

## **CHAPTER 25**

### **Nationalities Policy**

In late 1980, I decided to participate actively in the major discussions that were in progress regarding revising the national constitution. I had experienced firsthand how individual leaders could ignore or reverse policies with relative ease, so I wanted the government to add clauses to the constitution that clearly spelled out the rights of nationalities. If this was done properly, these rights would not just be policies, they would be the law, and they would stand regardless of subsequent changes in leadership or future political campaigns.

This debate over the constitution was a natural venue for me because I was a vice director of the Nationalities Commission of the National People's Congress, and so was directly involved in discussions of legislation relating to minorities. I thought a great deal about the new constitution, and then decided to present my thoughts verbally at a meeting of cadres in my work unit.

I decided that rather than just listing proposed clauses, I would start by discussing more broadly how Marxism deals with the issue of nationalities, and particularly the relationship between majority and minority nationalities. Many Chinese leaders criticized minority nationalities like Tibetans for pursuing separatist ideas. (That is what was bothering the officials in Lhasa who were attacking me.) However, I believed that they did not understand Marxist theory on this issue.

In Marxism, the relationship between nationalities in multiethnic states should be one of complete equality. However, Marxism draws a basic distinction between nationalities embedded in class-based societies and those in communist societies. In class-based societies, separatist activities by minority nationalities are not considered negatively because they are caused by the

oppressive policies of the majority nationality and the government it monopolizes.

In such societies, the ruling (i.e., oppressing) nationality typically emphasizes in its rhetoric the unity of all nationalities [ch. minzu tuanjie], and it vigorously opposes the struggles of minority nationalities against the state, labeling these pejoratively as "splittist" activities that seek to destroy the nation. However, from the Marxist standpoint, the struggle of minority nationalities against oppression by the majority nationality is correct and justified because there is no equality. In the absence of true equality, splittism is a valid response for minority nationalities in class-based societies. It is, in fact, characteristic of class-based multiethnic nations. By contrast, in socialist states, the majority nationality does not (or should not) oppress the minority nationalities. All should be equal, and there should be complete unity and cooperation among nationalities. Nationality unity, therefore, requires not suppression but new policies that provide real equality.

But what does equality of nationalities mean? Lenin, I said, wrote, "We require that there be sovereign [ch. zhuquan] equality between nationalities in a country" (The Collected Works of Lenin, vol. 19). True national equality, therefore, means that the party/state should admit and respect the rights of the minorities to make decisions in the fields of politics, economy, culture, and so on. "Only this," he wrote, "will solve the issue of separatist feelings! and activities" (ibid.). This being the case, I suggested that a number of specific items be added to the nation's constitution. [Phünwang's entire essay is found in appendix c.]

First, I suggested that the new constitution include a phrase stating that "the self-governing nationality is the major power body and should shoulder the responsibility of managing local affairs." If such were the case, each nationality would have the right to be involved in the management of its area and the development of its own politics, economy, and culture.

Second, I suggested that nationality populations should be combined into larger political units wherever possible. I pointed out that the current system of dividing nationalities between different regions interfered with the party policy of protecting the equality and unity of nationalities and would harm the interests of minority 'nationalities in the long run. I did not specifically mention a "Greater Tibet" because I thought it would anger or threaten people. But I crafted this point so that if it were accepted, it would include all Tibetans.

Third, as I had mentioned to Hu Yaobang, I thought the constitution should stipulate that the army should not be used as a police force in minority areas. While it is the nation's right to direct the military and foreign affairs of the whole country, in minority autonomous regions, there were problems that needed to be addressed regarding relations among the army, the local government, and the local people. Because the majority of soldiers were Han Chinese, the relationship between the army and the local people was often considered synonymous with the relationship between the Han Chinese and the minority. Therefore, I suggested the following article be added to the constitution:

The national defense of our country should be controlled by the highest national authority (the National People's Congress) and the highest national administrative organization (the State Council). The army defending our country is responsible for fighting invading forces but is not responsible for maintaining public order in autonomous regions. In autonomous regions, public order should be maintained by the local minority forces. The national defense army stationed in autonomous regions should respect the right of the local autonomous government organizations and obey their orders concerning nationality autonomy.

