Multilingualism in China

Contributions to the Sociology of Language

89

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Joshua A. Fishman

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Multilingualism in China

The Politics of Writing Reforms for Minority Languages 1949–2002

by

Minglang Zhou

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Printed in Germany.

To the memory of my parents,
Zhou Guihua and Dai Wulan

Preface

Joshua A. Fishman
Yeshiva U. (NY) and Stanford U. (CA)

In the early 70's I had the "good fortune" to be asked to write the preface of this book's intellectual predecessor, Glyn Lewis' *Multilingualism in the Soviet Union*. To my knowledge, that book was an "open sesame" to a world that was still largely hidden from the inquiring gaze of Western readership and scholarship. The two are alike in yet another and more basic respect: like that one, this book too is the first book-length (and by far the most comprehensive) study of one of the world's largest language planning efforts of modern times. The two efforts clearly merit and will richly reward detailed comparison.

In part, this volume itself constitutes such a comparison, since it carefully traces the major Soviet influences in Chinese language planning (and in Chinese social science more generally). Such influences have also been claimed in conjunction with India's hardly less monumental efforts. Thus, far more than half of the world's population were exposed to language planning interventions during the 20th century and the present volume is to be congratulated for making the last venture more accessible to Western specialists and the intelligent reading public alike.

Even just a cursory mention of the USSR, India and China, in one breath so to speak, must prompt an immediate realization of the importance of writing reform within language planning as a whole. The present volume is particularly noteworthy for the clarity with which it lays bare both the linguistic issues in such reform and the massive non-linguistic and supra-linguistic factors – often including traditional religious influences, that are very extensively examined here – that ultimately mold it, shape it and control it.

Being a serious work, this volume is necessarily based not only on a meticulous examination of the relevant international and indigenous literature – including that on Marxism/Stalinism, nation-building, state-building and ethnic politics in China, but (and even primarily) on many years of intensive and painstaking fieldwork and archival research. It also goes out of its way to bring examples of nearly 100 writing systems of China's minority peoples – more than have ever been brought together in one volume before – thus dispelling once and for all the myth (current among many Chinese and Westerners alike) that only Mandarin has well-established writing systems based on Chinese characters and Pinyin.

When I referred to my "good fortune" in the opening sentence of this preface, I did so in quotation marks which I would now like to explain. Subsequent to the appearance of Lewis' book he was barred from visiting the USSR again and I was barred from doing so three times, even though I was included as an official member of "approved" USA-USSR visiting exchange teams. I pray that no similar consequences will flow from the publication of this volume. Its author, Prof. Minglang Zhou, deserves our profound thanks and encouragement for producing such a brilliant volume in what will doubtlessly be a long and fruitful sociolinguistic career.

Acknowledgements

A project of this extent is beyond a single researcher's ability, and it is the culmination of many people's efforts and wisdom. Many people helped my in one way or another from my early research days to the final copy-editing of the manuscript, though I am not able to mention everyone of them here.

Three years ago when I had two book projects in hand, one on writing reforms for minority languages and one on educational language policy for minority communities, I was inspired to pursue the first one by Dr. William Bright, who saw the significance in my research and published my article on writing reforms for China's minority languages. Dr. Chen Ping also reinforced the idea that this was a worthy project to pursue. After I drafted the book prospectus, Dr. Florian Coulmas encouraged me to submit the proposal to Dr. Joshua Fishman, who has been both supportive and patient during the past three slow years of my writing and revising.

My fieldwork started in the summer of 1997 when I was at the University of Colorado at Boulder. R. J. Peterson, associate vice chancellor for research and a rare administrator who understood the importance of my research, granted my requests for funding for four consecutive summers. Those grants enabled me to collect data and do fieldwork in minority communities in Tibet, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Hunan, Guizhou, Sichuan, and Yunnan. In the past two years, Dickinson College has provided funding and technical support for me during the revision of the manuscript and the production of the camera-ready version.

During the seven long years of research and writing, Dong Kun, Dai Qingxia, Cheng Yanyan, Song Jie, Sun Hongkai, Zhou Qingsheng, Huang Zhongxiang, Yuan Zhen, Zhang Shen, Xiao Yong, Chen Lingling, Li Ling, and Guo Longsheng helped me in many ways, from scholarly exchange to assistance in my field trips. Without their support, it would have been more difficult, if not impossible, for me to research on this subject. Many other individuals and institutions generously assisted me in my data collection. Among them, two individuals and their institutions deserve special thanks. Liu Ping and her journal section of the Library of Hunan in my hometown – Changsha – helped me comb through journals and newspapers published in China between 1949 and the late 1990s to locate articles on minority issues and minority languages. Wu Suyila and his sales department at the Inner Mongolian Educational Press generously opened their warehouse to me so that I could go through piles of books and find helpful ones that were no longer available in bookstores or libraries.

I am especially grateful to China's writing reform veterans (aged 70 to 97), Zhou Youguang, Wang June, Sun Hongkai, Zhou Yaowen, Chen Zongzheng, Chen Peng, and Dai Qingxia. They all kindly and generously shared with me their experiences and insights into China's writing reforms. These interviews greatly helped me to understand the complexity of the politics and processes in the writing reforms.

In their capacity as referees and/or colleagues, Dr. David Bradley, Dr. Mary S. Erbaugh, and Dr. Victor H. Mair read the entire manuscript, and Dr. David Strand and Prof. Sun Hongkai read part of it. They all gave me detailed comments and criticism, which led to the correction of errors and the strengthening of the scholarship. Dr. Nancy Mann and Dr. Michael Shurkin helped me copyedit the manuscript, and their comments were particularly helpful for me to write for a readership that might not consist exclusively of China specialists or linguists. Rebecca Walter and Monika Wendland at Mouton de Gruyter have taken great care to ensure a perfect camera-ready version of this book.

While writing this manuscript, I was fighting against racial discrimination. Dr. Evelyn Hu-Dehart, Dr. Vicky Cass, Dr. Yen-hwei Lin, Dr. Babara Abbott, Dr. Jan DeCarrico, Dr. Kumiko Takahara, Dr. Haiping Yan, Dr. Zhigang Yang, Dr. Wendy Larson, and Prof. Liu Zaifu extended to me their friendship, moral support, and/or advice, without which I could not have won, single-handedly, my struggle for equality against a giant institution having unlimited legal and financial resources.

Simon Ager, SIL, and Daniel Kai (Xeno Type Techonologies) have supplied me with fonts for Mongolian, Dai, Pollard, and IPA scripts and technical support.

Lastly and most importantly, my wife Ping Fu has always been at my side to assist me, to discuss with me ethnic issues and nationalism, and to share my emotions. My son Daoyou grew up with the manscript from a crawling baby to a boy. He added a lot of joy to my writing but was occassionally disappointed by my shorter play-sessions with him. I hope that he will understand my work someday.

I am solely responsible for the views, analyses, and errors (if there are any) in the book.

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Abbreviations and names of minorities in China

I have used only two abbreviations and one short form throughout this book.

CCP for The Chinese Communist Party
PRC for The People's Republic of China
Pinyin or the Plan for The Plan for the Phonetic Spelling of Chinese

