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Appetite for education in contemporary Asia

Kenneth Orr, editor

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Reflections on feeding a multitude

Kenneth Orr

The appetite for education is surely voracious, and a first reading of the papers in this volume would suggest that it is universal. That is not altogether so. In a study which got very much closer to one segment of a society than was possible or appropriate for any of these papers, Pearse investigated the demand for religious schools among Muslim farmers in one or two districts of Java.¹ He found that few of the poorest demand education (as Freire has reminded us in discussing other places, the very poor rarely demand anything.²) Rather, demand first comes from those whose wealth is just a little greater: economic levels must first rise, and thereafter educational aspirations follow them. This relates to another finding from Pearse's study: that in areas of closer settlement, where the supply of schools is better, the demand is higher. This suggests that education is not, as planners are hopefully inclined to assume, a basic human need, capable of being met and satisfied. It is an appetite which doth grow by what it feeds on. And it is growing in Asia today into a monstrous maw prepared to gulp down 30, 40, 50 per cent of the expenditure of governments which can ill-afford it. Fortunate is the government (like Malaysia's) which can see a clear and positive relationship between the provision of greater educational facilities and an increase in economic growth. Even there, as Martin Rudner points out, the relationship is by no means always an exact one; but at least

¹ R. Pearse, 'The prediction of private demand for education: an Indonesian case-study'. Pearse's paper was included in the series given at the Melbourne conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, out of which this volume was born. Unfortunately, he was unable, owing to other commitments, to rewrite his material to suit the more macroscopic perspective of this volume.

² Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972, and elsewhere.

the two processes are moving in the same direction. What advice should be given to governments which experience a phenomenal growth in the demand for education, in the context of an economy which moves virtually not at all, where there is neither a growth of resources to pay for more school buildings and teachers, nor an extension of job opportunities for the products of the system when they graduate from it?

Some dilemma of this kind faces planners in a number of the societies represented in this volume. They are faced with two kinds of pressures which make it extremely hard for them to respond with creative imagination to the situation of rising demand. One of these pressures is that adumbrated above: the indefinite expansion of the appetite as it is provided for. Those persons who for the first time in their family history now go to primary school will in twenty years' time be demanding at least secondary schooling for their children; and that level of provision will be regarded as inadequate when they in their turn have children of an age to be schooled. There is something of a nightmare quality about this expansion of expectation which few of the social legislators of the early days of independence seem to have recognized. If only, they proclaimed, we can give to every child his right to be effectively literate and numerate, we shall have liberated him from the age-old bonds of ignorance. What they did not proclaim, and indeed seem not to have seen, was that they would give him a whole new set of expectations which would in time grow into social and political demand.

The other pressure which restricts the flexibility of planners' responses to the demands made on them is that of a suitable diet for those whose appetite is to be satisfied. In this respect their own experience is, naturally but frighteningly, prescriptive. As Robert Newman and Judith Kapferer point out, those who wield power, be they bureaucrats or politicians, tend to be products of the system as it has stood until the present. They are an elite of persons who are educated, and who regard the education which produced them as being suitable for their children, and for the children of their neighbours and friends. They recognize that there are just not enough resources to keep up this level and quality outside the metropolis to the surrounding countryside and still less to regions beyond. But any diminution they see in terms of the same kind of curriculum, taught to larger classes, maybe, by less competent teachers, in poorer buildings, with fewer books or other equipment. The soup will be the same recipe, but there will be more

water in it. This surely is the reason why Basic Education 'failed' in India: it was never given half a chance by a body of teachers and civil servants who were determined to keep their children's hands clean. This is the reason that Ceylonese governments of 1957 and after moved to change the literary, clerical, English education purveyed in the schools to a literary, clerical Sinhalese education: the mother tongue of the majority community was to replace the language of the imperial power, but the curriculum was to remain geared to the traditional end of producing clerks and lawyers and teachers. This surely is the reason why through all the slogan-ridden anti-colonialism of Guided Democracy in Indonesia, and on into a period which proclaimed itself by contrast to be a model of economic and social sanity, a veritable new order, there has been no real change from the heavy Dutch emphasis on bookish, literary, fact-ridden teaching in that country. Indeed, as Phillip Jones points out, there have been no lack of persons in high places in China who would if they could have done the same there. If in the passage of time the change of direction represented by the watershed of the Cultural Revolution proves to have been a permanent one, the educational policies of Mao Tse-tung may be among his most lasting and most remarkable monuments.

Decision-makers have of course not usually to cope with the consequences of their own decisions, but with those of their predecessors. Not many governments which decide to double the secondary school enrolment in the next five years are in power ten to 15 years later when the demand for clerical employment escalates. So why not give what today's citizenry wants? There are plenty of warning signs for those who too casually ignore such requests. One of the themes which runs through several of the papers is the danger of ignoring or frustrating widely-held educational aspirations. School in India is the road to a good job, one free of manual labour. Any politician therefore seeking re-election has for decades been able to increase his chances enormously if he can point to a clutch of high schools or a tertiary college established in the electorate while he has been in the legislature. Much the same could be said of Sri Lanka. In the countries in Southeast Asia where the Chinese settled in substantial numbers, Christine Inglis describes how governments either moved very slowly as in Malaysia or waited till the time when the Chinese community was a very small and powerless minority as in the Philippines, or was caught between the pressures of political suspicion and economic envy as in Indonesia, before they restricted their

support for or tolerance of ethnic schools. And if the government is a very clear-headed one, and recognizes that what the articulate rising middle class and substantial peasantry want is not what is good for technological expansion or agricultural development, then what?

It is at this point of course that the example of China is both sharp and salutary. As Phillip Jones has clearly indicated, there have been a wide variety of far-reaching reforms and innovations in educational practice since the reaffirmation of the mass line following the Cultural Revolution. These have included such unconventional measures as shortening the period of schooling, and integrating the curriculum with productive labour, with social investigation, with scientific experiment; as insisting on the self-conscious politicization of those engaged in education at all levels, teachers and students alike. That in itself might not be remarkable if we were talking of a highly centralized state like that in the USSR; but this has occurred in a society which seems to lack secret police and detention camps, and at the same time as deliberate moves are being made to decentralize educational decision-making. China, indeed, poses a number of challenges to our assumptions about the nature of the educational process in a developing society. Some of these deserve to be pondered.³

Do we have to regard the aim of high levels of technical skill as ruling out the possibility of training youngsters who will be willing to work with their hands? The most influential body of development thinkers of the last 20 years has seen the growth of secondary industry, and of urbanization, as being inevitable and proper means to the kind of prosperity enjoyed in the west. Malaysia has been economically lucky during this period, and the western model of development has proved fairly workable. The same cannot be said of Indonesia or India or Pakistan or Sri Lanka or several other countries, over-supplied with engineers and under-supplied with workshop technicians.

³In posing these questions, I am of course begging others concerning the capacity of governments with very different traditions of political legitimacy to work far-flung radical change on the basis of metropolitan edict. Nonetheless it seems to me that the cards were stacked more discouragingly against real educational change in China in 1950 than they were in, say, Indonesia or the Philippines or Thailand. If one subscribes to anything less than a total social determinism, then offers of models for emulation are appropriate.

Another issue which the Chinese experience makes plain is: do we have to regard technical training and an acceptable degree of moral socialization as mutually exclusive? Both Barend Terwiel and Robert Newman tell of parents who earnestly hope that the process of schooling will help their children to grow up to be persons deserving of moral approbation, behaving with civilized propriety. The extent to which they will not be disappointed depends of course a great deal on the emotional quality of family life and the encompassing influence of the community in which the young grow to maturity. Nonetheless, the school can complement the process or undermine it. A preoccupation with machinery, with the manipulation of an objective world of physical or economic forces, can readily reduce the capacity of the educand to grow in the range and subtlety of his response to human beings. It can make him an uncritical citizen, who cannot see the political process in any terms except those of authoritarian control by a military oligarchy. It can bind and restrict rather than liberate his spirit.

Do we have to accept that the educational process will remain an instrument of the urban elite, a means of making everyone else in the country into clerks or dropouts with a sense of failure? Do teachers necessarily and always have to reflect the status values of the urban elite? The paper by Lambert Kelabora and Kenneth Orr indicates something of the enormous effort that has been made since Indonesia achieved independence to extend education from the urban centres of Java to the furthest islands of the archipelago. And in the light of that story it is appropriate to ask whether the children in Dyak longhouses in the centre of Kalimantan and those of Minangkabau villages in Western Sumatra really ought to be following exactly a syllabus designed by educationists in Jakarta for the children of that city, in the hope that one day a tiny proportion of them will gain a position in the bureaucracy of the metropolis. Universal education ought to have effects which are nourishing and positive in the lives of those who remain in their birthplace and follow the trade of their fathers. It would be presumptuous to imply that the Dyak and Minangkabau children who presently remain are in no wise enriched by their years in the schools. But one of the ingredients of their diet has been a belief in the superiority of urban occupations and life-styles, and for many this becomes an addiction by the time they have completed their formal education.

It would be foolish, of course, to imply that nothing of the kind happens in contemporary China. Jones makes the apt observation that 'the appetite for education should be viewed in terms of the frustration of educational aspirations as well as of their fulfilment'. There seems little doubt that there are a considerable number of frustrated young people in China's communes today, aching to get access to the skilled occupations which they thought the opening up of opportunities for rural schooling would bring to them. But at least the official intention of the school system, and the efforts of its more devoted employees, has been directed to relieving them of such illusions, and to helping them to accept rural life as worthwhile in itself. It has been directed to helping them both to work with their hands and to think creatively, to be both technically proficient and politically alert, and to apply these developed skills willingly where they are. In these and other ways, it is providing an imaginatively positive alternative to the western model. Asian educationists who are looking for ways and means of satisfying the appetite for education without producing overfed and indolent city gluttons on the one hand and undernourished rural starvelings on the other could well learn some wisdom from studying it.

Chapter 2

India's educational split

Robert Newman

It is well known that there is a vast demand for education in India. No research is necessary to establish this, no papers need be written to prove it. The continued rush from degree to degree, the continued clamour for more educational opportunity despite the widely-known difficulties graduates have in getting jobs, is proof enough. There are a great number of statistics available. For example, in 1951 there were 209,671 primary schools, in 1961, 330,304. In 1951 there were 20,884 secondary schools, in 1960, 66,916. In 1950 there were 27 universities, today there are 96. (Keay and Karve 1964:214, 217, 220 and Paxton 1975:338). Since Independence, India's educational facilities have been expanded often faster than planners would have liked. Between 1947 and 1974 100 degree-granting institutions in engineering and technology were established (Paxton 1975:338). India was relatively poor in scientists and engineers at the time of Independence so such people could command good positions. The demand for appropriate educational facilities was irresistible. They were created and now large numbers of Indian engineers or scientists are unemployed, working as clerks or bus conductors, or overseas. The Five Year Plans had anticipated a more moderate approach. On the other hand, outside of technical, secondary and university education, expansion has still fallen short of the original targets. One target was universal education up to age 14 by 1960. In 1965 only 69 per cent of the 6-9 age group were in school and only 35 per cent of the age group 10-12 (Naik 1968:13). The population explosion has defeated even the herculean efforts of the Indian government. Figures on this great expansion in pupil and teacher numbers, expense involved, or types of school extant might be offered as additional evidence, but I think we would not be much wiser about the more important aspect of education in India. I refer to the quality of education. Measurement of school or pupil numbers in order to understand education is rather like measuring culture by counting bookshops and cinemas. Trying

to bring schools to as many Indians as possible has meant that qualitative improvements in education have been neglected. The basic style of education, inherited from the colonial period, has remained unchanged. This style, as Myrdal asserts over and over, presents school as an escape from manual labour. Most Indians perceive of education as the road to a good job, a better life, a more dignified existence.

The guru and the schoolmaster

The basic theme of this paper is that, whereas Indian society once had a balanced system of education, catering to both practical and spiritual or moral requirements, it no longer does. There is no doubt that traditionally the majority of the Indian population never benefited from any sort of formal education at all. What I propose to do is examine the two sorts of formal education that did exist and show that the former balance between moral and practical training has been disrupted, much to India's loss. The emphasis on practical training at the expense of moral or ideological education has cost India dearly.

The two traditional styles of education differed in style and intent, serving different functions in Indian society. One was centred around the *pathshālā*, a basically secular school usually sponsored by a particular caste, where children learned some reading, writing and arithmetic plus any special skill needed in the conduct of their traditional occupation. Since most such schools were sponsored by merchant or administrative castes, the special knowledge most commonly involved was account-keeping. *Pathshālās* were located in large villages, towns and cities. Their teachers were mere employees, often poorly paid, of varied caste, sometimes even of lower castes. Pupils were instructed in the regional vernacular. Memorization through repetitive chanting of lessons was the traditional method of teaching. Equipment was very basic. This was education as practical training for a job or general preparation for administrative tasks. Through these institutions a tradition of non-religious schools with non-Brahmin teachers was established. Such teachers would not have been accorded the respect and prestige of a guru. The village schools of modern India are surely the direct descendants of such *pathshālās* in tone and style. The position of modern teachers is at least in part influenced by this traditional schoolmaster role.

The second kind of education was centred around the guru. It differed from the first in style, personnel and content except for the use of memorization. The guru was a Brahmin, a man steeped in knowledge of the Hindu Great Tradition. He taught among other things knowledge of the sacred books of Hindu wisdom, ritual practice, and Sanskrit grammar. Sanskrit, the language of culture, was used, not the vernaculars. His pupils, mostly Brahmin, were disciples gathered at the feet of a moral and spiritual guide, for the most important education they received was not a 'subject' at all, but the example of the guru himself. The tie between guru and disciple was the basic relationship in this form of traditional Hindu education. Disciples served their teacher in every way, often remaining with him ten years or more. In turn, the guru treated the disciples as children, avoiding harsh punishments and, above all, taking no fees. Brahmin boys learned what they needed to carry on traditional religion, the underlying support of society, its ideological basis. All disciples, Brahmin or not, learned the moral and cultural precepts that were the basis of social order in the traditional Hindu world. In short, if we view the guru-disciple relationship as a drama, then the disciple tried to imbibe the form and inner emotion of the guru's acting rather than merely to memorize particular lines. This sort of education was training in life style and moral values, not preparation for a job. The guru - Brahmin, teacher and moral example - was a revered figure throughout Hindu society; even kings prostrated themselves before famous gurus.

Neglecting Islamic education entirely, we will touch on the subject of British education in India. Content was expanded to include history, geography, English and its literature. If a student pursued his education to the tertiary level, he learned admirable habits of inquiry and debate. A small group of Indians benefited from this new education to the extent that they became, over some 50 years (approx. 1835-85), a new elite. Most people were unable to obtain any education at all. The vernacular *pathshālā* was discredited and abandoned, the guru model had been more ideal than real for centuries. The new elite began as a group of social reformers with ties to the colonial bureaucratic structure. The difficulties of social reform without political power led to the eventual demand for their greater participation within the framework of the Raj (see Heimsath 1964). Grudgingly but increasingly, the British admitted the elite to positions of responsibility, always a step behind Indian demands. Respect and a comfortable life style

accompanied the new positions. On the lower level of clerks, private assistants and factotums, the situation was similar. British education, without a doubt, led to security, comfort, or at very least, a dignified life style, free from manual labour. Except for those lucky enough to study in Britain, Indians who received British education did not enter new and unexplored territory. The emphasis was still on memorization; only the things to be memorized had changed. English was substituted for Persian or the vernacular. British education in India was very much in the *pathshālā* tradition. The skills imparted were academic and clerical, with rare professional exceptions. British commissions often advised that more technical and vocational education was needed. Their suggestions were rarely heeded - 'a fact that bears witness to the dead hand of an established institutional situation, backed by vested interests' (Myrdal 1968:1642). Schoolteachers, lacking prestige both in England (see Shils 1969 and Gilbert 1972) and in the secular Indian tradition, remained poorly paid employees. Moral or ideological education did not exist in formal terms. There was no trace of the balance between practical and moral education that had existed in traditional society. The new elite was political and economic rather than moral or spiritual. Colonial education reflected their concerns as equally their concerns reflected colonial education. Major educational debates as early as the turn of the century centred around expansion and Indianization of curriculum and administration - controversies concerning a bigger slice of the pie.

Gandhi's great appeal to the Indian masses was the moral and spiritual quality of his leadership. His attempt to revitalize traditional moral values with an infusion of social ethics failed. After Gandhi's death there was no one who would even attempt such a thing and no one who could assume such a position of leadership. His example withered and was discredited because it failed to answer the pressing questions of economic development and of Hindu-Muslim conflict. The British-trained elite then in power was vaguely committed to a form of socialism and to bettering the lot of the people. Their preferences for exhortation rather than example and for a literary education as a road to a good job rather than practical training and hard labour have also failed to solve India's problems. Indian education has produced an elite out of touch with the masses, intent on preserving its privileges, and unprepared for social change. The elite is inherently unable to arrive at Indian

solutions for Indian problems because of the nature of its education. The nature of the demand for education in India, then, is a demand for access to jobs, power and dignity. Education continues in the *pathshālā* tradition, though now it would be more correct to call it class-based rather than caste-based.

Lack of a strong ideology is still an ideology

The Congress Party, vehicle of Indian elite ambitions, achieved its main goal in 1947. Since then, despite socialist verbiage and sentiments concerning a better life for India's millions, despite successes in several areas - the expansion of educational facilities for one - most changes the Congress governments have presided over have benefited an urban-rural elite. The masses have been left out. I argue that the political decisions taken by the Congress Party stem from the world view or value system of the people who run it. This value system has been largely created by a combination of western education with traditional, conservative social and economic patterns. The result has been policies of pragmatism within the status quo. To illustrate my points I will briefly discuss four political decisions.

Gandhi's system of Basic Education contained many ideas from Dewey, Pestalozzi and Tolstoy. It was education centred around a craft. Together with a specific skill, children would learn the dignity of labour. Basic Education would be a means of changing attitudes, getting away from the old literary education, and still strengthening certain desirable aspects of traditional culture. Gandhi also believed it would vitalize villages by encouraging production and self-sufficiency. It was an idealistic plan which did not answer the questions of who was going to run the huge nation, become professionals, manage trade and commerce, or maintain law and order. Nevertheless, Basic Education was adopted by most states in the brief home rule period in 1937. After Independence, again most states opted for Basic Education. The guidelines were set out. 'Education is to be imparted through some craft or productive work which should provide the nucleus of all other instruction provided in the school. Craft is not merely another subject added to the curriculum ... There is no question of just fitting it into the old system. Craft work has to inspire our entire educational program, ...' (Bhatia 1954:36). Gandhi wanted his teachers to be on the guru model, moral examples inspired by service, not salary. Such men would

build character. But the system involving a guru teaching crafts and manual labour was not to eventuate. Given that there were few craft teachers and many of the literary variety, that the government began to expand education immediately and had to use all available teachers, and that the elite were not about to turn their schools over to Basic Education, the result was predictable. Everyone wanted to send their children along the road to a good job. 'Another subject added to the curriculum' is precisely what craft education became. By the early 1960s government planners had abandoned Basic Education. Today, crafts continue (at least in Uttar Pradesh) as one subject of many and primary schools are still referred to as Junior and Senior Basic Schools. Most schools now are simply 'oriented' towards the Basic Education pattern (Myrdal 1968:1738). Indian schools remain firmly in the colonial mould, this one attempt at innovation and change having come to a sad end. If Indian leaders had not been divorced from Indian conditions, a more realistic sort of education, for universal application, might have been instituted. Basic Education was, after all, a romantic attempt to foist a separate curriculum on the rural masses while the elite monopolized the route to power.

The Block Development program is the organizational form India chose in 1952 to spread agricultural techniques and social welfare throughout the country. By 1963 nearly every part of the country was included in one of about 5,000 blocks. The general aims of Block Development are development overall through economic development, social welfare and political participation. The changes brought by the Green Revolution have been effected through this program.

It is interesting to examine the beginnings of Block Development. There were a number of previous models including idealistic projects directed by Gandhi, Tagore, and some Indians in Bihar (of which latter we have a description in a book with a very revealing title, *Model Village Republics* [Roy 1948]). Other projects were run by Americans and Britons. The immediate forerunner was Albert Mayer's Etawah project in Uttar Pradesh. This led to the setting up of 55 intensive development community projects which in turn led to the India-wide Block Development program. I argue here that the educational bias of the Indian elite, the long-held preference or admiration, if you like, for western models and ideas, was behind this choice. The elite opted for an American-designed model, based on the American agricultural extension program in the rural United

States and on American experience in India. The United States funded the original 55-project program to the tune of \$50 million under the Indo-American Technical Cooperation Fund. The Ford Foundation also contributed much money and personnel. These facts are emphasized here not to show some sort of underhand American involvement, but to underline the western orientation and approach of India's ruling elite to the nation's problems. They relied on foreigners to tell them what their countrymen needed. The results of this approach, after 25 years, are to have created a new rural well-to-do class via the Green Revolution. Many techniques and kinds of information have been spread but their use is beyond the means of most Indian farmers. A.R. Desai asks the pertinent question, 'How can a program which essentially supports the upper strata of the rural population and which primarily benefits this minority in strengthening it institutionally, be called a Community Development Program? The very name, to say the least, is deceptive' (Desai 1969: 621).

Panchayati Raj refers to 'rule by *pañchāyat*', the *pañchāyat* being a small body of governing elders in traditional village society. The idea of *Panchayati Raj* was linked to Block Development and had the same overtones of western preferences and misunderstanding of Indian society. The village *pañchāyat* was to be elected by all adult villagers. The members of all the village *pañchāyats* would elect a Block-wide *pañchāyat samiti* and the *pañchāyat samitis* would elect a district body called the *zila parishad*. The idea was launched in 1959; rather it was imposed from the top. Villagers were to be involved in democratic self-government in a return to the complete romanticism of the 'model village republic' variety. There was no preparation made for this new move, no groundwork of political education. The traditional village leaders, anything but democratic, moved into this new political framework so thoughtfully provided for them by the western-educated elite. 'Inadequate preparation of the large mass of really backward and downtrodden people in securing their due share in powers vested in these institutions has given an opportunity to the local vested interest to perpetuate itself with the aid of new resources provided by the State' (Mehta, in Desai 1969:591). To think that the conservative, powerful traditional leaders would not dominate the new *Panchayati Raj* was extremely unrealistic. To repeat myself, western education did not and still does not prepare the Indian elite to deal with the reality of their own society.

In 1966 the Kothari Commission made an extensive set of recommendations on Indian education. Though there had been a number of such Commissions in the past, this was the first really to talk of changing India's educational program for a truly Indian system of development. The Commission emphasized ten programs which it considered necessary to achieve the desired transformation. Among them were such things as work experience, stress on vocational education, particularly in agriculture, obligatory national or social service, more part-time and own-time education, Common Schools (schools for all children in a community), programs to promote national unity and basic moral, social and spiritual values, and more flexibility in the existing system. There were recommendations on improving quality also, mainly to do with upgrading teachers' pay and conditions. Like most Indian plans this seems excellent and comprehensive. I would argue that it suffers from the same shortcomings as Basic Education, Block Development, and *Panchayati Raj*, that is, it reveals lack of contact with basic social realities in India and fails to be precise in any way as to how the programs should be carried out. J.P. Naik, one of India's foremost educationists and Member-Secretary of the Kothari Commission, holds five things necessary for successful implementation of the Kothari Commission recommendations. These are patriotism, the *swādeshi* spirit ('using Indian methods'), the willingness to work hard and be dedicated, austerity and simplicity, and willingness to share life with the masses (Naik 1968:74). It is very well to call for such qualities to be developed. India does not have a political-economic plan for bringing these things about. So, talented men like Naik must fall back on exhortation and vague calls for the regeneration of political leadership.

The elite has been educated to be 'pragmatic', to blunder through somehow in the fine old British tradition. Job training has taken precedence over the development and propagation of an ideology that can provide the basis for social and institutional change. The Kothari Commission's idea of Common Schools for children of all social statuses in a community is a case in point. It is scheduled to be implemented over 20 years, bringing about a measure of equality in education a mere 39 years after Independence. Naik's exhortation on 'willingness to share life with the masses' is the saddest comment of all. It is too obvious that Indian education is designed to escape sharing life with the masses and Indian society is being directed by those who have escaped. There is no sign that this elite is

going to abandon the status quo. The several political variations of the mid-1970s have minimal relevance to basic change. Lack of a strong ideology is still an ideology.

Moh-māyā kā tyāg and the all-round boy

Over the years the demand for education of a particular kind has led to the creation of a westernized, conservative elite which has taken decisions appropriate to its world view. One might proceed in any number of directions from here in discussing the problems that this presently poses. I have chosen to examine problems created by the continuing split between education for job training and education as a guide to moral and spiritual values. *Pathshālā*-style education reigns supreme in India. The teacher, a paid employee, imparts facts for students to memorize and particularly that narrow set of facts necessary to pass examinations. Village teachers generally have little prestige in the community. The low prestige means that the job attracts low caste, poorly-trained people who cannot find jobs elsewhere. The Hindi use of the English term 'Master' underlines the difference between a schoolteacher and a moral guide. The word has a faintly derisive ring in Hindi and aptly separates 'teachers' from 'gurus'. The Master starts his charges down a road on which most will fall by the wayside. He is not even a successful example of what lies at the end of the road - he too is one of the fallen. For the lucky few who reach tertiary institutions in the cities there are still nearly insurmountable barriers to a comfortable life. Sons and daughters of the elite, with access to top level schools, will snap up all but a very few jobs. Most graduates are still condemned to a life of struggle and insecurity. This situation, obvious to nearly everyone in India, in no way decreases demand. Education, despite grave defects, remains the sole available avenue for the vast majority of Indians.

Many ideals dangle before young eyes, especially in films: 'success', 'love marriage', 'material comfort', the smart young cricket player in sweater and slacks who tops his class and enters the I.A.S. (Indian Administrative Service) or becomes a brain surgeon. The key to these is not to be learned from the drama of ordinary Indian education. They are remote and alien roles played in an urban drama most young Indians will hardly see, much less enter. The 'Master-ji' points the way to dissatisfaction, not to realizable models. Most Indians are aware of this, yet

there is no alternative to the status quo. Though gurus are exceedingly scarce in Indian society, the cultural model of the guru remains strong. The real teacher should be a guru, a moral example, a man of philosophical understanding. Indians carry this model in their heads, acquired from a multitude of traditional sources. The village teacher is constantly measured against this ideal and found wanting. As Shils and Gilbert point out, even university professors are measured by the guru model (Shils 1969; Gilbert 1972). Modern Indian education is merely the route to a job for a selected number of people. It is not the area in which Indians learn what is valuable in life. Standards of beauty and truth are imbibed elsewhere. No one finds the answers to the ancient, universal questions of man in a *pathshālā*.

What sort of things are learned outside school?

The term *moh-māyā kā tyāg* means in Hindi 'resignation from the material illusions of the world'. Such a quality in a person is deeply admired. Men like Mahatma Gandhi and Vinobha Bhave have this quality. Most Indians, like most people anywhere, are unable to tear themselves away from materialist-sensory attachments. But a guru, the moral example, has or is *moh-māyā kā tyāg*. He teaches, he acts without coveting the fruits of his action or being proud of the power of his teaching. He has no use for possessions. He meditates and grapples with the universe within. Another traditional quality that is much admired is *kartavya-prāyantā*, 'knowing one's duty'. This is tied into the whole complex of Hindu values stemming from the need to follow one's *dharma*. As a moral and spiritual example, the ideal man follows his duty without regard for worldly passions. He does not go on strike for more pay; he does not neglect his students by day so as to take them for private tuition by night. He is serious. He has simple tastes. The word *tehzīb* comes from the Arabic. It refers to 'cultured behaviour'. Although this is perhaps a Muslim value, certainly millions of north Indians, Hindu and Muslim alike, admire the sweet, delicate speech and polished manners of a traditionally educated man. Uttar Pradesh villagers are not expert at educational analysis, but many of them will reply when asked that 'nowadays the children do not know *tehzīb* any more'. Men who know *tehzīb* do not spring from the new *pathshālās* where English (often poorly acquired) is the prestige language. Similarly, *taggalūf*, flowery Urdu politeness, is widely admired and now scarcely found.

Such qualities stem from centuries of traditional culture and are identified with men of moral and cultural example. If we return to the drama analogy, these are the things that one learns from the life and attitudes of a wise man. Wise men are encountered in traditional stories, in songs, in the epic plays and dance performances, as well as, rarely, in real life. The closer one comes to taking on aspects of these moral and cultural models, the more respected one becomes. *Moh-māyā kā tyāg*, *kartavya-prāyantā*, *tehzīb*, and *taggaḷūf* have far more emotional drawing power than do the modern ideals of success. Neither is there any doubt that they do not lead to socio-economic advantage. Indians are stuck with a system of education that is producing individuals with neither the admired traditional qualities nor access to desirable jobs. The present system is basically an upper class one that has as its model the schools of a vanishing elite in Britain. Calls for increased vocational and agricultural training by upper class planners are not really for 'us' but from 'them'. The traditional values are not ones that will lead to the improved living standards most people want. There is a glaring lack of direction here, yet those in charge of finding a way out of the situation are not in touch with Indian reality and are not inclined to give up their privileged position. This is the basic problem as I see it. Where does Indian education go from here?

The guru style of Indian education, source of moral and cultural values and guidance, is presently totally out-balanced by the *pathshālā* tradition of job training. The Indian masses are still emotionally attached to cultural ideals that differ widely from those found in the school system. Because education, related to Indian culture or not, is the chief way out of poverty, there has been and continues to be a vast demand for schooling in India, despite widespread unemployment among the educated. As was noted in the first line of the paper, this is well known. The question is one of improving educational quality; to channel the vast educational demand into more productive and nationally meaningful lines. To quote a Vietnamese writer (Nguyen 1974:132):

Underdeveloped countries need first and foremost an ideology of progress which is able to mobilize, organize, and educate their people. The worse enemy of progress is any kind of excessive religious belief which paralyzes the common people. No less pernicious are the use of empiricism and short-sighted solutions which inhibit the development of a broader outlook.

The human spirit is not nourished on ingenious stratagems and clever propositions.

Hinduism is not excessive today; it does not paralyse the common people. Short-sighted solutions are rife. The Indian upper class has relied on idealistic, Gandhian-socialist preaching, elitist education and foreign example rather than a determined combination of theory and performance. Leaders of a real movement for social change must be willing to share life with the masses. India's leaders are not. The education system reflects this unwillingness. If an ideology could be found, springing at least partly from Indian traditions, propagated by and for Indians, accompanied by wideranging organizational efforts at the mass level, all aimed at instilling ideals of social consciousness and social justice, then perhaps there could be a return to a balanced system of education. Theory, ideals and ethical guidance are as important as job training. The Indian upper class has relied on idealistic preaching and elitist education rather than on a determined combination of theory and performance. In the last 20 years the mass of rural Indians has been proved willing to try new techniques and new ideas if they work. Sadly, education has not offered them any new moral or ideological guidelines that would provide a reasonable system of propositions on which to base the country's future.

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Chapter 3

The demand for education in Sri Lanka: antecedents and consequences¹

Judith Kapferer

The April 1971 insurgency in Sri Lanka provides an illuminating case study of the contradictions inherent in the notion of equality of educational opportunity, and as such has relevance for educational thinking in countries quite different in other ways, whether they have underdeveloped or industrial economies. The basic contradiction which I propose to explore here is one that the proponents of the equality of opportunity ideology cannot or will not recognize: that inequality in education is founded on and inseparable from inequality in other societal institutions - economic, legal, religious, familial and so on. Fundamental to the analysis which follows is the Frank (1966) thesis of devolving exploitation from metropolis to national capital to rural hinterland; this is a thesis well illustrated by the historical development of Sri Lanka as an arena of colonial and imperial enterprise, nowhere more clearly than in the educational institutions of the island, institutions which were 'structured to function as instruments of colonial policy' (Jayaweera 1973:465). As with the rise of the early labour movement in Sri Lanka, contemporary problems in education and social mobility are seen here as being 'a refraction of anti-colonialism, under the guise of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism' (Obeyesekere 1975:255).

