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Title: SOME QUESTIONS CONCERNING POLICY TOWARDS NATIONALITIES

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Members of the Commission, Delegates, Comrades:

I am in agreement with Vice-Premier: Tung Pi-wu's political report made at our meeting, with Vice-Chairman Liu Ke-ping's report on our work among the nationalities during the past two years, and with Vice-Chairman Ulanfu's report on work in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region.

Premier Chou En-lai's appraisal and instructions in respect to the relations among all the nationalities in China, as stated in his political report of October 23, 1951 to the Third Session of the First National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, constitute the guiding principles in our discussion of the various matters concerning nationalities at this meeting.

In the following I submit for your discussion my views on some of the questions concerning policy towards nationalities. Please correct me where I am wrong.

I. RELATIONS AMONG NATIONALITIES AND OUR TASK ARISING FROM THE NATIONAL QUESTION

China is a big, multi-national country whose various nationalities, the Han people as well as all national minorities, have through their tireless labour developed production, created their own history and culture, and made important contributions towards building up their great homeland. Economic co-operation and cultural exchange are the result of contacts of long standing between them. At different times, they jointly resisted foreign aggression. Imperialist encroachments on China during these last hundred years made the various nationalities feel that they were in the same boat. The national democratic revolutionary movement led by the Chinese Communist Party during the past thirty years, in particular, has systematically brought about greater unity among them.

In the long course of development of our country's different nationalities, the Han people, who constitute more than 90 per cent of the population, advanced far ahead of the other nationalities in the military, political, economic and cultural fields. They played the leading role in the country's life; they constituted the decisive factor for progress in the formation of our country, particularly in the founding of the People's Republic of China. They are bound also to render significant assistance in the future advancement of the various fraternal nationalities.

However, for a long period in our history, national oppression resulted in the inequality between nationalities. Ever since imperialism began its aggression on China, the Chinese ruling class, and especially, in latter days, the reactionary Kuomintang clique headed by Chiang Kai-shek, because of their ruthless oppression and exploitation of Han people and national minorities alike, made themselves the common enemy of all nationalities.

Under the leadership of Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party, this common enemy was overthrown two years ago by the great people's revolution and War of Liberation, initiate and expanded among the Hans but joined in by the people of many national minorities. Thus not on the Han people, but all national minorities on the mainland of China, were liberated. Founded on October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China is a stated of people's democratic dictatorship led by

the working class, a state in which many nationalities live together in fraternal co-operation like one big family! Relations among the nationalities of China are therefore radically changed: the era of national oppression has given way to an era of national equality. Consequently, our task arising from the national question has also undergone a fundamental change. Our task, is no longer to help national minorities in their strivings for liberation from national oppression. Our task is to assist them to realize complete national equality; to assist them, first of all, to raise themselves to the level of New Democracy and to bring about improvements in their material and cultural life. In order to accomplish this task, we must implement the provisions of the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference the essence of which is as follows:

to ensure that all national minorities enjoy the right of national equality, that is to say, equal rights in every respect for all nationalities; to implement the policy of regional autonomy for nationalities and of democratic coalition governments for nationalities; to help the nationalities develop politically, economically, culturally and educationally; to consolidate the unity among the various nationalities as well as within each nationality; to eradicate whatever influences of imperialist aggression and remnants of counter-revolutionary forces which still exist within the country; to intensify patriotic education simultaneously with education in internationalism among all nationalities; to oppose domination by the majority nationality as well as manifestations of narrow nationalism, so that all nationalities will be united in the common task of building their great country.

As Vice-Chairman Liu Ke-ping has already made clear in his report, the efforts expanded in different fields during the past two years mark a good beginning in carrying out these basic tasks.

II. REGIONAL AUTONOMY FOR NATIONALITIES

Regional autonomy for nationalities is the fundamental policy established by Chairman Mao Tse-tung in applying the Marxist-Leninist theory to solving China's national question. This policy enjoys the whole-hearted support of people of the various nationalities. The experiences of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region and other national autonomous regions prove that this policy is the key to the solution of China's national question.

