese and Soviet accounts of precisely what triggered this huge out-flowing of nomadic peoples from Mao's China, but the general historical situation is not ambiguous. By the time the Communists came to power in 1949, Chinese rule in the border area of Sinkiang was so weak that Soviet influence had completely penetrated in particular the Ili district. Under the policy of "leaning to one side" and in the spirit of socialist brotherhood it was impossible for the new Chinese Communist ruler to seek to counter Soviet influences. However, as the Sino-Soviet rift intensified and particularly after the break came into the open in 1960, it became necessary for the Chinese to assert their sovereign claims. The Chinese were not in a sound political position to do this because the previous years of the Great Leap had involved numerous attempts elsewhere in Sinkiang to introduce communes and alter the nomadic habits of other minorities. The Kazakhs were aware of these threats to their traditional ways, and the Soviet Union had been vigorously spreading reports about the dangers of Peking's policies. Thus by 1962 when relatively mild initiatives by the Chinese were combined with Soviet horror propaganda, near-panic seized the Kazakh community. The fact that such numbers would leave China demonstrated not only the failure of what Peking considered to be conciliatory policies toward minorities but also the vulnerability of China's borders. In the subsequent years the Chinese have increasingly seen the "nationalities problem" as one of guarding the sacred territory of the Chinese motherland.

#### The Realities of Guarding the Border

From this review of the ethnic minority problem in Communist China

it is apparent that the Chinese case is distinctive because it is so intimately tied to basic issues of national security. In the past Chinese problems of cultural diffusion and assimilation were not significantly different from problems of ethnic integration in other societies. What is special in the Chinese case is that a society which historically was hardly prepared to admit to having minorities and whose sense of cultural homogeneity helped create a strong feeling for the historically immutable territory of "China" should suddenly discover that its basic security is now threatened because its border territories are populated mainly by ethnic minorities.

A few facts can help explain the basis of this growing sense of Chinese anxiety. The basic contradiction of China is that while only 6 percent of the population is non-Han, this minority makes up in fact the majority peoples of nearly 60 percent of the territory in China. Furthermore, over 90 percent of the border with her neighbors is inhabited by non-Han peoples. The only significant border area occupied by Han population is along the Amur and Ussuri rivers, the boundary where the Chinese have had their most severe border fights with the Russians.<sup>15</sup> The fact that they have had problems in this Han populated area must have made the Chinese more aware of the populations on most of their other borders.

In the past the Chinese took comfort in the fact that only 6 percent of their people were non-Han, but now officials in Peking have become acutely conscious that this percentage represents in absolute terms some 52 million people. Similarly, in the past the Chinese minimized their minority problem because the national

minorities were divided among 52 or possibly even 54 communities,<sup>16</sup> several with less than 10,000 members. Now, however, Peking officials emphasize to Western visitors the fact that at least 10 and possibly 11 national minority groups number over one million. Also disturbing is the fact that as the Chinese have learned more about some of their larger national minorities, they have had to raise quite significantly their estimates of the size of these populations.<sup>17</sup>

Thus in 1969 when the Chinese became involved in serious border clashes with the Russians, Peking had to recognize that it has a far more serious national minority problem than any Chinese government had ever previously acknowledged. Circumstances which had once seemed favorable to Chinese interests now had to be revised. In particular, the many minorities who straddled China's borders and were once seen as providing the basis for a possible Chinese forward policy of subversion in Southeast Asia were now seen as a potentially subversive element in China. The exodus of the Kazakhs, who once numbered over half a million, raised questions about the Uighurs' loyalty, and they represented at least four million people with kinfolk also on the Soviet side. On the southern border the Chuang, whose population may have reached ten million, had been perceived for years as Thai speakers capable of supporting a Free Thai movement against the influence of Bangkok in the north and northwest of Thailand, were suddenly seen as requiring special attention because of their potential vulnerability to anti-Chinese appeals. In Peking doubts began to arise also as precisely to whom the minorities along the Burmese and Lao borders were likely to be loyal, partic-



ularly since only the Chinese had been harassing them to make them participate in any national system. Thus, by the end of the 1960s, when the overseas Chinese were seen as less threatening to Southeast Asian governments, and when the Cultural Revolution had weakened somewhat Peking's administrative influence over its minorities, questions arose about the balance of loyalties of some groups who straddled China's borders.

These changes in Chinese attitudes were part of a more fundamental alteration in basic Chinese views about Chinese security. For the last hundred-odd years the Chinese had lived with a world view in which military danger was likely to come from the sea. First in the form of British and European sea power, then from Japan, and most recently in the threat of American power. During this period China had been fortunate in being able to leave relatively unguarded the longest border in the world. Chinese military power was thus deployed in the eastern and southern regions where the Han population was concentrated. Indeed in modern times the Chinese evolved a unique pattern of civil-military relations in which armies — from those of the warlords, through the Nationalists and down to the Communists — participated to a great extent in civil administration and were concentrated where the Chinese population was the most dense. The combination of living off local resources and helping civil rule seemed to reduce the burden of the military.

The break in Sino-Soviet relations which reached a climax in the border fighting of 1969 brought to an end that era and reestablished the historic and tragic Chinese security problem of having

to station troops along a huge underpopulated border. Suddenly China was back to the problem which was as old as the Great Wall and which was an ingredient in the collapse of all the great dynasties: that is, the problem of extracting resources and manpower from the densely populated Han regions in order to establish lonely garrisons in the non-Han territories.