A further basic assumption made in this paper is that the present demand for education in Sri Lanka is broadly similar, in degree and kind, to that expressed in more industrialized western countries and in other underdeveloped countries. That is, the demand for schooling and for formal academic training at increasingly higher levels is voracious, on the part of both employers, and future employees, teachers

¹I am grateful for the helpful comments of Bruce Kapferer and Michael Roberts of the University of Adelaide in preparing this version of my paper for publication.

and students, parents and children. But the demand for education on the other hand is the prerogative only of those few who do not require certificates and diplomas for employment purposes (see Dore 1976).

The demand for schooling is, moreover, demand structured and manipulated by the ruling group, whose ideological and social concern has ever been to maintain itself in power. Post-independence reforms in education (the introduction of *Swabhasa*,² efforts to achieve parity for rural schools, the introduction of pre-vocational studies) have had a nationalist flavour, as perceived and orchestrated by the elite, while masking the continuing social differentiating factors of caste and class, ethnicity and religion. At the same time such reforms had a strong populist appeal, being anti-privilege in tone and specific in demand. But while the appeal to nationalist values, often (especially before 1948) couched in terms of anti-British sentiment, and the appeal to popular aspirations in the 1950s, increases the expectation of upward social mobility, the social economic system progressively denies the opportunity for mobility through education.

It is my purpose here to elucidate those factors which produce the ideology of equality of opportunity and social mobility through education, and to suggest possible reasons for its failure in application. That education, even 'equal' education, does not produce social mobility in a significant amount has been demonstrated many times, and the explanation is most usually seen to be a function of social class and economic disparities as differentiating factors in the wider society. The corollary of this explanation is that a reduction in the salience of such differentiating factors will allow the educational system more nearly to achieve its stated aims. But because this argument denies that educational planning, and the organization of education itself, is the product of the ruling elite, which seeks to reproduce and further develop itself in its own terms, it is argued here that this will not be the case. What would be required to attain equality of educational opportunity would be the abolition of social class and economic differences, not a mere reduction. In Sri Lanka as elsewhere in the third world, many ameliorative measures are planned, but few are put into practice. Rather, politicians and bureaucrats fall into what Obeyesekere calls '*picayunism*', an overwhelming preoccupation with trivia, irrelevancies,

²The Sinhala vernacular.

elaborate paper plans, and social legislation that cannot be implemented' (1974:384). Thus, the creation and maintenance of a false consciousness of the social value of education through the construction and orchestration of mobility ideologies, result in an acceptance by the masses of the ruling group's educational aims, and thereby of the existing social class system.

Two dimensions of the demand for education in Sri Lanka have been isolated here: the rural/urban and the academic/vocational. For the purposes of this paper I propose to treat these categories as discrete, though I have argued elsewhere (1976) that they are continuous. I shall do this in order more clearly to demonstrate the economic and political effects of the ever-growing demand for an education which is urban-based and highly academic. At the same time it will be necessary to confine our attention to these dimensions. Though religion, caste and ethnicity are important factors in the provision and quality of education, and though they have had, and continue to have, highly significant effects on social mobility in Sri Lanka, these elements have been dealt with elsewhere, particularly in the case of religion and the rise of nationalism (see, for example, Malalgoda 1974; Smith 1974; Wickremeratne 1969; Ames 1967). Though I do not wish to play down the importance of religious affiliation, and specifically Buddhism, in the struggle for equality of educational opportunity and its role in the nationalist movement, I wish to emphasize here the social and political implications of the demand for education in Sri Lanka. The 1971 insurgency, involving so greatly as it did relatively deprived rural youth, is considered here as a political statement rather than as a religious or nationalist uprising.

Since colonial times preferred schooling has been that made available to a tiny elite, and offered in the capital. At the time of greatest missionary influence, education in certain major provincial towns, principally Jaffna in the north, Galle in the south and Kandy in the highlands was also considered to be of particular advantage. The very highest educational rewards usually went, throughout the colonial period, to those who concluded their education and training abroad, either in Holland, India or Britain (Ruberu 1962, *passim*). This movement, from the village to the provincial town, to the capital and thence to the colonial metropolis, is still discernible today in education as in employment. However, the final step, education in the

metropolis, is once again, because of economic exigencies, restricted to a very small group which has relatives and/or financial reserves abroad - i.e. the urban upper middle classes. As I have demonstrated elsewhere (1976), movement in the opposite direction, to what the Ministry of Education actually refers to as 'difficult areas' is deplored, particularly by teachers, who will use all the resources at their command to avoid being posted to such rural areas as Polonnaruwa and Amparai. Thus it is those teachers who lack political power and/or ambition, who are often themselves of rural background, who have charge of rural children. Indeed, those who request postings in areas such as these (and a small number always does) usually do so because these areas are their home and they wish to join their relatives - they are very often women with Arts degrees.

Secondary schools available to rural children are usually of two types: a crowded high school in a market town, or (more rarely and very selectively) a central school. In terms of facilities and plant, of teacher-pupil ratios and measured academic results, the central schools are far superior to the rural high schools (Kapferer 1975), and are virtually the only avenue to higher education open to rural children of peasant or working-class background. Furthermore, entry to central schools is based on a meritocratic selection test, which purports to measure the potential of the child to benefit from this superior schooling.

Urban children, on the other hand, may attend a number of schools. In theory, all urban high schools are zoned, but for those with money and influence (or, indeed, cunning),³ this is not an insuperable barrier to attendance at a school with prestige - as in fact it is not in other countries with zoned schools. Parents may purchase or rent a house in the preferred area, or their children may reside with relatives whose address is suitable. The most favoured schools (often ex-independent schools) also have boarding facilities for rural children and those on scholarship. Children attending urban high schools have the obvious educational advantages of closer contact with the worlds of commerce, industry and politics, as well as enjoying a wider variety of educational experience, facilities and role models.

Education in Sri Lanka is dominated by the expressed need of students both rural and urban, male and female, to

³ Twenty-three boys at an elite Columbo school were found in 1971 to have the same false address - a small shed in a vacant lot.

obtain the highest possible paper qualifications - often in order to fill fairly menial positions. Thus the university is the goal of all ambitious children, often regardless of teachers' opinion of their capacity.

As Dore (1976) has demonstrated, this 'diploma disease' is not confined to Sri Lanka, but exists in other developing countries. I would add that it is increasingly true of industrialized societies, where it is becoming daily less surprising to find botanists employed as gardeners or geologists and physicists driving garbage trucks, particularly in times of economic recession and rising general unemployment.

Aspirations and expectations

The following data on aspirations and expectations of school children in Sri Lanka were obtained by means of an occupational prestige survey conducted in four southern province schools in 1972. Ninth and twelfth grade children were asked:

(a) If you could have any job at all that you wanted, regardless of whether you think you could handle it or not, what would it be?

(b) Now, what job do you actually expect to be doing ten years from now? What job do you think you will be doing?

The sample is skewed in some ways: for example, there were no Tamil children in the group surveyed, and numbers in some classes were too small to be representative. Nevertheless the figures do demonstrate some very obvious trends. At the same time, a few apparently anomalous results have been recorded. The explanation for these is, I think, students' (and especially rural students') incapacity to distinguish clearly between occupations deemed to be 'good' and prestigious. Over 90 per cent of respondents aspired to, and expected to attain, careers in teaching, medicine, accountancy, engineering, clerical work and nursing. Thus the figures do show clearly the desire for a highly academic education, usually in the sciences, and the preference for careers which require formal tertiary training.

The majority of Grade IX boys aspired to careers in accountancy, medicine and engineering. Grade IX girls gave the greatest preference to careers in teaching and medicine. However, in terms of actual expectations, the majority of both boys and girls expected to become teachers. Still, 21 boys expected to become accountants, and 17 girls expected

Table 1Aspirations of Grade IX and XII children, rural and urban

Teaching	81
Medicine	68
Engineering	66
Accountancy	25
Nursing	23
Clerical work	15
Law	6
Politics (M.P.)	6
Book keeping/Stenography	4
Business	3
Science	3
Don't know	1
Other*	<u>11</u>
Total	<u>312</u>

* Bank manager, railway worker, pilot, agriculture inspector, school inspector, ambassador, radio announcer, army, public health inspector, physiotherapist, builder.

Table 2Expectations of Grade IX and XII children, rural and urban

Teaching	118 (+)
Medicine	45 (-)
Accountancy	26
Clerical work	23 (+)
Engineering	20 (-)
Nursing	19 (-)
Law	9 (+)
Business	9 (+)
Farming	6 (+)
Science	5 (+)
Book keeping/Stenography	5
Politics	3 (-)
Don't know	1
Other*	<u>23</u>
	<u>312</u>

* Student, coach, driver, writer, builder, public health inspector, railway worker, planter, port inspector, school inspector, actor.

Table 3

Aspirations and expectations of urban male and female
Grade IX students (expectations shown in parenthesis)

	Boys	Girls
Accountancy	22 (21)	- -
Medicine	20 (-)	15 (17)
Engineering	19 (-)	2 (8)
Teaching	4 (22)	33 (19)
Other	7	16
	N = 72	N = 66

to become doctors. Eight of the 17 girls who expected to become doctors did not originally aspire to careers in medicine. Though 15 girls originally had aspirations to medical careers, only nine of these actually expected to become doctors. Of the other six, two expected to become engineers, the others a clerk, a teacher, a scientist and a member of Parliament. The one boy who did not expect to reach his goal of accountancy expected to go into business. None of the boys expected to fulfil their ambitions in medicine or engineering, but instead they expected to become teachers (nine originally medicine, nine originally engineering); farmers (three originally medicine, one originally engineering), students (3, 2); coaches (2, 1); businessmen (1, 2). The others who had hoped to become doctors expected to become an accountant and a driver. Of the aspirant engineers, the remainder expected to become clerks (2, a lawyer and a planter.

On the whole, boys' aspirations and expectations appear to be more realistic than those of girls. Of the eight boys on scholarships, (a) three aspired to medicine, and (b) five to engineering. Their expectations were (a) driver, teacher, businessman, and (b) law (1) and teaching (4). Perhaps the boy who expected to become a driver was being unduly pessimistic, given his academic ability, but on the other hand it is possible that the one who expected to become a lawyer was being overly optimistic, given his lack of powerful connections, though his attendance at a renowned school might help to overcome this very real obstacle.

Table 4

Aspirations and expectations of male and female rural and urban Grade XII children (expectations shown in parenthesis)

	Urban	Rural
Medicine	2 (-)	18 (18)
Teaching	3 (29)	26 (23)
Engineering	36 (2)	5 (4)
Clerical work	4 (11)	4 (4)
Other	<u>10 (13)</u>	<u>6 (10)</u>
	<u>N = 55</u>	<u>N = 59</u>

Thirty-six urban pupils aspired to careers as engineers, with clerk (4) the second most popular choice. Of the rural children, 26 aspired to careers in teaching, and 18 in medicine. In terms of expectations, however, 29 urban children expected to become teachers, and eleven clerks. Eighteen rural children expected to become doctors, and 23 teachers.

The disjunction between aspirations and expectations may best be discussed in terms of these four occupations, bearing in mind always that the disjunction is greater for urban than for rural children.

1. Medicine. Of the 18 rural children who expected to become doctors, 17 had originally had aspirations in this direction. The eighteenth had aspired to a career in the armed service. The eighteenth medical aspirant expected to become a nurse. The two urban children who had medical aspirations expected to become an accountant and a teacher.

2. Teaching. Twenty-nine urban children expected to become teachers, though only two aspired to do so. One boy who had wanted to become a teacher expected to become a clerk. Of the others with expectations of teaching, 23 wanted to be engineers and the other four had aspired to careers in medicine, law, accountancy and agriculture. These five occupations (engineering, medicine, law, accountancy and agriculture) require extensive tertiary training, and competition for places in courses is keen. These boys are much more likely to obtain places in guru *vidalaya* (teachers' colleges). Of the 23 rural children who expected to become

teachers, 20 aspired to do so. One aspired to medicine, one to a clerical position, and one did not know.

3. Engineering. Although 36 of the urban pupils aspired to careers in engineering, only two actually expected to become engineers. Of the remaining 54, 23 expected to go into business, science and the public service. Of the four rural children who expected to become engineers, three wanted to do so, but one desired a clerical career. Two who aspired to engineering thought they would become lawyers.

4. Clerical. Four urban children who expected to become clerks wanted to do so. Three wanted to be engineers, and one each desired a career in law, accountancy, politics and teaching. Four rural children expected to become clerks and three of these wanted to. The fourth wanted to be a teacher. One who aspired to become a clerk expected to be an engineer.

A perusal of aspirations and expectations in medicine would suggest that urban children are not only more realistic (or pessimistic) about their career chances, but also that few of them actually desire careers in medicine. There are two possible explanations for this: urban children are more aware of the pressure upon university places, while the rural children surveyed here have had their hopes raised by selection for a central school, and by doing well academically in that milieu. They and their teachers are less aware of the obstacles, financial and political, in their path to a career in medicine. For the same reason, it is suggested here, rural children are not as adept at lowering their sights as urban children. A comparison of their aspirations and expectations gives an overall impression of an all-or-nothing approach. This lack of capacity to distinguish one 'good' job from another would serve to explain some of the seemingly anomalous results recorded.

There were few imaginative choices with regard to aspirations, despite careful wording of this question to allow for and encourage flights of fancy. Most respondents cleaved to the obvious, and careers in the arts were never mentioned (see Kapferer 1975:35). There were remarkably few 'don't know' answers. This might well be because of the questionnaire situation in which school children might feel obliged to offer at least some kind of answer. On the other hand, pupils of this age are often asked questions about their ambitions, and because of the enormous competition for places in tertiary courses, must have their sights fairly strictly trained on a particular option from an early age.

Not one respondent merely said he wanted to 'do Arts' or 'read History', though a small number said that they expected to be scientists, or students.

Sowing the wind

We have seen that children in Sri Lanka overwhelmingly demand an academic, highly technological education, principally in applied sciences, despite the fact that many of them recognize that they will have little chance of obtaining university places in these fields, and will have to be content with teaching as a career.⁴ This situation is by no means unusual in more developed western nations, where children, and particularly those of the urban working class, recognize the difficulty of obtaining positions in, for example, the more glamorous fields of scientific research (see e.g. Connell 1972:48; Ford 1969:Chapter 6).

The cultural roots of this demand may be seen as historical and social structural. For four centuries (1590s to 1947) much of Sri Lanka was dominated by European colonial administrators, Portuguese (1590s-1658), Dutch (1658-1796) and British (1802-1947).

The indigenous educational system provided some years of schooling offered by monks in *pirivenas*, and this is commonly thought to be the source of the respect in which teachers are held today, that is, the perceived connection between education and religion, teaching and the gaining of merit. It does seem more likely however that, as the monastic life provided some measure of security in those days, so government employment today fulfils a similar function.

Throughout the Portuguese and Dutch colonial periods education, though supported financially by the state, was controlled by the church. Catholic and Protestant alike agreed that conversion to Christianity was the primary function of education, and to this end parish schools were organized to teach reading and writing in the vernacular. There was also under the Dutch some provision for secondary schooling, and further education in Colombo for high caste children of important government officials.

Like the Portuguese, the Dutch adopted the administrative apparatus of the Sinhalese kings, a system of indirect rule,

⁴For statistics relating to this question, see the work of S. Jayaweera and G. Uswatte Aratchy.

so that in the eighteenth century parish schoolmasters were also administrative officials of the government. The Dutch established, in theory, compulsory full-time schooling to the age of 15, and compulsory part-time schooling for four years after that. Under the British, education became a charge of the government, but was no longer compulsory. 'Orphan houses' in Galle, Trincomalee, Jaffna and Colombo were provided with education of a strongly vocational nature during the early period of British domination, but the purposes of schooling generally remained religious and administrative - that is, further education was directed to the training of some teachers and officials of the administration. Both the Dutch and the British sent some students of high calibre to universities in Europe. By 1831 over 9000 children were being educated in missionary schools, and over 8000 in private, secular schools. Barely 2000 were in attendance at government schools.

Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth, non-Christian and vernacular education languished, despite the fact that almost all government schools taught in the vernacular. The aim of education, as in India, was to create a colonial elite, Ceylonese 'in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect'.⁵ In 1911 there were 771 mostly vernacular government schools in Ceylon, and 1964 grant-aided schools controlled by religious bodies, including a few Buddhist and Hindu schools. There were still 217 private schools, now mainly Buddhist and Hindu (Sumathipala 1968:48). The study of the vernacular languages was not encouraged, despite some protest from eminent teachers of the day: '[Boycotting the mother tongue] cuts off our educated classes from sympathetic relations with, and all opportunities of influencing for good, the vast mass of their countrymen to whom English must ever remain inaccessible'.⁶ Nevertheless, those educated in English at the missionary schools continued to command the most impressive occupations available to Ceylonese at the time.

During the period from the 1920s to the 1940s, increasing pressure from members of the legislative council and from the *Sangha* (Buddhist clergy) resulted in the establishment of state-controlled vernacular education. Such pressure, with its roots in the nineteenth century, was indubitably one of the major reasons for the success of the coalition

⁵T.B. Macaulay, quoted in Sumathipala 1968:9.

⁶F.L. Woodward, quoted in Sumathipala 1968:46.

led by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party in the 1956 elections, and of the United Front Party (a coalition of left-wing socialist parties) in 1970. 'The rise of controversy over the official language in the first decade after independence galvanised communal solidarity and played a major role in the political mobilisation of the rural population' (Kearney and Jiggins 1975:49). Nevertheless, there was much opposition from politicians and Christian bodies to the Education Bill which was enacted in 1947. Throughout the 1950s, the most vexed educational questions still centred on the continued existence of private schools and agitation for increased vernacular teaching, but it was not until 1957 that the official change-over to the *Swabhasa* medium, begun in the early 1950s, was extended to the Senior Secondary level, and government control of assisted schools was not complete until 1965. By 1965, after 20 years of free education, there were 9481 schools in the island, over 8000 of these being administered by the Education Department (Sumathipala 1968:411). A comparison of figures for the University of Ceylon in 1946 and 1965 demonstrates the changes in religious and ethnic backgrounds of students in that time.⁷

Table 5

Religion of University of Ceylon students
as per cent of student population

	1946	1965
Buddhist	42.4	71.0
Hindu	18.5	15.0
Christian	34.8	11.9
Muslim	2.8	2.0
Other	1.5	+

Since 1965 the use of *Swabhasa* has increased and the state has tightened its control over education at all levels, to the extent that only a handful of private schools remains (and these are forbidden to charge fees) and the Sinhala-

⁷ These figures do not include the Universities of Vidyodaya and Vidyalankara, established as Sinhala medium and Buddhist institutions.

Buddhist universities of Vidyalandkara and Vidyodaya, established in the 1960s, have quickly become indistinguishable from the older universities, in terms of administration, ethos and public opinion.

Table 6

Ethnic background of University of Ceylon students,
as per cent of student population

	1946	1965
Sinhala	61.7	78.1
Tamil	29.4	19.1
Muslim	2.8	2.0
Burgher	4.9	.4
Other	1.1	.4

Source: Sumathipala 1968:413.

Reaping the whirlwind

Caste, class, ethnicity and religion have always played an important part in obtaining education in Sri Lanka. At various times it has been necessary to be a Roman Catholic, a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, a Methodist or an Anglican in order to obtain more than the most elementary education. Similarly, only high caste and Burgher (European descended) children were in the nineteenth century enabled to proceed with education beyond the lower secondary level. Caste, although not openly discussed by educationists today, nevertheless still plays an important part in obtaining education, in that the purchase of land and housing, and marriage, is governed by caste membership. This is particularly true in rural areas, which now have a quota of entrants to the universities in an effort to redress the rural-urban imbalance. It seems likely that urban parents will now reverse the trend of rural families' preference for city education, and send their children to live with relatives in the less densely populated areas of the island in an effort to gain university entrance for them.

Past Tamil over-representation in higher education may be traced to the success of the nineteenth-century American Missionary Society in Jaffna and other northern towns, and to the ecological and economic realities of the Northern

Province (see Roberts 1970). From the beginning the American Mission conceived of education in more liberal terms than the Wesleyans, Baptists or Church Missionary Society. Tamil children benefited from an ideal of education which was not confined to the promotion of literacy and Christianity, though these were indeed primary aims of the American Mission. For example, in the nineteenth century the Mission was, partly for economic reasons, more successful in the teaching of English than other missions (Ruberu 1962:168), and English was, until recently, the medium of instruction in the University.

With the rise of Sinhalese nationalism, and the re-establishment of Sinhala as the principal medium in the schools and the University, the disproportionate numbers of Tamils in higher education has waned. Similarly, with the nationalization of the schools, Buddhism has come back into its own as the 'established' religion, and profession of the Buddhist faith is no longer the handicap it once was. Caste and (more particularly) class, because of their relationship to residential zones and access to political and financial power, still have an overwhelming influence on the amount and quality of education available to Ceylonese children.

The demand for education is filtered through these cultural mediators (caste, class, ethnicity and religion) and its nature is changed thereby. No longer is it an amorphous 'appetite' for education, but a concrete demand for an education which will lead to employment which is secure, relatively well paid, and possessing prestige. That is, the products of the educational system demand entry into the social class system at a level commensurate with their qualifications, regardless of class, caste, ethnic and religious affiliations. When, as so often happens, this demand is not met precisely because of these affiliations, reform of the education system is promulgated, while the bases of social stratification remain unchallenged and unchanged - unchallenged, that is, except for the 1971 insurgency.

I intend now to discuss briefly the orchestration of the demand for education by politicians, both foreign and local, by reference to the provision of free compulsory schooling and vocational training.

Schooling has been free in Sri Lanka since 1945 and compulsory in theory for almost as long. However, all schools charge facilities fees each term, and a number of children

need to pay boarding fees, either in school hostels or in lodgings. A sizeable minority of children is not in regular attendance, and most schools are badly overcrowded by western standards. Parents will make considerable financial sacrifices to send their children to school, provide uniforms and equipment and maintain attendance for as long as possible.

The basic shortcoming of the country's educational system is that the academic curricula are framed to cater to the needs of that small minority ... [who] compete for the very small number of jobs available as doctors, engineers, administrators or teachers. Of the others, a small number obtains employment in the clerical, technical and service occupations, while the rest begin the interminable wait for the white collar jobs that are not there. Judging from results it is no exaggeration to say that the returns to educational investment have been negligible, if not negative (Ministry of Planning and Employment 1971:110).

The 1971 Five Year Plan stressed the need for vocational training in the schools, but the implementation of this scheme has been subverted as Dore (1973) has demonstrated - it is pupils and parents who demand an academic education, and academically oriented teachers who provide it. The greatest rewards, in terms of remuneration and prestige, still go to those with university training. The establishment of 'prevocational studies' in the schools, or the teaching of local crafts, often from a very abstract and theoretical point of view, will not alter this situation. The white collar jobs are still demanded, and still not available.

The social returns on investment in education have proved to be 'negligible' precisely because of the massive acceptance of the mobility ideology of the ruling group. Students have learned to aim for the positions with the greatest prestige, and to shun the skilled and semi-skilled trades. That the Ministry of Planning and Employment also sees the effects of educational policy decisions as 'negative', however, indicates a growing awareness on the part of those in power that discontent among the educated unemployed and underemployed has been increasing rapidly.

The classic neo-colonial situation as expounded by Frank (1966) obtains in Sri Lanka today. The material and, most particularly, the human resources of the rural areas are drained into the large towns and the capital, and not

recirculated back into the countryside, partly at least because urban training has little application to rural conditions. Medicine provides an example. Medical students learn to operate sophisticated, expensive and imported equipment which is not available in rural hospitals, hospitals which are sadly overcrowded because of the lack of even relatively simple and inexpensive facilities (Ministry of Planning and Employment 1971:113-19). In many cases the sophisticated equipment is not even really necessary, except, of course, in terms of the prestige and satisfaction of medical practitioners. Similarly, science graduates are expected to teach science in rural schools which often lack either laboratories or equipment (see Kapferer 1975:35). The lack of technical training (and of strong and autonomous trade unions) results in an oversupply of theoretically oriented engineers, and a dearth of, for example, motor mechanics, textile workers and other skilled tradesmen. Such middle level training is neither easily available to, nor desired by school leavers.

The Labour Force Survey of 1968-69 demonstrated geographically the unpopularity of skilled and semi-skilled employment even amongst the unemployed, and the preference for clerical work (Table 7).

Table 7

Distribution of unemployment by employment preferences,
sex and sector (per cent)

Employment preference	Male		Female	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Any employment	43.0	42.7	30.3	26.1
Unskilled jobs	14.9	19.1	4.2	8.8
Semi-skilled or skilled	7.7	7.0	5.9	12.0
Clerical	14.8	13.7	29.8	24.7
Teaching	1.6	2.7	15.8	17.7
Technical or professional	7.1	3.8	4.2	3.6
Unspecified	10.9	11.0	9.8	7.1

Source: Strivastava 1973:56.

'The most important feature of the unemployment situation in Sri Lanka is the predominance of youth, both in urban and rural areas among the unemployed.' Young people aged 15-24 constitute over 75 per cent of the unemployed, and the proportion of women and of the highly educated is increasing (Srivastava 1973:52).

By 1971, with general unemployment increasing in Sri Lanka and the presence of large numbers of educated unemployed (including many university graduates) the political situation in Sri Lanka was perilous, and government measures to alleviate status frustration and unemployment had been ineffectual. In early April, the island was plunged into a widespread uprising, led by the left wing *Janatha Vimukhti Peramuna*, and centred in the North-Central, Western and Southern Provinces, very largely in rural areas. The insurgents were overwhelmingly young, and though many were unemployed (17.5 per cent) and around 40 per cent were underemployed (Obeyesekere 1974:374) sizeable numbers were rural school teachers and other middle-rung administrators - 6.1 per cent of Obeyesekere's sample. The fact that the government recognized the youth of the insurgents is illustrated by their restriction of recruitment into the armed forces to those over 35 years (Halliday 1971:83). The educational background of the suspected insurgents (about 80 per cent of whom had had more than a grade school education) suggests that they were indeed 'a deprived group, but not a depressed group like a lumpen-proletariat' (Obeyesekere 1974:378). Obeyesekere points out that 37 per cent of his sample of suspected insurgents were in school or had recently left school, and it is believed that part of the actual leadership of the JVP was drawn from the universities. The relative deprivation experienced by rural and underemployed youth, who had been led to expect better returns on their educational investments, goes far towards explaining their disenchantment, not only with the government of the day, but with the entire ruling group and the social system it controlled. The uprising was savagely repressed, and 14,000 young people were interned in rural detention camps for 'rehabilitation' (see Kearney and Jiggins 1975:59). Government neglect of rural education, particularly in terms of staffing and facilities, and its failure to devise or implement schemes to train and employ young people, had contributed substantially to the worst civil strife the country had suffered in centuries.

But more than this, the ruling group's own ideology had rebounded upon it. The young rural graduates, products of the very system which was bound to maintain the social

status quo, had learned the lessons of equality of opportunity and mobility through education too well. Arguments about educational policy in Sri Lanka, couched in the rhetoric of ethnic opposition and anti-colonialism, had masked the realities of social class and caste as the major differentiating factors in Ceylonese society in facilitating or impeding social mobility. The successful populist rhetoric of the 1950s, though often expressed in class and communal terms, and though it undoubtedly tapped long-felt rural and peasant frustrations, served further to obscure the educational issue and to propagate the mobility ideology of the ruling group. Such popular arguments failed to overturn, and indeed exacerbated a false consciousness of the value of education and especially of an academic, urban-oriented education, a consciousness which, with the deteriorating economic situation in the island, was becoming increasingly untenable, particularly in the minds of educated rural youth.

During the colonial period, education was demonstrably pragmatic: it was oriented to the development of the governmental bureaucracy, and as such was organized with no thought of equality of opportunity. But with the coming of national independence, equality of educational provision was judged to be a political necessity, and the aims of education became less pragmatic and more firmly ideologically based. The provision of free compulsory education to a high level became a political imperative, despite (or perhaps, because of) the irrelevance of such education to all but a minority of the populace. Thus, although the elite may create the demand for education, it cannot, because it is part of the same process, depress the demand for high status occupations. These demands are two sides of the same coin, and both must be met for the ideology of social mobility through education to remain acceptable. As increasingly the demand for high status work is less and less fulfilled, so disenchantment with the ideology itself becomes more and more obvious, and its original premise, that education will produce upward social mobility, is discredited.

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Chapter 4

The development of a centrally organized education system in Thailand

B.J. Terwiel

In the rural areas of Thailand there has always been a healthy respect for education. This high regard for learning is reflected, for example, in an aspect of one of the ancient ceremonies surrounding the dedication of a new temple. Around the new building eight holes have been dug, and a ninth will be found in the centre, in front of the main Buddha image. Above each hole a big round stone is hung in a rattan sling, and everybody attending the dedication ceremonies uses the occasion to take part in the ritual of gilding the marking stones (phíthii pìdthooŋ lûugnīmìd).¹ After having pressed some goldleaf on at least one of the stones each person drops a packet into the deep hole gaping underneath. In this little packet invariably can be found a needle and thread as well as a booklet and a pencil. It is generally believed that this ritual will affect the immediate rebirth of an individual.² The needle and thread are symbolic of the wish to have a keen intelligence, whilst the paper and writing implement stand for a good education in the next existence.

Traditional education

In former times the Buddhist monks held virtually a monopoly on formal education. This traditional schooling can be divided into elementary schooling which was basically intended to instruct the *degwáds* or 'monastery children' and advanced education which was usually reserved for novices

¹The spelling of Thai words is according to the Haas system.

²It is also believed that a person who has pressed goldleaf on boundary stones on seven separate occasions will have acquired so much of this specific type of merit that after death such a person cannot go to hell, regardless of the evil karma that may have accrued through other deeds.

and the more recently ordained young monks. In effect this system of monkly instruction excluded all persons of the female sex from attending classes.

Elementary education. A *dègwád*, sometimes also known as *lûugsîd* or 'pupil', was a boy, usually aged between six and 14, who was assigned by his parents to serve the monastery. A *dègwád* usually worked for a specific monk, carried food for him, cleaned his dish³ and kept within call so that he could be commanded to perform some task. The boy also worked for the monastery in general, assisted in sweeping the grounds and, when appropriate, had to fill the water containers regularly with fresh water. In return he received food, lodging and instruction. Sometimes an abbot allowed a boy to return home for the night, but in most cases boys lived fulltime in the monastery. Novices were usually between the ages of 14 and 20, whilst the recently ordained monks would often be in their early twenties. Traditionally, almost every young man spent at least one Lenten season⁴ as a fully-fledged member of the Sangha, and this is still a common practice, especially in rural regions.

A hundred years ago in Thailand there was no nationwide educational program, no uniformity of textbooks and no check on teaching standards. Many textbooks consisted merely of collections of syllables and rhymes which were intended for rote learning.⁵ The quality of the education of *dègwáds* as well as of the younger members of the Buddhist order depended to a great extent upon the attitudes towards learning held by the abbot and his senior monks. In the smallest, remotest and most unprepossessing monasteries probably little attention was given to formal instruction. The variable and fluctuating education methods of a small rural monastery have been described by Phya Anuman Rajadhon (1961:78):

³ Although the strictest interpretation of the monks' rules could suggest that monks eat directly from their metal begging bowls, in rural Thailand it is common that monks pool the food offerings and have it served up by their *dègwáds*.

⁴ Between July and October - the rainy season.

⁵ The best known textbooks of those times were collected and reprinted in 1963 by the Department of Fine Arts under the title *prathôm kṛṣṇaa, pratôm kṛṣṇaa hād 'ān, pathôm maalaa, 'āgsānītī bēebriannaṇ sūyṭhaj chabāb hṛṣṣamudhēṇchāad*.

It was only at the wat [the monastery] that teaching was carried on by some of the monks voluntarily during their spare time as requested by the abbot. The knowledge of reading and writing thus gained by a monastery boy was relatively rudimentary or higher in level according to the monk-teacher's knowledge. Parents desiring their boy to know something of religion, reading and writing sent him to a certain monk in a wat to be trained.

