

*Plurality and Unity in the Configuration
of the Chinese People*

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INTRODUCTION

I am much honored to have been invited to deliver a Tanner lecture here. I am availing myself of this opportunity to present a subject which I have studied for many years, namely, the plurality and unity in the configuration of the Chinese people. My research on the subject is in its initial stages, and therefore what I am going to say will be only an introduction to a vast subject rather than a complete or mature statement.

To avoid lengthy definitions, let me clarify that I apply the term “Chinese people” to refer to the population of one billion within the peripheries of China’s territory who have the unified consciousness of a nationality. This includes over fifty ethnic groups who are also known as “nationalities,” a fact which embodies plurality and unity at the same time: pluralistic because fifty-odd ethnic units are included, unified because together they make up the Chinese people. The Chinese term *minzu* applies in both cases: *Zhonghua Minzu* (the Chinese people as a whole), and *Shaoshu Minzu* (ethnic groups, which we also call “national minorities”) include the same basic term, but it differs between one case and the other in the level and scope it implies. It is inappropriate to define the nationality of a people by the domain of the country, or state, they reside in, since a state and a people are different, though interrelated, concepts. I do so here for the sake of convenience and also to avoid involvement in certain political controversies in this regard. Macrocosmically, however, there is basic identity between the two.

The Chinese people became a conscious national entity only during the past century, as a result of China’s confrontation with

the Western powers, but their formation into a single nation has been the result of a historical process of millennia. Here I will go back into the process of formation of the Chinese people's pluralistic yet unified configuration. The general situation was the simultaneous existence of a multitude of ethnic groups who were separated and independent of each other. During a long period of mutual contact many groups were mixed, aligned, or integrated, while others were divided and became extinct. In time the groups unified into one group which consisted of a number of subunits that kept emerging, vanishing, and reemerging, so that parts of some subunits became a part of others, yet each retained its individual characteristics. Together they formed a national entity which was at once pluralistic and unified. This may have been a process of creation common to all nations the world over; yet the Chinese people, as a nation, came into being through a process of their own. Three thousand years ago, a nucleus assembled in the middle reaches of the Yellow River and gradually melded together a number of national groups. Known as *Hua Xia*, this nucleus attracted all groups around it, growing larger like a snowball. By the early fifth century, its domain enclosed the East Asian plain in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River and the Yangtze. These people were called *Hans* by other ethnic groups. The ethnic entity of the *Hans* grew steadily by their absorption of other groups. In the meantime, groups of *Hans* seeped into the habitats of other nationalities, where in time they became centers of liaison and assembly. These in turn formed a network which was the foundation for the Chinese people to be unified and to emerge as a single nation.

History is like an extremely long, complex, and elaborate scroll of painting, My present paper is an attempt to translate it into literal representation, and the narration is likely to be one-sided, disordered, chronically ill-arranged, or even lopsided in the order of precedence. At best, it is an experimental venture which I make bold to undertake in this branch of learning.

I. THE LIVING SPACE OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE

The Chinese people had their home in the vast land of eastern Asia which borders on the Pamirs in the west, the Pacific Ocean to the east with the offshore islands, the vast desert to the north, the sea to the southeast, and the mountain range to the southwest. Bounded by natural shelters on all sides, it is a geographical unit with a complete structural system of its own. In the eyes of the ancients this was the only piece of land for the human race to live in. For this reason the land was called Tianxia, meaning "all the land under heaven." Another name for China was Sihai, meaning "the land surrounded by seas on all sides, as was believed in those times. These conceptions are, of course, long outdated. What remains true is that this piece of land, which forms a geographical entity by itself, still serves as a living space for the Chinese people.

It seems that, as a rule, the makeup of a nation is restricted by the limits of the ecological structure of the homeland. To this restriction the Chinese people are no exception. The land of their habitation happens to be a large slope tilting from west to east, the altitude decreasing in this direction. In the west stands the 4,000-meter-high plateau of Qinghai and Tibet, labeled the "Roof of the World." From here eastward the altitude drops to 1,000—2,000 meters on the highlands of Yunnan-Guizhou, Inner Mongolia, and the Loess Plateau in between, which are interspersed by the basins of Talimu, Sichuan, and others. Farther east we come to the hilly regions below 1,000 meters, which lower to a plain of less than 200 meters above sea level.

The land consists of three gigantic steps with immensely conspicuous drops in altitude, and it extends over thirty degrees parallel. Vastly different ecological conditions resulting from differences in temperature and humidity have constituted severe shackles as well as limitless opportunities for the growth of civilization. It was within such a framework of nature that the Chinese people came into being.

II. THE ORIGIN OF PLURALITY

What was the situation of the first inhabitants of this piece of land? This is a question which involves the origin of the Chinese people. Each people tells in its own way about its origin, and the common version often serves to express sentiments of national consciousness and may not be entirely consistent with historical facts. There have been long-standing controversies over the question of the origin of the Chinese: disagreements between monism and pluralism, between claims of indigenous origin and those of immigrant ancestry. It was not until the 1950s, and especially in the 1970s, when unprecedented success was scored by archaeology, that it was possible to understand more or less scientifically the early history of the Chinese people.

Fossils of early man have been successively discovered in China which represent man at different stages of evolution from early man to new man, forming a complete picture of development. They serve to prove that continental China is one of the world's centers where mankind originated.

The fossils of early man were distributed over vast areas. The earliest, the Yuanmou man, who lived 1.7 million years ago, was found in Yunnan. Fossils of other ape-men were found subsequently at Lantian, Shaanxi; Zhoukoudian in Beijing municipality; Yun County and Yunxi County in Hubei; and He County in Anhui. Fossils of humans who lived 100,000 to 40,000 years ago were found at Dali County in Shaanxi; Dingcun village in Xiangfen County, Shanxi; Xujiajiao village in Yanggao County, Shanxi; Jinniushan in Yingkou, Liaoning; Changyang County in Hubei; Chao County in Anhui; and Maba in Qujiang County, Guangxi. Fossils of the new man living 10,000 years ago were found at Shandingdong in Zhoukoudian, Beijing; Chiyu in Shuo County, Shanxi (Ugusin Hosigun); Ushen Banner in Inner Mongolia; Jianping County in Liaoning; Antu County in Yanbian Prefecture, Jilin; Harbin Municipality in Heilongjiang; Liujiang

County in Guangxi; Xingyi County in Guizhou; Lijiang County in Yunnan; and Zuozhen in Tainan County, Taiwan. This lengthy list of places of discovery shows that China was the home of early man at the dawn of civilization and that he was active in the vast region bordered by Heilongjiang, Yunnan, and Taiwan. Stone tools have also been discovered.

It is difficult to imagine that these early people, who lived so widely apart from one another, came from a single origin. It can be affirmed that these groups, who lived independently of each other for long periods, developed their respective civilizations to cope with widely different natural environments. This material evidence can serve as enough ground to dismiss the unified and immigrant version concerning the origin of the Chinese people, and to confirm the pluralistic and indigenous version.

Should the above theory be viewed skeptically, then proof exists of multifarious civilizations of local nature in the abundant archaeological finds of the Neolithic period of the Stone Age. If we believe that a degree of cultural identity is sure to be found among the people of the same group, then it can be assumed that a number of ethnic groups, isolated from one another, lived in what is now China as early as 6000 B.C. The discovery of a variety of cultural areas in the Neolithic period can be a starting point from which to understand the pluralistic yet unified configuration of the Chinese people.

III. MUTUAL INFLUENCE AND ABSORPTION OF PLURALISTIC CULTURES OF THE NEOLITHIC PERIOD

Ruins of Neolithic cultures have been found in more than 7,000 places in various provinces in China during recent years, covering the period from 6000 to 2000 B.C. Study and analysis of these relics by archaeologists have resulted in a general understanding of the contents, evolution, mutual influence, and absorp-

tion of the various cultural regions at the time, though disagreement remains over some special questions. As it is impossible to go into detail about the fruits of research in this field, I will first deal briefly with the cultural sites in the Central Plain.

In the Neolithic period there existed simultaneously along the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River two cultural sites, one in the east and the other in the west. Neolithic cultures in the middle reaches of the Yellow River developed in the following sequence: the early Yangshao culture (6000 B.C.—5400 B.C.), the Yangshao culture (5000 B.C.—3000 B.C.), and the Henan Longshan culture (2900 B.C.—2000 B.C.). The last was probably followed by the Xia culture. The Yangshao culture was also known as the color-pottery culture because it was characterized by color-painted pottery first produced at that time. The culture had its center in the plain crossed by the Rivers Wei, Fen, Luo, and other tributaries of the Yellow River, spreading to the Great Wall in the north, northwestern Hubei in the south, eastern Henan in the east, and the Gansu-Qinghai border in the west. Cultures in the middle reaches of the Yellow River saw a general decline before the rise of the Henan Longshan culture.

The lower reaches of the Yellow River were the site of a series of cultures that were distinct from those in the middle reaches, namely, the Qingliangang culture (5400 B.C.—4000 B.C.), the Dawenkou culture (4300 B.C.—2500 B.C.), the Shandong Longshan culture (2500 B.C.—2000 B.C.), and the Yueshi culture (1900 B.C.—1500 B.C.). The Yueshi culture was probably followed by the culture of Shang. The Longshan culture was also called black-pottery culture because of the production of such utensils.

The Yangshao culture in the middle reaches of the Yellow River suddenly declined about 3000 B.C. This was followed by the westward expansion of cultures from the Lower Yellow River Basin. The Henan Longshan culture emerged after the Yangshao culture. Archaeologists hold that the Longshan culture of Henan

differed from that of the Shandong in local character. However, it is apparent that the area in the middle reaches received much from the culture of the lower river basin.

Quite similarly, two cultural centers existed simultaneously in the Yangtze Valley, one around the middle, the other around the lower reaches of the river. The cultural area in the Lower Yangtze Valley had its center in the plain around Lake Taihu, extending to Hangzhou Bay in the south and the Jiangsu-Anhui border in the west. The sequence: the Hemudu culture (5000 B.C.—4400 B.C.), the Majiabbin-Songze culture (4300 B.C.—3300 B.C.), the Liangzhu culture (3300 B.C.—2200 B.C.). The Liangzhu culture was roughly simultaneous with the Longshan culture of Henan, but it was characteristically more closely related to the Longshan culture of Shandong.

Neolithic culture in the Middle Yangtze Valley had its center in the Yangtze-Hanjiang Plain. The total area bordered on Dongting Lake in the south, eastern Sichuan in the west, and southern Henan in the north. Opinions differ over the time sequence of ancient cultures in this region. Following is roughly the order of succession: the Daxi culture (4400 B.C.—3300 B.C.), the Qujialiang culture (3000 B.C.—2000 B.C.), and the Qinglongquan culture (2400 B.C.). The Qinglongquan culture was also called the Longshan culture in Hubei owing to the influence it received from the Longshan culture in the Central Plain. Cultures in both the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River in their later stage were infiltrated by the Longshan cultures of the middle and lower reaches, respectively, of the Yellow River, so they were in an inferior position to the latter. Other Neolithic cultures such as those in Yan-Liao in the north, the upper reaches of the Yellow River, and southern China will be dealt with when these regions are discussed later.