Harrison E. Salisbury has described the almost pathological and racist fear of the Russians of the "Mongol hordes" of long ago and hence of the Chinese today.<sup>18</sup> What is often overlooked is that the Chinese on their side have an equally powerful historic fear of tribal peoples moving down into their agricultural domains. The Great Wall of China is a monument to this fear, and now that the Chinese are reacting again to a threat from the north it is understandable that the historic imagery of the dangerous "barbarians" of the border regions, that is, some of their national minorities, has again come alive in the Chinese imagination.

We have evidence of the Chinese anxiety about the minority peoples along the northern border from some unpublicized changes which the Chinese have been making with respect to the boundaries of provinces and autonomous regions along the border of China. Until these changes came in 1970, the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region extended along the southern border of the Mongolian People's Republic and on up in the east until it shared a border with the Soviet Union. The territory of the Autonomous Region did in fact coincide with the area of Mongol settlement. After the troubles with the Russians, the territory of Heilungkiang, the Han populated province along the Amur and

Ussuri rivers, was extended to the west so as to include the entire boundary with the USSR. The Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region was further cut in size when Kirin province, also Han populated, was extended to the west to the border of the Mongolian People's Republic. Presumably, Mongol herdsmen are still able to move into these new areas of Kirin and Heilungkiang to graze their flocks in the summer, but administrative and military control of the area is now firmly in Han hands.

Similarly, recent changes in the internal map of China have apparently cut down the size of the Ningsia Hui Autonomous Region and the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Furthermore since 1969 there has been a significant step up in the rate of Han people moving into Sinkiang and Kansu. Such influxes of Han peoples in the past have always been accompanied by increased ethnic tensions as the Han tended to monopolize the better farming lands, government offices, and the better paid jobs in the railroads, industries, and the servicing of the military.

The combination of internal tensions and the external security threats has convinced the Chinese to reinvestigate their political policies of winning over, or at least controlling, national minorities. The seriousness with which they take this task can be seen from activities at the Central Institute of Nationalities.

### The Central Institute of Nationalities

Current Chinese policies toward the national minorities are vividly manifest at the Central Nationalities Institute, which is located on the western side of Peking, near the Academy of Sciences

and on the route to where Peking National University (Peita) is now located on the old Yenching University campus.<sup>19</sup> The purpose of the institute, which was established on June 11, 1951, is to train revolutionary cadres, from each minority community, who are expected to return to their people and provide appropriate leadership. Since its founding the institute has turned out nearly ten thousand trained propagandists and party members.

Before the Cultural Revolution the training course could last as long as five years for most students who were being prepared for key leadership roles. At that time the average enrollment was about 2,800 students. From 1966 to 1970 the institute was closed by the Cultural Revolution, and new classes of students were only again brought to Peking for training when classes began on January 3, 1972. At the present the institute has 1,200 students, 30 percent of whom are members of the Chinese Communist party and 70 percent of whom are Communist Youth League members. The People's Liberation Army has 90 students at the institute. In addition there are some 70 to 80 Han Chinese being trained in minority languages and culture.

Physically, the institute is conspicuously better endowed and funded than even the leading Chinese universities. Its buildings are well maintained, its museum is brightly lighted with colorfully painted signs, its athletic fields are more extensive and have more equipment than those of even the elite universities and middle schools. The dormitory rooms seem more comfortable than the quarters associated not only with universities and the military but also the rest houses of government bureaus. Special care is given to providing from time to time

food for some of the different dietary traditions. There is a special kitchen for the Muslims, and the dancers from all groups, who are seen as needing more energy, have their special training tables.

The contrast between the very heavy investment in the institute and the slowness with which the training program is picking up since the Cultural Revolution suggests some of the frustrations the Chinese have had in arriving at appropriate policies for the national minorities at a time of crisis in national security. Officials at the institute insist that national minority policies are based solely on Marx and the thoughts of Mao Tse-tung (no mention of Lenin) and that there has been no change in content since before the Cultural Revolution. On the other hand they do admit that it is still impossible to teach history and that daily sessions of "struggle, criticism, and transformation" are still going on to arrive at an appropriate curriculum for teaching about the proper relations between Han and non-Han traditions. Trained anthropologists who once staffed the department of history and customs are currently not allowed to teach.

Officials suggest that the cause of the crisis has been in part the dropping of the old pre-Cultural Revolution practice of recruiting influential people in terms of the traditional cultures and instead recruiting workers, peasants, and soldiers who have little standing in their home communities. Reports indicate that in the past many "students" at the institute were from the "tribal" or "feudal" leading families — one Tibetan prince brought to this "workers" revolutionary training ground a bevy of personal servants to look after his needs. During the Cultural Revolution many of these earlier trained cadres displayed

distaste and even stubborn resistance instead of enthusiasm, for the Red Guards and Mao's revolution.

Although current recruits have supposedly far better revolutionary class backgrounds, the very humble nature of their origins, combined with the expectation that they are moving swiftly to positions of power, makes them appear in the eyes of just about everyone as suspiciously opportunistic individuals. The Chinese dilemma is how precisely to take the young people from the minority groups, who on the face of it would seem not to be destined for leadership, and put them into key positions without leaving them hopelessly tainted with the brush of Uncle Tomism. Officials are quite frank about this problem. First they admit that among more "feudalistically" inclined peoples, as they see most of their minority nationals, there is not enough appreciation of revolutionary virtues to understand that people from lowly peasant and worker backgrounds are appropriately the leaders of the future and not just rude social climbers. Second, the officials at the institute concede that the students they are training are expected to go back to their communities and spread the word of Mao, which regrettably makes them appear to be agents of Han domination.

