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PROBLEMS OF MINORITY RACES  
IN COMMUNIST CHINA

by Fujino Susumu

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PROBLEMS OF MINORITY RACES  
IN COMMUNIST CHINA

[This is a full translation of an article written by Fujino Susumu of the United Nations Association of Japan, appearing in Toho (The Eastern Press), February 1960, pages 48-55.]

Communist China is a multi-racial nation. It is estimated that minority races constitute a population of 40 million within the nation. According to the Shih-shih Shōu-tse (Current Affairs Handbook) of 1956, Volume 17, there are, besides the Han race, 46 different races totaling more than 35.5 million. Communist China has announced that the minority groups account for about six percent of the total population of the country. These minority races are spread mainly over the plateau area which occupies 60% of the total area of the country. Therefore, the Han race, which constitutes 94% of Communist China's population, occupies only about 40% of the total area. We can understand that this problem of the minority groups is one of the important problems confronting Communist China. Prior to the Communist regime, the Chinese Communist Party had recognized the autonomy of each of the races within the nation. The Communist Chinese Constitution declares each of the minority races to be autonomous but inseparable from Communist China: "All the races in Communist China are on an equal footing; racial discrimination, oppression, or any other action which threatens unity among the races is prohibited."

In Japan, people are given to understand that Communist Chinese problems of the minority races are being well managed by Communist China's authorities in compliance with her constitution. However, is the actual condition as simple as people think it is? Might it not be closer to the truth to say that there exist rather large problems even without mentioning the Tibetan problem? Basic problems are taken care of by establishing autonomous areas. But even in these provinces and areas, minority races constitute minority groups against the Han race. Probably this

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particular phase of the problem is the essential point of Communist China's counter-measure against her minority groups.

At the present moment, Communist China's problems of minority races are as follows:

1. There is a problem of population. The above mentioned 35.5 million could be an estimate politically extorted. Even the 1953 census aroused arguments. It is very difficult to believe that the census was precisely taken in the huge area which represents 60% of the gigantic continent and which has high mountains, prairies, and which is almost uninhabited in its inner regions. Then again, there seems to be room for thinking that the figure made known to the public underwent political manipulation, because the population of Mongolians, Mohammedans, Tibetans, and Uighurs seems to be too small. For example, the population of Tibetans is given as 2.7 million. This obviously excludes Tibetans in Tsinghai, Kansu, and Szechwan. As for Mongolians who are given to account for 1.5 million, those who live in Manchuria (the present northeastern region) alone are estimated to exceed this figure. Furthermore, this figure does not include Mongolians who live in the grass land in Inner Mongolia, Kansu, Sinkiang and their vicinities. Also, "Dahol" Mongolians are treated in this census as a separate, independent race. We do not have to depend on Russian research to determine that these people are of a branch of the Mongolian race and therefore they are Mongolians. It is also undertain to what extent "Kavachih" Mongolians are counted as Mongolians. A considerable number of Mongolians who live with Han people and who have forgotten the Mongolian language may have been counted as Hans. The census shows there are 3.5 million Mohammedans and gives their distribution as follows (Unit = one thousand):

Hopoh Province ...	305	Peiping City ...	78
Tientsin City ...	74	Shansi Province ..	19
Inner Mongolia ...	48	Liaoning Province .	125
Kirin Province ...	55	Heilungkiang	
Kansu Province ...	1086	Province .....	55
Sinkiang-Uighur		Tsinghai Province .	257
Autonomous		Shantung Province .	246
Area .....	134	Shanghai City .....	29
Kiangsu Province .	65	Anhwei Province ...	133
Chekiang Province.	1	Hupei Province ....	28
Honan Province ...	387	Kwangtung Province.	5
Kiangsi Province .	1	Kweichow Province .	40

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Kwangsi Province ... 9                      Yunnan Province ... 217  
Szechwan Province ... 48

(Source: A History and the Present Condition of Mohammedans, published in October, 1957. Round figures are given.)