Archaeological finds of Neolithic cultures in the middle and lower reaches of China's two great rivers, regions whose ecological conditions were almost identical, proved the fact that the ancestors

of the Chinese people lived in separate groups over vast areas to create their respective cultures, each with characteristics of its own, during the dawn of human civilization between 5000 to 2000 B.C. This was the starting point of the pluralistic configuration of the Chinese people.

Contacts between these ancient cultures led to competition, each taking over from the other the better parts while retaining its own features. An example was the Yangshao culture, which once spread westward to infiltrate into the cultural area in the Upper Yellow River Basin after it rose in the river's middle reaches. But its encounter with the superior Longshan culture in the Upper Yangtze Valley soon led to the rise of the Longshan culture in Henan, which eventually replaced the Yangshao culture. By adding geographical modifiers to the term "Yangshao culture," archaeologists are discovering a process of cultural exchange between the local groups at the time, a process which eventually resulted in uniformity as well as plurality.

IV. THE EMERGENCE OF THE HAN NATIONALITY AS A NUCLEUS OF INTEGRATION

The earliest records of Chinese history are inscriptions on bones and tortoise shells of the Shang period (c. seventeenth century B.C.). Some mention is made of ancient records and legends in the "Book of History" (*Shang Shu*), believed to be compiled by Confucius. Later history books relate primitive Chinese history in a system of dynasties known as the Three Kings and Five Emperors (San Huang Wu Di). Part of these records have been corroborated by archaeological finds, thus affording reliable information about the history from the latter Neolithic period to the Bronze Age. Xia ruins excavated at Dengfeng, Henan, in the early 1980s have been confirmed as the remains of "Yangcheng" of the early Xia dynasty. This has brought to light the history of the Xia period from the haze of myths and legends. In addition to the

concrete records of the history of the Shang found in the inscriptions on tortoise shells and animal bones, and that of Zhou in inscriptions on bronze bells and tripods, records compiled by later historians provide more details. The three successive periods of Xia, Shang, and Zhou were precisely the time during which the national group of Hua Xia, predecessors to the Hans, changed from a pluralistic state to one of unity.

Relics unearthed at the “Yangcheng” remains of the Xia period in Henan represented a culture which took over from the Neolithic Longshan culture of Henan and then entered the Bronze Age. Objects found in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River testify to agriculture in these regions in the latter stage of the Henan Longshan culture. Corresponding to the legends about the floods being harnessed by King Yu of Xia, this serves to indicate a highly developed productive power among the early inhabitants of this region. As we remember, the Longshan culture of Henan had its basis in the Yangshao culture and flourished after it took over from the Longshan culture in Shandong. It can be concluded, therefore, that the Chinese culture known as the Hua Xia culture had a start in the mixing of cultures in the Middle Yellow River Basin with those of the lower basin.

According to legend, King Yu was preceded by Yau and Shun, whose predecessor was the mythic Yellow Emperor, Huang Dio. Other legends tell of military expeditions by these leaders against surrounding ethnic groups, called Man, Yi, Rong, and Di. The Yellow Emperor was said to have defeated his enemies Chiyou and Emperor Yan (Yan Di) somewhere in what is now Hebei Province. According to “Records of a Historian” (*Shi Ji*), Shun had the conquered clans and tribes exiled to the regions of Man, Yi, Rong, and Di for the purpose of changing the latter’s customs and traditions. This evidently meant a cultural expansion from the Central Plain. During Yu’s reign, according to “Zuo Qiuming’s Chronicles” (*Zuo Zhuan*), “Yu summoned the local rulers for a meeting at Tushan, where he received tribute from ten thousand

states.” The domain of his territory, called “Nine Lands” (Jiu Zhou) by Yu Gong in a chapter in the “Book of History,” enclosed the regions in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River and the Lower Yangtze Valley, which formed a solid base for the already thriving people of Hua Xia.

The people who rose after Xia were called Shang. Originally, the Shangs were a tribe in the east called Dong Yi, who were nomadic herdsmen at an earlier stage. Later they moved to the area around Mount Ai in present-day Shandong, then westward to eastern Henan, where they developed agriculture and learned to use draft animals in farming. Having prospered on an agricultural economy aided by cattle raising, they rose from a vassal state under Xia and founded the dynasty of Shang after conquering the Nine Lands. They divided the country into five parts: central, eastern, southern, western, and northern. The Shangs’ domain was described in this way in the “Book of Odes” (*ShiJing*): “The country is one thousand *li* across where the people reside, and it is bordered by the Four Seas.” The land “within the Four Seas” has been proved to include the provinces of Henan, Shandong, Hebei, Liaoning, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Anhui, and part of Jiangsu and Zhejiang, plus probably some areas in Jiangxi, and Hunan, and Inner Mongolia.

The Shangs were succeeded by the Zhous. Coming from the west, the Zhous, according to legend, originated from a group called the Jiang Yuan, whom some historians identify as the ancient Qiang group, who were in turn part of the Xi Rong, a nationality inhabiting the land to the west of what was considered the Central Kingdom. It was a group which first lived in the upper reaches of the River Wei, and the area was entitled Zhou when enfeoffed by the king of the Shangs. In time the Zhous replaced the Shangs to rule the country, while expanding their domain to the middle reaches of the Yangtze River. The Zhou ruler claimed proudly that “all land under Heaven belongs to the King; every person on the land is the King’s subject.” A patri-

archal system was enforced in which the land was distributed to members of the royal family, each of whom became supreme ruler of the land to which he was enfeoffed. With the Jing Tian system of land ownership, agriculture received fresh impetus, and production was raised. The Zhou dynasty's regime, a loosely organized body of alliance, lasted nearly three hundred years before it was toppled, giving way to separatist rule by individual states, a period known as the Spring and Autumn and, later, the Warring States. Throughout the period of unified rule each part of the country preserved its own features of culture and traditions, a situation which Xun Zi, a philosopher who lived during the Warring States period, described as one in which "one has to be a Chu when living in the state of Chu, a Yue when living in Yue, and a Xia when living in Xia." Here Xia refers to the central part of China. The remark means that a native of one state would have to adapt himself to the ways of another state when he goes to live there. It also indicates that conspicuous differences existed between the cultures of Chu, Yue, and Xia.

Beyond a doubt, China saw a peak of cultural prosperity during the five centuries from the Spring and Autumn to the Warring States period, which resulted from the migration of the population, cultural exchange between various native groups, and the competition for political supremacy by the state rulers. These were the five centuries during which the Hans matured as an ethnic entity, a process which was completed by the time the first emperor of Qin made his conquests to unify the whole of China in 221 B.C.

The Chinese character for "Han" became the name of a nationality after generations of contact between the people of central China and the groups surrounding them during the Han dynasty and subsequent ages. As a rule, the name of an ethnic group was first applied by outsiders then gradually became accepted by the group itself. People living in the same social community would not develop the consciousness of their ethnic entity without contacts with people outside their community. An ethnic entity is

formed by a group of people who have the same life-style; it is only after a period of contact with outsiders who are “not our people” that they will develop a recognition of the entity they live in and a sentiment otherwise called “national consciousness.” An ethnic entity, therefore, is a thing in itself before it is conscious of itself. The people known as Qins and Hans called themselves by these names long after they were referred to in this way by ethnic groups outside the Central Plain. A people acquires its specific name long after it has begun its existence as an entity, instead of becoming an ethnic entity because it is called by that name.

The name “Han” could not have been devised before the founding of the Han dynasty, yet the Hans as an ethnic entity must have existed much earlier. Some believe that Han became a name for the people at the beginning of the period of the Southern and Northern dynasties (420–581). This was very likely the case, because in that period, which followed the fall of the dynasties of Wei and Jin, central China was conquered by one ethnic group after another, each ruling a great part of central China for a relatively brief historical period. This gave the Hans more chances than ever before to mix with non-Hans, and consequently the name of Han came to be used to refer to all original residents of the Central Plain.

These former residents of central China were viewed as a nationality or ethnic entity by the newcomers from the north, who therefore called them by a definite name. This served to indicate that the Hans were already a *de facto* ethnic entity. The two thousand years of existence of the people of Hua Xia, as mentioned above, were nothing more than a period of pregnancy before the birth of the Hans as a nationality.

The formation of the ethnic entity of Han was an important step by which the entire Chinese people came into existence as a national entity, as the Hans were a nucleus for what I have described as the Chinese people’s pluralistic and unified configuration.

V. TWO GREAT UNIFICATIONS IN THE NORTH
AND THE SOUTH

The unification by the first emperor of Qin, which ended the separatist rule by the Warring States, was epoch-making in Chinese history, because it was then that China began its history as a united country. Of course, the scope of unification by Qin was limited to the agricultural region in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River and the Yangtze, known as the Central Plain, and this unified status had been in the making over a long period of time. There was economic growth in all parts of China during the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, when roads were built and trade and commerce developed. The contest for power between the serf-owners' states had boosted intercommunication throughout what is now central China and made it an integral whole. On this basis several measures were taken by the first emperor of Qin that were of lasting significance, namely, the standardization of the wheelbase for all horse-drawn vehicles, the adoption of a unified script throughout the country, the designation of prefectures and counties directly controlled by the central government, and the unification of weights and measures. This meant the economic, political, and cultural unification of the Chinese as a nation.

While the unification of weights and measures was significant for economic unification, the use of a unified script meant the unification of communication signals on the basis of pluralistic spoken languages, a system of communication which came into use after the period of Xia and Shang and retains its vitality today. Politically, the inception of prefectures with local variation, counties under unified central control in place of separatist rule by feudal princes, meant the launching of a political system which has lasted 2,000 years.

What I want to point out here is that this was but one more step toward the completion of the pluralistic and unified con-

figuration of the Chinese people. As a reminder, the first step of this gigantic process was the coming into being of the Hua Xia group; the second, the formation of the Hans, meant that the nucleus evolved and enlarged. The unification of central China by the Qin empire was the last step which completed the development of the Han community into an ethnic or national entity.

I have defined the unification by the Qin empire as just one more step toward the formation of the Chinese people. This is because what the Qin emperor put under his unified control was only the Central Plain, which accounted for but a portion of the living space of the entire Chinese people. In the three-leveled topographical makeup, this was the region of the lowest altitude, and not all of it at that. Many various groups inhabiting areas around the Central Plain were likewise advancing on the way to unification in their respective areas. Let us first look at the north.