The principal solution the Chinese have found for their dilemma has been to emphasize the training of the nationalist cadres in their own folkways so that they can return to their communities and appear to be more knowledgeable about traditional customs than even their elders or those who have not been contaminated by close associations with Han Chinese. Thus the major emphasis in the cadre curriculum is in the fine arts and handicrafts. Traditional songs are practiced

which are only slightly modified, usually near the end of the verses, to give way to propaganda themes and the praise of Chairman Mao. The object is to ensure that the cadre will be as skilled as anyone in his community in traditional music, dance, and costume.

To the consternation of Han officials it has turned out that the post-Cultural Revolution recruits from more humble class backgrounds have tended to be "culturally disadvantaged," not just in normal educational skills but also in their ethnic cultures. Lower class Tibetans, Mongols, and Uighurs lack understanding of the social niceties associated with images of leadership in their respective cultures. Many are also illiterate in their own language and do not know a word of Chinese. Thus the burdens of language and cultural training are much greater than in the past when better educated cadres had five years of training. Now the short-term course for cadres is only two to three years. The uneven cultural background of the current students has also required extensive subdividing of classes into smaller and more homogeneous groups according to levels of talent and knowledge, all of which further complicates the program.

A second major problem of cadre training has been in the area of language education. Cadres have to be, on the one hand, fully capable of carrying to their people the ideas, slogans, and "thought" of Mao and his revolution and thus they do require extensive training as translators. On the other hand, it is desirable that they not appear to be people who have lost their roots in their own culture and been completely assimilated into the Han world. The very distinctiveness of revolutionary language and the Communist concern over the

"correctness of thoughts" work to dramatize the distance of Han culture from traditional ways and hence to spotlight the moral and cultural issue of assimilation. All the efforts at teaching traditional songs and dances are designed to mask the issue of assimilation and to demonstrate the cadre's identification with his cultural origins. On the other hand his need to perform his basic revolutionary role compels him to speak in terms which make him appear to be a running dog of the Hans.

At present representatives of 51 out of 54 "recognized" minorities attend the institute. During the 1950s the emphasis was particularly on dealing with Tibetans in the light of Peking's difficulties in extending its rule in Tibet. At present the Tibetans are still the largest group, consisting of some 400 cadres, and 90 out of 100 in the short course. There has, however, been a rise in the number of Uighurs to over 150.

The daily regime at the institute is what one might expect at a party cadre training center. Early morning exercises are followed by 50 minute classes from 8 a.m. to noon; then a rest break and then further drills from 1:30 to 3:30, followed by sports, and then evening homework from 7:30 to 10:30 and "lights out." The classes seek to blend language training, propaganda and political education, and song and dance performances. The institute does have a library of 600,000 volumes, 10 percent of which are in minority languages, and the most valuable are local chronicles in Chinese. At present, however, there is no research of a scholarly nature taking place, and there will not be any until they have resolved the issue of how to treat "history."<sup>20</sup> Academically trained

anthropologists are also not at present teaching. Instruction is entirely in the hands of party cadres and PLA representatives.

It is impossible to judge how effective the Central Institute will be in building loyalty to Peking among minority elements. The approach is determined, the investment is high; but one is left with the feeling that, as sincere as the attempt is, the policy is slightly artificial. Possibly this is an inevitable characteristic of any policy that strives to accelerate inter-ethnic relations not for its own sake but for some extraneous political end. Although the analogy is not entirely apt, the Chinese policy, if transferred to America, would be similar to the United States government's sponsoring the "Black Power movement," monopolizing the teaching of "Afro-American studies," and directing those who are thus trained to be more "knowledgeable" about a somewhat synthetic "black culture" to make all their "cultural performances" climax in uninhibited praise of the President.

### Future Prospects

While it is difficult to forecast the likely effects of current Chinese policies toward the national minorities, it is not hard to discern certain trends.

First, as the Chinese accept the prospect of a long-term security threat along their inner borders, the historic Chinese distrust of the once nomadic, non-Han peoples is likely to rise. The obsession of the Chinese over protecting their "territories," which was heightened by their "losses" through the "unequal treaties" of the nineteenth century, will make them even more hypersensitive to the vulnerability of their borders, which

lie almost entirely in minority dominated regions. The compulsions of national security are thus likely to heighten anxieties and stimulate the desire of Han authorities to eliminate any differences in underlying values and loyalties among the minorities, while tolerating differences only in the matter of forms, such as dress and folk dances.

The reactions of minorities to this increased pressure for political conformity is likely to be uneven. Power relationships within each minority community may shift as a consequence of Han pressures, and the result is likely to be greater internal ethnic tension. Those minorities who straddle the border with the Soviet Union will certainly find themselves in a complex situation. As both targets of suspicion and subjects of courting, these minorities have leverage with Peking but are also highly vulnerable.

In this situation it is hard to predict the balance of advantage or danger for each or all the minorities, but it does seem highly likely that the uniqueness of their circumstances will tend to heighten their ethnic awareness and make them feel not just culturally but also politically distinct.