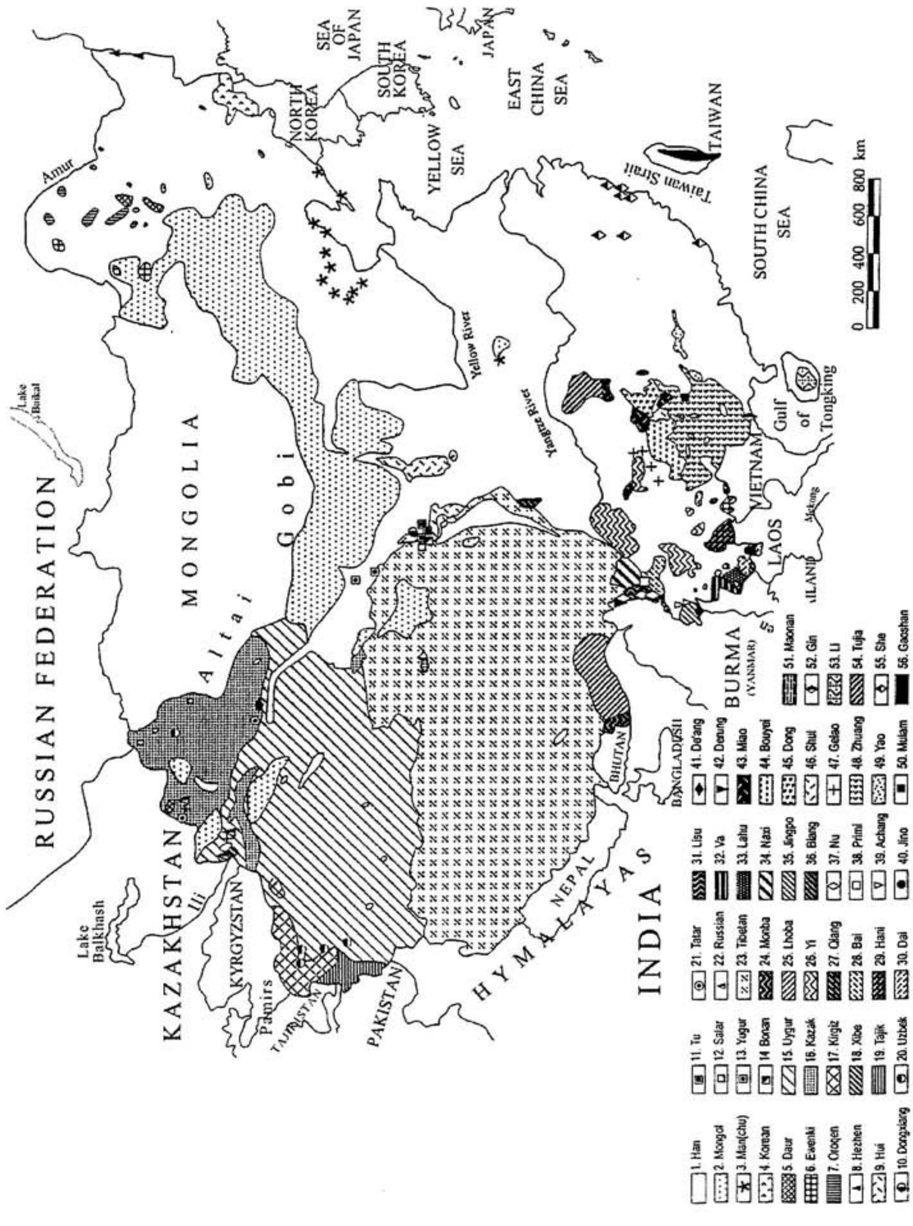
I have used the PRC's official Roman names for the officially recognized ethnic groups throughout this book. These Roman names, which are used in the PRC English publications, are **not** spelled in Pinyin **nor** spelled in the Western tradition. The Pinyin version and the official Roman version are not always identical, as shown in the following list. I have used Pinyin for ethnic groups which are not officially recognized.

List of China's officially recognized ethnic group in Chinese, Pinyin, and official Roman.

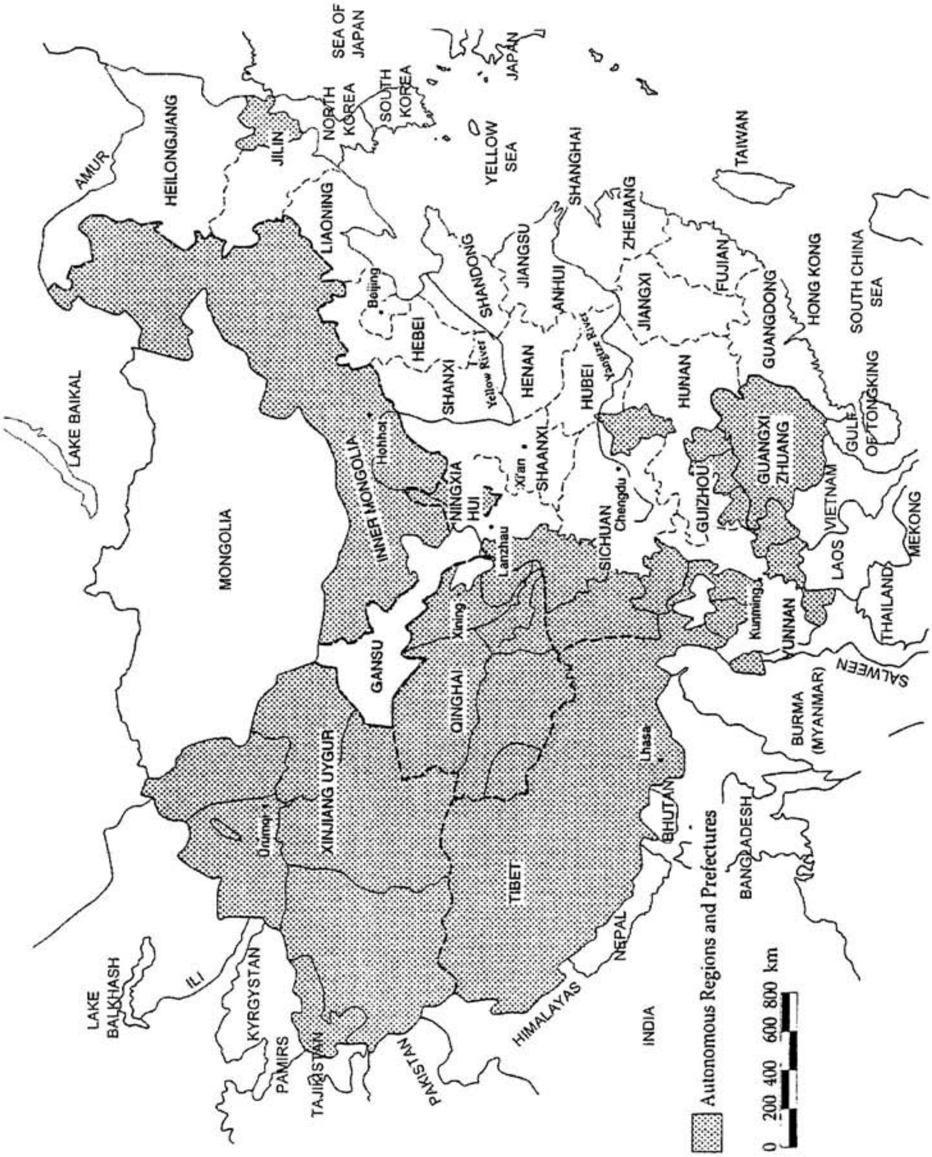
Chinese	Pinyin	Official Roman
汉族	Hanzu	the Han
蒙古族	Mengguzu	the Mongol
回族	Huizu	the Hui
藏族	Zangzu	the Tibetan
维吾尔族	Weiwuerzu	the Uygur
苗族	Miaozu	the Miao
彝族	Yizu	the Yi
壮族	Zhuangzu	the Zhuang
布依族	Buyizu	the Bouyei
朝鲜族	Chaoxianzu	the Korean
满族	Manzu	the Manchu
侗族	Dongzu	the Dong
瑶族	Yaozu	the Yao
白族	Baizu	the Bai
哈尼族	Hanizu	the Hani

哈萨克族	Hasakezu	the Kazak
傣族	Daizu	the Dai
黎族	Lizu	the Li
傈僳族	Lisuzu	the Lisu
佤族	Wazu	the Va
高山族	Gaoshanzu	the Gaoshan
拉祜族	Lahuzu	the Lahu
水族	Shuizu	the Shui
东乡族	Dongxiangzu	the Dongxiang
纳西族	Naxizu	the Naxi
景颇族	Jingpozu	the Jingpo
柯尔克孜族	Keerkezizu	the Kirgiz
土族	Tuzu	the Tu
羌族	Qiangzu	the Qiang
撒拉族	Salazu	the Salar
锡伯族	Xibozu	the Xibe
塔吉克族	Tajikezu	the Tajik
乌孜别克族	Wuzibiekezu	the Uzbeck
俄罗斯族	Eluosizu	the Russian
鄂温克族	Ewenkezu	the Ewenki
保安族	Baoanzu	the Bonan
裕固族	yuguzu	the Yugur
塔塔尔族	Tataerzu	the Tatar
鄂伦春族	Elunchunzu	the Oroqen
土家族	Tujiazu	the Tujia
畲族	Shezu	the She
达斡尔族	Dawoerzu	the Daur
仫佬族	Mulaozu	the Mulam
毛难族	Maonanzu	the Maonan
布朗族	Bulangzu	the Blang
仡佬族	Gelaozu	the Gelao
阿昌族	Achangzu	the Achang
普米族	Pumizu	the Primi
怒族	Nuzu	the Nu
德昂族	Deangzu	the Deang
京族	Jingzu	the Jing

独龙族	Derungzu	the Derung
赫哲族	Hezhezu	the Hezhen
门巴族	Menbazu	the Monba
珞巴族	Luobazu	the Lhoba
基诺	Jinuozu	the Jino


RUSSIAN FEDERATION
Lake Baikal
MONGOLIA
Altai
Gobi
Amur
SEA OF JAPAN
NORTH KOREA
SOUTH KOREA
JAPAN
YELLOW SEA
EAST CHINA SEA
TAIWAN
Taiwan Strait
SOUTH CHINA SEA
0 200 400 600 800 km
Yellow River
Yangtze River
Gulf of Tongking
VIETNAM
Mekong
LAOS
ILAND
BURMA (YANMAR)
BANGLADESH
BHUTAN
NEPAL
HYMALAYAS
INDIA
PAKISTAN
TAJIKISTAN
Pamirs
KYRGYZSTAN
KAZAKHSTAN
Ili
Lake Balkhash
1. Han
2. Mongol
3. Man(chu)
4. Korean
5. Daur
6. Ewenki
7. Oroqen
8. Hezhen
9. Hui
10. Dongxiang
11. Tu
12 Salar
13. Yugur
14 Bonan
15. Uygur
16. Kazak
17. Kirgiz
18. Xibe
19. Tajik
20. Uzbek
21. Tatar
22. Russian
23. Tibetan
24. Monba
25. Lhoba
26. Yi
27. Qiang
28. Bai
29. Hani
30. Dai
31. Lisu
32. Va
33. Lahu
34. Naxi
35. Jingpo
36. Blang
37. Nu
38. Primi
39. Achang
40. Jino
41. De'ang
42. Derung
43. Miao
44. Bouyei
45. Dong
46. Shui
47. Gelao
48. Zhuang
49. Yao
50. Mulam
51. Maonan
52. Gin
53. Li
54. Tujia
55. She
56. Gaoshan