Until now, China's archaeologists have largely concentrated their work on the central part of China, with the result that we understand less about what happened in areas around central China in prehistoric days. A valuable view was advanced by Professor Chen Liankai, which was seconded by Professor Gu Bao, another of my colleagues, after dozens of years of on-the-spot investigations in northwestern China. They hold that simultaneously with the unification of the Central Plain by the dynasties of Qin and Han, a unification of the nomads in the north was also in progress under the rule of the Huns (Xiong Nu), Professor Gu further points out that only when the two giant unified groups of the south and the north merged did the Chinese people complete the process of evolving into a national entity. I agree with this viewpoint.

The reasons why the southern and northern regions accomplished unifications separately were ecological. Cultures based on agriculture took shape as early as during the Neolithic period. In the Neolithic ruins in the Middle and Lower Yellow River Basin were found antique grains of millet, and rice was found in ruins of

the same age in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River. Water conservancy was given priority by rulers from the Xia period on, evidence that attention was devoted to irrigation. Even now the small-farmer economy remains the economic basis for the Hans. The Chinese people have not yet shaken free of the specter of Shen Nong (literally, "the God of Farming"), their mythical ancestor.

The vast arable land on the flat plain happens to be linked with the grassland and Gobi Desert of the Mongol Plateau in the north, and it joins the Loess Plateau and the Qinghai-Tibet highlands in the west. These highlands are not fit for farming except for a part of the loess belts and some basin areas, which are mostly used as grazing land. Agriculture and stock raising had given rise to different cultures, which furnished the natural preconditions for the north and the south to be unified separately.

The demarcation between the agricultural and pastoral areas was drawn roughly by the Great Wall. Constructed during the periods of the Warring States, then completed in the dynasties of Qin and Han, the Great Wall was a line of defense against the herdsmen for the people engaged in agriculture. Different economies decided the defensive nature of the peasants and offensive nature of the herdsmen. Agriculture must be stable, and the construction of sophisticated irrigation systems increased the peasants' adherence to the land. More land was cultivated when the population grew, and in this way the region of agriculture expanded from a center. In the same way, the farmer first had a home, then a native township, which he never would part with. No peasant would migrate unless forced to by natural or man-made calamities,

Herdsmen, on the other hand, had to be very mobile because their cattle needed to follow the growth of the grass. There are rules governing their movements, but generally no herdsmen would settle down in a single place. Going about on horseback, they were quick in movement and could promptly assemble and disperse. In case of famine, groups of herdsmen would swarm

southward from the pastoral regions in the north to seek food in the agricultural areas. Clashes became more acute between the peasants and the herdsmen with the growth of the economy and population. These clashes constituted grave threats to the agricultural people. Unable to resist the threat, the farmers had to rely on the authorities, who could give them armed protection and had the power to muster gigantic labor forces for the construction of works of defense. This was one of the historical factors contributing to the consolidation of centralized authority, and this historical process found expression in the construction of the Great Wall.

Similarly, for the growth of the pastoral regions' economy an authority was also needed to mediate conflicts over grazing land, while armed expeditions had to be organized at times to seize food from outside. We know very little about the early history of the people on the northern grasslands. By the time records were made about the Huns (Xiong Nu) in the history books of the Hans, they were already a formidable force that controlled the vast region beyond the Great Wall which was shielded by the Great Xing'anling in the east and Mounts Qilian and Tianshan in the west. This was the unified group in the north referred to above. In the early period of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.—A.D. 220) there were already records of confrontation between "the great Han in the south and the powerful Hus [another name for the Huns] in the north."

However, the actual historical process was not so simple. Since the 1930s archaeologists working at Chifeng, Inner Mongolia, which is outside of the Great Wall, have been finding ruins of the Hongshan culture of the Neolithic period. They showed that people here in the ancient times had already settled down to engage largely in agriculture, which was supplemented with stock raising and occasional hunting. Recent discoveries in the same area include a sacrificial platform and a goddess's temple built about 5,000 years ago and jade ware of the same style as that dug out at Yin and Shang ruins in central China. The discovery of bronzeware reminds us still more strongly that we know just too

little about the early culture in the northeastern area. And it was precisely this northeastern plain where the Great Xing'anling joins with Mount Yanshan that bred a multitude of ethnic groups who subsequently made themselves rulers of central China. This will be discussed later.

People in central China and those in the north did not live in constant hostile confrontation. In spite of the numerous historical records of what were described as plunders and aggressive wars launched by nomadic tribes, which were undeniably true, a more important aspect of the bilateral relationship was constant trade and exchange that had been the basis of interdependence, though these were little mentioned in history books.

It is wrong to assume that nomadic tribes lived solely on animal husbandry, or that they were content with feeding on meat and milk and being clad in furs. There was constant need for cereals, textiles, metal tools, tea, wine, and other beverages. These were not available to tribes wandering the year round about the vast grassland, nor could an adequate supply be afforded by the insignificant bases of agriculture and handicraft industry scattered in the oases. The main source of supply was the neighboring agricultural region. The acquisition was done through two channels: presents made by the Han court and trading between the peoples. The Han Emperor Wu was recorded to have presented the Huns yearly with significant quantities of wine, grains, and textiles. The amount of trade exchange was inestimable.

Trade was conducted to mutual benefit. The agricultural region could never produce enough of the draft animals it needed for farming or horses for its cavalry. The peasants needed sheep and cattle for meat and wool. Tea was a main item supplied to the pastoral areas. Therefore the trade between the two regions was later called "tea-horse" trade. Archaeological finds in the northern pastoral areas from ancient tombs of the latter period of the Warring States and the Han dynasty included numerous products from central China down to ancient coins.

As contacts increased and relationships became closer, a group of Hun herdsmen who lived close to the region of agriculture began mixing with Han peasants after the first century and developed a semiagricultural, semipastoral economy. Pressured by Emperor Wu of the Western Han dynasty, these Huns separated from their fellow natives to their north, and they were henceforth called Southern Huns (Nan Xiong Nu). Later, they did not join the Northern Huns in their Central Asia expedition but stayed where they were in present-day Inner Mongolia. They moved to the south of the Great Wall in increasing numbers to settle down and mix with the Hans.

As stated above, the Great Wall bore evidence of the controversy between two great unified groups, the northern one on the offensive and the southern one on the defensive, a situation which had continued from the time of the Warring States through the Qin dynasty. But as the agricultural group grew in size and strength, they shifted to an offensive position, notably starting with Han Emperor Wu. This strategic change led to the westward expansion of the Hans. With the establishment of four new prefectures in western Gansu —Danhuang, Jiuquan, Wuwei, and Zhangye —280,000 people migrated to this area, most of whom were Hans.

These four prefectures, lying west of the bend of the Yellow River, were a corridor which led to the region beneath Mount Tian (Tianshan). The area had very scanty rainfall, but irrigation was guaranteed by the melted snow which flowed yearly down Mount Qilian, affording an economic basis for the migration of the Hans. The corridor had formerly been pastureland for two minor groups known as the Wusuns and the Yueshis. Later the invading Huns forced these tribes off the land, made themselves masters of it, and formed an encirclement against the Hans by aligning with the Qiangs. In 122 B.C. the Huns here surrendered to Emperor Wu's forces, who subsequently had the four prefectures set up and inhabited by Hans. This made a breach in the

encirclement in a move aimed at “severing the Qiangs from the Hus.” The corridor also provided a route for the Han empire to communicate with the west. Han forces marching by this corridor aligned with a small agricultural emirate in a basin south of Mount Tian, which often fell victim to invasion and plundering by the Huns, and the tribes of Wusuns, who had been driven by the Huns to Central Asia. In this way the Hans formed a counter-encirclement against the Huns and eventually defeated them.

The vast expanse of grassland from the Mongolian plateau through the area north of Mount Tian to Central Asia was a gigantic arena which allowed the nomads to race unhindered on horseback. They were so mobile that a piece of pastureland could change its occupants overnight when one tribe arrived to replace another to graze its stock. When it was strong, any tribe could rule over others and name the groups of herdsmen after its own. This caused the appearance of a long list of names of ethnic groups that once thrived on the grasslands after the Huns: Xianbeis, Rourans, Tuques (Turks), Tiele, Geluolus, Huihes, and others. Some of these tribes once occupied the whole of the grassland, others a part of it. At last it was the Mongols, who expanded all the way to western Asia.

Many groups that arose on the grasslands returned to their former native place, but most have mixed with other groups. Their intermingling and occasional separation was a complex process in history which I will not dwell on in detail. Generally, five of the ethnic groups now in Xinjiang speak languages that belong to the Turkic language family: Uygur, Kazak, Uzbek, Tatar, and Kirgiz. The ancestors of all these groups had been once active on the grasslands.

VI. A LARGE-SCALE ETHNIC MINGLING AND MELTING IN NORTHERN CHINA

As soon as they came into being, the Hans became a nucleus of concentration. Their people radiated in all directions into the

areas around them and, centripetally, absorbed those people into their own group and made them a part of themselves. In the late period of the Western Jin dynasty, a total of sixteen local regimes were founded in northern China, mostly by non-Hans. In the course of about one and a half centuries (A.D. 304–439) a process of intermingling and assimilation took place between different nationalities in northern China. In actuality, this was a development of the Hans as an ethnic entity from a pluralistic to a unified organization. The preparation for such development started during the Han dynasty. A part of the process, for example, was what the Han rulers described as “subjugated alignment” by the Huns, referring to the willingness shown by the Huns for a closer relationship after being militarily defeated.

Of the above-mentioned successive regimes that ruled northern China, three were founded by the Huns, four by the Dis, one by the Jies, seven by the Xianbeis (Siempis), one by the Qiangs, and three by the Hans. Their domain covered present-day Shaanxi, Shanxi, Hebei, Henan, Gansu, Ningxia, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Xinjiang, Shandong, Jiangsu, Anhui, Liaoning, Qinghai, and Inner Mongolia, virtually enclosing the whole of northern China.

The conquest of northern China by non-Han groups from the north and the west meant a major influx of the people into the area. The conqueror nations began to contact and mingle with the Hans, so the term “Han” became popular as the name of an ethnic entity. As the Hans were politically subjugated, the name carried a sense of scornful discrimination. However, the conquerors, mostly nomadic tribes, had to shift to agriculture once they settled down amid the population of peasantry, and the inferiority of their economic position could not but make itself felt. Already in this period there were records of “Hus adopting Han names.” A decree was even issued by an emperor of the Northern Wei empire, which conquered all of northern China, ordering that all two-character surnames be changed into one-character names. This meant that all Hu names should be replaced by Han names. Of

the 126 Hu names in the official records of the Wei dynasty, 60 had disappeared in later records.

Intermarriages between ethnic groups were numerous, and they were practiced even by the upper class. As the non-Han rulers' regimes were mostly short-lived, one minority conqueror was soon replaced by another, and eventually most of them were assimilated into the Hans. The nation of the Hans grew, not simply in consequence of the growth of its own population, but mainly by taking into its ranks non-Hans who immigrated into the agricultural region. This was the snowball-like manner of its expansion.