The speed with which increased Han Chinese security anxieties can stimulate minority political awareness has already been demonstrated by the reactions of Tibetans to Chinese policies not just since the revolt of 1959 but more significantly since the Sino-Indian border fighting of 1962. As the PLA came to dominate more and more administration in Tibet, the Tibetans became increasingly sensitive to their separate identities. Even though younger Tibetans did not have as deep attachments

to Buddhism as did their elders, they have shown a new sense of ethnic awareness as they have been forced to recognize that they are different from the Han troops who appear to be manifestly a foreign occupation force.<sup>21</sup>

In more sociological terms it seems highly likely that as the processes of social change proceed in China and as more members of the national minorities come closer to the Han in cultural and economic circumstances, the greater will be their concern about their ethnic identities and the power status of their communities. During the last twenty years individual members of various national minorities have been welcomed into representational roles in a form of "tokenism." At the same time as increasing numbers of the minorities have been trained to play party cadre roles and convey the wishes of Peking in return for power and status advantages they have become vulnerable to the charge of being opportunistic. In time, however, as the numbers of better educated increase, these representational and agent roles are likely to decline and be replaced by roles based on the genuine autonomy of the national minority.

There is a certain irony in this prospect, for in its early enthusiasms and before the rise of fears for national security on the land frontiers, the Chinese Communist party did genuinely favor precisely such a development toward greater autonomy. In its very first years the CCP would have welcomed the idea that the national minorities were increasing in both cultural development and a sense of autonomy and self-identification. The paradox has been that with the need to maintain the territorial integrity of China the Communists have moved toward more and more aggressive

assimilationist policies. In order to facilitate penetration for spreading their control they have also helped maintain cultural forms and thus the basis for separate identity. Consequently they may have arrived at precisely the right policy mix for both advancing a minority and making it feel more self-conscious of its separate identity.

In sum, we come to the final conclusion that paradoxically as economic and cultural differences break down the Chinese are likely to find that they still have national minority problems, which will possibly be even more acute than in the past. When the cultural patterns between Han and non-Han were quite different and they each lived in relatively separate worlds, and when the Han Chinese had other pressing concerns and ignored those they considered their inferiors, the national minorities were able in practice to realize considerable autonomy. That is to say, in the past when the policy of the Chinese government was assimilationist, practical factors led to the realities of autonomy. The drift of Tibet and Outer Mongolia toward independence was only the most conspicuous assertion of autonomy by national minorities against weak Chinese authorities. Then came the Communists with their policy of praising autonomy for the national minorities but introducing practices which were more threatening to the autonomy of minorities. Moreover, Peking's increased capacity to penetrate the national minorities has made Chinese authorities more effective in supporting assimilation policies, particularly as they have become more anxious about their security problems.

Yet we know from the experiences of more industrial countries, the leveling of cultural differences can lead to greater

ethnic tensions as economic and political power considerations are elevated in relative importance. In China we are not seeing the cultural leveling between Han and non-Han because of industrialization but rather as the result of a combination of ideological commitment and national security concerns on the part of the government. Therefore China may shortly be confronted with the types of ethnic divisions typical of advanced industrial societies while remaining in a pre-industrial state and lacking the material resources that more affluent countries may have for ameliorating their ethnic divisions.

In China ideology and national security considerations may be serving as the functional equivalent of the social forces associated with industrialization in breaking down the significance of cultural uniqueness and in elevating the importance of political and economic differences in ethnic relations. These considerations have a compelling quality which will force the Chinese authorities to press for the solution of national minority problems and to feel that they cannot afford to allow time to work to reduce distrust. As long as the minorities are seen as linked to the vital question of the nation's safety, Peking will find it hard to maintain a relaxed and sympathetic posture. More important, the security factor means that, whereas in industrializing societies it is possible to diffuse power toward ethnic groups as they become more assimilated, in China it may be hard to yield significant power to the minorities as they can hardly be

trusted as the ultimate guardians on the borders.

In speculating about the possibility that national security considerations in China can produce effects comparable to advanced industrialization in other societies with respect to ethnic divisions, we have gone beyond current realities. Recent events in China do, however, point in the direction of these speculations, and more important, we can already note that the Chinese case seems to support a general law of ethnic relations which holds that substantive differences in cultural practices and values are less important than the realities of power and economic relationships in determining the intensity of ethnic tensions. As the cultures of the non-Han come closer to that of the Han, the ethnic identities of the non-Han will be increasingly defined by their sense of political efficacy and well-being as compared to the Han majority.

Thus the Chinese, like so many people, are learning that as they reduce differences and encourage the ideals of equality the remaining irreducible differences will come to be seen as the cause of even greater injustices than were associated with the earlier gross cultural differences.<sup>22</sup> Whatever the Chinese policies to cope with these problems, it is certain that there will not be a return to the original ideal of encouraging national autonomy because any minorities policy in China will certainly be subordinated to the higher issues of national security.