Whilst the instruction in the smaller monasteries thus took place at moments when the assigned teacher was free, in monasteries where a considerable number of *dègwáds* were expecting to be taught, there must have been a regular meeting. The most likely periods to be assigned to the elementary education of small boys would have been in the morning, after the monks' first meal, until the eleven o'clock beating on the drum which would announce the last chance of the day for monks to partake of solid food, followed possibly by a short class in the afternoon, between two and four when the daily routine of monks also allowed instruction to take place.

For roughly every five days of teaching there were two free days. The Buddhist holy day, *wanphrá*, and the day before holy day were free of formal instruction.⁶ In the smaller monasteries it is likely that *dègwáds* were taught only in the period from June to October, the time of the Buddhist Lenten retreat. It is probable that only during Lent would most rural monasteries have had the influx of young boys needed to serve a temporarily boosted number of monks. When the yearly retreat was over, a great number of newly ordained monks would leave the order. Outside Lent most monasteries were a haven of rest for the abbot and the few remaining monks until the following June brought a new group of recruits. Only in the most important monasteries, which also outside Lent maintained a considerable number of monks, could classes have been held throughout the year. The Thai author who described traditional elementary education at the end of the nineteenth century⁷ may well have had one of the bigger monasteries in mind:

⁶ *Wanphrá* is held on the day of full moon, the eighth day of waning moon, new moon and the eighth day of waxing moon.

⁷ From the newspaper *Thai Mai*, Feb. 1933, as quoted by Landon 1968:107.

School started at nine o'clock. There were no benches or chairs. Everyone sat cross-legged on the floor. The only studies were arithmetic and Siamese. Before noon the boys prepared and served tiffin to the monks and then [the monks] took a nap. The educational day concluded at four o'clock. Before and after study the boys prostrated themselves before the monks and took part in religious ceremonies.

It was only through service in the monastery that a young boy could gain access to literacy. In his study of *dègwáds* in Phetburi province, Ayabe (1973:5) gives a glimpse of the authority of the monk-teacher of yore. If a boy were excluded from the monastery he would automatically be 'deprived of the path to becoming a respectable adult'. This monopoly is also reflected in the drastic discipline monks could instil. There are several accounts of monks punishing inattentive *dègwáds*. The Venerable Worakawintho describes this clearly in his poem (1977:5), set in rural central Thailand:

line 80

The abbot made them learn and persevere
with matchless power. If any boy saw fit
to stray, oppose him, the old man would set
strict rules; he'd let none of them break his law.

A cane hung on the wall outside his cell,
warning them all. They trembled when they saw.
He'd chase the cheeky, wilful, playful few,
beat black and blue the clattering chattering one.

Krāng monastery had rules as strict as laws -
the abbot's views on how things must be done.

In rural areas, the number of *dègwáds* appears to have been approximately the same as the number of members of the Sangha. This estimate is not just based on the consideration that every monk may have had a boy assigned to him. It is confirmed in the first reliable statistics available for the provinces. For the province of Ratburi, for example, there were in 1907 a total of 8751 members of the Sangha and 7775 *dègwáds*, whilst a further 976 boys attended school in a monastery but returned home in the evenings.⁸ Surmising that

⁸ These figures have been tabulated from the survey of Provincial Education, reproduced in Wyatt 1969:335.

there was a yearly intake of *dègwáds*, similar to the yearly rush to join the Sangha, there must have been few boys who did not serve some time in the monastery. Some would reach full literacy, others would acquire at least an acquaintance with the alphabet. Much of this knowledge would be used but rarely in the years following the period of service in the monastery. Most teenagers would be fully employed at their parents' farm. The farmers' children had virtually no opportunity to gain a place in a secular school in the capital.

Further education. A further period of study would usually commence some ten years after the conclusion of *dègwád* service. All males were expected to serve at least one Lenten season as monks.⁹ Even in modern rural Thailand the majority of men serve at least one season in the order (see Terwiel 1976:97-101).

The reading skills of the aspirant-monk would be reactivated in the weeks before ordination. A great part of the new monk's preparation would consist of memorizing the Pāli ordination text from a printed form. After ordination most monks would receive regular training throughout the Lenten season. Traditionally, this consisted of a communal chanting period between 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning, a private study period between 5 and 6, an afternoon communal session of chanting and meditation and, finally, some private study in the evening.

Traditionally, most newly ordained monks would have to learn to decipher the sacred Khōm alphabet¹⁰ and at least once prepare to deliver a sermon. Young monks were not expected to write their own sermons, such skills befitting only great and famous teachers. The monk serving his first Lenten season would be expected to select from the monastery's collection of palm-leaf texts an appropriate one and to repeat the text in the privacy of his cell until he could chant the whole in an even voice, allowing for a breathing pause only at certain points.¹¹

⁹ This is true especially for the central region. In the north and northeast of Thailand it is often considered sufficient for a man to have served as a novice.

¹⁰ The Khōm alphabet, also known as Mūl writing, is a form of Cambodian script. After World War II the Thai government stopped printing Pāli texts in Khōm, but it is still used in the drawing of magical diagrams and religious tattooing.

¹¹ Further details about the traditional monkly education can be found in Terwiel 1976:105-24).

The central government and education

With the establishment of an autonomous Department of Education in 1887, the Thai government committed itself to the implementation of a nation-wide, centrally organized education system. It took many decades to create the administrative apparatus, to train the personnel and to convince the general public of the benefits of a uniform and compulsory primary education. The education administrators first had to decide what to do with the monkly teaching: whether or not to incorporate the religious schooling into the state-wide plans. During the first decades the decisions in this respect were generally in favour of the monks, but later they turned towards secular teachers.

During the initial years of the Department of Education, the monkly monopoly on education in the rural areas remained virtually unchallenged. Alternative plans, directed towards covering the nation with a network of state schools, manned by lay teachers, must have appeared no more than a dream. With the very limited funds and only a few progressive teachers, the government confined its first reformative experiments largely to Bangkok. All design of curricula, writing of new textbooks and drawing up of state examinations was oriented towards the education of the promising youth in the capital city. Education in the provinces remained, for the time being, under the traditional monkly responsibility.

In 1898, this state of affairs was suddenly formalized, when rural education was removed from what was then called the Ministry of Public Instruction¹² and brought under the direct supervision of two of the most esteemed Thais of that time: The Prince Wachirayan Warorot and the Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, both half-brothers of the ruling monarch, King Chulalongkorn. In the context of this paper it is relevant to note that provincial education was handed over to a Buddhist monk, for Prince Wachirayan was at that time one of the most senior monks in the country.¹³ Thus, whilst public education in the capital rapidly began to lose its religious

¹² The political manoeuvres which led to the removal of provincial education from the Ministry of Public Instruction are discussed in Wyatt 1969:215-31.

¹³ He was head (*châawkhaná' jàj*) of the Dhammayuttikanikāya reform sect, which exercises a much greater influence on the Thai Sangha than its relatively small membership may suggest.

cachet, in rural Thailand education remained for a considerable time tied to monkly teaching. Prince Wachirayan began to build up an education system by using existing monastery schools. In the first years of his work with provincial education he concentrated upon encouraging monastery schools to modernize their curricula by distributing a vast number of schoolbooks.

For the organizers, the Sangha represented a great wealth of manpower and a certain amount of teaching experience. Members of the Sangha did not have to be put under contract and paid a salary, so that the very limited funds available for provincial education could be used to make an inventory and to distribute textbooks. As a first step towards bringing rural education under central supervision, provincial education directors were appointed. All these directors were monks of high standing who had served a considerable number of years in the order, and upon their shoulders lay the task of assessing teaching situations, discussing methods and curricula and reporting back to Bangkok.

In order to make efficient use of the Sangha, a series of administrative reforms were deemed necessary. Many of the reforms announced in the Buddhist Church Administration Act of 1902 may have been instigated by Prince Damrong and Prince Wachirayan. A new hierarchy was created amongst the monks, in addition to the ancient ranking already in existence. This new hierarchy used the civil provincial administration as a model and provided for the appointment of ecclesiastical provincial governors, regional heads, and leaders of districts, sub-districts and monasteries. In the circumscription of the duties of each of these dignitaries the word 'education' features.¹⁴

In 1902, the future of provincial education was reaffirmed as linked with the development of monkly tuition, as shown in this policy statement (quoted by Wyatt 1969:306-7):

Were education to be separated from the monasteries, ... 'we would destroy the usefulness of all the monasteries and the Sangha, which always have been the support and strength of our religion, and, moreover, we would put the government in competition with the Sangha, which we should not do'.

¹⁴ *Acts on the Administration of the Buddhist Order of Sangha* (sic) (Bangkok: The Buddhist University, 1963), p.7 ff.

The last part of this quotation demonstrates that senior administrators were aware of conflict situations which might arise if provincial education were to become secularized. Until 1909, provincial education remained thus firmly in the hands of the Sangha. From this period also dates the government's policy of encouraging local money gifts towards monastery schools, no doubt influenced by the manner in which most monasteries managed to thrive without financial assistance from central authorities.

The reformers of provincial education tackled both primary schooling and the education of novices and recently ordained monks. The latter, rather than elementary education, seems to have received most attention. After all, if monks were to expand and improve their elementary schools, it was essential that they themselves be properly trained. A system of religious degrees was built up, textbooks were prepared for each level, and state examinations in religious knowledge were organized. These reform measures became the basis of the present-day system of formal religious education consisting of three basic levels and seven advanced levels, which is still viable and which has preserved a certain specialized educational role for the monks.

However, in 1909 elementary education was removed from the monkly organization, and the development of primary schools throughout the country was brought under the responsibilities of the Ministry of the Interior, which by this time had built up a considerable cadre of officers throughout the country. It was argued that this Ministry could handle the growing amount of administration involved in establishing new schools in a more efficient manner. Also this shift reflected a growth in the number of secular teachers. Gradually, the teaching load was moved towards properly trained lay personnel and the impact of the educational schemes set up in Bangkok¹⁵ became more noticeable in the countryside.

When the government passed the Primary Education Act of 1921, making it compulsory for every child between seven and 14 years to receive primary education, it did so fully aware of the fact that many rural areas did not have the resources to obey the law. This Act may be seen therefore as a firm commitment towards the installation of schools with modern curricula throughout the country. In order to increase the

¹⁵ The development of educational policy is described in some detail by Chongkol 1970:61-84.

budget, a new direct tax was levied from all adult men for the purpose of education. This tax was abolished during 1930, when the international slump came to be felt throughout the countryside. By 1926 the Education Act was effective in 3817 of the 4982 districts of the country, but even in the districts where compulsory education was made law, the attendance rate of children was only just over 50 per cent (Pin Malakul 1975:14-5). Another look behind the scenes reveals that in 1928 only some 10 per cent of the teachers had adequate qualifications, and that many teachers worked for pitifully low salaries (ibid.:15). In that year, schools run by the monks still accounted for almost 70 per cent of all Thai schools.¹⁶

The depression years had an adverse effect on the ambitious primary education program. Many recently opened schools were closed for lack of finance. The political turbulence of 1932 had some effect on schooling in the provinces. In response to the abrogation of absolute monarchy, a greater stress fell on the general democratic right of access to primary education (see, e.g., Jayanama 1960:28). The new government issued a proclamation that the education laws of 1921 should be applied forthwith. It was probably the urgency the new rulers felt towards introducing adequate primary schooling for all that accounted for a temporary return to a policy of upgrading monkly tuition in order to create sufficient primary schools. However, the ultimate aim was still the handing over of primary education to a corps of secular specialists.

By this time the efforts with regard to the introduction of state schools had resulted in a revolutionary phenomenon. For the first time many women in the countryside had become literate, and a growing number of them were preparing for the teaching profession.

The gap between farmers and Ministry

The policies worked out in the first decades of this century slowly but surely affected even the remote rural areas. In present-day Thailand almost every village possesses a secular school. Though in many cases the school can be found on the monastery grounds, secular and ecclesiastical education are now fully separated. Passing a secular grade

¹⁶ From the newspaper *Bangkok Times*, 21 June 1933, as quoted by Thompson 1967:776.

does not qualify a person to be exempted from religious examinations if that person later joins the Sangha. Similarly, a degree in sacerdotal knowledge does not usually qualify a person for secular responsibilities. Thus the traditional further education of novices and recently ordained monks has developed into a highly specialized type of vocational training, ably administered by the Department of Religious Affairs. In 1970, more than 200,000 persons sat for one of the three lower religious examinations.¹⁷ The demand for this type of education shows no signs of lessening. It is closely linked with the practice of serving at least one Lenten season in the Sangha and as long as that custom persists there will be many who wish to try and gain the distinction of a degree in sacerdotal knowledge.

There is also a traditional basis for elementary schooling and most farmers appear to be willing to send their children to school. They can see the advantages for their offspring in learning to read and write and they usually appreciate that their children are taught to behave politely and obtain some moral guidance. Many farmers reserve their opinion on the value of a teacher's knowledge until after they have been able to test his attitudes and advice.

The fact that primary education has been compulsory by law ever since 1921 has meant little or nothing to the rural people. In the 1920s it was clearly impractical to call the scheme compulsory for there were hardly any schools qualified to teach the new curriculum, and even nowadays it is still not possible to teach the full program everywhere. In addition the government lacks the machinery to enforce attendance. Even if a measure of control could be exerted, the officials would probably refrain from using it, for only in exceptional circumstances and under extreme provocation should an official interfere in such a blunt and uncouth manner. It is recognized and accepted as a lamentable fact that there are people, especially in the more remote regions, who do not send their children to school. In many cases these people simply cannot afford to pay for school uniforms and books, and they desperately need the children to work with the rest of the family. The school teacher may try to convince the parents of the advantages of primary education, but if the parents send a child only occasionally, he (or she) will let the matter rest. It appears, thus, rather

¹⁷ *Raajjaan kaansàasanāa pracampi* 2513 (Bangkok: Kromkaansàasanāa, 1970), pp.222-3.

impetuous for the Ministry of Education to speak of compulsory education. In actuality the plans to educate all Thais are more like guidelines or ultimate aims. They indicate a willingness of the central government to sponsor plans which conform to the letter of the law. Thus, when the Ministry extended elementary education from four years to seven, it merely committed itself to give a favourable hearing to school committees who wished to expand their existing program and to provide more teachers.

The fact that elementary education is generally accepted by the rural population is shown by the continued adherence to the custom of local involvement in school projects. Since the beginning of this century the government has advocated the principle of community involvement in schools, and it has propagated the idea that building a school, like building a monastery, is highly meritorious in a religious sense. It must be stressed in this context that religious considerations alone do not explain the farmers' acceptance of the idea of financial offers towards the setting up of a school. Before farmers co-operate in this way they must be assured of its practical value as well. Nowadays, if a rural community wishes a school to be established, it has to convince the authorities of its serious intentions by making a substantial financial contribution. Rich farmers may pay for the whole building and furnishings before the government recognizes the new school and pays for the teachers. In other cases the community is able to bring together only part of the construction cost and depends upon a subsidy from the local government for the rest. In the poorest villages it is expected that the community provides at least free labour and some building materials.

The general acceptance of the idea of primary education and a general willingness to send children to school do not mean that the central authorities and the rural population are fully in agreement on either the aims and purposes of education or on the curriculum. There are strong indications that these two groups have held, and continue to hold, quite distinct attitudes. The old-fashioned farmer sends a child to school because there he learns a moral code of behaviour, as well as the practical skills of reading and writing. At the same time there is a chance that a child may prove to have an exceptional aptitude for learning and in this case the school may provide the first step on a ladder leading to a government post. The government, on the other hand, has seen primary education as a vehicle to instil a variety of modern virtues in conjunction with the old ones. Thus, apart

from basic skills such as reading and writing, the government aims to instil a love for the country, an acceptance of the central authorities, principles of hygiene and a modern scientific outlook. At the same time, the Ministry of Education has been acutely aware of the danger of thousands of bright young scholars clamouring for clerical posts. Thus, in all the Educational Schemes drawn up between 1913 and 1960 a stress has been given to the opportunity for young people to be trained in a profession (Chongkol 1970:*passim*).

As Chao Phraya Dhamasakdimontri explained in a meeting with education officers in 1919 (quoted in Sunhachawee 1970: 98): 'Education for all people, according to their individual abilities, should not include only general education, it should include specialized subjects like agriculture, handicrafts, and commerce. Specialized education at the earlier stage would help cure the craving for clerical jobs'. In all the schemes up to 1951 an early option for a specialized education featured high, in addition to the various possibilities of leaving the academic stream in order to fit into a technical or vocational school (the reverse process does not occur).

In the course of time it became clear, however, that drawing up a scheme and proceeding to implement it did not necessarily mean that the scheme would be successful. In general, the population was not willing to send its children to a lower technical school. People withdrew their children from school altogether or they planned for them to follow the general academic curriculum. Many lower technical schools had to close down for lack of interest and enrolments (Sunhachawee 1970:102).

The Ministry of Education had drawn up three objectives for Thai education. They consisted of the development of the intellect as well as moral and physical development. In order to show their preoccupation with the fact that farmers may have held a 'wrong' attitude towards primary education, and still conceived of it as a means to becoming government officials, a fourth objective was added in 1951. The development of the dignity of manual work now featured among the aims of education. Subsequent research showed that notwithstanding this breakthrough, teachers 'used the hours allotted to handicrafts for teaching general academic subjects' (ibid).

It was not until 1960 that the Ministry made a fundamental change in its Educational Scheme and deferred the moment at which children had to choose which type of education

they wished to pursue. Primary education was extended by three years. The present-day curriculum features Thai language, arithmetic, science, health, physical education, arts and social studies. In upper primary school English and handicrafts are added to the program.

Since 1966, rural schools have been transferred to the jurisdiction of the Provincial Administration. However, the fundamental aspects which to a great extent determine the character of a school, such as curriculum development, assessment, instruction and supervision, remain firmly in the hands of the Ministry. The majority of rural children who will eventually obtain the advantage of being able to have the extra three years of compulsory education will be learning the dignity of manual work, which, it could be argued, they can better learn at home, and some words of English which will never be of use to them.

Wád Pàagnáam,¹⁸ a case history

In the previous pages the growing involvement of the central government with rural education has been sketched. The picture remains incomplete, however, without a description of what this increasing preoccupation with the education of farmers' children has meant to the rural population involved. The following idiosyncratic material highlights the problems engendered by the abolition of the educational monopoly of the monks. The example, taken from a community which finds itself rapidly becoming involved in a complex economic situation, illustrates some of the dynamics of modern rural Thailand.

The monastery which is here called Wád Pàagnáam has been in existence for a long time. Even the oldest farmers cannot recollect its foundation date. They can, however, reconstruct the essentials of the education system of the former period. Regular classes were held only during Lent. The abbot used to teach the alphabet and some Pāli formulae related to proper behaviour. Virtually all adult men had spent some time as a *dègwáđ* and later a period as member of the Sangha.

The monastery, in close proximity to a major town, immediately fell into a district where primary education

¹⁸In order to preserve the anonymity of the persons discussed in the following section, a fictitious name has been given to the monastery, and the nearby provincial town has been left unnamed.

became compulsory with the Act of 1921. A result of this was that by approximately 1930 the classes for *dègwáds* were opened up for boys who did not regularly serve in the monastery and also for girls.

In 1934, two years after the abolition of absolute monarchy in Bangkok, an event of magnitude occurred in the village. The village headman won 30,000 baht in a lottery. It had been the custom among rural Thais to invest a portion of such a windfall into a meritorious project, thus automatically ensuring further good luck. The headman invested some of his money in helping a new temple to be set up. Interestingly enough (for in 1934 the government had voiced its renewed interest in setting up primary schools all over the countryside) the headman gave 6000 baht towards the building of a primary school. Ever since 1902 the government had encouraged local people to raise money towards building schools, so that the donation soon resulted in a roomy wooden building of two stories and the appointment of the first teacher.

By 1967 the school was thus already 33 years old. Parents had become used to the idea of sending their children there between the ages of seven and 14. There was no novelty in hearing the children's voices chant their lessons in unison - a sound that increased the status of a monastery even further as a place of intellectual pursuit. In the course of time the number of schoolchildren had gradually increased and by 1967 the school was decidedly too small. In 1960 the government had increased compulsory primary education by three years, introducing a seven-year syllabus, but lack of space prevented the Wád Pàagnáam school from complying with the regulations. In order to instruct children in the old four-year schedule the school was already forced to borrow the small hall from the monks. This hall was thus in use during term as a temporary classroom and no rent was charged to the school.

During the Lenten period of 1967 there were seven *dègwáds* in the monastery. These *dègwáds* occupied a somewhat different position from that of their predecessors of just over a generation ago, when the abbot still held an educational monopoly. In the first place, recruitment no longer covered all eligible young boys. Only those who were persuaded by their parents to serve an older relative who had become a monk and those whose parents were compelled to send a son to the monastery to alleviate the family budget made up the modern *dègwád* population (see also Ayabe 1973:

passim). It was no longer an honour to learn with the monks. In many instances the young servant of the Sangha was well aware of the fact that his prolonged presence in the monastery amounted to a public admission of poverty.

The abbot of Wád Pàagnáam had not totally relinquished the role of educator. Occasionally, during Lent, he would summon the *dègwáds* and address them on proper behaviour, on the idea that they should stand out amongst their age mates for their moral code and on the thought that they ought to consider themselves privileged to be in such close contact with the monks and the sacred rituals. He would end such a session by letting his charges repeat a hundred times a Pāli formula relating to the Five Precepts. Such lessons were rare, the young boys would be inattentive and on the whole such exercises seemed only a vague reflection of former practices.

The most important factor contributing to the change in the institution of the *dègwáds* is the fact that all the young boys are of school-going age and have therefore been automatically withdrawn from their monastic duties in order to attend classes. In the traditional scene a generation ago, the abbot would regularly excuse some boys from class so that they could assist the monks. Formerly, whenever the abbot or his deputy had to travel to a neighbouring monastery or to the provincial capital he would take a *dègwád*. The rules of the Sangha forbid a monk to handle money, and though many rural monks used to break this monkly precept in the privacy of their cells, taking a young servant on travel enabled the monk to pay fares and make purchases without touching bank notes or loose change. Other occasions when monks used to take some boys on travel were the regular chanting sessions to which monks were invited in order to add lustre to a housewarming, a wedding, the celebration of a birth or a death.

Since the establishment of a school, all *dègwáds* are required to be in front of their school by 9 o'clock in the morning, to attend a flag-raising ceremony, to sing a few lines of the national anthem and to enter the classroom. At lunchtime all schoolchildren play in the monastery grounds and *dègwáds* can be expected to do some chores for the monks, but during the afternoon they are again withdrawn from the monks' observation. Not only are the monks deprived of their young servants; in addition they have the task of seeing to it that their charges are properly dressed in their school uniforms, that they are clean and tidy well before the schoolbell summons.

The abbot of Wád Pàagnáam occasionally took one of the older *dègwáds* on journeys, regardless of the fact that the boy would miss classes. The school headmaster, fully realizing that the abbot occupied a ritually exalted position and that a *dègwád* had the duty to assist monks, could do little to prevent the abbot from doing so. However, he insisted upon being informed beforehand, so that he could give permission and inform the teachers. Whilst the headmaster never refused such permission, this stipulation had for him the desired effect. After all, all monks are ritually far above lay teachers and members of the Sangha are therefore most reluctant to approach a schoolmaster with a request. By 1967 the abbot occasionally used the services of one of the *dègwáds* in schooltime by trying to avoid the awkward request and ordering the boy himself to ask whether he was allowed to assist the abbot. Even this indirect approach was felt by most monks to be unworthy of their ritual position and accordingly they scheduled travel on days that there was no school or they went without the services of a boy.

Until 1967 the school had followed the Buddhist calendar, in that no classes were held on the day before a Buddhist holy day or on *wanphrá'* itself. In this respect the school conformed with many rural monastery schools. In isolated areas the farmers generally calculate their days according to a lunar calendar and a change to a regular weekly period of rest would be impractical. Wád Pàagnáam, however, lies, notwithstanding its rural character, only an hour's walk from a major town where government institutions, including schools, run on a weekly basis and have Saturday and Sunday off.

Early in 1967, the headmaster of the elementary school of Wád Pàagnáam, having consulted informally with many members of the community and with the local school committee, decided to change over to the 'modern and progressive' calendar system in use in town. From Saturday, 22 June 1967 onwards the school would be closed on Saturday and Sunday.

From the monkly point of view, this decision was most unwelcome. Buddhist monasteries are firmly tied to the lunar calendar and the announcement by the headmaster would cause the two institutions to be out of step. Up to June, every *wanphrá'* had been characterized by an absence of the resounding rote learning of schoolchildren and by lunchtime the lack of noisy recreation had been welcome. With two calendars in use, only rarely would *wanphrá'* be marked by such rest. Moreover, the hall which the school used as a temporary classroom could be needed by the monks during some *wanphrá's*

and this could result in conflicting demands on that building.

It is likely that the abbot could have staved off the headmaster's decision by openly canvassing against it. However, the abbot was already in his sixties; he did not make a very forceful impression and preferred to hint at his displeasure rather than make a firm pronouncement on the inappropriateness of introducing a different calendar in his monastery. Moreover, the abbot was severely handicapped by a lack of friends and relatives in the community. He came from a village where most families had Laotian forebears, and had during the seven years of his abbotship not shown much enthusiasm for Wád Pàagnáam. Many farmers suspected that he was primarily devoted to the monastery where he had first become a monk, rather than to Wád Pàagnáam. There were senior members of the community who regretted their earlier proposal to the administration of the Sangha to appoint this monk as their abbot, but, once he was installed, there was little they could do to alter the situation. The abbot was well aware of the fact that he had not proved a success but he stuck to his position for lack of a better one. Meanwhile he was not inclined to do more than his minimum duties and he let the schoolmaster have his way.

The change to a weekly roster occurred at the beginning of Lent, the most inconvenient time from the monks' point of view. Throughout the rainy season of 1967, Buddhist holy day missed much of its usual atmosphere. During morning service the concentration of monks and devout laypersons was often broken by the sound of a class of children reciting sentences of their textbooks aloud. Most hindrance came from the gathering hall which was used as a temporary classroom, for this hall was situated only a few yards away from the temple. Similarly, during the sacred ritual of the recitation of the monkly rules, the calm of the monastery was often interrupted by schoolchildren. On one occasion the temporary schoolroom had to be claimed for a religious ceremony and some children were forced to attend class in the open air.

The situation was obviously impractical and bothersome to the monks, but the community members who were aware of the unfortunate side effects of having two calendars could see no immediate solution. The abbot had missed his chance to prevent the introduction of weekends and the headmaster could not revert to the old calendar system without considerable loss of prestige. For several years the situation remained unchanged. Plans were made to build a new school,

but many shrank back when considering the organization of such a venture.

In 1972, a delegation from the abbot's old monastery arrived at Wád Pàagnáam, and informed him of the fact that his relatives would like him to consider accepting the abbotship amongst his own people. Soon afterwards the ecclesiastical authorities approved of the transfer and the farmers of Wád Pàagnáam were able to propose a new head of their monastery. After the unhappy decade with an outsider, the leading villagers decided to offer the post to the oldest local monk, a man with many personal friends amongst the regular supporters of the monastery. This monk felt he lacked the scholarly attainments nowadays required of abbots and declined the honour. Thereupon the farmers looked widely around before putting up the name of another outsider, a monk of high reputation for learning and of strong character, who could be relied upon to put his monastery in order.

Two years later, Wád Pàagnáam presented quite a different face to the visitor. The bell tower had been restored and painted, new cells had been added to the monks' quarters, the grounds had been cleared of the ruins of previous buildings and a big water tank had been installed to supplement the supply of diminishing water in the traditional earthenware pots. The most spectacular change, however, was that the two wooden gathering halls had been dismantled and a modern hall had been built in the latest style, a design on a concrete base with metal screen doors and colourful roof. Behind this new hall a modern crematorium had been built and a soaring chimney formed a new landmark.

In conjunction with these innovations there appeared a brand new concrete bridge, so that the monastery could now be reached by car. Electricity cables had also been installed and many new houses had been constructed alongside the road leading up to Wád Pàagnáam. In a recently erected roadside cafe a second-hand television set provided a welcome opportunity for many farmers to follow Thai boxing regularly. Wád Pàagnáam and its surroundings appeared to be modernizing at a great pace. Land prices had soared and some farmers had left their land in favour of a job in town.

The steadily increasing population had boosted the number of schoolchildren. At the same time the small hall which had functioned as a temporary classroom had been dismantled to make room for the new crematorium. By 1974, the community had decided to hold a collection towards setting up a new school. After all, the government had expanded the

compulsory education program from a four-year span to a system that lasted seven years, and it could be expected that the government would be sympathetic towards the Wád Pàagnáam people's efforts to comply with the new regulation. The solution of the problems raised by the introduction of a different calendar came with the offer to donate a piece of land adjacent to the monastery for the new school. This generous gesture made it possible to plan the new school at a proper distance from the other buildings in the monastery. At the same time it added considerable momentum to the appeal for funds. The local school committee managed to raise 52,000 baht from the surrounding population, just over one-fifth of the total amount needed to build a school big enough to cope with the expanded curriculum, and the Department of Local Government decided to proceed with the building.

The new school was built in 1975 and the first children entered the higher classes of primary education. In the monastery organization further changes were instigated when the highly learned abbot resigned to take up a post elsewhere and the oldest local monk decided this time to accept nomination. His appointment appeared to inject new enthusiasm into the monastery. The new abbot immediately opened a fund to repair the roof of the temple which had been leaking for almost a decade. It is an indication of the bond between the new abbot and the surrounding population that, less than a year after helping to set up the new school, people responded generously. More than 100,000 baht was collected for the repair of the temple, twice the amount that had been given towards a new school.

The latest information from Wád Pàagnáam¹⁹ reveals that a new roof was being built during the hot season of 1976 and that three-quarters of the work had already been finished. Soon the bright new tiles and shining paintwork will demonstrate to the passer-by that here is a community that knows how to invest in the future. The people not only invest in the future of their children by providing them with a modern school, they look after their own interests as well as after the interests of their descendants by generously giving to the monks who spend all their time holding up a platter which contains the world as it should be.

Wád Pàagnáam in 1967 appeared a quiet backwater, bypassed by the bustle of modernization. Almost a decade later the scene was transformed and the community appeared on the way

¹⁹ From a letter dated 23 Feb. 1976.

to becoming an integral part of the provincial town nearby.

The reorientation of Wád Pàagnáam people is reflected in the changing attitudes towards children's primary education. In the traditional scene, boys were encouraged to become literate because it would give them access to religious knowledge and provide them with status. Monastic learning provided the channel through which a few individuals could embark upon a career in the Sangha. By a stroke of good fortune a primary school had been built in the monastery before World War II and all farmers had become accustomed to accepting four years of compulsory education for girls as well as for boys. In 1967 there were still many farmers who, although they considered the school as useful, held it as of only marginal interest for the preparation of young people as farmers. Many agricultural skills and traditions could only be transmitted on the farms. The failure of traditional methods of rice growing in the face of a major irrigation project upriver may have contributed to undermining this traditional outlook and it may have contributed to enhancing the position of the school. A growing number of young farmers began to realize that future generations may well benefit from being able to read agricultural news, to decipher instructions on handling machinery, and to understand about mortgages, profits and losses. Furthermore, as a result of the beginning of a 'post-peasant society'²⁰ a few peasants began to become aware of the fact that some of their children might well be able to follow a different vocation and might prefer not to be farmers at all. Proper education in a state school would provide a few children with an opportunity to enter a different profession.

The growing importance of the school may thus be seen as an integral part of the transition of this isolated peasant community to a modern Thai farmer's community. In this light, the headmaster's proposal to change over to a different calendar appears quite in tune with the trend of events. Probably the monks could have postponed this decision at least until a new school had been built, had they been able to put forward the problems resulting from a dual calendar. It was only the fact that the abbot had not established himself as a real community leader which enabled the headmaster to go ahead with a new system of time keeping.