Map 1 Distribution of Minority Nationalities and Languages in China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LAOS
THAILAND
Lanzhau
Xining
Kunming
YUNNAN
SALWEEN
GANSU
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BURMA (MYANMAR)
XINJIANG UYGUR
Ürümqi
TIBET
Lhasa
BHUTAN
BANGLADESH
NEPAL
LAKE BALKHASH
ILI
KYRGYSTAN
PAMIRS
TAJIKISTAN
PAKISTAN
HIMALAYAS
INDIA
▨ Autonomous Regions and Prefectures
0 200 400 600 800 km

Map 2 China: Autonomous Regions and Prefectures

Chapter 1

Minorities and minority languages in China

The People's Republic of China (PRC or China) is well known for its huge population, nearly 1.3 billion and still counting (2000 census). However, because of the isolation caused first by China's Sino-centrism, then by the cold war, and probably also by the linguistic barriers, China has usually presented itself from behind a bamboo screen to the outside world in the single face of the Han people, who speak Mandarin, Cantonese, Hakka, or some other Sinitic topolects, a representation that has also been conveyed by its diasporic population to the world over the past century (cf. Plum 2000). Only recently, particularly after the Dalai Lama won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, have dissidents and exiles from China's minority communities begun to draw broad attention from the international community to the fact that 8.4 percent of the Chinese population are members of linguistic and ethnic/national minorities, which amounts to about 104 million people (2000 census, *People's Daily*, March 29, 2001), and that there have been constant and sometimes fierce conflicts between the Han majority and non-Han minorities with regard to assimilation and accommodation – a knowledge that used to be kept mostly within the circle of China Studies specialists.[1] The 104 million non-Han people comprise many different linguistic and ethnic groups, 55 of which have been officially recognized by the Chinese government since 1949. Even so, about 752,000 people have still been left without officially recognized national communities since the early 1990s (China 1994a).[2]

This chapter introduces briefly but rather comprehensively the developments of the non-Han peoples to provide a historical and sociogeopolitical frame for understanding the official classification of minorities and their languages, the distribution of minorities and their languages, and the current status of minority languages in China.

1.1. Historical developments of the Han and non-Han peoples

For the last two thousand years the dominant sociopolitical issues in the territories that are now China have concerned assimilation and accommodation between the Han and non-Han peoples (cf. Dreyer 1976; Heberer 1989). The ancestors of the people later known as the Han are generally considered to have originated from tribes engaging in agriculture in the basin of the central Yellow River (cf. Jiang 1993, 1: 45–54; Xu 1992: 26–35). These tribes were gradually unified during the Xia (2200–1700 BC), Shang (1700–1100 BC), and Zhou (1100–256 BC) dynasties, and their territories expanded eastward down the river and southward toward the Yangzi River, wherever agriculture could take root and develop. The conflict between assimilation and accommodation among the various tribes was particularly obvious during the second or "Warring States" period of the Zhou, when many tribe-states achieved more autonomy under a weak central government. This is also the period when Confucius (551–479 BC) was born, taught, and died, whose ideology stressing order above all was to become central to the Han culture a few hundred years later.

The Qin dynasty (221–206 BC) and the Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220) again unified the different tribe-states and expanded eastward to the Pacific coast, southward to the territories of modern Guangdong Province in the delta of the Pearl River, and westward to the eastern part of modern Xinjiang in Central Asia. These two dynasties took a number of measures to ensure the assimilation of peripheral peoples into the people of the central plains under a unified state, the most important of which were language policy and state ideology. More than two thousand years ago, the Qin dynasty adopted a policy to unify the written language and script for all languages or dialects spoken within its territories – a language policy that has been persistently carried out into the twenty-first century as best witnessed in China's adoption of a common language law in 2000 (see China 2001). The Han rulers adopted Confucianism as the orthodox state ideology – a value system that has dominated Chinese thought and culture ever since. Before the end of the Han period, the peoples who used to inhabit the Yellow and Yangzi Rivers valleys had been largely assimilated by the people of the central plains. These people built a strong profile of themselves as people who spoke the Han language (Chinese) and embraced the Han culture with Confucianism as the core. They came to be known as the Han (汉)

people in their intensive interactions with other peoples in their frontiers, since their strong state was known as "Han" among the peripheral peoples (see Fei 1999: 9–10).

Earlier, during the Zhou dynasty, the people who were to become the Han had developed a more clear contrast of themselves as the *Xia* (夏) and the other as the *Yi* (夷). They began to develop general labels for other peoples, in the east as the *Yi* (夷), in the north as the *Di* (狄), in the south as the *Man* (蛮), and in the west as the *Rong* (戎), all derogatorily meaning "barbarians".[3] Throughout the Chinese history, other general and derogatory labels include *Fan* (番), *Hu* (胡), and *Lu* (虏), and moreover nearly 100 more specific terms had been used for various non-Han peoples since the Qin dynasty in 200 BC (cf. W. G. Wang 1997). During the Han dynasty, the Han people began deliberately to cultivate or sinicize non-Han peoples with the state ideology of Confucianism (cf. Harrell 1995: 18–20; Heberer 1989: 18). The Han people saw the agricultural non-Han peoples in the east and south as more cultivable, and the nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes in the north and west as less cultivable. Thus, because of the difference in production modes, the Han dynasty usually took an assimilationist approach to non-Hans in the east and south, while it often took an accommodationist approach to non-Hans in the north and west – as long as the herdsmen did not invade the heartland of the Han people (cf. Jiang 1993, 1: 109–142 and 169–200). In the assimilationist approach, after military conquest or threats, the central government established bureaucracies to implement rules and collect taxes as well as built schools to teach Confucianism and train officials from the local communities, of courses, in the Han language. In the accommodationist approach, on the other hand, the central government generally negotiated treaties with tribe-states for trade privileges and military cooperation, and sometimes married princesses to the tribal rulers to ensure smooth implementation of those treaties.

Given the mobility of their nomadic and seminomadic cultures, non-Han peoples from the north and west sometimes invaded the heartland of the Han people. After dissolution of the Han dynasty in 230 and the Jin dynasty (265–420) and the Six dynasties (420–589), non-Han peoples repeatedly invaded the heartland of the Han people and established local states. For about three hundred years, various non-Han nomadic and seminomadic invaders settled down to rule the Han communities and adjacent communities of their own, but those that were not militarily defeated and removed from the heartland of the Han found themselves mostly assimilated into the Han communities. To maintain rule and order, the non-Han rulers of Han communities generally adopted policies that promoted the Han language, Confucianism, and even Han costumes among the ruling non-Han peoples, while some non-Han rulers sometimes went as far as to require non-Han officials to switch to the Han language in their official business within a given period of time (cf. J. He 1998: 63; H. Wang 1990). As a result, the frontiers of the Han culture and community were pushed further northward and westward (cf. Jiang 1993, 1: 464–465; Mackerras 1994: 24). Meanwhile, these invasions from the north caused large waves of migration by the Han people from the central plains to the south and the southeast, further strengthening the assimilation of the non-Han peoples there into the Han (cf. Jiang 1993, 1: 501–502; Xu 1992: 258–262). Linguistically, the massive migration created layers of Chinese dialects, language contact situations, and pockets of minority languages, which were surrounded by the Han language.

The Sui dynasty (581–618) and the Tang dynasty (618–907) reunified China for the next three centuries. The Tang period experienced what has been considered China's golden age, when it opened up, probably for the first and only time in the Chinese history, to free trade and cultural exchange with its peripheral peoples and foreign countries. While having further consolidated assimilation in both southern and northern China, the Tang dynasty extended its frontiers further westward within the territories of the modern Xinjiang region, by means of trade along the Silk Road and accommodation of Turks and Mongols in Central Asia. At the same time, the Tang also expanded southwestward to the areas of modern Guizhou and Yunnan Provinces, using both military and accommodationist approaches simultaneously or alternatively. As long as the local chieftains (*Tusi*, 土司) recognized the authority of the central government and were willing to pay tax, the Tang government usually allowed them to rule with some autonomy. Westward, the Tang also interacted with Tibet through military actions and accommodationist communications. The Tang dynasty's rather liberal policy in fact greatly facilitated the spread of the Han language and culture to the peripheral peoples, where the talented and rich were more willing to receive an official education in preparation for the dynasty's imperial examinations. However, as the dynasty was drawing to its end, Islam was fighting to build a stronghold among the various Turkic groups in Central Asia and was to choke the Tangs' accommodationist approach in that direction.