Regional autonomy for nationalities is practised within the People's Republic of China under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government. It follows the general line of the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, with areas where national minorities are concentrated as its basis. (To take the proportion of national minority inhabitants in the total population of a given area as the basis for regional autonomy is an incorrect method contravening the stipulations of the Common Programme. This is the general principle and major prerequisite that must, in all circumstances, be adhered to.

Any national minority living in a compact community is entitled to regional autonomy for national ties and has the right to establish an autonomous region and autonomous organ, in accordance with this general principle and major prerequisite. Any national minority has the right to administer its own internal affairs in conformity with the wishes of the great majority of its own people and of the leaders in touch with the people. It is the right of every national minority to be the master of its own affairs. Assistance must be given to each national minority in order to facilitate the exercise of this right. This principle, too, must be adhered to strictly.

The establishment of national autonomous regions involves questions regarding national composition, boundary lines, administrative status, autonomous organs, autonomous rights, internal relations, and organizational relations between higher and lower levels.

The national autonomous regions already established may be classified generally into three types:

An autonomous region established on the basis of an area inhabited by one national minority (for example, the autonomous region of the Tibetans in Pingwu, northern Szechuan Province); an autonomous region established on the basis of an area inhabited by one large national minority but including areas inhabited by other nationalities with comparatively very small populations (for example, the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region); an autonomous region jointly established on the basis of areas inhabited by several national minorities (for example, the joint autonomous region at Lungsheng, Kwangsi Province, where the Tung, Chuang, Miao, Yao and Ling national minorities live together). There will possibly be other types.

These differing types of national autonomous regions have come into existence on account of differences in the existing relations among nationalities, in economic conditions, in historical relations, but are all based on the people's free will and national equality. The third type of regional autonomy may be established in areas where members of different national minorities live side by side with the advantage of fostering co-operation and mutual aid among nationalities and, therefore, assisting in their development. All must be done without compulsion and according to the principle of free will, equality and mutual benefit.

In some areas of national minority concentration which adjoin or overlap areas inhabited by the Han people, the establishment of regional autonomy necessitates—for economic, political and historical reasons—the inclusion of districts and towns inhabited by the Han people, so that in some cases the Han people constitute a majority among the population. Such inclusion is permissible as it is beneficial to the cause of unity among the various nationalities and, above all, helpful to the development of these autonomous regions. In such cases, subject to the wishes of the national minorities concerned, steps should be taken to encourage and persuade the Han people to join the autonomous regions. But in areas within such autonomous regions where the Han people are especially numerous, democratic-coalition governments of nationalities should be set up.

National composition in all the above-mentioned types of national autonomous regions is a complex and serious problem which must be properly dealt with according to actual conditions in the different places. The leaders of the national minorities concerned must be consulted and the approval of their people secured. This problem should never be handled carelessly.

The proper solution of the problem of national composition in an autonomous region will facilitate the fixing of the boundaries and administrative status of the said region. Decisions of a provisional character on boundary lines should be permitted, so as to avoid any rash action or delay in this matter. The administrative status of an autonomous region may be decided, in principle, according to the size of population and area of the said region.

The steps to be taken in preparation for establishing autonomous regions for nationalities are governed by actual conditions at a given time and place; they need not, indeed cannot, be the same everywhere. Actual conditions prevailing in the area concerned govern also the decision whether to establish a local democratic-coalition government of nationalities first and then set up a national autonomous region. But preparations should be made, and the establishment of regional autonomy for nationalities effected whenever conditions are favourable, for instance, when revolutionary order

within the area has just been established and regional autonomy is the desire of all strata of the people.

An autonomous organ is a local organ of state power, the level of which corresponds to the administrative status of the autonomous region in question. It is the organ of state power established by and for the people of the autonomous region. Such organs must be organized and established in accordance with the basic principle of democratic centralism and the system of people's congresses. Their concrete form, however, must accord with the wishes of the majority of the people of the nationalities exercising regional autonomy and with the wishes of the leaders who are in touch with the people, so as to do justice to the national minorities in their present stage of development. Such a form will be easily understood and accepted by the people of nationalities that are to enjoy regional autonomy.

The autonomous organs should be composed mainly of members from the nationalities exercising regional autonomy with the participation of an appropriate number of representatives from the other nationalities living within the autonomous region concerned.