## NOTES

1. It is noteworthy that the Englishman most closely identified with the aspirations of the Chinese in Malaya immediately after World War II, Victor Purcell, still used the designation of "tribes." See Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia* (London, Oxford University Press, 1951).
2. David M. Deal, "Peking's Policies towards Ethnic Minorities in Southwest China, 1927 to 1965," mimeographed paper given at Northwest Regional Seminar on China, University of Washington, April 28-29, 1972.
3. Alfred P. Rubin, "The Position of Tibet in International Law," *China Quarterly*, no. 35 (July-September 1968), 110-154.
4. Brandt, Schwartz, and Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism* (New York, Atheneum, 1966), p. 217, as quoted by June Dreyer, "China's Minority Nationalists in the Cultural Revolution," *China Quarterly*, no. 35 (July-September, 1968), 97.
5. Nym Wales, *Red Dust* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1952), p. 71.
6. Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China* (New York, Random House), p. 204.
7. Chang Chih-i, *A Discussion of the National Question in the Chinese Revolution*, trans. in George Mosely, *The Party and the National Question in China* (Cambridge, M.I.T. Press, 1966), pp. 68-69.
8. For an account of the Tibetan revolt which is sympathetic to the Tibetans and based on interviews with their leaders, see George N. Patterson, *Tibet in Revolt* (London, Faber and Faber, 1960).
9. William Heaton, "Inner Mongolia: Aftermath of the Revolution," *Current Science*, 9.9 (April 1971), 13.
10. Amrit Tal, "Sinification of Ethnic Minorities in China," *Current Science*, 8.4 (February 1970), 15.
11. Heaton, "Inner Mongolia."
12. For a discussion of the disaffection of the first classes of Tibetan cadres during the strains related to the Great Leap, see Mosely, *The Party and the National Question in China*, introduction.
13. For a detailed analysis of these events see George Moseley, *A Sino-Soviet Cultural Frontier: The Ili Kazakh Autonomous Chou* (Cambridge, East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1966).
14. The Ili area was a source of dispute between Russia and China since the Ch'ing dynasty. Indeed, it was the subject of a rather celebrated case in Western versus Chinese styles of international law and also the first occasion for Yalta to become an infamous name in Chinese foreign relations. Briefly, the Chinese negotiator at a conference held in Yalta made concessions about China's claim to suzerainty over Ili which infuriated the Chinese emperor, who immediately ordered the diplomat recalled and beheaded. This act created consternation among the Western diplomats in Peking who had been trying to teach the Chinese the principle of diplomatic immunity for their own safety, but who now realized that they would also have to insist that the principle be applied by the Chinese government to its own diplomats. As the doyen of the fledgling diplomatic corps said, "How can one outwit a Chinese negotiator if one knows he is to lose his head for it?" For a good general account of the Ili controversy see: Hosea Ballou Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire* (London, Longman, Green, 1910, 1918).
15. For an excellent analysis of these incidents see Thomas W. Robinson, "The Sino-Soviet Border Dispute: Background Development, and the March 1968 Clashes," *American Political Science Review*, 66.4 (December 1972), 1175-1202.
16. The Chinese Communists have varied in their official count of national minorities between 52, which was used in most of the earlier reports, and 54, which is the number now cited by the Central Institute of National Minorities. This change is another indication of rising Chinese concern over and sensitivity toward their minorities problems.
17. The Chinese, for example, for a long time thought of the Tibetans as totaling fewer than two million, but by the late 1950s they spoke of about three million Tibetans. Nobody has better than the roughest approximation of how many Tibetans there are. George Patterson reports careful estimates based on calculations of numbers of monks and the size of monasteries lead to figures as high as five to ten or even twenty million. Patterson, *Tibet in Revolt*, p. 35.
18. Harrison E. Salisbury, *War between Russia and China* (New York, W. W. Norton, 1969).
19. I visited the institute in December 1972, during a 26-day trip to China.



20. Before the Cultural Revolution the Central Institute did facilitate field research under the guidance of such recognized anthropologists as Wu Wen-tsao, who trained at Dartmouth and Columbia before teaching at Yenching, and the world famous Fei Hsiao-t'ung, but now these men are not in leadership roles. Fei Hsiao-t'ung during the Cultural Revolution spent two years and three months at a "May Seventh School" working at farming. He is now elderly but of quick mind and publicly accepts the current trends in China.
21. For a report on Tibetan attitudes as acknowledged in the Chinese press see "National Minorities," *China News Analysis*, no. 720 (August 9, 1968), 3-5.
22. Chinese appreciation of the delicacies of policies toward minorities and of the issue

of "genocide" associated with assimilationist policies was most recently revealed in the Chinese delegate's speech at the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (E.C.A.F.E.) when in dismissing an imperialist propaganda the Malthusian specter Chi Lung said that in China "population increase in a planned way" was a part of overall economic planning and that, "in national minority areas and other sparse populated areas, we adopt appropriate measures to help increase population." *Peking Review*, no. 17 (April 27, 1973), 1. By merely mentioning the issue the Chinese delegate attracted attention to Peking's ambivalence about whether minorities should be treated differently or be assimilated and treated like all other Chinese.

❖                      ❖                      ❖                      ❖

## CULTURAL WINDS OF CHANGE

The "gang of four," arbiters of China's new proletarian literature and art since the Cultural Revolution, now stand accused in the Chinese media of having been, in fact, exponents of a "counterrevolutionary revisionist line" in cultural matters, and of having "strangled and manipulated" literature and art. While these are by no means the most serious of the charges leveled against Mao Tse-tung's widow Chiang Ch'ing (江青) and the three Shanghai "radicals," Chang Ch'un-ch'iao (張春橋), Yao Wen-yuan (姚文元) and Wang Hung-wen (王洪文), it was in the cultural sphere that their influence was most pervasive and it was there that they proved most successful in imposing their uncompromising ideological standards.