After the Tang dynasty ended in disarray in 907, various Turkic and Mongolian groups occupied and ruled the heartland of the Han people for a half-century during the Five dynasties (907–960). The Song dynasty (960–1279) finally unified the heartland again, but was not able to regain the Tang territories in the north and west. Meanwhile, the Khitans, who consisted of various tribes including a large number of the Han people, built the Liao Empire (907–1125), which ruled over areas including modern Beijing, Mongolia, Manchuria, and, during its later years, parts of Central Asia. Both the Song and the Liao left the western part of the former Tang Empire to the Tangut, who built the Xia state. Confronted by the Liao and the Xia on its northern and western borders, the Song dynasty took both assimilationist and accommodationist approaches to non-Han peoples, labeled with the general term *Man[yi]* (蛮夷, barbarian), in the Southwest. In some areas, e. g. today's Zhuang (壮) communities, the Song established bureaucracies and school systems to enforce the assimilation of local peoples into the Han, while in other areas it gave authority to some tribe chieftains to rule their own communities, e. g. today's Yao (瑶) and Miao (苗), in their own ways, so long as they remained loyal to the central government (Jiang 1993, 2: 492). Farther north, the Liao set up two systems of administration with the north-facing half to serve the Khitans and non-Han peoples and the south-facing half to serve the Han people (cf. Hansen 2000: 302–303). From the very beginning, the southern administration adopted the Han ways and recruited mainly officials of Han origin, whereas the northern administration began to employ officials of Han origin only years later, representing the slow process of the permeation of the Han culture into the Khitan community (cf. Xu 1992: 277–278). The balance between the Song and the Liao was broken when the Jurchens, ancestors of the Manchu, arose in the northeast. The Jurchens declared the establishment of the Jin Empire in 1115, and in 1125 destroyed the Liao Empire, driving its remaining force westward to Central Asia. By 1132, the Jurchen forces reached the Yangzi River and occupied the Han heartland of the Song territory. The balance of assimilation and accommodation got so deeply involved in Jurchen politics that conflicting policies may have significantly slowed down the development of assimilation, but the Han administration system and imperial examination was finally adopted by the Jurchens in the 1150s (cf. Hansen 2000: 323–330; Jiang 1990, 2: 416–417).

The Jin Empire was destroyed, in 1234, by the Mongols from the northwest, who drove the last Song emperor into the South China Sea in 1279 and firmly established the Yuan dynasty (1206–1368) over the heartland of the Han. Facing the problem of how to rule China, the Mongols took an accommodationist approach to Tibet, but adopted, for peoples under their direct rule, a racial ethnic policy unprecedented in the relationship between Han and no-Han peoples. The Mongols classified peoples into four categories: Mongols, non-Han peoples from Central Asia (called *Semu* (色目) – colored eyes), Han people of the north, and Han people of the south in a mostly racial hierarchy with the last group (being most resistant to the Mongolian rule) at the bottom, and assigned job categories accordingly in an attempt to freeze the social structure (Hansen 2000: 351–354; Jiang 1993 [3]: 92–93). This racial ethnic policy might have ruined the chances of assimilation in either direction, but the Yuan ruled China for only eighty-nine years. After the Mongolian rulers and the larger part of their armies withdrew to Mongolia, the Mongols who were left behind gradually assimilated into Han communities, but the non-Han peoples from Central Asia assimilated only linguistically and remained Muslim; their descendents are part of the Hui (回) people today.

The Ming dynasty (1368–1644) sometimes used the military approach to conquer rebellious tribes in the north and the west, but mainly adopted an accommodationist approach to ensure peace, trade, and cooperation in Tibetan, Turkic, Mongolian, and Jurchen communities. In the south and southwest, however, the Ming alternated among three approaches: military conquest, assimilation, and tightened accommodation (cf. Jiang 1993 [3]: 131–176). For example, military forces were used against the ethnic communities, which are called the Yi (彝) and Dai (傣) today, but after conquest those communities were allowed limited autonomy. For the purpose of assimilation, the Ming began to replace chieftains with bureaucracy in some non-Han communities in Hunan and Guangxi, and gradually extended the replacement to some non-Han communities in Guizhou, Sichuan, and Yunnan, along with establishing Confucian school systems aimed at civilizing or sinicizing non-Han peoples there (cf. Harrell 1995: 18–20). At the same time, the Ming government tightened its accommodationist policy by greatly limiting the authority of the remaining chieftains and the autonomy of non-Han communities in those provinces.

The Qing dynasty (1616–1911) was ruled by descendants of Jurchens, Mongols, other non-Hans, and some assimilated Hans, who in 1635 were named the "Manchu" (cf. Crossley 1990; Rigger 1995). During their three hundred years of rule, while actively discriminating against the Han, the Manchus repeatedly fought to preserve their own ethnic identity against gradual assimilation into the Han; in the early years the Qing government adopted a language policy to force government officials of Han origin to learn the Manchu language and to use it in official business; during the 1700s the Qing government required only the Manchus to maintain their language and culture in the wake of pervasive assimilation into the Han; but during the 1800s the government had to translate the imperial court's Manchu documents into the Han language for its officials when the majority of the Manchus lost both their language and their culture. In the north and west, the Qing took military actions to conquer Mongols, Uygurs, Tibetans, and other non-Hans, built garrisons, and installed cooperative chieftains, so that minority languages remained intact there, with very little impact from the Han language. In the south and southwest, the Qing government sped up assimilation by replacing tribe chieftains with Qing bureaucracy in more and more non-Han communities, where minority languages and the Han language were use, the extent of which depended on the degree of assimilation. Thus, the Qing dynasty left modern China a multiethnic and multilingual empire.

Twentieth-century China began with continuing conflict between Han and non-Han peoples – in this case the Manchus. Influenced by modern nationalism from Europe and America, Dr. Sun Yatsen started his revolution against the Qing government with the slogan "to drive out the Tatar slaves (the Manchus and Mongols) and revive China". After the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in 1911, Dr. Sun adopted a reconciliatory posture, recognizing that China was made up of five races or nationalities: the Han, the Manchu, the Mongolian, the Tibetan, and the Muslim Turkic (cf. Dreyer 1976: 16–17; Mackerras 1994: 53–61). The Republic of China (1911–1949) based its ethnic policy on Dr. Sun's theory of nation and nationalism, and followed a two-thousand-year tradition taking both military and accommodationist approaches to non-Han peoples in the northwest. At the same time, however, the nationalist government of the Republic of China, sometimes forcefully, implemented an assimilationist policy in non-Han communities in the south and southwest, to which it gave no recognized status. Thus, the Republic of China also left behind a multiethnic and multilingual empire.

Clearly from the above oversimplified historical review, various central governments alternated between assimilation and accommodation in their ethnic policies over the past two thousand years, while the accommodationist approach was more often taken toward the north and northwest and the assimilationist approach was mostly adopted toward the south and southwest. This rather patterned historical implementation of ethnic policies has linguistic consequences that are of great concern in this book, though various dynasties were generally indifferent to minority languages, especially when the empire was weak. The assimilationist approach created forced language contact and bilingualism, where the Han language had been endangering the maintenance of minority languages over the years. On the other hand, the accommodationist approach basically left minority languages to evolve at their own pace and in their own courses, with minimal impact from Chinese, at least up to the middle of the twentieth century.

1.2. Official classification of the non-Han peoples

When the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded in October 1949, the PRC government adopted as the provisional constitution the Common Programs of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress, Articles 50 and 51 of which declare that all nationalities or ethnic groups within China are equal, and minority nationalities have the right to establish local autonomous governments (cf. China 1997a, 1: 1–13; Shi 1988: 1–3, for details see Chapter 2).[4] Clearly from the above brief history of the development of the Han and non-Han peoples, the notions of "nationality" (*Minzu*, 民族) and "minority nationality" (*Shaoshu Minzu*, 少数民族) are not native in China, but borrowed from Marxism-Leninism (For a complete picture, see Section 2. 2). The PRC government immediately faced the question of who had the status of a minority nationality and thus the right to autonomy. In the early 1950s over 400 groups filed for recognition of their independent national status (cf. Wu 1998: 18). For example, in 1950, Deng Xiaoping (then the first secretary of the CCP Southwestern Bureau) was surprised to learn that Yunnan Province alone reported more than 70 groups requesting recognition (cf. China 1994b: 51–52). In 1951, the number reached over 300 and was reduced to 132 groups by the Yunnan provincial government before it was reported to the central government (Ma 1994, 1: 276). Clearly, the Chinese government badly needed a model for nationality status recognition.