Finally, I emphasized the essential need for a statement about the rights of minorities to use their own languages. Lenin, I pointed out, said, "Those who do not agree with and support the equality of nationalities and languages and

those who do not fight against nationality oppression and inequality are not Marxists or even socialists" (The Collected Works of Lenin, vol. 20). And Stalin asked, "Why should people of a certain nationality use their own language? It is because using their own language is the only way for them to develop their culture, politics, and economy" (The Collected Works of Stalin, vol. II).

In our country, I said, we have had a succession of different policies regarding the languages of minority nationalities. Before liberation, the Guomindang practiced Han Chauvinism and nationality assimilation. They attempted gradually to replace minority languages with the Chinese language, and sought eventually to wipe out minority languages. By contrast, immediately after liberation, the Chinese Communist party adhered to the principle of nationality equality and unity, and respected the right of minorities to use and develop their own languages. However, under the influence of the extreme left, the CCP went back to the old approach. "During the ten-year calamity" of the Cultural Revolution, I wrote, "minority languages were 'sentenced to death.' "

After the overthrow of the Gang of Four, however, the CCP began to rehabilitate the language rights of minorities, although in some areas officials still dreamed of eventually replacing minority languages with the Han language. The fact that this kind of Han Chauvinism exists in some places is one of the most serious hindrances to our nation's current work on nationality relations. Therefore, I suggested that the following article be added to the constitution:

The nation protects the right of minorities to use their own language as the major language in their autonomous region, and the Han language should also be taught. It is prohibited to replace minority languages with the Han language. National laws, policies, regulations, and orders should be translated into minority languages. Detailed policies should be formulated to make sure that minority languages are used for minority students in the entrance

examinations to secondary schools and colleges, and not replaced by the Han language.

After I finished speaking, Li Gui, the head of my office, praised my views and asked me to write them down. He then distributed them to a number of important officials, including Ulanhu, who also liked my essay and distributed it further to other offices and officials. In general, however, the essay raised a storm of controversy and led to a major debate within the party, because until then, no one had ever seriously criticized the party's policy on nationalities affairs. Ulanhu had raised some issues while he was working in Inner Mongolia, and Liu Geping had also made some criticisms when he worked in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. But none of these critiques had gone to the core of the party's ideology on minority nationalities, as mine did.

Within the party, I was attacked by important officials like Yang Jingren, Jiang Peng, Xue Jianhua, and Huang Chou. I learned later that a group of about thirteen cadres got together and worked for five months to rebut this essay and my other discourses, such as the conversation I had had with the exile delegation. They produced a ten-thousand character attack on my thinking, which they presented under the name of Li Weihuan, the aging Marxist theoretician who, among other positions, had headed the Seventeen-Point Agreement negotiations in 1951 and the United Front Work Department. It was infuriating. The attack had ten points in all, most of them forced and misleading. For example, one point said that I hadn't specifically mentioned that the imperialists had invaded and suppressed the nationalities of China, including the Tibetans. And because I had said that nationalities had initially had their freedom and then were forcefully put under one nationality's control, they accused me of denying that Tibet was historically part of China. Another point attacked what they called my reservations about the quelling of the 1959 uprising. Still another said that I had taken the side of the Dalai Lama's brother, who criticized Tibetan officials for just doing what they were told

rather than representing the interests of Tibetans; and still another said that I had been inciting Tibetans to seek a Greater Tibet. There were even completely ridiculous suggestions that I was in league with the Tibetan exiles. But the main thrust of their attack concerned my argument about the need for what Lenin had called "sovereign equality between nationalities" in a country. They totally rejected my case for the sovereignty of nationalities. Their essay said that there was a fundamental difference between national sovereignty [ch. guojia zhuquan] and nationality sovereignty [ch. minzu zhuquan]. The concept of "sovereignty" is relevant only between nations. They said there was no such thing as sovereignty among the different nationalities that comprised a nation, so they rejected the model represented by the Soviet system of "republics" and, by extension, tried to attack the theoretical legitimacy of the case I had laid out for the full autonomy of minority areas like Tibet.