There is little doubt, however, that an abbot who combines his exalted ritual position with a strong personality

²⁰A term used by Foster 1967.

and a genuine attachment to his monastery still occupies by far the most prestigious position in rural Thailand. The monastery is not merely a monument set up by a former generation. In rural Thailand it is a continuous communal effort to create a heaven on earth. The changing views and modern influences cause the farmers to reconstruct and reshape their monastery to make it conform to new ideals. The frantic building activities in Wád Pàagnáam during the last years are a reflection of a new prosperity in the community, but they are also a reflection of new values. In a more personal way the renovation of Wád Pàagnáam is a sign of willing and generous co-operation between abbot and local people, striving together to create a lofty place where people do not sin.

A final observation following from the Wád Pàagnáam material concerns the relative positions of temple and school. In 1934, during a period when the government co-operated with rural monks to provide primary education, the school of Wád Pàagnáam was built in line with the monkly quarters and the temple. School and monastery were seen as closely related and the school could be built by the temple. The new school built in 1975 was placed on a piece of land adjacent to the monastery. The farmers had realized that the two institutions had grown to be separate entities, and increased the distance between school and temple correspondingly.

Conclusion

Education in the rural setting appears to be somewhat different from the picture set out on the Bangkok planning boards. In a rural community it is easy to gain the impression that farmers are quite satisfied with their school and its teachers. As long as the children learn to read and write and behave properly the teacher is considered to have done his task. If the teacher is also capable of translating the textbooks into meaningful lessons the children are well served.

The administrators in Bangkok, however, have much cause to be disgruntled when considering rural education. It can be demonstrated that the actual performance of rural teachers is quite below what the central planners had envisaged. Student achievement in the provinces lags even further behind what is expected (as indicated by Nathalang 1970:136). It has come to the knowledge of the Ministry that many rural pupils lose their reading and writing skills in a few years

after having left primary school for work on the farm. In order to cope with this problem, the Ministry has created a program of adult education to salvage the renowned literacy rate of the country.

I have little doubt that, in the present circumstances, a growing number of Thais will retain the reading and writing skills that are instilled during their early years at school, not so much because of the adult education schemes, but because of the growing amount of printed material which is becoming available in the countryside. There is little sense in teaching literacy to people who will not be surrounded by newspapers, pocket books and magazines. Without a literate environment, no remedial program will succeed. Similarly, it is no use teaching hygiene in primary schools, complete with pictures of flushing toilets and washing hands under a tap, if there is no water supply in the village. Such anomalies are indicative of too great a distance between the educationists and those who need to be educated.

In general, the Ministry of Education appears to have been out of touch with rural attitudes and the rural situation. The most recent developments point to a rapidly changing scene in the provinces, something which has long formed part of the central administrators' ideology. It is possible that in view of the most recent economic uncertainties and the revolutionary modernization of many rural communities, many farmers would for the first time be willing to consider putting a child at an early age into technical or vocational training. However, the central administrators, after having tried to instil this attitude in the rural population, have by now abandoned the option for an early alternative education. It is doubtful whether the machinery is flexible enough to recreate the opportunities it once unsuccessfully tried to impose upon the farmers.

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Chapter 5

The economic, social and political dimensions of Malaysian education policy*

Martin Rudner

The appetite for education inherited by independent Malaya was marked by chronic institutional malnourishment and structural deformity. Up to the end of the colonial period, education in Malaya had remained narrowly conceived both scholastically and socially, and was segregated into disjointed ethno-linguistic streams, with acute inadequacy of resources their common lot. To be sure, there occurred a dramatic rise in enrolments immediately after World War II, but this was not accompanied by appropriate changes in educational organization or policies. Ongoing discontinuities and constraints retarded the development of education following the postwar spurt, resulting in a downward trend in enrolment ratios during the last years of colonial rule.¹

The advent of representative government in 1955, followed by self-government in 1957, constituted a point of departure. In subsequent years, education policy was, by systematic stages, assimilated to the elected government's emerging goals of national development. Education institution-building became involved within three distinct aspects of society's changing appetite for education: the determination of educational content and direction; the public supply of education resources; and the private demand for various levels and types of schooling.

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¹ The enrolment ratio, that proportion of the eligible age group actually enrolled, was estimated at 63 per cent for 1951 (Member for Education, *Federation of Malaya Legislative Council Proceedings*, 19 Sept. 1951), and declined to only about 58 per cent by 1954; and see International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1954:142ff.

The evolution of a national educational institution

Among the priority issues tackled by the inter-communal Alliance Party government, following its election by an overwhelming majority in the country's first general elections (1955), was the reform of education policy. Shortly after assuming office, the government appointed a special parliamentary committee under the then Minister of Education, Dato (later Tun) Abdul Razak, to consider the reconstitution of Malaya's fragmented colonial educational system along more integrated, national lines. The ensuing legislation of 1957 marked a turning point. The new policy crystallized basic principles of an education institution linguistically plural in form, integrally national in content, Malay in its symbolism and developmental in its purpose. In the enthusiasm of independence, it appeared as if the Alliance formula had succeeded in sublimating the primordial racial controversies of the colonial past rent between educational assimilation and pluralism.²

But not for long. The Alliance leadership had presumed, with a simplistic utilitarian faith that was to become characteristic of their political style, that the benefits of dynamic growth would serve to overcome the latent dissensions of a multi-racial society. Hence, the very rapid expansion of primary school enrolments seemed to many to demonstrate widespread acceptance of the linguistic and cultural elements of the 1957 reforms among the main ethnic blocs, Malay, Chinese and Indian. However, the extent of the consensus achieved did not preclude further eruptions over the attendant social, economic, and political functions of the new education policy as it unfolded. During the 1960s, education was to become, in effect, a policy surrogate for issues of high strategy concerning national direction. Accordingly, the evolving education system, its growth and character, acquired a special significance as an instrument for, and expression of, political strategies for economic and social development, differentiated by race.

The initial thrust of the 1957 policy reforms focused on the primary level of education, and particularly on the historically sensitive matters of language and curriculum. Thus the new national policy distinguished between linguistic usage and language status, admitting pluralism in the media

²On the history of Malaysian education see, e.g., Wong and Tong 1971.

of primary instruction while conferring educational primacy on English as the international language, and Malay as the national language. However, all schools were to use a common curriculum and syllabus. Indeed, the notion of common educational content was the pivot upon which the national policy turned. Common educational content comprised the institutional cement that bound linguistic pluralism to national norms of political acculturation. The standardization of primary school curricula was significant not just for acculturation, but equally for patterns of socialization in education. Historically, each of the language streams had had its own instructional orientation and, through this, its distinctive social bias. English and Chinese schooling reflected their respective literary traditions in education, while the Malay and Tamil curricula connoted education for social stabilization at best, or economic impoverishment at worst. Following World War II some initial steps were taken to modernize the vernacular schools' curricula; however, the process was brought to completion by the 1957 policy reform. In line with the new policy, the grammar school orientation of English-medium education was not extended to all schools. The conception of public education as plural in form and national in content became also literary-academic in substance.

Secondary education received a somewhat more ambivalent treatment under the 1957 policy. Paradoxically, the successful implementation of the national school policy at the primary school level shifted the focal point of public controversy to the more ambiguous secondary education policy. As numbers of pupils passing through the multi-lingual primary schools increased during the late 1950s, the English language basis of secondary education posed an increasingly frustrating bar to their advancement.³ Although the issue appeared still to be linguistic, language in fact represented a mechanism regulating pupil progression and, ultimately, social recruitment, through the school system. Bitterness over post-primary language obstacles to social mobility and status was sharply manifest in the relative success of the more communal-oriented Malay and non-Malay opposition parties in the 1959 general elections. The returned, but shaken, Alliance government felt impelled to review its education policies for the secondary level, with a view to augmenting Malay mobility and inculcating non-Malay integration.

³With effect from 1958, special Malay-language classes were attached to otherwise English-medium national-type secondary schools, but this was clearly a limited venture.

The policy review proposed to resolve their problems by a reversion to a binary approach to secondary education. Structural differentiation was dictated by the divergent official aims for the acculturation and socialization of Malays and non-Malays. Malays were to be assured of the status of their national language in education, and given their vernacular avenue for upward social mobility. Non-Malays, for their part, would best be integrated on the basis of English-language, national-type secondary schooling. However, these bifurcated acculturation and socialization patterns bore the seeds of future conflict. Later, in the 1960s, the government was to restore the more assimilated, unitary post-primary model, based exclusively (albeit gradually) on the Malay language.

The second stage of secondary-level policy reform did not presume to alter Malaya's inherited grammar education tradition. As during colonial times, the quality of secondary schooling was still strongly identified with literary-style academic education. It was in this light that the government fixed an arbitrary ceiling on the pass rate from primary to secondary level of 30 per cent, based on past colonial practice, and which became the criterion for educational planning in the Second Five-Year Plan (1961-65).⁴ Pseudo-differentiated educational alternatives were set up, in distinct subordination to the grammar-style mainstream, and limited in scope and intent, for the overflow.⁵ The prevailing obsession with grammar education not only circumscribed the development of post-primary institutions, but even more significantly also restricted their capacity to cope with economic requirements. Officialdom preferred to blame public prejudice for the unpopularity of technical and vocational schooling. However, responsibility for this can be traced directly to the grammar school cult fostered and supported by the education authorities themselves.

⁴ *Second Five-Year Plan 1961-1965* (Kuala Lumpur 1961) para.157.

⁵ At the time there were only two technical secondary schools and two junior trade schools in the entire Federation. Under the 1961 policy so-called 'secondary continuation' and 'rural trade' schools were established as 'dead end' quasi-vocational alternatives, but never attracted popularity, and were abolished only four years later when more substantial post-primary reforms were introduced.

The third stage of education institution-building stemmed from economic considerations, which induced a further reform of secondary-level education towards a greater consonance with development strategy and planning. The expansion and extension of the old institutional format had led, by the middle 1960s, to an educational gap between large and growing numbers of primary school leavers emerging as semi-educated unemployed, concurrent with a shortage of middle and higher calibre technical and vocational skills. Education therefore became a limiting factor in economic development. Concern over the country's lagging economic performance prompted the Alliance government, following the 1974 general election, to inject manpower planning considerations into the education policy component of the First Malaysia Plan, 1966-70. In the event, this manpower planning concept denoted the primacy of developmental goals even over entrenched educational values, and paved the way for far-reaching changes in the internal organization and orientation of secondary education.

The reforms introduced from 1965 divided secondary schooling into two levels, different in selectivity and curriculum. At the lower secondary level, admission was non-selective and open, and the three-year program offered a so-called 'comprehensive' curriculum combining academic, technical and crafts courses. Post-primary selectivity was thus deferred. Continuation and Rural Trade schools were abolished in favour of Comprehensive education. Upper secondary schooling, however, remained selective, but was now separated educationally and organizationally into academic, technical, vocational and teacher training streams. Agricultural subjects were incorporated in the Comprehensive curriculum and, after 1969, agricultural science was offered as an Upper Secondary (both academic and vocational) alternative. A pre-university Sixth Form was similarly divided into arts, science and technical streams. This institutional transformation revealed a new conception of Malaysian education policy, moving towards the rationalization of levels and types of post-primary schooling in terms of the manpower requirements of the economy.

Although the immediate introduction of open-admission, comprehensive education resulted in an acknowledged fall in standards, especially in the academically-weaker Malay-medium stream, this was now accepted as the unavoidable short-run cost of social adaptation for eventual economic development.

The tertiary level of education was to experience a similar process of institutional reform and innovation. The country's first institution of higher learning was the University of Malaya. It had been founded in Singapore in 1949. The Kuala Lumpur division had been set up in 1957, and broke off to become an autonomous university in 1961. It was conceived as an English academy for the scholastic elite, which defined its social composition and educational purpose. Pressures of events (the combination of language politics, educational reforms and social trends during the 1960s) brought about the official adoption of English-Malay bilingualism at the University of Malaya by mid-decade, followed by the establishment of the Malay-language Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia) in 1970. Along with the termination of the English social and linguistic monopoly came a broadening of the scope and structure of higher education. Within the conventional universities of the English model, the sciences and technocratic professions were given increasing prominence. Moreover, the early 1970s also witnessed the establishment of new types of specialized tertiary institutions. To be sure, Malaysian education still retained its strong academic bias, a tendency evidenced in the school system's preoccupation with preparing candidates for higher education, rather than intermediate employment opportunities. Yet, the emergence of a tertiary system which provided for differences both of function and of academic content was evidence of a trend towards planning for economic development.

The next stage was marked by a revival of the language question, this time as part of a deep political search for institutional expressions of national identity. The challenge to Malay political primacy, apparent in the 1969 general election results and culminating in their violent aftermath,⁶ propelled the Malay elite towards a more strenuous reassertion of the Malay norms of statehood. Subsequently, the conversion of English schools to the Malay medium was accelerated on the basis of a detailed timetable, subject by subject, year by year, and scheduled for completion by 1983. Thereafter Malay would be left as the only educational language ranging over the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Schools in the Chinese or Tamil media were as yet unaffected by the conversion timetable, but would in any case be reduced to the status of peripheral, virtually terminal primary school

⁶ On the revival of communalist antagonisms in the 1969 elections, see Rudner 1970.

alternatives when Malay becomes the exclusive language of post-primary education. Linguistic Malayization pointed to the current political anxieties of the Malay leadership that the new nationally-educated, non-Malay elite had to be induced to recognize the established political equation for allocating power. The conversion of the English stream was calculated to promote shared educational experiences in elite formation, while ensuring that the process is imbued with Malay linguistic and cultural symbols. The new Malay norms of educational language policy inculcated a double sense of belonging: that non-Malays belong to Malaysia, but that Malaysia belongs to Malays. Institutional uniformity of language does not yet connote community of political identity.

It is worth noting that these educational developments pertained mainly to the territories of peninsular Malaysia, the former Malaya, and only to a lesser degree to the Eastern Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak. By constitutional agreement the administration of education in Sabah and Sarawak has remained under state jurisdiction (though federally financed). Policies have therefore differed somewhat from those pursued by the federal government in peninsular Malaysia. Lately there has been a marked trend towards conformity with the national system.

The building of a national education system in Malaysia has had to treat with fundamental problems of language, culture, social change, economics, and politics which confronted this multi-racial society. Yet educational institution-building did not reflect haphazard or ad hoc arrangements. Policy solutions were designed to cope with the complexity of social issues involving education, in ways consistent with the multiple goals of government. An active public interest exercised its influence as both a stimulus and constraint on policy, and it is significant that the stages of education institution-building were broadly coterminous with general elections. Education policy thus evolved from being an object to becoming an integral subject, or instrument, of national policy-making, producing radical changes in educational organization and orientations in the process. This policy transformation denoted the qualitative conditions affecting the quantitative aspects of the appetite for education in independent Malaysia.

The supply of education

Expenditures on educational factors comprise a convenient, if simplistic, indicator of the quantum of education available to society at any given time. Historically, education has been a difficult activity to evaluate in strict financial terms. Adapting public finance to assume the cost of education institution-building involved certain basic redefinitions of conventional economic attitudes, budgetary principles, allocative priorities and administrative goals.

Changes in official attitudes and assumptions concerning the economic utility of education heralded changes in policies involving public finance for education. In British Malaya education was commonly regarded positively, for its humanistic value as well as for its role in elite formation. Yet, this same affirmative attitude disclosed certain negative assumptions about the economics of education. Colonial officialdom tended to view education as a purely social service, something good and desirable but offering few direct economic returns.⁷ Education finance was therefore treated as a consumption item in public accounts, a usage which implicitly depleted the financial resources available for investment in economic growth. It was symptomatic of the character of colonial rule that those groups allowed to participate in colonial administration generally shared this attitude towards education, especially the influential British business interests, who regularly insisted that 'non-productive' social spending be 'cut according to the cloth' of residual finance. This view was typically shared by a traditional Malay elite on the defensive against rural social change. Even those who pressed for the expansion of educational finance, mainly professionals, trade unionists and rural Malay spokesmen, did so on the basis of social service and social welfare rather than in broader development terms, by implication validating conventional assumptions. For the dominant colonial power elite the dichotomy remained between education as a social service, however worthy its social, cultural or political objectives, and the hard economics of public finance.

The transition to elected government did not result in a frontal assault on inherited economic doctrine. Rather,

⁷ See *The Colonial Empire, 1939-1947* (London: HMSO, 1947), Cmd. 7167, p.107; see also Rudner 1973 and Ness 1967, esp. pp.100-2.

the new government's propensity for identifying education instrumentally with its emergent political goals gradually infiltrated an altered conception of education into Malaysian public finance. With the introduction of the 1957 national school policy, public expenditure on education now came to be redefined in terms of investment in the country's political future.⁸ However, prevailing economic philosophy had not yet conceived of education as being functionally related to economic, as distinct from social or political, development objectives. This came later, after it became increasingly apparent during the early 1960s that inadequate human resources constituted a significant limiting factor constraining planned economic performance. The government's development imperative thereupon assimilated education policy and turned it towards economic ends: 'the traditional system of education is [now] being reoriented to achieve not only the objectives of nation-building and universal literacy, but also the economic goals of the country'.⁹ Not just education, but also its economic perspective underwent reform. Thus, in the ensuing First Malaysia Plan, 1966-70, education was first treated as an economic resource, both with respect to short-run income and longer-run human capital formation.¹⁰ This marked a radical transformation in the policy conception of education, from a mere social (or political) function to a manpower approach. Education was effectively redefined as investment in the human aspect of economic development.

This change in conventional financial attitudes towards education, from budgetary liability to economic resource, denoted a cognitive change on another level of policy from narrow revenue accounting to broader social and national accounting as indicators of national performance. While it may be tempting to explain this movement on the basis of improved government financial capabilities over time, the fiscal record points to the contrary. It was certainly the case even during the late colonial period that restrictions were applied to expenditures on education, at the same time as substantial reserve balances were being accumulated. By contrast, the development plans of the 1960s called for greatly expanded public expenditures on education, even at

⁸ Minutes of Education, *Legislative Council Proceedings*, 11 Dec. 1958.

⁹ *First Malaysia Plan, 1966-70* (Kuala Lumpur, 1966), para.491.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, paras.37, 42-3, 180.

the expense of running down reserves and borrowing. It has not been so much government's ability to afford education, as its willingness - prompted by decisions in the political sphere and articulated through changes in attitudes - that determined the provision of educational finance.

The First Five-Year Plan, introduced in 1956 by the newly-elected Alliance government, provided for a considerable expansion of public spending for departmental capital projects over the quinquennium.¹¹ Highest priority was assigned to projects in the export and nascent industrial sectors, with the implementation of the new national school policy obtaining a second priority. Education Ministry proposals for some \$M128 million for the purpose were nevertheless pruned by the Treasury's Economic Secretariat, under the direction of colonial financial officials, to less than half that amount. Yet even that constituted a three-fold increase, in real terms, over (public) capital expenditure on education during the previous five-year period. Subsequent plans were to greatly increase the magnitude and scope of overall public investment, while successive changes in the politics and machinery of planning influenced education's share. The Second Five Year Plan, 1961-65, with its emphasis still on economic and productive projects, addressed its education target to the objectives of the concurrent policy review, simply stated in crude demographic and enrolment terms. In the First and Second Malaysia Plans of 1966-70 and 1971-75 the emergence of an economic-manpower approach to education occasioned its incorporation, integrally, in their formulae for economic development.

This changed planning role for education had a paradoxical effect on the ratio of educational expenditures under the plans. Fiscal appropriations for education, to be sure, increased absolutely over the successive quinquennia. However, the relative proportion of public investment devoted to education grew in the earlier, compartmentalized plans, from 8 per cent of the First Five-Year Plan to 12 per cent of the Second, but declined relatively in the later, more integrated plans, falling to just under 10 per cent of the

¹¹ This Plan, so-called, was never actually published, but its particulars were made known in the *Report on Economic Planning in the Federation of Malaya in 1956*, Legislative Council Paper 14 of 1956. For a study of this plan and its place in Malaysian economic history, see Rudner 1975.

Table 1
Malaysian Development Plan target 1956-75
(\$M million, current values)

Sector	First 1YP		Second FYP		1st Malaysia Plan* Est.		2nd Malaysia Plan**	
	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual
Total public investment	1148.7	1007.0	2150.0	2651.7	3713.6	3610.2	5868.12	8075.83
Economic sector	780.4	760.2	1477.9	1763.7	2228.7	2210.8	3898.76	5771.95
Social sector	277.9	138.9	491.0	413.6	797.4	644.7	836.02	1132.60
- of which education	95.4	60.9	260.0	236.0	368.0	286.9	370.11	575.78
General admin. and security	90.4	108.0	181.1	474.4	687.5	754.7	1133.34	1171.38

* Peninsular Malaysia-Malaya only.

** The Second Malaysia Plan was revised and substantially expanded in a mid-term review.

Sources: *Report on Economic Planning in the Federation of Malaya in 1956; First Malaysia Plan; Second Malaysia Plan; Third Malaysia Plan.*

First Malaysia Plan and again to 6 per cent of the Second (Table 1).¹² The closer integration of education into economic planning was not intended as a mere financial gesture to a politically-popular social service. Indeed, integrated planning led to increased public investment directed downstream from the education system, in employment-relevant economic development.

In the event, developmental priorities were allocated somewhat differently by actual patterns of public finance, compared to the original plans. On the whole, 'economic' and administration/security sectoral targets were achieved, and usually overfulfilled, while social sector objectives remained chronically under-fulfilled. Education shared the social sector shortfall, to greater or lesser degrees. The First Five-Year Plan reached only 64 per cent of its education investment target, slightly less than the social sector average, owing to persisting policy discontinuities between political goals and financial commitments. As development strategy became more consistent under the Second Five-Year Plan, the rate of fulfilment for education rose to 91 per cent, a level unprecedented for the social sector. Thereafter the rate was to fall under the First Malaysia Plan, to just under 78 per cent for peninsular Malayan education, compared to over 80 per cent for the social sector overall.¹³ In spite of the policy and administrative circumstances favouring investment in education, the persistent shortfall reflected difficulties in mobilizing suitable resources, pedagogical and other, especially at the more specialized secondary and technical levels emphasized in the Plan.¹⁴ The ratio of actual public investment in education to total public investment varied similarly, increasing from 6 per cent to 9 per cent from the first to the second Five Year Plans, and declining to 7.9 per cent in the First Malaysia Plan, and again to 7.1 per cent in the Second Malaysia Plan.

¹² If non-defence-related expenditure only be considered, the share for education rose from 6.3 per cent of the First Five-Year Plan to 12.6 per cent of the Second, falling to 11.5 per cent of the First Malaysia Plan and again to 7.6 per cent of the Second.

¹³ These figures pertain to the peninsular Malayan portion of the Plan. For Malaysia as a whole the education target was 69.9 per cent fulfilled, compared to 77 per cent for the sector overall (see *Second Malaysia Plan*).

¹⁴ *Second Malaysia Plan*, p.231.

The allocation of public investment within the education system, among the different levels and types of schooling, spelled out the goals and perspectives attached to the government's supply of education. A detailed breakdown of expenditures for the earlier period of planning is not available. However, it may be inferred that the First Five-Year Plan invested comparatively heavily in the expansion of primary education in order to realize the policy objectives propounded by the Razak Committee. This was eased under the Second Five-Year Plan, by which time the policy review had redirected development emphasis towards national-type secondary education. Subsequently, the integral manpower approach adopted in the First Malaysia Plan brought about a further reallocation of internal investment priorities in education (Table 2). Post-primary education now absorbed over three-quarters of actual public investment in education over the 1966-70 quinquennium, with the bulk going to the secondary (51.9 per cent) and university (12.6 per cent) levels. Even so, the secondary school investment target remained underfulfilled almost by half, while for the much vaunted technical type (secondary) schools the investment short-fall amounted to nearly 65 per cent. Teacher training suffered an even more severe investment lag, ironically in view of the pronounced shortage of qualified teaching staff for the schools. By comparison the universities did relatively well in Malaysia, as elsewhere, having attained over 80 per cent of the plan by way of attracting a disproportionate - in terms of enrolment, at least - share of realized public investment. The resulting balance of educational investment, though distorted by lags, in effect superimposed its own pattern of post-primary institution-building on the original policy scheme. Effective priorities stress the expansion and differentiation of the tertiary level while demoting the role of the secondary forms, a haphazard reallocation of educational resources that was quite unconnected with the country's manpower needs or the contribution of the different levels of education to the growth of national income.

The effects on national income of educational investment, together with its attendant current outlays, are indicated by the 'internal rates of return' attributable to various levels of schooling.¹⁵ In his pioneering study, made

¹⁵ The internal rate of return to education is that discount rate that equates the discounted flow of education costs to the discounted flow of income benefits, and is the

half-way through the First Malaysia Plan period, O.E. Hoerr¹⁶ concluded that education in peninsular Malaysia commanded comparatively high social, as well as private returns, especially at the secondary level, even when compared to the officially-determined public opportunity cost of capital of 10 per cent.¹⁷ From the data it appears that secondary schooling demonstrated higher social and private returns than the primary or even university levels, well above the opportunity cost of capital. This was so despite a relatively high unemployment rate among non-specialized, lower-secondary school leavers.¹⁸ In these circumstances, the high net returns to secondary education testified to the significant economic potential for suitably equipped middle-echelon manpower. Laggard investment in secondary education, and the application of strict selectivity rules above the comprehensive lower-secondary level, incurred considerable opportunity costs in terms of national income forgone.

Education institution-building was also marked by a greatly increased ratio of public education expenditures to national income. The portion of GNP devoted to public

15 (continued)

equivalent of the net marginal revenue product of education capital; see Schultz 1960 and Becker 1964. On the limitations of education investment analysis, and rate of return models generally, see Merrett 1966:289-303.

¹⁶Hoerr 1975. To date this remains the only study of the returns to education capital in Malaysia. The distinction between social and private rates of return reflect the usual differences in the education costs actually incurred by the state and private beneficiary, on the one hand, and discontinuities in the flow of benefits from education in 'insulated' labour markets like Malaysia, on the other. See Mehmet 1972:277-89.

¹⁷This is the rate used by the Economic Planning Unit of Malaysia for weighing social preferences in public investment. Another rate for comparison would be the interest rate earned on overseas reserve balances accumulated owing to the long-standing Treasury 'Reserves Syndrome'. In 1969, yields on long-term US and UK government bonds, an indicator of the returns to Malaysian Official Overseas Reserves, ranged from 7.48 to 8.82 percent; Bank Negara Malaysia, *Annual Report and Statement of Accounts 1970* (1971), pp.7-8.

¹⁸*Second Malaysia Plan*, pp.99-100.

Table 2

Internal distribution of development expenditure by level
of education, Peninsular Malaysia, 1966-70

(M\$ million)

	Plan	Est. actual	Per cent fulfilment
Primary school level	54.6	48.5	88.8
Secondary school level	188.7	100.7	53.4
Technical school level	30.8	10.8	35.1
University level	30.0	24.4	81.3
Teacher training	28.5	9.7	34.0

Note: Figures do not total the aggregate given in Table 1 because of the omission of training and other programs financed under the 'Education and Training' item in the Plan.

Source: *Second Malaysia Plan.*

Table 3

Primary level enrolments, 1955-73

	Peninsular Malaysia			Sabah and Sarawak	
	Enrolment ('000)	Index (1955=100)	Enrolment ratio* %	Enrolment ('000)	Index (1955=100)
1955	776	100	58	92	100
1958	1007	130	n.a.	120	130
1960	1125	145	86	142	154
1964	1197	154	90	161	175
1968	1371	177	91	250	272
1973	1531	197	91	292**	317

* Enrolment ratio equals enrolment as proportion of eligible age group for primary level education.

** 1974.

Sources: *Educational Statistics of Malaysia 1938 to 1967; Educational Statistics of Malaysia 1969; Education in Malaysia 1974; Progress of Education in the Asian Region, a Statistical Review.*

education, indicated by total public sector expenditure (development and current) on formal schooling at all levels, grew from less than 2 per cent at the end of the colonial period to over 3 per cent by the end of the First Five-Year Plan, to some 4-3/4 per cent at the end of the Second Five-Year Plan, taking account of necessary adjustments following upon the formation of Malaysia; and, after a slight decline under the First Malaysia Plan, reached well beyond 5 per cent of Malaysian GNP mid-way by the Second.¹⁹ Pupil numbers had grown by a factor of three, yet the level of public expenditure on education per pupil enrolled rose almost three-fold, in real terms, between 1955 and 1973. These education expenditures may be treated as a form of capital formation. Then, to generate the supply of education facilities warranted by politically-determined goals, Malaysia had undertaken a rate of real gross public education capital formation averaging over 11 per cent p.a.²⁰ Education capital formation, incidentally, compared favourably with contemporary rates of real gross fixed capital formation.²¹

¹⁹ The so-called 'Karachi Plan' for education in Asia, to which Malaysia subscribed, envisaged the expenditure of 4 to 5 per cent of GNP on formal education only by 1980; UNESCO and ECAFE, *Final Report, Meeting of Ministers of Education of Asian Member States Participating in the Karachi Plan, Tokyo, 2-11 April 1962* (Bangkok, 1962). The 'Karachi Plan' was adopted in 1959.

²⁰ Education capital formation here refers to formal education only, and to the public contribution solely; cf. Schultz 1961. The private components of education capital formation are omitted through inadequate information on student-borne costs and income forgone, historically and for the present. The incorporation of these two factors would substantially increase the absolute magnitudes, and perhaps also the rates of 'gross national' education capital formation.

²¹ Real gross fixed capital formation, per annum, averaged approximately 13 per cent and 11 per cent under the First and Second Five-Year Plans, respectively; and 8 per cent under the First and Second Malaysia Plans, through 1973. See *Second Five Year Plan*; *First Malaysia Plan*; *Economic Report 1973-74 and 1974-75*.

Rates of education capital formation reflected the intensity of government goal commitment at each stage of educational institution-building since independence. The highest rates of public education capital formation occurred during the First and Second Five-Year Plan and Second Malaysia Plan periods. These periods denoted particular stages of educational institution-building or reform, coinciding with the primacy of education goals pertaining to the political system, at first inter-cultural accommodation, then social integration, and, in the last, racial balance and national political mobilization. It was lowest, ironically, under the First Malaysia Plan at which stage education institution-building bore an essentially economic policy objective, but with little or no political urgency attached. Public attitudes and policy at the time had integrated education into development strategy without, however, inducing capital and current commitments to a high actual rate of public education capital formation. In education as elsewhere, political motivations have proved to be the most powerful mainsprings, even more than economic development, for resource mobilization.

The demand for education

Enrolments reveal the effective demand for education at each level and for each type of schooling. Educational enrolments in Malaysia are voluntary, i.e. not legally compulsory, and fee-paying at post-primary levels for the non-Malay population. Historically, only Malays were accorded free education, extended in the 1960s through secondary and tertiary levels; primary schooling for non-Malays was made free in 1962 in national-type institutions, as a sweetener for the controversial secondary school reforms, though the colonial custom obliging government-aided secondary schools to provide a margin of 10 per cent free places for the poor has been retained. Free education, in the Malaysian usage, has meant free tuition only, and while conceding that children of poor families (Malay as well as non-Malay) have had difficulty meeting attendance costs of schooling, the government has pleaded financial stringencies for not making free education wholly free. Neither has the government seen fit to make primary education compulsory. Instead, its policy has been to 'assure' school places for all qualified children up to (from the 1960s) age 15. This facile substitution of assurances for compulsory attendance in effect relieved the government of the burden of providing for genuinely universal primary education, while shifting the onus of enrolment to

society at large. Yet, the assurance of places and extension of free and aided schooling produced a notable structural change in enrolment patterns, with the once strong private school sector declining to relative unimportance as incremental demand for education concentrated on public education.²²

The total school population of British Malaya before World War II was to the order of 263,000 enrolled.²³ Enrolments subsequently increased sharply in postwar years, reaching over three-quarters of a million in Malaya alone by the middle 1950s (plus an additional 158,000 in Singapore). However, the inadequate treatment of education in colonial public finance restricted the capacity of existing educational facilities to cope with both the demand backlog as well as the rapidly expanding school-age population. Consequently, the ratio of primary-level enrolments out of the eligible age group actually declined during the first half of the 1950s, to approximately 58 per cent in 1954, notwithstanding the expansion of numbers.