The central China region, considerably enlarged after the sectarian rule of the Southern and Northern dynasties, was again unified under the dynasties of Sui and Tang. Many in the ruling class of the Tang empire were hybrids of other nationalities. Because a significant role was played by Xianbei noblemen who had aided the Tang emperor in the battles of national conquest, their descendants held powerful positions. Of the 369 prime ministers throughout the Tang empire, thirty-six, or 10 percent, were the descendants of Hus. A special chapter is found in the officially compiled "History of the Tang" (*Tang Shu*) for biographies of Hu-descended generals. The Shatuos were a very powerful local ethnic group toward the end of the Tang dynasty. It was the Shatuos who founded three of the five post-Tang dynasties, namely, Latter Tang, Latter Jin, and Latter Han. Throughout its rule, people from various nationalities participated in the Tang regime, though nominally it was a Han empire. Emperor Zhuangzong, who was known to have brought the empire back to prosperity, was a Shatuo himself. The vast region of northern China was a great melting pot with the Hans as the nucleus during the six centuries from Tang through Song. Many non-Hans inhabiting areas around the Central Plain became Hans after they were assimilated. Of course, the process of assimilation was a complex one, but the result was the disappearance of many ethnic groups whose names are found in earlier historical records.

It cannot be doubted that Chinese culture reached its peak during the Tang dynasty. One of the outstanding peculiarities of the Tang rule was its enterprising and open spirit, which made possible the mingling and assimilation of various ethnic groups.

VII. NEW BLOOD FROM THE NORTH FOR THE HANS

The Northern Song exercised but feeble control over northern China even though it managed to unify the country after the years of chaos and disunity of the Five Dynasties. In the year 916 a powerful people, the Qidan (Khitan) rose to their north, in Jun Barin Hosigun of Inner Mongolia. In 947 they established a kingdom named Liao, whose domain covered the area between the mouth of the River Heilongjiang and what is now the middle of the Mongol People's Republic, and between present-day Tianjin municipality, Ba County of Hebei and Yanmenguan in Shanxi, a sizable kingdom which coexisted with the Northern Song empire. Its rule lasted 210 years before it was conquered by the Nuchens, another northern group. The Nuchens had their home in the Song-Liao Plain. In 1115 a kingdom was founded by them with the name of Jin, which ousted the Northern Song regime after crushing Liao in 1125. The Jin empire had its capital in present-day Beijing and then in Kaifeng. Its domain covered that of the fallen Liao kingdom, and it later expanded southward to Mount Qin and the River Huai, where it bordered on the Southern Song dynasty's territory.

The Northern Song ruled northern China for only three hundred years, but this was a period when a variety of ethnic groups who mixed in this area experienced a process of mutual assimilation: in the meantime the Hans accumulated their strength for southward expansion.

The Song-Liao Plain east of the Great Xing'anling was separated from the grasslands by the mountain range of the Great Xin'anling, where the vast jungle could have hindered the nomads from moving eastward. Certain nomadic peoples could have

evolved from jungle tribes here who lived by hunting. In my recent visit to the forest of the Great Xing'anling I found a cave ten kilometers northwest of the town of Alihe in Hulun Beiyur Aimak. It was called Gaxian Cave and housed a stele with inscriptions which Tuoba Tao, Emperor Taiwu of the empire of Northern Wei, caused to be made in memory of his ancestors. This is evidence that the Xianbeis lived in Great Xing'anling's forests in their early stage. Later the Xianbeis migrated from the area southwest of the mountain to the grasslands of Hulunchi, then they moved down to Huhehot, via Jun Barin Hosigun. They were active in what is now Inner Mongolia and Datong in Shanxi, and some of them migrated to Qinghai. In the year 386 they founded the kingdom of Wei, which conquered all of northern China in 439.

The Qidans (Khitans) who founded Liao had been nomadic groups in the upper reaches of the River Liao when they were under the dominion of the Tang empire. The establishment of the Liao empire and the immigration of large numbers of Hans was followed by a flourishing of agriculture and handicrafts. But most of the Qidans were assimilated by the Hans and Nuchens after they were conquered by Jin.

The Nuchens who founded the Jin empire also rose from the Song-Liao Plain. They followed the same path as the Qidans, though they managed to control more territory in northern China than Liao. In the early period of their conquest they applied such names as Hans, Yans, or Southerners to the Han residents they had conquered so as to discriminate them from the Nuchens. However, they adopted Han names themselves in the course of time, thirty-one of which are found in the "History of the Jin Empire" (*Jin Shi*). The change of names was done by the inhabitants on their own without any coercion by imperial decree. This showed that they no longer resisted being assimilated by the Hans, though the change of the family name did not mean that the owner had become a Han.

Neither the Qidans nor the Nuchens succeeded in conquering central China, though both had acquired political superiority in the north. The Mongols who founded the Yuan dynasty were the first people from the north who eventually brought the whole of China under unified control. They were followed by the Manchus, the descendants of the Nuchens, who founded the Qing dynasty. The Yuan empire ruled for 96 years (1271-1365), and the Qing for over 260 years (1644–1911). Both the Mongols and Manchus were non-Hans, and both remain national minorities with populations exceeding one million at present. Nevertheless, the Han nation continued to grow during their rule, and the Mongols and Manchus merged with the Hans in large numbers after the fall of their empires.

Under the rule of the Mongols during the Yuan dynasty, the entire population of the country was classified into four grades: Mongols, Semu, Hans, and Southerners. Hans here included Nuchens, Qidans, and Gaolis (Koreans), who received equal treatment to the Hans. According to the “History of the Yuan Empire” (*Yuan Shi*): “Nuchens and Qidans are ranked with Hans. Those who live in the Northwest and do not know the Han language are ranked with Mongols” (“Life of Emperor Shim,” chapter 10). Evidently, both the Qidans and the Nuchens were divided, some of them merging with the Hans, others with the Mongols. Rulers of the Yuan empire divided the Hans into two categories, Hans and Southerners. Those who lived in the domain of the former Jin empire were still called Hans, while those who lived under the Southern Song empire which was conquered after Jin, were called Southerners, Songers, Newly Conquered, or Manzi (“Southern Savages”). These apparently included non-Hans to the south of the Yangtze. These circumstances accelerated the merging of these groups with the Hans.

Mongol rule was succeeded by a Han empire called Ming. In the early period the Ming rulers gave orders for the population to wear “costumes of the Tang fashion” and banned the use of the

Mongol language and names. But it proved impossible to change national traditions and language by administrative orders. “Notes of the Ming Empire” (*Ming Shi Lu*) quotes an official memoir as telling the emperor in 1442 that at the time, “Da costumes” (referring to Mongol clothing) were more popular than the Tang style. Commenting on the mingling of ethnic populations, GLI Yanwu, a scholar who lived in the period when the Ming empire was replaced by the Qing, remarked in his “Collected Essays” (*Ri Zhi Lu*): “I find the noble blood of Hua descent mixing with folk who wrap themselves in felts and furs. Regrettably, many respectable gentlemen have paid lip-service to the principle of ‘changing Yis on the model of Xias,’ and they can do nothing to prevent the peoples from mixing with each other.” He also said: “A great many celebrated families in Shandong are descendants of Jin and Yuan.” This indicates that intermarriage was common among the upper class of various ethnic groups, and as a result many national minorities were beginning to be naturalized as Hans.

A most tangible example of Mongol assimilation with Hans was afforded by the late Liang Shuming, who says in his book *Questions and Answers* (p. 2) :

My family descended from the same ancestors as the royal house of the Yuan emperor. The family name was Esen Temur, so we were Mongols. When the Yuan Empire was crushed, the last emperor, Shundi, fled with his people northward to Mongolia, but our family remained in Ruyang, Henan, and adopted the Han name of Liang. . . . Speaking of blood lineage, the Mongol extraction of my family has long been obscure after the 500 years since the fall of the Yuan Dynasty and the rise and fall of the Ming and Qing. Even we ourselves would not have suspected it without studying the family’s genealogy. Intermarriage with the Hans over the past centuries has caused the continued melting of the blood, and this is responsible for the inevitable intermediate quality in my character.

I never knew that Liang was of Mongol descent before I read the above. Nor had he ever registered at the census office as a Mongol, being content with identifying himself and being identified as Han. Interestingly, however, he considered the remote blood relationship as the source of what he calls an “intermediate quality” in himself. This exemplifies the far-reaching influence of national consciousness. Since 1949, numerous descendants of the herdsmen who first registered as Hans had their national identity changed to Mongol.

Having first conquered northern China, the Mongols marched west on an expedition to Central Asia, then turned back to Gansu and Sichuan en route to Yunnan, and thence marched down the Yangtze River to crush the remaining forces of the Southern Song dynasty. In these embattled years a new national minority, the Huis, came into being as an addition to the plurality of the Chinese people’s constitution. The Hui population numbered 7.22 million in 1982, second only to the Zhuang nationality. They are the most widely scattered over the country, the largest communities being found in Ningxia and Gansu, and smaller groups in the provinces of Qinghai, Henan, Shandong, and Yunnan and in urban districts elsewhere in China.

About the middle of the seventh century, Moslem businessmen from Arabia and Persia, arriving in large numbers at the port cities of Guangzhou, Quanzhou, Hangzhou, and Yangzhou by sea, settled down as permanent residents. They were called Fan Ke by the natives, meaning “settlers from abroad.” When the Mongols conquered Islamic countries in Central Asia in the early thirteenth century, large numbers of businessmen and craftsmen were made to help the logistics service in the expedition army. Then they came to China as part of the Mongol army and joined in the war to conquer the Northern Song empire. They were called the “Hui Hui Army” by the Hans. From then on, as the Fan Kes and descendants of the Hui Hui Army assimilated with the Hans by intermarriage, they formed a group which included virtually all

the Moslems in the provinces of China; these were known popularly as Huis, who became a nationality distinct from the Hans and other ethnic groups. Most of them were formerly businessmen and handicrafts workers who came with the Mongol army and settled down in large cities. As army units most were stationed in Gansu and Yunnan to till the land in times of peace, to be “ready for battle when mounted, and work as farmers and herdsmen when they dismount” (*History of the Yuan Empire*, chapter on the army). During the Yuan dynasty they belonged to the class of Semu, the second highest, so they enjoyed quite favorable positions socially and politically. Later, they remained in the upper class in the Ming dynasty’s government and army. The Hui population grew to a considerable size in the region of Gansu, Qinghai, and Ningxia, their ratio to the Han population is believed to have been “seven Huis against three Hans.” They were also very numerous in the region around Tali in Yunnan Province. The Hui population in Yunnan and the northwestern provinces was sharply reduced as large numbers were killed in battles against the Manchu army.

The Huis were traditionally inclined toward business; Fan Kes made up a large part of the caravans on the Silk Road during the Tang dynasty. The Huis mainly thrived in the corridor along the Upper Yellow River Valley in the Gansu-Qinghai-Ningxia area, a vast region which bordered on Mongolia in the north and the pasturelands of Qinghai and Tibet to the west. They traded mainly in agricultural and animal products in what was called “tea-horse” exchange. The largest Hui communities are found in Ningxia and Gansu to the present day.