I learned of this report only when a copy was delivered to me with a summons to appear at a meeting the next day (June 18, 1982) to answer questions about it. On such short notice, I decided not to try to respond in detail, but I also thought I should have something to give them, so I quickly wrote a one-page statement. In it, I tactfully said that while I hadn't had time to study and digest Li Weihan's comments, Li had been my senior leader in the past, so they could be sure I would consider his arguments carefully. I also said, however, that my cursory reading of the report revealed many points that were factually incorrect, and I promised to examine everything thoroughly and make a detailed written report. I put this brief statement in my pocket and went to the meeting.

From the moment I entered the room and saw a tape recorder and several microphones in the center of the table, I knew it was not going to be an ordinary meeting. Seven or eight people were already there, including Yang Jingren, but nobody came to meet me or shake my hand. They looked up when I entered but said nothing. I sat down quickly, and for a few minutes

nobody spoke. We just sat silently, looking at one another. They weren't openly hostile, but they definitely were not friendly.

Before long, Li Wei han came in, helped by two people. He was eighty-six and not in good health (he was living in a hospital and would die two years later, in August 1984). He had been attacked and demoted during the Cultural Revolution, and this was the first time he had been at the United Front Work Department since his rehabilitation. I was moved when I saw him and immediately rose, shook his hand, and told him how sorry I was to have been the cause of his having to come today.

Then we all sat down, and the meeting started.

"Phünwang," Li Weihan began, "thirty-one years ago you made a great contribution by helping to bring about the Seventeen-Point Agreement and the return of Tibet to the great motherland. But recently, people are saying that your understanding of Marxist theory is seriously flawed. I have examined what you said and have written a report about it. Have you seen that report?" "Yes," I said, "I received the document and I have looked at it." Then I took out the statement I had prepared and read it.

I could tell from their expressions that Yang Jingren and the others were displeased when I said that I would not respond to Li's criticisms at this time. I directed my next remarks to Li.

"Director Li," I said, "you have just said that thirty-one years ago I made a great contribution. Do you know what happened to me after that?"

"No. Please tell me."

"Not long after my great contribution," I said, "I was accused of being a 'local nationalist' and imprisoned for eighteen years."

"Were you really imprisoned for eighteen years?" he asked. "You must have suffered terribly." He seemed stunned and said he hadn't known. At that time, he himself had been under attack, so probably he hadn't heard about any of it.

Yang Jingren and the others didn't like this turn of events at all, and Yang interrupted.

"Phünwang," he said sharply, "you promised to prepare a detailed written response. When, may we ask, will that be?"

"You have written a ten-thousand-character document," I said coolly.

"It will take me some time to study it and respond."

"It will take some time, will it?" Yang hissed angrily. "You don't seem to realize that you have not been accused of minor mistakes. Li Weihan is a famous Marxist theoretician. He is the one who has criticized your ideas, and so your mistakes are extremely serious. Moreover, it is Deng Xiaoping who is really confronting you today. He was too busy to come himself, so he asked Xi Zhongxun [vice chairman of the National People's Congress] to handle the matter for him, and Xi is the one who chose Li Weihan to examine your writings."

I did not lose my composure. I simply said, as if it were the most obvious thing in the world, that it would be difficult to specify a time when I would be finished with my detailed response. "Director Li has thought carefully about his criticisms, and his points deserve equally careful examination."

At that, they all spoke at once, all trying to criticize and attack me, until finally Li intervened.