Once before, the population of Mohammedans was estimated as approximately 50 million. This may seem to be an over-estimate, while the figure 3.5 million seems to be an under-estimate. It requires further studies before one is sure about the figures. Chang Kai-shek's regime took an attitude of Great Han racism against minority races. As a result, those of minority races used to hide their racial backgrounds. However, it is said that after Communists took over the regime, they treated those minority groups with equality, and, therefore, they are willing to reveal their racial backgrounds. Those who believe in the foregoing statement say that the figures appearing in the census are correct. This argument exists in Japan, too. However, it sounds like propaganda.

2. A number of those who belong to minority races live in the following places:

- (1) USSR and some areas of the mainland of China
- (2) Other areas of the mainland of China, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, and Burma

This distribution of the minority groups offers various problems. For example: The majority of Mongols live on the mainland of China and there exists, in Outer Mongolia, the People's Republic of Mongolia with a population of about 1 million. To the northwest of this republic lies T'ang-nu-wu-liang-hai Region which became Tuva and in 1944 was absorbed into the Soviet Russia. This region has about 200,000 people of Mongolian blood. Then again, to the north of Outer Mongolia and inside Soviet territory is Buryat Mongolia. (Note: the Buryat race lives also in Outer Mongolia, Inner Mongolia; and many of those of Khalkha blood live in Balga, too.) In the mainland of China, the majority of Mongols live in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. There are some Mongols also in Kansu, Sinkiang, and Tsinghai, which lie to the northwest of that Autonomous Region. In Sinkiang those Mongols are under the rule of the Bayan Gol Mongolian National Autonomous Region (established June 23, 1954); the "Bolutava" Mongolian

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National Autonomous Region (established July 15, 1954); and "Hobugusairu" Mongolian National Autonomous Hsien (established September 10, 1954); respectively.

In Kansu, the Mongols are under separate rule of the Svpeh Mongolian race Autonomous Hsien (established July 29, 1950); in Tsinghai-Haihsi Mongol-Kazakh National Autonomous Region (established January 25, 1954) and Honan Mongolian Autonomous Hsien (established October 22, 1954).

Although Communist China's racial policy claims that each race should be placed where it belongs, the foregoing example makes us suspect that their policy represents "divided rules." The boundary between Outer Mongolia and Inner Mongolia is as yet undecided. Outer Mongolia has her consul-general stationed in Hu-ho-hao-te and an ambassador, in Peiping, while Communist China has her ambassador in Ulan Bator. On the surface, Communist China calls Outer Mongolia an advanced socialistic country. But there exist problems including the abovementioned unsolved boundary problem. The revolutionary movement in Inner Mongolia was caused by the struggle between "Hobis-golt-nam" of Outer Mongolia (generally called the Revolutionary Party, but it is the Communist Party) and China's Nationalist Party. However, before the Chinese Communists swept across Chinese Continent, they invaded Inner Mongolia. Thus Inner Mongolia, which at one time looked as if it would come under Outer Mongolian power, has remained embraced in the power of the Chinese mainland. However, as her cultural policy, Communist China has gradually recognized the use of the Outer Mongolian language (with Russianized writing). Thus, there are various secondary problems yet to be solved.

At present, Soviet-Communist Chinese diplomatic relations in regard to Outer Mongolia are peaceful. While history shows that there has been a deep-rooted distrust and conflict between the Mongolians and the Han race, there is an opinion that the two races now enjoy a cordial relation because both are Communists. In this particular point, however, the true state of affairs cannot be judged from external observations. Historically speaking, the Han race has harbored "Celestial Chinaism" and has called people outside of China "barbarians." Therefore, unless the Hans discard this traditional outlook, their "equality of races" will be an empty outcry. The same situation exists between the Hans and Koreans, Russians, and other races.

Let us look at the people in Sinkiang. Sinkiang has become the Uighur Autonomous District inhabited by Uighurs, Kazakhs, Mohammedans, Mongols, Tadzhiks Kirghiz, Russians, and Hans. The Soviet territory adjoining Sinkiang

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constitutes a republic where all these races, except Hans, live. Furthermore, the mountain range of Sinkiang does not serve as a territorial boundary; instead, the mountain range runs north and south joining the Soviet Russian and Chinese continent, leaving numerous areas where border transgression is easy. One can readily understand that problems are apt to rise in such areas where people of similar races live and where border jumping is easy.