The loosening of the vise of censorship that Chiang Ch'ing and her Shanghai

"confederates" exercised in the cultural sphere makes possible a greater variety of fare in literature and art; many works were produced that were either never made public or were subsequently denounced as "big poisonous weeds." In 1974, for example, a host of offerings heralded as a flowering of new revolutionary productions inspired by Chiang Ch'ing's model dramas was unveiled at a North China Theatrical Festival in Peking. The effusive billing proved premature. Upon viewing, a Shanxi entry, "Thrice Ascending Peach Mountain," showed itself to be a "very poisonous weed." Before long, it was found that the cultural soil of other provinces was also nurturing "big poisonous weeds."\*

\* See *Current Scene*, Vol. XII, No. 4, April 1974, pp. 23-25.

The first post-Cultural Revolution openings of China to foreign culture were similarly nipped in the bud. Performances of Western classical music by touring foreign orchestras in 1973 brought in their wake a vituperative campaign against the "decadent" and "depraved" nature of "bourgeois" music. Few foreign orchestras visited the PRC during the next two years.\*

Whether the current attacks on the stringent cultural norms of the past 10 years will bring more than a *pro forma* relaxation in the arts cannot yet be judged, despite frequent press references of late to Mao's well-known instruction "let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools of thought contend," and such uncharacteristic outpourings as *Liberation Army Daily's* heady prediction that "a springtime for multicolored socialist literature and art will soon arrive."

Of some relevance, however, was PRC press treatment of the fortieth anniversary of Lu Hsun's (鲁迅) death — the occasion that signaled the opening of the current campaign. The anniversary, which was accorded high-level media attention, emphasized the famous author's role in translating foreign works. The New China News Agency pointed out in an item on October 26 that roughly half of Lu Hsun's works consisted of translations and introductions to "writings from other lands." According to the news agency, Lu Hsun "utilized foreign works to stimulate the cultural outpourings of the Chinese revolution," and he translated the best creative writings of "Tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Finland, The Nether-

lands, Spain, Japan, France, Germany, Austria and Britain."

Even such honorable mention of "foreign" works marks a significant departure from the attitude that has prevailed in China since the clean sweep of the country's bookstores during the Cultural Revolution.

### "Pioneers" Redeemed

The current cultural campaign against the "gang of four" centers around their efforts, successful for a time, to suppress "Pioneers," a eulogistic film about the Taching Oilfield, one of China's model industries and a "red flag personally erected by Chairman Mao." The film, produced by the Changchun Film Studio, was originally shown nationally during the Spring Festival in February 1975 to widespread acclaim from workers, peasants and soldiers who expressed their love for it "from the bottom of their hearts."

Chiang Ch'ing, however, was "infuriated" by this "outstanding" work and brandished a "butcher's knife" against it. On the second day after it was shown, the "gang of four" ordered that no copies of the film be reproduced, that all publicity about it be stopped and that it not be distributed abroad. On Chiang Ch'ing's personal orders to "create willful charges against it," "10 accusations" were then "concocted" against the film — among them that it was too "sentimental," "stereotyped" and "abstract," and a story of "real characters and true events."

After receiving a letter from a Changchun film scenarist complaining of the activities of the "gang," Mao viewed the film and issued a directive approving its release. His directive, made public

\* See *ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

in a *People's Daily* article on November 5, said:

"There is no big error in this film. Suggest that it be approved for distribution. Do not nit-pick. And to list as many as 10 accusations against it is going too far. It hampers the adjustment of the Party's current policy on literature and art."

The "gang of four," however, was not to be put off and, resorting to "conspiracies and intrigues," they sought to negate the directive by delaying its dissemination and distorting its contents. In addition, they continued their persecution of persons involved with the film and attempted to have a new version made. They even forced the scenarist to write another letter to Mao containing a self-criticism and asking for the first letter back.

### A Cultural Indictment

The full complement of charges as set forth in the November 5 *People's Daily* article by Jen P'ing turns the tables on the "gang of four," accusing them of "criminal activities" in "distorting and negating Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in literature and art, sabotaging the proletarian revolution in literature and art and pushing the counterrevolutionary revisionist line." In a statement not without irony, Chiang Ch'ing is described as "a bourgeois careerist who shamelessly styled herself a 'standard-bearer of the revolution in literature and art.'"

According to the *People's Daily* indictment:

"...This gang has been making full use for years of literature and art as

their springboard for a capitalist restoration in order to realize the criminal aim of usurping Party state power, subverting the dictatorship of the proletariat and restoring capitalism.... They practiced unscrupulous sectarianism in literary and art circles, developed a coalition that ganged up to advance their interests so that literary and art circles would become their 'ganged dominated domain.' They split ranks of literary and art workers, rejected 'alien elements' in a manner of 'letting those who come to thrive and those who refuse to perish and at will rejected revolutionary literary and art works which the worker-peasant-soldier masses like. In fact, they enforced an outright bourgeois dictatorship, a fascist dictatorship over literary and art circles... They trumped up charges against a great number of revolutionary literary and art workers and persecuted them and suppressed a great number of good or fairly good artistic works...."

### More "Counterrevolutionary" Cases

In the wake of the November 5 *People's Daily* revelations, other cultural crimes perpetrated by the "gang" were made public. In Hunan, long Hua Kuo-feng (華國鋒) provincial base, the "gang of four" had strongly opposed a local opera "Song of the Gardener." According to a broadcast from that province on November 11, they found "serious errors in the opera and called for its public criticism in "flagrant violation" of Mao's approval of the work, which had been made into a film in 1973 "with the loving care of Chairman Hua Kuo-feng."