"Listen, everyone, please!" he said with some emotion. "I believe Phünwang should be given time to write his opinions in full. He may criticize my report or even rebut it, and he should be given all the time he needs to do it."

He paused and then smiled, saying, "I am pleased today. When I came, I thought I would have to argue with Phünwang, but we got along very well. Now let's all go to eat."

He took my hand as we left the room, and I sat beside him at the meal. My strategy had worked. They had wanted to attack me at the meeting and afterward report either that I accepted my mistakes or that I tried to argue

back. I would have lost either way. If I had accepted my errors, they would have said that I was persuaded of my mistakes by Li Weihan. If I hadn't, they would have said that Li Weihan advised me kindly and tried his best to educate me, but I stubbornly refused to listen. However, because Li himself made the suggestion that I be given more time and clearly seemed to have affection for me, there was nothing they could do, and so the meeting was concluded.

A week after the meeting, I sent a letter to Hu Yaobang. By then, I had begun my detailed response, and I estimated now that it would take some weeks to finish. So I sent Hu something brief to explain that Li's report had many points that were not factually accurate, and to request that the Central Committee investigate it carefully. I wanted to buy myself some more time, and I didn't want the only voices he heard to be those of my enemies.

It took several more weeks to finish my response, which ended up containing twenty-five thousand characters. I sent it to Li Weihan and also to Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang, Xi Zhongxun, and others because I was afraid that Yang Jingren wouldn't allow my comments to be passed along. I therefore thought that I had assured myself a fair hearing at the highest levels. I soon found out differently.

On July 27, 1982, Li Weihan sent a letter to Deng Xiaoping, along with a brief summary of our meeting, his ten-thousand-character document, and my one-page response-but not my full-length rebuttal. I learned that Deng Xiaoping himself saw all these documents and sent them to Hu Yaobang with a note saying, "Comrade Li Weihan has made a good presentation. Please distribute these documents to each member of the Central Committee and to the officials of the Secretariat of the Central Committee." Hu did so, in accordance with Comrade Deng's order.

I was, of course, upset because the documents now being distributed at the highest levels did not contain my full-length response to Li's criticisms. I subsequently wrote letters requesting that my complete response be read

together with Li's comments, and I went to visit Li in the hospital, because I had suspicions I hoped to confirm.

I found him sitting on a sofa. I shook his hand, sat down next to him, and said, "Director Li, you knew me well. I served under you in 1951 and in 1953. I have the greatest respect for you. If I had made mistakes in my thoughts and you had critiqued me honestly, I would have listened to you. I believe, however, that the ten-thousand-character critique was made by the people who put me in prison in the past. Now they want to attack me again. They are using your name to attack me, and I believe that you never saw all of the things I wrote. Therefore, I felt I had no choice but to respond strongly to your critique. But I want you to know that my comments are not aimed at you but at them." He didn't say yes or no, he just nodded his head.

Then things got worse. The packet of materials-again without my response-was sent to Yin Fatang, the head of the party in Tibet. Yin immediately distributed it to the members of the TAR Party Leaders Committee and called a big meeting to discuss it. Many Tibetan and Han officials criticized me strongly at this meeting. Only Yangling Dorje did not follow the party line. I was told later that he stood up and said, "If Director Li is correct, then Phünwang has made a serious mistake. However, in the one-page letter Phünwang submitted, he said that many things in Li's essay are not factually correct and that he will submit a detailed written argument that responds to these inaccuracies. I think we need to read Phünwang's response to know the whole story."

Yin Fatang did not appreciate Yangling Dorje's interference, calling his attitude ambiguous and later accusing him of being my "representative" in Tibet. Yin went on to distribute the materials to officials at the county level, where more meetings were held to attack me. It was a smear campaign, and it was extremely troubling.