Self-government produced educational institutional reforms and broad policy changes giving rise to a dramatic upsurge in primary level enrolments. In order to maximize the effects of its reforms, the elected Alliance government declared its intention to accommodate all children of age 7 plus who so desired in national primary schools by 1960. This target explicitly acknowledged a likely fall in scholastic quality ('it is better to offer a slightly lower standard

²² At the primary level in 1974, private schools, mainly Chinese, comprised 1 per cent of all schools and enrolled 1/2 per cent of all pupils. At the secondary level, private schools, mainly English, comprised 18 per cent of all schools (excluding, however, technical and vocational schools) and enrolled just over 7 per cent of all pupils: *Education in Malaysia, 1974*, annex 2. Note that figures supplied for Malaysian education refer to enrolments rather than attendance. Since there is usually a gap between enrolment and actual attendance, especially in poor and rural areas, this reduces the usefulness of official statistics for measuring real educational attainments. However, the enrolment figures do provide, at least, an indicator of trends in social participation in education.

²³ Figures in this paragraph are from IBRD 1954.

of education temporarily than no education at all'),²⁴ and even accepted the possibility of deficit financing in order to bring this about - a radical departure from past policy norms. Responding to the government's commitment, Malayan primary school enrolments had reached the one million mark in 1958, two years ahead of target. A good part of this sudden increase, to be sure, consisted of over-age pupils whose schooling had been forcibly deferred. And yet, there was no slack in enrolments as this backlog was made up. Demand for primary education now shifted towards more and longer schooling on the part of appropriate age groups. This was doubtless prompted by the highly remunerative private rates of return current for primary and post-primary education, stimulated still further by policy innovations including the introduction of free primary schooling in 1962. Primary enrolments continued their rise though the average annual rate of increase slowed down from 7.5 per cent during the 1955-60 era to around 3 per cent thereafter. The effect of this was to very nearly double the total primary school population of peninsular Malaysia between 1955 and 1973, to over 1-1/2 million enrolled.

Primary enrolments in the East Malaysian States of Sabah and Sarawak, where education was administratively separate from the federal centre, displayed an even more rapid growth rate arising out of their comparatively lower starting points. Nevertheless, apart from a rapid short-term increase immediately following the formation of Malaysia, the longer term growth trend for primary enrolment in Sabah and Sarawak for the decade 1964-74 scarcely equalled that for the earlier period, 1955-64, of British rule (Table 3).

More significant than mere numerical growth has been the real and very significant improvement in the ratio of primary school enrolments to their eligible age groups in peninsular Malaysia (no data are available on enrolment ratios for the East Malaysian States). This ratio stood at about 58 per cent in 1955, at the end of the colonial era in Malayan education. Increased enrolments accompanying the first stage of policy reform elevated this ratio to 86 per cent five years later. Since a large but uncertain portion of the primary school population consisted of over-age backlog, the effective ratio for the properly eligible age group was somewhat less than the aggregate appears to indicate.

²⁴ Minister of Education, *Federation of Malaya Legislative Council Proceedings*, 15 Nov. 1956.

Once this backlog was overcome, around the middle 1960s, this distortion disappeared. Growing demand for primary education among the currently eligible age group brought the effective ratio to 90 per cent in 1964, stabilizing at just over 91 per cent by the late 1960s. Primary education had become mass public education, though still not quite universal education.

Stabilization of the enrolment ratio at 90-91 per cent implied, conversely, that about 9 per cent of the eligible age group remained consistently outside the scope of primary education. These presumably comprised the socially and economically most disadvantaged segments of the population. Foredoomed by their lack of even elementary schooling, at a time of rising educational levels in the community generally, this hard core of educational impoverishment represented the long-run social cost of the failure to utilize compulsory means of attaining universal primary education.

A marked improvement has been recorded in the education of females, in peninsular Malaysia in particular. Female education had lagged during the colonial period, despite the efforts of educators. Only 44 per cent of Malaya's female eligible age group was enrolled in primary school in 1953, compared to over 78 per cent of the male group. Females constituted only 37 per cent of total primary-level enrolments as late as 1955.²⁵ Under-enrolment of girls gave way before the expansion of popular demand for education, and the policy changes after independence. The ratio of female enrolment grew to 89 per cent of the eligible age group by the late 1960s, so that just under 49 per cent of the total primary-level enrolments consisted of girls.²⁶ This proportion remained virtually constant into the 1970s for peninsular Malaysia. There was a greater imbalance in East Malaysia, however, though the female proportion had grown from 40 per cent in 1963 to 45 per cent of primary enrolment a decade later.²⁷

Higher female enrolment rates contributed, paradoxically, to the lowering of private and social returns to education at the primary level. This was because the female population,

²⁵ *Federation of Malaya Annual Report, 1953*, p.173; *Progress of Education in the Asian Region*, pp.90-1, Table A8.

²⁶ *Educational Statistics of Malaysia 1938 to 1967* (Kuala Lumpur, 1968), Tables 4-11.

²⁷ *Education in Malaysia, 1974*, annexes 1, 3, 9.

comprising now about half of primary enrolment, generally had lower rates of absorption into the labour force, and also suffered invariable wage discrimination. Be that as it may, the spread of female education held longer-run implications for greater and higher level female participation in the labour force, and, perhaps even more importantly, for the diffusion of social modernization through succeeding generations.

The demand for education also revealed itself in vastly improved retention ratios for successive cohorts of primary schoolers. The prolongation of primary education denoted a real gain in retained, effective enrolments. During the colonial period not only were the aggregate enrolment rates low, but pupil wastage was also relatively heavy. Retention ratios for Malayan primary schools as late as the 1950-55 period averaged a mere 32 per cent.²⁸ Between 1957 and 1962, the accelerated demand for primary education also took the form of greater continuity of schooling, boosting the retention ratio to over 80 per cent. Then, with the introduction of free primary schooling, the 1962 cohort experienced the retention of some 84 per cent of its initial enrolment. (It is noteworthy that retention ratios for females was lower than for males, 78 as compared to 88 per cent.) Yet, however impressive this degree of improvement, it was still incomplete, so that its effect was ironically to accentuate the relative deprivation of the disadvantaged. Educational wastage on the current scale tended to exacerbate the already existent social gap in the universality of primary education, particularly since the enrolments of those retained in the school system had become that much more effective in educational terms.²⁹

The growth of primary-level enrolments disclosed variations in the demand for education in and among the four linguistic streams over the successive policy periods. Such variations denoted changes in social preference for educational languages, tempered by the accent of government

²⁸ Figures in this paragraph are from UNESCO, *Regional Office for Education in Asia, Long Term Projections for Education in Malaysia* (Bangkok, 1962), p.13; and *Progress in Education in the Asian Region*, p.111, Table A15. These retention ratios apply to peninsular Malaysia only.

²⁹ On retention ratios and the effectiveness of primary enrolment, see 'The problem of educational wastage', in *Bulletin of the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia*, vol.1 (1967).

policy. English language education was most in demand during the last decade of colonial rule, though relatively high rates of growth of enrolment also occurred in the Malay and, to a lesser extent, the Chinese streams (Table 4), despite adverse circumstances. The educational language policy reform of 1957 inspired increased rates of enrolment for the Chinese, Tamil, and, to a lesser degree, Malay streams, even if incremental demand still favoured English by a wide margin. Demand for Chinese medium primary schooling subsequently declined, absolutely as well as relatively, following the adoption of the national secondary education policy of 1961, with most of the shift in enrolments going to the English stream. This growing preference for English education was ultimately reversed by the decision to gradually convert the English stream to the national language. From the late 1960s English enrolments therefore fell off suddenly and drastically. A small part of incremental demand reverted to the Chinese stream, by the terminating at the primary level, while the main gains in enrolment were recorded by the Malay stream, which exclusively offered assured post-primary continuity of language. Malay stream enrolments thus accelerated during the second half of the 1960s and first half of the 1970s at nearly three times the rate for primary education as a whole.

Differential growth rates for the various streams, as education policies unfolded, yielded a fluctuating linguistic balance at the primary school level. Table 4 shows how, after a decade of policy reform, the linguistic balance moved away from Chinese and towards English language education. Compared to 1956, by 1966 the Malay and Tamil medium schools continued to attract a virtually constant 45 and 6 per cent, respectively, of total primary enrolments, whereas the English rose to 21.5 per cent (in 1956 15.6 per cent) at the expense of a Chinese decline to 27.5 per cent (33.6 per cent). Eight years later, the evolution of educational language policy had produced a dramatically altered linguistic balance in the schools. Over 60 per cent of the primary population were now enrolled in Malay medium schools, 30 per cent in Chinese schools, 5 per cent in Tamil schools, leaving a residual 4 per cent in English schools, pending completion of their conversion to Malay standard. The displacement of English schooling by policy means led to a slight revival of Chinese-medium education, but (more important) to the emergence of Malay for the first time as the language of instruction for the majority of enrolments and on an increasingly multi-racial basis. This trend towards the decommunalization of Malay-medium education, as its share

of primary level enrolment began to exceed the Malay proportion of population, implied new meaning for the national language.

Expanded primary enrolments, coupled to generally rising educational aspirations, exerted increasing demand pressure on entry to post-primary levels of education. Transition ratios, indicating the actual proportions passing through to higher levels of schooling, have remained relatively inflexible, however. Institutional and policy-inspired rigidities, largely eliminated at the primary level, continue to restrict the demand-responsiveness of post-primary education. These constraints were not happenstance, but can be traced to the attitudinal legacy of colonial post-primary education policy. Earlier British Malayan secondary education had been modelled on the English grammar school in which strict selectivity applied, and was operationally defined on the basis of officially-determined optimal (actually maximal) transition ratios, in pursuit of elitist standards.³⁰ As a result, secondary-level enrolment ratios remained comparatively low, at about 11 per cent of the eligible age group at the end of the colonial period. Restricted orientation plus selectivity combined to ensure a strong upper class bias in the post-primary school population.

Obsessions with grammar-type schooling conditioned policy towards post-primary education even after independence. Thus, the old colonial ceiling on the rate of entry into secondary-level education, at 30 per cent, was reiterated by the review committee and afterwards incorporated into policy as the norm for post-primary educational planning. Overflow demand was to be separated out and diverted to pseudo-vocational, terminal alternatives. Overall secondary-level enrolment increased more than five-fold during the decade after 1955, however the relatively low transition ratios testified to the persistence of considerable unsatisfied demand.

The institutional reforms of 1965 aimed at reconciling traditional educational policy perspectives with the mounting pressures of demand. In 1965, the aggregate secondary-level enrolment ratio stood at 25 per cent. With the introduction that year of open-access comprehensive lower-secondary

³⁰ The IBRD (1954:465) cites colonial Education Ministry sources for setting the education constituency for grammar-type secondary education at a maximum of 20 per cent of the eligible age group. The optimal transition ratio was accordingly fixed at 30 per cent.

Table 4
Primary Enrolment Trends by Language Stream, Peninsular Malaysia

Year	Malay Stream		English Stream		Chinese Stream		Tamil Stream		All Streams	
	No.	Index	No.	Index	No.	Index	No.	Index	No.	Index
1947	170,693	100	57,013	100	190,349	100	35,386	100	453,441	100
1956	392,012	230	135,875	238	291,224	153	48,212	136	867,323	191
1961	503,041	295	218,100	382	378,031	199	64,355	182	1,163,527	257
1966	575,991	337	275,848	484	352,517	185	76,691	217	1,281,047	283
1974	942,479	552	61,846	108	470,472	247	79,814	226	1,554,611	343

schooling, enrolments at this level grew to encompass 60 per cent of the eligible age group by 1974.³¹ Access to upper-secondary education which now included parallel academic (arts and science) technical and vocational streams, remained selective still. Consequently, whereas enrolments in upper-secondary increased steadily, the enrolment ratio for 1974 was still below 25 per cent. Further selectivity applied at the Sixth Form and college levels, such that their aggregate enrolment ratio was reduced to 6.6 per cent, and again at the university level, where the ratio stood at just over 1 per cent, notwithstanding the great expansion of student numbers over the late 1960s and early 1970s. Selectivity, in the recent Malaysian experience, amounted to more than just a test of educational achievement, for the public examination mechanism was commonly wielded as an instrument for imposing other policy objectives on the education system.

Institutional and policy constrictions not only depressed the levels of enrolment, but furthermore tended to distort the structure of demand for post-primary education. The national language requirement built into the selection mechanism, for one thing, was particularly interdictive to Chinese and Indian students in the English stream with a bias towards scientific and technological studies. Conversely, the utilization of fee discrimination, by which post-primary education was free for Malays and not for non-Malays, in effect lent a comparative advantage to demand oriented towards the liberal arts. Such measures worked to shift the composition of the (upper) secondary school population proportionately away from technical and skilled-vocational education, contrary to the intentions of the reform. This effect was also felt at the university level, in the general universities, where the proportion of enrolments in the liberal arts actually increased in the decade after 1965, and the proportion of graduates even more so, to more than half.³² It is noteworthy that the balance would have been

³¹ Figures in this paragraph are from *Education in Malaysia 1974*.

³² See *RIHED News* (Singapore), Nov. 1974. While the Second Malaysia Plan forecast an enrolment of 12,800 in the technical and vocational streams by 1975, actual enrolments lagged a third behind this target. Note that the Karachi Plan had called for a 45:55 balance between arts and other subjects, and the sciences and technologies, by 1975.

in the other direction except for the concentration of Universiti Kebangsaan's mainly Malay enrolment in the humanities (and, to a lesser extent, economics) faculties; indeed, it was symptomatic of the universities' ethnic distribution that Malays also predominated in the arts enrolment at University of Malaya, while the composition of the scientific and technological faculties was overwhelmingly non-Malay, especially Chinese. If the new technological universities be taken into account, the enrolment distribution emerged less emphatically liberal arts, though it was precisely these institutions that suffered from laggard technical enrolments at the upper-secondary level. Policy and institutional constraints begot a situation of qualified but unsatisfied excess demand for higher levels of education. This was indicated by the outflow of students to universities abroad, totalling over double the domestic university population.

The shape of Malaysia's educational pyramid depicts the narrowing effect of confined transition and enrolment ratios at higher rungs of the education system (Table 5). Broadly based at the primary level, this pyramid tapered sharply at the secondary level and beyond, coming to a very narrow tertiary-level peak. To be sure, the introduction of open-admission comprehensive schooling in 1965 tended to broaden the lower secondary range somewhat, but a tight bottleneck occurred at the upper levels. The skew of the pyramid demarcated the smaller proportion of Malaysian enrolments at the post-primary levels, relative to the country's socio-economic development, or compared to others in the Asian region or Latin America. With the distribution of educational opportunity so confined, the selective mechanisms invariably involved a comparatively large extent of pre-selection along typically class and racial lines, in curious combinations. Differential policy treatment of Malays and non-Malays made for a reportedly significant degree of upward mobility of Malays from lower class backgrounds to higher levels of the education system; while, conversely, for non-Malays this distributive mechanism for educational advancement tended to reflect and reinforce existing patterns of social stratification.

The dynamic development of educational facilities in Malaysia may be justified by the employment benefits thereby conferred, as indicated by the overall (internal) rate of return to expenditure on education. To be sure, this situation was enhanced in part by the deliberate government

policy of promoting the advancement of Malays through educational sponsorship coupled with assurances of employment. However, non-Malays likewise benefited from educational developments, although with less of an effect of social change. Unlike some other less-developed countries, Malaysia did not incur a gap between educational ambitions and economic realities. Rather, the rate of development of the education system, and particularly its capacity to generate intermediate and higher skills, constituted a major constraint on Malaysian economic development. Policy limitations and inhibitions at the post-primary level imposed manpower restraints on the economy, and reduced the potential returns to education. The average educational attainment of the Malaysian labour force may have compared favourably with that of less-developed neighbours. However, the sharply skewed shape of the Malaysian education pyramid denoted average attainments far beneath the more advanced Japanese and western levels (Sundrum 1971).

To be sure, any evaluation of the wider consequences of education policies must necessarily remain tentative, owing to our inadequate time perspective. It is still too soon to discern the influence of changes in Malaysian education since independence: the first cohort to embark on post-1957 national schooling finished its primary education in 1963, completed the secondary level not before 1970, and graduated from university (bachelor's degree) only in 1973. This lengthy time sequence, the gestation period of education, suggests that the outcome of the education institution-building process of the 1950s and 60s has yet to be fully revealed.

Table 5

Percentage distribution of enrolment at all levels

	Year	All levels	1st level	2nd level	3rd level
Malaysia	1965	100	78.1	21.2	0.7
Malaysia	1973	100	71.5	(18.4+9.0)	1.1
Asian region	1965	100	75.0	22.0	3.0
Philippines	1964	100	79.4	14.8	5.8
Republic of Korea	1965	100	78.6	19.1	2.3
Singapore	1965	100	74.0	23.6	2.4
Taiwan	1965	100	75.1	22.1	2.8
Latin America	1965	100	82.0	16.0	2.0
Europe	1965	100	64.0	32.0	4.0
North America	1965	100	64.0	26.0	10.0

Sources: For Malaysia: *Educational Statistics of Malaysia 1938 to 1967*;
Education in Malaysia 1974.

For other countries: *Progress of Education in the Asian Region.*

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Chapter 6

Stimulating the appetite and coping with the consequences in Indonesia¹

Lambert Kelabora and Kenneth Orr

Indonesia's population increased by 64 per cent between 1940 and 1970. Yet enrolment at the government primary schools increased by six times during the same period, from 2,021,990 in 1940 to 11,374,000 in 1970. The secondary school intake increased by 72 times, from 26,237 in 1940 to 1,892,340 in 1970. The growth rate at the tertiary level was 80 times, from 1,734 students in 1940 to 136,892 in 1970.² If enrolment figures can be accepted as indicators of the demand for education, then there has been an incredible expansion of that demand since the last days of Dutch rule. This paper aims to suggest some of the reasons for this expansion and some of the consequences of it. It centres for the most part on educational institutions under the Ministry of Education.

Limitations of colonial supply

Since the Dutch colonial administration decided in the early part of the nineteenth century to enter public education, the provision of education for the native population gradually increased over the years. This growth was given an impetus in 1867 by the creation of the Department of Education. With its own budget and personnel, the Department gradually extended primary education to rural areas, especially in Java. The main aim of the government's

¹With the exception of proper names and titles, all terms in this paper have been expressed in the new spelling system adopted in 1972.

²This and other figures are taken from: Indonesia, *Statistik Indonesia 1970/71* (Jakarta: Biro Pusat Statistik, 1972); Nugroho, *Indonesia: Facts and Figures* (Jakarta: Perguruan Tinggi Ilmu Statistik, 1967); Indonesia, *Statistik Pendidikan* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1972); and other sources as referred to in the text.

educational drive was to train lower level public servants for its establishments. As the government apparatus grew in size and complexity, the demand for a sizeable number of Indonesians with secondary education became obvious. So secondary education, too, was introduced and expanded. A technical school was established in Surabaya in 1860. This was followed by a high school in Jakarta (1867) and teacher training courses in Jakarta (1871), Surabaya (1875), and Semarang (1877). The student enrolment in all the colonial schools grew accordingly to reach 42,242 students in 1880.

So the demand for education in its earlier stages was a public demand. It was generated by a government, a ruling elite, which saw education as a means of achieving its own ends. The government educational endeavour was gradually and systematically extended to more of the peasantry in the countryside who had initially been ignorant of the attractions of western education. 'Pupils were often forced [by government officials] to attend school.' And since the aristocracy was a part of the educated colonial elite, the 'native princes decided who were to go to school and truants were often fined' (Hutasoit 1954:28). As more people were educated and became conscious of the rewards to be gained from western education, such as a well-paid white collar job in a city, the private demand for education increased. Parents in particular came to identify western education with their desire to improve the social and economic future of their children. In this way, the private demand for education by parents and social organizations increased rapidly as a response to the growth of public education.³

The dawn of the 'ethical policy' at the opening of the twentieth century led to further expansion of educational facilities. The champions of the policy argued that the time of exploitation and endless repression of the colonial people for the sake of developing a great Dutch empire should be given a new face: the native population should be given a share in that development. They should be allowed to imbibe something of the arts and cultures of the west so that they could become a part of the greater humanity. This called for more education for the indigenous population. So, schooling was restructured to enrol more native children. For the first time in many years schools were open not only to birth but also to talent, and ordinary Indonesians were

³Indonesia, *Social Demand for Education* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1972), pp.2-3, provides a categorical distinction between public and private demand for education.

allowed to study at Dutch-medium schools. G.McT. Kahin (1952:32) points out that 'this approximated a small scale social revolution. By academic training and ability a man could rise in the civil service to a rank close to that of regent'.

The idea of education as the means for social and economic betterment of oneself gradually emerged. The realization of this idea generated more determination in the minds of many parents to ensure better education for their offspring. The resultant influx of native children to Dutch-medium schools threatened to lower the quality of education. So the government and the aristocracy were forced to create separate schools, the vernacular village schools, for the native population. The implementation of this policy was responsible for much of the expansion of educational facilities to villages during the period before World War II. But it was by no means sufficient to meet the social demand for literacy, especially in Java. Unauthorized schools were set up in private homes and vacant store-rooms under Indonesian teachers of varying educational competence. The colonial government labelled them 'wild-schools', and by the early 1920s was moving to control them, especially in view of the evidently nationalist bias of their curriculum. In spite of ordinances and regulations, their number increased; and the government of the 1930s, noted for its repressive policies in most other directions, modified its demands for teacher supervision, and turned a blind eye to the continued spread of these unofficial institutions. The enrolment in the primary schools in the colony grew to reach 2,021,990 in 1940 - a sizeable increase since 1880. The Dutch-medium primary schools were reserved for the Dutch, Eurasians, and the aristocracy. So too were most of the secondary schools. But more and more native children were being admitted to the latter as the number of primary school graduates built up over the years. This increase pushed the secondary school enrolment to some 26,237 students by 1940.⁴

The notion that education was the passport to better social and economic status in the colonial society was much reinforced in the minds of many Indonesians by the development of tertiary educational institutions in the country. After long debate and hard work, an Institute of Technology was created in 1919. This was followed in 1924 by a School of

⁴ Sarino Mangunpranoto, *Pembangunan Pendidikan Nasional* (Speech by the Minister of Education in Bandung, 29 Oct. 1956), p.7.

Law, and by the conversion in 1926 of the training school for native doctors into a School of Medicine. A School of Philosophy and Literature, and Academy of Public Administration, a School of Agriculture, and a Royal Military Academy were established just a few years before the war. These higher educational institutions were either affiliated with the long established universities in Holland or were direct copies of them. The curriculum, staff, language of instruction, and teaching techniques were all Dutch. It was through these institutions that the few Indonesians who had the rare opportunity for study were able to delve into the nature of western culture. They were able to train themselves in medicine, technology, economics, philosophy, arts, literature, political and legal thinking. Some were given the chance to study in Europe and obtained a great deal of intimacy with the European social, political and intellectual traditions. It was one thing to allow a handful of Indonesians full access to the documents of European humanism. It was quite another to permit them, on return to the Indies, to replace senior colonial officials and occupy positions in the civil service in which the notions of liberalism might be applied. A number were employed; but the proportion was not much more than half at lower middle levels and diminished to a mere 7 per cent at high levels (Kahin 1952:34).

An effect of this process, for all its limits, was to substitute for heredity a new set of criteria for membership of the native elite. And those who met the new criteria were very conscious not only of the place education had played in their own elevation, but also of the place it might play throughout their society, enabling the most able to rise from places of private obscurity into public eminence. One of these men wrote in 1935: 'Every nation desires progress and development, so too does our nation, Indonesia' ... [since] 'education is men's guided progress towards happiness', it was certainly a means to facilitate progress (Mangunsarkoro 1935:1). It was indeed the function of national education to 'raise the dignity of the country and the nation' (ibid: 4). This conviction informed the thinking of some political parties when they wrote it into their platforms. It stimulated the angry young men of that generation to participate in the formation of a People's University and teach there (cf. Hanifah 1972:51).

Understandably, many Indonesian leaders were eager to welcome the Japanese Army to Indonesia in 1942. The Japanese quickly imprisoned all Dutch personnel thus putting an end to the 350-year-old Dutch colonialism. The multiple Dutch

primary education with all its discriminatory features was abolished and replaced with a uniform *Sekolah Rakyat* - SR (People's School) for all. The general idea was to provide every Indonesian village with its own school in order to bring education within the reach of everyone. Secondary schooling was far more limited in its operation and tertiary education was closed during much of the occupation period. The Japanese also forbade the use of anything Dutch in the country and prescribed the Japanese language and textbooks in the schools. However, the Nipponization policy failed for lack of qualified personnel and other resources. So, *Bahasa Indonesia*, which had long been a symbol of nationalist struggle was adopted as the medium of instruction. The hoisting of the red and white flag of the nationalist movement 'Indonesia Raya' was permitted in the early part of the occupation period. With this rapid expansion of the Indonesian content of the curriculum, education clearly emerged as an instrument of nation building. The nationalist leaders were using education for political socialization, for ideological exaltation and for national integration. The Japanese too were employing the schools and the teachers for military propaganda to fight the war, to develop unquestioning loyalty towards the Japanese emperor, and to train the youngsters and mobilize the population at large to defend their motherland against the incoming Allies. Later, the Japanese were forced to curtail much of their educational activities. But the infrastructure of an expanded education was there and in the event lasted.

Primary education by right and by obligation

In August 1945, Indonesia was proclaimed an independent nation and the western-educated elite of the prewar years took the reins of government. These were the people who in the previous two decades had protested so strongly at attempts by the colonial government to close or otherwise restrict the number of 'wild-schools'. Bad education, they had argued at that time, might be preferable to no education at all. To be educated was a universal human right. 'Every citizen', the Constitution of the Republic proclaimed, 'shall be entitled to receive education'. A commission was set up in 1946 under Ki Hadjar Dewantara, and the following year it produced its recommendations for a national system of education based on the national culture. Initially, the recommendation ran, there should be a four-year primary school in every village, a continuation primary school, a general high school and a vocational high school in every

Kabupaten, and so on. The long-term goal, in the commission's reckoning, was a six-year primary school for every 2000 people. By the time these recommendations could be given statutory embodiment, the ambition was greater. The first National Education Act of 1950 proclaimed, 'All children who are already six year old shall be entitled to and those who are already eight years old shall be compelled to study at school for at least six years'.

This strong commitment was during the succeeding years to have a twofold effect. On the one hand, it inclined the republican government to commit its slender resources extensively to education. On the other, it effectively muzzled the possibility of any politician ever publicly querying the wisdom of a policy of extending the institution of schooling far beyond the capacity of the society to maintain its quality. The people on the one hand and the government on the other were locked in a situation of symbiotic stimulation: each action taken to meet the appetite for education was done with an assurance that the demand was a commendable one, and should never in an independent country be moderated.

This two-sided commitment had its positive consequences. The government was faced with an impossible task. Even to convert some 16,000 existing three-year village schools to six-year schools was a mammoth undertaking. Beyond that there were the thousands of villages without any school at all. The primary school enrolment in 1950 was just over five million. The number of students of school age not attending a school was estimated to be a further six million.⁵ But if the government could not find resources, the people might. During the colonial period, villages had often built their own school, or rented a room or two in one of the larger homes, in order to be able to set up a school. They now set about doing it again. Speaking in Bandung in October 1956, the Minister of Education told of the reception by his ministry from the community during the 1954-55 academic year of 6878 primary school buildings complete with land and school yards.⁶ No more tangible proof could be given of the extent to which private demand for education had been generated and maintained. There was no question by then of the appetite for education existing only among the elite.

⁵The Ministry of Education's exact estimates were: students enrolled in primary school 5,040,800; school age students not enrolled 5,921,200.

⁶Mangunpranoto, *Pembangunan Pendidikan Nasional*, pp.11-3.

It was of course one thing for a village to purchase land, erect a building on it, and to summon the unschooled children to enter it. It did not become a school without a teacher. Estimates in the year 1950 suggested that, with a national class size of 50 pupils, there was a shortage of 19,816 teachers. If the entire cohort of school-age children were to attend, this figure would need to have added to it a further 138,240 teachers. With each succeeding year, the permanent officers of the Ministry suffered an increasing awareness of the enormity of this task. It was therefore decided to postpone the introduction of compulsory education until 1961 so that there would be enough time to 'train as many teachers as possible; within the shortest possible time; at the lowest possible cost; with a minimum reasonable standard of education' (Hutasoit 1954:84). Even so, a Bureau of Compulsory Education was set up by the Ministry, to educate the community concerning the need for compulsory education, and to advise the government on the best and cheapest possible way of implementing the policy. By the end of the decade, it was obvious that its objectives had been more successful on the first count than on the second, and the target date was moved from 1961 to 1981.

Secondary education according to need or demand

This does not mean that considerable efforts were not made to train teachers quickly and cheaply. A number of courses were instituted. Three of these deserve mention. The stopgap measure to get bodies in front of classes with a minimum of delay was known as the Emergency Instructors Training for Introducing Courses for Compulsory Education (abbreviated in Indonesian to KPKPKB). This enrolled primary school graduates for one year of training, and then placed them for their second year in a school which boasted at least one well-qualified teacher, and brought them back to the institution for the third year of study, and so on. Though the teachers' unions had some reservations, they accepted the plea that these people in their second year were *in statu pupillari*, and muted their objections - at least until there were some alternatives. By 1954, half a million students were enrolled in KPKPKBs, and union pressure in the light of the grim experience of having 14-year-olds taking full classes, had mounted. So the course was abandoned, and a number of the institutions were instantly converted by decree into SGBs. These refer to the *Sekolah Guru B*, a four-year training course for those who had completed the sixth year of primary school. The numbers rose to 534 by the end of 1953. Soon

afterwards enough graduates were being produced to fill all the positions for which the government or other bodies could afford to pay salaries. This glut strengthened the hand of the teachers' unions and others who by then were calling for the phasing out of this institution in favour of one offering a longer training. This was the *Sekolah Guru A*, which was planned to offer a six-year post-primary course. The demand for places, however, was so great that its intake for the first few years was almost entirely of SGB graduates. Later it took students who had completed the academic junior high school, and added only the final three years to their 12 years of schooling-plus-training. By 1960 SGA was the norm for a fully trained primary teacher, though of course the schools continued to employ hundreds of thousands with lesser qualifications.

Enrolment at teacher training schools formed a major part of the secondary school intake for several years. There were two particular attractions which these schools had over others: nearly all places in them were reserved for scholarship holders, and those who passed from them were guaranteed employment by the government. Even so, many parents had other ambitions for their children, and for the fulfilment of these pressed for the extension of academic high schools. In the first decade after independence, there were vacancies aplenty in the expanding offices of the government. By 1960 it was clear that all slack had been taken up and indeed that several departments were overstaffed. Higher levels for entry were set; but still the pressure continued, especially in Java, where the association of aristocratic status with civil service had been retained right through the colonial period. To be educated was to become *priyayi* (a term of deference implying refinement of civilized behaviour); to be employed as a government officer was to confirm that honoured status.

Meantime, the development plans were languishing for want of technicians. The rapid educational expansion of the 1950s was limited almost entirely to the general academic stream. It became clear in the early 1960s, when the Eight Year National Overall Development Plan was drawn up, that the ratio of technical high schools to general academic high schools was only 3 to 7. For a nation which was proclaiming its intention of embarking on a wide-ranging program of social and economic development, this was seriously inappropriate. The Ministry of Education was therefore instructed to make the reversal of this ratio an essential part of its educational strategy within the Plan. The Communist Party,

growing rapidly in size and a measure of acceptance by the Sukarno government, supported the policy. The party proclaimed the need for a change of values, from those which lauded bookish learning to those which respected manual labour. An attempt was made to produce an acceptable formulation of aims for the education system which would include 'the development of manual, technical and other skills' as one of its items. But even before the cataclysm of 1965-66 which destroyed the Communist Party, even that modest attempt at ideological redefinition had been quashed. The fact that the political left had espoused this aspect of educational reform was a sufficient reason for many to oppose it. And the combined professional inertia of the teaching body and of the bureaucrats served to slow any movement for rapid change. Besides, technical schools required extensive capital outlay for building and maintenance, and few funds were left over from campaigns of confrontation for programs of social reconstruction.