Describing a confrontation over the film, the broadcast said:

"...Behind the backs of Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee, they called a meeting at which they asserted it was 'right' to 'criticize' the opera, arrogantly slandered the principal leading comrades on the Hunan Provincial Party Committee and accused the committee of reporting the matter to Chairman Mao and 'handing them an ultimatum.' In fact, they turned the spearhead of their attack on the great leader and teacher Chairman Mao."

Meddling in military affairs, the "gang of four" waged a protracted battle against an army theatrical endeavor, the "Long March," a Peking broadcast of November 7 reported. This work, originally performed by an army troupe in 1964, so pleased Mao that after viewing it he "joyfully mounted the stage and had a picture taken with all the performers and workers." He also issued an instruction to the troupe "to perform the drama well."

In 1974, the "gang of four" ordered that the "Long March" be revised and, when their instructions were disregarded, they had the drama consigned "to the back shelf." When it was performed in 1975 on the fortieth anniversary of the army in defiance of their orders, the "gang of four" took reprisals, suppressing broadcasts and performances of the work and preventing production of a film version.

Paralleling efforts to suppress "good or fairly good" theatrical works were plans by the "gang of four" to produce their own "black" films—a course they

pursued more blatantly after the death of Chou En-lai in January 1976. A broadcast from Kwangtung on November 9 related the experiences of workers at the Pearl River Studio who were "pressured" and "threatened" by the "gang" to complete a batch of "counterrevolutionary" films for showing on October 1.

One of these films was so explosive that the "gang" called it an "atomic bomb." Ostensibly, the broadcast said, it showed the overthrow of the head of a provincial Party committee, whereas in fact it was an attack on Chou En-lai.

#### Whither "On the Docks," *Et Al*

**A**n aspect of the current campaign not yet directly addressed in the PRC media involves the ultimate fate of those model theatrical works that passed Chiang Ch'ing's litmus test of ideological and artistic purity and for a decade monopolized the performing arts. Recent articles have accused Chiang Ch'ing of taking undeserved credit for these revolutionary theatrical works, but her association with the struggles of their evolution has been recorded in the Chinese media too long and too insistently to be easily cast away. Nor is it possible to see how they can escape the taint that is now upon all that Chiang and her "confederates" touched. Their artistic merits, or lack thereof, aside, these works served—in a political sense—as "counterrevolutionary" tools. As the Jen P'ing article in *People's Daily* said: "They treated model revolutionary theatrical works as their personal capital, used them as monuments to themselves to create public opinion favorable to themselves for their counterrevolutionary plot to usurp Party and state power."

## BRIEFS

### PRC Ministries on Technology Imports

A number of articles in leading PRC newspapers last month stressed the positive role of advanced technology imports in China's economic development. The articles, some authored by economic ministries, have denounced a "closed door" policy on technology imports as well as "blindly worshipping things foreign," calling in for China to "learn from the good experience and advanced science and technology of other countries and absorb them for our own use."

*People's Daily* on November 22 carried one such article written by the criticism group of the Ministry of Light Industry. The article denounced the "Wang Chang-Chiang-Yao anti-Party clique" for tactics that "slandered the efforts to introduce some necessary advanced technologies and equipment from abroad in a planned manner on the basis of self-reliance."

Denying that technological imports would threaten China's sovereignty and independence, the article said: "Economic and technical exchanges between countries with different social systems are completely normal activities if they help supply each other's needs and overcome their own weak points..." Citing the example of the petrochemical industry, the article said that the import of major pieces of equipment helped China build up its own industrial system and utilize its own raw materials.

In a similar vein, an article by the Coal Ministry in *Kwangming Daily* on November 11 attributed Kailuan's doubling of coal production during the period of the First Five-Year Plan at least in part to the installation of imported equipment. "Importation of advanced technology is needed in socialist revolution and socialist construction," the Ministry said.

### National Railway Conference

Some 1,200 representatives of China's 20 railway bureaus attended a conference in Peking from October 30 to November 1 — the first such national-level economic meeting announced since the leadership changes of early October. Held to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the "Mao Tsetung Locomotive," the meeting set a no-nonsense tone for this important and recently troubled industrial sector. A message was highlighted in its message to the country's railway workers stating that the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua had "full confidence" in the railway workers and had issued "new battle orders" placing "higher demands" on the sector — the "main artery of the national economy."

The meeting was attended by Railway Vice Ministers Kuo Lu (郭魯) and Su C (蘇杰), who expressed the hope that railway personnel would adhere to Mao Tse-tung's line for building socialism and work to accomplish the modernization of agriculture, industry, defense, and science and technology — the four modernizations — by the end of the century.

Crew members of the "Mao Tsetung Locomotive" denounced the "gang of four" for spreading such nonsense as "we'd rather have a socialist behind schedule than a revisionist on schedule." The locomotive team described the "gang of four" as "bloodsuckers" who knew "nothing about farming and industrial work" and who harbored the "criminal aim of ruining the economic foundation of the proletarian dictatorship."