The relations among Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Burma, Nepal, and India are similar to the racial relations between Sinkiang and the adjoining Soviet territory. The Thai Race, "Hani" race, "Riss" race, "Pai" race, "I" race, "Kawa" race, "Rafu" race, "Torun" race, and the "Nu" race live in Yunnan province, and it is easy to train these people and export revolution with them to Laos, Thailand, and Burma. It is said that staff members of Free Thailand, Free Laos, and Free Nepal are under training.

3. The problem yet to be solved in the future lies in the relationship between Communist China's changing policy and minority races.

Many of the policies which Communist China is using on the Chinese mainland are good. It may be necessary to put on a certain amount of pressure in order to accomplish positively and progressively what has been neglected so far. However, people would find it unberable if an accomplishment of a good thing were forced on them at an excessive speed or with a constantly changing policy. There is danger for people not knowing about the change in policy that what was good yesterday is punishable today as "anti-revolutionary." It may be possible for the Han, whose brains function well and who are sensitive enough to know what others are thinking, to keep up with a speedy change in the policy. But it is difficult for minority races which have rigidly observed their tradition for a long time. According to a man who spent several years in jail in Outer Mongolia, the jail in that region was filled with anti-revolutionary elements, and there was no brain-washing, wither. Simple and honest Mongolians are unable to understand when they are told that what they believed to be right yesterday is not right today. Finally they would be driven into desparation and self-abandonment and would take an "I don't care; kill me if you want to" attitude. Those innocent natives who had been kept free from the outside world were suddently taught about agrarian regrarian reform, and were told that the framers themselves were now landlords. Immediately after that, they were told they must form a cooperative; then a higher cooperative; and then a people's commune was the right thing

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because individuals should not own land. This rapid succession of changes in the concept can never be digested by the simple folks. The statistics announced in the fall of 1958 reports that Yunnan people's communes accounted for only 33%. This per centage explains the above situation.

"Nationality Solidarity" of Peiping, which arrived on January 10, (December issue) carries an article on the Dalai People's Commune of "Holon Bairu". According to this, a people's commune was organized by land-owners; and highclass Lamas could not be convinced that the people's commune was the best. However, the common people finally made them understand that it was the best. Even so, the cattle which joined the people's commune accounted for 20%.

4. Among the Chinese in the past, there were few researchers on the problem of minority races. Furthermore, worthless people invaded regions inhabited by minority races.

Those who have observed Communist China report that at present staff members for minority races are being properly trained at the Central or Local Racial Institutes. Therefore, Han staff members who enter territories of minority races, are said to be understood and supported by the regional people. However, it is difficult to believe that reality is as simple as that.

It can be safely said that in general minority races are filled with distrust against the Han race. If you look at the staff training program of Tibet, you will understand the situation. It is reported that the Tibetan staff members who were trained by the Central Authority and who were back in Lhasa in Tibet were nearly all killed off before the Dalai Lama's exodus in the spring of 1959. If you look at the books published in the Mongolian language before 1957, you can understand the extent of the research on Mongolia by Communist China. Furthermore, in reports on Communist Chinese conferences, one can see here and there a statement that they are disturbed by some Han staff members who show off their Great Hanism. Some Japanese researchers on Chinese affairs admire the fact that Communist China has discarded Great Han racism, but the fact that we see in contemporary Chinese literature statements persuading them not to entertain Great Han racism, reveals that Communism did not suddenly change the national sentiment of the Chinese people.

5. (With reference to 4.) Leaders of minority races include a considerable number of Han, and these leaders are disliked by minority races. They are anxious to distinguish themselves. The recent Tibetan affair seems to have gone far

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by a chain reaction caused by such an attitude on the part of Han leaders in Tibet. This same attitude must enlarge statistical figures of production, and population; of sanitation, school, and cultural programs, etc. of a region of minority races.

6. There are problems caused by internal migration and minority races.

Relocations within the Chinese continent is great. Some leave urban areas for farms. Others are forced to move into areas of minority races under the pretence of voluntary immigration under a "go northwest" slogan. They have to leave at a short notice order to work on farms, in industrial plants, to open mineral mines, to survey underground natural resources, to build railways and highways, dams and power-houses. Those who are out of a job must go to any place, even to areas of minority races, according to the assignment they receive. It is said that in and around 1958, it meant "no return and death" to be assigned to northwestern regions, and some of the immigrants fled at the risk of their lives.