In Beijing, I wrote several letters to the Central Committee telling them that I had written a twenty-five-thousand-character response to Li Weihan's ten-thousand-character essay and suggested that they ought to be evaluating the two arguments because this was not a trivial debate. Until now, I said bluntly, there had been no comparable debate in the party on nationality affairs. I stressed that the outcome was likely to have a huge impact on future work in minority nationality areas, and I therefore requested that the Central Committee set up a small investigation group to evaluate both Li's and my arguments. I sent letters making the same request to Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang.

While waiting for an answer and preparing to attend the Sixth National People's Congress (which was to start in mid-1983), I got another shock. One day, quite by accident, I met Wang Guangmei, the widow of Liu Shaoqi. She told me that my name was not on the list of Sichuan delegates. I didn't pay this much attention, since what she said seemed impossible, but the following week, I met her again and she reiterated that she had checked and my name was not on the list. "You should pay attention to this," she said. This time I did.

Since I was a deputy party secretary of the Nationalities Committee of the National People's Congress, I had access to the list of representatives. As she had warned, I found that my name was missing and realized that this was another attempt to push me aside. Angry and frustrated, I immediately called Xi Zhongxun and asked for a meeting.

Xi, who was one of the top leaders in the party and a member of the Politburo, didn't know what I was talking about.

"No changes have been planned," he said. "You are still a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and a deputy party secretary of the Nationalities Committee."

"Then why has my name been dropped from the list of Sichuan representatives?" I asked.

Instead of responding, he turned to the lists, I think to show me that my fears were groundless. But the lists were so long-filling between ten and fifteen volumes-that while I sat sipping a glass of tea, he stopped searching through them and called Yang Jingren directly.

"What happened to Phünwang's status as a delegate to the National Nationalities Policy People's Congress from Sichuan?" he asked bluntly. "Did you forget to put his name on the list?"

"I reported this to you some time ago," Yang said smoothly. "That report was so long I didn't read it all. Can you tell me what happened?"

"As you know," said Yang, "Phünwang has been accused of being one of three people harming the party's work in Tibet. Then there were his comments about adding nationality clauses to the constitution, and finally there was the debate with Li Weihai. For these reasons, I have withdrawn him from the coming National People's Congress and instead have placed him as a candidate for membership on the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference."

"Why didn't you discuss such an important thing with me first?" Xi said angrily. "And why did you bury an important decision like this under thousands of names on your endless list?" He paused, and continued, "You made a big mistake. Phünwang's position should not be changed. I am going to report this to Hu Yaobang! You must reinstate Phünwang immediately. Do you understand?"

After the phone call, I had a serious talk with Xi.

"Till now," I said, "I have never asked for a personal favor. However, as you can plainly see, the people who attacked me before are attacking me again. I have a right to be a delegate for the Tibetan people to the National People's Congress. You said just now that you will report this matter to Hu Yaobang. I

will also report this to Hu-and to Deng Xiaoping himself if necessary-and I will fight to represent the Tibetan people."

After I left Li, I did write letters, and so, I believe, did Xi. And before long, Hu Yaobang and Deng Xiaoping sent a message informing me that they had instructed Yang Jingren not to change my position as a member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. The decision meant a great deal to me, and soon my fortunes began to improve on another front. My detailed criticisms of Li Weihang's report posed a difficult problem for the party. Li had made his judgments on behalf of the Central Committee, which in a sense meant that he represented Deng Xiaoping. Thus, if the Central Committee said I was right, it meant Li-and by extension Deng-was wrong. They came up with an interesting solution.

At the National People's Congress, Xi Zhongxun, representing the Central Committee, made a speech introducing the members of the Standing Committee. When he introduced me, he praised me as a party member who had done good revolutionary work for many years. "He has made a great contribution," he said, and then he added, "In our party, there are different thoughts on ideology, and according to the party's constitution, one has the right to hold different views." He didn't mention my name, but what he was talking about was clear to those who knew of the dispute. And it was now clear to me what the Central Committee had done. Indirectly and cleverly they had declared that Li Weihang and I had the right to hold our different views. It was not necessary to decide whether one was right and one wrong. I wasn't declared right, but in this battle of criticism and debate, I felt I had won a victory against enormous odds. Not only had the party leadership declined to support the attack on my views, but they also sent a message that people in the party like me were free to speak their minds.