The Huis as a nation are the only group which grew by continually assimilating the Hans. Religion was a main factor: China has ten Islamic ethnic groups, most of whom live in Xinjiang and the Guansu-Qinghai region. All Moslems in inland China are called Huis; any Han converted to Islamic belief immediately becomes a Hui.

All Huis speak the Han language, popularly known as Chinese. Little is known about when and how the Moslems who came to China from Central Asia or by sea lost their own language. It is believed that when the businessmen or troops came to settle in China, they could marry only Chinese women, since scarcely any females came with them from their own countries, and the Chinese-speaking mothers inevitably changed their language habits. Being businessmen also made it necessary for them to learn the native language; the need was still more clearly felt because most of these settlers lived in rather small groups scattered amid the vast Han population. This naturally caused their language and life-styles to be assimilated with the Hans. However, they have persisted in their Islamic belief, a spiritual prop and stay by which they have retained and promoted their nationality consciousness. It is the general custom that Huis can marry Han women provided the latter are converted to Islam, while Hui women cannot marry Hans unless the husbands are converted and adopt Hui identity. This has been an important factor contributing to the magnification of the Hui community by absorption from the Han population.

Throughout the Qing dynasty, the Manchus (Mans) repeated the old track traversed by all the northern groups who managed to conquer central China. This is very recent history, so not much needs to be said here. Before 1949, I never knew that Luo Changpei, the linguist, and Lao She, the writer, were Mans, a fact they never made public until after 1949. We as Hans never felt any difference of an ethnic nature throughout our association with them. However, both of them were well aware of their identity as Mans before they announced it. This indicates the indubitable presence of plurality alongside the unified nature of the configuration.

Time and again in the course of this long history, non-Han ethnic groups have made their entries into agricultural central China. This has meant continued infusion of new blood for the Hans, which has helped the Hans to thrive while adding to the

pluralistic character of later generations of the Chinese people. All this has contributed significantly to the formation of the unified yet pluralistic configuration. The above is only a very brief account of this great process of development.

VIII. HOW THE HANS INFLUENCED OTHER NATIONALITIES

Among the ancient nationalities, except for those sections of the Yueshi, the Wusun, the Hun, the Tujue, and other groups who moved abroad, the majority lived in this geographic area for a long time. The integration and mixing of those groups was quite a normal phenomena. In the last section, I mainly concentrated on the integration of other nationalities into the Hans, but here I would like to describe briefly the integration of the Hans into other groups.

Sometimes the Hans were absorbed by force. For instance, they were pillaged by the Huns and the Tujues; they were then sent to remote areas to reclaim wasteland. Others moved to avoid natural or man-made calamities. Both cases involved large numbers of people. According to estimates on page 12 of the "Collections on History of the Hun" (*Xiong Nu Shi Lun Wen Xuan Shi Er Ye*), there were 300,000 slaves among the Huns, making up one-seventh of the whole population. According to estimates on page 10 of the "Collections on History of the Hun," the Huns had 500,000 slaves, making up one-third of the whole population. Most of these slaves were Hans and some were Xixiangs or Dinglings or people from other groups. In the year 109, according to the "History of Southern Huns in the History of the Later Han Dynasty" (*Hou Han Shu, Nan Xiong Lu Zhuan*), "thousands of the Hans who were later returned by the Southern Huns had originally been captured or bought from the Qiangs."

In the Xihan dynasty, Hou Yin once listed ten reasons to object to giving up frontier fortress defenses and destroying the Great

Wall. The seventh reason was that “people suffered a lot and many wanted to get out of the frontier fortresses.” From this, it can be seen that some of the Hans were willing to join the Hun nomads in the area. In the last years of the Donghan dynasty, more than 100,000 Han families went to the Wu Heng area. After the downfall of the Xijin dynasty, a turbulent situation arose in the Central Plain. Many Hans went to Liaoxi, Hexi, Xiyue, and the south. According to the *Autobiography of Mu Rongwei from the History of Xijin Dynasty (Jin Shu, Mu Rongwei Zhuan)*:

Two capitals were overtaken and the situation was very turbulent. As an official, Mu Rongwei was honest and upright, listening to people’s criticisms with an open mind. Some intellectuals and ordinary people brought their families to Mu Rongwei and were willing to be under his control. Mu Rongwei set up some prefectures to organize the newcomers. People from Jizhou were grouped together in what was called the Jiyang Prefecture, people from Yuzhou into a Zhou Prefecture, people from Qingzhou into a Yinqiu Prefecture and people from Binzhou into a Tang Guo Prefecture.

From this we can see that many people were moving out from the Hans.

The Han who immigrated to other areas soon intermarried with local people and adapted to the social life and natural environment there. The Han way of living and Han traditional culture changed simultaneously. After several generations, the Hans were totally integrated into the other groups. For instance, in 399, the people in Jiu Shi Gao Chang State settled in the Tu Lu Fan Basin and nearby areas were mainly Hans. Those Hans were the descendants of soldiers in the Han-Wei dynasty and descendants of those who had escaped from the Han in the Jin dynasty. As stated in the “History of Gao Chang in the History of the Wei Dynasty” (*Wei Shu, Gao Chang Zhuan*), “The people in Gao Chang State were the descendants of the Hans from the Han-Wei Dynasty, who left the Hans in the Jin Dynasty because of the dis-

turbed situation at that time.” The people in the Gao Chang State had become Hu-nized (Hu Hua). As stated in the “History of the North, the History of Xiyue, and the History of Gao Chang” (*Bei Shi, Xiyue Zhuan, Guo Chang Zhuan*), “men dressed like the Hus, the women had their hair worn in a bun or coil. The tradition and customs were similar to the Hua Xia. The language used was similar to the Hans,” and they also used the Hus’ language as well, Although they studied *Mao Shi, Lun Yu*, and *Xiao Jin*, they did so in the Hu language.” The Gao Chang State existed for about 141 years, ruled by northern nomads, such as Gao Che and Tu Jue; it was conquered by the Tang dynasty in 640 and renamed Xi Zhou. In 866, the Huis conquered the area, which was ruled by the Huis thereafter. The local descendants of the Hans gradually integrated with the Uighur. Meanwhile, other groups living in the south of Mount Tian (Tian Shan), using the Yan Shi-Gui Ci language and the Yu Tian language, which are members of the Indo-European language family, integrated with the Uighur.

As another example, in the period of the Warring States, Zhuang Jue, from the Chu State, guided thousands of farmers to the Tian Chi area in Yunnan and called himself the king of Tian. In the Han-Jin dynasty, Hans were sent to Yun Nan. Most of the Hans who had moved to Yunnan before the Ming dynasty had already been integrated into local groups. The Hans who moved to the Da Li Er Hai area had become an important part of the Bai.

Not much research has been conducted on the mutual penetration and absorption of nationalities. In particular, not enough attention has been paid to the fact that the Hans integrated into other groups. Therefore, people often take a one-sided approach, thinking that the Hans are an impure race, since other groups have been integrated into the Hans, while the other groups are racially pure. As a matter of fact, every nationality absorbs from others, and the others, meanwhile, absorb from them, too. As to the view that the nationality which is less advanced in economics and cul-

ture should be integrated into the one which is more advanced in economics and culture, I think this is a lopsided view. In history there are cases where the groups with more advanced levels of economics and culture were integrated into other groups with less advanced levels of economics and culture. The integration of the Han into other groups which had less advanced economies is a good example. The mutual penetration and mixing of nationalities should be analyzed according to the specific situation. The Hans during their process of development have absorbed a lot from other groups, and meanwhile they have also contributed to these other groups. As far as biological factors and blood lineage are concerned, the Chinese people as a whole have been mixing and integrating throughout their history. We cannot say that one nationality is pure in terms of blood lineage.

IX. SOUTHWARD EXPANSION OF THE HANS

As early as during the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, the Hua Xia people, progenitors of the Hans, were already a group of formidable size, whose area of habitation extended to the coasts on the east, and mid-lower Yangtze Valley on the south, and the Loess Plateau on the west. They formed a nucleus which kept expanding in all directions. In the course of this they constantly encroached upon the ethnic groups who lived around the Central Plain, and they dealt with these groups by two different strategies: merging with them, or as it was put conceitedly, "changing Yis [a spiteful name for smaller ethnic groups] into Xias," and expelling them to remote areas. An example can be found among the Huns, who were divided into northern and southern groups, the former departing on a distant expedition, the latter losing their identity after integrating with the Hans. Traversing the grasslands that led all the way down to Central Asia and eastern Europe, the Northern Huns eventually took leave of the mother nation of China, never to come back.

Few other groups were able to do the same. Probably some of the Eastern Yis who lived on the Shandong Peninsula in prehistoric ages sailed overseas or trekked to Korea via northeastern China and thence to Japan. But the great majority of the non-Han groups who refused to be merged into the Han nationality had to go and live in places where the Hans would not care to go, mostly grasslands or mountainous areas unsuitable for agriculture. Some of these ousted groups persisted in living where they had been expelled to and retained their ethnic peculiarities, thus contributing to the pluralistic nature of the Chinese people.

A further revision of history can trace the same process back to the mythical age of the “Three Emperors and Five Kings.” The Yellow Emperor, who was believed to be the sole ancestor of the Han nationality, waged war on Emperor Yan and Chi You on the northern bank of the Yellow River. Later, Emperor Yan was recognized as another of the Hans’ forefathers, so that the Chinese people refer to themselves as descendants of Yan and Huang. As to Chi You, he has always been excluded by the Hans because he “is not of our race.” However, the “Three Miaos” under his command have been linked by some researchers to the Miaos of our times. This is not well grounded, but it is quite likely that some of Chi You’s descendants can be found outside of the Hans.

As stated above, different Neolithic cultures existed in the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River in the same way as different cultures were found in the corresponding areas along the Yellow River. The Qingliangang-Dawenkou culture, which developed in the region between central-southern Shandong and the Xuzhou-Huaihai Plain, was a well-developed agricultural culture which lasted almost three thousand years (5300–2400 B.C.). This reminds us of the Eastern Yis mentioned in history books. Beyond doubt, the Eastern Yis included various ethnic groups, and they were ancestors of the Yin group who founded the Shang dynasty. When they were defeated by the Zhous, who were descendants of the Qiangs from the west, a section of them was

absorbed into the Hua Xias along with the Zhous, while another section, which could have included those who sailed abroad or wandered to Korea or Japan, was expelled.

This proposition is based on the anthropological analysis I made of the Koreans in the 1930s. I noted in my master's thesis that in the physical-type data for the Koreans are found large numbers of Type-B specimens identical with those of the coastal inhabitants of Jiangsu, which are characterized by round heads and a short stature. Again, the same type was found in the Yaos in Mount Great Yao in Guangxi. If the analysis of these data is reliable, then it naturally follows that the people in the above three areas were historically interrelated. Admittedly, my research on probable physical types has long been suspended, and most of the data lost, so the above suggestion can only be based on what I can remember.