Yet the Ministry of Education went on, even after the advent of the Suharto government, declaring that it was working towards reversing the 3:7 ratio and using its powers to this end. For a time, it took the bold step of refusing to open any more academic secondary schools. New technical schools and secondary schools with a curriculum bias towards economics and commercial practice were permitted. Since the latter offered a fairly academic curriculum and still provided access to higher education, they became very popular. The pressure in some parts of the country for the prestigious and inappropriate academic high school was still so great that local officials found it expedient to set up a school and after it was operating to seek recognition from the Ministry. And of course the number of private institutions multiplied. Even when the count was limited to schools recognized by the Ministry, and the secondary schools specializing in economics and commercial practice were counted on the technical side of the ledger, progress towards the goal of reversing the imbalance seems to have been negligible.

Dearth in tertiary education

If there was some need in the early years of independence to persuade parents to send their children to schools to fill places provided for them, there was none at the university level. The neglect of university facilities by the colonial government had been so monumental, and the need for trained personnel in the new republic was so pressing, that every

available place was taken, and has continued to be through succeeding years of phenomenal expansion. An early attempt to reconstitute the prewar facilities in Jakarta in 1945 had soon to be surrendered to the returning Dutch, who over the next two years brought earlier plans to fruition and formally proclaimed the University of Indonesia. It grew rapidly over the next few years into one of the foremost universities in the country.

Meantime the republic was fighting for its life in Central Java. The Javanese tradition had always placed a high value on literacy as a part of that cultivation which marked *priyayi* behaviour. And the republican government was committed not merely to political power but also to social reform. So it was fitting that a series of efforts should be made to set up tertiary institutions there. Teachers and students who had escaped from the capital at the time of the Dutch return set up a faculty of medicine, one part of it in Surakarta and the other in Klaten. A group of social and intellectual leaders initiated a private foundation in Jogjakarta, named after Gajah Mada, a prime minister of great repute in the medieval Mojopahit empire. In 1946 they were able to announce the opening of three faculties (Law, Philosophy and Letters) in a place which most tangibly symbolized continuity with the great tradition of Javanese civilization: the palace of the Sultan of Jogjakarta. It rapidly grew to being a full university, and even after the return of the seat of government to Jakarta retained republic-wide prestige.

During the next few years, every indicator pointed to the need for an expansion in university places. Many of the senior administrative posts in the colonial government had been occupied by Dutchmen and Eurasians who had left the country, and the independent government had a whole host of programs to administer and extend beyond those which it had inherited. For years there was a dearth of sufficient trained personnel, and those who graduated could count on appointment to permanent and often esteemed government posts. So new tertiary institutions were set up in other parts of Java, and a few in other islands. The dearth of staff with sufficient expertise was as great as that of buildings, and emergency measures were adopted to lessen its effects. Lecturers would double up, giving their whole week's ration in Jakarta on the first three days of the week, and then go to Bandung on Wednesday afternoon and repeat the issue there. It was one of the factors which, begun as an emergency measure, settled in time into a permanent maladaptation. Its effect

in the first decade was to reinforce the chronological primacy of Java over the outer islands as the place to send your children if you wanted a university place for them.

It was of course only one among a number of respects in which Java seemed to those who lived elsewhere to be getting more than it gave. The rebellions of 1958-59 came sufficiently within sight of success to convince the Sukarno government that there must be more tangible efforts at decentralization of services than had hitherto occurred. No single institution carries as much prestige per unit cost as a university. During the succeeding five years, therefore, universities were set up all over the scattered republic from Kotaraja in Aceh to Jayapura in Irian Jaya; eventually every province could boast a university.⁷

Those who have had extensive experience in mystical practice assure us that mantras can have a very powerful effect when uttered by the well-practised initiate whose mind and heart is concentrated. When, however, they are picked up and repeated by those of slight understanding and shallow commitment, they are valueless, and their worth is consequently denigrated in the eyes of onlookers. The period of Guided Democracy resounded with mantras. It was one thing to appoint a rector and a handful of professors, and set them in an empty building. It was quite another to produce a high level of concern for scholarship, or even a widespread acceptance by those who attended that scholarship was in any sense fundamental to the institution. The spread of the appetite for university education ensured that there were students, and as long as the institution issued an appropriate piece of paper at the end of the process, they would submit meekly to whatever regimen was prescribed. Some of these institutions have managed in the intervening years to get together a modest collection of books and a modicum of laboratory equipment. But the great majority of the best qualified and most able academics prefer to live in Java, whence they may make one or two flying visits each year to deliver an intensive course of lectures over a week or a fortnight.

⁷The Ministry of Higher Education and Science listed in 1965 some 39 state universities, technical institutes, and institutes of education and teacher training: *Perguruan Tinggi di Indonesia*, p.35. By 1970, the figure was 58 institutions, catering for 136,892 students: *Statistik Indonesia 1970/71*, p.78.

So much for the willingness of a government, straitened by the effects of economic mismanagement, to meet the rising demand for tertiary education. When all the available places in governmental institutions were taken up, and hopeful matriculants were still unaccommodated, the scene was set for the expansion of private institutions. Some of these, especially those associated with Christian churches, were able to draw on resources, both of personnel and finance, from outside the country, and they have escaped in varying measure the dilution of quality which has afflicted many of their contemporaries. Others have been set up, with more optimism than sound judgment, in one small building with a handful of administrative staff. Lectures are given in the evenings by graduates who have been teaching during the day in a local high school - in the same classrooms. There is no laboratory and no library. Since examinations may be taken only in recognized universities the percentage of students in these private institutions who pass is usually low, sometimes negligible. Even so, they seldom lack as many students as they can accommodate. As more graduates with degrees move into a supersaturated employment market, the appeal of these institutions can only increase. And since their only effect on governmental institutions is one of emphasizing the latter's superiority by comparison, there is little case for closing them down.

Development plans versus social demand

The period since the abortive coup of 1965, and the subsequent removal of President Sukarno from power, has seen a wide-ranging change of policies in most aspects of national life. A number of these have had effects on the demand for education. In 1967, for example, access to the permanent civil service was frozen except for necessary replacements. It took some time for the reality of this to seep into the minds of parents who had looked to the education system to provide for their more able children a safe route into the bureaucracy. It is a moot point whether the effect has been to lessen the clamour for university places, though it certainly has increased the insecurity of later-year students, and probably has increased the tendency to press on to higher levels rather than to seek employment at the end of the first degree.

The new order abandoned the application of hothouse nationalism to the management of education, and in its place looked for systematic thinking based on adequate information.

Instead of basing decisions on ideological perceptions of the world, the new technocrats of Jakarta commissioned careful enquiries into educational problems to provide the information for sound decision-making. L.H.S. Emerson presented his *Diagnosis of the Present Situation with Identification of Priorities for Development* to the Ministry in 1969, and among his recommendations was one for a high level survey of the entire field of education, so that future decision-making might be based on much more accurate information. The consequence was the National Project for the Assessment of Education, set up under the joint auspices of the government of the republic and the Ford Foundation, with noted Indonesian and expatriate researchers seconded to it.

Working parties were set up in various parts of the country. Even as the project began to apply itself to its enormous task, its usefulness was called in question. Educational decisions, it was said, involved not only empirical data but also political, historical and cultural factors. Just what vested interest was able to exert what influence it is difficult to say. By the end of 1970 the project had been transformed beyond recognition. It had become the Office of Research and Development in Education and Culture, and then promoted to the status of a Directorate-General. The practical effect was to deprive the project of its independence, to bring the Indonesian staff firmly back into the ambit of the Ministry, and to make the participation of foreign researchers supplementary only. It could be said that the change made it easier for recommendations to find their way to the schools through the normal channels of the Ministry. It could equally be said that the possibility of independent assessment had been effectively emasculated.

The effects of inflation on teachers' salaries through the decade of the 1960s had been to reduce them to disastrous levels: unless a teacher's wife had a job, there would be no rice to feed his children for half the month. So schools and parents' organizations developed a range of fees, some payable on first entry, others each month. Legally, government schools were free; but in practice few of them could function without a fee system. By 1970, fees were accounting for somewhere between 20 and 25 per cent of the total expenditure on education.⁸ The effect of this on parents is hard to judge.

⁸This calculation is based upon figures given by Daroesman 1972:Tables 15, 17, 18. Figures of expenditure on education by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and by private foundations are not available: hence some guessing and the estimate in terms of outer limits.

There is evidence that for some it meant keeping school-age children at home, especially in rural areas and more frequently if they were girls.⁹ The fact that is worth remarking in the present context is that so many parents went on sending their children to school, in spite of the severity of this discouragement.

Another indication of the continuing private demand for education has been the revival and extension, especially in the period immediately after the 1965 watershed, of the *madrasah* movement. These were schools of a kind founded in the latter colonial period by a reformist Muslim organization as a response to the expanding but discriminatory Dutch educational policies. Subsequently, these schools were taken up widely by different groups of the devout as a means of bringing a wide range of Indonesians back to orthodoxy. Their appeal during the first decade or so of independence appeared to be limited to the religiously zealous. But with the growth in intensity of the struggle for political hegemony between the supporters of Communism and those of Islam in the 1960s, the schools were seen as one of the places where the battle for the hearts and minds of the younger generation might be more effectively waged. In many of the villages the *madrasah*, sponsored (albeit at several removes) by the Ministry of Religion, became an alternative to the primary school under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. Its presence throws up several considerations relevant to the theme of this paper. The first is that it is manifested and reinforced among the orthodox section of the population the importance of having their children educated; science and modern history and some of the other emphases of the government primary school might be of dubious value, but there was clearly a case for a curriculum centred upon the *Koran* and Islamic doctrine and practice. The second was that the *madrasah* was virtually always a local foundation. The majority of primary schools in the villages had been founded by the local community; but once the building was established, the Ministry of Religious Affairs had seen to the staffing and taken over the supervision of curriculum and general order. To the present, only a handful of *madrasahs* have been nationalized (and therefore fully fully supported) by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Teachers' salaries usually come from that quarter; but the rest of the school is financed and managed by a board of orthodox local leaders. It is therefore

⁹Indonesia, *Pendidikan Dasar di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1972), p.72.

very much a manifestation of a village appetite for education related to an alternative supernatural culture. The third consideration relevant to this paper is that, although less finance for the running of the *madrasah* comes from outside the village, it keeps its fees lower than those levied by the Ministry of Education's primary school. It is therefore able to appeal to a segment of village parents who are more financially straitened than most of their contemporaries.

Meantime, the appetite for education goes on posing problems for planners. There has been a continuing shortfall in accommodation. Schools in urban areas continue to be used for two shifts, and sometimes for part-time evening classes also. In some villages, classes continue to meet in rented or free accommodation in private houses; in others, they go on occupying run-down, ill-lit, leaky buildings. The second five-year development plan provided for the replacement of a handful of those in each *kabupaten* with permanent buildings. Most of the increased allocation of funds to education has gone on an improvement in teachers' salaries, such that the village teacher by 1973 no longer needed to be treated with charity by his neighbours. The supply of fully trained teachers is more than adequate; but a number of them cannot find employment, while a sizeable proportion of the tenured positions in the schools are held by under-qualified persons who were appointed in earlier periods of shortage. Technical education is no longer popular, and large numbers of those who accept places in the schools set up to provide it do so in order to move beyond them to tertiary institutions. What the Suharto government is finding, in this segment of public life as in many others, is that it is one thing to eschew the foolishness of the past and adopt a more rational stance; it is another to have society at large accept a new order, no matter how reasonable. And it is much more to expect that deepseated personal longings which have had approval from the political elite for forty and more years will now be set aside in the interest of some abstract notion of balanced development. Development in the thinking of most Indonesians means more money for the things which were in short supply under the old regime - including schools. It is an uncomfortable position for any government to be in, and not one for which the present incumbent can be held responsible. Nevertheless, the appetite is now both extensive and in many places deep: the government has in some measure to continue to satisfy this demand or to attempt to moderate its growth if it is not to be faced with widespread social disaffection.

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Chapter 7

Chinese education in Southeast Asia

Christine Inglis

The schools set up by Chinese immigrant communities in Southeast Asia in the first half of this century were an impressive example of the ability of, and desire by, a minority group to provide for its children's education. A major survey of Chinese education in Southeast Asia appeared in 1964 (Murray) but since that time there have been considerable changes in the social and political structure of many of the countries in the region. Not least among these changes has been the actual, or foreshadowed, establishment of diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and many of the countries. If, as many writers have predicted, the establishment of diplomatic relations marks a watershed in the position of Chinese communities in these countries, now is an appropriate time to reconsider the position of these communities.

This paper, which is concerned with the present situation of Chinese education in the five ASEAN countries (Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia) explores one area of relations between Chinese and non-Chinese. An examination of Chinese education in the ASEAN countries highlights the political nature of the issues which surround minority education, not only in Southeast Asia but elsewhere. The material in this paper focuses on the wider social considerations involved in minority education and touches only indirectly on such issues as the effects of multi-cultural or multi-lingual education on concept attainment and literacy since, with the exception of a few educators, the debate over Chinese education has not been directly concerned with these issues.

The five countries examined in this survey vary in the size of their ethnic Chinese¹ population as well as in the

¹The term 'ethnic Chinese' is used to refer to those persons who, while not necessarily Chinese citizens or born in China, nonetheless retain significant social and/or cultural links

positions which the Chinese occupy in the social, political and economic life of the respective countries. For this reason, variations in Chinese education are to be expected. After a brief survey of certain key features of Chinese education in the first half of this century I will, therefore, outline the opportunities and demands which exist for Chinese education in each of the five countries and how these have changed in recent years. The concluding section of the paper will consider the extent to which common trends are discernible in these changes, and the implications which these changes may have for relations between Chinese and non-Chinese.

The development of the Chinese schools

One of the major characteristics of the large-scale migration of Chinese to the countries of Southeast Asia in the first half of this century was the extent to which these immigrant communities financed and operated their own schools through community organizations. Private tutorial groups and classes had always provided a classical education for small numbers of select Chinese in the Nanyang; but the new schools were designed to offer the new, modern forms of

1 (continued)

with the Chinese community. The following table is provided in the absence of more detailed and up-to-date information. Since the information in the table was compiled the respective populations have increased; but there would appear to have been few major changes in the proportions of Chinese in the population.

Country	Ethnic Chinese (1970 estimate)	Total population	% Chinese
Indonesia	3,100,000	117,000,000	2.6
West Malaysia	3,250,000	9,000,000	36.1
East Malaysia (Sabah and Sarawak)	455,000	1,581,000	28.1
Philippines	520,000	37,158,000	1.4
Singapore	1,500,000	2,017,000	74.5
Thailand	3,400,000	34,738,000	10.0

Source: Heidhues 1974:3.

education which were gaining currency in China and the countries of Southeast Asia. Many factors were involved in the emergence of these schools. The size of the Chinese migration and the inclusion for the first time of large numbers of Chinese women resulted in much larger numbers of Nanyang-born Chinese youth requiring a traditional education. For the many young people whose families could not arrange an education in China, the opportunities for education in the Nanyang were limited to a small number of Christian schools or, as in Thailand and Indonesia, a few places in government-sponsored schools for the indigenous elites.² The needs of commerce for educated staff also provided the incentive for the establishment of Chinese schools in Thailand (Skinner 1957:169), while in Indonesia the establishment of an extensive system of schooling was part of a larger scheme to improve the position of the Chinese (Williams 1960). In most cases, the schools used some form of Chinese as the language of instruction. The use of Chinese was favoured not only by the background of the Chinese, but also by the cultural and political nationalism of the Chinese communities at a time of national revival in China. Furthermore, the Chinese saw little opportunity for social and economic advancement in the colonial situation of the Nanyang, even if they could afford the costs of an education in the appropriate European language.

Initially the overseas Chinese schools were subjected to very few governmental restrictions but, as they became more overtly nationalist with the adoption of the national language, Kuo Yü, to replace other Chinese languages as the medium of instruction, and with the increasing involvement of the Kuomintang government in the operation and curriculum of the schools, regulations were introduced to limit the schools' operation in all countries except the Philippines (Clark 1965; Watson 1973; Coughlin 1960; Skinner 1957; Perpinan 1964). Despite these regulations and, in some cases, the selective granting of government subsidies (Watson 1973: 83), the Chinese schools in the present-day ASEAN countries, with the exception of Thailand, remained essentially under the control of the Chinese communities until World War II.

In the three decades since the end of the war, there have been major political and social changes which have affected the Chinese communities and their schools. One

²The quite extensive system of Dutch-Chinese schools started in the Dutch East Indies in 1908 was a response by the Dutch administration to the success of the Chinese private schools.

important change affecting the schools is the increased involvement of governments in education, while another is change in the nature of the Chinese communities which provide the schools' students.

The increasing importance of government policy in Chinese schooling is related to the achievement of independence. Now, in addition to Thailand, all five countries have their own national governments which have replaced the former colonial administrations. Two major tasks which these governments have undertaken are economic development and the search for national unity. Education is seen to be of particular importance in both these tasks, and all the countries have a national education scheme. In the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia, a key feature of the educational program is the promotion of the national language. In such circumstances the existence of separate, minority-oriented schools is regarded with considerable suspicion. Where the minority concerned is Chinese this suspicion is compounded by yet others. These suspicions focus on the co-operation often felt to exist between Chinese and colonial interests, especially at the time of independence; the economic success of many Chinese; and the fears of communist subversion inspired by the People's Republic of China, in which Chinese and their schools might be actively involved as a fifth column. Taken together these fears and suspicions provide the basis for the considerable interest which a government is likely to take in the operation of Chinese schools. For this reason, any attempt to discuss the demand for Chinese schooling must take account of the ways in which this demand may be extensively circumscribed by government decision.

The demand is also closely related to the characteristics of the Chinese communities. Since the end of World War II the Chinese communities of Southeast Asia have developed a more stable and permanent population. Major reasons for this change are the almost complete cessation of Chinese immigration as a result of government restrictions and the low rate of return to China, except in situations of extreme difficulty such as have occurred in Indonesia. Inevitably the stabilization has had an effect on the socio-political structures of the community. One potentially significant consequence of these changes is that the younger Chinese, who have been born locally, now constitute a major section of the Chinese communities. The effects of these changes on the demand for Chinese schooling are far from clear. A common assumption is, however, that the changes flowing from stabilization will lead to a weakening valuation of, and

need for, Chinese language and culture, with a consequent decline in the demand for Chinese schooling.

Singapore

Among the ASEAN countries, Singapore is the one which provides the widest opportunities for parents to obtain a government-supported Chinese education for their children, as government-supported schools use Chinese³ as the medium of instruction from primary to tertiary level. The availability of government-supported Chinese education is a result of the decision, implemented on the attainment of independence in 1959, to provide equal educational opportunities in the country's four official languages: English, Chinese, Tamil and Malay. At the primary level this policy involves the government in providing six years of free primary education in each of the four official languages. All schools operate on a common curriculum and are required to teach a compulsory second language which, for those students not in the English stream, is English. In recent years the second language has been not only taught but also used as a medium of instruction. In 1969 Mathematics and Science were taught in English in all non-English-medium schools, while in English-medium schools the second language was used for teaching Civics and, since 1972, 'Education for Living', a subject which integrates Civics, History and Geography. By 1974, 43 per cent of teaching time used the second language, while additional subjects such as Physical Education and Music could also be taught in the second language. The effect of these innovations was virtual parity of the first and second languages (Gopinathan 1974:44).

At the end of their primary schooling and later on in secondary school, students sit for examinations which they may take in the medium of instruction. At the secondary level the government provides schools which teach in all the languages except Tamil and, as at the primary level, there are a small number of private English- and Chinese-medium schools. At the end of secondary school, Nanyang University, where the major medium of instruction is Chinese, provides for students who wish to continue with their Chinese education. Apart from commerce, the University does not, however, offer any professional courses. These are taught at the University of Singapore where the medium of instruction

³Here, and in future instances, the term 'Chinese' will be used to refer to Mandarin Chinese or Kuo Yü.

is English. Students with a Chinese language education are able to take degree and non-degree teacher training courses which equip them to teach primarily in the Chinese-medium schools. Formerly Ngee Ann College and the Singapore Polytechnic offered courses in Chinese but now, like other vocational and technical colleges, their courses are offered in English, though a lower standard is required than at the University of Singapore.

In 1970, 74 per cent of Singapore's population aged between 5 and 14 (the major years of school attendance) were Chinese, yet only 31.8 per cent of the school students in that year attended Chinese-medium schools. This drift towards English education is also found among the Malays and the Tamils, whose schools contained only 5.9 per cent of all enrolments although they were 25 per cent of Singapore's population aged between 5 and 14. In 1970 more than 64 per cent of the schoolgoing population were attending English-medium schools. The preference for English education is actually increasing. In 1959 the percentage of English-medium enrolments was 50.9 per cent, in 1967 58.9 per cent, in 1970 64.3 per cent and in 1975 69.4 per cent. Over the same period the enrolments in Chinese schools declined from 43.6 per cent to 28.2 per cent of all enrolments (Chan and Evers 1972:9; Singapore 1975:1).⁴

In 1968 the government granted recognition to degrees from Nanyang University and so widened the career opportunities for holders of the University's degrees. This recognition had no marked effect on the overall level of enrolments in Chinese schools as the decline in their proportion of students continued from 1967 to 1975. In 1967, however, the Chinese-medium secondary schools catered for 37.2 per cent of all secondary students, while Chinese primary schools catered for 32.6 per cent. Primary schools in all the other language mediums that year, however, took a larger proportion of the students at the primary than the secondary level. A similar, though less marked, variation in Chinese enrolments occurred in 1975 when 29 per cent of secondary students were in Chinese schools compared with 27 per cent at the primary

⁴The effects of this trend are most serious for the Malay- and Tamil-medium schools. In 1975 and 1976 no students were taken into the first year of the Tamil primary schools. Although closure of the Malay-medium schools is not so close it is significant that, as with Tamil, no new teachers are being trained in the medium, though training is given in teaching both languages as a second language.

level. One tentative interpretation of these figures is that the existence of Chinese-medium, tertiary, education provides at least some incentive to continue within the Chinese-medium school rather than to change to the English-medium schools. Despite the official recognition of the Nanyang degrees the weakening of this trend by 1975 perhaps reflects the inevitable time lag involved in school enrolments adjusting to reduced tertiary opportunities.

The availability of government-supported education in Chinese suggests that factors other than the cost of school fees and the quality of the educational facilities influences an increasingly large number of parents to decide against a Chinese education for their children. An important influence in the Singapore situation is the wider occupational advantages which are generally perceived to exist for the student with training in, and knowledge of, English. The prominence of the English-educated in all spheres of social, economic and political life is a continuing affirmation of the correctness of this belief. Students in Chinese-medium schools do receive instruction in English but their level of competence, especially in spoken English, is inevitably below that of their English-educated counterparts. To the extent that the demand for education is indicated by school enrolments - and in Singapore the government policy of educational equality makes this a more reasonable assumption than in many other countries - the Singapore figures indicate a significant but declining demand for Chinese education. If, as I have suggested, a key factor in this declining demand is the perception of career opportunities, then the 1974 decision to give more prominence to the teaching and use of Chinese in English schools may encourage an increasing number of parents to send their children to English-medium schools in the belief that children will receive there a considerable grounding in the Chinese language while also obtaining an English-language education.

A further way of estimating the demand for education apart from school enrolments is by examining the expression of public support and demands for such education. Singapore's 1959 educational policy was based on the recommendations of the 1955 All-Party Committee set up to investigate Chinese education. Up to that point Chinese-medium education had been provided by the Chinese themselves, though there was considerable frustration about such a situation. The Committee took such views into account when it made its recommendations. The extent of the support for Chinese education was indicated by the wide range of persons, from

within Singapore as well as overseas, who contributed to the establishment of the Nanyang University in 1953 (Lind 1974:103). The Chinese willingness to support Chinese educational institutions continued after independence when, in 1963, Ngee Ann College was established by a Chinese community association. Both Ngee Ann and Nanyang University have now become statutory bodies under the control of the government, which has reorganized them so that they are no longer catering exclusively for Chinese-educated students. Government intervention in the operation of Nanyang University during the 1960s was extensive and was related to fears of communist subversion and of excessive Chinese cultural chauvinism at a time when the government was trying to avoid the image of Singapore as a Third China and to establish its place in the Federation of Malaysia (Lind 1974:109-21).

In recent years Singapore educational policies have placed an increasing emphasis on English, especially at the tertiary level. Nevertheless, the demographic dominance of the Chinese ensures that the actual de-emphasis on Chinese is less than on Malay or Tamil. It is in this context that the 1974 decision to extent Chinese instruction in English-medium schools can be seen as a response to the increasing importance of Chinese as a world language and, of more significance for the present discussion, to popular pressure (Chee 1974:190). Since the operation of the Singapore government favours an administrative, rather than a political, mode of operation, the demand for Chinese-medium education is less easy to determine. The recent willingness of Chinese to establish their own tertiary institutions, and the success of pressures to introduce more Chinese in the English-medium schools, points to a continuing, albeit muted, desire for Chinese education among large numbers of Singapore's Chinese population. The significance of such desires should not be overestimated especially as, in the last year, Chinese teachers' organizations and community groups involved in education have declared their support for the abolition of separate language streams to be replaced by a system similar to that currently operating in the English-medium school.

The Philippines

Of the five countries under consideration, the Philippines has the smallest Chinese population both in absolute and relative terms: yet the opportunities for Chinese education, until April this year, were equalled only by those in Singapore. Unlike Singapore, however, the

Chinese schools in the Philippines are privately financed, as indeed are a majority of secondary and tertiary institutions in the country. A further difference is that, in the Philippines, the children attending the Chinese schools undergo a much more demanding education. The reason is that, in the Philippines, Chinese schools have been allowed to operate on the condition that they teach the normal, Filipino curriculum and only then, as an addition, teach a full Chinese curriculum. The Chinese curriculum is taught in Chinese though in the earlier years the Amoy dialect (or, in two Cantonese-sponsored schools, Cantonese) may also be used. The Chinese curriculum is based on that used in Taiwan while the texts are also prepared in Taiwan. Chinese schools thus offer an exclusively China-oriented education which is symbolized by the observance of Chinese national holidays and the flying of the Chinese Nationalist flag.

The usual way in which the Chinese schools meet the requirements of offering two curricula is by offering the Filipino curriculum in the morning and the Chinese in the afternoon. Students undertake the double primary curriculum in the normal six years but, whereas the Filipino secondary curriculum takes only four years, the students who also study the Chinese curriculum require six years to complete their secondary schooling. At the end of the Chinese secondary curriculum, students are able to apply for entry to Taiwanese universities and each year some 30 do so (Chang 1973:594). Students may also continue their education in a Chinese tertiary college in the Philippines where teachers are trained for the local Chinese schools. Permission has also been granted to teach a course leading to a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (Board of National Education 1972:91). Completion of the Chinese curriculum does not qualify students for entry to Filipino colleges and universities, for which successful completion of the Filipino curriculum is a minimum requirement (BNE 1972:41).

In the 1971-72 school year there were 152 Chinese schools in the Philippines with a total enrolment of 75,195 students (BNE 1972:40). One of these institutions was the aforementioned tertiary college and, of the others, 46 offered courses at the secondary level, 151 at the primary level and 33 at the kindergarten level (Go 1972:393). Figures from a year or two earlier indicate that the distribution of pupils is closely related to the number of schools teaching at each level. Thus, of a total of 61,445 students, 9,718 were in kindergarten, 38,663 were in primary schools, 9,462 were in lower secondary schools while 3,430 were in upper secondary

schools and 172 were in the college (Chang 1973:594). In addition to the schools which taught the Chinese curriculum there were also, in 1972, ten schools which had given up their registration as Chinese schools and now taught only the Filipino curriculum as a part of which, however, they offered Chinese language as a subject (Go 1972:394). At least one missionary-operated school which had a large enrolment of Chinese students also taught Chinese on a similar basis (Amyot 1972:46). Estimates of the children attending schools offering the Chinese curriculum indicate that, although the number of schools has not increased rapidly, the student enrolments have increased considerably. Thus, in 1948, shortly after the end of World War II, there were estimated to be 20,000 students in the Chinese schools, by 1956 the estimate was 56,000, in 1963 64,000 (Murray 1964:86) and, by 1971-72, 75,000. Whether this increase in student numbers has kept pace with the increase in the school-age Chinese population is impossible to tell without detailed demographic material. An approximate doubling in the general school population in 20 years does, however, suggest that they have kept pace.

The significance of these enrolment figures for Chinese schools becomes more apparent when it is noted that most writers agree that a majority of Chinese children in the Philippines receive a Chinese education (Amyot 1972:41; see quote in Omohundro 1973:179). If this is the case, then it suggests that the appetite for a Chinese education in the Philippines as indicated by the school enrolments, is higher even than among the Singapore Chinese. Although I have some doubts whether the figures do indicate such a high level of enrolments in Chinese schools, nevertheless the proportion is still high especially when it is remembered that Chinese education is not free. There is contradictory evidence on whether the Chinese schools are run primarily as profit-making institutions or by community groups (Murray 1964:86; Pao 1964:345). In the latter case the fees would tend to be lowered or the education of a slightly higher quality. Nevertheless, at the primary school level, free public education using the Filipino curriculum is widely available. At the secondary level, however, the significance of fees as a consideration in a Chinese education is much less important as even the public schools (which cater for only 67 per cent of the secondary pupils) charge fees except in a few urban areas (Chaffee 1969:126). Students who pursue the dual curriculum are subject to very heavy academic demands, particularly at the secondary level. Not only are

they required to cover more subjects and in a longer period, but they are also required to learn Filipino and English in addition to Chinese. One compensation for these heavy costs to the students is that pursuit of the Chinese curriculum does not inevitably limit the future occupational chances of the students, since they also study the Filipino curriculum. The financial costs of giving children a secondary education in the Philippines are beyond the means of a majority of the population, and the rural population are particularly disadvantaged in this regard. As the Chinese are primarily urban-based and are considered to be above average in their economic position, it might be expected that a high proportion of students continue to secondary education in the Chinese schools. However, the figures on enrolments indicate that the proportion of students who proceed to a Chinese secondary education is comparable to the general population. This suggests that at the secondary level some parents may transfer their children to schools which follow the Filipino curriculum, possibly those which teach Chinese language as a subject, because they feel the non-economic costs of a Chinese education are unwarranted. Such a transfer is especially likely where the parents have decided that their child will continue with tertiary training in a non-Chinese institution.

Although the Chinese make extensive use of the Chinese schools the existence of the sizeable system of Chinese schools in the Philippines is not a reflection of the political influence of the Chinese, who constitute a small and largely alien section of the population. While the private schools play an extremely important and accepted part in the Filipino educational system, and operate with minimal supervision (Bernadino 1965:18), the latitude allowed to the Chinese schools is a result of a special diplomatic arrangement between the governments of Nationalist China and the Philippines. By the 1947 Treaty of Amity between the two countries and the subsequent agreement of 1955, schools offering Chinese curriculum were allowed to be operated in the Philippines so long as they also offered the Filipino curriculum and met the general requirements of the Bureau of Private Education. Under this agreement the Nationalist Chinese Embassy played an important part in the operation of the Chinese schools as it authorized the teachers allowed to teach in the school, supervised the curriculum and standards of instruction, dealt with promotions and issued certificates and diplomas (Perpinan 1964:334).

In 1964 the Minister for Immigration and other prominent Filipinos called for the closure of the Chinese schools.

In the ensuing debate the Chinese supporters argued that because of the alien status of most Chinese they were entitled to go to schools which provided them with the education of their homeland (Liao 1964:331-57). It was also argued that the Chinese schools were not the only ones operated by aliens since many schools were operated by foreign missionaries. The hostility to the existence of the Chinese schools continued and in 1972 laws were proposed which were an explicit attempt to Filipinize the Chinese schools in curriculum, students and management (BNE 1972:42-3). The dependence of the Chinese schools on diplomatic considerations was made clear by the Board of National Education which endorsed the general proposals subject to the following conditions:

1. A policy stand to be taken by the Philippine Government on the relationship with the Republic of China; and
2. that the endorsement will not violate treaty obligations with the Republic of China. Any step taken to achieve the aforementioned objective should be on a diplomatic level (BNE 1972:42-3).