I also had an impact on the constitutional front. I didn't get the specific clauses I had suggested accepted, but I was able to persuade Peng Zhen,

Politburo member and chairman of the National People's Congress (and de facto head of the Constitution Revisions Committee), to phrase a section of the pre-amble so that the word "equality" preceded the words "unity" and "cooperation." I thought this made a big difference in orientation because without equality first there cannot be unity. The final version, approved on December 4, 1982, said, "The People's Republic of China is a unitary multinational state created jointly by the people of all its nationalities. Socialist relations of equality, unity, and mutual assistance have been established among the nationalities and will continue to be strengthened." [The previous 1978 constitution had said only, "The unity between all nationalities of the country should be strengthened."

On the other main front-the "three enemies of the party" campaign against me-I also eventually was vindicated.

In spring 1984, a number of TAR officials (including Yin Fatang, Ragdi, and Yangling Dorje) came to Beijing. During this visit, Yangling Dorje met with Premier Zhao Ziyang, whom he knew well from their days together in Sichuan. At their meeting, Zhao asked him about Tibet, and Yangling Dorje told him frankly, "After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Party in 1978, the whole nation shifted its priority away from political struggle to issues concerning economic development. However, Yin Fatang and others in Lhasa continued to proceed on the assumption that in Tibet the priority was political struggle. They have said that the primary targets of this political struggle are the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, and Phünwang. They also criticized Phünwang's views on nationality theory without even reading his response to Li Weihai."

"What is going on in Tibet is wrong," Zhao said. "Economic development is the work priority for the nation-including Tibet. Phünwang and the Panchen Lama are both our people, and we are trying to win over the Dalai Lama. Therefore, it is wrong to make them objects of political attack."

The next day, Yangling Dorje went to see Hu Yaobang, and when Hu heard what he had to say, he became angry. "Economic development is the priority of the whole nation," he said. "Because of class struggle, our country has had very hard times. If we do not pay attention to economic development in Tibet and improve the people's living conditions there, we will never achieve the kinds of political results we want." He also said that it was wrong to single out three people and make them targets of political struggle.

I didn't know about any of this until one afternoon when there was a knock on my door. It was Yangling Dorje, and he was smiling broadly.

"A rog' he said [a rog is a term of greeting that means roughly "my friend" in Khampa dialects], "I no longer need to be afraid to visit." (He meant, of course, that while I was under political attack, it was a risk for anyone to seem too close to me.)

"Today," he continued, "I bring two swords in my hands. One is from Hu Yaobang, and the other is from Zhao Ziyang. They are the ones who have asked me to visit you." He then proceeded to tell me about Hu's and Zhao's responses.

Not long after these events, the Central Committee actually criticized Yin Fatang publicly for his attack on the "three enemies," and then one day in early April 1984, Yin Fatang, Ragdi, Yangling Dorje, and Dorje Tseden (a top Tibetan cadre in the TAR government) unexpectedly came to see me. They came to tell me that the Central Committee had told them their campaign against me was wrong. They had visited the Panchen Lama yesterday, and today they had come to apologize to me. They admitted they had made a mistake!

It was more than I ever dreamed would happen.

Finally, in the fall of 1985, I also got closure on the status of our Tibetan Communist Party. When I had contacted the Chinese Communist Party in Yunnan in 1949, the local party leader agreed to accept me and the others in

my party as members of the CCP but said that the date when our party membership should start would have to be decided later by the Central Committee. It was the mid-1980s now. Many of our members were close to retirement, and there was still confusion about the date at which their party membership had begun. Therefore, the United Front Work Department and the State Nationalities Affairs Commission conducted an investigation and reported their results to the Central Committee.

