

**PRACTICAL EDUCATION REQUIRED FOR INDUSTRIALIZATION
IN ASIAN COUNTRIES**

by

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Discussion Paper

on

Dr. Wei-fan Kuo's

**EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE ASIAN COUNTRIES:
ISSUES AND COPING STRATEGIES**

The Thirteenth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences
Washington, D.C. September 2-5, 1984

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We have just been enlightened by the papers presented by Dr. Wei-fan Kuo, President, Taiwan Normal University, Republic of China. It is very excellent. We are grateful for him who has reminded us of the educational issues and coping strategies in the Asian countries. His thoughtful remarks on the problems and strategies have proven to be right.

However, the papers deserve a few comments.

First; Dr. Kuo mentioned in the introduction of his essay that a pervading conflict is existing in Asian education. It is that the general public is very eager for an academic type of education programs while the governments emphasizes vocational and technical education suited to the requirements of national modernization and economic development. I myself personally noticed this conflicting issue in various Asian countries when I made a trip to some Asian countries to carry out an industrial assistance programs. I know this is a crucial problem for those governments which are making efforts to meet the requirements of modernization and industrialization and to achieve the national targets they have deliberately planned. Dr. Kuo just mentioned that the Asian governments were seeking to expand their school systems to meet the feverish requests for credential of the population. But they shouldn't forget the real necessity for their national industrialization. They shouldn't remove their emphasis on the vocational and technical education because it is apparent that in the effective industrialization, roughly speaking, they need excellent five technicians when

they have one engineer and five practical engineers working when they have one PHD academician in any technological field. For a successful industrialization, they need more practical, vocational and technical people than academic researchers, arm-chair engineers and theoretical managers with credential papers. The combination of too many PHD and too few technicians would certainly not achieve the industrialization.

The reason why the general public tends to show their preference for an academic type of education program is that more sweet opportunities would be opened for those who have obtained higher, academic and prestigious paper credentials. They can easily climb up their promotional ladder or easily get better status through job-hopping. In many Asian countries, vocational and technical workers are often treated unfair within the promotional system. On the promotional ladder those practical skilled-workers are destined to be slow and terminated at a certain rank and the university graduates without practical production experience take up higher ranks and decorative status symbols. I know that many developing countries are still short of good university graduates. But at the same time they are more in need of experienced technicians on the production floor. Now that Dr. Kuo did not mention clearly enough strategies to solve such conflicting needs, I would like to suggest that industries should open more opportunities for advancement and more trainings for advancement to the workers who establish their careers through vocational and technical education. Those people are the industrial foundations to sustain and promote the

national economic development which may be planned and designed by academic officers who have obtained beautiful paper credentials inside or abroad. Here we should note clearly that academicians and unexperienced managers can hardly plan and design a practical development as they are usually promoted too fast and unaware of actual problems and hindrances existing on the production floor.

In Japan, all university graduates and any academician are placed once at least in the production line -- so called "Gemba" in Japan. Actually "Gemba" is the battle ground of production brimmed up with spirits of work force -- cooperation, cohesiveness, efficiency, exclusiveness and hierarchy. Laboratory is more like an incubator having perfect conditions to create new theory and process. Gemba contains a real life of industry with unexpected disturbances and unwiedly germs. It is the nature of Gemba. When theoretical planning or achievement, graduating from the laboratory stage, is placed in the Gemba, it will face the external conditions which are varied and complicated. Japan's production lines (Gemba) are very unlikely to pose a rejection symptom against this new intruder whatsoever. Far from rejection, they seem to have a receptor to include the new comer and they immunise the new technology against germs and disturbances that exist in the real life of production. Who do it? Experienced engineers, practical technicians and skilled-workers do it altogether.

Second; Dr. Kuo introduced the qualitative growth of colleges and universities in Asia, conspicuously in Republic of Korea and Republic of China. He also pointed the problem caused by the over-expansion of higher education in quantity. The limitation of educational facilities, teaching staff and other resources have lead to the downgrading of accademic quality. It then caused under-employment of college graduates and has become a problem of public concern.