The Han people living in autonomous regions are a component part of the Han nationality of the entire country; there is, therefore, no need for them to practise regional autonomy, no matter how large their population in a given autonomous region may be. But their political system must conform with the general system of the whole country, and their political rights and ways of life should be respected in the same way as those of other nationalities in autonomous regions.

All nationalities in autonomous regions have the right to adopt and develop their own national languages, both spoken and written, and to use them in developing their culture and education. An autonomous organ may adopt as the chief medium in exercising its authority the language that is generally accepted within the region, but in exercising authority over a nationality unacquainted with this language of the latter nationality should be used concurrently.

Under our unified state system and plan, the various national autonomous organs enjoy the right to exercise local autonomy in economy, finance, culture and education, as well as the right to organize local people's armed forces, according to their respective administrative status. The Central People's Government, or local people's governments of a level higher than the national autonomous organ concerned, will formulate rules governing the exercise of these rights according to prevailing actual conditions, and facilitate their implementation.

Within their jurisdiction the autonomous organs of national autonomous regions may formulate special regulations which should be submitted to the people's governments at the two next higher levels for approval.

In order to keep the Central People's Government posted on actual conditions in the various national autonomous regions throughout the country and thus to enable it to give better guidance in the exercise of autonomous rights, the rules governing autonomous rights in the autonomous regions, and the special regulations approved by the competent people's governments of higher levels, should be sent through successive levels to the Government Administration Council to be put on record. This procedure will prove advantageous, at least for some time to come.

The exercise of autonomous rights, the consolidation of the autonomous organs, and the general development of the autonomous regions are dependent on fraternal co-operation among the nationalities, on the constantly rising political consciousness and readiness for organization of the people of different nationalities, and on the leadership and help of the people's governments at

higher levels. All these factors make the autonomous organs of national autonomous regions responsible for safeguarding the right to national equality of all nationalities and for prohibiting any kind of national discrimination. At the same time, they must safeguard the civil rights and the right to elect and to be elected of the people of all nationalities under their jurisdiction, irrespective of sex. The autonomous organs must inculcate in the people a sense of patriotism and internationalism and respect the leadership of the people's governments of higher levels.

In leading the autonomous regions, the governments of higher levels must respect the autonomous rights of these regions, help them develop politically, economically, and culturally, help them improve education and health services, and help them train government functionaries. They should also send cadres to work in the autonomous regions according to necessity. As to the method of leadership, the people's governments of higher levels should properly appraise the peculiarities and actual conditions of the various national minorities at the present stage of development so that orders and decrees issued will conform to the basic spirit of the Common Programme and, at the same time, be compatible with the peculiarities and actual circumstances of the nationalities. The practice of transplanting arbitrarily experiences and methods from other areas should be guarded against and, where necessary, corrected.

Matters should be explained so that whatever doubts or misconceptions about the meaning of regional autonomy may be dispelled. Below are samples of questions asked:

Now that national oppression is gone and national equality has taken its place, the "question is only one of democracy among the nationalities themselves; what need is there for regional autonomy?"

Now that cadres of national minority origin have already assumed responsible positions in the organs of state power, does that not already mean regional autonomy ?

Should national minorities living in compact communities whose social and economic practices are similar to those of the Han people, or national minorities who have no language of their own, also practise regional autonomy?

Why can't regional autonomy be based on the proportion of the people of national minorities in the total population of a given area? Is it necessary to practise regional autonomy in national minority areas where the administrative status is of the basic level?

Is the implementation of regional autonomy beneficial to the political, economic and cultural development of the national minorities ? Will emphasis on national forms not encourage narrow nationalism?

These constitute one type of questions which tend to hinder a smooth implementation of the policy of regional autonomy.

Then there are still other questions:

Why must regional autonomy be practised under the leadership of the people's government of higher levels and not independently?

Is democracy necessary in an autonomous region?

Why should national equality be the accepted government policy within an autonomous region, why can't the nationalities exercising regional autonomy administer their own affairs?

Are democratic-coalition governments of nationalities not superfluous in localities within autonomous regions where the Han people are especially numerous ?

Why is it necessary to wipe out the remnant Kuomintang reactionaries and the influences of the aggressive imperialist powers?

What will be the advantage of improved relations with nationalities outside the autonomous regions ? Why should we assimilate the experiences of the more advanced nationalities and obtain their co-operation?