The above inference had the support of Professor Pan Guangan, one of my former teachers. Based on historical records and direct observations he had made in the habitats of the Shes in Fujian Province, he advanced a view which I recorded as follows: From a series of names of places and ethnic groups— Xu, Shu, and She— we can picture a route of migration for the ancient people. Very possibly, Xu had been the name of a group, a section of the Eastern Yis, who lived in the southwestern part of their domain. This was the area between the Yellow River and the River Huai, which is the present-day Xuzhou. According to the Archaeological Institute's *Archaeological Finds in New China and Their Study* (p. 317), Xu was a powerful state at the time of the Western Zhou dynasty and remained strong during the Spring and Autumn, but it was conquered by Chu in 512 B.C. (Of special significance was the bronzeware of the state of Xu of the Spring and Autumn period found in digs in northwestern Jiangxi in recent years, as it could indicate a route of migration for the Xu people.) Ancient records of this period show that the place was called Shu by the inhabitants. Linking the legends of Pan Gu, popular among

Yaos and Shes, with records about King Xuyan, Professor Pan believed that the Guo Shan Bang of the Yaos evolved from a historical background that was mystified afterward. These people then moved toward the Yangtze. Those who reached the area of Mount Nanling probably became the present Yao. Others moved east from Nanling and then mixed with Hans in the mountainous areas of Jiangxi, Fujian, and Zhejiang; these could have become the She nationality of today. Still others who once settled around Lake Dongting and later moved into the mountains of Guizhou and western Hunan could be the Miaos of our times.

Professor Pan linked the Miaos with Yaos because their languages belong to the same system, the Miao-Yao language family.

As stated above, some of the Yis from eastern China have survived the twenty centuries of turbulent life and still retain much of their ethnic traditions and culture, and their descendants have become the present Miaos, Yaos, and Shes. These were the Yis who lived in the western half of their homeland. What, then, has become of the Yis living in the eastern half? In all probability, these Yis were related to the Qingliangang culture in northern Jiangsu, and later all the way down to the Hemudu-Liangzhu culture in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, which used to be the domain of the Wu and Yue states during the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods. Later they became the Shan Yue (Yues in the Mountains), who were omnipresent in the mountains and brought constant headaches to the Wu regime as one of the Three Kingdoms which ruled the region. All these suggest that a series of Neolithic cultures has been the progenitor of the cultures in Wu and Yue districts.

Archaeological data for the coastal areas between southern Zhejiang and Guangdong are inadequate. However, the discovery of Shixia culture in Guangdong has suggested to archaeologists that this culture was in constant contact, directly or indirectly, with the primitive cultures in the mid-lower basin of the River Gan, the mid-lower basin of the Yangtze, and even down to the coastal

regions of Shandong; that there was mutual influence between them; and that these ties became more extensive and profound as time went on. All this suggests that the coastal regions have been closely related to each other throughout the ages (Archaeological Institute, *Archaeological Finds*, p. 166).

These clues make me believe that the above ancient groups not only were interrelated culturally but also had close relationships as ethnic groups. The vast expanse of the coastal area between Shandong and Guangdong was the home for the Yues of various descriptions. There were Shan Yues in Wu during the time of the Three Kingdoms; earlier, there had been the Ou Yues in southern Zhejiang and the Min Yues in Fujian; a state called Yue was founded in Guangdong during the Han dynasty; to its west was found the group of Luo Yue in Guangxi. The identical names suggest the same ethnic lineage.

Many ethnologists link the ancient Yues with ethnic groups of the Zhuang-Dong language family who live in the southwestern provinces of China down to those in southern Asia. They include the Zhuangs in Guangxi; the Buyis, Dongs, and Shuis in Guizhou; and the Dais in Yunnan. If such a linkage is credible, then these people can be considered to be related to the ancient Yues in the coastal areas. Now all Yues in the coastal provinces have been assimilated with Hans. The remaining groups of the Yue system are found in the southwestern corner, who mostly live in mountainous basins of these areas and engage in agriculture. Meanwhile, some Miaos and Yaos and minor groups of unknown origin are found to inhabit the slopes and peaks of the mountains. Concrete information is unavailable to explain the history of these numerous and widely distributed populations of the Yues.

So much for the Lower Yangtze Basin, the coastal region, and the southwestern borders. Let us now consider the situation in the middle reaches of the Yangtze.

The Neolithic cultures on the Yangtze-Hanshui Plain, which included the Daxi, Qujialing, and Qinlongquan cultures, are geo-

graphically followed by the Chu culture. The state of Chu retained local cultural characteristics at the time of the Spring and Autumn period. The famous “Odes to Chu,” by Qu Yuan, was claimed to “record the Chu language, follow the Chu accent, tell of Chu’s places and enumerate Chu’s objects.” Chu was regarded as a barbarous nation by people of the Central Plain. Even Xiong Qu, successor of the fifth generation to the founder of the Chu state, claimed: “Being a Man-Yi [meaning “barbarous race”], I will not adopt a title from the Middle Kingdom after my death.” The king of Chu ruled over a great many minor states, believed to exceed sixty, which means that it once confronted Hua Xia as a similarly pluralistic but unified group. Its domain was so vast that it was described in “The Book of the Prince of Huai Nan” (*Huai Nan Zi*) in the following terms: “In the past, Chu claimed a territory which reached the Rivers Yuan and Xiang in the south, Rivers Ying and Si in the north, the area of Ba and Shu in the west, and Tan Pi [in present Jiangsu and Shandong respectively] in the east. The Rivers Ying and Ru were but its canals, and Rivers Yangtze and Han were its ponds. . . . It occupied half of the land under Heaven.” Chu also sent an expedition westward into Yunnan to occupy the area around Lake Dianchi.

Chu had a highly developed culture based on an agricultural economy. It fell in a war with the Hans in the second century B.C. when Xiang Yu, a famous general of Chu, killed himself in a debacle. This can be regarded as the last war between the two great unified groups, one from the Central Plain and the other from the Yangtze Valley, a war which finally merged the state of Chu and the Hans into a unity.

As early as the Qin dynasty, the Hans reached the Pearl River Valley across Mount Nanling. This is evidenced by the Qin Qu (a canal built during the Qin dynasty) which is still to be found at Guilin, Guangxi. But it was not until the Han dynasty that the Han culture spread to that area. It has been reported that at that time, the king of the state of Nan Yue desired to compete with

the Han empire for the size of territory, and it took the Hans almost a thousand years to reach the southern coast.

The Hans exerted formidable pressure on non-Han groups in the south and forced the natives to give way, a historical process that can be attested to by the presence of the ethnic groups now on Hainan Island. The island's earliest inhabitants were the Lis. Their language belonged to the Zhuang-Dong family, but it formed an individual language by itself, which indicates that the people had separated from speakers of other branches of the language at an early stage. It can be inferred, therefore, that a part of the Yues had reached the island across the channel while the bulk of them inhabited the coasts of the mainland. Immigrants after the Lis spoke the Zhuang language. They settled in the northern part of the island and were known as Lingaos, but they have always identified themselves as Hans. Later, about the time of the Ming dynasty, there were new settlers who spoke the Yao language. These were called Miaos, which they acknowledge themselves. According to the above analysis, these must have been a group of Yaos who had moved farthest south from their former habitats. By the time of the Song and Yuan, Hans had moved in, in large numbers, most settling along the coast.

X. MIGRATIONS THAT TOOK PLACE IN SOUTHWESTERN CHINA

Let us return to the western part of mainland China, where are found the largest number of ethnic communities. This includes the Loess Plateau, the Qinghai-Tibet and Yunnan-Guizhou plateaus, plus Xinjiang to the south and north of Mount Tian (Tian Shan). Owing to inadequate archaeological data, less is known about the early history of this region than about the Central Plain and the coastal regions. But fossils of the ape-man were found in Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau (Yuanmou County, Yunnan); these plus the Paleolithic and Neolithic ruins mentioned above help to

confirm the existence of man on these plateaus in prehistoric ages.

In historical records, all the people residing to the west of the Central Plain from early on were uniformly named Rongs. The corridor in the upper reaches of the Yellow River close to the Central Plain in present Ningxia-Gansu was located between the two vast regions of agriculture and husbandry. Early inhabitants here were called Qiangs. In historical classics Qiang and Di often appear as twin names, Qiang meaning “shepherds.” This proves that the Qiangs were herdsmen at the time. They were described by “The History of the Later Han Dynasty” (*Hoa Han Shu*) as “originating from the three Groups of Miaos,” which referred to the tribes that the Yellow Emperor drove from North China to the Northwest. The character for “Qiang” was found in tortoise-shell and bone inscriptions of the Shang period, which referred to a group in what is now Gansu and Shanxi. The Qiangs intermarried with the tribes of Zhous, and the Zhou people claimed to have been the descendants of Jiang Yuans, “Jiang” being almost identical with “Qiang” in Chinese. For this reason the Qiangs held high posts in the ruling class of the Zhous, and they later became an important part of the Hua Xia population.

As a group who have retained their ethnic traditions and characters, the Qiangs were closely related with the Central Plain as an intermediate group between the Yis and Xias. A powerful group in the Gansu-Shanxi region, they founded the state of Xi Xia, which lasted from 1038 to 1227. At its height Xi Xia’s domain enclosed the present Ningxia, northern Shanxi, and part of Gansu, Qinghai, and Inner Mongolia. Its regime existed simultaneously with those of Liao and Song as one of the tripartite rulers of mainland China. Liao was succeeded by Jin during that period. These people lived on agriculture and cattle raising, and their script resembled that of the Hans. Qiangs were little mentioned in Chinese historical records after Xi Xia was crushed by the Mongols. Probably most of the Qiangs have been assimilated by the local Hans or other ethnic groups. Qiangs acknowledged

as such numbered 500,000 by the time of the general census taking in 1964. They live in a Qiang autonomous county in northern Sichuan,

It appears that the Qiangs played a role that was quite the reverse of that of the Hans in the growth of the Chinese people as a nation. The Hans increased in numbers by taking from other groups, while the Qiangs, which in fact is a collective name given to an estimated 150 ethnic units in the west of central China, decreased, giving up members so that other groups could grow. Many ethnic groups, the Hans included, received blood from the Qiangs.

Let's start with the Tibetans. According to Chinese historical records, the Tibetans were formerly a branch of the Western Qiangs (Xi Qiang) during the Han dynasty. They were known as "Fa Qiangs," and the character for "Fa" was pronounced "bod," which is the modern Tibetan word for "Tibetans." The Fa Qiangs were one of the many tribes living on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, and they had exchanges with the Qiang tribes in Gansu and Qinghai. There were three branches of the Tibetan language family, namely Tibetan, Jiarong, and Menba. In the opinion of some linguists, Qiang, Pumi, and Luoba all come under the Tibetan branch, while others consider that Jiarong belonged to the Qiang branch. It is also believed that the Xi Xia language was actually Jiarong, which was the Qiang language itself. This shows a close relationship between the Tibetan and Qiang languages. People who speak Jiarong mostly live in Aba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan, and they are all considered to be Tibetans.