There is a proverb, "Too many cooks spoil the broth." In Japan, we say, "Too many sea captains navigate their ship to the mountain." In other words, quality is more important than quantity. As Dr. Kuo stated, when the increase of qualified teaching staff has failed to keep pace with that of the students, it would certainly spoil the effectiveness of education. The recent moral deterioration of younger generations is partly attributable to the unqualified teaching staff. Any nation shouldn't try to make a hasty progress in education. Clever chinese overseas merchants often say, "It is all right to be slow in progress so long as we don't stop on the way". We should make a slow but steady progress in educational development by placing a priority on quality rather than quantity. The participants may express any better idea to approach such conflicting needs of Asia -- to increase both quality and quantity at the same time of the higher education. I don't have any absolute answer to go about it.

The speaker also said in the papers as I believe that the

economic approach is an excellent means of encouraging education to move closer to reality and to take into more account the closer relationship between education and socio-economic development. Then we must consider more seriously the linkage between the school education and the industrial training within industries. In Asian countries in general, these two are not closely planned in harmony and not linked in contents for development. The national goal of each country should be frequently reviewed and should balance both school education and industrial training.

Third; I quite agree with the view of Dr. Kuo that culturally pluralistic societies and their ethnic complications make it difficult for the government to unify the nation for development. In this respect, the participants may learn a little bit lesson from the Meiji Restoration of Japan. Before the Restoration, Japan was culturally pluralistic and had some ethnic complications. People in the north were originated from Ainu race. People in the southern area were the natives or the decendants of immigrants from South-east Asia. The central parts and Northern Kyushu of Japan were mostly inhabited by the natives and the people whose antecedents came from chinese continent through Korean Peninsula. Those were all called Japanese but originated differently in culture and were not so communicative each other as they spoke different Japanese dilects. Moreover, the Japanese society was vertically classed by four: Samurai at the top, peasants next, artizans in third

and merchants at the bottom. Each class had different culture and different style of life. In addition, Japan was divided by approximately 300 sultanates -- so called "Daimyo" (territorial samurai lords) under the administrative control of the Shogun (the top of samurai class) in Edo (Tokyo). Each fief of Daimyo had different law, education system, taxation practice and its own army composed by its own samurai group.

Then at the Meiji Restoration, the unification of the nation was carried out by three drastic changes.

(1) Abolishments of sultanates to be replaced by governors appointed by the central Meiji government. The administration and taxation were all unified and centralized.

(2) Conscription Law

The division of the people by four classes was abolished and the defense of the nation has become the duty of everybody.

(3) Dissemination of compulsory education. The Ministry of Education published exactly the same texts for education at the national standard and distributed them all over Japan. The standard Japanese language spread all over Japan and made those pluralistic societies perfectly communicative each other.

The Government of Singapore has also introduced the excellent system, as Dr. Kuo mentioned in his papers, to educate its multi-racial society to be unified and to be bilingual. She has exemplified the way of unification of multi-cultural

society. In my own opinion, every nation should have one international language like Singaporeans as the global communication medium at this stage of civilization.

Fourth; Dr. Kuo pinpointed the importance of moral education. As we notice nowadays, not only the Asian countries but the whole world are being suffered from the moral deterioration, particularly from upsurge of violence and juvenile delinquency. The moral corruption have already eroded working ethics, industriousness, group loyalty and filial piety of people. We must do something effective about it. Dr. Kuo suggested a restoration of Confucian teaching as "Moral Education in Asia". In principle I agree, because in many Asian countries the elderly people have still retained some moral heritage from Confucianism and it has long been the basis of working ethics of Asian people. However, some younger generation and particularly women have considerably strong resistance against traditional Confucianism because some parts of Confucianism don't fit into the concept of our present democratic society. It is absolutely needed, in my opinion, that educators and social leaders modify the traditional teachings to fit the contemporary human societies in Asia. It will then become an effective instrument to rescue the moral deterioration in the Asian societies.

I must add another thing at this opportunity. To make the moral education really effective, it must be provided to the infants when they are before ten in age. Moral can be

better indoctrinated when receivers are still infants. Then we will have a difficult problem -- who is going to teach infants. Of course their parents are in the position to conduct the moral education to their infants. But very unfortunately the younger parents of the infants are already spoiled morally and they are the victims of materialism. Those younger parents have already lost ethical standard and are not fully aware of the importance of moral revampment. I would like to ask Dr. Kuo and the participants how we can educate those younger parents and strengthen the roots of home education who should indoctrinate children with ethics and values of human life. We have to change somehow the alarming situation with our new approach and new impact.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Drafted by Mr. Mitsuyuki Masatsugu