Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations in China

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Outline

• Brief introduction
• Historical development
• Perceptions of ethnicity
• Challenges of ethnic relations
• Portraits of ethnic diversity
• Q & A
Western China has about 60% of the land with less than 20% of the population. Most of the ethnic minorities live in western China.
Major minority ethnic groups (2010 census)

- **Zhuang** (16.2 million)
- **Manchu** (10.7 million)
- **Hui** (9.8 million)
- **Miao** (8.9 million)
- **Uyghur** (8.4 million)
- **TuJia** (8 million)
- **Yi** (7.7 million)
- **Mongol** (5.8 million)
- **Tibetan** (5.4 million)
- **Buyei** (2.9 million)
- **Dong** (2.9 million)
- **Yao** (2.6 million)
- **Korean** (1.9 million)
- **Bai** (1.8 million)
- **Hani** (1.4 million)
- **Kazakh** (1.2 million)
- **Li** (1.2 million), and
- **Dai** (1.1 million)  (Smallest groups: Hezhen 4,640; Lhoba 2,965)

Total minority population: 114 million (8.5% of total)
Historical Development

• The Han Chinese evolved by interacting with different peoples around them.

• The Chinese civilization evolved and became richer by absorbing different cultures from the peoples around the Han.
  – The relationship between the Han and ethnic minorities is mutually beneficial.
Census in 2 AD:
57.67 million people in 12.36 million households
Perceptions of Ethnicity and the Challenges

• *Ethnic categories in imperial periods:*
  – Eastern Yi (东夷), Western Rong (西戎), Northern Di (北狄), and Southern Man (南蛮)

• *Ethnicity in the Republican period:*
  – Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Tibetan and Hui Muslim
  – Quote by Sun Yat-sen *(next slide)*

• *Ethnicity in PRC:*
  – Ethnic identification and autonomous areas *(2 slides)*
  – Ethnic policies *(references on separate slide)*
  – Challenges of ethnic nationalism *(mainly from groups with strong religious identity, such as the Tibetans and Uyghurs)*
Sun Yat-sen on Ethnicity

Some people say, after the overthrow of the Qing, we will have no further need of nationalism. Those words are certainly wrong... At the present we speak of unifying the “five nationalities” (Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui, and Tibetan), yet surely our country has far more than five nationalities? My stand is that we should unite all the peoples of China into one Chinese nation (Zhonghua minzu 中华民族)...and, furthermore, develop that nation into an advanced, civilized nation; only then will nationalism be finished.

Ethnic Identification based on hundreds of monographs and five principles
(shared language, territory, economic life, material and spiritual cultural traits)
## Autonomous areas of China

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<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Autonomous banners</td>
<td>自治旗</td>
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</table>

*(in Inner Mongolia)*

More than 270 autonomous townships with less power.

About Ethnic Policies in China

• “China’s Ethnic Policies: Political Dimension and Challenges” (2009, EAI Background Brief No. 441; http://www.eai.nus.edu.sg/BB441.pdf)
• Report of Congressional Executive Commission on China (http://www.cecc.gov/pages/annualRpt/annualRpt05/2005_3a_minorities.php#ethnicb)
Ethnic identity is usually displayed through language and religion.

Challenges to ethnic nationalism – keeping the balance.

a) How ethnic minorities are governed determines their loyalty towards the state.

b) Whether members of a group want to claim independence determines the government willingness to allow for autonomy.

c) Globalization has serious impact on ethnic relations because indigenous cultures have to adapt for the socio-economic changes, and migrants are attracted to minority areas.
Yin & Yang Approach: a Balance
Books by Melvin Goldstein
Prof. of Case Western Reserve University


References for Understanding

- *Plurality and Unity in the Configuration of the Chinese People* (by Fei Xiaotong 1988; http://www.tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/documents/fei90.pdf)
Minority populations: 8.5% of total; but they inhabit 64% of the country.
Portraits of Ethnic Diversity


• YouTube of “family portraits” of all ethnic groups in China ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwuOaII-JqE&NR=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwuOaII-JqE&NR=1))

**NOTE:** These photos/images are authentic because each one shows exactly where it was taken and who were in it. The costumes and material items displayed are genuine. One sample photo of the Zhuang is provided in the next slide.
壮族 | ETHNIC ZHUANG

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拍摄时间：2009年3月25日
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Q & A
Confucius and Socrates

• Both lived within a century of each other:
  - Confucius (551 – 479 BCE)
  - Socrates (470 – 399 BCE)

• Both were philosophers who were mainly concerned with questions of moral behavior.

• Both had an enormous influence on their societies.
  - Confucius = Eastern Civilization
  - Socrates = Western Civilization

• Neither left their thoughts in writing but their ideas were spread by their disciples.