Again, the Tibetan language itself is divided into three distinct dialects: the Weizang dialect, spoken in the great part of the Tibetan autonomous region; the Kang dialect, popular in the Tibetan autonomous prefectures of Ganzi in Sichuan, Diqing in Yunnan, and Yushu in Qinghai; and the Anduo dialect, spoken in Gannan in Gansu and some Tibetan autonomous prefectures in

Qinghai. The complexity of the Tibetan language reflects the pluralistic nature of the Tibetans as an ethnic group. The Qiangs undoubtedly played a significant role in the creation of the Tibetan nationality, if they did not account for the main origin of the Tibetans themselves.

Historically, the Tibetans were an aggressive people. Besides conquering the whole of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, they marched northward to the Pamirs and seized southern Xinjiang. To the east they advanced as far as Zhangan, capital of the Tang empire, and the Chengdu Plain in Sichuan. To their south, they once expanded to northern Yunnan, where their domain confronted the state of Nanzhao. In their period of expansion they placed a great many other ethnic groups under their control, who were thenceforward called Tibetans. In the district of Aba now are inhabitants called "White Horse Tibetans," who neither spoke Tibetan nor believed in the Lamaist religion. Some inhabitants of the corridor in the Six River (Liujiang) valleys speak two languages: Tibetan in public and another language at home. These were evidently people who were once conquered by the Tibetans but refused to be totally assimilated.

If language systems can afford us some clues to understand the historical relationship between ethnic groups, then the close kinship between the Han and Tibetan languages would support my suggestion, stated above, that the Qiangs were a connecting link between the Hans and Tibetans. Following this clue further we come to the Yi language, again a close kin of Tibetan, and the Yi people are believed by many scholars to have been the descendants of Qiangs. In the *Encyclopaedia Sinica*, under "Yi," we find:

About 4,000 to 5,000 years ago, the branch of Qiangs who migrated to the south mingled with the local tribes to become Pus, who were actually part of the Qiangs. . . . In the early fourth century, the descendants of the Qiang leader Wuyi Aijian moved southward from the Yellow River and River

Huang in the Gansu-Ningxia-Qinghai region by way of the area east of Mount Min to reach River Jinsha, where they developed into Qiang communities that later settled in Wudu, Guanghan and Yuesui.... They belonged to the Qiang branch which came into being later than other south-moving Qiang groups.

The Yis numbered 5.45 million by the 1982 census; if other Yi language groups were included, such as Hani, Naxi, Lisu, Lahu, and Jinuo, the total would reach 7.55 million, which would exceed the Huis and be second only to the Zhuangs among China's national minorities. The Yis live in mountainous regions that are divided up by mountains into insulated minor areas. For lack of communication, the inhabitants of these areas, who actually had descended from the same tribe, called themselves by different names and were regarded as different ethnic groups by outsiders. Now there are five minority groups, bearing different names, that speak the Yi language. Even those who recognize themselves as Yis belong to a number of subgroups, each bearing a name of its own, such as Nuosu, Nasu, Luowu, Misapo, Sani, and Axi.

In its offensive against the decrepit Southern Song regime, the Mongol army marched across Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou, when it met with the resistance of most Yi-speaking groups who aligned against the Mongol invaders. Thence they were called by a new name, Luoluo, which remained in use until 1949. The name was then dropped because of its implication of racial discrimination and contempt, and the name of Yi was used.

For a long time Yis held power in local governments on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau. Both Yuan and Ming rulers exercised control over the Yis by installing officials from the same group, known as Tusi, who were responsible to the central government, as a means of indirect rule. Later, the Qing rulers abolished the Tusi system and put the Yi districts under direct administration. Large numbers of Hans migrated to some of these places that had good communication facilities. A report in 1746 noted that in

Dongchuan and Wumeng, “Yis are living with Hans as next-door neighbors. . . . the place appears quite the same as what one would see in the interior.”

The Yi community is very unevenly developed socially. Just before 1949, Yis who saw themselves as the elite associated with Hans so closely that they could hardly be differentiated, and some Yis held political and economic power in the localities. But in out-of-the-way hilly regions, such as Liangshan in Sichuan, the traditional slave-owning system remained in practice, and the community was like a tiny independent kingdom inaccessible to any outside influence.

Macrocosmically, the ethnic configuration on the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau actually consists of six groups. The first are groups of the Zhuang-Dong language family, mostly Dais, who live on the southern and southwestern borders. It remains unclear whether these people were indigenous or emigrated from the coasts in the east. The second are Yi-speaking groups who moved in from the north. The third are native groups who had been there from early on. Archaeological evidence has proved the locality to be one of the cradles of mankind, which cannot be supposed to be devoid of any remaining descendants of early man. But we have not learned enough to describe just in what way they were related to the people living there at present. Probably they have mostly died out over the centuries or merged into incoming groups. The earliest emigrating Chinese people recorded in writing were those in the Spring and Autumn period, when General Zhuang Jiao of Chu led an army into the area around Lake Dianchi. By the time of the Han dynasty, transportation was open between Sichuan and the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, and traveling became convenient. Sima Qian, the author of “Records of a Historian” (*Shi Ji*), had been to Yunnan. A gold seal of the Han dynasty was found near Lake Dianchi. The fifth are hybrids of the above groups. The Bais are probably one of these. Lastly there are the groups who live on both sides of the national border who speak South Asiatic

languages, such as the groups of Wa, Benglong, and Bulang. Most probably they moved in across the borderline.

To complete the picture for the southwestern region, mention must be made of the Sichuan Basin, which lies between the highlands of Qinghai-Tibet, Yunnan-Guizhou, and the Loess Plateau. Very suitable for agriculture, the basin was inhabited from early on. The earliest record of the civilization here was a Shu character, found in the bone and tortoise-shell inscriptions of the Shang period, which was the name of an ancient state in the Sichuan Basin. There are also records of a military role by the Shus in the war between the Zhous and the Shangs. Most of the Shus live in western Sichuan. A local regime was set up, which was later destroyed by Qin. Records say that after the designation of the Prefecture of Shu by the first emperor of Qin, the place was settled by large numbers of immigrants from central China, and eventually the Shus were assimilated by the Hans.

No definite material is available concerning the history of the Bas. They were said to have descended from the prince of Lin, their origin being from the "Mountain of Wuluo Zhongli," which has been supposed to be the present Hubei Province. They mostly lived in areas enclosing eastern Sichuan, southern Shanxi, and the western parts of Hubei and Hunan. During the early Zhou period a Ba state was set up in the basin of the River Han. The state was later crushed by Qin, and the Bas as an ethnic group sank into oblivion thenceforward. Professor Pan Guangdan, who investigated the Tujias in western Hunan during the 1950s, believed that they were the descendants of Bas. In the early period of New China the Tujias were not counted as a national minority because they were regarded as part of the Hans, being very close to the latter both in language and in life-styles. However, when the Tujias were later recognized as a specific ethnic unit, many in the borders of Hunan, Hubei, and Guizhou who had registered as Hans asked to reregister as Tujias. Tujias totaled 520,000 according to the 1964 official count, but rose to 2.8 million in 1982, an

increase of five times in eighteen years. This reflected a trace of nationality complex, a degree of repugnance at assimilation, among the numerous non-Hans who have long had imposed on them the status of being nominal Hans.

XI. SOME SALIENT FEATURES IN THE CONFIGURATION OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE

The above is a brief account of how the pluralistic yet unified configuration of the Chinese people came into being. The Chinese people have been conscious of themselves as a national entity only since confronting the Western powers during the past century; but it was through a slow historical process that they have grown into a single nation. Here I might note a few outstanding features through which such a configuration came to be formed.

1. There has been a nucleus of attraction and consolidation. During the dawn of civilization, that is, between the Neolithic period and the Bronze Age, the progenitor group of the Hua Xia came into being in the middle reaches of the Yellow River. The nation of Hua Xia enlarged itself by absorbing people from the neighboring groups both on its east and west over the periods of Xia, Shang, and Zhou. A process of absorption was started and continued during the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, till an unprecedented unification of the Central Plain between the Yangtze and the Yellow River was accomplished by the first emperor of Qin. When Qin was succeeded by Han, the population in central China was unified on a pluralistic basis to become what was known as the Han nationality. But the name did not become popular until the time of the "Five Hus and Sixteen Countries," when various ethnic groups alternately made themselves masters of northern and central China. After two thousand years of expansion, during which vast numbers from other groups were assimilated, the Hans now claim a population of 930 million (1982), accounting for 93 percent of China's popula-

tion, while the other fifty-five ethnic groups add up to 6.72 million, which equals 7 percent of the Chinese people.

The Hans mostly live in agricultural areas, which include all of the country's arable plain except the northwest and the southwest regions. At the same time, Hans are found residing permanently along communication hubs and business centers in the regions of national minorities. In this way the Hans have infiltrated deep into the areas of all ethnic groups, their presence forming a giant network which is denser in the east than in the west. This network has served as the skeleton of the pluralistic yet unified configuration.

2. Also noteworthy is the fact that the areas inhabited by national minorities cover more than half of the nation's territory. These areas are mostly mountainous highlands or grasslands, for most of China's national minorities are engaged in animal husbandry, as distinct from the Han farmers. The areas inhabited by congested ethnic communities are also homes for Hans, who often constitute the greater part of the population. China has eight provinces, or regions, in which national minorities make up more than 10 percent of the population; namely, Inner Mongolia (15.5%), Guizhou (26.0%), Yunnan (31.7%), Ningxia (31.9%), Guangxi (38.3%), Qinghai (39.4%), Xinjiang (59.6%), and Tibet (95.1%). As can be seen, it is only in two of the autonomous regions that more than half of the population are non-Hans. In some of these areas, habitants of Hans are interspersed with those of non-Hans; in others Hans live on arable land with non-Hans in hilly regions; in still others Hans are found to populate towns while other ethnic groups live in villages and stockades; but Han households are often found in these stockades. Except for Tibet and Xinjiang, it is hard to find counties whose population is uniformly non-Han, and the case is rare even in *xiangs* (districts). Such densely intermingled habitation makes it possible for some Hans to be absorbed into the local ethnic groups; but it is mainly for Han groups, who have infiltrated into non-Han communities,

to work as the centripetal force around which to build a unified entity participated in by various groups.