These represent another type of questions which tend to hamper the correct implementation of the policy of regional autonomy. .

III. LOCAL DEMOCRATIC-COALITION GOVERNMENT OF NATIONALITIES

Each local democratic-coalition government of nationalities is an organ of state power, which ensures to all nationalities equal rights in the exercise of state power in areas where "different nationalities live together and thus facilitates the implementation of the basic policy of co-operation among, and development of, the various nationalities. Experience has shown that such governments play a beneficial role in meeting the demand of national minorities for exercising state power, stimulate the people of national minorities to take an active part in the administration of state affairs, strengthen the unity among nationalities, help the practice of regional autonomy, and accelerate whatever work that is in progress in these areas.

An important point is that the number representatives from each nationality to the people's representative conferences must be based on the proportion of their respective populations and must be equitably allotted, with due consideration for nationalities with very small populations. Representatives may be elected or appointed separately or, jointly by the various nationalities. A decision on any question concerning one of the national minorities; should be made only after full consultation with the representatives of that minority and after their concurrence has been obtained.

The government councils of democratic-coalition governments of nationalities and their corresponding consultative committees of the people's representative conferences should, as far as possible, include representatives from all national minorities under their jurisdiction; they should, in discharging their responsibilities, adhere in spirit to the same principle of consultation.

In what areas should democratic-coalition governments of nationalities be established? We are of opinion that they should be set up in provinces (subprovinces), municipalities, special regions, counties, districts, and hsiang (villages), where the Han people constitute the overwhelming majority of the population, while national minorities constitute 10 per cent or more; or where the population of the national minorities is less than 10 per cent but where the various nationalities very obviously have dealings with one another affecting the administration in many respects. Democratic-coalition governments of nationalities may also be established in areas inhabited by two or more national minorities where joint autonomy is not yet in practice and in districts within national autonomous regions where the Han people are especially numerous.

In general, a local democratic-coalition government of nationalities includes one or more national autonomous regions within its jurisdiction. On the other hand, an autonomous region of a high administrative level may include one or more democratic-coalition governments of nationalities of a low administrative level. These principles apply generally to relations between the governments of different levels and to the exercise of leadership by the people's governments of higher levels.

A proposal has been made that any local people's government practising the system of democratic-coalition government of nationalities should indicate this fact in its name. We deem such change unnecessary.

IV. NATIONAL MINORITY ELEMENTS LIVING AMONG OTHER NATIONALITIES

For various historical reasons, national minority elements have for a long period been living among the inhabitants of the Han nationality (mainly among city inhabitants). They have long been under Han influence and subjected to national oppression and discrimination. As a result, they have lost most of their original national characteristics; some have even been concealing their national identity on purpose. Nonetheless, they have retained their national sentiments to a larger or lesser degree.

Since the liberation, the implementation of the policy of the Central People's Government in respect to nationalities has had its influence in awakening these forgotten elements of national minorities. They have begun to raise their heads again, demanding the right to national equality. Although they are not free from national oppression, in a number of places they still meet with discrimination.

It is, therefore, necessary that protection given them by law to ensure their enjoyment of civil liberties on the same footing with the Han people of the right to elect and to be elected; of the freedom to maintain or change their traditional ways of their religious beliefs, their customs and habits; the right to engage in any occupation and to join popular organizations. National minorities may use their own languages, if any, when carrying on litigation in court or in other matters.

The people's governments of all levels should more carefully see to it that national minorities enjoy equal rights in their respective areas and should give them all necessary and appropriate assistance in actual practice. The national minorities have the right to bring complaints to the people's governments, in case they meet with national discrimination or insult; the people's governments must not fail in their duty to be perfunctory in settling such complaints.

Such legal protection must also be afforded the Han or any other nationality who live within autonomous regions of national minorities.

V. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONALITIES— POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL

The general adoption of the system of regional autonomy for nationalities and of democratic-coalition governments of nationalities, together with the assurance in every respect of the right to national equality, does not imply that the national question is already solved. The real solution of our national question has to await the emergence of the national minorities from their political, economic and cultural backwardness which, for them, is a kind of historical liability. It is this backwardness which has hampered their full enjoyment of the right to national equality; According to Comrade Stalin, this situation constitutes "actual inequality."