In the early 1950s, the PRC government generally looked to the Soviet Union for a model and to works by Marx, Lenin, and Stalin for theory. Although it did not consider appropriate for China the Soviet model that classified not only nationalities but also subgroups of a nationality, the Chinese government liked Stalin's (1975: 22) theoretical definition of a nation: "A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture". Nevertheless, this apparently clear and operational definition of nationality had already given the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) some trouble in the early 1940s. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, after establishing the puppet Manchu State in collaboration with some Manchus (cf. Rigger 1995), the Japanese imperialists were trying to find collaborators in northwestern Hui (the non-Turkic Muslim, *Hui*, 回) communities to set up a similar puppet Muslim state in northwestern China. The CCP, headquartered in Yan'an in Shanxi Province next door to many Hui communities, formed a task force to fight against the Japanese scheme and obtain support from the Hui people. The task force, whose first step was to draw up a policy determining whether the Hui people should have independent national status, came up with two conflicting opinions (cf. C. Liu 1996: 1–29). The first one considered the Hui as Han people who believed in Islam and the Hui question essentially as a religion question, since the Hui spoke Chinese, lived in discontinuous communities, shared no common economic life, and might share only a common culture marked by Islam. The other opinion traced the historical development of the Hui people – but without following Stalin's four criteria – and thus concluded that the Hui people constituted a minority nationality. Both opinions were submitted to the CCP central committee, which authorized the latter view because it would support the formation of a united front with the Hui communities in the anti-Japanese war. Clearly this was a sociopolitical solution to the national question at a time of national crises (cf. Gladney 1998).

In the 1950s, the same question – how strictly to follow Stalin's four criteria – returned to haunt the PRC government. Stalin (1975: 23) particularly stressed that "it is only when all these characteristics are present together that we have a nation." If the Chinese government strictly followed Stalin's four criteria, it could recognize very few minority nationalities and would thus alienate a lot of CCP and PRC supporters. If it did not follow the four criteria, the PRC government would violate its own guiding principles of relying on Marxism and Leninism-Stalinism to build a socialist state. But the Korean War was already going on, and the Nationalist government of the Republic of China in Taiwan was preparing to launch a counterattack to recover the mainland. To secure minorities' support and to establish solid control in minority communities along China's border areas had top priority in terms of national security, as Deng Xiaoping stressed (cf. China 1994b: 51).

Trying to resolve the national question for China, the CCP United Front Work Department under the leadership of Li Weihan closely examined Stalin's four criteria and found the key term "historically" to be of great significance, pointing out that Stalin's four criteria were historical notions and should be applied historically instead of blindly.[5] Specifically, Stalin's four criteria applied strictly to the recognition of nationalities in well-developed capitalist societies in Europe and North America, but did not apply to the situation in China. In the CCP's view, China before 1949 had been a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society. Thus, it was justifiable within the principle of Leninism-Stalinism to apply Stalin's four criteria selectively in nationality status recognition in China. Li reported this view to Premier Zhou Enlai of the State Council,[6] who further elaborated it, arguing that Stalin's criteria could not account for the complex national relationships in the pre-capitalist society of China and should be applied historically and practically to China's situation (cf. China 1994b: 150–151). Zhou's view was immediately adopted by the CCP and the Chinese government in the early 1950s. In 1986, the Chinese government reaffirmed that this policy was still a valid basis for minority nationality work during the period of reforms and socialist modernization (cf. China 1996: 580). This policy has been made operational by articulating four principles:

1. All factors in the constitution of a nationality are considered as a whole, and no single factor is considered as the sole determinant.
2. The present situation of a community is the main consideration with reference to the analysis of the community's history, origin, political system, and relationship with other communities.

3. A community is officially named with proper respect to the will of the people of that community.
4. To facilitate national unity and the development of the national community in question, communities with close languages, similar national features, geographic adjacency, and close economic ties shall be recognized as much as possible as one single nationality.

Nationality status recognition has developed in three stages (cf. Wu 1998: 19). The first stage was between 1949 and 1953. First, local governments and task forces from provincial and central governments reached out to inform local communities about the policy on nationality status recognition. Second, communities that believed that they were unique nationalities applied for official recognition. Third, various levels of local governments submitted the applications to provincial commissions on nationalities affairs. Fourth, these provincial commissions worked with local anthropologists, ethnologists, and linguists to classify the applicant communities into preliminary categories; when necessary the specialists would do fieldwork in a candidate community. Fifth, the provincial commissions and local specialists worked with anthropologists, ethnologists, and linguists sent from Beijing to finalize the list of candidate communities, often with fieldwork in candidate communities by those specialists. Sixth, the provincial commissions submitted the applications of the candidate communities to the State Commission on Nationalities Affairs, which made recommendations to the State Council (the central government) for final recognition. During the first stage, together with the Han (汉), the Mongol (蒙古), Hui (回), Tibetan (藏), Uygur (维吾尔), Miao (苗), Korean (朝鲜), Yi (彝), and Manchu (满) communities won quick recognition, which means that they did not go through any or all of the above five procedures, and were followed by 30 other communities, as shown in Table 1.

The second stage of recognition ran from 1954 to 1964. This stage focused on the remaining applications, for which decisions were hard to make. When candidate communities strongly demanded further consideration, task forces, consisting of officials from the State Commission on Nationalities Affairs and the subcommittee on nationalities affairs of the National People's Congress, as well as specialists from the Central Institute (University) for Nationalities and the Institute of Nationalities Studies of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, were regularly sent to investigate and do fieldwork in the communities in question to amass further evidence. For example, in 1956, a ten-person task force was

Table 1. Status of nationality recognition and populations *

Nationalities	1953 Census	1964 Census	1982 Census	1990 Census
Recognized between 1949 and1953				
Han	542,824,056	651,296,368	936,674,944	1,130,510,638
Mongol	1,451,035	1,965,766	3,411,367	4,802,407
Hui	3,530,498	4,473,147	7,228,398	8,612,932
Tibetan	2,753,081	2,501,174	3,847,875	4,593,541
Uygur	3,610,462	3,996,311	5,963,491	7,207,024
Miao	2,490,874	2,782,088	5,021,175	7,383,622
Yi	3,227,750	3,380,960	5,453,564	6,578,524
Zhuang	6,864,585	8,386,140	13,383,086	15,555,820
Bouyei	1,237,714	1,348,055	2,119,345	2,548,294
Korean	1,111,275	1,339,569	1,765,204	1,923,361
Manchu	2,399,228	2,695,675	4,304,981	9,846,776
Dong	712,802	836,123	1,426,400	2,508,624
Yao	665,933	857,265	1,411,967	2,137,033
Bai	567,119	706,623	1,132,224	1,598,052
Hani	481,220	628,727	1,058,806	1,254,800
Kazak	509,375	491,637	907,546	1,110,758
Dai	478,966	535,389	839,496	1,025,402
Li	360,950	438,813	887,107	1,112,498
Lisu	317,465	270,628	481,884	574,589
Va	286,158	200,272	298,611	351,980
Gaoshan	329	366	1,650	2,877
Lahu	139,060	191,241	304,256	411,545
Shui	133,566	156,099	286,908	347,116
Dongxiang	155,761	147,443	279,523	373,669
Naxi	143,453	156,796	251,592	277,750
Jingpo	101,852	57,762	92,976	119,276
Kirgiz	70,944	70,151	113,386	143,537
Tu	53,277	77,349	159,632	192,568
Qiang	35,660	49,105	102,815	198,303
Salar	30,658	34,664	69,135	87,546
Xibe	19,022	33,438	83,683	172,932
Tajik	14,462	16,236	26,600	33,223
Uzbek	13,626	7,717	12,213	14,763
Russian	22,656	1,326	2,917	13,500
Ewenki	4,957	9,681	19,398	26,379
Bonan	4,957	5,125	9,017	11,683
Yugur	3,861	5,717	10,568	12,293
Tatar	6,929	2,294	4,122	5,064
Oroqen	2,262	2,709	4,103	7,004

Continued on the next page

Nationalities	1953 Census	1964 Census	1982 Census	1990 Census
Recognized between 1954 and1964				
Tujia		524,755	2,836,814	5,725,049
She		234,167	371,965	634,700
Daur		63,394	94,126	121,463
Mulam		42,819	90,357	160,648
Blang		39,411	58,473	82,398
Maonan		22,382	38,159	72,370
Gelao		26,852	54,164	438,192
Achang		12,032	20,433	27,718
Primi		14,298	24,238	29,721
Nu		15,047	22,896	27,190
Deang		7,261	12,297	15,461
Jing		4,293	13,108	18,749
Derung		3,090	4,633	5,825
Hezhen		718	1,489	2,115
Monba		3,809	1,140	7,498
Recognized in 1965				
Lhoba			1,066	2,322
Recognized in 1979				
Jino			11,962	18,022
Unrecognized		1,017,299	32,411	799,705

Note:

* The groups are listed in the order of the conclusion of the official recognition process, which may be a difference between a few days. Among the early recognized groups, it is impossible to identified on which date a group was officially given the recognition because of the confusion in the procedure. The PRC government carried out five national censuses between 1949 and 2000, the last of which was conducted in 2000, but the data has not yet been made public.

dispatched to investigate Tujia (土家) communities in three counties in western Hunan Province, and it wrote a favorable report that won the Tujia people official recognition in the same year (cf. Jian and Zhou 1993: 88–91). This stage finally awarded official recognition to 15 communities listed in Table 1.