3. Except for the Huis, who have de facto adopted the Han language as their own, each of China's ethnic groups has its own language. However, for many ethnic groups their own languages already have ceased to be the means of daily communication, and Han (Chinese) is used instead. This is the case with the Mans (Manchus), outstanding figures being Luo Changpei, the famous linguist, and Lao She, the celebrated author. Some ethnic groups claim to possess their own languages, but study has shown that these languages, such as the She language, are actually local dialects of Han. Ten of China's national minorities have their own written languages, but few claim high literacy, popular use of a script being found only among the Tibetans, Mongols, Uighurs, and Koreans. Han (Chinese) has been popularized for most groups by association with Han people. When I visited minority areas in Guangxi and Guizhou in the early 1950s, I found that most males among the natives could converse with me in the local Han dialects. But they used their own languages among themselves. In Inner Mongolia, which I visited in the early 1980s, some Mongolians could not speak Han, but others spoke only Han and not Mongolian. Mediums of communication between ethnic groups are also diversified: some converse in their respective languages, others in the language of the other party, and still others in the language of a third nationality popularly used locally. Investigations in this regard have been lacking, but generally, Han has become the most commonly used language. Since 1949, the government has recognized the right of all national minorities to use their own languages, which has been stipulated in the constitution.

4. Causes for the mixing of different groups are manifold, of which social and economic needs appear to be the major ones. However, political factors cannot be overlooked. One time shortly before 1949 the government forced the Miaos to change their cos-

tumes and cut their hair. But such direct political intervention proved to be ineffective and undesirable. Worse, any act of discrimination or oppression would inflame resistance and xenophobic sentiments which would distance one group from another. Some policies or principles were devised by all feudal rulers and even local regimes concerning the relationships between ethnic groups. Some rulers of minority groups forced their own people, by incentives or coercion, to assimilate with Hans after they had conquered Han territory. But most of the conquests by minority groups were soon followed by measures to subordinate the conquered Hans while warning their own people against losing their national traditions and culture. As a rule, these acts led to the reverse, for political advantage was not inevitably attended by social or economic superiority. The most recent and outstanding example was afforded by the Mans (Manchus).

Going back in history, China as a state was unified during two-thirds of the post-Qin period, and it was divided for the remaining one-third of the historical span. But the picture was different concerning ethnic relationships. Throughout the ages the Hans had been expanding themselves, and the process of absorption and assimilation went on with more vigor whenever the country found itself under separatist rule, as conquests by national minorities generally brought the ethnic groups closer together.

What, then, has made the Hans a nucleus with such centripetal force? The main factor, in my view, has been their agricultural economy. Once a nomadic tribe made its entrance into the plains and found itself in the midst of the careful, orderly society of farmers, most of the nomads would eventually throw themselves all too voluntarily into the embrace of the Hans.

Let us be reminded that China's national minorities mostly live on highlands, on grasslands, or in mountain valleys or out-of-the-way localities, places the Hans did not care to live in or beyond their convenient reach. Without exception, these were places where the "agriculture-oriented" Hans found it impossible to give play

to their superiority. The minorities could never attract the Hans there as long as the Hans stuck to agriculture. In fact, the Hans have taken every bit of land which permitted the development of agriculture. Then they undertook to cultivate the grasslands that could not be farmed. This led to encroachments on pasturelands, which sparked conflicts between farmers and herdsmen, or, in actuality, between Hans and other ethnic groups. Can all this be taken as proof that the Hans had the agricultural economy as their basis of prosperity? With their feet planted firmly in their soil, the Hans found themselves hard put to pull them out when times changed and mankind entered the industrial age.

5. As a national entity, the Chinese people are composed of numerous elements, hence their pluralistic nature. The component elements or groups are vastly different in size. Over the past two thousand years, the Hans have attained a population of 930 million, the most populous national group in the world. The other fifty-five groups of the Chinese people total a mere 67.2 million, which includes some 800,000 of “unidentified” nationality. That is why these groups are called national minorities. Of these groups fifteen have populations of over a million, the largest being the Zhuangs (13 million). Four have between 500,000 and a million each, seven less than 5,000 people each, three less than 2,000 each, the smallest being the Luobas who claim 1,066 people. The minority groups in Taiwan are not counted for lack of statistical materials.

All nationalities have grown markedly between the census of 1964 and that of 1982. Total population for national minorities increased by 68.42 percent, the annual growth rate being 2.9 percent, as compared with 43.82 percent and 2.0 percent, respectively, for the Hans. The Tujias were found to have grown most rapidly, being 4.4 times their former strength eighteen years before. This was naturally not the result of natural population growth; rather it was because multitudes asked to change their identity to Tujia, though they had registered as Hans previously. Similar cases have

been noted with other ethnic groups. The Hans as a nation grew by attracting non-Hans and assimilating them. If all these former non-Hans should undertake to track down their blood lineages, find out their respective groups of origin, and renounce their identity as Han, the Hans would lose a sizable part of their population. Of course, the problem lies in what identification means in the ethnic sense.

Almost as complicated is the problem of the so-called “unidentified groups,” the people whose ethnic identity has not been determined, of whom the total number is about 800,000. They include two categories: those who cannot be classified as either Hans or non-Hans, and those of whom it cannot be determined which national minority they should belong to. The question involves what we call “nationality identification.” Rather than referring to individuals, it concerns certain groups who claim to be non-Han but were proved by historical records to have been Hans who immigrated to remote regions early on and for some reason refused to acknowledge their identity as such. Similarly problematic are those people who detached themselves from certain non-Han groups and remained unwilling to resume their original ethnic identity. All these fall into the category of “unidentified groups.” This serves to prove that, rather than a permanently stable community, an ethnic group or nationality, as we call it, is a community which is constantly changing. But here I am not going to elaborate theoretically.

6. The growth of the Chinese people into a national entity was accomplished in stages. At the beginning, it appeared, a number of nuclei were formed separately in different localities, which in time grew into independent entities. For example, in the upper and lower reaches of both the Yellow River and the Yangtze appeared different cultural areas in the Neolithic period, which in time merged to become an initial unified entity known as Hua Xia, progenitor of the Han group. By that time the region north of the

Great Wall was a pastoral area belonging to another unified entity with the Xiong Nu as the main body, which stood in confrontation with Hua Xia, and later with the Hans. Then as these two powers united, the nomadic groups from the north penetrated inside of the Great Wall one after another mixing with the Hans, and in the meantime, the Hans never stopped their expansion to the south and northeast. What followed was a long process of migration, mixing, dividing, and remixing of the ethnic groups. In the course of this the Hans, still a nucleus but much larger than ever before, settled in all the land suitable for agriculture. Partly by migration and partly through trade, the Hans scattering far and wide in the non-Han areas formed a gigantic network. It was this network that eventually bound up the ethnic groups of this part of East Asia into a single nation, a great unified community, which we call the Chinese people. In the face of the aggressive Western powers, this giant community has been through thick and thin together in a common struggle since the last century, when it became a conscious national entity. It is a unified nation comprised of more than fifty ethnic groups, which gives it its pluralistic nature.

The Chinese term for “Chinese people” is “Zhonghua Minzu”; that for any of the fifty-odd ethnic groups also is “Minzu,” but they are Minzu on different levels. Besides, many of the fifty-odd “Minzu” are subdivided into groups of various kinds that are sometimes called “Zutuan,” the latter meaning “ethnic group.” Therefore it is to be noted that within the unified body of the Chinese people there exists a multistrata pluralistic configuration. Moreover, such a configuration is often volatile rather than static: groups of any stratum can be divided, reunited, and redivided; some can actually be disintegrated yet remain unified outwardly, while others may insist on certain ethnic peculiarities after having mixed with another group for centuries. It is this unlimited spectrum which makes such an attractive research subject for ethnologists.

XII. THE FUTURE

Is the configuration of the Chinese people going to change in the future? This is a question that can only be left to speculation.

It must be noted that the Chinese people are experiencing, and have already experienced, two significant changes before entering the twenty-first century. Concrete steps have been taken both by legislation and in practice to end the inequality that has prevailed in the relations between ethnic groups in China over the past millennia. Since 1949 the Chinese government has made it one of its basic policies to assure equality between ethnic groups, a policy which was entered into the constitution. In accordance with legislation for regional autonomy, autonomous regions were designated for all national minorities to manage their own affairs. Ethnic language and traditional culture should be respected, and their reform can be decided on only by the ethnic groups themselves. Owing to historical reasons, China's national minorities lacked the means to develop their economy and culture in the past, so preferential treatment is being offered to help them. As a result, many who had concealed their ethnic identity previously now readily acknowledge that they belong to national minorities.

Second, since China has embarked on the drive for industrialization, closed isolation has given way to opening and reform. The shift from agriculture to industry poses new questions for China's nationalities as to what to do in the future. If my analysis here conforms to historical facts, then it is the Hans who will have to meet the challenge of economic reform after having thrived and grown on agriculture since time immemorial. The Hans live in areas suitable for farming but short of raw materials for industry. On the other hand, regions previously avoided by the Hans and left to national minorities now prove to be richly endowed with resources needed for industrial production. But as the national minorities are generally inferior to the Hans in the level of culture and technology indispensable for the development of modern in-

dustry, they would find it difficult to undertake industrial projects in their own regions, their advantages of natural resources notwithstanding. Now, we may ask, is all this going to influence the configuration of the nation in times to come?

If the principle of equality and general prosperity is to be adhered to, specific plans must be made which will enable China's ethnic groups to cooperate fruitfully. This should be the subject of intensive research at present.

Should China adopt such policies as to unleash an uncontrolled competition between the ethnic groups in disregard of the differences in their present levels of development, then the result will predictably be the elimination of the slow-movers, which would mean China's united configuration must become less pluralistic in the course of time, an outcome surely to be opposed. Therefore the policy is for the better-developed groups to help the underdeveloped ones by furnishing economic and cultural aid. Substantial material assistance is given national minorities in addition to preferential treatment.

Another question is, will modernization mean further assimilation with the Hans for national minorities? If so, the simultaneous prosperity of all ethnic groups would have to be achieved at the price of ethnic traditions and cultures. Would this not likewise diminish the plurality of the people as a nation? Of course, there is the possibility that this may happen. But it is my belief that the more wealthy a society is, the more there will be opportunities for its members to develop their own characters. On the other hand, very few choices of modes of life will be available to members of a poverty-stricken society. If this rule also applies to ethnic relationships, then a developed economy will most likely provide opportunities for the ethnic groups to give play to their respective advantages and characteristics. With the progress of industrialization, more and more will be shared by various groups. For instance, a common language will be more necessary for communication, but this does not contradict the creation of ethnic literature

in the respective languages of the various groups. On the contrary, a shared language will only facilitate mutual help and thereby promote the flourishing of each national literature. Each group has adapted to the ecological features of its native land. The Tibetans, for example, who are used to living and working at high altitudes, can play a major role in the effort to develop the economy on the highlands, while cooperating and exchanging with other ethnic groups for the ultimate purpose of general prosperity. In this way China will be able to meet the challenge of the modernization drive.

The future will be marked by a still higher level of the configuration of plurality and unity of the Chinese people, a level on which China will be like a gigantic flowerbed blossoming with greater vitality than ever before. With this I feel encouraged while concluding my brief exposition of this subject.

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