Following the introduction of martial law later in the year these proposals formed the basis of Presidential Decree No. 176 which provided for the cessation of alien schools by the end of the 1976 school year.

The Philippines' decision to end diplomatic relations with Nationalist China in 1975 removed the main diplomatic reason for continuing the Chinese schools. Such an action was not opposed by the People's Republic of China since it fitted with its policy of encouraging the overseas Chinese to integrate with the local population (Fitzgerald 1972). By April 1976 there were only 138 Chinese schools operating in the Philippines, a reduction which indicated that a number had already adopted a Filipino curriculum and now offered Chinese only as an optional language. The announcement in early April, the day before the summer term commenced, that in future all Chinese schools were banned from offering Chinese subjects, other than Chinese language, was not a surprise. Under the new regulations, textbooks require governmental approval and Chinese classes are limited to two periods of 50 minutes per day. The schools are to be open to Filipino students, for a knowledge of Chinese is not to be a requirement for admission, nor are credits in Chinese courses to be used as a basis for promotion in the Filipino curriculum. While Chinese language will still continue to

be taught, significantly, no new courses are to be introduced. Furthermore, Chinese schools are to observe only the legal holidays of the Philippines.

It is as yet too early to determine how the Chinese react to these restrictions or how far-reaching their effects will be. The changes do, however, indicate the extremely tenuous position of Chinese education in the Philippines.

Malaysia

Although future prospects for Chinese education in Malaysia are bleak, the political situation in the country is such that changes in government policy result from different considerations and are implemented differently from the Philippines.⁵ The discussion of Chinese schooling in Malaysia is complicated by variations in policy between East and West Malaysia. These variations are related to the different patterns of education which existed in each state before Federation. The pattern in West Malaysia is that there are now, at the primary level, both public and private schools teaching, according to a common curriculum, in three languages: Malay, Chinese and Tamil. Students in Chinese-medium schools also study Malay and English. At the end of the primary school there is no exam for entry to the secondary level, but students who change from one medium to another are placed in the remove class for one year. At the secondary level there are no Chinese-medium schools, though there are private Chinese schools which use English as their medium of instruction and teach Chinese language in addition to Malay. The alternative to attendance at these private Chinese schools are the Malay- or English-medium secondary schools, though the latter are being phased out. As English is progressively replaced by Malay in these schools, the Chinese schools will also change their medium of instruction to Malay. No tertiary institutions offer a full course of instruction in Chinese. Malaysian students have attended universities in Taiwan and the Nanyang University in Singapore, but the Malaysian government does not automatically recognize a degree from these universities.

Although this paper will not consider in detail the situation in Sabah or Sarawak the following brief comments indicate their increasing similarity to the West Malaysian

⁵ A detailed survey of the Malaysian educational system and policies is contained in the paper by Martin Rudner elsewhere in this volume.

situation. In Sabah the main difference at the primary level is the absence of Tamil-medium schools. Until 1971 Chinese-medium secondary schools did exist, but have now been phased out. Since Sabah is not yet eliminating the English-medium schools at secondary level, the Chinese schools are now changing to the use of English as the medium of instruction. Tertiary courses for trainee Chinese teachers were conducted in Sabah but the last of these was completed in 1971 (Dewan Bahasa an Pustaka 1973:74). In Sarawak, Chinese-medium secondary schools continue to operate but they are privately supported as the government only supports Chinese-medium schools at the primary level.

In West Malaysia the proportion of Chinese children attending Chinese primary schools declined from 33.9 per cent of all enrolments in 1960 to 27.2 per cent in 1967 (cf. Table 4 of Rudner's paper, this volume). From 1969, however, attendance at the Chinese primary schools began to increase to a 1974 figure of 30.3 per cent. Over the same period, the proportion of students attending the Chinese secondary schools has declined far more sharply. In 1961, when it was announced that the government would no longer subsidize Chinese-medium secondary schools, 31 per cent of all secondary students were enrolled in Chinese schools; but, by the following year, the percentage had decreased to 17 per cent, and this decline continued until 1970 when the Chinese schools accounted for only about 3 per cent of all enrolments. Since that time, the proportion has stayed fairly stable (Department of Statistics, West Malaysia 1975:221; Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka 1975:42).

In 1970 the Chinese were 35.5 per cent of the West Malaysian population. Even in the absence of detailed age distributions, it is apparent that a very high proportion of Chinese children attend Chinese-medium primary schools. The increase in the proportion since 1969 is related to the progressive abolition of the English-medium primary schools from 1970. Unlike the Tamil schools, the Chinese schools obtain some, though not the major, share of those students who might otherwise have attended the English schools. The increase in Chinese school enrolments is not readily explicable in terms of future opportunities for the Chinese educated since the possibilities of tertiary training have, if anything, contracted. The students currently in the Chinese primary schools will need to take an extra year for their secondary education since they will need to enter the remove class before moving into the Malay-medium secondary schools. The increase in enrolments in the Chinese primary schools is

occurring during the period of increasingly rapid Malayanization which was implemented following the 1969 riots. Because of this, the enrolments may indicate an increasing concern among certain Chinese with ethnic culture and identity. Certainly, the enrolments indicate that large numbers of Chinese parents are not convinced of the desirability of Malay-medium education. At the secondary school level, in contrast to the primary, the present enrolment figures for Chinese schools suggest a very restricted appetite for Chinese education. The effectiveness of the government's financial policy in affecting the pattern is clearly indicated by the decrease in student enrolments between 1961 and 1962. The costs of a private education may well be a factor deterring parents from sending their children to the schools; but the schools also have a fairly low academic standing and reputedly are used by students who have been unable to obtain entry to the government secondary schools. Since 1976, English is being phased out of the secondary schools as a medium of instruction. When figures for this and subsequent years become available, it will become possible to assess whether, as at the primary level, some students select the Chinese schools in preference to the Malay secondary schools.

In addition to using enrolment figures as an indicator of the demand for Chinese education, the Malaysian party political system provides another basis for assessing this demand. Communalism is an important element in West Malaysian politics and education has been an issue on which considerable political debate has focused (Enloe 1970). At the 1969 elections, education, and in particular the issue of a Chinese university for students from the Chinese secondary schools, was a prominent issue (Snider 1970). The strength of this demand and the electoral support received by the opposition parties who advocated the issue point to a very extensive demand for such education. An examination of the enrolment figures does not entirely support this conclusion. In 1969, only 3.6 per cent of all secondary students attended the Chinese schools and this was clearly not the majority of Chinese students, though, for reasons outlined above, the schools did not provide a real alternative to many parents and students. The discrepancy does, however, highlight the way education and national language usage can readily become the symbols for a much larger range of issues relevant to communally-based politics. Following the 1969 elections and subsequent riots, amendments to the Sedition Act prohibited attacks on Malay as the national language and on other areas of the constitution which enshrined Malay privileges. The

1974 election campaign in West Malaysia was, in consequence, far less contentious and non-Malay education was, for obvious reasons, not a major issue.

Thailand

Thailand is the only ASEAN country which has never been under European colonial rule. It is thus not a surprise to discover that, even before World War II, the Thai policy on Chinese education was restrictive, since the orientation of the schools was considered to be at variance with the interests of the Thai nation. This restrictive policy has continued so that, under present regulations, Chinese schools are not allowed to use Chinese as a medium of instruction and can only teach Chinese language, with texts produced under Thai supervision, for a maximum of ten hours per week in the four years of primary school. Most schools teach no more than six hours of Chinese since the acceptance of this further restriction makes them eligible to receive government financial assistance. At the end of primary schooling, which is being extended gradually to seven years throughout Thailand, progression to secondary school is dependent on success in an examination in Thai. At the secondary level, no Chinese schools are allowed to operate though Chinese language courses are available in certain schools. The study of foreign languages was one of the topics dealt with in the National Scheme of Education initiated in 1960. Included in the aims giving effect to the scheme was the recommendation that students in Junior Secondary Vocational Courses were only recommended to study Chinese. For this proposal to be put into effect, it would be necessary for these schools to teach courses in Chinese language. In 1974 there were changes in the educational system which included greater flexibility in the courses available at secondary level. In one area, this has led to a plan to introduce Teochiu as a language subject in a public secondary school next year. The selection of Teochiu was based on its usefulness as a business language. The only tertiary courses available in Chinese are those provided in the language departments of universities.

A survey of Chinese schools in 1973 revealed that of the schools which had been operating in 1967, at least one-third and perhaps more of the 69 located outside the Bangkok-Thonburi area had closed; among the 63 schools in the Bangkok-Thonburi area there had been fewer closures (Franke 1974:47-8). The decline in the number of Chinese schools in this six-year period is a continuation of an existing trend for schools to

close. The closures did not, however, always result in a decline in enrolments. Recent information on the numbers attending Chinese primary schools is not available. In 1962 though there were 211 schools with 83,606 pupils (Amyot 1972: 90) who represent about 10 per cent of the total Chinese primary school population. This number was less than half the 175,000 who were reported to be attending Chinese schools in the immediate postwar period when Chinese schools operated for a brief period without extensive restrictions. However, it was an increase over the 50,000 students estimated to be attending Chinese schools in 1955, when there was a slight relaxation in measures directed against Chinese schools and Chinese (Skinner 1957:370). The increase in students at the Chinese schools in the period between 1955 and 1962 is linked to increases in the school-age population rather than to increases in the proportion of Chinese children attending the schools. Although Franke (1974) does not present detailed figures on school enrolments, the impression is that total enrolments have not increased and may well have declined.

The decision of the government in the 1950s to restrict the number of Chinese schools placed a limit on the extent to which enrolment figures can be interpreted as an adequate indicator of the demand for Chinese education. The increase in enrolments between 1955 and 1962 indicates that a certain elasticity does exist in the schools to absorb new students. By the early 1960s one writer was of the opinion that the expansion of the Chinese school enrolments had come to an end (Murray 1964:74) and the more recent material supports this conclusion.

The cost of a Chinese education may deter many parents, especially as increased government spending on education has improved the opportunities for obtaining a free public education. During the 1950s, Chinese school fees increased substantially as an indirect result of government activity in restricting the entry of Chinese, including teachers. The competition for Chinese teachers able to meet the requirements necessary to obtain permission to teach in Thailand led to increases in teachers' salaries (Coughlin 1960:154). At the same time, government action in treating donations to Chinese school funds as illegal reduced substantially the financing of schools by associations and private individuals - this was an important factor leading to the closure of a number of schools (Skinner 1957:370). A further consideration for parents is that, in the short time available for learning Chinese, few students will obtain any real level of proficiency. The time spent on their Chinese studies may, however, detract

from their study of Thai which is a basis of the examination to gain entry to secondary school (Coughlin 1960:157). In Thailand, secondary education is an important prerequisite for entry into the professions and bureaucracy as well as into the upper strata of commerce.

A different perspective on the demand for Chinese education in Thailand can be obtained by examining the Chinese response to the restrictions on the curriculum, texts, teaching and management of the Chinese schools. Although the majority of Thailand's Chinese are citizens, demands for Chinese education have not been a prominent feature of the short periods of parliamentary rule in the late 1960s and again more recently. Under postwar military governments, the Chinese initially did make public protests about the restrictions on Chinese schooling; but these met with little success and the Chinese did not continue to press their protests to any great extent (Skinner 1958). The failure to continue with the protests may indicate that the Chinese believed protest would be unsuccessful or counterproductive. Another factor may also have been lack of support from community leaders. Skinner (1958:131-2) shows that, as parents, the Chinese leaders relied more on non-Chinese than Chinese schools in the local education of their children. While many sent children overseas for education, this was not always to countries such as Malaysia or Taiwan where they would obtain a Chinese education. The willingness of these key leaders to send their children to non-Chinese schools suggests that they may have little enthusiasm for supporting campaigns for increasing the opportunities for Chinese education. As described earlier, such men also withdrew their all-important financial support from the Chinese schools when the government indicated by arrests that such support could be construed as subversive activity.

After a period of extensive restrictions and closures of Chinese schools in the early 1950s, the Thai government, which acknowledges the importance of private schooling in its system of education, has reached a position where its control over curriculum, texts, teachers and operation is sufficiently strong for it to allow the remaining Chinese schools to continue. Chinese pressures have played relatively little part in these decisions but, according to one observer, many Chinese in the early seventies were not satisfied with the opportunities available (Chang 1973:591).

Indonesia

Indonesia is at present the only ASEAN country where opportunities for any type of formal Chinese education are absent. In no school is Chinese used as a medium of instruction, nor is Chinese language taught as a subject.⁶ The only way to obtain a Chinese education is outside the school system, from individual tutors or through programs conducted by voluntary associations, though in the present political situation these options are extremely limited. The lack of opportunities for a Chinese education results not from a lack of demand from parents and children but from a government decision to discontinue existing educational opportunities.

The present situation in Indonesia is the latest phase in the government policy on Chinese education which, since the end of the Japanese occupation, has been highly erratic. In the immediate postwar period the majority of Chinese students were attending Chinese-medium schools. Although from 1952 the government took an increasing interest in the Chinese schools, severe limitations on their operations were only applied by the government from 1957. In that year Indonesian citizens were forbidden to attend alien schools, a policy directly aimed at the Chinese schools. At that time there were 425,000 children estimated to be attending Chinese schools and 250,000 of them were Indonesian citizens who were affected by this regulation. Soon after this, the number of remaining alien Chinese schools was reduced still further by government regulations and by the closure of those schools which were oriented to Nationalist China. In the remaining schools, government control of curriculum led to a greater emphasis on Indonesian material. Many of the students who had been forced to leave the Chinese-medium schools attended schools which taught in Indonesian but offered classes in Chinese language. These schools were operated by Baperki, a political party which, in the tradition of an earlier politically oriented group of Chinese, placed considerable importance on the education of Chinese students. As part of this policy, Baperki established a university to cater for Indonesians of Chinese descent who often found they were discriminated against in seeking admission to university.

⁶I am indebted to Dr Charles Coppel for the information that the Special Project National Schools, referred to later in this section, had ceased operation by the beginning of 1976. Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to obtain detailed information about the exact date and reasons for their closure.

In the post-independence period in Indonesia opportunities for Chinese schooling have been closely linked with wider political developments. This is most clearly demonstrated in the aftermath of the 1965 coup which saw the closure of all remaining Chinese alien schools and the government supervision and control of all Baperki schools and its university, for Baperki had been linked with the coup attempt. Only in 1968 was it announced that the Special Project National Schools would be allowed to operate and the first of these schools opened in 1969. By 1971 there were eight Special Project National Schools (SNPC). These schools were allowed to offer Chinese language as a subject which could be taught for a maximum of 2.5 hours per day (Suryadinata 1972:71; Chang 1973:590). In these schools, which were privately financed but operated under government control, 60 per cent of the students were meant to be Indonesian citizens, but in at least one of these schools 72 per cent of the 1865 students were not Indonesian citizens (Mabbett and Mabbett 1972:12).

The small number of SNPC schools offering Chinese language courses would hardly seem sufficient to meet the demand for such education if one considers the numbers of students attending Chinese schools even a decade earlier. Yet, according to one report, the schools were able to accept all those who applied (Mabbett and Mabbett 1972:12). The lack of opportunities for pursuing a Chinese tertiary education in either Indonesia or elsewhere and the variability of government policy may discourage potential students. Even if students were not all able to gain admission and the number of schools did increase as another report suggests (Suryadinata 1972:71) it appears that Chinese who were Indonesian citizens were not particularly interested in them since, instead of the required majority of Indonesian citizens, the schools had a majority of alien students. In part this may be because of the difficulty aliens experience in obtaining access to schooling (Liem 1969:342); but such a variation in demand is not new among the Indonesian Chinese. In the prewar period, the *totok* Chinese, who were often new arrivals and culturally oriented to China, were far more likely to support the Chinese-medium schools than were the *peranakans*, who had often lost their Chinese cultural distinctiveness and preferred the Dutch-Chinese schools which gave instruction in Dutch. During the war and the period up until 1957, *totok* and *peranakan* differences in education became less obvious though the latter were still more likely to attend Indonesian-medium schools. This difference was

re-emphasized after 1957 since the Indonesian citizens were more likely to be *peranakans*.

Since the 1965 coup the majority of aliens and Indonesian citizens, even during the short-lived operation of the SNPC schools, have received a comparable, though Indonesian, education. In most cases Chinese children now receive their education in private schools, many of which are operated by boards which are affiliated to Christian churches and which are assimilation conscious (Coppel 1976:76). The attendance of Chinese children at these schools indicates not only a preference, and the ability to afford the fees, but also, in some cases, the difficulty in gaining entry to public schools (Mabbett and Mabbett 1972:12). At the present time in Indonesia there appears little prospect that the opportunities for Chinese education will become once again available for either the alien Chinese or those Indonesian citizens who are of Chinese descent.

Conclusion

The preceding survey indicates that the Chinese schools continue to operate as separate institutions in all the ASEAN countries, except for Indonesia. Although variations exist between the ASEAN countries in the position of Chinese schools, it is clear that in all countries their role has changed considerably since World War II. No longer are the schools, even in the Philippines, an important formal channel for transmitting a Chinese culture based on China as the homeland. Instead, as a result of government controls and manipulation, they now provide an education following the common national curriculum, whether this is taught in Chinese or in another language with Chinese as only one of many subjects. Furthermore, the integration of the Chinese schools into their respective national education systems, especially where they receive financial assistance, provides them with an official recognition which they often lacked.

Although Chinese schools continue to operate it is often under considerable difficulties which jeopardize their future. The most immediate difficulties are those in the internal operation of the schools. Staff recruitment is a problem for the schools because restrictions on immigration make it increasingly necessary for teachers to be recruited locally; but only in Singapore and the Philippines are teacher training courses available for new teachers. The financing of the schools also is a difficulty where government help is not available. Formerly Chinese communities were renowned

for their funding of education through organizational and private donations, but now much of this support has disappeared. The costs of providing adequate school facilities are now also much higher than before. Fees have become higher and a more important source of finance. Although difficulties in financing and staffing may not force the closure of the schools, they can lower the quality of the education which is offered.⁷ Another factor affecting the quality of the education obtainable in the Chinese schools is the considerable language skill required of children attending Chinese schools. For most children Kuo Yü is not their mother tongue yet, in addition to it, they are often required to learn the national language and English. In many cases these languages are taught by teachers whose own command of these languages is imperfect. All too often it appears that children may acquire a low level of competence in a number of languages (Tilman 1970:41).

The continuing operation of any school depends ultimately on the willingness of parents to send their children to it. The extent of parental support for the Chinese schools is difficult to determine with the available material. Nevertheless, my impression is that, with the exception of West Malaysia, smaller proportions of parents are now using the Chinese schools. Costs and low standards may deter the parents, especially where the occupational aspirations they have for their children are hindered by receipt of a Chinese education. A further factor which may influence parents' decisions about Chinese schooling is often alleged to be the extent of their own 'assimilation'. The term assimilation has a multiplicity of meanings⁸ though, in the context of Chinese schooling, emphasis is usually given to level of personal commitment to, and identity with, China and the extent of adoption of non-Chinese cultural traits. Detailed information on the extent of parental 'assimilation' of those attending Chinese and non-Chinese schools is rarely available. Information on the socioeconomic status of parents suggests that, at the upper levels, the children of the wealthy and

⁷ Estimates of the relative quality of Chinese and non-Chinese schools vary considerably and the information I have does not allow for a detailed assessment.

⁸ Gordon (1964) has distinguished seven major variables in the process of assimilation: cultural assimilation, structural assimilation, marital assimilation, identificational assimilation, absence of prejudice, absence of discrimination and civic assimilation.

those in professional and bureaucratic occupations are less likely to attend Chinese schools (Amyot 1972:41; Skinner 1958:131-8). Such parental characteristics are not, however, necessarily indicators of assimilation. Nor does the frequent attendance of such children at schools with a good educational reputation, often operated by Christian missionary groups, necessarily ensure assimilation.

On a society-wide level, a crude indication of the relationship between assimilation and educational preferences may be obtained by comparing attendance at Chinese schools, in so far as these are fairly freely available, with the social position of Chinese within the larger society. Singapore, the Philippines and Malaysia are all countries where Chinese schools are freely available to any who want them. Malaysia and the Philippines both have high rates of attendance at their Chinese schools and, in both countries, the Chinese can be broadly described as constituting an unassimilated ethnic minority. In Singapore, by contrast, the attendance rate at Chinese schools is much lower and is, in fact, actually declining. Since the Chinese constitute a majority of the Singapore population the decline in attendance at Chinese schools can scarcely be accounted for by reference to their increasing assimilation into Singapore society. Rather it can be attributed to the success of the Singapore government in encouraging the Chinese to accept English education and bilingualism as the basis for a new Singaporean national identity. This government policy has depended on effective restructuring of educational and career opportunities which has not been perceived as endangering the position of the Chinese.

An important constraint on the future of Chinese education is exercised by governmental policy. The above comments on the internal operation of the Chinese schools and the factors influencing parental support have already indicated examples of how governmental policy may indirectly affect the future of Chinese schools through measures which hinder the operation of the schools or which restrict the job opportunities of their pupils. Governments may also directly affect the schools by decisions about the conditions under which they may operate. The recent restrictions on Chinese schools in the Philippines are an example of such direct government intervention. An important element in the Philippines government's change of policy was the establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Although Malaysia and Thailand have also recently established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China,

the establishment of relations has not affected these governments' policies on Chinese education. In the field of education it therefore appears that the establishment of such diplomatic relations has not generally brought major changes.⁹ One reason for this is that individual governments' policies on diplomatic recognition are only partially related to their other policies affecting their Chinese populations. These latter policies are substantially determined by the political influence and power of the local Chinese population. This is true of education as of any other area and it is for this reason valuable to consider the opportunities for Chinese education in the context of Chinese-non-Chinese relations. The policies adopted on Chinese education do not, however, stand in any definite relationship to the other policies concerning the Chinese population, if only because they depend to an extent on the ability and resources of the government to replace Chinese schools. The most that can be said is that increasing restrictions in one area are often associated with increasing restrictions in another. In the case of the Philippines, however, there has until recently been a marked disparity between the freedom given to Chinese schools and the extensive economic restrictions under which Chinese business has to operate. Such a disparity becomes explicable if the aim of the Philippines government in coping with its Chinese minority is seen as not assimilation but, rather, elimination, or more realistically, containment (Amyot 1972: 42-3). In such circumstances there is little incentive for the government to adopt educational policies favouring the extensive assimilation of the Chinese. The recent change in policy on Chinese education may herald a new acceptance of the continuing presence of the Chinese in the Philippines.

Governmental concern with Chinese schools and education is a consequence of the importance attached to Chinese schools as social institutions which promote Chinese separatism not only at the level of formal organization and that of informal social relationships, especially at the primary group level, but also at the cultural level by sustaining a culture with distinctively Chinese norms, identity and loyalty. This view of the role of Chinese education is not confined to

⁹When diplomatic relations existed between Indonesia and the People's Republic of China, the Indonesian government made a similar move when it closed all those schools oriented to Nationalist China. The remaining schools were, however, not closed until the May 1965 coup attempt and diplomatic relations between the two countries were not suspended until 1967.

government, for many social scientists have emphasized the role of the schools in retarding Chinese assimilation. Given the changes which this paper has shown have taken place in Chinese education in recent years it is appropriate, before I conclude, to consider how these changes have altered the separatist role of the schools.

The area of most obvious change in the schools is in their control, since a variety of administrative measures have been introduced which effectively reduce the independence and significance of the school boards to a point where not only are the board members unable to exercise any major policy-making functions but, as a corollary, the boards have lost much of their prestige and attractiveness to community leaders. As a consequence of these changes the organizational significance of the schools in the Chinese community has been greatly reduced and many of their non-educational functions have disappeared.

One of the most important functions attributed to schools is their role in socializing their pupils. The introduction of national curriculum and texts, and the abandonment in many cases of Chinese as the language of instruction has reduced the overt Chinese cultural content of education in the Chinese schools. Although the schools may no longer be able to ensure their pupils are literate in the Chinese language or to pass on the great tradition in Chinese culture, these activities are only a small component of their total contribution to their pupils' socialization and, even if the socialization is no longer oriented towards China as the homeland, it may still operate to produce a separate, local, Chinese identity and set of values. The informal socialization provided by teachers and other pupils is a particularly important and potent feature of the school situation which can be more effective than the overt governmental attempts to assimilate the Chinese through supervision of curriculum and texts.

Even should Chinese schools disappear altogether as institutions, similar informal socialization processes are likely to continue in the schools to which the Chinese children are dispersed, for present experience indicates that Chinese children tend to be concentrated in certain schools. This concentration results from either their parents' ability to pay for a private education or residential concentration in certain neighbourhoods which results in significant concentrations of Chinese even in government-operated schools. Schools are not the only, or even necessarily the most effective, agents of socialization so that, in the absence

of separate Chinese schools, a Chinese-oriented process of socialization may continue in the home and other non-school areas of social relations.

The process of socialization involves not only the learning of social norms and values but the acquiring of a social identity. This identity is not dependent on the existence of some 'great tradition' in a cultural heritage though this may well be an important source of pride. Rather, this identity is formed out of a complex process of social interactions, only a part of which occurs in the school situation. In this context, it is relevant that throughout this century numbers of Chinese in the ASEAN countries did not attend Chinese schools; yet this did not lead on any large scale to their incorporation into the non-Chinese population. The experiences of this group highlight the way in which some level of cultural assimilation, which may be obtained through non-Chinese schooling, though a necessary condition for such incorporation is not a sufficient one.

Apart from their role in socialization, a major function which schools may play is the allocation of places in the occupational hierarchy. This function of schools has, however, been largely ignored in discussions of the role of Chinese schools. An important barrier to assimilation of Chinese in ASEAN countries has been the marked racial differentiations in occupations structures, especially in the colonial period. The graduates of Chinese schools have typically found that their education prepared them only for jobs of high status within their own community rather than in the larger society. In the larger society those with non-Chinese education were always far better placed to compete for high status jobs, notably in the bureaucracy but also in commerce and finance. Niche occupations such as Chinese language journalist or teacher were reserved for the Chinese-educated; but the availability of jobs has declined with a decrease in the Chinese education system. As already noted, occupational considerations have been an important factor leading to a decline in the Chinese school enrolments in several countries. Those children who formerly would have received a Chinese education are now competing directly, and in increasing numbers, with non-Chinese children for school and university places as well as for the relatively small number of high prestige occupations. Even those children still attending Chinese schools are now often able to compete since the curriculum changes make it possible for them to sit for the relevant examinations. Although some Chinese were always involved in competition with non-Chinese, the changes in

the Chinese schools, together with changes in the national system of education, have created a situation where the extent and range of this competition is greater than ever before. The practice of certain governments in establishing job and education quotas which discriminate against the Chinese reflect and enhance the bitterness resulting from such competition. The changes and decline in Chinese education have, in this way, introduced a new element of conflict into relations between Chinese and non-Chinese.

This survey suggests that the recent changes in Chinese education have not resulted in cultural assimilation, even though they have played a major part in reducing cultural exclusiveness by increasing the non-Chinese content of the curriculum and, especially, by their emphasis on the official language. To expect the changes to have achieved more without concomitant changes in other areas of the society is unrealistic. This is illustrated by the way the changes have extended the bases for conflict between the Chinese and non-Chinese beyond the issues associated with government attempts to restrict Chinese education. It would be wrong though to interpret the strength of the Chinese reaction to restrictions on Chinese education as merely representing their desire for Chinese education. The significance is far wider for it indicates how education can become a focal point for Chinese hostility to perceived attempts to disadvantage them in other spheres. Education can only become such a rallying point because of the structural divisions which are so widespread in society. It is the existence of these underlying structural divisions which lead to the conclusion that, even should the Chinese schools cease to operate and the cultural differences become less marked, structural separation of the Chinese is likely to remain a significant factor in the five ASEAN countries.

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Chapter 8

The identification and management of educational aspirations in China

Phillip Jones

The demand for education can be seen as a set of responses made by individuals and groups as they perceive the benefits of educational processes. Since it is rare for there to be a single, collective response it is generally useful to focus upon three distinct areas which highlight the multifaceted nature of the demands made of educational systems. First, those who have educational expectations and aspirations need to be identified. Secondly, it is necessary to focus on their respective views of the nature, functions, and benefits of the educational process, which has as much to do with what kind of education should be provided as with how much. Thirdly, it is important to note that the demand for education cannot be conceptualized nor measured solely in terms of current provision or projected expansion. For example, growth in the number of certain kinds of institutions may not always be an accurate reflection of the demands or aspirations of all individuals or groups concerned.

Much of the literature in the area fails to take all of these elements into account. Some appear to discuss the demand for education in terms of increasing enrolments, or national education plans, or in terms of the building up of educational systems (e.g. Poignant 1967; Perlman 1973). What much of the literature fails to consider are the relationships between the various groups competing for a share of the very small education slice in the national economic pie; the varying nature of their demands, aspirations and motives; and the processes by which any competitive tensions are either temporarily or permanently eased by the adoption of certain educational policies.¹

Given these considerations, it is nevertheless clear that third world education over the past decade or two has

¹A significant exception is the most recent World Bank literature, e.g. IBRD 1974.

been characterized by increasing demands, from a variety of quarters, for a marked and rapid expansion of educational provision. Several factors of importance help to account for this. Education has been seen by many as a convenient and sure means of personal betterment, leading to higher wages, social and geographical mobility, and increased status and security (see Harbison and Myers 1964:5-10; Solari *et al.* 1967:404-12). Many newly-independent nations found it appropriate to express their new status by building up national education systems of considerable complexity and cost (usually and paradoxically along western lines) (see Hans 1971:349-60). The economists' discovery of education in the early 1960s led to a marked quantitative emphasis in educational administration and planning, which often led to the belief that the more education the better (see Correa 1969). The priorities and funding criteria of the international agencies assisting educational development (such as the World Bank Group and the UNDP) stress more than any other strategy the rapid building and expansion of formal school and higher education systems, especially those with a scientific and technical orientation (see Jones 1976:Ch.4).

Although the sources of these kinds of demand are varied, it is both interesting and important to note that each aimed at a similar kind of educational provision. During this period, resources available to third world countries for educational development were extremely scarce, and the bulk of these were deployed in the area of formal school and higher education systems.² However, as I have argued elsewhere, the task of building up these systems is largely completed, if the aim had been to provide a high-quality, western-inspired scientific and technological education to limited numbers of students who would be expected to provide leadership in the development of their societies (Jones 1976). In short, most third world countries today have both the means and the experience to continue the task of preparing leaders.

The issue that has subsequently arisen for all such countries is an important and troublesome one: how appropriate is it to expand this kind of educational provision? Can this kind of education be appropriately made available to larger segments of the population, or should the bulk of the populace be provided with a different kind of education: one which will still meet their demands, the requirements of national planning, and the demands of social justice? The satisfactory resolution of this problem is becoming an increasingly

²This is an important theme in much of the literature; see Adams and Bjork 1969, *passim*.

important task for third world education, and ought to be increasingly reflected in considerations of the demand or appetite for education.

The appetite for education rarely comes from just one source: the demands for certain kinds of provision are usually many and varied, and increasingly have to do with the establishment of educational priorities. But the establishment of priorities points more often than not to the dominance of some groups over others, whose demands are respectively met and unmet. Here we find ourselves embarking on an investigation, not merely of the educational aspects of national manpower planning, but of the power relationships in given communities. (This may or may not be helpfully discussed in terms of the continuance and resolution of a class struggle in a revolutionary or potentially-revolutionary society). The major point that I am making here is that in analysing the demand for education it is far from sufficient to examine the expanding national system. If we do this, we are presupposing that the demands being made are in fact being met, and that the expectations and aspirations of the various groups expressing an interest in educational provision are being satisfied. We could learn as much about the demand for education by looking at plans and proposals that have not been implemented. Further than this, we would examine, if possible, the educational aspirations of those individuals and groups whose voice is rarely or never expressed at the stages of planning and policy-formulation, those groups bound, as Freire puts it, by the culture of silence (1972:25).