After the completion of the above two stages, the normal recognition process was considered complete by the Chinese government. However, in the following years, two groups were able to win recognition from the PRC government, resulting in the so-called “third stage”. The first group is the Lhoba (珞巴), whose community is located in northwestern Yunnan bordering Tibet and Burma, not far from the borders between China and India. The official recognition took place in 1965, within about two years after the Sino-Indian border conflict (the end of 1962) and during the high-tension period between China and India. The second group is the Jino who inhabit an area in southeastern Yunnan, close to the borders among China, Vietnam, and Loas. The Jinos received their official recognition in 1979, during a time of border conflicts between China and Vietnam. Obviously, both recognitions were given not because these two groups stood out, among a number of unrecognized groups, in terms of the recognition criteria, but because of their strategic locations and the timing of their request for recognition. In its negotiation with minority groups for autonomy, the Chinese government follows what is termed Hobbesian principle of equality, which essentially means that, among all of China's minority groups, those of equal threat to the state obtain equal rights and power whereas those of unequal threat are given unequal rights and power (M. Zhou forthcoming). Because of the border tension and conflicts, these two groups had more weight to negotiate with the state for the status that they desired.

In the late 1970s, as the accommodationist interpretation of the CCP ethnic policy was again being formed, the Chinese government faced two large groups of people – those who claimed that they belonged to an existing nationality and requested identification, and those who claimed that they belonged to unique unrecognized nationalities and requested recognition. To handle this volatile situation, in 1979 the State Commission on Nationalities Affairs issued Document #166 (1979), stressing Section Four of the four operational principles stated above. This document favored the group of more than 5,000,000 people who asked merely for identification (China 1996a: 579; see the sudden increase of the Manchu population and Tujia population between the 1982 and 1990 censuses in Table 1). By 1985, about 2,600,00 people had won their identification, most of whom were Manchus. The remaining 2,400,000 people were mainly those in western Hunan Province who claimed Tujia identity, and they also received their official identification in the following few years. However, this document has essentially signaled the end of recognition for new nationalities. For example, between 1980 and 1985 in Guizhou Province, which then had the most cases, applications from 15 different communities were officially settled by assigning them to already recognized nationalities; three groups to the Han, two to the Miao, one to the Bouyei (布依), one to the Bai (白), two to the Yao, one to the Manchu, one to Gelao (仡佬),

two to the Dong (侗), and one to the Yi, with some of the Sanqiao (三橇) people assigned to the Miao and some to the Dong (cf. Guizhou 1999: 228–230). During the same time, the Guizhou government made recommendations to assign eight other communities to existing nationalities, but those eight communities strongly rejected the recommendations and insisted that they were unique minority nationalities. In 1985, the provincial government sent a task force to Beijing to report those eight cases to the State Commission on Nationalities Affairs. The Commission held a conference with specialists from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Central University for Nationalities as well as officials from the CCP United Front Work Department and the subcommittee on nationalities affairs of the Chinese People's Congress to discuss these difficult cases. The conference agreed with the Guizhou government's recommendations and further affirmed Document #166 of the State Commission on Nationalities Affairs by concluding that in processing those eight applications care must be given to the principles of no recognition for new nationalities and of assignment of applicant communities to already recognized nationalities to which they are linguistically, geographically, and historically close. In the following year, in its bulletin to provincial governments regarding nationality recognition work, the State Commission stated that nationality status recognition had generally concluded in the 1950s, and reaffirmed the four criteria with a stress on Section Four in handling the remaining issues (China 1996: 578–586). This has been the policy since 1986. Unless the situation in China changes dramatically, the PRC government's minority status recognition has clearly come to a conclusion.

1.3. Distribution of minority communities

The geographic distribution of China's minority communities is largely determined by their history and production modes, with a deep influence of the various governments' ethnic policies over the last two thousand years. Large minority communities are found in areas where husbandry used to be predominant and the governments historically often implemented accommodationist ethnic policies. Medium-sized minority communities are found in areas where there used to be a mixture of agriculture and husbandry and the governments historically alternated between assimilationist and accommodationist ethnic policies. Small and discontinuous minority communities are found in agricultural areas where the governments tried to implement limited accommodationist or simply assimilationist ethnic policies over the last five hundred years or so. The distribution of minority communities also reflects the spread of religion and language in the last thousand years.

The pattern is best seen in the distribution of minority autonomous administrations, as shown in Table 2 and Map 1. By law, an autonomous government must be headed by officials of minority origin, has much more flexibility in the implementation of the central government's policies, has the right to use minority languages for government business and education, and organizes its own local security force (China 1998). There are huge economic benefits for autonomous communities because of the central government's tax reduction and financial subsidiary, which are part of the PRC's "affirmative" action policy.

In China there are four levels of local governments – province/region, prefecture, county (usually with a population of about 100,000 to about 1,000,000) and *xiang* (乡), with the last being the lowest level and having a population of about 20,000 to 50,000 under its jurisdiction.[7] China has a total of five provincial level autonomous governments, called "autonomous regions", four of which are located in northern and western China, where various central governments have taken military actions or implemented accommodationist policies over the last two thousand years.

In the north is the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, where most Chinese Mongols live. In the northwest lies Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, where many of China's non-Turkic Muslims are found, and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, where most of China's Turkic Muslims live. In the west stands the Tibetan Autonomous Region, the heartland of the Tibetans. The only exception is Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, which is located in the south. These five autonomous regions are large communities with various densities of minority population: 20 percent in Inner Mongolia, 34 percent in Ningxia, 38 percent in Guangxi, 61 percent in Xinjiang, and 94 percent in Tibet (cf. China 1999b: 406).[8] The PRC government recognizes those areas as the original homes of those minority groups in whose names autonomous governments have been established, though their respective populations have been dramatically diluted by Han immigrants over the years, with the exception of the Tibetans. The geographic locations of these five provincial level autonomous governments more or less represent the

Table 2. Distribution of autonomous regions, prefectures, and counties in China

Province/Regions	Prefectures	Counties
Northeast		
Hebei	none (0)	Qinglong Manchu, Dachang Hui, Kuangcheng Manchu, Fengning Manchu, Weichang Manchu/Mongol, and Mengcun Hui (6)
Inner Mongolia (Autonomous)	none (0)	Molidawa Daur, Oroqen, and Ewenki (3)
Liaoning	none (0)	Xiuyan Mongol, Xinbing Manchu, Qingyuan Manchu, Benxi Manchu, Huanren Manchu, Kuangdian Manchu, Fuxin Mongol, and Kelaqinzuoyi Mongol (8)
Jilin	Yanbian Korean (1)	Yitong Manchu, Changbai Korean, and Qianguoerluosi Mongol (3)
Heilongjiang	none	Duerbote Mongol (1)
Northwest		
Gansu	Linxia Hui, and Gannan Tibetan (2)	Zhangjiachuan Hui, Subei Mongol, Akesai Kazak, Sunan Yugur, Tianzhu Tibetan, Jishishan Bonan/ Dongxiang/Salar, and Dongxiang (7)
Qinghai	Haibei Tibetan, Guoluo Tibetan, Huangnan Tibetan, Hainan Tibetan, Yushu Tibetan, and Haixi Mongol/Tibetan (6)	Datong Hui, Minhe Hui/Tu, Huzhu Tu, Hualong Hui, Xunhua Salar, Menyuan Hui, and Henan Mongol (7)
Ningxia (Hui Autonomous)	none	none
Xinjiang (Uygur Autonomous)	Changji Hui, Boertala Mongol, Bayinguoleng Mongol, Kezhilesu Kirgiz, and Yili Kazak (5)	Balikun Kazak, Tashikuergan Tajik, Mulei Kazak, Yanqi Hui, Chabuchaer Xibe, and Hebukesaier Mongol (6)
Southeast		
Zhejiang	none (0)	Jingning She (1)
Guangdong	none (0)	Ruyuang Yao, Lianshang Zhuang/Yao, and Liannan Yao (3)
Hainan	none (0)	Baisha Li, Changjiang Li, Ledong Li, Lingshui Li, Baoting Li/Miao, and Qiongzhong Li/Miao (6)

Continued on the next page.