In areas of minority races, too, immigration is taking place in various forms. To give an example, the Wusu area in Sinkiang (known as an oil producing area like Karamai) is inhabited by Hans, Kazakhs, Uighur, and Mohammedans. There are five production-battalions -- a Han Battalion (including a small number of Uighur and Kazakh) is in Hsi-hu and Ma-chiang; a Kazakh Battalion is in T'ou-t'ai and Ch'e-pai-tu; and a mixed battalion in Kan-ho-tzu. In the past, relations among those races were not close; there had been assaults or murder cases; and especially the relationship between the Hans and other races had been unfriendly. This situation continued even after the establishment of a cooperative. Between the T'ou-t'ai Battalion and the Ch'e-pai-tzu Battalion, there is a productivity corps (agricultural corps of the liberation army). Ch'e-pai-tzu formerly was almost uninhabited and was first developed in 1950 by the productivity corps of the liberation army. Following the land reform of 1952, five families of Kazakhs were made to settle there. In 1957, the number of families increased to 27; in 1958, to 224. In 1958, the establishment corps and the Kazakh corps traded their lands. At present, there are 319 families, with cultivated land of over 30,000 Chinese acres, and livestock of more than 200 animals. Comrade Wang San-li is now the secretary of the party committee of this Kazakh Battalion. ("National Solidarity" December 1959 issue)

A noteworthy fact in the developing of mines is that the areas inhabited by minority races have deposits of rare-

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element ores. The following mines are known to the public:

- (1) Northwest of Pao-t'ow in Inner Mongolia: beryllium, tantalum, uranium
- (2) Kwangsi: uranium
- (3) Sinkiang: uranium and gold

At the same time, a development of oil fields is actively taking place in the Tsaidam Basin of Chinghai Wusu in Sinkiang as well as Karamai. In Ordos, too, oil has been discovered. It has been pointed out that Communist China's policy for Tibet includes measures for oil, uranium, and gold as well as measures for the plateau which is of great importance as a missile base.

7. Religious Problems -- The minority races are more serious about their faiths and beliefs than Hans are. Especially, Lamaism in Tibet and Mohammedanism in Han-hui and Uighur are all of their cultures and lives per se.

Some of the Japanese religious people maintain that since Tibet is terribly feudalistic, it ought to be freed by Communist China. No argument can be stranger than this. For Tibetans, Lamaism is their culture and faith. Feudalism and so forth are nothing but a criticism thrown at them by outsiders. Many Tibetans are happy in the present society. It is an unnecessary meddling by outsiders if they say:

"We are sorry for you. We will free you."

The doctrine of Lamaism has Buddhistic culture on its high level, and we must realize that feudalism itself was showing a sign of improvement, even if a slow one. It is terrible to be robbed of land, people, and freedom of faith in exchange for Marx-Leninism. The same thing can be said about Mongols, Uighurs, and many other minority groups in Communist China. Some people erroneously believe that, by her constitution, Communist China guarantees freedom of faith. They also erroneously believe that democracy or socialism is being used in iron-curtain countries.

Iron-curtain countries preach freedom of faith, but it is as meaningless as placards promising rights to vote, hold meetings, and speak freely. "Religion is opium" is Communists' belief, and their religious policy is to take away religions from minority races, which are too weak to put up resistance. Liberation means to be free in religion and humanity. It is worthless to replace religion for minority races by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Mao Tse-tung.

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However, reality is severe. Communist China is well aware of the importance of this problem; so, while overtly they sing freedom of religion, they cause, in real life, disappearance of a man at midnight, and "send a man down to the farm." They also check a man's right to vote or to be voted for, and if it is necessary, they restrict his action by placing him under the watchful eye of the people's police or civilian soldiers as a man must be watched for political reasons. In Mongolia, Tibet, and Yunnan, a man of minority race would try to flee under such circumstance. (Han in other areas would do the same.) He would stand up against the power from outside if he thought he was stronger than the pressure, but if he knew that he was weaker, he would first try to run away. If he could not run away, he would submit to the power or die opposing it.