The policy of the People's Republic of China towards nationalities not only ensures equal rights for all different nationalities in their political, economic, cultural and social life, but also helps them to develop in all these fields, so that they will gradually emerge out of their backwardness into actual equality.

Since the foundation of the People's Republic of China, the Central People's Government and the local people's governments concerned have shown the greatest solicitude for the national minorities' political, economic, and cultural life. Despite the fact that China's economy was still in the process of rehabilitation and that building up the nation's defences was necessarily the most important of the tasks of the state, the people's governments of all levels did much in the last two years for the national minorities in giving them political education; establishing state power; training and assigning cadres; assisting their trade; establishing health services; and fostering other phases of their economy, culture, and education. Even greater progress is expected in 1952.

On the elimination of the "actual inequality" of China's nationalities, i.e., overcoming the political, economic, and cultural backwardness of the national minorities, our opinion is as follows:

- (1) This question can be solved only step by step, and through prolonged and persistent efforts. It is impossible at once to expect too much, or too quick results.
- (2) Urgent problems facing the various nationalities that are ripe for solution should be disposed of by all means. Generally speaking, these problems include the establishment of state power, the training of cadres, trade, health services and the development of local production. Speaking specifically, each national autonomous region, or an area where national minorities live in a compact community, has its own differing urgent needs. These needs in material and cultural life should be dealt with at once by all possible means according to actual conditions.
- (3) Stress should be laid on the nation's defence and the development of the various nationalities. Certain important phases of capital construction should be tackled in accordance with the country's financial condition.
- (4) The question is one of gradual solution requiring unity and mutual assistance among nationalities, first and foremost the assistance of the Han people and of the People's Liberation Army both of whom have the duty to assist the minorities. In turn, the national minorities should appreciate such help rendered.
- (5) The "actual inequality" of China's national minorities can be done away with gradually only through stimulating their capacities and intellect. Consequently, reforms are necessary and indispensable in the various old systems within national autonomous regions. However, such reforms should accord with the wishes of, and in the main be carried out by, the people of the different nationalities and their leaders in touch with the people.

One urgent problem facing us is that of creating a written language for those nationalities who have only a distinct spoken language of their own, but not a written one. I wish comrades here would put forward suggestions on this problem for the consideration of the Central People's Government.

VI. TRAINING OF CADRES FROM AMONG THE NATIONAL MINORITIES

The training of national minority cadres who have close contact with their own people on the widest possible scale is the key to a satisfactory implementation of the policy of carrying out regional autonomy for nationalities, forming democratic-coalition governments of nationalities and pressing forward their political, economic, cultural and educational development.

The people's governments at all levels which paid close attention to this key issue have achieved much in this direction. However, this still remains a serious task which we must carry out systematically. I am making the following proposals for your consideration.

- (1) We must see to it that solidarity is achieved between all patriotic intellectuals among the various nationalities, activists among the masses, and other leading personalities in close contact with the people. We must rally these three types of cadres to work in common for the people, give free play to their abilities, and help them improve themselves.
- (2) We must adopt a system to train these cadres in order to raise their cultural and political levels.
- (3) We must bring about a proper division of labour among local training classes, institutes for nationalities in different localities, secondary schools, higher institutions, and technical training classes. Local training classes shall undertake extensive elementary training; institutes for nationalities shall train more advanced political workers and translators; secondary schools and higher institutions shall give training to intellectuals, teachers and specialists; technical training classes shall furnish the lower levels of technical personnel. Such classes, institutes and schools shall be established by the people's governments of all levels (including the people's governments in national autonomous regions), their commissions of nationalities affairs, their educational and business departments. Outlines of courses in political science, history, etc., should be drawn up and the courses established step by step.
- (4) Our aim is to secure the participation of Han cadres in this work. Past experience has borne out that one of the important factors in developing political, economic, cultural, and educational work among national minorities is co-operation and mutual assistance between Han cadres and cadres from the national minorities in the area. It is necessary, however, that the Han cadres should be conscientious in helping to train cadres from among national minorities.