Province/Regions	Prefectures	Counties
Southwest		
Hubei	Enshi Tujia/Miao (1)	Changyang Tujia and Wufeng Tujia (2)
Hunan	Xiangxi Tujia/Miao (1)	Chengbu Miao, Jianghua Yao, Mayang Miao, Xinhuang Dong, Zhijiang Dong, Tongdao Dong, and Jingzhou Miao/Dong (7)
Guangxi (Zhuang Autonomous)	none (0)	Sanjiang Dong, Rongshui Miao, Jinxiu Yao, Longsheng Various Minorities, Gongcheng Yao, Fuchuan Yao, Longlin Various Minorities, Luocheng Mulam, Huijiang Maonan, Bama Yao, Douan Yao, and Dahua Yao (12)
Guizhou	Qianxinan Bouyei/ Miao, Qiandongnan Miao/Dong, and Qiannan Bouyei/Miao (3)	Daozhen Gelao/Miao, Wuchuan Gelao/Miao, Yuping Dong, Yinjiang Tujia/Miao, Yanhe Tujia, Songtao Miao, Weining Yi/Hui/ Miao, Guanling Bouyei/Miao, Zhenning Bouyei/Miao, Ziyun Miao/Bouyei, and Sandou Shui (11)
Chongqing (Municipal)		Shizhu Tujia, Xiushan Tujia/Miao, Qianjiang Tujia/Miao, Qiuyang Tujia/Miao, Pengshui Miao/Tujia (5)
Sichuan	Aba Tibetan/Qiang, Ganzi Tibetan, and Liangshan Yi (3)	Ebian Yi, Mabian Yi, and Muli Tibetan (3)
Yunnan	Chuxiong Yi, Honghe Hani/Yi, Xishuanbanna Dai, Dali Bai, Dehong Dai/Jingpo, Nujiang Lisu, Wenshan Zhuang/Miao, and Diqing Tibetan (8)	(29)*
Tibet (Autonomous)	none (0)	none (0)

Note:

* Yunnnan's 29 autonomous counties: Shilin Yi, Luquan Yi/Miao, Eshan Yi, Xundian Hui/Yi, Xinping Yi/Dai, Yuanjiang Hani/Yi/Dai, Puer Hani/Yi, Mojiang Hani, Jingdong Yi, Weishan Yi/Hui, Gongshan Derung/Nu, Lanping Bai/Primi, Weixi Lisu, Jinggu Dai/Yi, Zhenyuan Yi/ Hani/Lahu, Jiangcheng Hani/Yi, Menglian Dai/Lahu/Va, Lancang Lahu, Ximeng Va, Lijiang Naxi, Ninglang Yi, Shuanjiang Lahu/Va/Blang/Dai, Gengma Dai/Va, Cangyuan Va, Pingbian Miao, Jinping Miao/Yao/Dai, Hekou Yao, Yangbi Yi, and Nanjian Yi.

extent of accommodationist approaches taken by historical and current Chinese governments.

In addition, China has 30 minority autonomous prefectures mostly located outside autonomous regions, as Table 2 shows, of which 14 are in the northeast and northwest and 16 are in the southeast and southwest (cf. China 1999c: 25). In the northeast is Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin Province. In the northwest, Xinjiang has five autonomous prefectures, a Hui, a Kirgiz, a Kazak, and two Mongolian ones; Gansu Province has a Hui autonomous prefecture and a Tibetan autonomous prefecture; and Qinghai Province has six Tibetan autonomous prefectures. In the southwest, Hunan and Hubei Provinces both have a Tujia-and-Miao autonomous prefecture; Guizhou Province has three autonomous prefectures, two Bouyei-and-Miao ones and one Dong-and-Miao; Sichuan Province has a Tibetan autonomous prefecture, a Tibetan-and-Qiang autonomous prefecture, a Yi autonomous prefecture, and Yunnan has eight autonomous prefectures, a Dai, a Dai-and-Jingpo, a Lisu, a Bai, a Tibetan, a Hani-and-Yi, a Zhuang-and-Miao, and a Yi. These autonomous prefectures represent medium-sized communities whose minority populations range from about 30 percent to 97 percent (cf. China 1999c: 728). By law, an autonomous prefecture has the same rights and privileges as an autonomous region, but in practice it has much less flexibility in implementing the central and provincial governments' policies. Sometimes an autonomous prefecture is named after two minority groups, who are supposed to share the responsibility to govern that area, though usually one of the two is more dominant than the other. These autonomous prefectures are about equally distributed between the north and northwest and the south and southwest; however, those in the south and southwest generally reflect accommodationism on the part of the various historical central governments, while those in the north and northwest mainly reflect historical immigration and/or the mobility of nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples.

China also has 120 autonomous counties, 21 of which are located in the northeast, 20 in the northwest, 10 in the southeast and 69 in the southwest (see Table 2). Finally, China has 1,252 minority xiangs; 315 in the northeast; 120 in the northwest; 55 in the southeast; and 762 in the southwest (China 1999c: 394).[9] These minority autonomous counties and minority xiangs manifest small, discontinuous minority communities surrounded by Han communities and other minority communities. The large number of minority xiangs in the northeast and southwest suggests that, historically, assimilation has taken place extensively but not yet completely in those areas (see Section 1).

Linguistically, too, the distribution of China's minority communities mirrors their history of assimilation and accommodation, which in turn reflects their historical economy and production modes. Altaic language speakers, who include Turkic speakers (Uygurs, Uzbeks, Tatars, Salars, Kazaks, Yugurs, and Kirgizs), Mongolian speakers (Mongols, Daurs, Dongxiangs, Bonans, Yugurs, and Tus), and Tangusic speakers (Ewenkis, Oroquens, Hezhens, Xibes, and a few Manchus), are found in communities along the plains, deserts, and grasslands in the northwest, north, and northeast, since these groups are or used to be nomadic and rely on or used to rely on herding for their livelihood (cf. Ramsey 1987: 173–174). In these same areas, there are four linguistic exceptions – the Tajiks, who speak an Indo-Iranian language; the Russians, who speak a Slavic language; the Huis, who speak Chinese; and the Koreans, who speak a language that may or may not be included in the Altaic family – all of which represent relatively recent immigration to the areas (cf. Mackerras 1994: 39–44). As the mixed result of assimilation and accommodation, in the mountains and hills of the west, south, and southwest, there are Tibeto-Burman language speakers (Tibetans, Monbas, Jingpos, Yis, Hanis, Naxis, Lisus, Lahus, Jinos, Vas, Achangs, Bais, Qiangs, Primis, Lohbas, Derungs, Tus, and Nus), Miao-Yao language speakers (Miaos, Yaos, and Shes), Tai language speakers (Zhuangs, Bouyeis, Dais, Dongs, Shuis, Maonans, Mulams, Lis, and Gelaos), and Austroasiatic language speakers (Deangs, Vas, and Blangs). Finally, Austronesian language speakers (Gaoshans) are found in Taiwan and other islands claimed by the PRC.

In terms of religion, the distribution of minority communities also shows the imprints of assimilation and accommodation (cf. Gladney 1991; Harrell 1995: 3–36; Z. Luo 1991; Mackerras 1995: 19–38).[10] Islam spread eastward to Central Asia, and from Central Asia still eastward, for nearly a thousand years. Along its way, the religion has become dominant in all the Turkic communities (Uygur, Kazak, Uzbek, Tatar, Salar, and Kirgiz) in Xinjiang, in some Mongolian communities (Dongxiang and Bonan) in Gansu and Ningxia, and among the immigrant Tajik in Xinjiang and the immigrant Hui on the great plains along the Yellow River down to the heartland of the Han people. Starting earlier, Buddhism spread eastward from India for more than a thousand years. It first reached Tibetan communities, and eventually advanced northeastward to Mongolian, Tu, and Yugur communities, where it has become the dominant religion. Meanwhile, Buddhism (Theravada) also spread from Southeast Asia to the Dai, Blang, Derung, and some other minority communities in southwestern China. Dominant among the Han and more of an ideology than a religion, Confucianism has greatly influenced the Korean community in the northeast, the Manchu community in the heartland of the Han people, the Tujia, Miao, Jing, Gelao, She, and Zhuang communities in the south and central south, and the Dong, Bouyei, Bai, and Shui communities in the southwest. Given some space between assimilation and accommodation, many of the southwestern and northeastern minority communities influenced by Confucianism, and many others not so influenced, also practice polytheism, nature and ancestor worship, and shamanism (cf. Mackerras 1995: 28–31). The real religion that originated in the Han communities is Daoism, which does not appear to have much influence in China's minority communities. Though there is a controversy regarding the exact date of the spread of Christianity into southwestern China (cf. X. Yang 1999: 337-413), in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, various Christian missionaries began to extensively influence religious beliefs in some Miao, Bai, Lahu, Yi, Va, Jingpo, and Nu communities in Yunnan and Guizhou in the southwest, where Christianity has seen a revival since the early 1980s (cf. Covell 1995; Waldron 1998). Of all these religions, we will find in the following chapters that Buddhism, Christianity and Islam have seriously challenged writing reforms initiated by the PRC government in the past half century.

The geopolitics, languages, and religions related to the distribution of minority communities in China have shaped the identities of the minority communities in contrast to the Han people and are continuing to influence language attitudes, language policy, bilingual education, and the maintenance and development of minority languages (cf. Dwyer 1998; Ramsey 1987; Sun and Coulmas 1992; M. Zhou 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, forthcoming).