---

## CHRONOLOGY

---

### EVENTS IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

#### NOVEMBER 1976

- 1 A rally and parade of 100,000 militiamen in Shanghai celebrated Hua Kuo-feng's (華國鋒) appointment as Party Chairman. The rally was addressed by Shanghai Garrison Commander and CCP Secretary Chou Ch'un-lin (周純麟).
- 1 A meeting of railway workers was held in Peking to mark the 30th anniversary of the naming of the "Mao Tsetung Locomotive."
- 1 A Malaysian economic mission led by Datuk Musa Hitam, Minister of Primary Industries, arrived in Peking.
- 1 A Swedish exhibition of furniture and lighting facilities and interior decorations opened in Peking.
- 3 In a brief news item, the New China News Agency (NCNA) reported the victory of Democratic candidate Jimmy Carter in the U.S. Presidential election.
- 5 *People's Daily* (PD) frontpaged an article by Jen P'ing (任平) revealing a July 25, 1975, comment by Mao Tse-tung on the film "Pioneers" and reaffirming his art and literary principal of "Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend."
- 5 Sri Lanka Navy Commander Admiral Don Basil Goonesekera arrived in Peking.
- 5 A delegation of the Rwandan National Revolutionary Movement for Development arrived in Peking.
- 6 The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the State Council sent a message of greetings to their Soviet counterparts on the 59th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, making no mention of the Sino-Soviet border problem.

- 7 A Romanian economic delegation led by Paul Niculescu, member of the Executive Political Committee of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, arrived in Peking.
- 8 A U.S. Congressional delegation led by Republican Senator Carl Curtis arrived in Shanghai. The delegation met with Vice Foreign Minister Wang Hai-jun (王海容) on November 13 in Peking and with Vice Premier Li Hsien-nie (李先念) the next day.
- 9 Yunnan Province was struck by an earthquake registering 6.2 on the Richter Scale, according to the Hong Kong Royal Observatory.
- 9 General Sterian Tirca, Romanian Vice Minister of National Defense, arrived in Peking.
- 11 Foreign Minister Ch'iao Kuan-hua (喬冠華) met with Lutyn Chuluunbaatar, new Mongolian ambassador to China.
- 12 Li Shih (李石), new PRC ambassador to the Central African Republic, left Peking for his post.
- 12 An exhibition on the life of Lu Hsun (魯迅) opened in Tokyo.
- 13 Knut Hammerskjold, Director General of the International Air Transport Association, arrived in China.
- 14 A Jen P'ing article frontpaged by PD alleged that the "gang of four" had sought to "sabotage" China's economy.
- 14 An NPC delegation led by Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee Ulan (烏蘭夫) and Secretary General Chi P'eng-fei (姬鵬飛) left Peking for Iran and Kuwait.
- 15 President Salah Addis Ahmed Bokassa of the Central African Republic arrived in Peking. A banquet in his honor was hosted by Vice Premier Li Hsien-nie. In his banquet speech, Li accused Moscow of creating "false impressions" and relaxation in Sino-Soviet relations.
- 15 A Sri Lanka delegation arrived in Peking for the fourth committee meeting of the Sino-Sri Lanka Joint Shipping Service.
- 16 The PRC and the Central African Republic signed an economic and technical cooperation agreement and a trade agreement in Peking.
- 16 A spokesman for the PRC confirmed that an earthquake of 6.9 magnitude on the Richter Scale struck the Tangshan area on November 15.
- 16 An Italian Christian Democratic Senate Group arrived in Peking with Giuseppe Bartolomei as its leader.
- 17 The PRC conducted what was described as a "new" hydrogen bomb test — its fourth nuclear test this year.
- 17 A British broadcasting, radar and instrumentation exhibition opened in Peking.
- 18 Hua Kuo-feng met with Thakin Ba Thein Tin, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Burma, and hosted a dinner for him the next night.

- 19 Representatives of the 10 national pace-setting coal mining and tunneling teams attended a meeting in Peking called by the Ministry of Coal Industry to denounce the "gang of four."
- 19 A PRC delegation led by Vice Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Hsiao P'eng (蕭鵬) left Peking for Mexico to attend the inauguration of President Jose Lopez Portillo.
- 20 A protocol of the 14th session of the Sino-Bulgarian Commission for Scientific and Technical Cooperation was signed in Peking.
- 21 Albanian Vice Minister of Trade Victor Nushi arrived in Peking.
- 22 A press communique was issued on the China visit of President Bokassa of the Central African Republic.
- 23 A PRC trade delegation led by Hsi Yeh-sheng (奚業勝) left Peking for Bangladesh.
- 24 A ceremony was held to lay the cornerstone for the Mao Tsetung Memorial Hall in Peking's Tienanmen Square.
- 25 Representatives from petroleum units throughout China gathered in Peking for a meeting sponsored by the Ministry of Petroleum and Chemical Industries.
- 25 A protocol of the 13th session of the China-Polish Shipbrokers' Company was signed in Warsaw.
- 25 A protocol of the 18th session of the Sino-Czechoslovak Joint Commission for Scientific and Technical Cooperation was signed in Prague.
- 27 Leonid Ilichev, head of the Soviet delegation to border talks with the PRC and Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, arrived in Peking.
- 29 PRC permanent representative to the United Nations Huang Hua (黃華) left New York for home upon recall by his government.
- 30 The Standing Committee of the Fourth NPC opened its third session in Peking.
- 30 NCNA identified Huang Teng-pao (黃登保) as Deputy Commander of the PLA Artillery Force.

*The opinions expressed in the pages of CURRENT SCENE are those of the authors. With the exception of copyright articles, the material contained herein may be reprinted or quoted in whole or in part without permission of the publisher, but copies of the articles in which the material is used are requested. Material so used should be attributed to CURRENT SCENE. Subscriptions are provided on a complimentary basis.*

*Manuscripts and other correspondence should be addressed to: The Editor, CURRENT SCENE, G.P.O. Box 66, 26 Garden Road, Hong Kong.*

*Also published in French and Spanish editions.*

Typography by THE GREEN PAGODA PRESS LTD. for USIS