In a document that was signed by Xi Zhongxun, Hu Qili, and others, the Central Committee determined that after I met with Ye Jianying in Chongqing in 1940,<sup>1</sup> established a Communist Party in Tartsedo and Lhasa and enrolled many members. My revolutionary work therefore officially began in 1940.<sup>1</sup> I thought that they should consider my relationship with the Chinese Communist Party to have started when I met with Ye Jianying in 1940, but they said that because Ye Jianying, who was then in his nineties, could not remember our meetings, they did not accept us as part of the CCP until 1949, when I arrived in Yunnan. I decided not to contest this. I was satisfied that they had officially recognized our Tibetan party as a Communist Party, and it did not matter to me whether it belonged to the Soviet Communist Party or the Chinese Communist Party or was its own Tibetan party.

And so events had finally come full circle. I had not only been rehabilitated, but now my revolutionary work since 1940 had been accepted.

The terrible years in prison could not be wiped away, but the historical record was now clean.

#### AFTERWORD

From 1985 until 1993, Phünwang continued to serve as a deputy director of the Nationalities Committee of the National People's Congress. He was also a close advisor to the late Panchen Lama, working with him in a number of ways on behalf of Tibetans. The latter's untimely death in 1989, coupled with the death

of Hu Yaobang, the demotion of Zhao Ziyang after Tiananmen, and the imposition of martial law in Tibet in 1989, led Phünwang to concentrate on bringing to a conclusion the work on dialectics that he had begun in prison. In 1990, his major (eighthundred-thousand-character) study *New Exploration of Dialectics* was published by the Tibetan People's Publishing House. This work was widely acclaimed in China and led to a conference on the book and the publication of the proceedings.

In 1994, his second book, *Water Exists in Liquid Form on the Moon*, was published by the Sichuan Science and Technology Publishing House. Using a dialectical perspective to study astronomical problems, it argued correctly for the presence of water on the moon. Two years later, in 1996, his third book, *Further Exploration of Natural Dialectics*, was published by the Chinese Social Science Publishing House.

While all this was happening, Phünwang met and married Tseden Yangdron, a Tibetan born in Lhasa. They live in Beijing, where she assists Phünwang in his research and writing. Without her tireless support and assistance, he would not have been able to complete all of these studies.

Although Phünwang, at this writing, is now eighty-four years old, his deep feelings about Marxism and the Tibetan nationality continue to keep him active in current Tibet policies. He remains a critical Tibetan voice advocating a new policy in which Tibet will be granted greater autonomy. His opinions on Tibet are often solicited, as was the case in 1998, when he met with President Jiang Zemin and discussed nationality issues with him for two hours.

Phünwang is currently engaged in a variety of research efforts, including comparative research on the famous Chinese classic *The Book of Changes* and his own *The New Investigations into Dialectics*. At the same time, he is working on a history of revolutionary activities in the Tibetan region.

At present, Phünwang is a professor and tutor to doctoral students in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences graduate school and is the first Tibetan doctoral tutor of philosophy.

It seems fitting to dose this story of the life of Phünwang with his account of an important conversation he had with Hu Yaobang in late 1983, in which he laid out many of his ideas on the place of Tibetans within the People's Republic of China:

Hu Yaobang asked me about Tibet, and I laid out my views on what needed to be done. Before I started, though, I told him that if he had a little time, I would present my thoughts in some detail, but if he was very busy, I would tell them briefly. Without hesitation Hu said, "No problem, take your time.

My feet hurt a bit, but if I keep them up on a chair, I will be fine." 50 he put up his feet, lit a cigarette, and then listened to me. I spoke frankly, laying out a number of issues I felt were critical for creating and maintaining good relations with minority nationalities, especially Tibetans. During the conversation, time and again he would nod his head in agreement. He did not once say "no" or indicate disagreement.