1.4. The classification and distribution of minority languages

In the early 1950s, the Chinese government realized that it was essential to have a good knowledge of the distribution of minority languages and a good classification of minority languages in China, as one of the bases for its work in the recognition of minority nationality status and in minority autonomy, a understanding that, in the late 1950s, restricted the classification of minority languages in many ways. At that time, a lot of work had been done on the Altaic languages by Soviet and Western linguists, but only sporadic work had been done on languages in south and southwestern China by some nonlinguist missionaries and a few Western and Chinese linguists (cf. Y. Wang 1993: 42–74). In 1951, seven language survey teams, totaling over one hundred linguists, were sent to Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, and Guangxi to investigate minority languages there (cf. Fu [1953] 1995: 81–88). In 1956, seven language survey teams with a total of over seven hundred linguists were sent from Beijing, of which six teams were assigned to investigate languages in south and southwestern China while only one was assigned to study languages in the northwest (cf. Dai et al. 1999: 95–108). This survey has laid the foundation for the classification of minority languages in China.

The survey and classification of minority languages were done in a rush, considering how uncharted were the waters in linguistic communities in southern and southwestern China, so that a considerable number of linguistic communities and languages were simply skipped. Moreover, the directions given to the language survey teams in the 1950s context limited their ability to fully exploit their professional expertise in surveying and classifying languages. They were given two specific tasks: (1) to provide the linguistic basis for the on-going work of nationality status recognition and (2) to provide a linguistic basis for creating writing systems for minority communities (cf. Fu [1954] 1995: 89–94). The first task was particularly troublesome if a given minority community, especially one that had already been officially recognized by the state, appeared to have more than one language. According to Stalin (1975: 19), every national community was supposed to have a common language, though different nations did not necessarily have different languages. This essentially amounted to saying that more languages should be not recognized than there were nationalities in China. This was in fact a guiding principle in China's recognition and classification of minority languages in the 1950s, though it seems not to have appeared in the central government's official documents nor to have been strictly followed in practice. In a few minority communities, more than one language was recognized, but this practice was an exception, which carried a big political risk for linguists and was politically attacked in the later 1950s (cf. China 1958; Y. Liu 1958). The second task first faced a practical problem as to how many writing systems should be created and implemented in China's minority communities, but the survey teams concentrated on a limited number of linguistic communities and classified fewer languages than they could have otherwise because the government very soon prioritized a list of candidate languages for new writing systems (cf. Fu 1959; M. Zhou forthcoming). Since the late 1970s, Chinese linguists have had more freedom in surveying and classifying minority languages, but their work has been basically circulated within the academic community and has not been considered in the Chinese government's language policy (cf. Dai et al. 1999: 104; Y. Wang 1993: 517–522).

In the 1950s, the Chinese government officially recognized and classified over 50 languages (cf. Fu 1959, [1979] 1995: 367). In the 1980s, with previously well-recognized languages and newly recognized languages added, the official number reached 61 languages (Chinese plus 60 minority languages), though linguists in China generally consider the number as being about 80 in the early 1990s and as being over 120 in the late 1990s (cf. China 1981: 585–586, 1994c; Dai et al. 1997: 10; Shearer and Sun 2002; Hongkai Sun 2002 – personal communication). Although the specific total number varies, it is generally agreed within the linguistic community in China that languages in China fall into five families: Sino-Tibetan, Altaic, Austronesian, Austroasiatic, and Indo-European (cf. China 1981: 585-586, 1994c; Dai et al. 1997: 10–11; Dai 1998: 10–16). The Chinese classification differs from those of the international linguistic community mainly in two ways (cf. Comrie 1990; Crystal 1987: 310–311; Katzner 1995; Lyovin 1997: 109–184). First, Chinese linguists call Tai-Kadai languages "Dong-Dai" (Tamdai) and put them into the Sino-Tibetan family as a group, while many linguists outside China categorize the Tai(-Kadai) as an independent family. Second, some Chinese linguists consider Bai, Tujia, Derung, Primi, Qiang, and Nu as unidentified languages or as independent subgroups of languages, while linguists outside China generally classify them into existing subgroups of Tibeto-Burman languages. Currently, Chinese linguists still maintain their division with Western linguists regarding their difference in classification (X. Huang 2000: 82–83; Sun Hongkai 2002 – personal communication).

Under the Chinese classification (cf. China 1994c; Dai et al. 1997), as shown in Map 2, the Sino-Tibetan languages (excluding the majority's Sinitic languages) spread in many discontinuous communities in southern, southwestern, and western China; the Altaic languages cover

Table 3. Classification and distribution of minority languages

Classification	Speakers*	Areas
Sino-Tibetan		
Tibeto-Burman:		
Tibetan	94% of 4,593,072 Tibetans	Tibet, S. Qinghai, S.W. Gansu, N.W. Sichuan, and N. Yunnan
Jiarong	125,700 Tibetans	N.W. Sichuan
Monba	36,000 Tibetans	S.E. Tibet
Jingpo	25% of 119,276 Jingpos	W. and NW. Yunnan
Yi	93% of 6,578,524 Yis	Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou
Hani	99% of 1,254,800 Hanis	S. Yunnan
Naxi	95% of 277,750 Naxis	N.E. Yunnan
Lisu	99% of 574,589 Lisus	N. Yunnan
Lahu	99% of 411,545 Lahus	S.W. Yunnan
Bai	90% of 1,598,052 Bais	Central N. Yunnan
Jino	99% of 18,022 Jinos	S.W. Yunnan
Nu **	30% of 27,190 Nus	N.W. Yunnan
Zaiwa	63% of 119,276 Jingpos	W. Yunnan
Achang	99% of 27,718 Achangs	W. Yunnan
Qiang	63% of 198,303 Qiangs plus 40,000 Tibetans	W. Sichuan
Primi	64% of 29,721 Primis plus 26,600 Tibetans	W. Sichuan
Tujia	3% of 5,725,049 Tujias	S.W. Hubei, NE. Guizhou, and N.W. Hunan
Lhoba	70% of 2,322 Lohbas	S.E. Tibet
Derung	99% of 5,825 Derungs plus 6,000 Nus, Tibetans, and others	N.W. Yunnan
Miao-Yao:		
Miao	80% of 7,383,622 Miaos	W. Hunan, S.W. Hubei, N.W. Guangxi, Guizhou, SW. Sichuan, NW. Yunnan, and Hainan
She	About 1,000 out of 634,700 Shes	Scattered in Fujian, Guangdong, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, and Anhui
Bunu	22% of 2,137,033 Yaos	NW. Guangxi, S.W. Hunan, S. Guizhou, and E. Yunnan
Mien	49% of 2,137,033 Yaos	NW. Guangxi, S.W. Hunan, S. Guizhou, and E. Yunnan

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Classification	Speakers *	Areas
Dong-Dai (Tai-Kadai):		
Zhuang	97% of 15,555,820 Zhuangs	Guangxi and S.E Yunnan
Bouyei	85% of 2,548,294 Bouyeis	Guizhou
Dai	95% of 1,025,402 Dais	Yunnan
Dong	80% of 2,508,624 Dongs	Guizhou, S.W. Hunan, and N.W. Guangxi
Mulam	Above 80% of 160,648 Mulams	Guangxi and S. Guizhou
Shui	88% of 347,116 Shuis	Guizhou
Lakia	8903 out of 2,137,033 Yaos	Guangxi
Maonan	Above 80% of 72,370 Maonans	Guangxi
Li	90% of 1,112,498 Lis	Hainan
Gelao	1.5% of 438,192 Gelaos	Guizhou and N. Guangxi
Altaic		
Turkic:		
Uygur	99.9% of 7,207,024 Uygurs	Xinjiang
Kazak	99.9% of 1,110,758 Kazaks	Xinjiang and Gansu
Kirgiz	99% of 143,537 Kirgizs	Xinjiang
Uzbek	25% of 14,763 Uzbeks	N. Xinjiang
Tatar	25% of 5,064 Tatars	N. Xinjiang
Salar	87% of 87,546 Salars	Qinghai, Gansu, and Xinjiang
Western Yugur	44% of 12,293 Yugurs	Gansu
Tuvin	2,000 Tuvin speakers (recognized as Mongols)	N. Xinjiang
Mongolian:		
Mongol	80% of 4,802,407 Mongols	Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Gansu, Qinghai and other northern provinces
Daur	90% of 121,463 Daurs	N.E Inner Mongolia, N.W. Heilongjiang, and Xinjiang
Tu	62% of 192,568 Tus	Qinghai and Gansu
Dongxiang	84% of 373,669 Dongxiangs	Gansu and Xinjiang
Bonan	65% of 11,683 Bonans	Gansu
Eastern Yugur	33% of 12,293 Yugurs	Gansu
Tungusic:		
Manchu	a few hundred out of 9,846,776 Manchus	in a few counties in Heilongjiang
Xibe	33% of 172,932 Xibes	Xinjiang
Hezhen	15% of 2,115 Hezhens	Heilongjiang
Ewenki	70% of 26,379 Ewenkis	Heilongjiang and Inner Mongolia
Oroqen	51% of 7,004 Oroqens	Heilongjiang and Inner Mongolia

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