It will be a rare occasion on which the oppressed give hearty obedience to invaders. Thus potential danger exists all the time. The situation is not only unfortunate to minority races, but it is a grave consequence which Communist China has invited on her own accord. Communist China claims that she has created twenty-odd ways of writing for minority races. Writing is of less importance. Unless Communist China changes her religious policies, there exists a perpetual danger. With repairing of a house of worship or printing of prayer books, they cannot smooth up such religious problems.

Availing myself of the remaining space, I want to mention about a few more minority races to which I did not refer in this article.

(1) Uighur race -- The population is about 4 million. Since most of them lived in Sinkiang Province, this province changed its name to the Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Area. They live in the southern part of this area. After taken over by Communists, they raised a movement for independence. The year 1957 saw a movement to establish East Turkestan Republic. They are engaged in agriculture, hand craft, commerce, and stock raising.

(2) Miao race -- The population is 2.5 million. Many of them live in the southeastern part of Kweichow Province and the western part of Hunan Province; and some in Hainan island. They are engaged in farming. Some of the Miao race use Miao writing. The Hu-hsi Miao National Autonomous district which is in the western part of Hunan Province occupies ten hsien: Lung-shan, Sang-chih, Yung-shum, Ta-tang, Hua-yuan, Feng-huang, Chi-shou, Ku-chang,

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Pao-ching, and Lu-ch'i. The total area is about 19,000 square kilometers; the population is about 1.6 million which includes 310,000 Miao people. The same as in any other area, the Miao people still is a minority race even if this is an area for a minority race.

In August, 1952, areal autonomy was established. The chief of the district, Shih Pang-chih, and Deputy-Chief, Lung Tsai-tsu are Miao. The people's committee of the district consists chiefly of Miao, and there are 980 Miao operation workers who were trained by the district government. At present, areas, where Miao are the majority group, there are many Miao officials. Six hsien -- Hua-yuan, Feng-huang, Ku-chang I, Chi-shou, Lu-ch'i and Pao-ching are mixed hsien with Miao as the majority group. The chiefs or deputy-chiefs of these prefectures are mostly Miao, and there are many Miao who hold the position of ward chief. Miao who are in a position of, or above, ward chief number 157. This area has a power station, a mine, an oil refinery, and a printing plant, and there are about 700 workers.

(3) Chuang race -- The population is about 7 million. Since they live mostly in the western part of Kwangsi Province, the district came to be called the Kwangsi Autonomous Area in 1958. They also live in the southeastern part of Yunnan Province and the southwestern part of Kwangtung Province. Wen-shan Chuang-Miao National Autonomous Area was established in Yunnan Province and Tsing-pe Chuang National Autonomous Prefecture was established in Kwangtung.

Merchants in Chuang areas are all Hans, and the Chuang are farmers. The Chuang live together in mountain areas of Feng-huang mountain range, Kou-lou mountain range, Liu-chao mountain range, and of other mountain ranges, and also in the ravines and valleys formed by the Tso-chiang, the Yu-chiang and the Chiang-shui-ho which ran southeast.

The climate of this area is mild and the precipitation is large enough. This makes the area good for farming, and there are sufficient products of farms and of the underground. The areas surrounding this area have deposits of antimony, tin, tungsten, coal, iron, asbestos, uranium, etc. In 1956, it was reported that terrible drought caused scarcity of food which in turn brought about deaths from starvation.

(4) Korean race -- The population is about 1,100,000. They are scattered over the Yen-pien Korean Autonomous

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Region in Kirin Province. They also live in Heilungkiang District, Liaoning Province, Inner Mongolian Autonomous Area (about 8,000 in "Hulonhairu". In Kirin District, the Chang Pai Korean National Autonomous Hsien was established. (It is recorded that in 1881, there already were 50,000 agricultural Korean families consisting of over 100,000 Koreans.)

It is reported that at present, the Yen-pien Autonomous Region consisting of Koreans, has one university, seven senior high schools, 31 junior high schools, 339 elementary schools, as well as institutes for teaching profession, health and sanitation, agricultural techniques, and arts. In 1957, "Hulonbairu" of Inner Mongolia had 14 elementary schools attended by about 1,000 Korean pupils.

Simplified Introduction of Minority Races of Our Country

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