Considerations of the demand for education must also revolve around both the perceived and the actual functions of education. It is not merely how much education an individual or group wants to receive, nor what kinds of education they feel they should receive. It is also a question of the ability of the educational process to forge people's aspirations into reality, and of the social factors which facilitate or constrain the achievement of these aspirations. The key problem concerns the reconciliation of divergent and incompatible demands, and the consequences of success or failure once priorities have been established.

It is equally relevant, then, to examine the educational demands of minority groups, liberation movements, and so on, and to consider the fate of their expectations. The kinds of factors that are usually described and measured as indicators of the appetite for education more often than not reflect the view for education of the powerful, the articulate, the

educated élite, and (more importantly) those who aspire to inclusion in these groups. It is the last group whose aspirations are most troublesome, from both political and educational standpoints. A marked degree of frustration is inevitable on their part, even after participation in educational processes. The power of education to transform social realities is usually greatly over-emphasized and misjudged. It is the élites who would normally be expected to decide whether the educational aspirations of the people (e.g. to enable a move from the countryside to the city) are in the 'national interest'. But it is also a function of élites to determine what is the national interest, and usually to control entry to their own ranks. The appetite for education, then, should be explored in terms of the frustration of educational aspirations, as well as their fulfilment.

These considerations of the demand for education begin to revolve around the relationships between various groups expressing an interest in or commitment to education. These relationships determine not only whether certain groups' demands will be met, but also whether and how other groups - minority groups, oppressed groups, geographically-remote groups, for instance - will enjoy even the expression and consideration of their views of education in the planning and policy-making arena, let alone their application. Three principal groups seem to be important here. First, there are those who can be called clients or potential clients of the educational system (a group usually of considerable diversity whose demands are rarely totally compatible). Secondly, there are those whose positions of power and authority enable them to assert the demands of some as priorities at the expense of others. Finally, there are those who as planners and educators must forge whatever solutions or decisions have been made into programs of action. It should be noted that these groups are seldom mutually exclusive, a factor whose implications are worthy of detailed examination, as will be argued later in this paper.

It is clearly not possible to examine each of the dimensions of the demand for education in the People's Republic of China in ways strictly comparable with other Asian countries. Even if this were possible, a quite different set of issues would require attention. These revolve around the official Chinese view of which groups in society have a legitimate view of education and its benefits, and the problem of the official universality of the collective response, deviance from which is seen generally as counter-productive. Yet the fact that a range of choices and options

remains open at various levels indicates that the debates and discussions concerning the functions and benefits of education means that there is a richer and more multifaceted 'appetite' for education than we would otherwise be expected to suppose. That the debates are usually orderly and tightly-controlled has of course both positive and negative consequences: but the over-riding consideration here appears to be the encouragement of orderly educational development and reform. In addition there is the usual problem of the divergence between official doctrine, political realities, and social realities in modern China, as well as the current volatility of each of these factors.

In the following pages I wish to examine these issues as they relate to the three principal groups identified above, particularly in the light of post-Cultural Revolution policies and reforms and their re-evaluation. First, I wish to examine some consequences and implications of the mass approach to education. Secondly, the demand for education is discussed from the point of view of modernization, that is as it relates to questions concerning the national interest, especially technological innovation, administration, and quality control. Lastly, I turn to consider the importance of these issues in recent debates in education and their relationship to recent shifts in policy and emphasis.

The mass line in education

The appetite for education in China must be considered first and foremost in mass terms, not so much in order to understand what the masses are demanding, but to approach issues related to the management of the mass approach to education, particularly from the point of view of planners, administrators, and teachers. The mass approach to education in China has two linked, but distinct, aspects. First it points to the intention that educational processes serve to reduce the barriers that divide people: education is to be a great equalizing force in Chinese society. Secondly, it involves the notion of mass participation in education, its planning, conduct, and evaluation. Education is to be conducted both for the people and by the people. It is the masses who are the source of correct ideas about educational thought and practice, as they are in all social enterprises.

The working class must lead all forms of education and must practise proletarian dictatorship in every cultural sphere of the superstructure in order to fulfil in various stages the tasks of

struggle, criticism, and reform ...³

It is the masses whose demands for education must be satisfied. In practice, this ideological tenet has proved extraordinarily difficult to manage, for Mao's view of the demands of the people would look to a kind of 'common sense', a common wisdom, rather than to the respective demands of several competing sub-groups among the masses, whose expectations may or may not be compatible or in the national interest. The idea of there being a single, collective, common sense which can and must guide educational policy has proved difficult to apply, and has not always been confirmed in reality.

While the egalitarian ideal in most contexts is multifaceted, it is most commonly expressed in terms of aims or processes that affect material well-being, opportunity, status and function (see, e.g., Munro 1972:256-301 and Whyte 1975). The Chinese ideal tends to revolve around the latter two in particular, for not only is education in China to aim to bring people closer together, it is to proceed along these lines as well. Education is to treat people equally in order to promote equality among them. This is a crucial but sometimes neglected point: the egalitarian ideal not only guides but indeed facilitates and determines policy formulation. Having declared to André Malraux in his 1965 interview that 'we must teach the masses what we have received from them confusedly' (Malraux 1968:410), Mao went on to say that 'equality is not important in itself; it is important because it is natural to those who have not lost contact with the masses' (ibid.:464). This naturalness of mass leadership and equalization was central in Mao's educational thought, but is frequently overlooked. For him, discord or dysfunction only arises because, and when, this natural way of proceeding in education is resisted.

Any conflict or difficulty in managing the implementation of these principles would most likely revolve around a set of basic questions which could well be examined in any educational system. The fact that they have been variously interpreted and have stimulated different approaches and policies at various times since 1949 is of considerable significance in understanding the relationship between educational thought and practice in the Chinese educational

³'Communique of the Twelfth Plenum', *Peking Review*, 6 Sept. 1968. Useful discussion of mass participation can be found in Townsend 1967; Barnett 1967 and Lindbeck 1971.

revolution. First, what institutional means can be evolved that will guarantee and facilitate the identification and application of the mass demands for education? Second, to what extent does a commitment to the mass line in education imply or even necessitate any particular administrative pattern, and how are questions related to the national interest and national planning best handled? Next, what implications arise for leadership, granted the need for technical and specialist skills and innovation? Fourth, how does a commitment to the mass line affect the curriculum, and procedures related to enrolment, examination and quality control? Last, how are alternative views and approaches, including innovative and deviant views and approaches, best handled?

Much of the literature concerning the relationships between political development and modernization stress the need to increase mass participation in decision-making and development efforts (see Weiner and Binder 1970). The political advantages of mass participation in China's development are many and obvious: it has accorded a considerable degree of legitimacy to the regime, it has fostered a sense of national unity and purpose, and it has given impetus to the pursuit of the egalitarian ideal. We can identify, however, periods in which the practice of mass participation has become increasingly institutionalized and in turn less institutionalized (Pye 1971:3-33 *passim*). This has been the major problem area, and remains so, for Chinese education: how can an institutional framework be developed that will foster the mass line in education and guarantee its continuance? Further, the egalitarian ideal demands an institutional framework which, while depending on mass loyalty for its support, nevertheless can at times pursue ends which at the time might appear incompatible or inconsistent with the wishes of the masses. This point will be taken up in more detail in the next section of this paper.

There can be little doubt that mass participation through mass organization has facilitated the development of Chinese society and economy. Closer relationships have developed between cadres and the masses. The Chinese economy has demonstrated the extent to which it can rely upon personal sacrifice, particularly in times of special difficulty. Mass organizations have provided contexts in which both individual participation and security have been preserved. Mass participation has also fostered a mode of planning and administration marked by coherence and efficiency. Many of these achievements have been facilitated by the functions

of various educational institutions and media to produce a marked sense of loyalty and enthusiasm brought about by a conflation of national pride and personal security (see Jones 1974:26-33 *passim*).

Some have concluded, however, that at times the organizational structures designed to facilitate mass participation have had a reverse effect, and that a major function of the Cultural Revolution was to ensure that participation take 'a more direct and spontaneous revolutionary quality'. Pye, for instance, has argued that had the new pattern of participation been fully internalized by Chinese people, then 'the elimination of the props of the mass organization' would not have made any difference (Pye 1971:29-30). Accordingly it is simplistic to have a concern about the degree to which the egalitarian ideal is being successfully achieved in terms only related to its ends. The achievement of these ends is a long way off, and we have little idea of progress to date. We ought also to have a concern for the means implied in the ideal, and here a critical glance ought to provide us with some enlightenment, given our generally scanty access to Chinese society.

In the post-liberation period, to 1957 or so, the egalitarian ideal was consciously pursued by the provision of a common educational experience. It was expected that in time there would be provision of a uniform core curriculum of a highly academic nature for all primary and middle school-aged children. Each student was to develop in a comprehensive way, and his moral, physical and intellectual development was to proceed without undue emphasis in any area at the expense of the others (see Connell n.d.:23). According to some, however, educational practices tended to foster an essentially academically-oriented curriculum, and failed to take into account the conflict between the egalitarian ideal and the 'actual qualitative differences between students'. According to Mumro:

Institutionally, the conflict showed itself in the increasing appearance of tracks within certain schools separating the backward students from the others, and, in 1962, in the formal maintenance of special schools for more qualified students. But from the broadest perspective, the approach through homogeneity simply did not deal with the essential barrier to egalitarianism in China: the imbalance between rural areas ... and the cities ... Quite simply, the ministry policy of emphasizing quality

education meant that there were too few schools, and in those that existed, the admissions practices and internal standards impeded the mobility of children of peasants and workers (Munro 1971:273).

The Cultural Revolution served in many ways to reaffirm the mass line in education. More than this, however, it brought about an unprecedented characterization of the 'masses' as constituting industrial workers, members of the army, and poor and lower-middle peasants (Hsiung 1970:242). In particular it was the last group which was especially seen as a check on the activities and attitudes of the cadres, and we find from the Cultural Revolution on, a novel emphasis on peasant initiative and responsibility in social enterprises. From this time on we find a clearer conception of the functions of the working classes in exercising leadership. The educational implications of these principles were outlined by Yao Wen-yuan in an enormously significant editorial in the *People's Daily* in August 1968 (Yao 1968). According to Yao, the leadership of the masses is legitimate for four basic reasons. First, 'the working class has rich practical experience in the three great revolutionary movements' (of class struggle, the struggle for production, and scientific experiment). Secondly, it bitterly opposes all words and deeds against socialism and Mao Tse-tung Thought. Thirdly, it hates 'the old educational system which served the exploiting classes', and lastly it strongly opposes the 'civil war' activities of certain intellectuals. Yao went on to criticize the attitude of these who maintained that the sole concern of the workers was production and that they lacked understanding of educational thought and practice.

The Cultural Revolution interpretation of the mass line brought about a wide variety of far-reaching reforms and innovations in educational practice.⁴ In particular, it led to a thorough politicization of education at all levels, so that questions of academic excellence were no longer regarded as the primary criteria for evaluating education, but ideological commitment and correctness as well, which included a high degree of practicality, flexibility and scientific outlook on the part of both teachers and students. Periods of schooling were shortened and made considerably more practical in nature, with many elements of the curriculum becoming integrated with productive labour, social investigation

⁴ That these reforms have in themselves furthered equality in Chinese society is still too early to state with certainty, but see the remarks made by Whyte (1975).

and scientific experiment. The Cultural Revolution reinforced the tendency to decentralize educational decision-making, led to the innovative Revolutionary Committee mode of control, and used educational processes far more deliberately as a means of maintaining a revolutionary spirit among the people.

Emphases such as these have mirrored the more important of China's development and modernization strategies. First, they have reaffirmed the principle that priority must always be given to spreading educational resources as evenly as possible, in order to raise the general educational and cultural levels of the people, rather than channelling them into exclusively specialist and potentially élitist kinds of education. Second, they have reinforced the notion that egalitarianism and mass participation in decision-making implies decentralization of control. Third, they have led to a rethinking of the notion of leadership in Chinese society: that cadre positions remain as service positions, with cadres gaining no undue power, status or privilege as a result of their educational advantages. Last, they have reinforced the affirmation of the supremacy of the rural life over urban life, and all that this implies.

This last point is particularly important in a consideration of the mass line in Chinese education, for it links directly with much of the literature concerning the demand for education in many developing countries (see Griffiths 1968; Frank 1969; and Abernethy 1969). Often, mass demands for education are discussed in terms of the rural population's desire to lead an urban life, with all its presumed benefits, and education is seen as the key to this new mode of existence. Higher income, better material conditions, stability of employment and better provision of services are commonly-expressed benefits of education as perceived by rural folk. It is usual for these groups to identify urban classes whose lifestyles they covet, examine the educational experiences of these classes, and demand these experiences for themselves.

Whether or not the Chinese peasants share such aspirations is difficult to judge, but it is clear that they are encouraged not to. For obvious demographic reasons, and for reasons outlined above, the leadership of the masses in Chinese society implies the leadership of the peasant classes in particular. We find that the drift to the cities that characterizes most developing societies is not a factor in China. Folk are actively encouraged to remain in the countryside, or even to go there from urban communities.

The rustic way of life is extolled. Further, it is the development of agriculture rather than industry which takes precedence in China's modernization, with the consequent attempt to reduce as much as possible rural/urban differences, especially by the spread of small-scale industry through the countryside (see Wheelwright and McFarlane 1973:216-7).

In arguing that any consideration of the demand for education in China must involve first and foremost an examination of the mass line, I am seeking to point to a factor which has far-reaching consequences for the conduct of education, to a factor which is far more than an ideological abstraction with little practical import. If its chief consequence has been a high level of mass involvement in the educational process, it has also had important implications for the concept of leadership in society, in the relationship between the masses and cadres, and in the way in which cadres, technicians and teachers go about their work. Accordingly, it becomes mandatory to consider problems associated with the management of educational aspirations in China. Compounding the problem enormously has been the constant ebb and flow of interpretations of the mass line, and as the ideological zeal of the post-Cultural Revolution period gave way to increased recognition of the ends of modernization and nation-building, China after Mao began to face a new phase, yet again. But many fundamental principles remained unchallenged, and these give some indication of the abiding nature of many aspects of Chinese educational and development strategies.

The Cultural Revolution and the demands of modernization

It would seem that the demands of technical innovation and leadership are not immediately compatible with the egalitarian ideal. Much of the literature supposes that neither can be fostered without some degree of compromise. This is not the same as saying that no modernizing process can advance without the presence of innovating technicians and specialists. Rather, it is a question of how technical innovation is to be brought about. Normally, the development literature assumes that it has been a high quality, scientific, formal education system that has produced leaders of this kind. The Chinese would argue that this is not necessarily always the case.

In Chinese education we find a unique juxtaposition of concepts related to the mass line, technological development and the assertion of national self-reliance. The position

that is argued is that it is the masses who constitute a reliable, constant and rich source of creative power for the development of new technologies. This view of the masses' functions in technical innovation has led, among other things, to institutionalized patterns of worker participation in the design of new processes, equipment and products. Thus the creation of new technologies is seen as a co-operative venture, through a three-in-one combination of workers, technicians and cadres (see Lee 1973:301-25).

By the mid-sixties, technological leadership and innovation appeared to have reached a crisis point. The preparation of technologists and specialists, it has been argued, was hampered by a 'remoteness from practice' and a 'mechanical copying of unsuitable foreign designs and methods' (Lee 1973: 309-10). In particular, it was argued that a major 'obstacle to the rapid development of Chinese scientific and technological self-sufficiency appears to be the over-specialisation of Communist China's new engineers and technicians' (Wheelwright and McFarlane 1973:179). One common difficulty was that the highly-specialized nature of many courses (designed in the interests of speed and efficiency) had meant that their graduates were not able to be readily shifted from one function to another without retraining.

These criticisms can be linked with purpose to a set of conclusions about the nature of leadership in China generally. According to Pye, critically important features in China's modernization have been the nature of mass motivation and participation (Pye 1971:22). The developmental process has been facilitated considerably by the 'determination, skill and imagination' of the working people. For Pye, the real weakness has been a 'tendency toward rigidity and, particularly, a lack of an adequately imaginative and flexible leadership; ... it has been mainly the narrow-mindedness and lack of perspective of its decision makers' (ibid.:25).

Whether this has been the price paid for the pursuit of the mass line in education cannot be so readily judged. For some, mass participation and the egalitarian ideal have indeed discounted rather than heightened the human factors in development:

In spite of all the talk about the human element being superior to machines and technology, the Maoist approach does blur human differences, and hence, it minimizes the importance of the most critical scarce resource in China, the talented human resources (Pye 1971:26).

A judgment such as this, however, can only be made in the light of the Chinese attempts to evolve new patterns of technological innovation and development, the key element being here the functions of the masses in these processes.

The major principles here involve the attempt to have the masses seen as a creative and intelligent force in improving the country's productive capacity. It is intended that technical control be in the hands, not of a few experts, but of the workers themselves, although the term 'technical control' can be variously interpreted. Second, it is important that innovation be seen as a product of an effective linking of theory and practice, practice involving the knowledge, skills and attitudes that flow from participation in productive processes. Also, such an approach means that what would otherwise be routine work for many workers in China can now be part of a creative endeavour, and thereby heighten their sense of participation in social enterprises. The Marxist aim of eliminating the gulf that separates mental and manual work becomes an important educational and economic prescription. It has meant that technical innovation should be seen to take place not only in the laboratory but also on the factory floor. Thus technological theory consists of formalizing and restructuring ideas that have, by and large, come from the working people. The aim is that every worker 'vies to be a path-breaker in technical innovation'.⁵

Here we find a unique attempt to shift the emphasis in the classical development dilemma of whether to foster mass education or specialist education, one at the expense of the other. The Cultural Revolution seemed to involve the attempt to evolve a new relationship between the two approaches, granted that some degree of compromise in one or the other approach in the short term seemed impossible to avoid.

Another important aspect here has been the linking of mass technical innovations and initiatives to the idea of Chinese self-reliance. By relying on the 'creative genius of the working people', China has seen itself becoming free from foreign approaches and models. Here we detect a close relationship between the idea of oppression of certain classes in Chinese society and the oppression of the nation itself. This relationship has important implications on two fronts: first we find a fostering of the enthusiasm of the workers for participation in the building of China's great and secure

⁵'The working class is the master of technical revolution', *China Reconstructs*, 18, 4 April 1969.

future. But, more importantly, it facilitates considerably the management of that most troublesome of elements in the appetite for education arena, that of the reconciliation of mass demands with questions of the national interest and national economic planning.

This latter question is seen as a matter of class relationships. The gulf between mental and manual labour is, ultimately, a reflection of the opposition between classes. The social divisions of labour usually prevent the working people from participation in innovation and experimentation (which can be seen as a form of mental labour). The technical revolution is seen to depend increasingly on the integration of mental and manual labour which can only come about in the short term by a new relationship between workers, technicians and cadres, and in the long-term sense by the total resolution of the class struggle.

One of the central themes of the Cultural Revolution was the increasing bureaucratization of both the Party and Chinese society itself. Centralized planning and control was seen to be in need of simplification, even if this meant some decrease in the capacity to co-ordinate. Rather than being a disadvantage, this was seen to foster a more rational and sensitive response to local conditions, contingencies and requirements, and was intended to lead on to increased initiative and self-reliance, along mass lines.

The use of Revolutionary Committees was one of the more visible aspects of the post-Cultural Revolution attempt to increase mass participation in education. During the Cultural Revolution there developed an unprecedented emphasis on the masses' supervision of the cadres (Hsiung 1970:253). Earlier, cadres had been urged to follow the mass line; but then there was a shift from 'from the masses and to the masses' to 'bonds with the masses' (ibid.:253-4). The Revolutionary Committees, however, did not have a numerical dominance of workers and peasants, although as we have seen above the term 'masses' came to include PLA men. The shift in emphasis was towards the view that Revolutionary Committees maintain close contact with the masses and learn from them.

In the pedagogical sense, the impetus to decentralize was seen most directly in the areas of curriculum, teaching methods and teaching materials. Here the intention was to shift the focus of authority in the learning process away from books and teachers, in order to foster a practical, problem-solving capacity among students. Questions of authority were important, then, not only in determining the

relationship between the masses, teachers and administrators; they were important considerations in the relationship between teachers and students as well. Teachers, further, were no longer held responsible to their superiors in a bureaucracy, but directly to working people, which included parents and students. In practice, this led to a significant decrease in ministry responsibility for the work of the schools, especially in rural areas. Rather than have the ministry formulate policy and rely on provincial and county-level bureau implementation, the new authority pattern looked to brigade control over primary education and commune control over middle school education, by and large. Further, Revolutionary Committees increasingly included commune and brigade cadres, which fostered closer liaison between production units and schools.

This general line of approach in the countryside was reflected, but not to the same extent, in the work of the city schools. There, the municipal Bureau of Education seemed to be the focus of educational innovation, evaluation and reform, and played a far greater co-ordinating and administrative role. A good example of the need for a body with functions such as these was the administration of the 'open-door' policy, which among other things encouraged schools to maintain close contact with both factories and production brigades. In the early 1970s, middle schools in Sian, for example, established permanent links with some 500 factories and production teams, 'permanent' meaning that it was through the municipal Bureau that these links existed. Another example concerned the establishment by 91 middle schools in Sian of branch schools in rural areas, in which 20,000 students studied in 1975, for periods averaging between one and two months. Even productive labour within school workshops necessitated a high degree of inter-school co-ordination. The 400 school-run factories in Sian produced in 1975 340 different products, many of which were exported overseas. These examples⁶ point to the emerging fact that while the reaffirmation of the mass line in the immediate post-Cultural Revolution period has involved the notion of simplified and decentralized administration and control, some reforms have demanded the adoption of rather challenging and complex administrative procedures, which have proved increasingly difficult to manage.

⁶ Given during an interview with officials from the Bureau of Education of Sian, 14 January 1976.

It was stated earlier that a classical dilemma in development education stems from the apparent inconsistency in fostering the egalitarian ideal and in fostering a high quality education for potential leaders. This section has considered some of the elements in the Chinese attempt to reduce these inconsistencies. The principal strategies involved in the post-Cultural Revolution period can be summarized as follows:

1. The content of courses was geared specifically to China's immediate production needs.
2. The shortening of courses brought students into production processes much earlier.
3. The workers themselves were said to be indispensable in the process of technical innovation.
4. Workers, technicians and cadres were encouraged to view any tensions between their functions (and their preparation for these functions) in terms of the class struggle.
5. The extent of local control and initiative in education, production and modernization was considerably increased.
6. While high-level scientific and technological research continued in a variety of institutions, technical and productive innovation was seen to depend as much on the identification and solution of problems by those involved in production themselves. The content, purpose and general flavour of research was to be as much determined by the demands of innovation in production as by any other factor.

Continuing the revolution in education

So far, these considerations of the demand for education in China have revolved around the identification and application of mass demands for education, considerations of how the mass line in education bears upon the need for technical innovation in the modernization process, and questions related to educational administration. It has been argued that the Cultural Revolution served in particular to forge a new approach to the management of demands made upon the educational system.

It is easy to overlook the fact that for all concerned the Cultural Revolution was an unsettling and, for some, a traumatic experience. The aspirations and vocational identity of many were profoundly altered; many educational

institutions were disrupted or closed for long periods; and the futures of a whole generation of students were clouded. These kinds of factors can help explain the rather energetic fashion in which the reforms of the Cultural Revolution, and the considerable experimentation which followed it, were attempted to be institutionalized as quickly as possible. That is to say, the early seventies were marked above all else by the attempt to make the reforms a part of the regular way of doing things.

Accordingly, it took some time for the developmental and economic purposes of the Cultural Revolution to become apparent and to bear fruit. According to Goodstadt, it was not until 1969 that things had become settled enough for the 'reforms' to have a real chance of working on a wide front. For him, it was only then that

the actual operations of industry and agriculture showed considerable promise of low-cost economic development ... What had seemed empty slogans about emulation, innovation, self-reliance and the masses when freshly minted in the Cultural Revolution took on a significance from 1969 which made sound sense (Goodstadt 1972:231).

In these terms, the Cultural Revolution can only be regarded as a partial success, but once Mao's own programs came to be fully implemented from 1969, their effects were immediate. Goodstadt argues:

A remarkable feature of the first period after the proclamation of a Maoist development programme in 1969 was the way Mao Tse-tung's practical proposals for progress bore fruit so quickly. The rapid creation of small subsidiaries by larger enterprises, the progress from primitive workshops to advanced manufacturing, the birth of a huge network of rural industries confirmed the solid basis for Mao's confidence in his own strategy for economic growth (ibid.:232).

But given these immediate consequences, there have still been enormous barriers to the full implementation of the policies zealously advocated at the height of the Cultural Revolution. On the one hand there has been the difficulty of establishing new trends in economic and educational policy as being in strict accordance with the mass line. On the other hand, once some policies have been thus legitimized there has remained the difficulty of ensuring

their institutionalization in Chinese society.

Significant aspects of the egalitarian ideal (and Mao's prescription for achieving it) have remained open for various interpretation, and this is equally true of the immediate past as in any period since 1949, and even before then. This has often been an enormous advantage, as planners have been given considerable flexibility in their work. But more often than not, reinterpretation has been closely associated with shifting balances of political power, particularly at the national level. If modernization in China came to revolve around restructuring the relationships between technology, the economy and society at large (and no one could deny that it did) it is still open to question that sufficient guidance had been given concerning the specifics of this task, particularly before the people themselves had clearly developed an advanced enough outlook on life. Thus there was some attempt during the Cultural Revolution to have it seen not as the institution of new economic and development policies, but rather as a return to the old line that Mao himself had been urging before that time. 'The political struggles of the Cultural Revolution can thus be seen as a bid to eliminate all traits inconsistent with the spirit of Mao's philosophy' (Goodstadt 1972:178).

Yet, on the other hand, there were many groups of cadres and political leaders (increasingly influential and powerful in the mid 1970s) who saw in numerous reforms an excessive zealotness and an unrealistic view of economic development, a view that was in danger of becoming over-politicized and which did not handle well enough the problem of the relations between technical, economic and social aspects of development. By 1976, circumstances enabled them to characterize their approach as the one faithfully advancing Maoist principles and policies, as opposed to those who, while physically and psychologically closer to him, were seen to err in their excessive zeal. With the deaths of several great leaders, with the calamitous destruction brought by a series of earthquakes, and with unfavourable seasonal factors impeding food production in many parts of the country, the economic aspects of Mao's program seemed in late 1976 to be in jeopardy, and the time seemed right for the pragmatists to move in with their demands for increased production, technological advancement, and higher levels of economic well-being.

The keys to their success were institutional. They were supported by the holders of institutionalized power, such as the army. They were also in a position to capitalize

upon those of the Cultural Revolution reforms which (in the economic sense in particular) were seen to be working and which had become part of the regular way of doing things.

As far as education is concerned, the Cultural Revolution brought about mixed institutional changes. Despite the enormous administrative challenges of many of the reforms, despite the fact that many new kinds of educational institutions and practices were conceived and established, despite the upsets to many careers in education, education in China continued to be remarkably orderly, purposeful and efficient. Nevertheless, dissatisfaction with the revolution in education was widespread in the crucial period 1972-76, and was in evidence in each of the two major groups of political activists. This dissatisfaction with educational policy and practice points to key areas in which crucial elements of Cultural Revolution reforms were not readily moulded into institutional patterns.

The 'Debate on Education' of 1975-76 saw these issues brought to a head, and reflect very closely indeed the political power struggles associated so closely with them. From May 1975, Education Minister Chou Jung-hsin found himself increasingly under attack for alleging a decline in academic standards and a rise in ultra-left dogmatism. The most important issue at stake was the failure of the mass line reforms of the Cultural Revolution to deal adequately with high-level manpower requirements, and as such had a direct bearing on education policy, especially at post-secondary levels. While the origins of the debate were confined to the Peking campuses of Peita and Tsinghua, its spread to other universities, schools and centres of production was remarkably rapid.

The firm grip of the radicals on education (at least on educational theory and policy, if not on practice) ensured that the debate at the time was a one-sided discussion of the need to adhere to the more extreme principles established during the Cultural Revolution. An account of the debate as it relates to Tsinghua has been given by a member of the Revolutionary Committee of that university. This account sees the debate originating because of certain departures from reforms in higher education. These included (as far as Tsinghu was concerned) criticisms by Chou Jung-hsin and Tsinghua deputy Party secretary Liu Ping of declining academic standards at the university, of the fact that the most academically-able middle school graduates were being denied places in favour of students from the broad spectrum

of society, criticisms that many students paid only lip-service to being 'ardent' about science and engineering, that many students were not willing to participate in productive labour and other social tasks, and criticisms that these factors will combine to prevent China's technological advancement.

There is considerable evidence of widespread misgivings concerning many aspects of the reforms in education in the post-Cultural Revolution period. Cleverley sees this as part of a deep-seated re-evaluation of the Cultural Revolution itself, a 'larger national questioning' that had been simmering for years:

With Chairman Mao's death has come a major ideological upheaval and in its wake an unprecedented public airing of China's educational deficiencies. In a remarkable reversal of roles, the Chinese have proven far more willing critics of their 'revolution in education' than most Western observers (Cleverley 1967:32).

But what Cleverley points to is a lessening of emphasis in some policy directions, rather than their total rejection. Time spent by students in productive work, either at school or away from home, remains an entrenched principle, shortened in length rather than abolished. Such work programs are seen to be not effective enough, rather than totally inappropriate. Student and parent criticisms of teachers is another example - many teachers, while resenting (even fearing) the zeal of some of their critics, and while welcoming a reduction in emphasis on it, would nevertheless be 'going against the tide' if they advocated a total abandonment of the principle of student-parent-teacher interaction and comment. Many reforms can be expected to continue; what will change is the emphasis placed upon them, both practically and ideologically.

Just as it is simplistic to view the Cultural Revolution as a power struggle between two opposing political factions, so is it equally unhelpful to consider the education debate along these lines. Any education debate in China is important to understand for a wide variety of reasons, not only relevant to educators. This is because educational thought and practice, as we have seen, is tied remarkably closely to ideological, political and economic considerations. Any change in political or ideological emphasis will find almost immediate expression in Chinese education, and this is certainly true of the 1975-76 debate. But it has not been the occasion of the debate that has determined its substance

nor its importance: the issues it embodies are central in any radical alteration of traditional approaches to development and education, conceived broadly. While it is reasonable to expect a constant reaffirmation of the mass line in education, we can also expect from now on a greater sensitivity to questions related to academic quality and their relation to theoretical and technological advancement.

In the foreseeable future, China will achieve universal primary and middle school education. During this period, increasing attention will need to be given to the problem of ensuring satisfaction among a generally well-educated younger population. Many issues remain closed for student opinion - although already one can detect a growing readiness to consult with students in such areas as job assignment, curriculum and assessment. But the virtual absence of specialist middle schools, and the enormous impracticalities of relying on formal and informal links with factories and production units, leads one to wonder how readily can medium and high level innovation be expected to continue. National quality control appears virtually non-existent, the national ministry having direct control of only a dozen or so of the major universities. One wonders, too, at the possible long-term effects on students of the constant worry of one day being daubed by the 'expert but not red' brush.

More generally, there is the question of the contexts in which Maoist principles originated and had their first application; namely, a revolutionary but impoverished society. With increasing affluence, and the diminishing influence of the revolutionary past, the nation will have to consider the abiding relevance of Maoist strategies in agriculture, in industry, in facilitating mass participation, in education, and in economic planning. The vision of a modern state is far from utopian, but the ordering of an affluent society along Maoist lines has yet to be attempted.

As far as development education is concerned, the key issue revolves around the structural relations between mass involvement in educational policy and policies related to quality control, and whether approaches in each area can be institutionalized without negating the others. The current 'discussions' have served to illustrate the point that generalizations about quality control do not go far enough when it comes to high level technological advancement. It says much, however, for the Chinese style that these issues have been identified clearly and that solutions are being openly searched for. Furthermore, while it is obvious that

China's relative poverty alone imposes considerable strain on both educational provision and on the formulation of development education strategies, and that the egalitarian ideal still remains in essence an ideal, it is nevertheless clear that the identification and the management of the demand for education in China represents a vigorous and interesting approach to the political and administrative problems caused by individual and group expression of educational aspiration and expectation in a society undergoing profound change.

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