VII. CONSOLIDATION OF UNITY AMONG NATIONALITIES

With the expulsion of the aggressive imperialist powers, the overthrow of reactionary Kuomintang rule and of the system of national oppression, disunity among out1 nationalities has become a thing of the past. As I said earlier, on the very day the People's Republic of China was established, all nationalities in our country formed one big family, each member living in fraternal co-operation with all others, on the basis of equality and free will. During the past two years, the different nationalities within this big family have steadily tightened the bonds between them. They now form an indivisible group, a fact over which all of us must rejoice.

The consolidation of the unity among our various nationalities is inseparable from the consolidation and unification of our country as a whole, from the consolidation of the great historic victory won by the people of all our nationalities over imperialism and its lackeys. The consolidation of the unity among nationalities serves to stimulate them to mutual assistance, and accelerates the development and build up of the whole country; at the same time, it facilitates their political, economic, cultural, and educational development.

But since obstacles in the path of unity have not all been completely uprooted, consolidation of the unity among nationalities still remains an important task. Such obstacles are:

First, destructive attempts by the enemy—that is, by imperialism and its lackeys—to incite discord and sow dissension among our nationalities. Our fraternal nationalities in the border regions, «from the Northwest to the Southwest, are especially exposed to, and constantly confronted with, this threat. The chief method of combatting these destructive attempts is to expose the enemy, punish the counter-revolutionaries, and intensify the patriotic education of our people (particularly in the patriotic meaning of the movement to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea).

Secondly, remnants of dominant-nation chauvinism and narrow nationalism among the various nationalities. Remnants of dominant-nation (primarily Great Han) chauvinism find expression in discrimination against, or contempt of, national minorities neglect or disdain of the national characteristics and forms of the minorities. (Dominant-nation chauvinism also survives to some extent among certain nation; minorities occupying majority positions within certain region.) Such remnants of Great Han chauvinism lead to reckless adventurism in matters of policy, while cadres become coercive and domineering in their working style, monopolizing all activities in the name of the masses. Remnants of narrow nationalism are more or less found among the national minorities. These remnants find expression in conservatism and xenophobia; lack of appreciation for China's greatness and progress; lack of vision in appreciating the future of their own nationality; satisfaction with things as they are; inertia to move forward; and a propensity to hinder their own national progress. Dominant-nation chauvinism and narrow nationalism often interact and are inseparable from each other. To ascertain which of the two is the decisive tendency, we have to take into consideration concrete conditions at a specific time and place.

A most important measure for eliminating the remnants of dominant-nation chauvinism and narrow nationalism is further education in patriotism and internationalism of all the nationalities. At the same time, the advanced elements of the major nationalities, first of all, of the Han nationality, should be asked to take the responsibility of criticizing tendencies towards dominant-nation chauvinism among their own people. Cadres of Han nationality, in particular, should be asked to set examples in their actions. Apart from a determination to serve the national minorities with heart and soul, all Han cadres working in national minority areas should at all times and on all questions adopt a working style of consultation with the government workers of national minority origin, securing their concurrence, and relying on them for execution of all decisions. Arbitrary action and monopolizing all undertakings in the name of the masses should be done away with. This is one aspect of the problem.

Another aspect is that advanced elements among the national minorities should be asked to take the responsibility of criticizing the various tendencies towards narrow nationalism among their own people and of teaching them to broaden their vision, to welcome progress and to strive towards self-improvement. If both sides rely on and advance such self-education and self-reform, then tendencies towards dominant-nation chauvinism and narrow nationalism will, both in their rise and growth, be prevented or rectified in good time and in the proper place.

Thirdly, disunity still exists among certain national minorities. The causes of such disunity are numerous, e.g., traditional enmity, incitement by counter-revolutionaries, manipulations by schemers among the socially higher strata, conflicts of material interests, etc. The people's governments at higher levels should, with due consideration of the differing conditions, bring about

reconciliation and persuade the two sides involved to settle such disputes by means of self-criticism and mutual concessions.

For all these reasons, the consolidation of the unity among China's nationalities remains a very important task for the people of all nationalities, especially all cadres of national minority origin.

Rally around Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the Central People's Government!

Long live our great homeland, wherein many nationalities in fraternal co-operation constitute one big family!

Long live Chairman Mao Tse-tung, great leader of all the nationalities of China!